

dared to make a trial of prospecting in that region for several decades. The Tauris live in houses of poles roofed with hewn planks. Their farms are fenced, and their stock is well cared for.

There are about three hundred wild and rebellious Yaqui Indians hidden in the fastnesses of the Bacatete Mountains, and some thirty thousand peaceful Yaquis working all over Sonora, among the best workers, the most successful farmers, and the quietest citizens in the whole state.

There are few things in the history of the native races of North America of more absorbing interest than the career of the Yaqui Indians. The Spanish conquistadores found them living in this country three hundred and fifty years ago. They were a strong and stalwart race. Put a Yaqui by the side of an Iroquois, and you can hardly tell them apart. Put a Yaqui and an Iroquois by the side of any other Indian in North America, and their physical superiority is seen at once. Compare them physically with all the other races of the earth, and you will find that they have few if any superiors.

The Yaquis were not, however, like their prototypes the Iroquois, dependent upon the chase for their food. From the beginning they were not woodsmen, but farmers. Cabeza de Vaca, after his long, romantic, and perilous journey across the continent, found great fields of Indian corn waving on the Yaqui River as far back as 1536. When the early Spanish missions were established in the Californias they obtained their supplies from the agricultural Indians in the Yaqui valley, and many a Spanish army was saved from starvation in times past by the Yaqui cornfields.

At Quergache are the "Gambucinos," or miners who live by creeping into the old mines and working out enough of the rich silver ores to support them for a few days. They are an ignorant, shiftless, and thievish set, who will not cultivate the ground any more than they can possibly help. Here, too, is a cathedral erected three hundred years ago, when the Spaniards worked the mines around this place. The church, built in honor of Señora Pillaro, has suffered from fire and has been only partly restored. It is a lofty, roomy affair, of cut stone carved by artists from old Spain, and patched with adobes by lazy mestizos.

In such a church and in such a city one feels as if the spirit had gone back into the ages of the past. This is not a part of the busy, bustling nineteenth century; it is a day-dream in the world of three hundred years ago.

The state of Sonora is fortunate in having for its governor Don Ramon Corral, to whose integrity of purpose and wise supervision it owes its recent prosperity.



## CHAPTER XXXVI

## BAJA CALIFORNIA

THE peninsula of Lower California forms one of the territories composing the republic of Mexico. This peninsula was discovered by Cortez in 1536. The Jesuits began to form establishments there about 1690, and instructed the native Indians in the arts of agriculture and civilization. They were taught the arts of irrigation, and exported agricultural productions to the mainland of Mexico. The Jesuit fathers remained there until 1767, when they were expelled, and the missions which they had established were placed under the charge of the Dominican fathers at Mexico City, under whom they greatly declined, so that in 1833 they were all secularized. The region settled by these Jesuit and Dominican fathers in the eighteenth century is extremely beautiful, and the ruins of the old mission are to-day exceedingly picturesque.

While everybody knows of the beauties of Southern California, there is dense ignorance among most readers of the fact that the peninsula of Lower California is equally beautiful. It is, in fact, a continuation of the same general features.

The imaginary line that separates Southern California from Baja California marks no difference in soil or climate. The valleys and *mesas* on the Mexican side are as good as those upon the American. All they need are irrigation works and roads. When these are supplied, and it becomes known that fruits, cereals, and wines can be profitably produced there, Mexico will be an open market, and the peninsula will gradually fill up with an industrious population.

Taking the steamer Orizaba at Guaymas, we went to La Paz and San José del Cabo. At La Paz we visited the pearl-fisheries, and were duly initiated into the mysteries of the hideous-looking diving apparatus. The Mexican government leases these fisheries to the companies that operate them, and some fine pearls



CORONEL RAFAEL GARCIA MARTINEZ,  
JEFE POLÍTICO, LA PAZ.

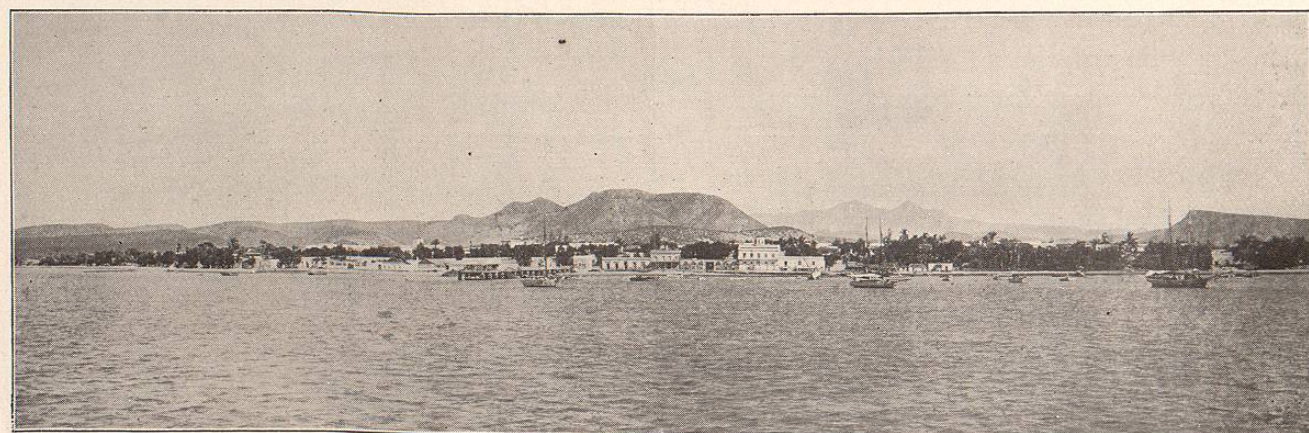


have been brought up from the depths of the ocean off the rocky coast of Lower California. We were told of a black pearl worth ten thousand dollars in gold that was sold to Madame Carnot, the wife of the former president of France; and recently another exquisite pearl was sold in the American market for thirty-five thousand dollars. The pearl industry, conducted as it is under perilous surroundings, has its incidental curious phases. The divers are all the time attempting to steal these gems, and a common practice it is. While working, if they find a pearl, their faces never change expression; but if detected, the diver, who also opens the shells, will simply swallow the pearl. In such cases it is restored to its rightful owner by a prompt dose of tartar emetic.

These deposits have yielded the finest pearls discovered in modern times. They are still yielding, and to-day more pearls are found there than anywhere else along the coasts of the two Americas.

More than a thousand divers are employed during the season, which lasts from the month of May to November of each year. They are furnished with boats, money, and diving paraphernalia by local merchants, with whom they contract for all the pearls they can find. The total annual product is estimated at five hundred thousand dollars.

Baja California contains some fifty-seven thousand five hundred square miles. The population is composed largely of Indians and mixed races, and is principally in the southern part.



PORT OF LA PAZ, SHOWING THE GREAT PEARL-FISHERIES OF BAJA CALIFORNIA.

It is divided into eight districts, each having an *alcalde* as judicial head. The coasts are low and sandy, and broken up by many islands and bays along the entire length. La Magdalena, the bay, has been regularly visited for fifty years past by American whalers, sealers, and fur-hunters. The bay of La Paz is the most important in the gulf, penetrating inland some twenty-five miles. The cove opposite the town of La Paz may be reached by vessels not drawing over twenty feet of water. Loreto, Los Angeles, and San Felipe Jesus are the other ports of any importance.

The entire peninsula is traversed by a volcanic range of mountains. This is divided into three sections, the Sierra de San Lázaro, with an average height of six thousand feet, forming the principal backbone of the lower peninsula. The Sierra de la Gigantea has an average elevation of three thousand or four thousand feet, with occasional peaks six to eight thousand feet high, and lies north of the San Lázaro range; and still farther north is the Coast range, having an average breadth of one hundred and thirty-five miles. These are barren and desolate near the summits, with cactuses of enormous size at their base, and some very fertile valleys. Toward the interior there are many springs which send out streams that afterward lose themselves in

the sand. Along the coast lagoons there is much good soil, and in the plains and most of the dry river-beds water is found a few feet below the surface, offering easy and inexpensive means of irrigation. Wherever irrigation in any form has been practised the crops are exceedingly abundant.

The summer temperature along the Pacific coast varies from fifty-eight to seventy-one degrees, but that on the gulf coast is higher. The scenery is in many places picturesque. The sky is remarkable for its transparency and deep azure color, save at sunset, when it is often variegated by the most beautiful shades of purple, violet, and green. In winter there are heavy rains and terrific tornadoes. In summer and autumn, especially on the gulf coast, rain often falls from a cloudless sky.

The vegetable productions of Baja California are corn, wheat, beans, peas, manioc, grapes, oranges, lemons, citrons, prunes, dates, plantains, pineapples, olives, and figs. The sugar-cane has also been cultivated, and some cotton was raised by the

Jesuits. Several varieties of the agave family are abundant, and many kinds of acacia-trees, such as mesquites, algarrobas, and locusts, are common. Two varieties of native palms bearing edible fruit are frequently found. The pine, cedar, oak, wild plum, cottonwood, sycamore, willow, and elder are also met with. The principal animals are wild sheep, goats, horses, horned cattle, mules, and swine. The adjacent seas abound with excellent fish. The pearl-oyster is found at intervals along the coast. It is most abundant in the bay of La Paz, near Loreto,



GOVERNMENT HOUSE, LA PAZ.

and in the bays of Muleje and Los Angeles. Fossil remains are found in various parts. Argentiferous galenas are very common above Muleje Bay, and pure sulphur occurs in the same region. Copper ores are found in several places between the northern boundary and the old mission of Rosario, on the Pacific coast, and also on the northern gulf coast; the deposits on Ceralbo, San José, and Espíritu Santo Island are very rich. Quicksilver is also said to have been found near Santa Catalina Mission, at the head of the gulf. The salt-beds of the Pacific coast, from San Quintin to Magdalena Bay, are numerous, and the salt is readily obtained. The salt-mines on Carmen Island are very rich, and large quantities of salt have been exported to San Francisco. The Mexican government has derived considerable revenue from these mines.

There is a great deal of activity in the mining districts adjacent to Ensenada. The history of the Pueblo mine is well known to miners. The fabulous deposits of gold found in pockets near the surface and the number of coyote-holes that can be seen give evidence of the methods employed in days gone by. This and the Castillo were the first gold-mines worked in that section. The latter was started forty years ago, and gave birth to the town of Real del Castillo.