

boys and girls. The accompanying illustration represents a girl of two months. I asked the mother if it were girl or boy. "Mujer"

("woman"), she answered, "*Felicita Rodriguez criada de V.*" Never was there a more delighted mother than when I asked her to hold the baby until its picture could be made.



"YOUR OBEDIENT SERVANT."

The *cuna* (cradle) is a concomitant of every humble dwelling. It is sometimes suspended from the ceiling, but quite as often it hangs under the table. The material of which it is composed is usually palm or maguey, and its quaint little occupant looks quite comfortable, snugly sleeping in the *rebozo*, while the cradle sways back and forth of its own accord.

These poor women are often the mothers of such beauties as would arouse envy in the breasts of many aristocratic parents. Miguel Mondregon, whose picture is here given, was one of these children. His mother was a cook. We met him in the street in Tacubaya on the opening of the feast of Candlemas, and when asked his name, he gave it, taking off his hat, as seen in portrait, which is an excellent likeness of him, and saying: "*El criado de V.*" His style of dress is typical of his class. No urchin was ever happier than he when paid his *real y medio* (18 cents) to stand, hat in hand, while being sketched.

His cheeks and lips were like cherries; his mouth a perfect Cupid's bow; his complexion brown as a *frijole*; and his eyes great, soft, melting, glorious orbs. An old woman, standing near, hearing our comments upon his beauty, remarked:



"Yes, he is a beauty now, but wait till he is twelve or fourteen years old, and he will be *mas serio*," meaning that he lost his *spirituelle* expression and became coarse and sallow. Pity it is that this loveliness is so evanescent.

The *evangelistas* (letter-writers) have a distinct position to themselves. They subserve a valuable purpose to the great army of servants and low-class people, who, through them, carry on a correspondence with their lovers. With a board on his knees, or perhaps sometimes a plain little table, and a big jug of ink, and pen behind the ear, the *evangelista* is ready to serve his customers. Anxious lovers stand around awaiting his leisure, the desire to transmit their sentiments making his services in high demand. Note paper, variously shaped, is at hand, and for a *medio* or *real*, a letter is furnished that will be expressive of grief, jealousy, love, and overweening affection.

*Love-letter written by "un evangelista."*

APRECIABLE SEÑORITA.

Quisiera tener el lenguaje de los angeles; la dulce inspiracion de un poeta; ó la elocuencia de un Ciceron, para expresarme en terminos dignos de Vd. Pero por desgracia mi mente la cubre el velo de la ignorancia, y no puedo menos que tomarme la libertad de revelar á Vd. mis aficciones; pues desde el primer dia que tuve la dicha de conocer á Vd., la calma ha huido de mi, y dominado por la pacion mas violenta, me adverbio a decir á Vd. que la Amo, con el amor mas puro y berdadero, y que aun me parece con ésta declaracion que hago á Vd. de mi amor, que no supera el ardor que mi triste y afligido corazon sufre, mientras tanto obtengo la contestacion de Vd. quedo impaciente por saber el fayo de vida ó de muerte que dé Vd. á su apasionado.

Es cuanto le dice á Vd. quien á sus pies besa.

MANUEL GOMEZ Y SUAREZ.

[Translation.]

ESTEEMED SEÑORITA.

Would that I possessed the language of the angels, the sweet inspiration of a poet, or the eloquence of a Cicero, that I might then express myself in a manner

worthy of you. But alas! my intellect, my brains, seem veiled in ignorance, and I cannot resist taking the liberty of revealing my love, my affection. When I first had the happiness of meeting you, my peace of mind fled, and governed solely by the most violent passion for you, I dare tell you *I love you*, with a love most pure, most true, and notwithstanding this declaration of my love you will not even then realize what my sad, afflicted heart suffers until your answer reaches me. I impatiently await your fiat, whether of life or death, to your devoted, passionate one.

Meanwhile I say to you, that I kiss your feet.

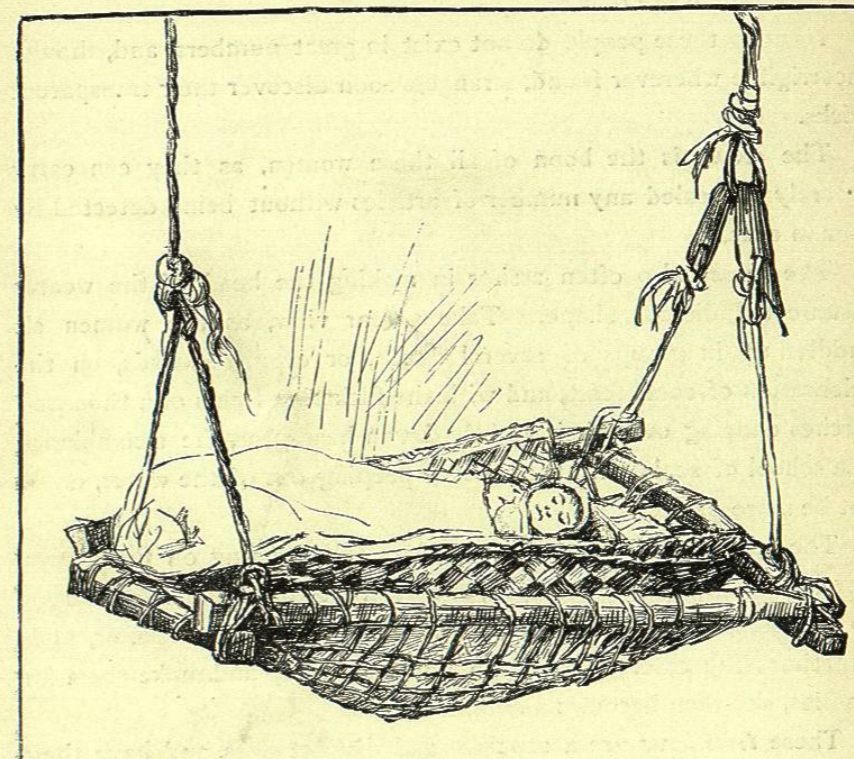
MANUEL GOMEZ Y SUAREZ.

A character which must be considered in the light of a nuisance, is to be found in both sexes all over the country. Plausible and gifted with all the "*suavidad en el modo*" of their betters, they ply their vocation in the street, as well as in private houses. If in the street, they come upon you unawares. Suddenly brown fingers are thrust under your nose, holding a comb, a toy, jewelry or a piece of dry goods or embroidery. You dare not even look at it, or feign the least knowledge of their presence, for if you should do so, they will haunt and pursue you for squares without ceasing. Enter a store, and be ever so much interested in the purchase of some article or textile fabric, here comes the irrepressible vender and again puts the article in your face, this time with a great reduction in price.

Another class with which strangers are sure to be annoyed, are the women with black shawls drawn tightly about their heads and faces; neat calico dresses, cat-like tread, though invariably in a hurry, and with the most benignant expression on their countenances. If in your house, they approach you most humbly, with many kindly inquiries after the health of the family in general, and as to how the night has been passed. While doing this, the shawl goes slightly back, revealing some article of needlework, a handsome shawl, silk dress, or whatever else they may choose for gulling you. A long history of the article follows, ending by a high price being asked for it. You don't want it, so the price is reduced until perhaps you look a little more inclined; but at last no sale is effected. She goes away apparently much disappointed and almost with tears in her eyes. But

be patient! she will come again with softer tread, and with such honeyed words as will surely win their way.

She makes her appearance the second time with a handsome tray in hand, on which rest several kinds of tempting *dulces*. These she tells you have been sent by Doña So-and-So, also naming the street;



CRADLE OF A POOR BABY.

that she has heard you are a stranger, and sends these as a token of her regard.

Nothing remains but to accept them with many thanks for her interest, and the hope that she will soon call on you.

The next day the thoughtful woman again enters, with a humility of manner that even Uriah Heep could not excel. She makes all manner of inquiry as to the health of each inmate of the household. She then states that it was a mistake about the *regalo* she had brought

a day or two before (of course you have long since eaten them); that the Doña told her to sell them at a certain house, and she had made the mistake. You ask her the price, that being the only alternative, and it is a startling one. She is paid, and perhaps never again appears in your house, but she has amply paid you off for not buying the first article she offered.

Happily these people do not exist in great numbers, and, though incorrigible wherever found, strangers soon discover their transparent tricks.

The *rebozo* is the boon of all these women, as they can carry securely concealed any number of articles without being detected by human eyes.

The *rebozo* also often assists in making the head of the wearer assume a ludicrous shape. Take a rear view, as the women sit cuddled up in groups of several dozen, or even hundreds, on the celebration of some feast, and with the flickering lights of a thousand torches dancing over their tightly drawn head-gear, the resemblance to a school of seals, with their heads peeping out of the water, could not be more perfect.

The *molendera* is a woman who does the grinding on the *metate*, whether corn for *tortillas*, coffee, or spices. Should the *molendera* set up an establishment of her own, and make *tortillas* for sale, or, as is sometimes the case, go at certain hours each day and make them for families, she then becomes a *tortillera*.

These *tortilleras* are a separate and distinct class, and have their own rules and regulations for conducting business. They employ ten or a dozen women, who grind the corn and make the *tortillas*. When made, the women who sell them in the markets and streets come with their baskets and take them away, paying wholesale rates.

The proprietress of the establishment is called the *patrona*, and the Queen of Sheba never moved about with more dignity and consequence.

She pays her employes each day a *real y medio*. I have made it convenient to drop in at the hour for settling up with them.

She has a little chair or stool before her, herself unostentatiously occupying the space in front of it on the floor. The *real* in silver, and six cents in *tlacos* for each "grinder," are laid in little piles, each one being named for the woman to whom it is to be paid. The *patrona* sits by and looks on serenely after counting over and over the piles, with satisfaction and self-importance emanating from her, and expressing in unspoken language—"You poor contemptible '*grinders*,' you have no position!"

Jay Gould, in his mansion on Fifth Avenue, when reflecting on his



A TORTILLA ESTABLISHMENT.

enormous investments, could not feel more remote from the toiling multitude in the street beneath him than the *patrona* of the *tortilla* establishment feels her superiority to her subordinates.

I never went into one of these places without being most cordially invited to be seated. On accepting the invitation, an animated conversation would follow, while eating the delicious hot *tortillas*, fresh from the smoking *comal*, and admiring the animated bronze statuettes that ambled and capered about without even the disguise of a fig leaf.

Invariably they desired to know my nationality. If I told them to

guess, they were sure to say France, Andalusia, or Spain, but "an American never!"

The portrait of Gregoria Queros represents one of these functionaries, and also the pure type of an Indian that she is. One might easily imagine her to be the mother of a hero, not only by her face, but also by her conversation.

On entering her house, she began by asking the usual question, and guessing I was from France. But when told I was an American, she turned her head doubtfully to one side, as if in reflection. The silence was broken by my asking her:

"What do you think of the Americans!" and the somewhat startling reply came:

"*Los Americanos son como los Indios barbaros*" ("The Americans are the same as wild Indians").

"Why do you say that?" I asked.

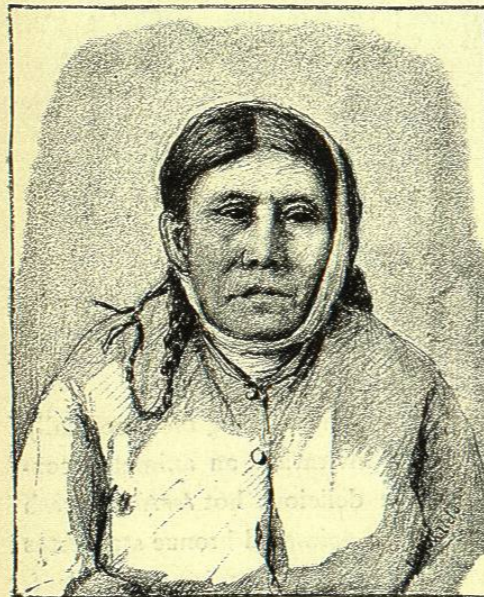
"Because," she answered, "in 1847, when I was sixteen years old, they came down here and fought terrible battles all over this country.

Just think of Chapultepec, Molino del Rey, and Churubusco; ah! what sad days those were to us!"

"Well," I added (endeavoring to recall her from reflections so painful), "what other objections have you to them?"

"They are never satisfied. They always want more land and more money. This is what they live for."

During this interesting colloquy she preserved a politely respectful demeanor, and felt evidently pained to



GREGORIA QUIROS.

be compelled to tell me such absolute truths. A sharp neuralgic pain in her face brought forth a moan and a sigh, when she explained that for a whole year she had never been able to go for one day without the handkerchief on her head.

I asked her if she knew President Diaz.

"Who? Porfirio? I don't know him personally, but he has the reputation of being a very good and brave man; but—he has already been married twice."

I could only infer that his bravery and courage would vanish, if he should ever try matrimony again. I never found either a man or woman of that class, who spoke of the president by any other than his Christian name.

The *lavandera* is an important outside servant. Owing to the construction of the houses, in part, and to the fact of the water being conveyed to them from the city fountains, washing is rarely done on the premises.

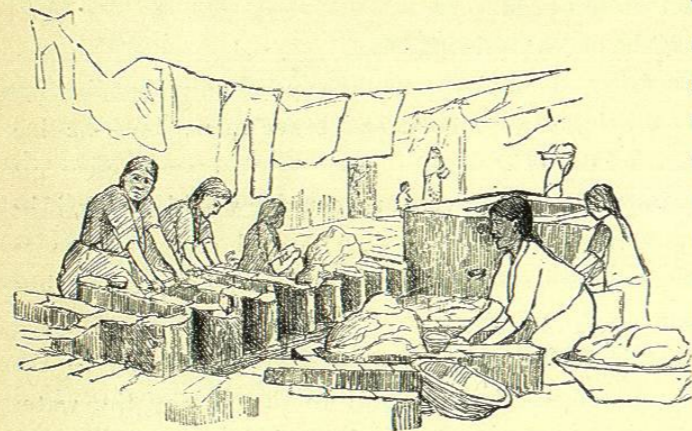
The *lavanderas* also have their own rules and regulations, and are as rigid in exacting the observance of them by their subordinates and satellites as any other class.

In some cities and towns the *lavandera* is not also the *planchadora*. She does not even starch the clothes, but is supplied with soap for the washing. At those places presided over by a *patrona*, the contract is taken for all, but the custom is to charge by the piece and never by the dozen. But in the smaller towns and cities she will receive a *real* a dozen for washing alone, having soap furnished.

When she returns them, the *planchadora* comes, counts, and, on being supplied with starch and coal or wood, again takes them away to finish the job. There is, however, an agreeable offset to all this—the *planchadora* is also the *apuntar*; she mends carefully every article requiring it before taking her work home.

At the capital there are laundries inside the houses where *lavanderas* may go and rent, for a *medio* a day, a compartment of brick in which the water flows from a fountain.

Springs usually burst from some steep declivity of the neighboring mountains, and not infrequently in the descent to valley and



WASH-HOUSE AT THE CAPITAL.

lowland the water circles and winds about through the adjacent trees. In such desirable locations are the spots coveted by the *lavanaderas*. Sometimes for the distance of two miles they may be seen like a bright fringe along the edge of the stream, in costumes which would delight a painter in search of the unconventional.

On these occasions their hair is unbraided and hangs in a superb mass of rippling waves to the end. The only dress is a red woolen petticoat and the chemise, both of which serve only to enhance the classic beauty of form disclosed by the peculiar costume.



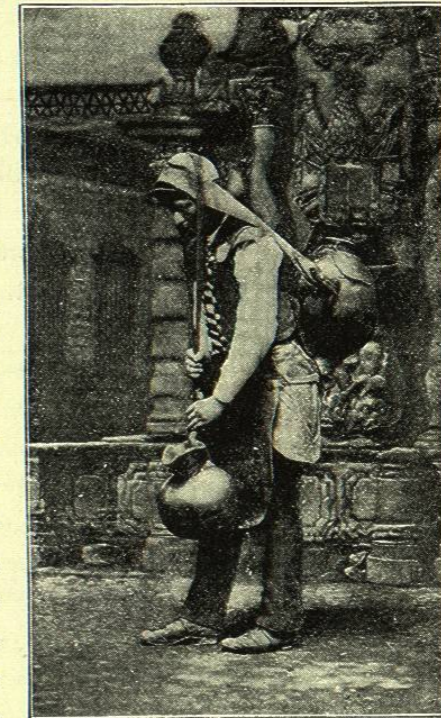
WASHERWOMEN IN THE COUNTRY.

Six or seven days of the week, kneeling in graceful attitudes, these laundresses may be seen expending their tireless energy on the

*ropa* (clothes). Armed with the crude washing equipments of the ancient Egyptians—only a stone slab, or at best a wooden tray resembling our bread-trays—they make their week's washing whiter than the whitest. However it is accomplished, the fact remains that without boiling, washing-soda, washboard, tub or bucket, and even in many cases without soap, this perplexing branch of domestic life is brought to perfection.

The *aguador* is the most noted of all the classes who serve outside the residence. As there are few houses furnished with pipes, the water supply is transported by this functionary.

His costume is peculiar to himself and well adapted to his vocation. It varies in every province. That worn in the City of Mexico is the most picturesque, and deserves a description. Over a shirt and drawers of common domestic he wears a jacket and trousers of blue cloth or tanned buckskin. The latter are turned up nearly to the knee. With his leathern helmet,



WATER CARRIER.

broad leather strap across his forehead, called *frontera* (from which depends the *chochocol*, or water-vessel), leathern apron, and sandals of the same, called *guarachi*, we might imagine him to be a man in armor, so completely is he enveloped in this substantial equipment.

The piece that covers the back, and on which the *chochocol* rests, is called *respaldadera*, or back-rest; that which reaches from the waist to the knee, *delantal* or apron; and that which protects the thigh, the *rosadera*. All these pieces are fastened by means of thongs to a