

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

embroidered standard under which he wrested this immense empire from the hands of the unfortunate Montezuma. We were shown a massive table of mahogany, which was extraordinary from the top of it, notwithstanding its size, being formed of only one plank, and still more remarkable from having been the property of the conqueror. There is a neat church belonging to the establishment, containing a monument to the founder, with a pompous inscription, recording his actions, and surmounted, as I have before mentioned, by a well executed bust in bronze.

A strong iron-bound chest was produced, and when unlocked we were allowed to touch the bones of him who conquered and added New Spain to the territories of Charles V. I attentively examined the cranium of this extraordinary person, but saw nothing to distinguish it—I should

judge from it that his person was small. Some of the teeth had been lost before death.

A National Establishment for affording temporary relief to persons in pecuniary distress has long been founded in Mexico, under the protection of the Government. It occupies an extensive building opposite the Franciscan monastery. I procured an introduction to the director, a highly esteemed ecclesiastic, who politely attended me, and explained the regulations. I was shown property of all kinds, deposited, as pledges, for money advanced. A room of great extent and strength was filled with various articles of value. Whole services of plate were piled up one upon another.—Massive silver vessels, dishes, crucifixes, statues of saints, pictures with silver frames, articles of female decoration, diamonds, pearls, and some very fine rubies and emeralds, by

their presence, impress upon the beholder, at once, the past opulence and present reduced condition of the country. Property sent here remains for a certain term on the payment of a small interest, when, if not redeemed, it is offered for sale by private contract, with the lowest price affixed to each article; if, in a given period, it remains unsold, it is then put up in a monthly sale by auction, sold to the best bidder, and the overplus of what has been advanced, after deducting interest and expenses, paid over to the original proprietor.

The establishment is open every afternoon. The crowd that filled the court attested the humble fortunes of the bulk of the people. We remarked that the jewellery deposits were less in proportion than any other species of property; and the conductor accounted for it by observing,

that those Spaniards who had, or were about to return to the mother-country, converted their dollars into more portable articles, that they might convey them about their persons with greater security. This, too, accounts for my having sold the old doubloons which I had brought with me to the capital for twenty-two dollars, though intrinsically worth only sixteen—they afterwards fell to eighteen. The discerning reader will at once perceive the difference between this establishment and the pawnbrokers' shops of England: with us the distressed individual is but too often at the mercy of an interested person; but the public functionary of the Mexican Institution has no interest of his own to serve,—and perhaps a still greater public advantage accrues from the American plan, by preventing the facility with which stolen property is disposed of with us.