CHAPTER XLIV

CITIES AND INHABITANTS; PECULIARITIES OF THE INDIANS; SOME NOBLE FAMILIES; LITERATURE OF MEXICO; FOLK-LORE.

THERE are now twenty-eight states and two territories, and it is estimated that there are more than eleven million inhabitants, about three-eighths of whom belong to the pure Indian race, while the rest is made up of mixtures of Spanish and Indian, with a few hundreds of thousands of pure Spanish origin and still fewer of other foreign elements.

There are in the country three cities of more than one hundred thousand inhabitants: Mexico, in the federal district, with three hundred and fifty thousand; Guadalajara, in Jalisco, with one hundred and five thousand; and Puebla, in the state of the same name, which has slightly over the limit figure. Guanajuato has over fifty thousand people. Of cities having more than twenty thousand inhabitants there are sixteen,—from León, with fifty thousand, to Celaya, in the same state, with twenty-one thousand.

There are supposed to be seven castes in Mexico, which are kept distinct. First, the Gachupino, or Spaniards born in Europe; second, the Creoles,—that is, whites of European family born in America; third, the Mestizos; fourth, the Mulattoes, descendants of whites and negroes, of whom there are a few; fifth, the Zambos, descendants of negroes and Indians, the ugliest race in Mexico; sixth, the Indians; and seventh, the remains of the African negroes.

Of pure Indians, Humboldt in his day calculated that there existed two millions and a half in New Spain (without counting Mestizos), and they are probably very little altered from the inferior Indians as Cortez found them. The principal families perished at the time of the conquest. The priests, sole depositaries of knowledge, were put to death, the manuscripts and hieroglyphical paintings were burnt, and the remaining Indians fell into a state of ignorance and degradation from which they have never emerged. The rich Indian women preferred marrying their Spanish conquerors to allying themselves with the degraded remnant of their countrymen, —poor artisans, workmen, porters, etc.,—of whom Cortez speaks as filling the streets of the great cities and as being considered little better than beasts of burden; nearly naked in the tierra caliente, dressed pretty much as they are now in the temperate parts of the country, and everywhere with nearly the same manners and habits and customs as they now have, but especially in the more distant villages, where they have little intercourse with the other classes. Even in their religion, Christianity, as I observed before, seems to be formed of the ruins of their mythology; and all the festivities of the Church, their fireworks and images and gay dresses, harmonize completely with their childish love of show, and are, in fact, their greatest source of delight. To buy these they save up all their money, and when you give a penny to an Indian child it trots off to buy crackers as a white one would to buy candy. Attempts have been made by their curates to persuade them to omit the celebration of certain days, and to expend less in the ceremonies

of others, but the indignation and discontent which such proposals have caused have induced the Church to desist.

Under an appearance of stupid apathy they veil a great depth of cunning. They are grave and gentle and rather sad in their appearance when not under the influence of pulque; but when they return to their villages in the evening, and have taken a drop of comfort, their white teeth light up their bronze countenances like lamps, and the girls especially make the air ring with their laughter, which is very musical. Their smile is extremely gentle, and the expression of their eyes very severe. As they have no beard, if it were not for a little moustache which they frequently wear there would be scarcely any difference between the faces of men and women.

The Indians in and near the capital are, according to Humboldt, either the descendants of the former laborers or remains of noble Indian families who, disdaining to intermarry with their Spanish conquerors, preferred to till the ground which their vassals formerly cultivated for them. It is said that these Indians of noble race, though to the vulgar eye indistinguishable from their fellows, are held in great respect by their inferior countrymen. In Cholula, particularly, there are still caciques with long Indian names, also in Tlaxcala, and, though barefooted and ragged, they are said to possess great hidden wealth. But it is neither in nor near the capital that we can see the Indians to perfection in their original state. It is only by travelling through the provinces. The Metis reside by preference in the great centres of population, where they work at all sorts of trades. They are also scattered throughout the country, engaged in its development as employees in the agricultural, mining, and manufacturing lines. Nearly all the working class is from this group. Spanish, mixed with provincialisms and words of Indian origin, forms their language.

THE MAIN CANAL AT TLAHUALILO, DURANGO.

The working class shows its intelligence and activity in printing, bookbinding, carpentry, cabinet-making, blacksmithing, turning, wood- and stone-carving, hat- and shoe-making, and the spinning and weaving of cotton, silk, and wool. Its members have a somewhat advanced social organization.

While the Indians have preserved their customs, diametrically opposite to those of the other two races, there is a very notable change for the worse in those of them who live near the great centres; but most of them who live in the mountainous districts have preserved in all their purity the ancient customs and the primitive language. Their general bearing and their brilliant clothing, and above all their cleanliness, greatly distinguish them from the degenerate Indians of the central plateau.

In some districts, as in the fertile regions of the Sierra, they preserve their imitative dances of the Cegador, Tehuacanzi, and Zempoa Ixochitl. During certain religious ceremonies they execute their dances in the churches before the most venerated images, as, for example, that of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

The Indian in general likes fermented drinks; but he is brave and sober, and shows these good qualities whether as a hunter in the ravines of the sierras or as an intrepid soldier going into battle after a severe march of sixty miles. His robust countenance explains why, despite a frugal and often insufficient diet, and in defiance of hygiene, piled pell-mell in cramped and damp huts, so many reach a very advanced age.

The numbers of these natives who, thanks to education, have become notable in office and in the Church, prove beyond all question that they can reach, like members of the white race, a high degree of civilization.

The degeneracy of some of the Indian tribes proceeds from several causes, among which may be mentioned too early marriages. Pestilence has decimated them, and wars and a mixture with the white and Metis races have aided in wiping them out.

Their minds are affected by the same variety of passions as are the people of other nations, but not in an equal degree. Mexicans seldom exhibit those transports of anger or frenzies of love which are so common in other countries; they are slow in their motions, and show a wonderful tenacity and steadiness in those works which require time and long-continued attention.

They are patient of injury and hardship, and where they suspect no evil intention are most grateful for any kindness.

They are by nature taciturn, serious, and austere, and show more anxiety to punish crimes than to reward virtues. Generosity and perfect disinterestedness are the principal features of their character. Gold with the Mexicans has not the value which it seems to possess elsewhere. They give without reluctance what has cost them the utmost labor to acquire. The respect paid by children to parents and by the young to the old seems to be a feeling born with them. Parents are very fond of their children also.

Courage and cowardice alternate in their minds, so that it is often difficult to determine which predominates. They meet dangers with intrepidity. Their singular attachment to the external ceremonies of religion is very apt to degenerate into superstition, as happens among the ignorant of all nations of the world, but that they are prone to idolatry is nothing more than a chimera formed in the brains of ignorant persons. The customs of a few mountaineers are not sufficient to justify an aspersion upon a whole people. To conclude, the character of the Mexican Indian is a mixture of good and bad.

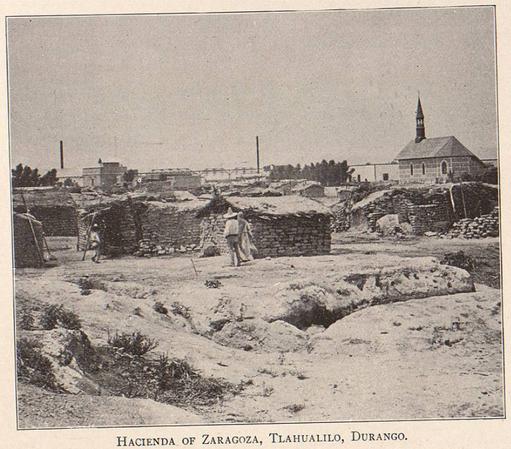
Many Mexican families of noble lineage can point to a family history dating back to the eight hundred years' war against the Moors, when their ancestors were ennobled for gallantry or services to the kings. There are living many families of noble descent who cherish their titles in secret and hold aloof from the mass of the people. Some of these ancient families are wealthy, being still possessed of great estates. The newer families are the descendants of successful soldiers, who stood somewhat in the same relation to the old aristocracy as did the marshals and generals of Napoleon I. to the old French nobility. Consequently, when we talk of an American aristocracy we should look to Mexico for the best and most genuine specimens.

Descendants of Hernando Cortez exist, some bearing his name; one gentleman of this

race and name, a man of cultivation and refinement, is living to-day in Tacubaya. Descendants of Santa Anna also live in Tacubaya.

Descendants of presidents constitute another sort of aristocracy. In fact, service to the state in high place seems always to give one's family and descendants a claim on popular consideration and respect.

Every little while interesting information regarding the descendants of the Aztec monarchs is made public, and, as the people who sprang from the earliest known monarchy on the soil of North America, they may rightfully claim precedence socially. The young son of Don Luis G. Sierra y Horcasitas and his wife Señora Maria Dolores Abadiano, Roberto Luis Cuauhtemoc, is the fourteenth in descent from the Emperor Cuitlahuac, although it is disputed that he is descended from the last Aztec monarch, the ill-fated and heroic Emperor Cuauhtemoc, whose statue adorns the Paseo de la Reforma.



HACIENDA OF ZARAGOZA, TLAHUALILO, DURANGO.

Cuitlahuac, from whom the boy referred to descends, and Montezuma II. were brothers of Matlazinca, the cacique of Coyoacan. Among the descendants of Cuitlahuac are Don Pedro Patino Itzolinque, who lives in Holland, and another Don Pedro Patino Itzolinque, who is a soldier in the state of San Luis Potosí.

As is known, Cuauhtemoc was the son of the Emperor Ahuizoti, son of Axayacatl, and consequently a nephew of Montezuma II. He married the princess Tecuichpocli, a daughter of Montezuma.

It is sufficient to know that there are many well-proved descendants of the Aztec monarchs living and borne on the pension-roll of the Mexican government. Some of them reside in Spain and other European countries, among them being the Duke of Abrantes, the Marquis del Aguilar Fuerte, and the Count of Miravalles.

In this connection it is of interest to note that the direct descendants of Montezuma are living to-day, and boast a family tree which reaches back to the fourteenth century. They reside at Salamanca, in Spain. They have not a large fortune, but possess sufficient means to enable them to appear at court. The present head of the family is Señor Don Agustin Maldonado y Carbajal Cano Montezuma, Marquis of Castellanos and of Monroy. There are three children, —two sons and a daughter, The latter is the widow of the Count de Monterrón, who was one of the principal noblemen in the Basque provinces. The Countess of Monterrón, notwithstanding her large fortune and high position, has followed a scientific career, and is prominent in Spanish educational work. Of the two sons, Don Fernando is a lawyer and a deputy and Don José is an eminent musician. The Maldonado family is connected by marriage with the

English house of Lancaster, and also with the houses of Abrantes and Medinaceli, which are of the first nobility in Spain. The Marchioness de Castellanos has furnished a genealogical tree of the family showing the lineage from the Emperor Montezuma to the Maldonados of the present day. It is as follows:

Montezuma I. (king in 1469) =

Princess Atotoztli = Prince Tezozomoctli.

Axayacatl = Princess Azcalochitl.

Cuitlahuac. | Princess Teotlalico = Montezuma II. (king in 1502).

Princess Tecuichpocli, afterward baptized Isabel de Montezuma, = (1st) Alonso de Grado. No issue.

= (2d) Pedro Gallego.

Juan Gallego de Montezuma.

= (3d) Juan Cano de Saavedra.

Pedro Cano de Montezuma. | Gonzalo Cano de Montezuma. | Isabel Cano de Montezuma. | Catalina Cano de Montezuma.

Juan Cano de Montezuma = Doña Elvira de Toledo.

Juan Cano Montezuma Toledo = Mariana de Carbajal.

Juan Cano Montezuma Carbajal = Isabel Maria Antonia Pizarro.

Mariana Cano Montezuma Pizarro = Alvaro de Vivero.

Maria Vivero Cano Montezuma = Juan Carbajal y Landa.

Bernardino Carbajal Cano Montezuma = Maria Josefa Lancaster.

Juan Carbajal Carbajal Lancaster Cano Montezuma = Francisca Zuñiga Enriquez Fernandez de Córdova.

Manuel Bernardino Carbajal Zuñiga Cano Montezuma = Maria Micaela de Gonzaga.

Angel Carbajal Gonzaga Cano Montezuma = Maria Vicenta Fernandez de Córdoba.

Angel Carbajal Maria Fernandez de Córdoba Cano Montezuma = Manuela Isidra Tellez Giron.

Manuela Carbajal Tellez Giron Cano Montezuma = José Maldonado y Acebes.

Agustin Maldonado y Carbajal Cano Montezuma, the present Marquis de Castellanos.

Among other descendants of Montezuma is Eugenie de Guzman y Porto-Carrero, the ex-Empress of the French,—a fact not known generally. It is therefore apparent that the wife of Napoleon III. was of older imperial stock than her husband, and brought to the alliance more dignity than she acquired by it.

In the city of Mexico there is a gentleman by the name of Mercado who is a descendant of Montezuma, a very intelligent person, who has preserved many relics of his illustrious ancestors, and is extremely well versed in the family history of the Montezuma race.

Among the older famous men of Mexico were Hidalgo, Morelos, and Matamoros, accounts of whom have been given elsewhere in this volume. The earliest of Mexico's famous men, whose fame has come down through several hundred years, were the Montezumas. Montezuma was the name (Moncteçumatin, the sad or severe man) of two emperors of ancient Mexico.

Montezuma I. was born about 1390, and died in 1464. After his accession in 1436 or 1438 he made war upon the kingdom of Chalco in defence of his allies the Tezcucans. The Chalcos were routed in a great battle, and their chief city was entirely destroyed. A war followed with the king of Tlatelolco, who was defeated and killed. Montezuma next conquered the province of Cuihixcas, and subsequently that of Tzompahuacan. In a war with Atonaltzin, a chief of the Mixtecas, he suffered reverses which led to a confederacy between Atonaltzin and the Huexotzincas and Tlaxcalans against the Mexicans; but Montezuma in his first encounter with them gained a signal victory, which greatly enlarged his empire. In 1457 he conquered Cuetlachtan, a province on the Mexican gulf, and carried six thousand two hundred of the people to Mexico, where they were sacrificed to the god of war.

Montezuma II., the last of the Aztec emperors, was born about 1480, succeeded his uncle Ahuitzotl in 1502, and was killed June 30, 1520. He was both a soldier and a priest, and had taken an active part in the wars of his predecessor. When his election to the imperial dignity was announced to him he was sweeping the stairs of the great temple of Mexico. At the commencement of his reign he led a successful expedition against a rebellious province and brought back a multitude of captives to be sacrificed at his coronation. For several years he was constantly at war, and his campaigns, which extended as far as Honduras and Nicaragua, were generally successful. He made important changes in the internal administration of the empire, especially in the courts of justice, and became noted for strictness and severity in the execution of the laws, as well as for munificence to those who served him and in his expenditures for public works. He became equally noted also for arrogance, pomp, and luxury, and his heavy taxes led to many revolts. At the time of the arrival of Cortez in Mexico, in 1519, Montezuma was alarmed not only by the internal troubles of his empire, but also by the appearance of comets and other strange lights in the sky and of mysterious fires in the great temple, which the seers interpreted as omens of the approaching downfall of the empire. Thus disheartened, he did not meet the invasion of the Spaniards with his usual energy. He at first forbade the white men to approach his capital, and then sent an embassy to welcome them. When Cortez entered Mexico (November 8) he was received by Montezuma with courtesy and apparent good will, and at first he treated the emperor with the greatest deference, but a collision between the Mexicans and a Spanish garrison at Vera Cruz soon afforded a pretext for a change of measures. At the end of a week after his arrival he waited upon Montezuma with a few of his officers under pretence of a friendly visit, and, after upbraiding him with the transaction at Vera Cruz, took him captive and carried him to the Spanish head-quarters. The emperor, fearing instant death if he made any opposition, assured his subjects, who were about to attempt a rescue as he passed through the streets, that he accompanied the Spaniards of his own free will. Montezuma was for a while put in irons, and was so completely humbled that when Cortez offered to liberate him he declined to return to his palace, apparently ashamed to be seen by his nobles. He was subsequently induced to swear allegiance to the King of Spain, and was kept a prisoner for seven months, till, in June, 1520, the people of the capital rose in insurrection and besieged the Spaniards in their quarters. He was induced by Cortez to address his subjects from the battlements of his prison in hopes of appeasing the tumult, but, though at first listened to with respect, his appeals in behalf of the white men at length exasperated the Mexicans, a shower of missiles was discharged at him, a stone struck him on the temple, and he fell senseless. He refused all remedies and nourishment, tore off the bandages, and died in a few days. Some of the children of Montezuma became Christians and were carried to Spain. From them descended the counts of Montezuma, one of whom was Viceroy of Mexico from 1697 to 1701.