

bridal outfit as well. But in some of the wealthier families parents furnish the greater part of the latter themselves, restricting the purchases of the groom elect to perhaps the bridal dresses, the jewels, and other accessories. An ivory-covered prayer-book is an indispensable offering from the groom. The bridal tour is one expense from which he is now exempt, but as facilities for travel increase, perhaps in the near future, this item may be added to his already long list of expenditures. I believe the event of matrimony is no less troublesome than the long and tedious courtship. The war of reform made three marriage ceremonies necessary. Two months before, the young people must register at the cathedral, giving date of birth, in what city or country, vocation, etc., whether widow or widower. After this, the priest registers the same at the civil office, and their intentions must be placed on a bulletin board outside the office for twenty days. For five Sundays the priest publishes the bans. After this, accompanied by the notary public, he goes to the house of the bride, where she is asked if she acts of her "own free will and accord," and other necessary questions are put with as much freedom as though the subject were a transfer of real estate. A few days prior to the church wedding, the judge of the court, accompanied by six witnesses, the priest being one, performs the civil marriage. The dress worn on this occasion is presented by the groom.

I witnessed a church wedding at "Santa Brigida," and the Mexican ceremony is a pretty one. The groom passed many coins through the hand of the bride, indicating that she is to handle and control the household funds. They knelt at the altar with lighted candles in their hands, emblematical of the Christian faith, and a silken scarf was placed around their shoulders, after which a silver cord was put around their necks, and the ceremony was complete.

An American who contracts marriage in Mexico, regardless of faith or creed, must have three ceremonies—two in Spanish, and one more in either English or Spanish. This is the invariable rule even when marrying his countrywoman. He must, besides, make public notice of his intention by having it announced on

a bulletin board for twenty days. He may evade or escape the latter by the payment of a sum of money—it is said from \$60 to \$150; but in any event, he must have resided one month in the country. The three ceremonies consist of a contract of marriage—civil marriage, the only one recognized by law since 1858—and the church service, which is not compulsory with Americans, and may be celebrated in their own homes. The first two must take place before a judge, and four witnesses, at least, including the American Consul. The contract of marriage includes a statement of names, ages, lineage, business, and residence of the parties. The ceremony of the civil marriage—the legal one—is always in Spanish.

The length of time required for the completion of one of these marriage arrangements may be from one or two days to three months, as the parties understand facilitating such matters. But once such a knot is tied, it would be a difficult task to have it loosened by even the expert fingers of a Chicago lawyer.

Weddings are not generally widely announced. Intimate friends are invited to the marriage in the church, and afterward participate in the festivities that follow at the house. After the wedded pair are established in their own home, they send cards which read:

"Tirso Calderon y Julia Hope

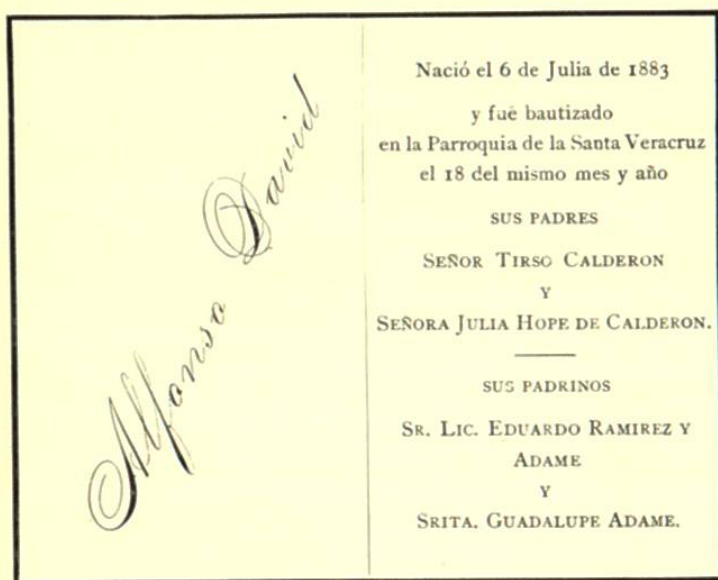
tienen el honor de participar á Vd. su enlace, y se ofrecen á sus ordenas en la casa, munero 6 a de la primera Providencia" ("have the honor to inform you of their marriage, and their house as above mentioned is at your service"). In other words, you are considered a friend of the newly-wedded pair, and they will be happy to see you in their house.

Cards announcing a birth are thus expressed:

"Tirso Calderon y Señora

tienen el gusto de participar á Vd. el nacimiento de su hijo, y lo ponon a sus ordenas," which means, in few words, that this gentleman and his wife have the pleasure of announcing the birth of their son, and place him "at your orders."

Baptism occurs within ten or fifteen days after birth, and, as is customary in the Catholic Church, children bear the name of some saint. Birthdays are not noticed, but the celebration of the *dia de santo*, or day of the saint for whom the child is named, is the most important event in his life. Cards are sent announcing the baptism thus:



having a seal upon it, either of ten cents in silver or a one dollar gold piece.

When ten or fifteen days old the infant is taken in charge by the *padrinos* (godfather and godmother), and after much elaborate preparation is carried to the church and baptized. These godparents are called *comadre* and *compadre* by the child's parents, in preference to their legitimate names.

The names of children of both sexes are identical, by simply changing the termination of *a* or *o*, and often even this is not done. José Maria is the same for both, but Pomposa is the feminine for Pomposo.

Within a reasonable time a great dinner follows, at which many handsome gifts are displayed for the young innocent. Cards of con-

gratulation are sent, if nothing more, but more frequently it is some delicious article of food or drink, or a piece of jewelry.

Social usages show no signs of change or relaxation, even with the advancement so manifest in every other direction. Many of them may seem formal and useless—based on the tedious Spanish etiquette—but they are not without charm as well as meaning; and in comparison with our own rather free and informal ways one might wish that a happy medium might be found. Many of the customs are admirable; and always the culture, ease, kindness, and elegance with which they are observed must commend themselves to our brisk, business-loving and energetic countrymen.

Those agreeable features of American and English home life, informal luncheons, teas, and the unceremonious happening-in of a few friends to a "feast of reason and a flow of soul," or perhaps games and music, and whatever else may be, are wanting among the Mexicans. The *mereñda*, a mid-afternoon luncheon, which takes place after the *siesta*, consists of a cup of chocolate or coffee with some sort of fancy cake or bread. It is the only small social feature of every-day life, and a friend may drop in and partake of it without ceremony. But they are happy in their own way, and a departure from it would be rather painful than otherwise. The love for pomp and ceremonious display leads them to discard simple and unostentatious entertainments, which makes a narrow limit to their social existence. Hence, if the wealthy indulge but seldom, those of less means, being unable to cope with them, though in comfortable circumstances, abstain from any, except on occasions of domestic festivals—christenings or weddings. But there are many smaller hospitalities which always prove acceptable. One is scarcely seated before being asked to have something, and generally delicious chocolate is served *sin ceremonia*.

A high estimate is placed on dress and external appearance. The taste for rich and gorgeous clothing belongs to them by heredity—Montezuma himself giving an example. We read of his mantle of the plumage of rare and brilliant-hued birds, his gold-embroidered clothing, that "his half boots were set with jewels, their soles being of

solid gold;" and that he always allowed four days to elapse between the wearing of each suit.

In these latter days the taste displays itself in every way to be imagined, and they judge others from their own stand-point. Quickly is the dress of a stranger summed up, even before an impression has been made as to his face, being able to give a minute description of his clothes, even to the pocket-handkerchief and shoes, two articles of dress in which every Mexican takes pride.

To enter the higher strata of society, one must give external proof of his fitness by his dress. After this, his merits are duly weighed. The first appearance of a stranger, both in dress and manner, makes his future position. I have often been amused at seeing the very dignified and quiet manner in which the inspection is made, the distinguished invited guest never for a moment supposing himself a subject of scrutiny. But however incorrectly he may speak the language, under no circumstance will he encounter a smile, and he is kindly assisted in mastering its many difficulties.

The last decade—the period of railways—has marked a new era in dress, for even in the smaller cities and towns the people are leaving off to some extent the ancient styles of their progenitors and are donning the newer modes. The old-fashioned silks that stand alone, the laces and shawls, worthy heirlooms, have been relegated to the silent shades. Even the black lace *mantilla* is no longer used except for church. On Sunday mornings in the *alamcdas* of all cities, hundreds may be seen, but the graceful devotees have already attended morning mass, and now the assembled sight-seers may view them in the national *mantilla*.

Later in the day, and on all other occasions, Parisian hats are worn. But the *señorita* is never so charming, so fascinating, so haloed by mystical romance, as when her glossy tresses are crowned with the graceful *mantilla*.

No people on the continent indulge more in the luxury of fine clothes than those of the Mexican capital. Here the votaries of wealth and fashion receive their toilets direct from Paris, from the

king of dressmakers, M. Worth; while the men are fully up to the standard of either Europeans or Americans.

But the gentleman of ease and wealth, supported by the profits of his landed property, is one thing when in the city, clad in European dress, and quite another on his *hacienda* arrayed in the native garb he so delights in. The swarthy complexion takes on a different cast enhanced by color. The suit of cloth or buckskin, trimmed with a profusion of flashy silver ornaments, a red sash about the waist and full, loose tie at the throat, a gayly bedecked though very heavy sombrero, all go to make up a costume eminently becoming to the dark beauty of the wearer.



HACENDADOS.

Mounted upon his gorgeously caparisoned steed, whose equipments sometimes cost thousands of dollars, he presents a striking picture of a "gay cavalier."

No more charming feature exists in Mexican life than the brilliancy and variety of color in the costumes of the *hacendado*. The effect of this picturesque attire is most pleasing, not only from its intrinsic beauty, but also for the novelty to English and American eyes, accustomed only to dull, conventional garments worn alike by all our classes. May the *hacendado* never change his colors!

Sisters have a fancy for dressing exactly alike, so that not a button, hook, or article of jewelry varies. I have counted in one morning six

of them promenading arm and arm and talking in a low, confidential manner.

The prevailing style of dressing the hair is the plaited coil low upon the neck and the crimped bang across the forehead. But fashionable society belles have long since adopted the more modern high *coif*. The men universally appreciate the value of exposing the entire brow, consequently their hair is invariably arranged *à la pompadour*.

Mexican gentlemen manifest their appreciation of feminine beauty by gazing intently at ladies whether in the Alameda or at the theater. This custom, which would be generally resented as impertinent by our fair ones, is there well understood and accepted, as it is meant—a flattering tribute to their charms. Between acts at the theater or opera the men rise to their feet and with leveled glasses pay admiring homage to the señoritas whose dark-eyed beauty has attracted their attention. The pretty language of the fan then comes into admirable play, and the maidens nod gently to each other in appreciation of the gallantries of these knights, and with blissful memories to carry away, the evening ends happily for all.

It has been said that the gallantry of these *caballeros* is rather wearisome and tedious, but I scarcely imagine that any lady of refinement could feel herself otherwise than honored at being the recipient of their courtly attentions. They are punctilious to the last degree in observing the most insignificant courtesies of daily life. If ascending a stairway accompanied by a lady, she always takes his arm, and in descending he precedes her a step or two, holding firmly her hand so as to avoid a misstep. This attention is even offered to strangers with as much naturalness and with far more regularity and promptitude than our own countrymen relinquish to us a seat in the street-car.

In saluting ladies, gentlemen still observe the Spanish form, "*A los pies de usted*" ("at your feet"), the response to which is "*Beso á usted la mano*" ("I kiss the hand to you"). And in closing a letter they always add "*B. S. M.*"—" *Beso sus manos*" ("I kiss your hands").

A few current complimentary phrases in society are: "*Tan hermosa*

como siempre" ("As charming as ever"); "*Es Vd. * muy simpática*" ("You are very captivating"); "*Soy su mas humilde servidor*" ("I am your most humble servant"); "*Puedo tener el gusto de bailar con Vd. esta pieza?*" ("May I have the pleasure of dancing this piece with you?") To this last remark the answer generally is, "*Si, señor, con mucho gusto*" ("Yes, with much pleasure"). Not to be outdone, the gentleman replies, "*El gusto es para mi—cuanto honor, señorita!*" ("The pleasure is mine—what honor, Miss").

On retiring from a visit, as long as in sight, the salutation with the hand, the bow, the "*A los pies de usted, señorita,*" are continued, until one feels as if transported to the days of chivalry.

All Mexican cities have their social organizations, which on one evening in each month give a handsome ball that is attended by the *elite* of society. With all their tropical embellishments, growing plants, and sparkling water from the fountains in the *patio*, singing birds, brilliant flowers, and *salons* of grand proportions and magnificent furnishings, added to the elegant costumes of the guests, it makes a delightful event in the lives of the people and an enviable one for the stranger.

But dancing is an inherited accomplishment with the native Mexican, the younger members of society learning from those more experienced in the ways of the world. Grace and ease of movement are inseparable in the Mexican make-up, but nevertheless as a rule they do not dance as gracefully as one would expect. Teachers of Terpsichorean art have not, from some cause, with their divine talents, penetrated that country. But unquestionably they will follow in the wake of railways and other attendant comforts and perhaps give a strong contest for precedence over the time-honored customs.

The *danza* is the most distinctively national of all the dances, and bears a strong resemblance to the *Habanero*, as known in Cuba. Its slow and rather pathetic music, played by native musicians on national instruments, renders this dance fascinating to both natives and

* Abbreviation for *usted* (you).

strangers. The latter find some difficulty in catching the time, but a little practice soon makes them perfect.

Beyond all things it is a boon to the Mexican lover, for it is only when treading its slow, dreamy measures that he can without restraint convey to the dark-eyed darling of his heart the thousand tender utterances that glow afresh at every motion. They can with propriety dance together every *danza* on the evening's programme and excite no comment.

The *danza*, though resembling in some respects our waltz-quadriple, differs greatly from it in many essential features. The "sets," if they may so be termed, consist of but two couples. The first figure is a "ladies' change;" next, the lady with her right hand on the gentleman's left shoulder and his arm around her waist, the couples balance four times to each other; then, joining hands, they again balance, go partly round a circle, then back again, after which they waltz away. This waltz may be continued *ad libitum*, the waltzers pausing at any moment in their revolutions to go through the same graceful maneuvers with any other couple similarly disposed. They generally make a point of not dancing twice with the same couple during one *danza*.

In a country so favored by climate, the stranger is early impressed by the limited amount of outdoor amusements in which the women participate; in lawn parties, picnics, or riding they rarely indulge. The men are understood, of course, to ride almost unceasingly, but señoritas, though graceful equestriennes, seldom do. At the capital riding is more frequent than elsewhere, and some of the most bewitching beauties—whom Hebe herself might envy—I saw on horseback enjoying the lovely environs of Mexico.

I recall a gay party of twelve señoritas near Tacubaya, ambling along on the broad avenues lined with great trees which stretched out their friendly arms to ward off the scorching rays of the sun. With navy blue and plum-colored habits, big white straw sombreros, their horses handsomely equipped after the fashion of the country, they made a striking picture. Two brothers and three *mosos* attended them, and they laughed and had a good time.

The *tamalada* is an outdoor diversion somewhat corresponding to our picnics. It usually occurs in the afternoon, in some quiet wood or beautiful garden, and begins with dancing, which is kept up throughout the afternoon and evening. The refreshments are *tamales*, after which the entertainment is named—*atole de leche* and *chougas*. The latter is simply sliced bread with *piloncilla* (syrup made from brown sugar) and grated cheese thickly spread over each piece, the whole arranged in pyramid form, and is a most delicious dish. *A dia de campo* (day in the country) with a gay *tamalada* party, is a most agreeable recreation. Pity that it occurs so rarely!

One of the most brilliant national and social events at the capital in which I had the pleasure of participating was the annual distribution of prizes, on the night of January 30th, to the cadets of the Military Academy, at Chapultepec.

The National Theater, where it took place, was gorgeously decorated with banners, streamers, and military emblems. Flowers were everywhere—wreathing the cannon which lined the entrance, surrounding trophies of war, combining with the white moss of Chapultepec and dark evergreens, in festoons from light to light—even cannon-balls reposed on them and bayonets were converted into bouquet-holders.

In the *patio* electric lights, in the form of stars, shed their white radiance over the scene and mingled with the lights from a thousand Chinese lanterns and Venetian lamps which swung between the flag-draped and flower-wreathed pillars.

The main entrance was lined with soldiers who, with the cadets, presented arms when President Diaz, accompanied by members of the Cabinet, entered and passed through to the great stage reserved for the presidential party and high army officers.

The interior of the theater presented a grand spectacle; every column was covered with national colors arranged diagonally; flags of all sizes and the ensign of the Republic were draped artistically on the walls and hung from every available point. Three hundred gay and gallant cadets were ranged with military precision on either

side the grand aisle, forming a guard of honor, themselves the motive and main feature of the occasion.

Boxes were filled with people prominent in fashionable and public life, a central one being reserved for Madame Diaz. An excellent orchestra and pupils from the Institute for the Blind furnished the music.

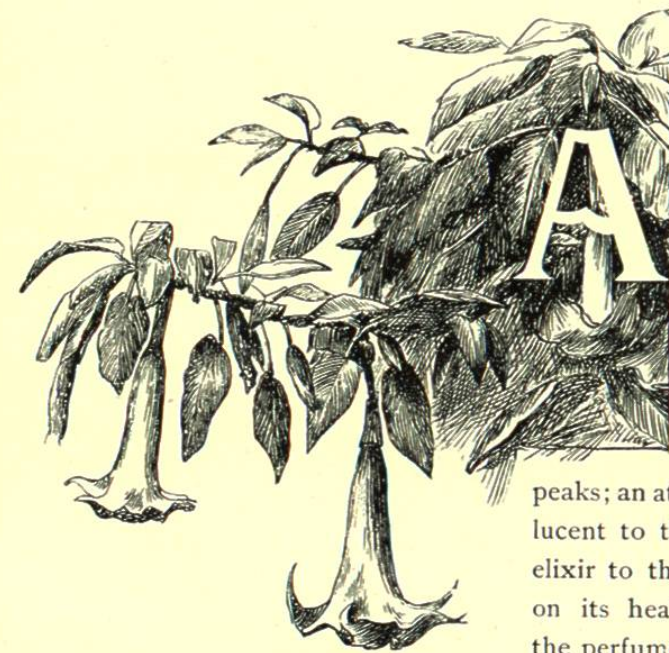
The prizes were handed to the cadets by the President.

In the literary exercises poems appropriate to the occasion were read by Juan A. Mateos and Anselmo Alfaro, but the most noted was the official address delivered by the "Poet Laureate" of the Republic, Guillermo Prieto.

It would be a graceful compliment for the students of Chapultepec Military Academy to be invited to participate in our competitive inter-State or national drills.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM MEXICO TO MORELIA ALONG THE MEXICAN NATIONAL.



SKY such as only a Mexican sky can be, when the sun's rays wove gorgeous oriflammes across the snowy mountain

peaks; an atmosphere, translucent to the eyes and an elixir to the lungs, bearing on its health-giving wings the perfume of a thousand

flowers; all these were the delightful accompaniments of a holiday jaunt on which we set out in gay spirits one brilliant afternoon in October.

Our party consisted of Madame de C — (whose guest I was) and her bright little daughter, Lotita, and servant. The objective points of our excursion were Toluca and Morelia, on the *Ferrocarril Nacional*, and as the railway had then been opened only a short time to the latter place, it was an event of no small magnitude, our visit to these famous old cities. In a charming letter to the *Two Republics* Madame