

loose at liberty, to inslave souls to sinne and Satan. And there are so many of this kinde, both men and women, growne to a height of pride and vanity, that many times the Spaniards have feared they would rise up and mutiny against them. And for the loosnesse of their lives, and publicke scandals committed by them and the better sort of the Spaniards, I have heard them say often, who have professed more religion and feare of God, they really thought God would destroy that city, and give up the countrey into the power of some other nation."

## CHAPTER IX.

Churches.—Convents.—Religious Processions.—Palaces.

THE places of divine worship, and other religious establishments, in this city, yield to none in point of number, extent, or the richness of their endowments; but as any minute account of them, after the description I have already given of the churches of Puebla de los Angeles, to which they bear a great resemblance, would be superfluous, I shall merely notice a few of the most remarkable.

The cathedral of Mexico is far famed for its splendour and riches, and deserves its high reputation. It is about 500 feet long, including a building behind the altar, and stands in the great square, occupying the

site of the grand temple, or Teocalli, of the ancient Mexicans; and most of their idols or gods, which were of stone, and of considerable size and weight, are said to be buried under its foundations, below the pavement of the square. The exterior is far preferable to that of the cathedral of Puebla de los Angeles, but is rather heavy, and the architecture of the mixed kind.

On entering I felt something like disappointment, notwithstanding the extent and magnificence of the interior. The centre is nearly filled by the ponderous erections which entirely obstruct its otherwise fine appearance, and the high altar is, as well as that in the cathedral of Puebla, too large for the place it occupies. Like most of the churches in this country, it is loaded with a profusion of massive carved and gilt ornaments, pictures, and

painted statues. Many of the smaller paintings appeared to be of value, and works of the old Spanish and Italian masters; but they are so placed, and in such an obscure light, that it is not possible to judge decisively of their merit. There are in the apartments adjoining the cathedral, allegorical and sacred subjects, pictures of a prodigious size, and of considerable skill in their composition and design, though few of them are executed by masters held in estimation in Europe.

The high altar and its appendages are enclosed by a massive railing, of great extent, of cast metal, said to have been founded in China, from models sent from Mexico. The figures which ornament it are very numerous, but of poor execution and design. The metal, resembling brass, is considered to be of such value, on account of the gold it contains, that a silver-

smith of Mexico is said to have made an offer to the bishop to construct a new rail of solid silver, of the same weight, in exchange for it.

Divine service is celebrated here with great magnificence. Mass is regularly said every half hour from daylight till one o'clock, exclusive of the high mass, and other occasional masses. In no place are religious ceremonies observed with greater pomp or splendour. The procession which I saw from this cathedral far exceeded, in order and regularity, in the grandeur of the vestments, in the costliness and value of the sacred ornaments, and in gold and silver, any thing I ever witnessed. The processions of Rome, or any other city of Europe, suffer much in the comparison.

In the Mexican churches we do not meet with that distinction, so universal with

us, of pews and seats. Here on the same floor the poorest Indians, and the highest personages in the land, mix indiscriminately in their prayers to that being to whom earthly distinctions are unknown. In South America, persons of property are (or were till lately) always preceded to church by slaves, carrying handsome cushions for their masters, but this is a luxury unknown in this country. The newly-arrived European is shocked at the idea of kneeling on the boards which form the floors of the churches and are left loose to receive the bodies of the dead; for this is the place of burial:—but it is not customary to erect any monument, nor is even the name inscribed to point out to surviving relatives or friends the spot of interment. In no part of New Spain did I observe any memorial of the dead, except in the chapel which contains

the bones of the conqueror Cortez; where a fine bronze bust, cast by Tolso, is placed near them. Funerals are performed here in a very unostentatious manner; the same coffin being used for ages to remove the bodies of the deceased. How different in this respect are the pleasing customs of the Swedes, and other northern nations of Europe, where the graves of the departed are kept in the greatest order by surviving relations, and weekly visited and planted with fresh flowers. I have often witnessed in Sweden, and in some parts of North Wales, with pleasure, on a Saturday evening, whole families employed in this affectionate office.

The Franciscan convent of Mexico is an immense establishment, with an annual income of nearly £21,000, arising principally from alms. Its church is fine, and, as well as its numerous apartments, courts,

and cloisters, covered with large paintings, descriptive of the miracles and life of its founder:—to those who, like myself, are fond of church-hunting, it will supply ample subject for a long morning's lounge. On my first visit I was lost amidst its multiplicity of passages and labyrinths, nor could I find my way to return till conducted by one of the courteous Padres who had observed my dilemma.

The Dominican convent and church is another place of great extent and wealth, and, like the rest, contains a numerous collection of large pictures, statues, and other splendid decorations. It has been used occasionally since the independence of the country, as a temporary place of confinement, by the Government; and a few months before my arrival it contained some of the principal members of the Congress, who had here comfortable apart-

ments, and were well entertained. Escape from it was impossible, though it contains sufficient space to lodge several thousand persons, allowing ample room for exercise; whilst the various subjects delineated on its walls would furnish topics for contemplation and study.

In the paved yard or court in front of the church we were shown a large flat stone, with a square hole in its centre, in which, my informant told me, was fixed the stake to which the victims of the Inquisition were formerly fastened, previously to their being burnt. This tribunal was, till its abolition by the Ex-Emperor in 1820, under the jurisdiction of the Dominicans.

The Palace of the Inquisition is on the opposite side of the street, and near the place of execution. In this house persons accused of ecclesiastical crimes were confined. I had been told, previously to

my arrival in Mexico, of its horrible subterraneous cells, in which the wretched captives were imprisoned; but this must evidently have been an exaggeration, as no subterraneous places ever existed in the city of Mexico, nor ever can exist, as wherever the ground is excavated, even for a few feet, water instantly springs up. In the great square, whilst I was digging for the purpose of taking a cast of the sacrificial stone, at only three feet we were obliged to employ persons constantly to lade out the water. This palace is very elegant, and exhibits little or no appearance of the purposes for which it was intended. It was occupied as a polytechnical school at the time I was in the city, but was then on sale.

The monastery of the Professa is also well worthy the attention of strangers:—the fitting up of its elegant church is in a

more modern style than the others, and its appearance is as fresh and brilliant as at the hour it was finished. When lighted up on particular or great occasions, the profusion of its superb silver and gilt chandeliers, and massive candelabras, filled with wax-lights, produce a magnificent effect.

St. Augustine's should not be missed, and many others are well deserving of a visit; but the bare enumeration of their treasures would exceed the limits of this work.

The religious processions which I saw here were conducted with greater order and effect than those at Puebla, and appeared to be equally attractive to the people. The preparation of the streets from the cathedral commenced a week before the festival, and the whole line of passing was covered with an awning, to defend the procession

from sun or rain. It was the grandest and best-arranged thing of the kind I had seen. It commenced and finished by discharges of artillery. The number of religious dignitaries, in all their splendid vestments, with the quantity of silver and gold ornaments of the church, made an appearance quite new to an Englishman; and the effect was much heightened by the appearance of the magistrates and gentlemen of the city in full dress, and officers of the army, cavalry and infantry, with their military bands, and some of the finest troops, in handsome uniforms. On these occasions the city pours forth its whole population, and then only has the stranger an opportunity (in the crowded balconies and windows) of seeing the ladies to advantage. A fete in the neighbourhood of the capital constitutes one of the principal

sources of amusement to the populace, where dancing, gambling, and cock-fighting seem to be leading pastimes.

The Palace of the Viceroy is a noble building, and of greater extent than any thing of a similar class in England. It stands on the south side of the great square, and contains many of the public offices, the Prison, the Mint, the Botanic Garden, the Library, the Government Printing Office, &c. &c. The Library contains many valuable manuscript works, among which the History of Mexico, made by order of Government, occupies more than forty large quarto volumes, with numerous maps and drawings.

The Palace of Chapultepec, built by the Viceroy Galvez, is delightfully situated on a small hill about a league from the city; it is a large handsome edifice, and cost an

immense sum of money.

immense sum of money. The best-informed persons believe that it was rather intended as a fortress than a palace. It is now unoccupied, and is, in some parts, in rather a dilapidated state; but being at the distance of a pleasant short ride from Mexico, it is well worth visiting, especially as the road passes the whole way close to one of the fine aqueducts. In the garden that belongs to the palace are some immense trees, which the natives call cypresses: I paced some of their trunks, and should think they were sixty feet in circumference;—they are of great height, and from their thick foliage descend great quantities of that remarkable lichen, several yards long, called Barba d'España, or Spanish beard.

About two miles farther, near Tacubaya, is the house and garden of the Arch-  
the great captain himself; and the identical

bishop of Mexico; the latter well deserving the attention of the botanist, as well as exhibiting a fine specimen of a Spanish garden, decorated with a profusion of flagged walks, fountains, canals, close-shaded ways, and innumerable large and elegant flower-pots, placed on steps in every direction.

## CHAPTER XI.

Hospital of Jesus de los Naturales, erected by Cortez.—  
Public Establishment for pledging Goods.

WE visited the Hospital of Jesus in company with the Count Luchese, uncle to the Duke de Montleone, the descendant and heir of the great Ferdinand Cortez, who founded and endowed this institution; and in the chapel of which, by his own express desire, are deposited his bones. The house is large, forming a square, and enclosing a court; the apartments for the patients are clean and airy, the offices for the attendants comfortable and well laid out. In one of the rooms were several portraits of the family, and one likeness of the great captain himself; and the identical