

cumstances will permit, they are brought out to act as clerks, and fill other places of confidence, proving invaluable aids to the heads of the establishment and strengthening their position.

An evidence of how other foreigners study to please the Mexicans, even to the details of dress, I observed in traveling with a young Englishman who had lived in the United States for six years. He was then about to join his brother, who had resided for some years in Mexico. Naturally this subject was under discussion between us. He frankly told me that his brother had written to him on no account to wear anything that looked American, and especially to refrain from wearing an American slouch hat, as the Mexicans detested that article heartily. Take warning, my countrymen! If you cannot wear a beaver, then a Derby—stiff, half high, or the genuine wide-brimmed, silver-decked sombrero.

He certainly had obeyed the injunction, for he was a live representative of John Bull, from the apex of his prim-sitting hat, to the tip end of his square English foot. But I was glad to see him thus prepare himself for his future life associations, and candidly told him I should expect to hear of a marvelous success from his sojourn in Mexico.

After my arrival in the capital I found his brother's firm, that of B., S., R., C. & Co., had made for themselves an enviable name as architects, mining engineers and contractors. I had the satisfaction of seeing with my own eyes that the wise head which had planned his brother's advent into the country had practiced literally what he preached. As an equestrian, the native gorgeousness quite melted into insignificance by comparison; while in whatever society, foreign or native, he was a shining light and noted for the suavity of his manners.

The last I heard of the newly inducted young traveler bent on conquest, he was mounted on a litter going to Oaxaca, a seven days' journey, as a mining engineer.

Mexicans are not generally wholesale merchants. Those who have sufficient means to become such, prefer investing in *haciendas*, which

are a sure source of profit and much less trouble. The smaller retail trade, however, is chiefly controlled by them, and in this field they are both able and successful. They are declared, on competent authority, to be strict, if somewhat slow, in meeting their obligations. But slowness, where everything is slow, need not necessarily be considered detrimental; and it may generally be assumed that if they do not pay, it is because they have not the money—a condition not surprising in the financial depression of the last few years.

Native retailers manage their business most skillfully. With a full estimate of the value of everything they desire to exchange, barter, or sell, they will ask the outside price, at the same time reading critically the character of their customer; if the price demanded will not secure him, most graciously and gracefully they will accept a lower.

To their powers of manipulation may be accredited the fact that in no part of the country have the Jews, to any extent, been able to obtain a foothold in mercantile life. The Mexican is even more suave, more entertaining, and more determined in his mode of selling than the most smooth-tongued representative of the Israelitish race. He can sustain himself comfortably on a smaller profit, and is content to do so, as long as he is assured of holding his customer. The native, however, has not a monopoly of the retail trade. Frequently he has associated with him either a Spaniard, Frenchman, or Italian, and again these are established with success, independently.

The capital is naturally the great emporium, the business of the country being concentrated there. The cities and towns along the Rio Grande may possibly conduct some traffic with the United States, and certainly an immense amount of smuggling is done; but the main supplies come from the capital.

Mexico affords a striking illustration of the extremes of wealth and poverty. A late estimate by one who is well informed gives her only about five hundred thousand people who are wealthy; while the remainder is divided between those with moderately comfortable incomes and the absolutely poor. But among the former there is a large professional and shop-keeping class, who always appear well

dressed, and with more or less indications of competency, but whose incomes are meager and uncertain.

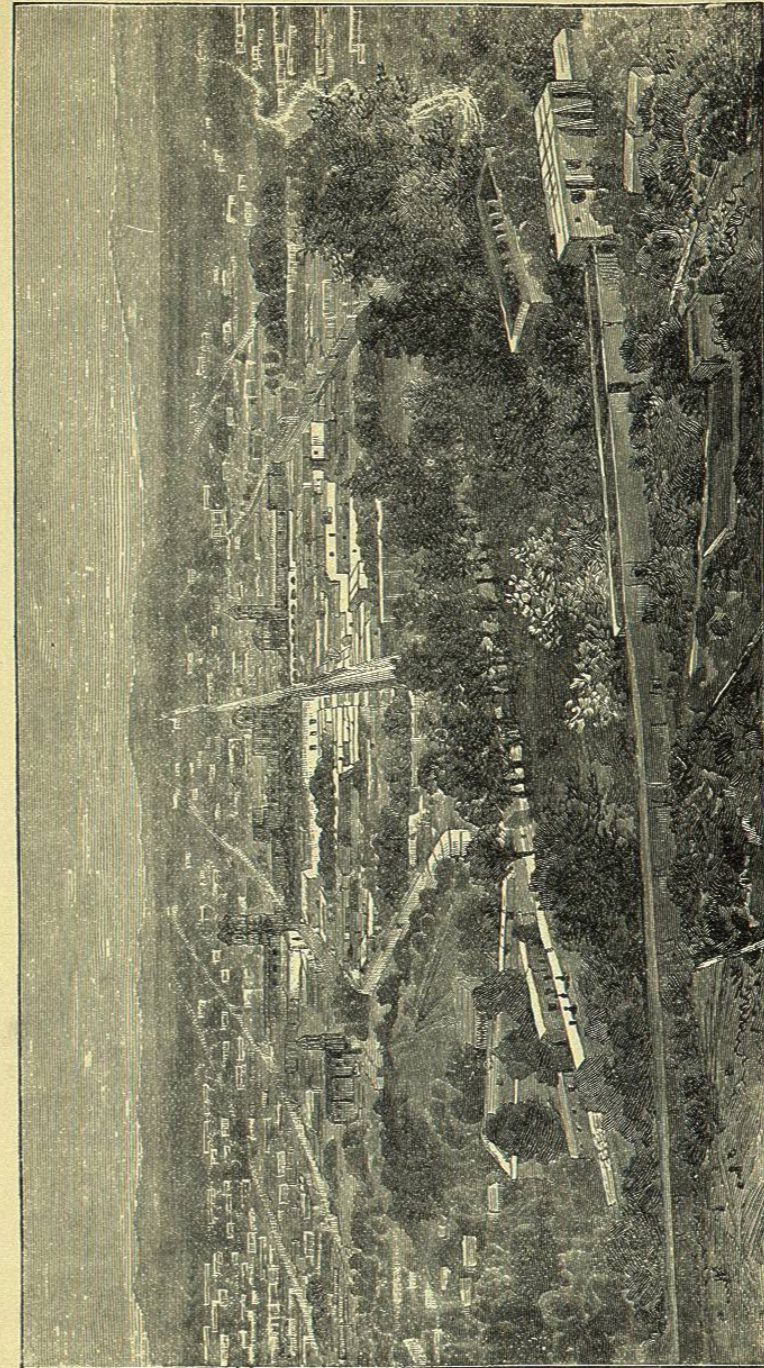
Those who have accumulated large fortunes are, after all, at a loss how to find suitable investments. A distinguished Mexican statesman has estimated that an uninvested capital of \$50,000,000 exists in the City of Mexico to-day, a sum large enough to build and equip a railway to some extreme point of the republic.

This is the case in every large city. Immense sums of money are in the hands of the rich in absolute bulk, without any outlet or means of investment.

Stock companies and co-operative plans do not strike, as tangible, the popular fancy. The best thing generally is for this class to build houses and rent them, or lend their money at very high rates.

Banking privileges are not usually resorted to by either the tradespeople or the merchant princes. The "Bank of London, Mexico and South America" has been established for twenty-one years, yet even now the majority of people do not avail themselves of it. Merchants use it for exchange, and also as a means of safety for large sums in silver dollars, this last sometimes for a very short time, perhaps for one day and night, after which their *mozos* may be seen carrying it back in meal-bags. Perhaps a prejudice may attach to mere bits of paper as the representatives of big silver dollars, but checks are not used after our method, nor is banking resorted to except as a means of commercial convenience. For the mechanic or tradesman no facilities whatever exist in the way of savings banks for the deposit of their small earnings. Consequently more or less extravagance is indulged in, or the money is hidden away without profit to themselves or to the country.

Notwithstanding the rainy season, success in agriculture in Mexico depends almost solely on the facilities for irrigation. Every drop of water is skillfully utilized. Often, indeed, the entire body of water is turned from its legitimate course, and employed in irrigating a large and otherwise profitless region. If a river runs near to or through several *haciendas*, the proprietors unite in constructing a dam across



THE CITY OF DURANGO.

it, with large ditches to convey the water through the fields. They employ a man to take charge of its distribution, and during the farming season he must be on hand both day and night, to turn the water on and off, as may be necessary.

Lands rent for one-third and one-half of the crop. The proprietor furnishes no teams, and the yield of corn is from thirty-five to forty bushels per acre.

A *hacienda*, it must be understood, is a large plantation, and not a ranch for cattle, although one proprietor may own both. In this case, the farming is kept separate from the cattle raising. A church and store are inseparable adjuncts to the well-kept *hacienda*. The peons buy the necessaries of life from the store, which of course keeps them always in debt, thus securing their services. Unless the proprietor of some other *hacienda* pays the debt, they of course cannot leave.

There are two classes of peons, those who are in debt and those who are not. The former are by far the more numerous, and are called *calpaneros* or *gañanes*. The names and salaries of the principal employés are as follows:

<i>Administrador</i> , who is paid from \$70 to \$100 per month.					
<i>Mayordomo</i> ,	"	"	"	30	60
<i>Ayudante</i> ,	"	"	"	15	30
<i>Sobre saliente</i> ,	"	"	"	8	25
<i>Capitan</i> ,	"	"	"	8	20
<i>Trojero</i> , who has charge of the keys and keeps the accounts of the <i>hacienda</i> ; paid from \$15 to \$30 per month; and a doctor, who is also paid by the month.					

The priest is paid for his services as they are rendered. The founder, wheel-wright, and carpenters are paid by the job.

The *mayordomo* and the *capitan* are allowed horses and certain perquisites from the *hacienda*.

These *capitans* are rare characters in and of themselves. Though

in letters he may be the most ignorant, yet in that little narrow skull he can carry more accounts than the most expert book-keeper. He knows the antecedents of everybody and everything on that place. He is a peon just as they are, but in many ways he shows his power over them.

The accompanying illustration, taken from life at San Miguel Sesma, shows him in the robes and dignity of his office.

Every night the *raya* (an account of the days' doings) is gone through by the *mayordomo* and *capitan*, who come to the office of the *hacienda* to give an account to the *administrador* of what has been done during the day. The names of the peons are read, and the captain answers: "*Cetonale*" ("He has worked to-day"), or "*Homo cleno*" ("He has not"), as the case may be. The *mayordomo* has a box full of beans kept for the purpose. Each time the captain answers "*Cetonale*" or "*Homo cleno*," a bean is pushed aside. When the calling and answering are finished, the beans in the two piles thus formed are counted, and the result entered in the day-book. The captain retires and the *mayordomo* takes orders for the next day.

Everything is kept as systematically as in a banking business. The books of the *hacienda* are under government seal, and any one wishing to purchase the property may satisfy himself by looking at them.

Haciendas have their marketable small products, such as pulque, wood, milk, lumber, charcoal, beans, sheep, goats, and many others known as *esquilmos*. Hogs are also fattened, but they are little used save to make soap, which is excellent in any part of the country.

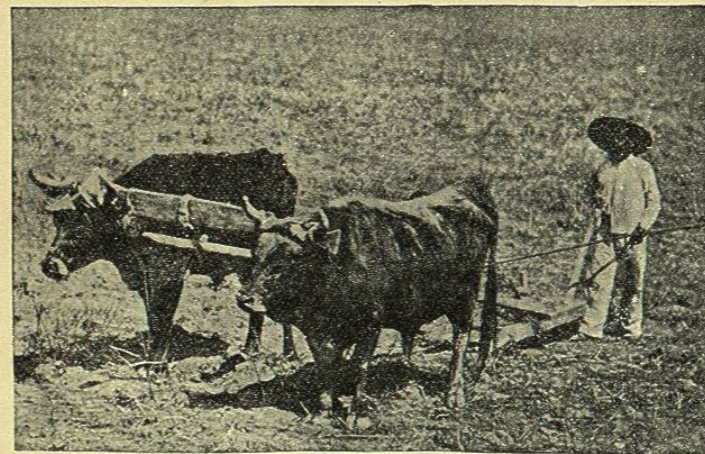
The impression prevails that the peon is in such a state of servitude that he can be easily compelled to adopt any methods his



EL CAPITAN.

employer may see fit to impose upon him; but the fallacy of this is too well known by all who have tried the experiment of farming.

The peon, like the rest of his race, has an instinctive dislike to



A MEXICAN PLOWMAN.

any innovations, and he clings to his rude methods of agriculture, driving the new-fangled notions to the wall, or stacking them in the

fields, while he unceremoniously returns to the ancient forked stick. He hugs the rawhide harness thongs and straps, and the primitive fixtures of his forefathers, and will not yield them up without a determined resistance.

In the hope of compromising matters with these ultra-conservatives, a wide-awake Chicago firm has recently invented and patented a steel plow that is the exact reproduction of the forked stick and makes a furrow much deeper, whereby finer results are obtained.

I visited several *haciendas*, and on each more or less of our agricultural implements were used. Every agent with whom I conversed spoke hopefully that finally the products of our manufactories would prevail over any and every competition. But with the inherent prejudice of the peon, it is not a source of wonder that even a progressive *hacendado* hesitates to introduce any new form. On some plantations both the ancient and modern work side by side. But on many large estates one sees as yet only the usages of the Romans or ancient Europeans. It is easy for the mind to travel backward to the days