

swung from the ceiling, and on Christmas eve is baptized, the godfather and godmother being selected from the company.

This pastoral is much in use on the Rio Grande frontier, where there is a dearth of amusement, and generally among the plainer population. When practiced by the wealthy, it is enlarged upon until it assumes grand proportions. The *pastorela* begins sometimes a week or more before Christmas.

The Feast of the Epiphany, known in Mexico as the *Fiesta de los Tres Reyes* (Feast of the Three Kings), which comes on the 6th of January, has connected with it an interesting social event. This is known as the *Bailé de los Compadres*. It is not so commonly observed now as formerly, but is none the less interesting.

A coffee cake is made, in which is placed a bean, and at the dinner which follows mass on that day this cake is placed under a napkin and then cut by some one of the guests. The one who gets the bean is known as king; if a woman, queen. If the former, he drops the bean into the glass of the lady whom he selects as queen. If a lady gets the bean, the same process is gone through, with the difference of sex in the selection. They embrace *à la Mexicano*, becoming at once *compadres*. The king makes the queen a present, and must also give a ball within the month of January.

At the ball the names of all the ladies are put into a hat and the gentlemen draw. The lady whose name the gentleman draws becomes his *compadre* for the evening, and much merriment follows.

*El Candelario*, or the feast of Candlemas, comes on the 2d of February. It commemorates the purification of the Virgin, and is the occasion on which the candles are blessed and consecrated, to be used the ensuing year, in extreme illness, death, earthquakes, and thunder-storms.

The day is celebrated at Tacubaya in a novel way. The streets are filled with gambling booths, where all kinds of games of hazard are played by the common people; not only by the men, but women also of every age yield to this fascinating pastime.

On the 5th of February the Church celebrates the death of

Mexico's only martyr, San Felipe de Jesus. He was martyred in China, and his baptismal urn stands in a wooden frame in the cathedral beside the tomb of the Emperor Iturbide.

The carnival season comes with its throngs of gay, promiscuous maskers, but without a representation of our King Comus. Some of these are said to represent the spies sent out by Herod in search of Christ; if so, they seem to enjoy themselves amazingly.

Lent is duly observed, especially by ladies, who perambulate the streets dressed in black, on their way to and from church. At this time the Zocalo has two of its sides adorned with booths and rustic tents, in which various delicious drinks are sold by captivating Indian maidens. In accord with the season fewer toys are sold in the streets, but as the people pass they halt to partake of a drink of *aqua de chia*, *aqua de pina* and *orchata*.

On Palm Sunday large quantities of palm, plaited in every imaginable form and tied with ribbons, are taken to the church and blessed. They are then placed on the iron rods outside the windows to protect the house from lightning or any other dread calamity.

During Holy Week, bells, organs and choirs utter not a sound, the stores are closed, and the world has a holiday. On Holy Thursday it is customary for both ladies and gentlemen to turn out in their new suits. The ladies appear in handsome toiles, the result of weeks of labor for the dressmakers, while the gentlemen display a corresponding industry on the part of the tailors.

Good Friday sees an entire change. The whole republic is in mourning, and the smiling faces of yesterday are superseded by downcast eyes and sober mien, as the vast concourse of people pass silently on their way to church.

In the afternoon is celebrated the feast of the *Tres Caidas* (Three Falls), which commemorates the three falls Christ suffered on his way to Calvary. After each fall the priest preaches a short sermon. Then follows the ceremony of the *Tres Horas* (Three Hours), when the scenes of the Crucifixion are represented in pantomime and with effigies. On the evening of the same day there is a service

called *pesame*, a visit of condolence to the Virgin on the death of her Son.

The last day of Holy Week, *Sabado de Gloria*, or Saturday of Glory, is devoted to the death and disgrace of Judas. Effigies of the traitor are hung all over the streets, and, being filled with powder, burst as they fall to the ground. This catastrophe is celebrated by the rattling of myriads of *matracas*, wooden rattles, that make the head ring, mingled with the shouts of the populace.

Numerous and grotesque paper effigies hung across many of the most prominent streets, and the Judases, filled with bamboos of powder, were tied to the balconies, roofs of buildings, and lamp-posts. Many of them had silver coins pasted upon them, representing the thirty pieces of silver for which Judas sold Christ. When the Judases burst, the eager crowd gathered up the coins and then proceeded to tear into shreds the effigies, in order to avenge the treachery of Judas.

On the 16th of April, the annual *Fiesta de las Flores* (Floral Festival) is inaugurated on the Viga Canal. None of the feasts of the capital affords more pleasure to its citizens. The *paseo* is deserted, while the boulevard beside the Viga is enlivened with hundreds of elegant equipages filled with the *élite* of the capital, as well as pedestrians and horsemen, who repair thither to witness the festival of the Indians. The canal itself is literally overspread with boats large and small, some with a covered space in the middle and a deck at each end, all manned by swarthy Indians. Indian women and girls in their well-befitting costumes, with wreaths of poppies on their heads, and garlands around their necks, guitar in hand, sing in every imaginable key the madrigals of their people, dancing as they go. On the shore the best bands play, and the same scene of animation is presented for days.

The 24th of June is the *Fiesta de San Juan Bautista* (St. John the Baptist), the patron saint of all bathers. This is a day on which the Catholic world of Mexico bathes and puts on clean clothes.

Small boys dressed up as miniature soldiers, with imitation

swords and guns, parade the streets, making an animated scene. It is a holiday that any mortal who cares for St. John may enjoy inexpensively.

A legend received by the common people has it that ablutions made in honor of the Herald of the Saviour "give beauty to the maiden, vigor to the matron, and freshness to the old maid."

Regardless of the truth of this, the bathing establishments everywhere are liberally patronized on this day. Such pushing, jostling, screaming, and lofty tumbling as these devotees of St. John do, is enough to call forth tears from the Mexican Mars.

The public is entertained with as much freedom as though it were a bull fight, and it shows a generous appreciation in long and continued applause. In one tank one hundred and fifty or more bathers may be seen at once, throwing themselves head first, diving and swimming, or standing half submerged, or perhaps jumping from the spring-board.

To all these gyrations add the screams of the multitude, the shrieks of the bathers, and the people on shore selling a thousand and one articles beneath the rays of a scorching sun, to complete the scene. Though many pursuits and avocations are carried on, the dominating and supreme desire of the crowd is to get wet.

This feast of water costs but a *real*, and on that day the populace shows its appreciation of the opportunity for so insignificant a sum to be made wet from crown to sole.

Superb masses, probably not surpassed anywhere in the world, are celebrated for the dead. A very grand occasion of this kind was when the Spanish Colony honored their dead king at the Profesa Church. This was the most imposing church service that I witnessed. The interior attested the faultless taste of the decorator. An immense catafalque stood in the center with white and silver drapings. The bust of Alphonso was wreathed in immortelles, the whole surrounded by the arms of Spain. Columns were draped with black and great black streamers were suspended from the dome and gracefully festooned from the altars. Wax candles of remarkable size and length

were lighted all around and throughout the church, while clouds of incense floated over all. Each one in the large congregation was provided with a candle two feet in length. The music, both orchestral and choral, was grand. Chairs were provided for all, and the floor was handsomely carpeted. The best of society was represented, and I never saw a more elegant assemblage, all in deep black. President Diaz with his cabinet occupied seats near General Jackson and his friends, so there was a commingling of nationalities as well as of tears on that day.

Funeral cards are elaborate both in style and diction. The following will give an idea of the forms in general use:

"Died yesterday at half-past twelve, Señorita Dolores Garcia. Her mother, brothers, and relatives, in informing you of this sad event, beg that you will lift your prayers to the Eternal for the repose of her soul, and be kind enough to attend her funeral, which will take place to-day at four o'clock at the Church of Santa Vera Cruz."

The sending of cards or letters of condolence follows, as a matter of course, and where families have an extensive circle of acquaintances, every day in the week finds them writing to their afflicted friends.

Below will be found another still more poetic in its language, which was sent me upon the death of the gentleman named, who was the father of Señor Alberto Bianchi, the well-known author and journalist:



A la sombra del árbol santo de la Cruz, ayer á las ocho de la noche, voló al seno de su Criador el alma del

SR. D. ALBERTO BIANCHI

(PADRE).

Sus atribulados hijos piden para él oraciones á la piedad de sus hermanos en Jesucristo.

México, Setiembre 23 de 1886.

(Translation.)

Under the shade of the holy tree of the Cross, yesterday at eight o'clock at night, ascended to the bosom of his Creator, the soul of

SR. D. ALBERTO BIANCHI

(FATHER).

His afflicted children ask for him prayers from the piety of his brethren in Jesus Christ.

México, September 23, 1886.

The wearing of mourning is universal, not only for near relatives, but also for friends. A young lady dies, her companions don the somber garb for thirty days; if the father or mother of the girl should die, it is worn for fifteen days. By this time some other relative or friend may die, when the custom is again in force, and may be indefinitely prolonged. During all this time they seclude themselves from society. On visiting a house of mourning, likewise, custom prescribes a black dress; and for these ever-recurring occasions mourning costumes are an essential part of every lady's wardrobe.

Ladies do not attend funerals, but visits of *pésame* (regret) are made immediately after death, and for nine days those who cannot call send letters or cards of condolence.

The national feasts are those of the 16th of September and the 5th of May. Differences of opinion may exist upon every other subject; but on those days, the former recalling the *grito* (call) of Hidalgo for Independence, and the latter the victory of the Mexicans over the French at Puebla, all hands and hearts are united in giving them a fitting and enthusiastic welcome.

Courtship is something of a serious matter as undertaken under Mexican auspices. The probation may extend from five to ten years, or may even exceed that of Jacob, and at the end of this period the devoted Romeo has perhaps never entered the house—possibly not even spoken to his Juliet. Patience is a virtue all possess; and as time is of no consequence, they content themselves with waiting for something in the future. The lover walks slowly back and forth before her house for hours at a time, days and nights alike. Perhaps it