

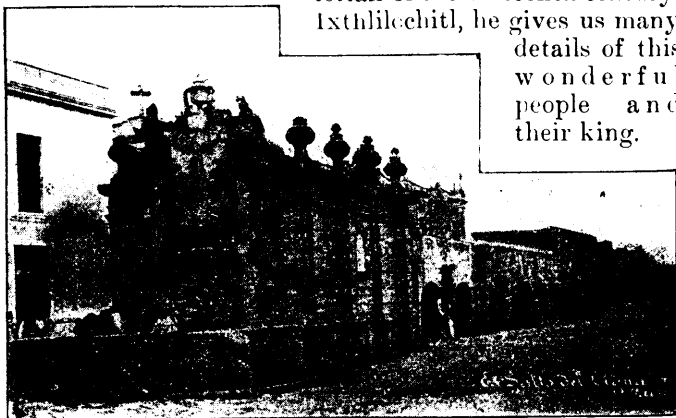
jects, those in which we as moral and intellectual beings become most readily and intensely interested. Though it be true that for three hundred years Mexico has been a country little read of or cared for in the history of the world's political movements, yet nevertheless, there has existed there a political and social life in many ways of extreme interest and importance. At the time of the Conquest there were, according to all evidences, several millions of people in the valley of Mexico, and one has only to read the history of that conquest to realize how intense a life that of the ancient Aztec was.

At the coming of Cortes, the Aztec warrior race, Indian in blood, as its traditional descent from the country to the northward shows, had attained the summit of its power and glory; while its civilization, borrowed from its Toltec predecessors in the valley, had in its political development attained a point worthy of comparison with many of the countries of Europe at that time.

The Toltec race, the civilized Greeks, so to speak, of the valley of Mexico, had, as tradition goes, reached the valley in the seventh century, and finally became the "teachers of wisdom" to all the tribes or nations on plateau and mountain side, extending from the western ocean to the shores of the eastern sea. Within authentic history, for the century preceding the Conquest, the Toltecs had occupied the north-eastern side of the valley across Lake Texcoco, and, under the wise Prince Nezthualcoyotl, a King Arthur and King Alfred in one, had built up a great city, Texcoco, the Mexican Athens, by the borders of the

ancient lake, and a social and political life which recalls the glories of an Assyrian empire under Sennacherib, or of a Persia under Cyrus the Great. Over this Golden Age of the Toltecs, between A. D. 1,400 and 1,500, Prescott grows eloquent, and following the Toltec historian of the sixteenth century,

Ixtlilicxitl, he gives us many details of this wonderful people and their king.



FOUNTAIN AND AQUEDUCT, EL SALTO.

Having had the good fortune to visit the old town of Texcoco and surroundings, with a Canadian friend, a resident of Mexico, I may be forgiven for having become specially interested in the place, and for referring to some of the historic evidences of its former greatness, part of which I saw. Its great monarch, Nezthualcoyotl, had a royal residence and public offices of great extent, from east to west 1,234 yards and 978 from north to south all encompassed by a wall of unburnt bricks six feet wide by nine to fifteen high. Within the wall were two courts. The inner held the council chambers, courts of justice, accommodation for ambassadors, apartments for men of science, poets, etc., who met together under its marble porticoes; while the outer court was the great market-place for the people. Adjoining the inner court were the royal apartments, incrustated, we are told, with stucco and alabaster, richly tinted and hung with gorgeous feather-work and tapestries. These courts led through arcades and labyrinths of