

struction, with a chapel for Roman Catholic worship, and is large enough for its usual number of offenders, about sixty. It was given by a former resident of the city in the early years of this century, on condition that it should be used only for the purpose designated. Each principal town in the state has a prison for men and one for women.

North of San Luis is the very pretty village of Bocas, a typical town of Mexican beauty. Fine haciendas with walled gardens, blossoming flowers and fruits, towered chapel and ancient court-yards, may be seen, with plenty of green foliage to soften the landscape on every side. In the northern portion of the state, at La Maroma, the line separating the Temperate from the Torrid Zone is marked by a pyramid erected by the Mexican National Railroad.

Up to the present time we have described only the inanimate features of this wonderful state. But there are other treasures, more precious than mines of silver and of gold: her men of action and of soul; her patriots and warriors; her defenders in time of war, her leading citizens in days of peace.

Of these, the "noblest Roman of them all" is he who has long stood at the helm of government in the state of San Luis Potosí, and whose career is at once the record of the progress of this state and one of the principal features of its advance. General Carlos Díez Gutiérrez was born in the city of Maiz, in this state, in 1845. As governor and military commander of San Luis he has given a vigorous impulse to all public duties, reformed the postal service and the gendarmerie, and completely reorganized the government and its departments. As governor of his state he has brought to the front rank the penitentiaries, industrial schools, asylums, hospitals, telegraphy, railways, and other public institutions and improvements.



CHAPTER XXVII

ZACATECAS

ZACATECAS is another inland state, south of Durango, and surrounded by Coahuila, San Luis Potosí, Aguas Calientes, and Jalisco. It has an area of twenty-six thousand five hundred and eighty-eight square miles, and is a flourishing state in many ways. It is one of the most mountainous, being traversed by the Sierra Madre with numerous spurs and branches. The hilly country of the middle and west is

interspersed with fertile and wide valleys and deep gorges and ravines, furnishing a variety of wild and beautiful scenery. The state is rather poorly watered, there being no large streams. The climate is very generally salubrious, warm in the valleys, and rather cold in the elevated portions. Silver is very abundant in this state, which long ranked first in importance among the great mining regions of Mexico. Guanajuato, however, has taken precedence of it in this respect. Mining is the chief industry, although agriculture is extensively and profitably carried on.

Zacatecas is divided into twelve *partidos* or districts,—Zacatecas, Fresnillo, Sombrerete, Nieves, Mazapil, Ciudad García, Pinos, Villanueva, Sánchez Roman, Juchipila, Nochistlan, and Ojo Caliente.

The capital is Zacatecas, a city of about eighty-five thousand population, lying in a deep gorge of the mountains about three hundred miles northwest of Mexico City, on the Mexican Central Railway. It has many churches, a hospital, a mint, good schools, and a literary institute founded in 1868. The city is justly celebrated for its enormous output of silver. Its first mine was discovered in September, 1546, and on July 1, 1818, it was estimated that the total output of the mines since their discovery aggregated the sum of six hundred and sixty-seven million three hundred and forty-three thousand two hundred and nineteen dollars. These



SEÑOR GENERAL JESUS ARECHIGA,
GOVERNOR OF ZACATECAS.

silver-mines are steadily producing immense quantities of ore, and recent new discoveries have been made which indicate that Zacatecas may become famous as a gold-ore producing point also.

The city is reached by a steep slope from the railway station, and the narrow streets are wonderfully clean, well paved, and have raised pavements at one side. Everywhere the little court-yards are seen through open door-ways and are glowing with flowers and sunshine. There are many market-places, and the central one has a great circular stone fountain, around which at almost every hour of the day may be seen women and children with great red earthen jars



THE CATHEDRAL, ZACATECAS.

and little gourd-shaped cups, which they use to fill the jars; these latter are then swung easily to the left shoulder, and the women walk off with all the grace and self-possession of ball-room belles.

To see Zacatecas you must go down a steep side street to the beautiful old church, with its great façade of carved freestone and three unique spires, and the arcade covered with its double row of arches. Everything glows with color,—the sky, the frescoes, the flowers, the trees, the gayly dressed people, and the broad stone seats. The inner court of the government patio is finished with a dado and frieze of blue and yellow; the slender pillars in double columns between the arches of the first and second floors are brilliant with stencilled wreaths of flowers; the broad stone steps curving away to the upper galleries are ornamented with pots of tropical plants. From a corner of one of these galleries one sees a beautiful picture. The red sandstone towers of the cathedral, with their beautiful carving, are barbaric in splendor and still harmonious. Against the sapphire sky their outlines are wonderful, and there is no end of novelty. One market-place is devoted entirely to coarse potteries, jars for water, and cooking articles and kitchen utensils.

Many travellers say the low-topped houses and domed churches remind them of Palestine. Indeed, Zacatecas is called "The Jerusalem of Mexico." Far up on the mountain called "La Bufa" is the shrine which the Mexican devotees visit to obtain remission of their sins, many of them scaling the steep sides of the mountain upon their hands and knees, as an exceptional self-imposed penance. The people wear their peculiarly picturesque garb, and should it be Sunday and the band playing in the plaza, the moving throngs will form a veritable kaleidoscopic scene, wonderfully pleasing to the eye.

Water is a comparatively scarce article in Zacatecas. The fountains in the plaza are always thronged with people with their water-jars, and as early as four A.M. men and women of the poorer classes are at the fountain filling jars with water, which they sell to later arrivals at a centavo for four gallons, the quantity a jar holds. The schools and the markets, the latter with their many varieties of fruit unknown in our country, are very interesting. Many of the venders, spreading a shawl on the pavement, divide their articles into sundry little piles,

each of which is sold for one cent. These sometimes consist of cooked articles, and many a passer-by gets a meal for that sum.

Passing along the streets, through the open door the mother of the family or a young girl can often be seen preparing the family meal. Corn, having been first soaked in a weak lye, is placed on a flat stone, over which a stone two inches in diameter and perhaps ten inches long is rapidly rolled by the hands of the woman, who kneels on the floor. The softened corn is soon reduced to a coarse paste, and is then flattened by hand into very thin wafers, which are immediately baked. These are the tortillas which, together with the frijoles, constitute the staple diet of the masses. Some of the tortillas are laid out for dishes and plates on which to place the beans; another tortilla is twisted into a spoon; and when the beans have been eaten,



A GENERAL VIEW OF ZACATECAS.

then the spoons, dishes, and plates are eaten, and, the hands being wiped on a tortilla that is left, that is eaten also. Thus the meal is over and the table cleared, with no dishes or table-cloth to wash. This, of course, obtains only among the poor classes; nowhere can be found more charming manners and true refinement than among *la alta sociedad*.

Of course the principal interest of the people of Zacatecas is mining. Among the principal buildings is the Aduana, built of red sandstone, with handsome carving around the entrance and the yard. Then there is the handsome market, which is exceedingly tidy and clean, and of which the upper floor is used as a hall or occasional theatre. There is another fine theatre, with a seating capacity of eight hundred, handsome decorations, and all the modern improvements. Close to the market is the cathedral, built of red stone, with a wonderful frontage on three sides, magnificently carved. The interior is equally rich, and cost many thousands of