

east of the city of Mexico, and famous for its two snow-clad peaks, Popocatepetl, "the smoking mountain," and Ixtacewatl, "the white lady," from 14,000 to 17,000 feet above the sea.

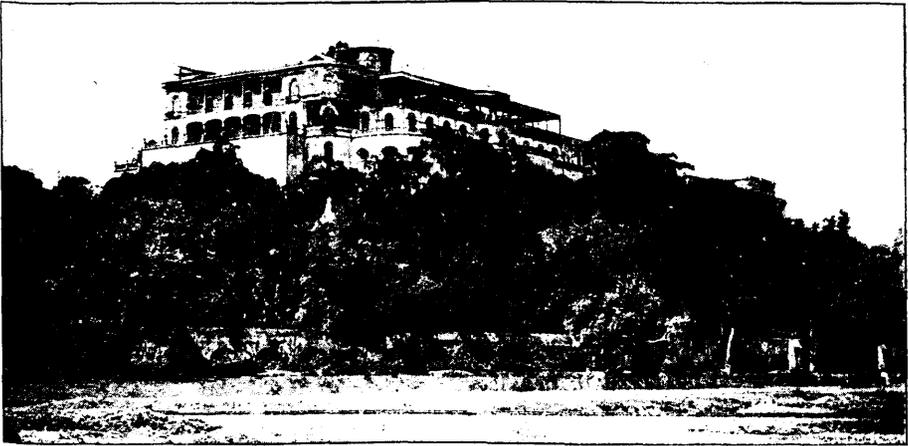
Lying between these two ranges of volcanic rock are the great *mesas* or tablelands, having heights of from 7,000 feet downward to 4,000 feet, where the Rio Grande is crossed at El Paso. Though being in the latitude of the Sahara and Arabian deserts, the altitude of these great table lands gives to a large part of Mexico a climate most unlike that of those arid wastes of the east.

Though possessing tropical forest in the lowlands sloping towards the sea, the larger portion of Mexico has, from its height, a comparatively temperate climate. As every 700 feet of height is commonly estimated as equivalent to a degree of latitude, the climate of the Mexican table land is very much the same as regards average—though

are very hot at noonday, though it is cool in the shade; while one is informed that even in summer few nights are so warm that a blanket on the bed is found uncomfortable.

The high ranges of mountains cause the vapours blowing up from the sea to become condensed into rain, and so it happens that while abundant rains form mountain torrents and rivers running to the sea, the central tableland has an aridity which in some years is almost complete, but which in any year is seldom broken except by the rains of the late spring and early summer.

I have referred to the valley of Mexico as the Mexico which I viewed so briefly, and do not wish it to be thought that this fully represents the tropical appearance of the Mexico of the sea shore. However, so far as the historic Mexico and its people are concerned, the valley of Mexico is that part about which history and legend



CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC.

not occasional—cold as that of western Tennessee. Though no snow falls, the evenings grow cold enough to occasionally have slight frost; while the altitude, with the extreme dryness of the tablelands, makes the daily range of temperature from mid-day to evening quite extreme. In the clear sunshine, the direct rays of the sun

cling, and which gave to the country its characteristics as the Spain of the New World.

So long as men have existed or shall exist, so long the lives of a people become the chief centre of attraction and study. Heroic actions, social and intellectual life, and the sentiments and religion of any people are, of all sub-