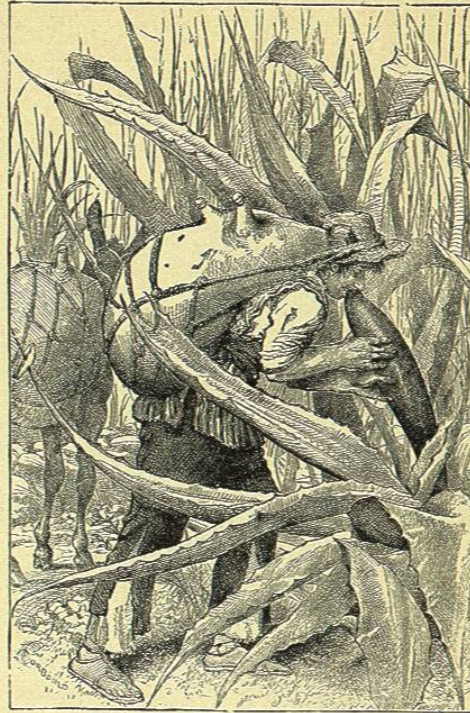


The other liquors besides *pulque* which this plant produces are *tequila* and *mescal*. The former, named after the district in which it is principally manufactured, possesses an agreeable flavor, somewhat resembling Scotch whisky. *Mescal* is made from a liquor obtained by pressing the leaves of the maguey in a mill. Both *mescal* and *tequila* are transparent, while *pulque* has very much the appearance of the milk of the cocoa-nut.

Tanneries are to be found at many places, but the leather must be of very inferior quality, if one may judge by the rapidity with which shoes break and wear out. There is no greater inconvenience to Americans than the style and quality of shoes. Generally it is not possible for them to wear those made on Mexican lasts. I have seen in the windows of shoe stores, "American shoes made here," but the samples shown were far inferior to our home productions, and did not even resemble them. But for the artistic repairing of old boots and shoes the Mexican cobbler can certainly claim precedence. Shoes so old and dilapidated that even mothers could not use them instead of a switch on refractory children, or that would not be available for throwing after departing bridal parties, he will repair and return as good as new, for fifty cents. He sits on his stool on the sidewalk, himself unshod, verifying the ancient proverb, perhaps waiting for the *mañana* on which to begin his avocation.



THE TLACHIQUERO.

More paper factories are needed, and no country offers greater inducements, as the maguey is ever at hand to furnish pulp for the enterprise. France and Belgium have heretofore supplied the market, with a moderate amount from Germany and England. If Americans do not go there to manufacture paper, they should certainly be able to compete with all others in supplying the market with a superior article.

Considerable attention is now paid to the importation and breeding of fine stock of all kinds, and Mexico offers unsurpassed facilities for this purpose, by reason of the equable climate and extensive pasturage. For, while cattle men annually lose thousands in their chosen sites in the United States, in Mexico it is perennial spring-time for man and beast.



A STREET SHOEMAKER.

The meats are excellent in flavor and quality, the mutton being especially delicious. But a difficulty lies, generally, in the butchers, who cut and slash it in so many directions that it is difficult to tell what part of the animal you are eating.

Butter everywhere is a very scarce and inferior commodity. Housewives know nothing of making and caring for this article, which to Americans is a prime necessity. The most primitive means are employed in its manufacture. In some places the milk is put into a sheep or goat skin, then fastened on a mule or *burro*, usually the latter, and trotted at a rapid rate. Inferior in quality as it is, I have never seen a pound sell for less than from four to six reals. The natives make a cheese from goat's milk that is quite good when one becomes accustomed to it; but no attention is given to cheese-mak-

ing, as we know it, although the facilities are at hand, in the labor, the cattle and feeding, as well as in the tastes of the people, who use it largely in their *cuisine*. At the capital a pound of American cheese costs 62½ cents (five reals). The finest butter and cheese in the world could be produced on the beautiful and abundant alfalfa. Our people should look into these openings for enterprise, particularly as the Mexicans themselves would be constant patrons.

The refining of salt is another much needed industry, for which ample material exists in immense deposits that are in the same condition to-day as when the conquerors came. A five-cent sack of American table salt costs three reals, while what is generally used is in the crudest state possible, requiring to be washed, dried in the sun, and then ground on the *metate* before it is ready for use.

Bacon and ham are both imported, the United States now furnishing the greater part. The price is never less than five to six reals a pound, even at the capital.

Finer hogs can be produced in no country, and with mountains forever snow-covered, and railways offering inducements to shippers, pork packeries and meat-canning establishments could easily be established and made a paying investment. No improvement can be made on the lard, which is beautifully white and sweet; but the supply in no wise reaches the demand, as shown by the price, which I have never known to be less than from twenty-five to thirty-seven cents, or three reals a pound.

Wheat is one of the best products of the soil, and flouring-mills convert it into excellent flour, but either the mills are not numerous enough or the supply of wheat is deficient, as prices are exorbitant—the cheapest I have seen costing three dollars and a half for fifty pounds.

Fond as the Mexicans are of dainties and delicacies, the cracker and wafer, so indispensable in our dietary, are not made in the country, with the exception of one or two factories at the capital from which they are supplied at three reals a pound. Factories of this kind would develop the general taste and doubtless also prove profitable.

By all means let some enterprising spirits establish goose ranches. Strangers are particularly impressed with the unyielding pillows and beds, encountered everywhere in hotels; and with few exceptions they are little different in private houses.

Both climate and soil are favorable to the production of broom-corn, and, as the native manufacturers are less skilled in broom-making than in almost anything else, I surely think this manufacture would be a desirable enterprise. American brooms, when obtainable, cost one dollar apiece.

I could go on enumerating the smaller industries which would find a ready demand, and require but little capital. But it is unnecessary. It has only been my aim to show that everything stands waiting for the ready hand and determined will of some who may desire to begin life in that old country on a moderate scale and grow to affluence.

There is no opening whatever for either American matches or match-makers; for the matches of the Mexican match-maker are matchless; a rule that holds good in more ways than one, and may even apply to scenes from the balcony.

I have found an elysium for the Smiths, Browns and Joneses. By merely crossing the Rio Grande, they will find themselves answering to extremely high-flown names, without legal or legislative intervention, or arousing the suspicion that they left their country for their country's good. Plain William Brown becomes Guillermo Moreno, James Smith flows off euphoniously into Santiago Esmith, while John Jones murmurs in the mellifluous Castilian as Don Juan Jo-nis (Huan Honis).

The very serious question of American families taking up their residence in Mexico is one that demands especial care. We of the United States have such a profusion of comforts, even among the plainer classes, that it is not to be expected of an American woman to settle herself contentedly in her Mexican home with the scanty allowance of furniture and otherwise primitive household arrangements she there encounters. As before stated, hotel life is not proper or customary for families, and there are no boarding-houses; the whole

matter must at once resolve itself into the setting up of one's own little household kingdom. Furniture is not only extremely scarce but high-priced, and furnish the house the best one can, with what is to be had, and with a limitless amount of pottery cooking utensils, still there will remain an aching void in the list of supplied necessities. If household goods are brought from home, taxes and custom-house duties will fully quadruple their original cost. No American woman thinks at first that she can exist without a cooking-stove, but, to carry one along that has cost twenty dollars at home, it will, when turned over to her, have cost six times its original value. When in its place and man or *burro* have trotted their score or two of miles with a double handful of wood for cooking purposes, another difficulty is added when the cook tells her: "It will give me disease of the liver," or, "*No es costumbre.*" It is then her disgust reaches a supreme height. If she fails to take pillows and bedding along, it is possible that she may "lie on the floor and cover with the door," or rest on such substitutes for beds as would break the bones of a Samson or Goliath.

This may seem paradoxical, having described the elegant furnishings of some Mexican mansions; but stores exclusively for furniture are not general, with some exceptions at the capital and in the larger interior cities.

The Mexicans have been always accustomed to order their household furnishings direct from Europe or the United States, and strangers generally on going must risk the chances of buying what they can second-hand from some one moving away, or have a carpenter manufacture some, on his own plans and specifications. But do not calculate on the time for it to come into your possession. Meanwhile a cot and a few Mexican blankets are blessings in exchange for the soft side of an earthen floor.

You may be able to rent rooms in families, and in gems of precious pottery prepare your meals after your own fashion. Sometimes you will be able to procure comfortably furnished rooms, and have meals sent from a *fonda*, but you will very rarely find a Mexican family who will furnish them. You may have a room in their house,

and be freely invited to a place at their board, but to receive money for anything but the rent would be an infringement upon their established usages and ideas of hospitality.

While the vegetables, meats, and fruits are not so high as in the United States, and are generally better, other necessities make expenses mount up amazingly.

American men accommodate themselves quite readily in Mexico to the inconveniences of the home life—natural enough, when they have none of the worry—but, with a few exceptions, I have never seen an American woman in the country who was not continually pining to return home.

So far, no educational advantages exist for American children; and this of itself is a source of great perplexity. But the children themselves are extremely adaptable to everything in the country, learning the language with wonderful rapidity, and in their childish communications adopting the customs of Mexican children. Like these, they are universally petted and adored by all classes, from the servants to the highest society. I have seen one American child engage the attention and interest of every Mexican in a railway car.

An American gentleman and his wife who had resided a number of years in Mexico, and had had four children born to them in that country, were returning to Texas. These little ones had completely identified themselves with the country of their nativity and repudiated that of their fathers. Soon after crossing the Rio Grande, they stopped at a ranch house, and seeing some other American children bare-footed, they ran excitedly to their mother, exclaiming with mingled scorn and pity, "*Mira, mama! las gringitas sin zapatitas!*" ("Look, mamma! those little gringos without shoes!")

Anglo-Mexican children will never admit that they have American blood in them.

Generally there is but little social interchange between the women of the two countries; but when it takes place, warm friendships are apt to ensue. I wish my countrywomen residing there would make more effort in this direction, that the people of both countries might

know and understand each other better; for men, left to themselves, with all their diplomacy, lack the finer tact and instinct of women in uniting and binding together widely separated elements.

Those who intend to become residents will read with interest the late laws relating to foreigners.

There is a law of naturalization lately published that is important to Americans. Subjoined is a copy of the official notice:

"Americans are hereby notified that, in conformity with Article I., Chapter V., of the Law on Foreigners, of June, 1886, foreigners who may have acquired real estate, or have had children born to them within the republic, will be considered by the Mexican Government as Mexican citizens, unless they officially declare their intention to retain their own nationality, and to that effect obtain from the Department for Foreign Affairs a certificate of nationality, on or before December 4, 1886.

"Said certificates may be obtained for Americans through the Legation or the Consulate-General of the United States in this city.

"Applications for the same must be accompanied by one dollar for the necessary revenue stamps, also by a personal description of the applicant

"LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES, MEXICO, August 20, 1886."

Still another law requires that all foreigners should be matriculated at the Department for Foreign Affairs, that their nationality may be declared and recognized. Foreigners who wish to have a hearing before the courts of the country should not fail to comply with this law, as business interests are not secure without it.

The climate is all that is claimed for it—even more; and it is recommended as a safe retreat for those afflicted with pulmonary or throat troubles. But, even here, a disadvantage arises. If they improve and all goes well, it is not safe to return to their homes and this is the thing above all others they most wish to do. If they remain, the lungs will harden and heal over, causing little or no pain or inconvenience, and life be prolonged to a good old age. But the artificial or real strength imparted by the delightful climate lures them into a feeling of security. But a return home makes the decline more rapid than the improvement has been. However, if in the earlier stages of the disease, they will make up their minds to live in Mexico, taking all things as they find them, I believe many permanent cures will be

effected. I have seen some fine specimens of robust strength and health which were only gained by exercising a firm will and determination—a trying and almost impossible achievement to the invalid. While the strong and healthy American will readily accustom himself to the food, the sick naturally longs for home cooking. Occasionally a friendly countryman will have a few comforts, and such fare as is suited to the palate of the invalid, which he is generally pleased to share.

Mexican physicians, as a rule, are highly educated and accomplished men; having not only excellent advantages in the Medical School at the capital, but a large proportion being graduates of celebrated European colleges.

Consumption is not by any means confined to the stranger. It undoubtedly originates among the natives, and usually with fatal results. Another disease in this fine climate, and as much to be dreaded,

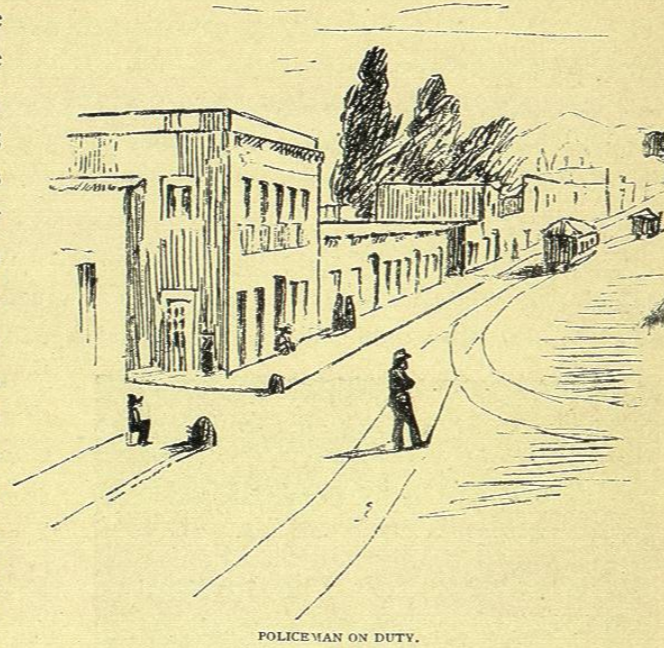


"ON ACCOUNT OF THE AIR."

is catarrh; and a simple cold soon takes this form. No class is exempt from it, and perhaps from this the custom arose of wearing the blanket, shawl, or handkerchief over the nose and mouth. That their fine air, so celebrated and lauded by visitors, should be blamed for every malady that flesh is heir to, seems a contradiction. But in this as in everything else

there is a special fitness, for strangers soon find themselves following the same custom. Ask at any time a man or woman of the poorer class why they draw the blanket over the mouth, and you will at once be answered with, "*Por el aire*" ("On account of the air").

Police regulations are admirable. The men are uniformed, and stationed in the middle of the streets where they cross at right angles; and regardless of wind or weather, each one remains at his post eight hours at a time, blowing his shrill whistle every quarter of an hour, in answer to the call of his co-guardian of the peace. The quiet and order that prevail in all towns and cities attest their efficiency.



POLICEMAN ON DUTY.

The body known as the *Rurales* constitute in Mexico to-day the most competent preservers of the public peace existing within her borders. They were once lawless and abandoned men, who led lives of wild adventure, many of them being bandits, fearing nothing.

When General Porfirio Diaz became President, he felt the necessity of providing the rural districts with an efficient mounted police force. The utmost forethought could not have predicted such grand results. Being as they are familiar with every mountain pass and lonely defile, fearless riders, and possessed of extraordinary strength and undaunted

courage, they have proved their prowess and valor from first to last. It gives one a feeling of security and satisfaction to see a company of these sturdy horsemen entering a city or town, after a toilsome journey in the wild mountain fastnesses. They wear a gay and picturesque uniform of buckskin, the pantaloons decorated on the outside seams with silver buttons, coat and vest of the same material,



A COMPANY OF RURALES.

a gorgeous red sash, and a red cravat or silk handkerchief around the neck, and sombrero with silver cord and tassels. Behind the gayly-equipped saddle a red blanket is folded and snugly secured, adding an extra charm of color to the invincibles. They come and go as if in haste, the rattling of their accouterments always attracting the attention of strangers.

Land and sea can alike testify to their courage. On January 18th, 1886, the American whaler *Ranger* ran ashore at Ensenada on the Lower California coast. The crew were swept into the sea, and would