

## THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC.

The geographical situation of the Mexican Republic is from the 15th degree of lat. to 32° 42' north, and from the 88°, 55', 30" to the 119°, 25', 30" of long. west of meridian of Paris. The country is limited on the north by the United States of America; on the south by Guatemala; on the east by the Gulf of Mexico, and on the west by the Pacific Ocean. It covers a total surface of 1,972,618 square kilometres (1,224,996 square miles). The Republic is ruled by the constitution of 5th February, 1857. Its President is elected every four years by universal suffrage, and vested with Executive Power. The Legislative Power is represented by a congress-renewed every two years, composed of 224 delegates (one for each 40,000 inhabitants or fractions over 20,000); and by a senate composed of two senators for each State. The third and last one, the Judicial Power, consists of the Supreme Court of Justice. Its members number seventeen, and its president is also the Vice-President of the Republic. These members are elected in the same manner as those of the other two powers.

The country comprises twenty-seven States, one territory, and the Federal District which is divided into four prefectures, namely: of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Tacubaya, Talpam and Xochimilco.

The territory, States and District are free and independent as regards their local interests; but united in one federation, according to the Constitution of the country (1857).

The entire country enjoys religious liberty and a free press. Public business is distributed amongst six ministries, viz: of *Relaciones*, Foreign Affairs; *Gobernación*,

*cion*, Interior; *Justicia é Instruccion Pública*, Justice and Education; *Fomento*, Public Works; *Hacienda y Crédito Público*, Finance; *Guerra y Marina*, War and Navy.

The greater part of the imports are manufactured goods sent by the United States of America, and Europe.

The exports principally consist of gold, silver, coffee, tobacco, sugar, cochineal, indigo, medicinal ingredients, rice, beans (frijoles), hides, vanilla, cocoa, salt, fruit, wool, dye-woods, precious stones, etc. etc. Besides these articles of exportation, many Mexican products are consumed in the country itself, such as copper, mercury, iron, lead, zinc, marble, cotton, corn, lucern, sulphur, etc.

The general aspect of Mexico is that of a mountainous country, and singular to say, those same mountains which contain in their bowels over two hundred different minerals, and which therefore, constitute one of the chief resources of the territory, have been the principal reason why the capital is so far behind the progress of America, and of the deficiency of communication which existed before the completion of the railway from Veracruz to Mexico City (1873). The Cordillera, (Sierra Madre), the main range of mountains which extends through the whole country from the southeast to the northwest, forms a continuous chain, the declivities of which slope gradually down towards the Pacific Ocean on one side and the Mexican Gulf on the other, interrupted now and then by plateaux, on which towns are to be found on the lakes, rivers, and amidst luxuriant vegetation. Although this richly endowed country is in the tropics, the perfect combination of nature has bestowed on it three different climates, from the torrid lands (*tierra caliente*) of the coast, to the icy regions (*tierra fría*) of the mountains; the temperate climate (*tierra templada*) occupying the intermediate altitudes, thus presenting to the tourist an evergreen and varied vegetation. The productive valleys intercepted by rivers, and fertilized by the waters rushing down ravines and carry-

ing with them the rich soil of virgin forests, yield flowers and fruits of every description, from the European rose and apple, to the Cuban cactus and guava, besides other species unknown to any other country.

The Mexican ports on the Gulf of Mexico are: Mata, moros, Túxpam, Tampico, Veracruz, Alvarado, Progreso-Campeche, el Carmen, Goatzacoalcos, etc., from which are principally exported the vegetable products of the country, which vary much in quantity and quality.

#### POLITICAL DIVISION AND POPULATION.

*The present population of the Republic ranges near 9,389,461 inhabitants, distributed in the following manner:*

##### FRONTIER STATES.

I Sonora : .....	110,809	} 725,420
II Coahuila.....	104,131	
III Chihuahua.....	180,758	
IV Nuevo Leon.....	189,722	
V Tamaulipas.....	140,000	

##### STATES ON THE GULF OF MEXICO.

VI Veracruz.....	504,950	} 957,761
VII Tabasco.....	83,707	
VIII Campeche.....	86,170	
IX Yucatán.....	282,934	

##### STATES ON THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

Territory of Lower California.....	23,195	} 212,543
X Sinaloa.....	189,348	
Over.....	1,895,724	

Carried over.....	1,895,724	
XI Jalisco.....	953,274	} 2,928,699
XII Colima.....	65,827	
XIII Michoacan.....	661,947	
XIV Guerrero.....	301,242	
XV Oaxaca.....	718,194	
XVI Chiapas.....	208,215	

##### CENTRAL STATES.

XVII Durango.....	190,846	} 4,586,948
XVIII Zacatecas.....	413,603	
XIX Aguascalientes.....	89,715	
XX San Luis Potosí.....	525,110	
XXI Guanajuato.....	768,208	
XXII Querétaro.....	173,576	
XXIII Hidalgo.....	427,340	
XXIV México.....	683,323	
XXV Morelos.....	156,519	
XXVI Puebla.....	697,788	
XXVII Tlaxcala.....	133,408	
Federal District.....	327,512	

9,411,371

#### THE RAILWAYS FROM VERACRUZ TO JALAPA AND MEXICO.

The tramway from Veracruz to Jalapa follows the main line to *Tejería*, where it branches off to *San Juan*, following the primitive track. The whole journey taking place by daylight, the railway company has had the consideration to run open cars, so that travellers may enjoy the scenery. We will not make a minute description of it, as

it would only be repeating what we have said of the main line—that it presents all the luxuriant beauties of a tropical climate, etc.

*San Juan* is at a distance of  $9\frac{1}{2}$  miles from *Tejería* and  $16\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Veracruz. Before the entire track of the main line was completed, this station was the head one—the diligences stopping here to give up their travellers to the small tramway which took them to Veracruz and vice versa. The train here stops ten minutes.

*Tierra Colorada*, is  $20\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Veracruz. Between this station and *Paso de Ovejas*, which is the next one on the right hand of the track, and at about two miles from the latter, is the village of *Tolome*.

*Paso de Ovejas* is 29 miles from Veracruz, and *Puente Nacional* 25 miles from Veracruz. The name means national bridge, and was formerly called the King's bridge.

*Rinconada* is  $40\frac{3}{4}$  miles from Veracruz. Here the up and down trains meet and the travellers of both can enjoy a wash, and join at the breakfast table, for there is one hour allowed for both. *Plan del Rio* at  $48\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Veracruz, *Cerro Gordo* 55 miles (from Veracruz) and *Dos Rios* 62 miles (from Veracruz) and  $8\frac{3}{4}$  miles from *Jalapa*.

The Mexican R. R. Co. Limited. When the Republic and Government, presided by Benito Juárez, took possession of the country, the line was ready as far as *Paso del Macho*,  $47\frac{1}{4}$  miles from Veracruz, and *Apizaco*, (Puebla junction),  $86\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Mexico; besides, part of the track was prepared on remainder of the line. But another impediment was thrown in the way of the road by the Government itself, that deprived the company of its concession (27th November 1867) "because it had contracted with a government which the French intervention had the pretention to establish in Mexico." The concession was once more confirmed by the Congress of the Republic on the 10th of November 1868. The works were commenced again under the able direction of Messrs, William Foote,

Murray, Hill, Pringle, etc., English engineers; and Messrs. Braniff, Winner, etc., contractors. A few Mexican engineers also took part in the works, as Messrs. González Cosío, Couto, Besáres, etc.

The branch line from *Apizaco* to *Puebla* was inaugurated on the 16th of September, 1869. The section of the main line from Veracruz to *Atoyac*,  $53\frac{1}{2}$  miles, was opened to the public in 1870, and from there to Fortin,  $70\frac{1}{4}$  miles further on, in December, 1871. Orizaba, 82 miles from the coast, was reached in September, 1872, and the two trunk lines were brought together in December following. The final inauguration of the whole line took place on the first of January 1873, in the presence of the President of the Republic, Lerdo de Tejada, and is now in good working order, under the name of: "La Compañía del Ferrocarril Mexicano (limited)" Never did a line of railway meet with so many difficulties, nor require so long a time and so much money for its construction. And how many lives and dollars did it cost! *Quien sabe!* We are told that up to the 30th of June, 1874, it had cost the government alone, twelve million five hundred and seventy-three thousand, six hundred and ninety-five dollars! . . .

Before the opening of the line from Mexico to Veracruz, two highways were followed: one through Córdoba, Orizaba and Puebla, and the other via Jalapa, Perote and Puebla.

On the 23d of May, 1868, a concession was given to M. Ramon Zangronis for a tramway from Veracruz to Puebla via Jalapa and Perote, crossing the main line at Nopalucan. The trains from Veracruz to Perote to be drawn by animals, and thence to Puebla by steam power.

On leaving the station of Veracruz, the line cuts through the fortifications of the city; crosses the boulevard of Santiago; passes in sight of *La Alameda* (the Veracruz promenade); the gazometer, the cemetery of *Casa Mata* and then across the *Laguna* of *Cocos*—the junction that leads to

*Medellin* being at *La Zamorana*. Finally, the main line forms a sharp curve, and then runs in a straight line to:

*Tejería*, at nine and a half miles from, and one hundred and six feet higher than Veracruz. Between the station of *Tejería* and that of *Soledad* there is no other village but that of *Purga* which takes its name from the medicinal plant *jalap*, which grows in its vicinity.

*Soledad* is a village near by, and its bridge is the longest of the whole line, erected on the same spot where stood the old highway bridge. It is supported by pillars, around four of which runs a river whose waters are shallow in winter, but very abundant in the rainy season.

*Camaron* station comes next,  $30\frac{1}{4}$  miles from *Soledad*, 8 miles further on; and  $47\frac{1}{4}$  from Vera Cruz, is *Paso del Macho*, which was a central point for the railway employees during the construction of the line. Its altitude is one thousand five hundred and sixty feet.

Three miles from the station of *Paso del Macho* the train runs over the bridge of *San Alejo*, three hundred and eighteen feet long, and thirty-six feet above a ravine. It is entirely built of cast and wrought iron. From this bridge under which rushes the river *San Alejo*, one can witness at the same time, the treasures of a tropical climate and the works of man.

Thenceforth, on each side of the line, sugar-cane and coffee plantations succeed to virgin forests, lighted up by innumerable fireflies, and in the midst of which one's eye is attracted from the creepers entangled amongst the shrubs at one's feet, to the numerous parasites which invade the trees above. The scene is animated by a variety of birds of brilliant plumage, flying from branch to branch, and the echo repeats their joyful songs. The parasites merit the special attention of tourists, as well as of botanists and horticulturists; they are of the orchid and bromelia species and of an infinite variety, from the thick drooping green leaf and multicolored flowers, to the upright red bromelia,

The most complete collection of them that exists, is at the *Jardin des plantes de San Francisco*, calle San Juan de Letran, in Mexico.

At a mile and a half from the bridge of *San Alejo* stands Mount *Chiquihuite*, through the base of which runs a tunnel two hundred feet long.

*Chiquihuite bridge*. Then, to his left, the traveller may admire a deep and picturesque precipice, down which, from rock to rock, falls in pulverized spray the silvery stream of a murmuring cascade, over which is thrown the bridge of *Chiquihuite*, two hundred and twenty feet long.

The richness and variety of the scenery is such, that the tourist does not perceive that he leaves the road rapidly behind him, and that he is now going up a mountain, then down a slope, as can be seen by the difference of the levels; for, on arriving at the station of *Atoyac*, the height is only one thousand five hundred and thirteen feet—forty seven feet lower than at the previous station.

From this river and Mount *Chiquihuite*, the soil is of a calcareous nature and contains a kind of lithographic stone. There are no traces of fossils, which denote that it is of the tertiary formation. Then follow the bridges of *San José Río Seco*, and another of less importance.

After *Soledad* begins the ascent of the mountains around which the railway takes a serpentine course with its iron girdle. Up to *Atoyac* the ascent is very gradual, the distance from the coast being fifty three miles, and the altitude only one thousand five hundred and thirteen feet; but from there, it becomes so steep that it requires the Fairlie engine, which takes up a rise of four per cent, a burden of one hundred tons net, of cargo, at the rate of twenty five miles per hour. Between *Atoyac* and *Córdoba*, at sixty five and three-quarter miles from Veracruz, and two thousand seven hundred and thirteen feet above it, the train runs through a rich and splendid country which yields all the products of a tropical climate, and especially the *frijol*,

a small, dark-brown bean, which has a peculiarly rich flavor. It is the Mexican national vegetable much esteemed by foreigners, and largely exported to Havana and the neighboring islands.

*Córdoba* is a town of 9,500 inhabitants, situated in a mall valley. Its origin goes as far back as 1818. The highway travellers and the neighbors who gathered around soon gave importance to the rising village. The first occupants lived on the products of the wild fruit-trees; the banana and *nopal* gave the fruit; the *maquey* furnished them with *pulque*, and its fibre served to weave their garments. Then they cultivated oranges and other fruits which they sold at Orizaba and Veraacruz, and finally grew sugar-cane and built factories. Then sprung up distilleries of *aguardientes* (alcohol). The number of *Haciendas* was thirty-one, and the *Ranchos* (smaller farms) twenty four. Foreign plants were also cultivated, for we find that tobacco was grown in Córdoba as early as 1756. The coffee tree and Manilla mango were imported into this region by a Spaniard, Juan Antonio Gómez. In 1825, there were already seventy five thousand coffee trees, and one year later the number was five hundred and twenty-three thousand, four hundred and fifty. Quina has also been introduced into the environs of *Córdoba*. This thriving centre is in full prosperity and rapidly increasing in riches and civilization.

The city itself is two miles from the railway station, with which it communicates by a tramway at every train; it is located in a charming and advantageous position, being surrounded by mountains, and near to *Rio Seco* (Dry River) the waters of which have an average temperature of 80° Fahrenheit. As it is only at a moderate altitude, and not far from the sea, it enjoys at the same time the daily tropical heat and the evening sea breeze. Five miles further on the line, is the station of *Fortin*, which was named after a fort or tower, now in ruins. The soil of the moun-

tains around *Orizaba and Fortin* is of a grey black calcareous kind; it also extends as far as the *Cofre of Perote* and is of the cretaceous formation.

On leaving *Fortin*, the traveller needs to give a hasty glance at the immense horizon which extends to the base of the Peak of *Orizaba*; for, shortly afterwards, the railway track turns sharply to the right and the train glides over a bridge under which rushes a torrent at the depth of ninety two feet, embedded between the declivities of the mountains, covered with virgin and evergreen vegetation; and after having thrown a rapid look to the right, on the mountains above, let the tourist cast an eye of admiration at the sight below his feet to the left. There is the *barranca of Metlac* (Metlac Ravine) in all its horror and splendor . . . . . The spectator's attention will be drawn so rapidly from one marvel to another, that it is only when he is under the first of the five tunnels which succeed one another at a short distance, that he reflects on the daring of an enterprise such as the ascent by steam of the *Cumbres*.

Before coming to the ravine of *Metlac* itself, there are two small bridges of little importance: therefore, let the traveller direct all his attention towards the main viaduct, and look ahead so as to enjoy the view of it, as it forms a curve of 325 feet radius over the river. He will see also the serpent-like train, at the head of which, the Fairlie engine moves along easily, although the ascent up the hill is 3 p 8.

*El puente de Metlac* (Metlac Bridge), measures 350 feet in length, and is built of cast and wrought iron. It came from the works of Crumleie (England). It rests on eight pillars, also of iron, and on solid masonry. So as to prevent the train from running off the track at the curve, the rails are of pure steel; and at every seven feet distance is an iron brace to keep the rails in their places; besides, there is a third one called *guard rail*. The *Barranca of Metlac*

begins at the foot of the Peak of Orizaba, it being formed by the waters which filtrate from its heights. After many windings it first disappears near Mount *Cacalote*; and finally at the base of *Mount Chiquihuite*. Its narrowest part measures 900 feet, and its greatest depth is 375 feet. Its banks may be compared, for their steepness, to those of Niagara, near the Falls.

At three miles from the Barranca is Mount *Sumidero*, into the interior of which the river *Sonso* disappears momentarily, but reappears further on. A short while afterwards, the valley of Orizaba is in sight. It presents to the eye the appearance of an immense luxurious garden, in the middle of which the town is seen with its flat roofed and white houses and *haciendas* with domes and steeples looking like thimbles and needles compared to the Peak, which stands 17,375 feet above the level of the sea. The population of Orizaba averages 12,500 inhabitants. Three rivers run near the city, viz: the *Ojo del Ingenio*, containing alcalina, slightly sulphureous; the *Rio Blanco*, also impregnated with alkaline and large quantities of carbonate of lime; and the *Rio de Orizaba*, a little salty in dry weather, but full of vegetable *detritus*. There is a large spinning and tissue mill, as well as a paper factory, and there are flour mills. Argillaceous, calcareous, and flint stones are to be found in quantities all around the city. The climate is rather humid, though healthy; the easterly wind being the predominating one. The plateau on which it stands is 4,027 feet higher than the level of the sea, and the average temperature is 72° Fahrenheit. The first church was built by the monks of San Francisco themselves, with the help of the Indians; it was situated on the spot where now stands the church *del Calvario*.

In the suburbs there are several water falls: the *Barrío Nuevo*, *Rincon Grande*, *Puente Santa Anna* and *Tuspango*, the rivers of which give hydraulic power to the mills. In the direction of the western part of the city is Mount

*Borrego*. Orizaba contains twelve churches: but their architecture is like that of all the churches erected by the Spaniards, and they only vary inside by the variety of their adorned altars, paintings, and relics, more or less authentic. Hotels; *de las Diligencias* \$2 a day, including room, board, service and light; *de San Pedro* \$1 for the same items; *de las Cuatro Naciones* and *del Ferrocarril*. The rolling stock of the Railway company is built and repaired at Orizaba.

After passing the small station of *Encinal*, the next one, we then look forward to that of *Maltrata* at 94½ miles from Veracruz and 5,550 feet above it. Although this station only contains 2,000 inhabitants, the borough has more importance than that of *Ingenio*, which is as fully inhabited. The tourist will be able to compare them, for the train passes through the latter at 4½ miles from Orizaba. Up to *Ingenio* the scenery and vegetation continue the same as from *Paso del Macho*; luxuriant plains, mounts and valleys, odoriferous plants and savory fruits; bright feathered and cheerful birds; but at a few miles from there the aspect gradually changes and you see the natives wrap themselves up in their *zarapes* and *rebozos*, make a rapid sign of the cross, and murmur the dreaded name of *El Infiernillo* (The Little Hell); for such is the name of a deep precipice between two mountains. All traces of vegetation have disappeared; not a tree, nay, not even a shrub, to be seen; and still less any living being. A scanty stream runs from rock to rock into its depths and murmurs a hollow sound; as though it protested against the fate which condemns it to fall in scattered spray into the dark abyss; for the light of the sun never penetrates into its recesses. The passage of the train detaches small stones from the barren rocks around; they roll into the *Infiernillo*, and the echo alone would tell us, after we are gone by, that they had reached the sombre bottom, were not the noise drowned by the rattling of the train.

The traveller, like Dante and Telemachus, son of Ulysses, when they come from the dark dominion of Pluto, after having sought, the one for his beloved Laura, and the other for his father, breathes with ease and satisfaction on leaving behind him the desolate *Infiernillo* where the traces of so many eruptions are seen at every step; for he now comes to life again as he penetrates into the valley of *La Joya* (the Jewel). It well merits its name, for such it looks like. *Maltrata* is situated in the middle of that sweet little valley. Nothing is more refreshing to the sight, nor more satisfactory to the mind, than to contemplate the view now before us, and the passage of the *Infiernillo* appears to us as a horrible nightmare! On the right of the cars stands a mountain covered with moss and grass, spotted with bright wild flowers and crowned with a forest of old trees. To the left, the valley extends itself to the horizon, similar to an evergreen carpet, through which runs, like a riband, a silvery rivulet on a golden bed of sand. Whilst the spectator is admiring the beauties, of which our feeble pen can only give a slight idea, the train arrives at the station. There, as at all the other depots of *La Tierra Caliente*, the natives bore you with the parasitical orchids, bananas, pine apples, oranges, etc., but as a compensation, under an open shed, one may indulge in a cup of coffee, grown in the neighborhood; and if it be not good, it is because it is not well roasted nor properly steeped. Still, what a difference when we compare Mexican coffee to that of Moka, Massaoua, Suez, Cairo, Alexandria, etc. Only ten years ago, when the *Diligence* stopped at a *fonda* (inn) the only beverage offered you was *chocolate*; now, it cannot be obtained at any price. But let not the tourist, who is come to see and not to eat delicacies, lament over this deficiency; let him rather lift his eyes towards the mountain up which he is about to ascend. The railway track is only visible now and then as it winds round the steep declivities, amidst the vapors of the clouds which bathe the

crest of the Cumbres. Now and then the opening of a tunnel appears like a black spot. But before the locomotive attains that height, it will have to run over 13 miles of rail, now placed on artificial plateaux, supported by masonry, then plunged into the bowels of the mountain, and then again, suspended on an iron bridge of more than 300 feet long and thrown over ravines and precipices.

But the engine cannot accomplish its journey without taking in water at *El Tanque* (The Tank) near the station of *La Bota* (The Boot), a small station in the mountain, three miles from *Maltrata*. The name of "*La Bota*" was given to the station on account of a spot in the mountain which assumes the shape of a boot. *La Toma de agua* (Water-Giver), is a source that gives water to the tank of *La Bota*; it was struck upon by the laborers whilst cutting through the rocky mountain, and we can say, that it is as valuable to the railway company as if it were a gold mine. From the Winner bridge three miles from *Boca del Monte* and at several other parts of the circular ascents, when there are no clouds below one can enjoy the view of the valley of *Maltrata*, which presents the appearance of a draught-board, whith its fields of uniform square and varied colors, its flat top buildings, representing the draughts, and its steeple imitating the queen—but all so small that they look like a bouquet of lilies in a garden. Soon after, the road passes through the mountain, and when it comes out of the tunnel, it runs for half a mile in a cut, 200 feet long, and at the end of which the tourist comes in sight of the station of:

*Boca del Monte*. Here the traveller, at the sight of a copious *déjeuner à la fourchette*, forgets his recent emotions and the coolness of those lofty regions, to satisfy a craving hunger, and he does not find the price of seventy-five cents too dear.

Before now, he has acknowledged *in petto* that our advice to provide an overcoat to protect him from the damp.