

entirely ignorant of the first principles of the art which they so successfully practice:

The government is now doing a great work by granting pensions to all meritorious persons in the cultivation of any talent. I saw in the Conservatory of Music, in the capital, two Indian girls who had walked from Querétaro, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles, to present themselves as pupils in that admirable institution. I heard them sing selections from Italian opera, and the sweetness, strength, and range of their voices were far beyond the average, and produced a profound impression upon the audience.

The brass bands, with which travelers' ears are regaled everywhere in the country, are composed of this part of the population. It is no uncommon thing to see bands composed entirely of young boys, from twelve to eighteen years, who render the music in such a manner that a master from the Old World would find but little to criticise and much to commend.

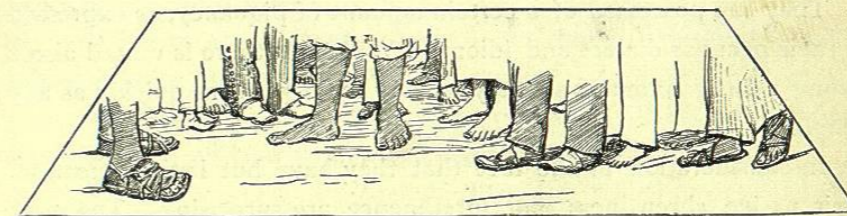
Their music is of a sad, melancholy kind, even that danced or sung at their *fandangos*. *La Paloma* is a universal favorite, and as they sing it, often their bodies and faces look as if it were an appeal to the Virgin or some of the saints, rather than an air for enlivenment or amusement. In this way the sentiment and deep-toned pathos in their natures find expression.

The large class of useless, lazy, indigent, ragged, and wretched objects in the streets of a Mexican city impresses the stranger that there is no good among them. But there is a large and industrious population possessing kindly and gentle impulses, the women practicing, as far as possible, the tender charities of the cultured higher classes.

Even the *lepero*, the representative of the very lowest and most degraded of the male element, assumes the extremes of two conditions. On the one hand, he has no compunctions of conscience in appropriating the property of another, nor does his moral nature shrink, perhaps, from plunging the deadly dagger into the back of his unsuspecting victim, while other vicious and ignoble traits are imputed

to him; but, on the other hand, he has a heart and much of the sentimental and romantic instinct which invests him with many of the attractions of the bandit.

The most beautiful and distinctive female type of the common people is the *China* (Chena), familiarly known as the *China poblana*. With many added attractions she may be considered the counterpart of the French grisette. But the *China* has a rich and luxurious tropical order of beauty that is especially her own, with hands, arms, and feet that could not be excelled for artistic elegance by Praxiteles. She has the warmth of nature and faithful devotion which charac-



THE ARTIST'S REVENGE.

terize all Mexican women. Her peculiar costume, now rarely seen, possesses a semi-barbaric charm that interdicts all rivalry; but it will soon be a memory of the past, having given place in great measure to a more modern style.

The common people have, generally, a great dread of having their pictures taken. A sort of superstition haunts them that the process will deprive them of some part of their being, either corporal or spiritual. This dread was realized when the artist took her revenge on a curious crowd who had gathered so closely around us as to almost impede the manipulations of her pencil. I was constantly on the *qui vive* for some of my former *mozos* who had left me some years before to go to their families. I was certain on one occasion that I had found one of them, but he had risen from the rank of *mozo* to a *cargador*, with all the dignity and equipments of that station. When he entered the house where I was, on an errand, the resemblance to Miguel Rodriguez

was so striking that I told him so, and begged him to allow himself to be sketched. But no sooner were the initial marks made upon the paper, than, looking on to examine the work, he became filled with unreasonable but not-to-be-combated terror, saying, perhaps the man he looked like had robbed me, and so, with the inevitable finger motion, and a "No, I cannot permit it!" turned and fled out of the room, down the steps, and up the street like a deer before the hounds.

In writing of this class, I have allowed them to speak for themselves, and surely no history is more reliable and complete than that related by the actors in the events recorded.

They are possessed of a certain amount of piquancy, as expressed in their peculiar dialect and idioms. With this there is united also a strong vein of humor, and they usually see a point as quickly as any people.

In consideration of the fact that they have but little education, their native shrewdness and intelligence are surprising. The most highly educated and enlightened cannot cope with them in the matter of barter and sale and the counting of money. By instinct they know just how, when, and where to strike the weak point of a stranger in any business transaction.

Americans are special objects of interest in this line. They always imagine that all Americans are possessed of boundless wealth.

The love of money is well developed, and the possibility of winning even a *tlaco* at gambling is sufficient to induce them to lose a whole night's sleep.

These people are made up of that mixed race of natives and whites called *mestizos*.

Their social life is of a free nature, and consequently but few marriages take place among them. The women are vulgarly called *gatas* (cats), or *garbanceras* (bastards); the former are those who usually perform the offices of chambermaids, nurses and cooks, the latter generally do the marketing.

As the shops where the marketing is done are kept by the common

people, when a *marchanta* (customer) appears, the shopkeeper begins to pay her compliments, and say things with double meanings. She usually answers in the same manner, which causes the shopkeeper to laugh. If the servant is at all attractive, and the clerk understands that she is a match for him, and sees that she receives his compliments with pleasure, he takes her basket, keeps on talking to her, and tries to keep her as long as possible. They carry on something like the following dialogue by the clerk saying to her:

"*Que cosa se le ofrece, mi vida?*" ("What do you want, my life?")

"*No se enoje porque hasta eso sale perdiendo*" ("Don't get mad, for you will only be the loser").

"*No le importa, anda despacheme,*" she replies ("Mind your own business, come wait on me").

"*Pues deme la mano y dígame como se llama*" ("Well, give me your hand and tell me your name"), he rejoins.

Her reply to this is full of stinging sarcasm, which finds vent in the following way:

"*Ora sí! que encamisado, tan igualado! Parece que soy su juguete. Anda despacheme y no esté moliendo que se me hace tarde y la niña me regaña porque me tardo con el mandado*" ("Well, I should say you were a naked upstart. One would think I was your plaything. Come, wait on me, and don't bother me, for it is getting late, and the mistress will scold me for being so long doing the errands").

When he sees she is a little angry, he gives her back the basket with the things she has bought. She then throws the money to him on the counter, in an angry manner, for him to take out the cost of what she has bought. When he gives her back the change, he takes her hand, which she pulls away, after he has given it a squeeze. The next day she returns to the same shop or stand, but this time she presents herself a little less reluctantly than before, and without minding at all what is said to her. On the contrary, she leads him on, by throwing little stones at him or giving him a sly pinch.

At the end of a month or two they make an appointment to meet

The bridegroom appears in pantaloons and short jacket of cashmere, white embroidered shirt, red sash, raw hide or deerskin shoes, and a highly decorated, broad-brimmed hat. Followed by his family, *padrinos* (those who are to give him away), witnesses, and those who have been invited, he proceeds to the house of the bride, where he is overwhelmed with attentions from the family.

The dress of the bride consists of a blue skirt with red sash, and a chemise with a deep yoke and sleeves elaborately embroidered with bright-colored beads, a red silk handkerchief with points crossed in front, and held by a fancy pin. The handkerchief serves to cover the neck and breast, leaving the arms free. She also wears many strings of beads, and silver hoop ear-rings of extraordinary size. Her hair is worn in two braids, laid back and forth on the back of her head, the ends tied with red ribbons. She wears *babuchas*, a kind of slipper made either of deerskin trimmed with beads or of gay cloth. The toilet is completed with a white woolen mantle, cut in scallops trimmed with blue, and hanging from the plaited hair.

After they have proceeded to the church and have been married according to the usual religious ceremony, they go to the house of the bride, accompanied by the greater part of the inhabitants of the village where the marriage has taken place, followed by sky-rockets, music, and shouts from the boys. In the house there is a large room decorated with wreaths, flowers, and tissue-paper ornaments, with palm-leaf mats and wooden benches running around the room. Here the wedding feast takes place, presided over by the bride and the *madrina* (the one who gave her away), who sit on the mats at one end of the room, while the bridegroom and his *padrino*, and other guests, occupy the wooden benches. There they receive the congratulations of relatives and friends. But before the dinner, the bride removes her wedding finery, and puts on a house dress, and grinds all the corn that will be necessary to make the *tortillas* for the repast.

When the dinner, which generally takes place about six o'clock, is over, the dance begins, accompanied in its motions by songs which, though agreeable, are somewhat melancholy. The older guests re-

main at the table drinking *pulque* and recalling their youth, until this cheerful beverage reconciles them to the epoch in which they live. The greater part of the night is spent in this way.

The following day they repair to the house of the bridegroom, where the feast is concluded with another dinner and dance; the only difference being that on this occasion the bride has nothing to do with the preparations.

The two days which are devoted to the solemnization of the wedding being spent, the couple receive the blessing of their parents and retire to their own house to enjoy the honeymoon.

The following is a specimen of a street conversation between a man and woman of the common people.

Says the man: "*Pos onde va mi vida, pos de donde sale tan linda como una rosa? ni signiera habla?*" ("Where are you going, my life? Where do you come from as nice as a rose? Don't you want to speak to me?")

"*Pos ande habia de ir? Mire que pregunta!*" ("Where am I going? Listen, what a question!"), she replies.

"*Pos claro onde va? ò ya porque lleva su rebozo nuevo se la hecha de lado!*" ("Well, that's all right, but where are you going? Now that you have on your new *rebozo*, you are beginning to put on airs!"), he retorts. At the same moment he catches her by the *rebozo*.

"*Oh, súlteme, mire que aburricion con V. todos los días que lo encuentro me ha d'estar moliendo! Caramba con V.?*" ("Oh, let me alone! what a nuisance you are! Every day I see you, you bother me so! Goodness, what can I do with you?") she vehemently replies.

"*Pero no se enoje. Me quiere ó no me quiere? digame y si no me dice no la dejo ir!*" ("Don't get mad. Do you love me or not? tell me, and if you don't tell me I shan't let you go"), says he, pacifically.

"*Dale otra vez, pos ya no se lo dije el otro día que no me ande molestando?*" ("But didn't I tell you the other day not to bother me again?") says she.

"*Cuando me lo ha dicho? mire nada mas que embustera!*" ("When did you tell me that? See what a story-teller you are!") answers the man.

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"*Cuando me lo ha dicho? mire nada mas que embustera!*" ("When did you tell me that? See what a story-teller you are!") answers the man.

"Bueno, si no me deja, se lo digo al gendarme que ahí viene!" ("Well, if you don't let me go, I'll tell the policeman who is coming there!") she threateningly answers.

"Digaselo, el no tiene que ver con mis negocios!" ("Tell him, then; he has no right to know my business!") says the man, insolently. And when she sees that she can't go, then she says, entreatingly:

"Que quiere? y dejene ir que se me hace tarde" ("What do you want? Let me go, now, because it is getting late").

He: "Pos ya se lo dije que si me quiere ó no?" ("I have already asked you, do you love me or not?").

"Pos yo lo quisiera pero dicen que es casado, pos para que me quiere? entonces vayase con su nuyer!" ("I should like you, but I was told that you are married; if so, what do you want with me? Go on to your wife!") she replies.

"Miré! nada mas lo que son las jentes de mentirosas. Quien se lo dijo? Si fuera casado, no la quisiera, pos digame nada mas" ("See what story-tellers the people are! Who told you? If I was married, I wouldn't love you. Only tell me"), he retorts.

"Bueno, que deveras me quiere?" ("Well, is it really true that you love me?") she now pleasantly replies.

"Pos Hasta la paré d'enfrente, como no? V. mas dulce que un acitron y mas buena que'l pan caliente. Qualquiera sénamora de V. nada mas con que se le quite un poquito el genio de Suegra que tiene, entonces si valia la plata, pero no tenga cuidado que yo se lo quitare!" ("I love you about as much as that wall in front of us. Why not? You're sweeter than preserves or candy, and better than hot bread. Whoever sees you will love you, only you must leave off some of that hot temper such as mothers-in-law have, and then you'll be equal to a silver mine; but never mind, don't bother yourself, I'll get all that out of you!")

After this, her hot temper gets the better of her, and, tossing his hand from her shoulder, and releasing the *rebozo*, she says:

"Déjeme! déjeme!" ("Get out the way, and let me alone!"), and,

wrapping her *rebozo* more tightly about her head, passes rapidly from his sight.

Under ordinary circumstances, the common people are easily controlled, but if anything occurs suddenly to rouse their slumbering wrath or animosity, every animate object had better retire before the advancing frenzied multitude. Face a stampede of buffaloes—jump into the raging sea, or risk the relentless cyclone—but always keep clear of a Mexican mob. Let their anger be aroused at a bull-fight because of the inefficiency of the *torreros* or the tameness of the bull, the further one gets from the scene the better for him. They demolish the ring, tear down its whole interior, smash the benches and seats into atoms, and did not the *rurales*, or strong police force, take charge of the bull-fighters, they would be in danger of losing their lives. The mob comes down upon them like a thundering tornado.

It has been estimated that the number of people who serve in one capacity or another is about one-fifth of the common population. That part relating to the household is in a great measure an inseparable adjunct of it; but there are also separate services that are performed by people on the outside, who come daily for the purpose. The low wages, and the generally poverty-stricken condition of the masses, place the servants in a state of extreme dependence.

An average house in the city has from ten to twenty servants, and I have seen some grand houses where thirty or thirty-five were employed. Each one has his or her separate duties to perform, and there is no clashing and no infringement one upon the other. A larger number of Mexican servants can live on peaceable terms than those of any other nationality. It is a rare occurrence to hear them quarreling, whatever disaffection may exist.

The leading servants of the household may be classified as follows:

*El portero*—The man who takes care of the door.

*El cochero*—The driver.