

The cacao- or chocolate-tree can be planted also, nine hundred to the hectare. Each tree produces half a pound of seed a year, and begins to yield after five years' cultivation. The advantage that cacao has over coffee is that its crops can be gathered four times a year. In the city of Mexico and other interior towns cacao is worth from fifty cents to one dollar a pound.

Tobacco can be harvested six months after planting. The best tobacco-lands are situated in Simojovel, Mezcalapa, and Matatepec, in Tonalá.

In the lands best adapted for the cultivation of sugar-cane the cost of production does not exceed twenty-five cents per arroba of twenty-five pounds, and this could be much reduced by using modern appliances, as yet unknown in Chiapas. The fine sugar-lands of Chilón, Palenque, Pichucalco, and Mezcalapa require no irrigation, and the plantations last twenty years without replanting.

The cultivation of the rubber-tree is known to be very lucrative. It is found wild in Mezcalapa, Tuxtla, and Soconusco; only in the latter district has it been cultivated.

Vanilla is found wild in Tuxtla and Mezcalapa, where good-sized plantations could be established in connection with rubber-growing. In a few years such experiments would yield profitable results.

In all the departments where the climate is warm the tropical fruits, such as pineapples, bananas of various kinds and of excellent quality, lemons, oranges, mangos, and zapotes, are raised. The traffic in semi-tropical fruits obtainable in Las Casas is in itself the way to a fortune, for these fruits sell well in the state, in Tabasco, and along the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

The production of cereals is abundant, and in some sections corn yields four hundred for one. The ears of corn raised in Juncana (Comitán) very often exceed twenty Mexican inches in length. Wheat, which can be raised on a large scale in Las Casas, is sold for a good price throughout the state.

Cattle-raising is one of the best enterprises in Chiapas, on account of the splendid pasture-lands.

Mining is a new industry in the state. The gold-mine of Santa Fé in Pichucalco is worked with good financial success; other mines have been discovered and gradually developed. Those in Motozintla (Comitán) and several others in Tuxtla and Chiapa demonstrate the fact that the state is wealthy in minerals.

Other exportable articles are the skins of crocodiles caught in the rivers and lakes of Palenque and Tonalá. In the same district herons are numerous, the feathers of which have been sold as high as forty-eight dollars gold per ounce. Notwithstanding the extensive exportation of cedar and mahogany, there are yet many unexplored forests of this fine timber.

Good land can be had in any of the districts, the prices varying according to the kind of land, accessibility, and location. Waste lands belonging to the federation are obtained by denouncement before the resident agent of the Department of Encouragement (Fomento).

Of all the states in the Mexican federation, Chiapas has the least burdensome system of taxation. Improved farms pay six dollars taxes for every thousand dollars of assessed valuation. The law exempts from taxation all kinds of buildings, machinery, unproductive plantations, and breeding animals imported from foreign countries to improve the stock. City property pays no taxes to the state, but the municipalities or cities collect six-tenths per cent. on very low assessments. Twenty thousand dollars tax is imposed on all the merchants doing business in the state, the pro rata being adjusted by the assessment boards. Freighters in making use of the highways pay a road tax. On the amounts collected for state and city taxes the federal government imposes an extra tax of thirty per cent.

The district of Palenque is located in the descent which the Sierra Madre mountains make on their extension toward the northern part of the state, and covers a great portion of the plains that stretch out to Tabasco and Campeche. The country consists of high and low lands: the former are the extension of the rich coffee-belt of Simojovel, but more fertile in this section; the lowlands do not inundate, are higher, of better quality, and their climate less hot, than those of Tabasco. El Salto, head-quarters for the department officials, is situated at the head of navigation of the Tulija river. Catazaja, on Lake Catazaja, is probably the most important city. Whilst crocodiles have been almost annihilated in Tabasco by killing them to export the hides, they abound in the lakes and rivers of Palenque. In like manner herons are plentiful, and their fine feathers have reached a very high price.

Near the town of Palenque are the famous ruins of that name. They were discovered by the Spaniards in 1750, but no one knows what they were originally intended for or by whom they were built. They consist

of artificial terraces, or terraced truncated pyramids, of cut stone. They are surrounded by edifices of elaborate plan, covered with hieroglyphics and bearing evidences of having once been painted in bright colors. The principal structure, called the palace, is built upon a truncated pyramid three hundred and ten feet long. The palace itself is two hundred and twenty-eight feet long and twenty-five feet high. It is built of cut stones cemented with lime and sand, and was once painted. The hieroglyphics which ornamented the piers and bas-reliefs show a much better knowledge of human



TYPES OF INDIAN WOMEN IN CHIAPAS.

anatomy than is shown in other American aboriginal work of like nature. In one of the courts are a number of stucco tablets and one of stone which shows a cross-legged seated figure like that of Buddha in some of the Hindoo pictures. It is on a seat carved with figures of jaguars, and before it is another richly dressed figure presenting some highly ornamented object. There are hieroglyphics on the tablet that doubtless tell the whole story, could we but read them. Near by is another building seventy-five feet long, and with solid walls except on the north, where there are five door-ways and six piers. Four of the latter are ornamented with well-executed female figures, and the whole is ornamented with stucco-work and plenty of hieroglyphics, outside the house and in. In another structure is a group of human figures apparently in the act of making a solemn sacrifice. Many of the buildings seem to have been lived in, and others were probably devoted to religious purposes. Two stones in the shape of a tongue, about a yard long and two-thirds of a yard wide, inscribed with hieroglyphics, are objects of awe and adoration to the Indians. Throughout the state are scattered evidences of ancient occupancy, and it is remarkable for the numerous ruins of ancient cities and

monuments. The tombs at Palenque are objects of deep interest to archæologists. One who has not visited the forests of Palenque cannot imagine the inextricable confusion of great roots, overturned tree-trunks, climbing vines, and decaying vegetation that buries everything under a seething, gloomy, deceptive covering. One step forward may land one on a fallen column, and the next bury one waist-deep in the rotten trunk of a fallen forest giant among scorpions and biting ants.

The district of Chilón shares the extension of the salubrious mountain-lands of Palenque in the north and the fertile plains of Comitán in the south. The land is well timbered, has an abundance of water and pasture-fields, and offers splendid inducements for agricultural enterprises. Capitalists from Comitán and San Cristóbal have established fine estates that bring them a good income.



ON THE ROAD TO BONITO.

Tuxtla-Gutierrez, the capital and residence of the state officials, is situated in the extreme east of the district and a few miles from the Chiapa River. It is the best trading town, being in communication with all sections of the state, the supply-store of the other towns, and the warehouse for a good many of them. Suchiapa, Ocosocuaúta, Zintalapa, and San Fernando are towns whose inhabitants exceed one thousand. A wagon-road connects Tuxtla with the port of Tonalá, and a branch near the coast touches the Tehuantepec Railway. Good wagon-roads connect the capital with the towns of Suchiapa and Chiapa, and the plains that follow the left side of the Chiapa River render the country accessible clear up to Guatemala. There are mule-roads to San Cristóbal, Comitán, and Copainala, and another is being constructed to Pichucalco. Twenty leagues below Tuxtla-Gutierrez the Mezcalapa River is navigable to Tabasco and the gulf.

Tonalá, the county-seat and the residence of the Jefe Político and Judge of First Instance, lies six leagues from Arista; it has five thousand inhabitants. It is quite a commercial point. Arista is the only port of the district. The federal government has established here a maritime custom-house and an office of Captain of Ports. The principal wagon-road of the state is the one that starts from Arista through Tonalá and then ascends the Sierra Madre into the department of Tuxtla. A branch of this road connects the department with the Tehuantepec Railroad. The Mexican Pacific Railroad is built from Arista to La Aurora, and will continue to the capital, Tuxtla-Gutierrez.

Soconusco is the best known of all the districts of Chiapas, owing to the rapid development of its natural wealth. From a poor, unknown section it has grown up within a few years to be the most famous and prosperous coffee district. Here foreign capitalists have invested ungrudgingly and made fortunes. Soconusco is situated at the southeast corner of the

state, adjoining Guatemala, and occupies the widest section of the strip lying between the Sierra Madre and the Pacific Ocean. The country is mostly level along the coast, but rises gradually toward the Sierra, where splendid coffee-lands are found, rivalled by none in the republic, unless by the other rich coffee districts in Chiapas. Soconusco cacao has been known ever since the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards, and always has had the reputation of being the best in the world. Soconusco is the most southern point in North America.

Throughout Chiapas large amounts of foreign capital are coming into the country for investment. The successful results already accomplished are encouraging, and there are more new ventures being planned than ever before. Indeed, quite recently contracts have been made for bringing over several hundred Japanese colonists, nearly all of whom will locate in Chiapas and become factors in the coffee cultivation. The climatic conditions in the lower coast sections of the country, the soil, and the river transportation facilities in most of the coffee districts all offer peculiarly good inducements for the investment of capital in coffee-lands.

The governor of Chiapas is Señor Coronel Francisco Leon, who conducts the affairs of his state with a commendable spirit of economy.

