

writing there are ten colonies of Mormons, comprising five thousand inhabitants, in Chihuahua. Mr. Andrew J. Stewart is the *concessionnaire* and manager of the colony in Hidalgo, which owns a large tract of land in the Santa Maria valley. The colony has a dam which irrigates fifty thousand acres of what is already proving grand farming land for ordinary grains and vegetables and for dairy purposes. These colonies are not sectarian, however, although the majority of the colonists are Mormons. Governor Ahumada has been a friend to these colonies and has helped them in many ways.

It is recorded that when Joseph Smith originally started the Mormon movement in America he desired to found his first settlement in Mexico; and now this first idea of the great Mormon apostle is being carried out.

The foreigner who goes to Mexico, invests capital, and gives due respect to the laws of the country can have no just cause of complaint. "It is only the tramp American who goes to Mexico with the expectation of making a fortune within a brief period, and who, failing in this, expends his spleen in deriding the government, the people, and the laws of the country. It is this class of people who go through the land disseminating their spite against Mexico and her people."



## CHAPTER XXV

## DURANGO

**D**URANGO lies south of Chihuahua, and has an area of forty-two thousand six hundred and twenty-three square miles. The western portion of the state is broken up by the range of the Sierra Madre, but the east is very fertile, with wide plains and beautiful scenery. On the western slopes of the mountains, too, are rich valleys, where sugar-cane and the tropical fruits and plants are raised.

Flax and potatoes grow wild in Durango, and cotton is raised in large quantities. The climate is cold on the mountains, hot on the western slopes, and temperate in other portions. Wheat and all vegetables peculiar to the temperate zone are produced in large quantities; in fact, Durango offers excellent opportunities to the Northern agriculturist, especially in the eastern and central districts. Gold is abundant near Santa Maria del Oro.

Durango, besides many silver-mines, contains inexhaustible iron-beds. It is often called the "State of the Iron Mountain." Less than two miles from the capital city, Durango, is the largest mass of iron in the world, being a solid mountain of iron, called Cerro del Mercado. It is estimated that this mountain contains more than one hundred and twenty-five million tons of iron, the larger portion of which is magnetic. This entire property now belongs to a company known as the Durango Steel and Iron Company. Governor Flores owns a section of this wonderful mountain. An explorer has said that the Cerro del Mercado could supply with iron for three hundred and thirty years all the foundries

of Great Britain, the value of the iron consumed in that time reaching the enormous figure of nine billion nine hundred million dollars; that is to say, seven times more than the value of all the gold and silver coined at the mint of Mexico from 1690 to 1803. Widner's calculation



SEÑOR GENERAL DON JUAN M. FLORES,  
GOVERNOR OF DURANGO.





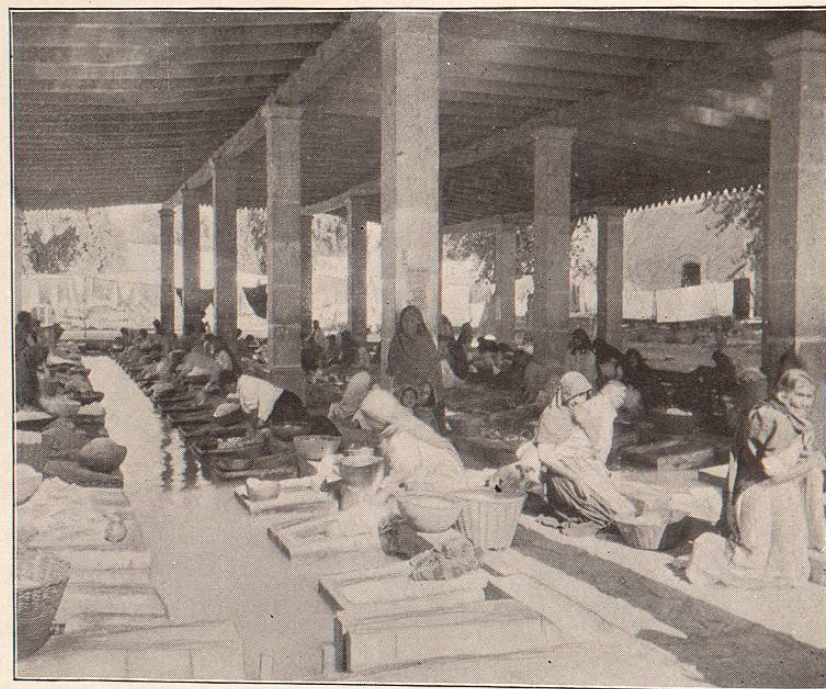
TUNAL, THE GREAT COTTON-MILLS OF DURANGO, DURANGO.

house, the cathedral, a number of parish churches, a spacious hospital, a penitentiary, a state prison, a coliseum, an arena for bull-fights, and a sumptuous-looking cockpit. There are attractive public gardens, public squares, and public baths. Thermal springs supply the city with water, and the place is remarkable for cleanliness. There are cotton and woollen manufactories, also leather-, iron-, glass-, and tobacco-factories. The mint at Durango coined twenty-seven million nine hundred and sixty-two thousand six hundred and sixty-eight dollars between 1811 and 1845. There is an institute in which law, languages, and the sciences are taught, with several very good public and private schools.

Durango is a very peculiar town. It is very rich; some thirty-five thousand people, the owners of lands, timber, mines, etc., have to be coaxed to sell. At the same time, there are large mineral districts not yet explored, and Americans have found good gold-bearing properties. There is no mining exchange, board of trade, or other business organization. The people are rich and contented, and the resident merchants do not care to have any more

reports the Cerro del Mercado a mile long, three hundred and eighty-eight yards wide, and six hundred and forty feet high, representing one billion two hundred and forty-six million nine hundred and eighty-four thousand two hundred and twenty-four cubic feet.

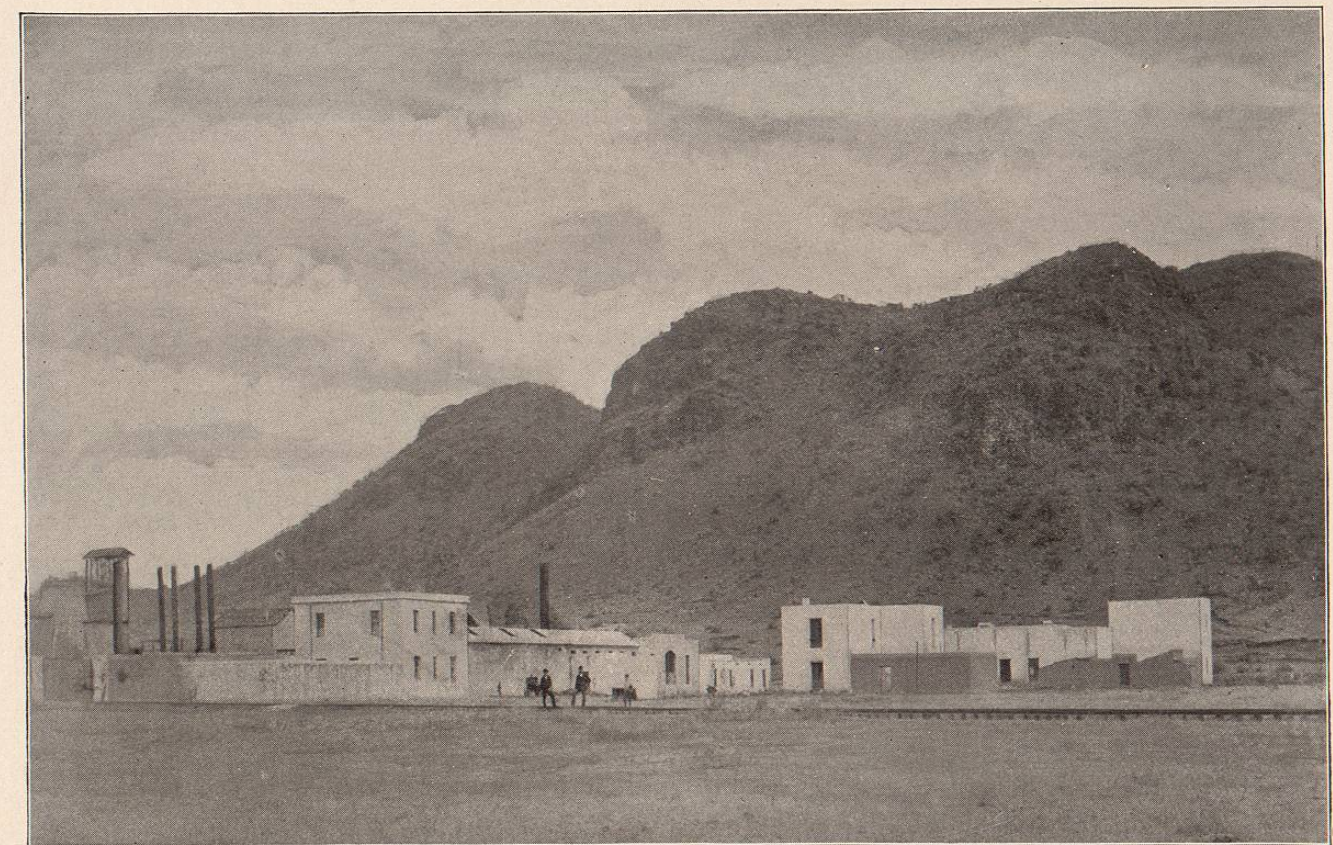
The capital is Durango, which is beautifully situated some seven thousand feet above the sea. It was founded in 1560 by Alonzo Pacheco as a military station, and soon after was made an episcopal see. It was originally called Guadiana, and is still sometimes called Victoria. The most noteworthy buildings are the government



PUBLIC WASHING-PLACE FOR THE INDIAN WOMEN, STATE OF DURANGO.

competition. The fact that there has not been one failure here in sixteen years is a good indication of solidity. The developed mining district is very rich, and the cattle industry is large. Cotton-, woollen-, and print-mills represent large capital. The climate is perfect all the year; never lower than twenty degrees above zero nor higher than eighty. The people are getting more enterprising now, after three years of railroad communication, but the town is a solid, slow business place, entirely able to exist independently of the world.

Durango is, in fact, literally covered with mines. Among the important mining centres are El Oro, Indi, and Coñito; some of these have yielded from sixteen hundred to four thousand six hundred dollars per ton. There are plenty of other mines in the state, the estimated average yield amounting to six hundred thousand dollars weekly. Large beds of tin have also been



A MOUNTAIN OF SOLID IRON, DURANGO.

discovered, and promise great profits. The mines of Guanacevi, San Juan de Guadalupe, Mapimi, Metates, Topia, Indi, Papasquiario, Santiago, San Dimas, and El Carmen are all of importance, but one of the largest is that of Peñoles, whose estimated annual value is about half a million dollars.

The agricultural interests in the state have not been neglected, the situation being especially favorable for the cultivation of cotton, as well as of other profitable crops. That cotton is profitably raised is proved by the fact that there are several mills in the state for weaving, spinning, and printing cotton, besides two or three for the manufacture of woollen goods. These facilities, and the fact that a ready market is found in the city of Mexico for all its products, give excellent promise for the future.

The rich agricultural district surrounding Lerdo is under irrigation, and from eighty to one



hundred thousand bales of cotton are raised there yearly, in addition to the corn, cane, beans, and fruits which are produced in great abundance. This is part of the Laguna district (which lies partly in Coahuila), which is traversed by the river Nazas throughout its entire valley. Among the chief tributaries of this river are the Castine and the Santiago, which unite to form the Ramos. A strange feature about this river is the fact that it furnishes a large volume of water which never reaches the river Nazas, the disappearance of which has never been fully accounted for. Consequently, during the summer months the Nazas dwindles to a very small stream, and this has been utilized to irrigate the Laguna lands. Corn, wheat, and *frijoles* are raised there, but the most important crop is the cotton for which the Laguna district is famous. The cotton-fields at this point are immense. The broad irrigating ditches take the places of



CASA OF MAXIMILIAN DAMM, DURANGO.

fences or hedges, so that the view covers one broad sweep, miles in extent. These fields are often two miles square, white as snow when the bolls are open, and they are repeated as far as the eye can reach along these river banks.

A few miles out from Durango is the Fábrica del Tunal, one of the oldest cotton-factories in the country, having been established by the father of the present owner, Señor Emilio Stahlknecht, in 1837. This establishment has eighty looms, which will probably be increased in the near future to two hundred and fifty looms, as there is a water-power of nearly three hundred horse-power. The establishment includes bleaching and print works, and its products of fine cloths are known everywhere as among the finest cotton goods of Mexican manufacture.

The city of Lerdo was founded in 1867, but has already ten thousand inhabitants, with a surrounding territory containing a population of fifty thousand more. Lerdo occupies a beau-

tiful site, surrounded on three sides by low mountains. It has wide streets and a beautiful plaza with plenty of trees and flowers. Here is one of the finest hospitals in the republic, the Hospital Francisco Garza. The building is two stories in height, with a large area, and has in connection an orphan asylum and a poor-house. Governor Flores has contributed largely to the support of this magnificent structure, which would do credit to a city ten times the size of Lerdo. There are a large number of manufactories with all modern improvements, among which may be mentioned one of the largest soap-factories in America, several large wholesale establishments, banking-houses, etc.

There are many romances regarding buried treasures in Durango. There is no doubt that there has been deposited all through the state in caves and other secret places a vast amount



THE PRINCIPAL STREET, DURANGO.

of treasure, the proceeds of robberies committed by bands of brigands and outlaws during the numerous revolutions.

To Governor Don Juan Manuel Flores the state owes the greater part of the progress it has made for some years past, and to him was given the duty of driving the last spike on the International Railroad, which owed its construction largely to his indefatigable zeal. When that road was formally opened and the hitherto remote capital of Durango made accessible to travellers for the first time, it was a veritable revelation to the world. No one had imagined that up among those mountainous solitudes would be found a city so beautiful, so advanced, or so fully equipped to compete with modern national capitals; and the whole country did honor to the untiring genius and progressive spirit of Durango's able governor, General Flores.