

Loreto. The modern spires of the chapel, designed by an untutored native, contrast strangely with the square and Moorish style of the older buildings beside it.

San Juan de las Vegas is a typical Mexican town, primitive in style, where no foreigner has his home, where there are groves of oranges and lemons and bananas, where fruits may be had for the picking, and where the native "lazies" the time away in indolent do-nothingness behind the rows of cactus that hedge the streets.

Celaya was founded by the Spaniards in 1570. But, for that matter, the Spaniards penetrated a thousand miles farther north than this and founded Santa Fé, in New Mexico, and then over five hundred miles farther than that and founded Monterey, in California, before the English had established their first feeble colony at Jamestown, in Virginia.

Celaya is a city of great beauty in the midst of a fertile country. Here the tourist meets the vender of opals, strawberries (at all seasons), and dulces, a native confection, or rather the vender meets the traveller on all trains, night or day. At Celaya are many fine old churches, especially Our Lady of Carmen, which contains some frescos of note and several paintings well worth seeing. It is built on a level plain in the valley of Laja.

Salvatierra is noticeable in the distance from the glittering of its many church domes, which, being covered by glazed tiling, present a pleasing contrast to the dark green of the many shade-trees with which the streets are lined. Salvatierra has a population of ten thousand, and is something of a trading-centre. There is a large woollen-mill, which gives it some manufacturing importance.

Acambaro is the most satisfying town in Mexico. It is delightfully primitive, and the fact that it is an important railway junction-point has not deprived it of its antique quaintness. The town lies westward of the station, and, although scarcely half a mile away, is so completely hidden by the trees that only the church-towers can be seen peering above them and showing their white outlines against the blue background of the high hills beyond the town. The lover of the quaint and antique will find much to charm in this old town. Acambaro is the junction of the western division of the Mexican National Railroad, leading to Morelia and Patzcuaro and the beautiful lake region of Mexico.

The very pretty town of Maravatio has the usual complement of queer-looking old churches and attractive plazas. Its red-tiled houses give it a picturesque appearance. At Maravatio connection is made with the Michoacán and Pacific Railroad, under construction, to the west coast of Mexico.

Skirting the valley of Solis is a beetling cliff, called by the natives "El Salto de Juan Medina," the tradition being that a famous bandit, one Juan Medina, being hotly pursued by the authorities, leaped his horse from the precipice and was dashed in pieces on the rocks below.

Near Rio Hondo is a great meteoric stone as big as a car, called by the natives the "moon-stone," as they believe it fell from that planet. There are some strange hieroglyphics on the stone, and, from its engraving, it is believed to have a more ancient origin than the famous Calendar stone.

León is situated in a valley noted for the fertility of its soil, and has a population of about one hundred thousand people. It is a great manufacturing city, and one of its principal productions is the beautiful soft leather clothing, delicately embroidered in gold and silver bullion, worn by the wealthier classes on their estates, although largely discarded in the cities.

Away back in 1680 a Spanish garrison was established around the infant city of León. León in the early history of New Spain became celebrated for its shoes, rebozos, saddles, spurs, small ironware, leather, etc., a reputation which it still retains. It is pre-eminently a city

of small factories. In thousands of houses hand-loom are running, producing blankets and rebozos, and small shoe-factories are scattered all over the city, where the head of the family can be seen in the front room working, assisted at times by the wife and younger members of the family. They are a prominent and ever-present feature of this quaint city. The general cleanliness of the streets is noticeable. There is no poor quarter. The houses of the well-to-do and of the working classes are to be found together on every block. There are miles of streets of one-story houses, with whitewashed fronts and little gardens or patios in the rear, where the workmen live. It is common for two or three trades to be represented in one family. Zapateros (shoemakers), rebozeros (weavers), and factory girls all belong to the same family.

One of the interesting sights of the city is on Sunday mornings to see the artisans carrying their wares about the streets for sale or delivery to their employers. Men loaded with shoes, saddles, leather, clothing, rebozos, spurs, small ironware, etc., crowd the sidewalks, anxious to realize on their week's work before noon.

León is known as the "Queen of the Bajío," and is the largest city in that section of the republic. It has a population of about seventy thousand. The city is regularly laid out, with a central plaza and twelve minor plazas, and among its more notable buildings are the Casa Municipal (city hall), Alhondiga (commercial exchange), barracks, and jail. The main plaza has a fountain in its centre and is planted with trees. Special mention must be made of the calzada and the park. The former is a magnificent promenade about a quarter of a mile in length by two hundred feet in width, the centre tiled and paved for pedestrians, with seats extending its entire length, and carriage-drives on both sides, also shaded with magnificent rows of trees. This is a favorite resort of the public in the afternoon, and on Sunday many equipages may be seen there that would do credit to the metropolis.

León has an opportunity to possess at a small cost a boulevard of exceeding beauty by connecting the Rio Calle and the park; the cultivation of the trees should then be pushed, and the city would have a paseo of two miles more reaching from park to calzada; add electric light to this, and a fairy-land would be the result.

On one side of the plaza is the Casa Municipal; on the other three sides are portales lined with shops. Just outside of the city, on the road leading to Silao, is a picturesque causeway shaded by trees, that is the paseo of the town. This pretty place is reached by a tramway from the plaza.

The curacy of León was founded before the year 1586, for in that year the first curate, Alonzo Espinosa, was slain by the Chichimec Indians. During the ensuing two hundred years



TRIUMPHAL ARCH IN THE PASEO AT LEÓN.

the curacy was administered by the Franciscans, by whom the existing parish church, dedicated to San Sebastian, was erected early in the last century. It was remodelled in 1834. Adjoining this is the small church of the Tercer Orden, also a Franciscan foundation. The church of Nuestra Señora de los Angeles, also a Jesuit foundation, and the oldest church in the city, contains some noteworthy carvings by the artist Sixto Muñoz, a native of León. La Soledad is believed to be contemporaneous with the foundation of the town.

The climate of Silao is equable and delightful. Many who find the capital too high for comfort come to Silao, which is two thousand five hundred feet lower, and therefore affords relief and a radical change from the hurly-burly of the city, at an elevation of more than seven thousand feet.

Irapuato is a thriving business town of some fourteen thousand inhabitants, and is widely known as the "strawberry station," from the fact that fresh ripe strawberries can be purchased here at the train-side every day in the year for twenty-five cents, Mexican money, per basket.

The present governor of Guanajuato is Señor Joaquín Obregón González.



CHAPTER XXXI

JALISCO

JALISCO is one of the richest, most important, and most populous of the Mexican states. It has an area of one hundred and one thousand four hundred and thirty square kilometres (forty-eight thousand nine hundred and sixty-seven square miles), with a population of one million three hundred thousand. Its principal river is the Grande, or Santiago, which forms near the village of Juanacatlan a beautiful cascade, which tourists have aptly named the "Niagara of Mexico," and which is reached by an electric road from El Castillo station. It may be mentioned that these falls furnish the electric lighting for the city of Guadalajara, fifteen miles away. The river is here five hundred and sixty feet wide, and it pours the waters from Lake Chapala and an area of forty thousand square miles over the shelf of rock sixty-five feet high at a single leap. There are smaller rapids above and below.

Besides this, the same river has many other picturesque falls on its way to the Pacific Ocean. Among the lakes which stud with beauty this prosperous state is Lake Chapala, larger than Lake Geneva, and the largest and most beautiful in the republic. This lake, by reason of its area of eight hundred and ten square miles, is sometimes known by the name of the Chapalan Sea. Lake Chapala is a summer resort of the highest grade, and is frequented by the most prominent residents of Guadalajara and other large towns. There has recently been discovered a large deposit of petroleum discharging from the bottom of the lake.

In this state there are fifteen silver-mines, besides three of gold, five of copper, three of lead, two of mercury, and eight of iron. The richest mining district is that of Comanja.

The soil of Jalisco, by reason of its varied climate, produces all kinds of fruits. Its mountains are covered with trees, some of which are valuable and in great demand. In the group



SEÑOR GENERAL DON LUIS C. CURIEL,
GOVERNOR OF JALISCO.