

CHAPTER XXIX

QUERÉTARO

EOUTH of San Luis Potosí and just west of Hidalgo is the old state of Querétaro, with an area of three thousand four hundred and twenty-nine square miles. It occupies a part of the Cordilleran plateau, and, while it contains much fertile land, is traversed by numerous mountain spurs. In these, however, many minerals lie waiting for the enterprising capitalist. Gold, silver, copper, lead, antimony, quick-silver, and tin are found. Cotton is grown in some parts, grain, tobacco, and sugar are extensively cultivated, and a good many cattle are raised. Fine forests of timber and precious woods abound also. The state is divided into six *partidos*,—Querétaro, San Juan del Rio, Amealco, Jalpan, Toliman, and Cadereyta.



SEÑOR CORONEL DON FRANCISCO COSÍO,
GOVERNOR OF QUERÉTARO.

The chief towns, besides the capital Querétaro, are San Juan del Rio and Toliman. Querétaro will arrest the attention of the traveller because of its beauty, and also because the career of Maximilian was there brought to a tragic close upon the "Hill of the Bells." It is an old city, dating back to the Otomites, in 1400. Its churches are numerous, imposing, and beautiful. A small stream flows through the town, furnishing irrigation,—all that is needed in this whole land to make it prolific in crops and fruit.

Querétaro has a population of fifty thousand, and is situated one hundred and ten miles northwest of Mexico, on a plateau six thousand feet above sea-level. It occupies the sides and summits of several hills, and is separated from picturesque little suburbs by a small stream. The streets are well laid out, the houses are regular, and the city is one of the finest in the republic. Palms and bananas

grow in the open squares, with an occasional tree of scarlet hibiscus. The houses are more pretentious architecturally than most Mexican cities can boast, and give an air of comfort and wealth. The parish churches are magnificently decorated. The town has about fifty churches

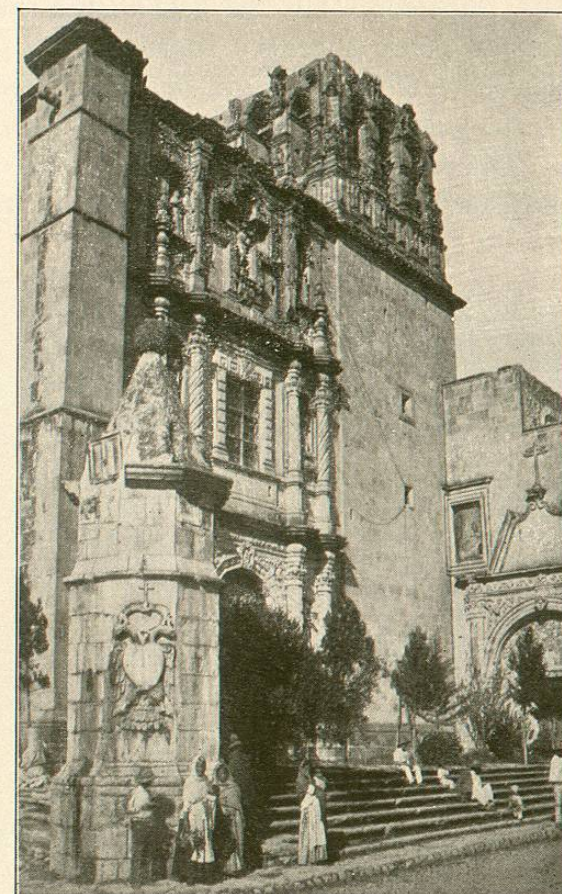
in all, a college, an art school, and an academy of design. Water is supplied by an aqueduct five miles long, which crosses a plain upon arches some of which are ninety feet high. This aqueduct is connected with a tunnel, through which the water is brought six miles, and is a marvel of skilful and substantial work. The expense was borne mainly by one generous person, to whom the city has gratefully reared a beautiful monument on one of its plazas. The water-carriers, in their quaint dress, gather about the public fountains to fill their jars for domestic purposes.

There are manufactures of woollen and cotton goods, leather, soap, cigars, and pulque. It is interesting to visit the large cotton-factory known as the "Hercules Mills." A colossal statue of Hercules, which cost fourteen thousand dollars before it left Italy, stands near a fountain in the midst of ornamental trees. Some fifteen hundred women and girls are employed in this mill, the best operatives receiving about forty cents per day.

Querétaro is noted for its opals, which have been worked for centuries and are still unexhausted.

This city has a melancholy interest because here Maximilian was shot. It will be remembered that Napoleon "the Little" undertook, while the Civil War was in progress, and because the United States government was occupied in suppressing a rebellion, to establish

an empire in Mexico. He took upon himself the task of exporting an emperor to Mexico,—Maximilian of Austria, a dreamer imbued with the idea of the divine right of kings. He listened to the seductive assurances of an emperor who himself had secured the right to rule by rapine and blood. Carlotta, the beautiful wife of Maximilian, was ambitious, an ardent Catholic, and the Pope gave the new rulers consecration and his blessing. The history is interesting, though both emperor and empress exhibited a spirit of vanity and frivolity and a disregard of the rights of the people that was lamentably weak and heartless. When the Civil War was closed, the United States government put sixty thousand troops into Texas on the Mexican border, and then the Little Napoleon was told in unmistakable language that the French troops who sustained Maximilian must be withdrawn. Maximilian was advised to abdicate, and would have done so but for the proud and ambitious Carlotta. She volunteered to go to France to intercede



FAÇADE OF THE RUINS OF SAN AUGUSTIN, QUERÉTARO



MONUMENT TO DOÑA JOSEFA ORTIZ DE
DOMÍNGUEZ, QUERÉTARO.

with Napoleon. He was deaf to her entreaties, and she then fled to the Pope for relief, but with no better success. Repulsed, her finely strung nature succumbed, and she became a maniac,—perhaps the best surcease, except death, from the humiliation, the defeat, and the greater grief that were to follow.

Maximilian, with a few thousand troops, was shut into this city. On the night of May 19, 1867, the city was captured, and he was tried and condemned to be shot, together with his two



COURT-YARD OF THE FEDERAL PALACE, QUERÉTARO.

trusted generals, Mejia and Miramon. The execution took place two miles out from the city one month later. Maximilian said, as the fatal pilgrimage was begun, "I am ready; it is a beautiful day to die." Holding the crucifix over his breast, as an indication to the soldiers where to fire, and with his faithful generals at his side to share the same fate, he received the death-dealing bullet. The place is marked by three rude stones within an iron-railed enclosure,

each stone bearing the name of one of the victims. Thus ended the last attempt to plant a monarchy upon this continent.

Querétaro possesses two of the masterpieces of Tresguerras, the churches of Santa Clara and Santa Rosa. Tresguerras was an architect, a sculptor, an engraver, a painter, and a poet, and he trained a great many workmen to carry out his ideas. He was born at Celaya in 1765, and died there in 1833. The church of Carmen at Celaya, with its wonderful dome, was one of his great works, and the interiors of Santa Rosa and Santa Clara, both of them old convent churches at Querétaro, are two others. Both have been mutilated by the removal of the grand altars and of the decoration of the chancels, and by the substitution of tawdry modern constructions. Otherwise they are both superb examples of art, Santa Rosa being much the

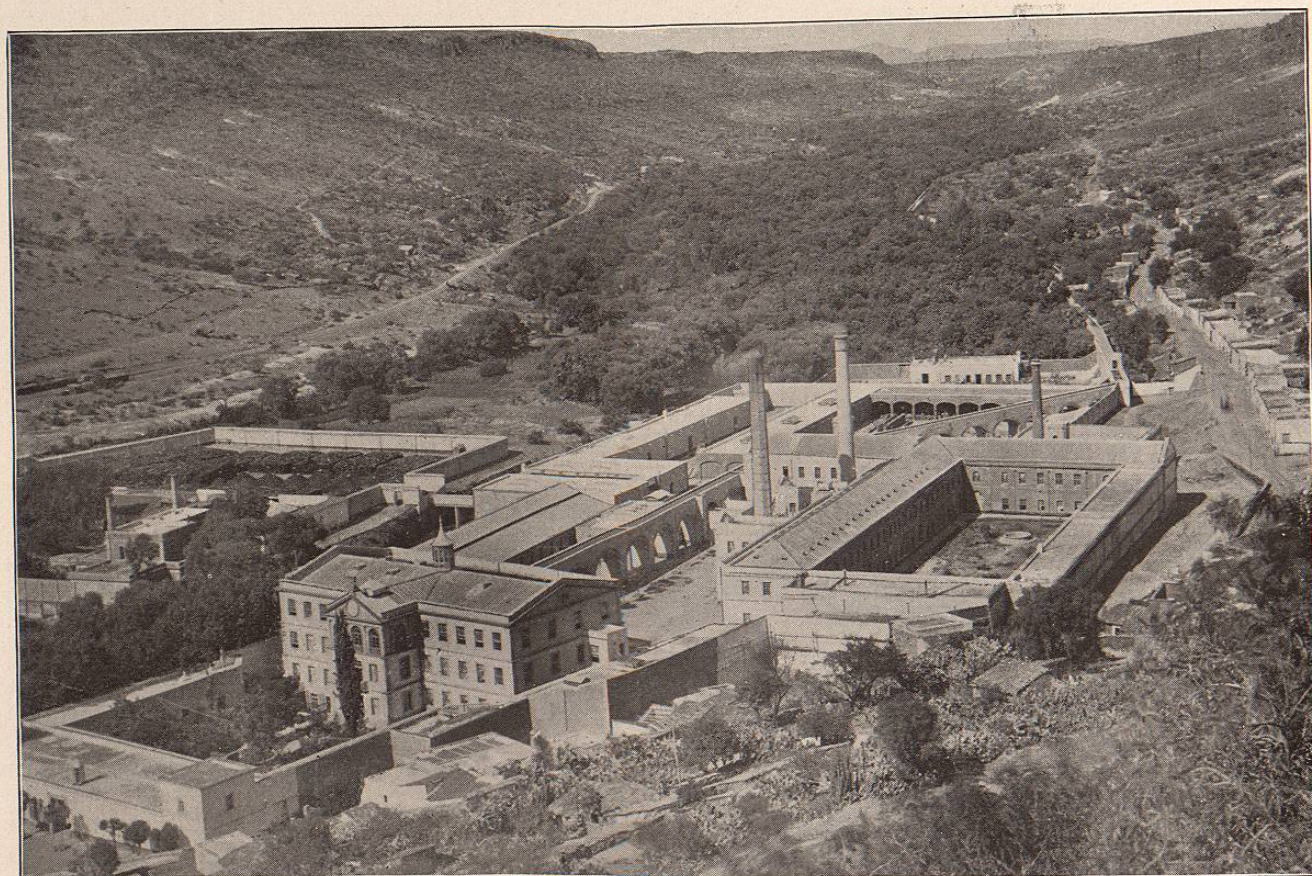


AQUEDUCT AT QUERÉTARO.

finer. There is nothing in Europe more beautiful than this interior decoration. They are possessions of which Querétaro should be proud and which she should guard with jealous care as incomparable monuments of Mexican art. Words are inadequate to describe the splendor of the wonderfully rich wood-carving, heavily gilded, the elaborate and graceful metal-work, including balconies and grilles of wrought iron, and the painting and sculpture, all from the hand or design of this great artist. As the work of a great Mexican they should be cherished by the entire nation, and it is to be hoped that no further act of vandalism will be tolerated.

In the government palace of Querétaro Governor Cosío has established a museum known as "The Historical Chamber," which is full of famous relics that have a bearing on great events of Mexican history. On the walls hang the portraits of former governors, including that of the present one. Among other curious objects are the mortuary casket in which the remains of

Doña Josefa Ortiz were brought from their former resting-place in the city of Mexico. Above it, in a glass case, is the identical old lock through the keyhole of which Josefa Ortiz (who was the wife of the corregidor) gave warning that the plot for Mexican freedom had been discovered. On the wall above the casket hangs her portrait, with that of Hidalgo and other heroes of the independence. On the wall are the portraits of the generals who fought against the French, and facing them are those of the imperial leaders. In this room is also preserved the rude coffin in which Maximilian's remains were brought back to the town to be embalmed before being sent to Austria, the blood-stains still showing on the bottom. On the side is the full print of the back of his hand where in jolting it struck against the side of the coffin. His remains now rest in the lovely castle of Miramar, by the sounding Adriatic. The bodies of



GENERAL VIEW OF THE HERCULES FACTORY, QUERÉTARO.

Miramon and Mejia were carried to Mexico and buried beneath stately monuments in the mausoleum of illustrious dead, in the pantheon close by the church of San Fernando, and near them, under a still handsomer monument, lie the remains of President Juarez, who refused to pardon them. The remains of Miramon have been lately claimed by his native city, Puebla, and they have been reinterred there with honors.

Querétaro was founded by the Otomite Indians in 1400, captured by a lieutenant of Cortez in 1531, and besieged in the Mexican revolution of 1810, when it stood for the cause of freedom and suffered for it. "Many a tempest's breath and battle's rage" has passed over Querétaro.

In the public square is a monument to Columbus. On one side of this are the names of the distinguished men the city has produced, on another the names of those who deserve remembrance for their benefactions to the city, on the third side are inscribed the memorable

events in the city's history, with their dates, and on the fourth the elevation of the city above sea-level, its latitude and longitude, its mean temperature, with its highest and lowest range, its rainfall, and similar information.

The church of Santa Rosa was built as a thank-offering for the suppression of bandits and contrabandistas about 1752, and toward the end of the century was thoroughly reconstructed by Tresguerras. Mr. F. W. Church, the artist, has made a very close study of Persian architecture, and he thinks it remarkable that an artist who had never been outside of Mexico should have reproduced some of the most delicate characteristics of that architecture.

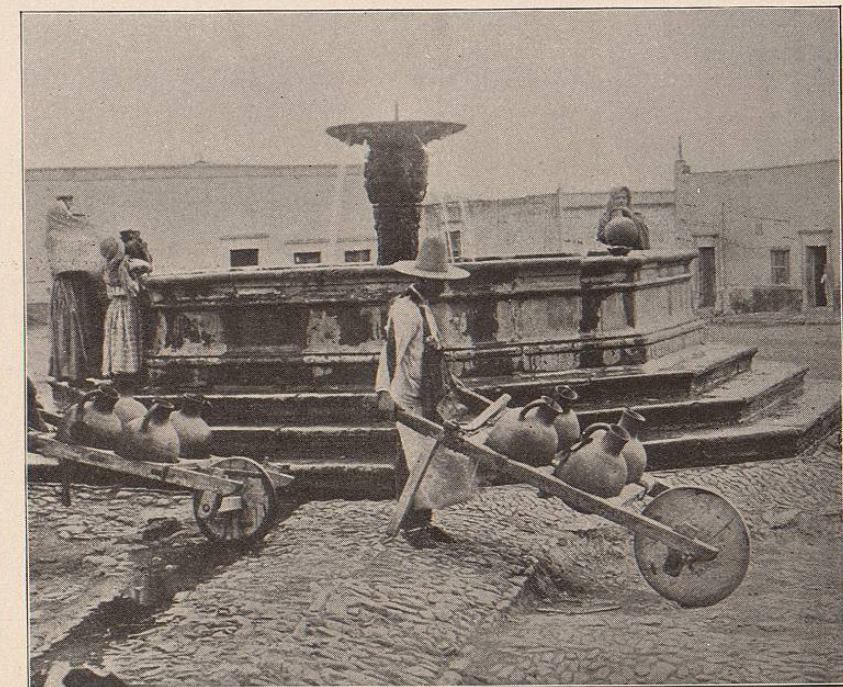
The country about Querétaro dimples and curves into a nest of sunny valleys, rounded into great beauty and widely different from the arid plains of some of the plateau regions.

San Juan del Rio is a pleasing little town of about eighteen thousand inhabitants. From here the train climbing the sides of the mountains gives the passenger a fine view of the beautiful valley below, and at Marquez station reaches the highest point on the line, eight

thousand one hundred and thirty-three feet above sea-level. From this point there is a gradual descent of fourteen hundred and seventy-six feet in twenty-six miles.

The condition of public instruction throughout the state is most gratifying. Besides the numerous primary and grammar schools there are a normal school, a civil college, and the academy of San Fernando, so that the beneficent influence of good schools is felt even in the smallest villages.

Governor Cosío, of Querétaro, is in hearty sympathy with the importance of preserving such noble works as the churches of Santa Rosa and Santa Clara, the monuments of a great Mexican architect. Governor Cosío is a fine type of the Mexican gentleman and statesman. He is a man of sterling character, universally esteemed, patriotic, public-spirited, and progressive. He speaks excellent English, and would be an honor to any country. A distinguished gentleman of honorable ancestry, his tact and integrity of purpose make him a credit to the high post which he has so long occupied and in which he has become firmly entrenched in the hearts of a loving people.



WATER-CARRIERS AT THE PUBLIC FOUNTAIN, QUERÉTARO.

