

## CHAPTER XXXIX

## MORELOS

**M**UCH larger in the old days was the state of Morelos, which yielded up a part of its borders to Guerrero; but, in turn, the state was once a part of the state of Mexico. It is now a very small state, with an area of only eighteen hundred and eighty-seven square miles, but it has a large and rapidly increasing population and is a perfect garden of beauty. It is very mountainous, and is a part of the central table-land, with an elevation of four thousand five hundred

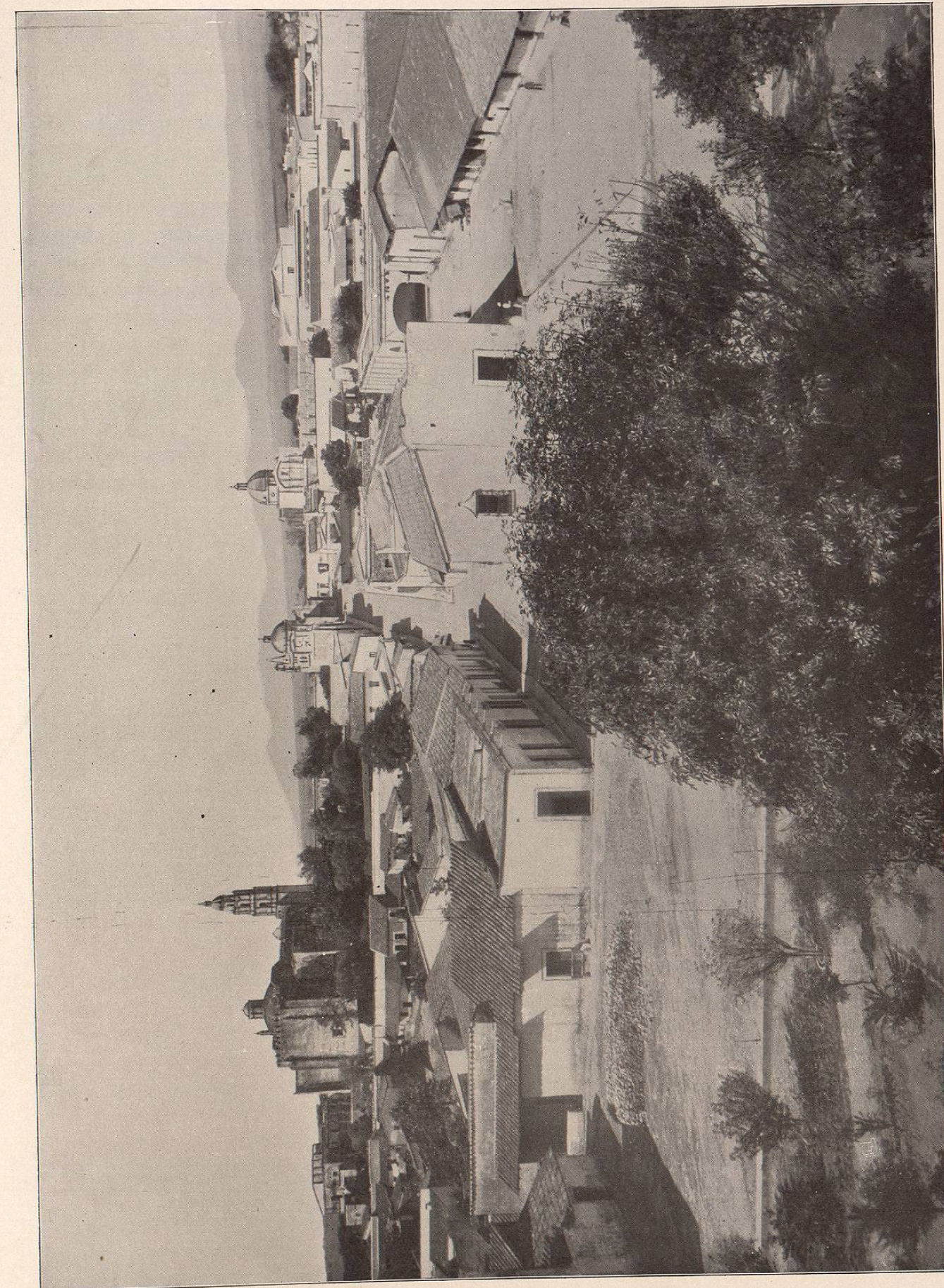


SEÑOR CORONEL MANUEL ALÁRCON,  
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MORELOS.

feet above the sea. Popocatepetl, that most beautiful of volcanoes, is on the northeastern boundary, and there are other high peaks; but between them are most beautiful valleys of remarkable fertility, and these are being cultivated by enterprising Americans as well as Mexicans, and offer the best possible field for Northern men.

Numerous streams water the plains, the most important of which are the Cuernavaca and the Cuautla, tributaries of the Amacusaque. This is the greatest sugar-cane-producing state in proportion to its area, and immense gardens are laid out everywhere for the cultivation of exquisite fruits. Enormous quantities of sugar and molasses are made.

Of the thousands of tourists who yearly visit the city of Mexico, few now fail to make a trip up to the summit of the Mexico and Cuernavaca road as it crosses the lofty sierra. From the train, as it winds up the mountains, one gets a wonderful panorama of the valley of Mexico, seven thousand square miles in extent, guarded by its snow-capped sentinel volcanoes, a panorama of unsurpassed beauty and grandeur. Once upon the plains of Ajusco, over nine thousand feet above sea-level, you are in a region of pine-trees and potato-fields. But go on a few miles, and, looking from the cars, your gaze is fixed on another vast valley, that of the state of Morelos, the



A VIEW OF CUERNAVACA.

richest sugar-growing region in Mexico. You look down from the pine-clad uplands, says one writer, "into a region of palms and tropical vegetation, and the ancient city of Cuernavaca seems to be riding out on an ocean of green sugar-cane. And yet the half has never been told."



AZTEC MONOLITH, CUERNAVACA

Poets have sung of nature's enchanting loveliness and beauty bordering the right of way of this great scenic line; orators have painted word-pictures of the beauties of its travel which charm the senses with unspeakable variety; writers have crowded glowing words into most befitting rhetorical effects; and yet, with all this combination of effort and intelligent description, to know, to understand, to appreciate, and fully to realize and enjoy the picturesque views, one must

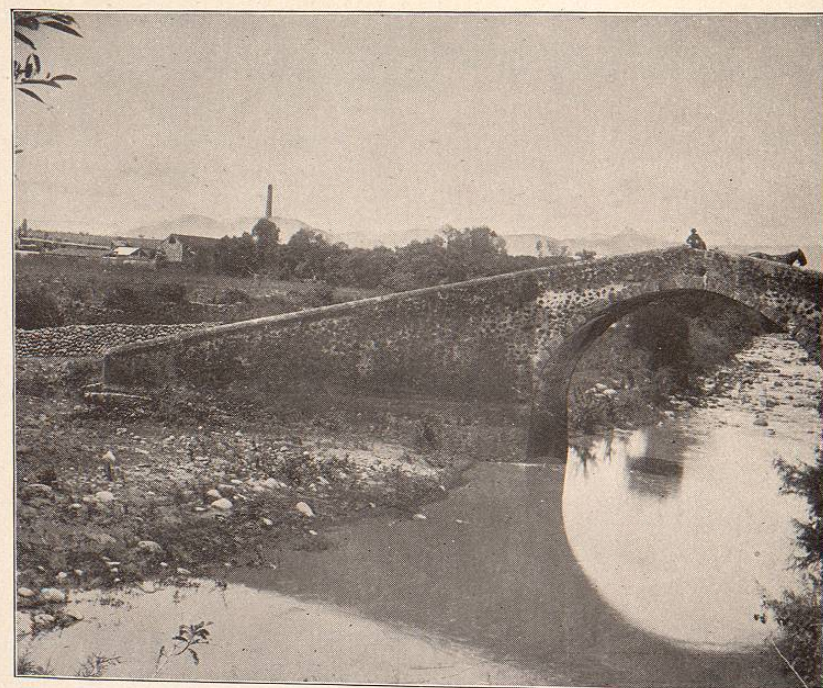
see them. Born with an indomitable will and intelligence, Colonel J. H. Hampson has written the realization of another of his great railway projects and public benefactions in letters of railway-steel along mountain-sides and rugged ways, and the Mexico, Cuernavaca and Pacific Railway is, and will ever be, a lasting monument to his energy and genius.

There are many mines in operation in Morelos, silver, gold, cinnabar, lead, chalk, and kaolin all being found in abundance on her mountains.

Morelos is divided into five districts, and the chief towns are Cuernavaca, the capital, Cuautla de Morelos, Yautepec, Jonacatepec, and Tete-Cola.

Cuernavaca has an ideal climate, dry and uniform, and the air is delicious. Among its chief attractions are the ancient palace of Cortez and the famous garden of La Borda, on which over a million dollars were lavished. Maximilian, when emperor, had his winter home in Cuernavaca, as had Cortez long before. The former lived for a time on the La Borda estate, and Carlotta and the emperor breakfasted under its trees and spent long days in the great walled garden. The empress used to go about the street like a young girl, attended by a

single maid of honor, her head covered with a silk rebozo. Maximilian also took a small country house outside the town, which still stands, and dwelt there some months.



A BRIDGE BUILT BY CORTEZ IN MORELOS.

Cuernavaca is situated at the foot of the southern slope of Ajusco, where the cold storms which sweep the gulf coast in winter can hardly gain access; hence it enjoys the perfection of a winter climate. Fields of tender vegetables planted in November for fruiting in winter attest the absence of frost. Its summer climate is also agreeable, for its elevation of five thousand feet above sea-level precludes oppressive heat. Moreover, the rain is said to fall here mostly by night. From this point one has a nearer view than from the city of Mexico of the great snowy summits rising above forested slopes, and here the interest of the view is greatly enhanced by the striking contrast afforded by an intermediate range of bare red rock, disordered masses, serrated, castellated, and pinnacled beyond description. Above and about the town the mountain-side is furrowed by many ravines so deep as to receive the name of



PALACE OF CORTEZ, CUERNAVACA.

barrancas. Below the town these open out into a wide valley which is green throughout the year with plantations of cane. Streams of pure water course down through every street, and fountains are frequent. To this quaint and quiet town, verdant and shady under bright, warm skies, was attracted the ill-fated Maximilian, and hither he was wont to ride by night to hide from assassins in the thick wood of his high-walled garden. The several barrancas of this neighborhood, with their brooks and waterfalls, their thickets of shrubs, their cliffs and bluffs, shaded or exposed, dry or wet, and the swampy meadows at their bottoms, offer a prospect for the tourist seldom excelled. The mountain woods more distant are hardly less inviting. The character of its plants indicates that this region belongs to the same floral zone as Oaxaca and Guadalajara. As a health-resort, a place to restore weak lungs and to rest weary nerves, Cuernavaca has no superior.

Cuernavaca (cow's horn), the ancient Quauhnahuac, was one of the thirty cities which Charles the Fifth gave to Cortez, and afterward formed part of the estate of the Duke of Monteleon, representative of the family of Cortez, as Marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca. It was celebrated by the ancient writers for its beauty, its delightful climate, and the strength of



CASCADE OF SAN ANTONIO.

its situation; defended on one side by steep mountains, and on the other by a precipitous ravine through which ran a stream which the Spaniards crossed by means of two great trees that had thrown their branches across the barranca and formed a natural bridge. It was the capital of the Tlahuica nation, and after the conquest Cortez built a splendid palace, a church, and a convent of Franciscans, believing that he was laying the foundation of a great city. And, in fact, its delicious climate, the abundance of the water, the minerals said to exist in the neighborhood, its fine trees, its luscious fruits, and its vicinity to the capital combined to strengthen this belief. The conqueror's palace is now a half-ruined barrack, though a most picturesque object, standing on a hill, behind which starts up the great white volcano. There are some good houses and the remains of the church which Cortez built, celebrated for its fine arch.

It would be difficult to imagine anything more picturesque than the coffee plantations and orange walks. In this region the orange-trees are covered with their golden fruit and fragrant blossoms; the lemon-

trees bend over, forming a natural arch which the sun cannot pierce; the air is soft and balmy and actually heavy with the fragrance of the orange-blossom and the starry jasmine. All round the orchard are streams of the most delicious clear water, and now and then a little cardinal, like a bright red ruby, perches on the trees. One may pick orange-blossoms,

jasmine, lilies, double red roses, and lemon-leaves at the very moment when Winter is wrapping the world in his white winding-sheet in the United States.

The cave of Cacahuamilpa, whose wonders equal the descriptions of the palaces of the genii, was until the present century known to the Indians alone, or if the Spaniards formerly knew anything about it, its existence had been forgotten among them. But although in former days it may have been used as a place of worship, a superstitious fear prevented the more modern Indians from exploring its recesses, for they firmly believed the evil spirit had his dwelling there, and in the form of a goat, with long beard and horns, guarded the entrance of the cavern. The few who ventured and beheld this apparition brought back strange tales to their credulous companions, and even the neighborhood of the enchanted cave was avoided, especially at night-



FIELD OF RICE IN MORELOS.

fall. The chain of mountains into whose bosom it leads is bleak and bare, but the ravine below is refreshed by a rapid stream that forms small waterfalls as it tumbles over the rocks, and is bordered by green and flowering trees. Among these is one with a smooth, satin-like bark of a pale golden color, whose roots have something uncanny and witch-like in their appearance, intertwining with each other, grappling as it were with the hard rock, and stretching out to the most extraordinary distance. The entrance to the cave is a superb portal, upward of seventy feet high and one hundred and fifty feet wide, according to the computation of a learned traveller; the rocks which support the great arch are so symmetrically disposed as to resemble a work of art. Down a declivity, it may be one hundred and fifty feet, surrounded by blocks of stone and rock, is a gloomy subterranean palace, surrounded by the most extraordinary, gigantic, and mysterious forms, which it is scarcely possible to believe are the fantastic produc-