

colossal museum of American antiquities. Cortes' conquest of Mexico dates back nearly four centuries; yet this era is comparatively modern. Far back beyond the Spanish invasion, into the dim distance of prehistoric times stretches Mexican civilization, the monuments of whose unique, antique grandeur even now are among the wonders of the world. For example, there is the Teocalli of Choluba, its four stories coinciding with the cardinal points of the compass, its base more than fourteen hundred feet square, its summit rising to a height of one hundred and sixty-four feet. Though undoubtedly built as a temple or grand altar, it was also like the Pyramid of Cheops, a sepulchre; and a square sepulchral chamber has been found within, having no egress, and supported by cypress wood. In it were idols of basalt, curious vases and two skeletons. At Mitla, in Oaxaca, have been discovered very unique ruins, palaces with quaint, arabesque ornaments; a vast hall, whose ceiling is borne up by six porphyry columns, the like of which are not elsewhere to be found in this hemisphere, and which bear the marks of the primitive days of art.

Politically, the country of Mexico wields a peculiar fascination over the student of political history. In a double sense this is a land of earthquakes and volcanoes. Frequent and violent social upheavals characterize its annals. From the conquest, about 1522, until now, it has enjoyed little respite from these political eruptions and revolutions. After exactly three centuries of Spanish domination, in 1822, it became for a short time an independent state under an emperor; in 1824 it was constituted a Federal Republic, but afterwards came under military dictatorship. In 1862, by French intervention, it became subject to the sovereignty of an Austrian prince, and then again became a Republic. There is no social stability: quiet is but the interval between eruptions and explosions.

The population is of a mixed heterogenous character, composed of everything, but compacted into nothing; and this is one secret of social disquiet. The whites of Spanish descent, called creoles, constitute at once an oligarchy and a landed aristocracy. There is a much larger body of mixed Spanish and Indian blood who count themselves among the whites, but are not of pure lineage. Indians form the bulk of the population, and their abject poverty reduces them to practical slavery. With this mixed mass are further mingled a few negroes, and everywhere may be