

one that is national and distinctive, being made and used only on Christmas night, and for that reason is known as

*Esalada de la Noche Buena* (Christmas Salad).—Wash and dry the lettuce, then chop fine. Put in a dish, oil, vinegar, sugar and a little salt; stir these well together; then add the lettuce, also beets sliced, with bananas, lemons and oranges, and some peanuts broken fine. Take pains that the fruit is placed on top.

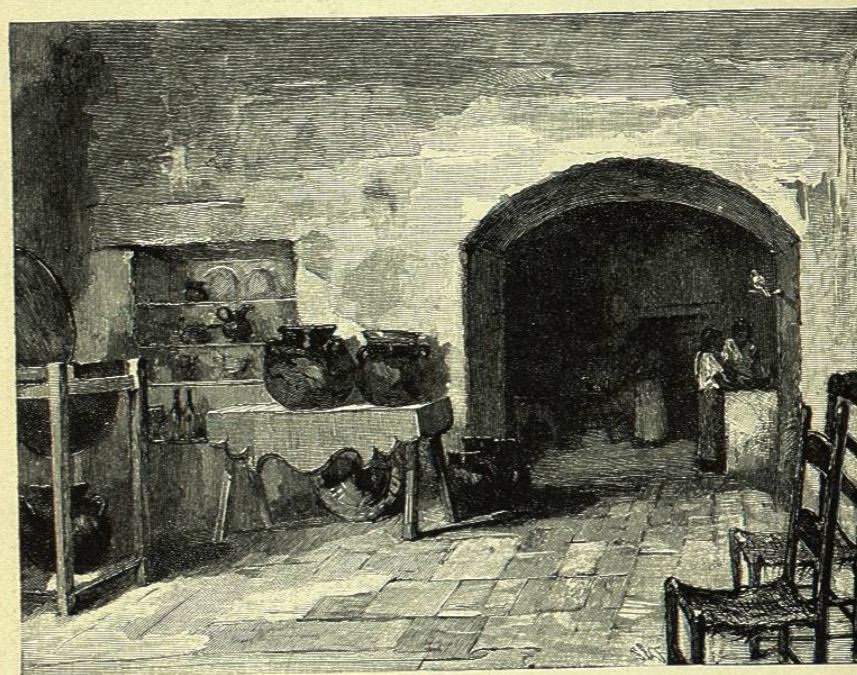
Every day in the year a Mexican housekeeper can have some kind of delightful salad on her table. The lettuce is whiter and more crisp than we generally see; the cauliflower grows to immense size, and is correspondingly good, while tomatoes, equally fine in color and flavor, gratify at once both eye and taste, supplying at any moment a depleted larder. But while these are all of superior quality, the popular taste prefers them served up in omelettes, with pepper, eggs, and spices. Fortunately, eggs, which fill such an important place in the national dietary, are always excellent and bountiful.

A delicious omelette is made of green peas, string-beans, potatoes, carrots, parsley, onions, pepper, and tomatoes, cooked a little and then chopped into a fine mass. Beat five or six eggs, in proportion to the quantity of vegetables, mix thoroughly, and salt to taste; add a lump of butter, then bake in a pan until nicely browned on top.

*Embueltos de Huevos*.—Beat six or more eggs, as for a scramble; have some lard boiling, throw in the eggs; then when cooked sufficiently, put on these any amount of grated cheese according to taste. Make a sauce of onions and tomatoes, with a few peppers chopped very fine. After stirring as for an omelette, cut the eggs into short pieces, pin them with a straw, and then pour the sauce over them.

*Chili y Huevos con Queso* (Pepper and Eggs with Cheese).—Toast the peppers in the fire, remove the seeds and cut into small slices. Have some hot lard in a saucepan, into which throw a handful of chopped onions, the same of tomatoes. Pour in water, and when it is boiling, break in as many eggs as liked; put in the sliced peppers, and when on the dish, ready to serve, cover the whole with grated cheese. This is excellent.

*Chilis Reyenes* (Stuffed Peppers).—Take a dozen large green bell-peppers, toast them in the fire, then remove the skin and seeds. Have ready boiled meat minced very fine, a few cooked onions chopped with tomatoes, a little cinnamon, two or three cloves, a few currants and a boiled egg, all made into a paste. Having previously ground up all the spices as fine as possible on the indispensable *metate* (which for that purpose is as excellent as any of our spice-



KITCHEN AT THE CAPITAL.

mills), great care must be taken to have the paste smooth, then slit the peppers, carefully stuff them with the mass, and close carefully. Beat four eggs, whites and yolks separately, after which put them together, dip the peppers in, and then fry in a large quantity of boiling lard until quite brown. Some make a sauce of chopped onions and tomatoes poured over, but this is superfluous.

*Stuffed Squashes*.—Boil the squashes and cut them in halves, re-

moving the seeds. Take tomatoes, onions, and a very small piece of garlic, and cut all very fine. Fry the mixture a little in lard; after this, stuff the squashes with it; then, with bread-crumbs beaten fine, fry the stuffed squashes in lard, when they are ready for the table.

*Frijoles*, the native beans, are as much a boon to the rich as to the poor. Twice a day they close the meal, and even on ceremonious occasions are not dispensed with. A failure in the bean crop would prove as great a misfortune in Mexico, as a falling off in the potato crop in Ireland.

There is some little art in cooking them, and under no condition are they considered wholesome to be eaten the day on which they are cooked. They are boiled first until tender, and when required, are fried in a quantity of lard with a little chili thrown in.

Housewives have much skill in the preparation of their sweetmeats, and the Mexican preserves and crystallized fruits are certainly superior to our own. They possess the remarkable feature of retaining the original color and flavor of the fruit. The climate is favorable to their preservation, but as they have only the earthenware of the country in which to put them up, it seems strange that they should remain delicious to the last. I subjoin a few of their *dulces*.

*Queso de Almendra* (Almond Cheese).—To one pound of almonds add one pound and a half of sugar, the yolks of eight eggs, and six ordinary glasses of milk. Put the milk on to boil; when well cooked, set aside to cool until the cream rises; then remove this. Stir the sugar in the milk, and when well dissolved, strain through a fine sieve. After this, put in the yolks of the eggs, well beaten; then put on the fire. Have the almonds thoroughly beaten as fine as a powder, and when it begins to boil, put them in, stirring continually. Add a little ground cinnamon. This is done when you can see the bottom of the vessel each time you stir across it. It may be cut any size preferred while still in the vessel, and it is a very delicious *dulce*.

*Copas Mexicanas*.—Here we have a very dainty and attractive dessert. The yolks of twenty-two eggs beaten until very light, one pound of powdered sugar and twenty four lady-fingers beaten as fine

as a powder. First put the sugar with the eggs, then beat them well together; lastly, add the lady-fingers with vanilla to taste. To be served in small glasses or cups. I can recommend this.

*Another*.—Three pints of milk, half a pound of sweet almonds, two pounds of powdered sugar. Beat the almonds to a powder; mix with the sugar. Have the milk boiling and stir constantly. While still boiling, put in the almonds and sugar and stir until the whole is the consistency of a thick paste. Put away to cool for the next day. Then take one pound of butter, and beat with the paste until very light; the yolks of sixteen eggs beaten very light; add to the paste, stirring all well together. Beat the whites of the sixteen eggs to a stiff froth, as for icing, adding a small proportion of powdered sugar. Put the first mixture in cups or glasses and place the white on top.

*Huevos Reales* (Royal Eggs).—Beat a dozen yolks until very light, then put them in a vessel, and put this again into one of boiling water to remain until they are well done. Put half a pound of sugar into a pint of water to cook together like a syrup. Before the syrup has cooked to a candied state, cut the yolks into shapes, or small pieces and put them into the syrup to boil. When cooked to an agreeable consistency, place in a dish, and on each piece of egg place almonds and raisins.

The botanical and mineral kingdoms possess untold wealth, not only valuable to the chemist and pharmacist, but also to the housekeeper, who, for a trifling sum paid to an Indian, may supply herself liberally with domestic nostrums.

*Tequisquiti*, a mineral combining the properties of both soda and ammonia, is a standard remedy for indigestion, gastritis, or other stomach troubles. It is also valuable in the bath.

*Tisa*, another mineral, resembles prepared chalk, and is not only used as a remedy, but is also the refuge of the housekeeper for brightening her silver, glass, and paint. Mountains of these and kindred minerals are to be found almost anywhere, an ever-ready boon to the housekeeper. These are all supplied and dispensed, for the most insignificant consideration, by the serviceable and ubiquitous Indians.

The maguey that furnishes, in one way or another, food, shelter and raiment for the toiling millions, is also lavish in the bestowal of various medicinal gifts.

Pulque—the national beverage, a prolific and profitable product of the maguey—affords many remedies. For coughs, they drink warm pulque; for indigestion, pulque with a little starch or *tequisquiti*; and it has been recently discovered that for Bright's disease and diabetes it is a sovereign remedy, while it is a specific for lung trouble, by placing under the bed at night a large vessel filled with pulque from which the patient inhales its healing fumes.

In proof of its wonderful virtues, a Mexican lady told me that the venders of pulque are always blessed with health, flesh, and strength.

For ear-ache, Mexican mothers resort to the leaf of a plant called Santa Maria, which is reputed to have a magical effect on the sufferer.

For headache, a rose leaf pasted on the temples, with perhaps the addition of some kind of salve, is said to be a sovereign remedy, and is used by all classes.

For catarrh and colds, rub the breast, forehead, and soles of the feet with hot tallow, in which a little snuff has been stirred. Be careful not to wash the face the next day.

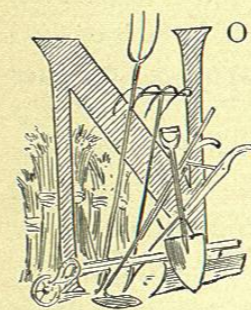
For chills and fever, take a dose of oil, followed by a tea made from *Hojosen* and the camphor-tree, to produce perspiration. Then rub the body with a salve made from the *Balsamo Tranquillo* or lobelia, and the leaf of the cactus, bitter like quinine. Eucalyptus, which grows luxuriantly in many places, is also used.

For whooping-cough, the patient is kept closely in a room without a breath of fresh air for forty days; emetics are frequently given, and pitch is burned at night.

For measles and scarlet fever, tea is made from violets and the *Noche Buena* flower; the patient is also quarantined for forty days.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## THE AMERICAN COLONY.



NO mention has yet been made in these pages of the little band of my own countrymen which has sought and found a home in Mexico. This orphaned colony, numbering between six and eight hundred, has been kindly adopted by Mrs. Cornelia M. Townsend, of New York, who has resided there upwards of twelve years, and right nobly does this gentle woman fulfill her high trust and merit the title that has been bestowed upon her of "Mother of the American Colony."

Since the successful inauguration of railways in Mexico, thousands of our people have drifted there—some for health, others for pleasure, and still others to improve their financial condition. The Mexican capital has naturally been the great rallying point with them, and whatever their successes, trials, sorrows, or misfortunes, their fellow-countrymen, in greater or less degree, have endeavored to aid and encourage.

Some time ago an American Benevolent Society was formed by the most prominent permanent American residents, which numbers about fifty members.

Of this society the American minister is ex-officio President; Mr. I. Mastella Clark, Vice-President; Mr. W. I. De Gress, Secretary; and Mr. Frederic P. Hoeck, Treasurer. The payment of \$1 a month entitles one to membership, and it is a noble way to spend that dollar, the object being to render effective aid to their suffering and distressed countrymen, whose increasing numbers demand active co-operation.