the hill, seats had been placed for ladies, which were speedily filled by them attired in full dress for the evening. The fine military band of the garrison struck up directly in the centre of the sward, and in a moment the dancers were on foot. Galopades, waltzes, cotillons, Spanish dances —succeeded each other rapidly. It was difficult to say which was the more beautiful display—that of Mexican beauty tripping it with gay cavalier "to music on the green," or that of Mexican beauty lining the hill-side, and watching the festive scene with its pensive gaze.

The dance continued until twilight, when the crowd moved off to town, in carriages and on foot. In a moment all was bustle, and as I gained the road, I was a little astonished to see the hosts of beggars who were there to meet the returning mass of roystering lads, and gleesome fair ones. Nor were these, alone, the beggars of St. Augustin—the city had poured out its complement; all my well-known acquaintances were present, anxious to pick up the "crumbs from the rich man's table," and, for ought I know, to venture some of them slyly in the booths of the square. As this tide of joyous life swept home, I could not help noticing one of these wretches, who threw himself actually in the pathway of the returning multitude, and *rolled* along the road in such a manner that it became impossible to pass without treading on or over him. It was the old howling beggar of the Alameda: kicks, cuffs, stumbles availed nothing; still he rolled, and still he howled.

Such is the contrast presented continually between enormous wealth and squalid misery in the Republic of Mexico!

LETTER XV.

REVOLUTION. WAX-FIGURES. VISIT TO THE MUSEUM. ANTIQUITIES.

It was just after the conclusion of the Revolution of 1841, which resulted in placing General Santa Anna at the head of the Government, that I arrived in the city of Mexico, and found the marks of the struggle that took place on that memorable occasion, yet visible in the streets. For a month the city had been in a state of siege; General Bustamante, the Constitutional President, occupying the National Palace, and holding possession of portions of the town with his troops, while General Valencia controlled the citadel, from which he cannonaded and threw shells into the city. During all this time the work of slaughter went on; but the chief injury was inflicted on harmless non-combatants, who happened at times to pass exposed places, or to cross streets which were raked by the artillery. Numbers of poor laborers, and laborers' wives, bringing them food, were thus destroyed; and during the whole of the period I remained in the Capital, the scars and indentations made by the balls and bullets in the walls of the *Calle Refugio*, were never repaired. From the tops of houses, too, death was dealt by the insurgents. Screening themselves behind the parapet walls of azotéas, and frequently in church-towers, they shot down, indiscriminately, all who passed, and made the sureness of aim a matter of boast and joke. In the Revolution or *émeute* of the previous year, General Valencia had thus well nigh fallen victim to some reckless marksman. As he passed along one of the streets, at the head of his troops—at a moment, too, when no attack was meditated—a solitary rifleman sent a ball from a steeple through his *chapeau*. The General keeps the hat as a sort of military trophy.

Upon the azotéa of the house occupied by the Prussian Chargé d'Affaires, a man was slain early one morning, by a shot from the azotéa of the opposite convent of the Profesa; yet, so incessant was the firing, that the family was prevented from coming to his succor or removing the body for several hours.

Thus did that fearful struggle degenerate into murder within the city walls, while the horrors of civil war were enhanced by a bombardment and cannonade from the citadel, under a commander who, until within a few days, had enjoyed the highest confidence of the Constitutional Government.

It is sincerely to be hoped, that the lesson taught at this epoch has disgusted the nation with these bloody turmoils. There appears among the

people a general desire for peace; and the wise, just, and thoughtful of all parties, can surely agree upon some plan to satisfy the common interests, to quell the inordinate passions of military chieftains, and, in fine, to terminate for ever these dreadful scenes. In treating hereafter of the political condition of Mexico, I shall have occasion to refer again to this subject, and shall then do so more fully.

These ideas struck me as I went for the first time to the University, and saw even the front of that edifice, which should naturally be sacred to learning and peace, pierced with cannon balls and bullets. The walls only, I believe, were injured. Indeed, from the appearance of the houses throughout the city, I am inclined to think that the Mexicans were either exceedingly bad marksmen, or, that they aimed high (if they aimed at all,) to prevent carnage. The plaster and stones, and the poor non-combatants were evidently the greatest sufferers, while the soldiers seem to have had an amiable compassion for each other!

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The UNIVERSITY is a fine old monastic building, erected around a court-yard of large dimensions, in the centre of which is now placed the colossal bronze statue of Charles IV., cast in the city of Mexico by Tolsa, a Mexican artist. This really beautiful work formerly stood in the great square fronting the Cathedral, where its huge mass was more in proportion to the surrounding space and objects.

STATUE OF CHARLES IV.

The statue is Equestrian. The monarch is represented in Roman costume, his brow bound with a wreath of laurel, and in the act of curbing his horse with his left hand, while his right extends a truncheon. An antique sword rests on his thigh, and an imperial robe flows in easy folds from his shoulders covering the haunches of the horse, who is moving forward, and trampling on a quiver of arrows. The face of Charles was not remarkable for dignity or command, so that, in order to preserve the resemblance, the artist has been obliged to throw all the *power* of his work into the figure. But the result has been a statue of great majesty, and worthy of the most judicious praise. Although the model of the horse is certainly good, and the dimensions well preserved in the colossal size, yet it is quite evident that the artist had only the Mexican animal in his mind's eye when he moulded his masterpiece. The chief defects, as well as I was able to judge in its present unfavorable position, were disproportions in the neck and haunches; the former being entirely too thick and large, while the latter are too heavy and small, both for the legs of the animal and the figure they support. The drapery of the sovereign, the saddle-cloth, sword, bridle, a Medusa head on the martingale, and all the accessories, are admirably finished in the highest style of art. One of the most severe and tasteful critics who ever saw it, compares this work of the native Mexican with the famous statue of Marcus Aurelius at Rome, which has so frequently been the theme of praise by the most learned sculptors of the Old World.

Indeed, the art of imitating nature in statuary, is a talent perhaps nowhere more common than in Mexico. I do not mean by this, that fine sculpture is common there; but I know of few places where there is more talent to produce it.

The moment a stranger arrives in Mexico he is besieged by a host of *wax-figure* makers, with small statues of the costumes and trades of the country. These, it is true, are cast in moulds, but the talent is not the less remarkable. They are admirably executed. Dress, feature, demeanor, action, are all caught and faithfully depicted to the very life, and no collection can be more worthily adorned than by a series of these figures. You can obtain them of any size, or any subject; and although the materials are frail, they may be safely transported from the Capital to the coast. If these *statuettes* are wonderful, their makers are not less so. You would be astonished to see the artist, who produces a gem of a figure which in Europe would command a couple of doubloons. A little room up two pairs of ricketty stairs, just large enough to turn in, where his wife cooks and sleeps with two or three children in one corner; while he, with his lump of wax and his portable furnace, stands working, moulding and dressing his figures in another. Such is the atélier, while the man himself, is scarcely distinguishable from the commonest *léperos*.

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Until recently, there were in the city of Puebla two sisters, remarkable for the manufacture of *figures from rags*. These ladies were of respectable birth, and always commanded a ready sale for their works, which were sought for even in Europe. They moulded the figures of lumps of beeswax, covered the different parts of the body with *cotton cloth* of colors suited to the complexion, and, while the wax was yet soft, moulded the features into the required expression, completing the representation with appropriate dresses. I have two of these in my possession, which, in point of character, are worthy of the pencil of Teniers. They represent an old Indian woman, scolding and weeping over her drunken son. The grief and age of the one, and the tipsy leer, roll of the head, and want of command over the limbs of the other, are rendered with indescribable faithfulness. One of these remarkable artists died while I was in Mexico, and the other is extremely old and feeble, so that it has now become a matter of great difficulty to obtain a specimen of her works; nor can they hereafter be as perfect as formerly, as the sister who died was remarkable for her perfection in *forming* the figures, while the greater talent of finishing and giving *expression*, was the task of the survivor. Both duties now devolve on her, and what with age and the loss of her companion, her hand seems to have lost much of its cunning.

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But let us retrace our way to the Museum.

Turning from the statue of Charles IV. in the centre of the court-yard, to the left-hand side of the quadrangle, you observe the arcades at that end covered with panels of wood, ten or fifteen feet high, and apparently filled with boxes, old bookcases, old stones, and a quantity of lumber. A *real* to the porter will, however, admit you to the inclosure, and you will be surprised to find amid that mass of filth, dirt, and refuse furniture, relics of antiquity for which thousands would be gladly paid by the British Museum, the Louvre, the Glyptotheca of Munich, or, indeed, by any enlightened Sovereign, who possessed the taste to acquire and the money to purchase.

You see a mimic tree, with a stuffed bear climbing up it; a bleached and hairless tiger-skin dangling from the ceiling; half-a-dozen Indian dresses made of snake-skins, fluttering on the wall; and, amid all this confusion, towers aloft the grand and hideous Indian idol of Teoyaomiqui; the great Stone of Sacrifice, (with a stone cross now erected in the middle to sanctify it;) the celebrated statue of the Indio Triste, not long since disinterred; a colossal head of serpentine, in the Egyptian style of sculpture; the two carvings of the Feathered Serpents, already described in my letter on Cholula; while, on the benches around the walls, and scattered over the floor, are numberless figures of dogs, monkeys, lizards,

birds, serpents, all in seemingly inextricable confusion and utter neglect.

As you enter the gate of the inclosure, the stone that first strikes your view is represented in the following sketch.

It is a huge mass of serpentine, a stone now rarely found in the Republic. This curious head* was discovered in the year 1837, in the street of St. Teresa, on the site of an old Indian Palace, the tradition of which records it to have been the residence of Montezuma's father. It is a yard broad and twenty-nine inches high. The carving is admirably well executed, and strangers are struck with the strong resemblance it bears, both in its massiveness and demure style, to the statues of ancient Egypt. Bustamante, one of the most learned of the modern antiquarians of Mexico, asserts it to be the god of Baths. Gondra, the director of the National Museum, on the other hand, alleges it to be the god of Night—the half shut eyes, and sealed mouth, bearing him out in his hypothesis.

Next to this are the "Sacrificial Stone," and the idol "Teoyaomiqui," of which I shall treat in a separate letter. Beyond them is the following curious figure,

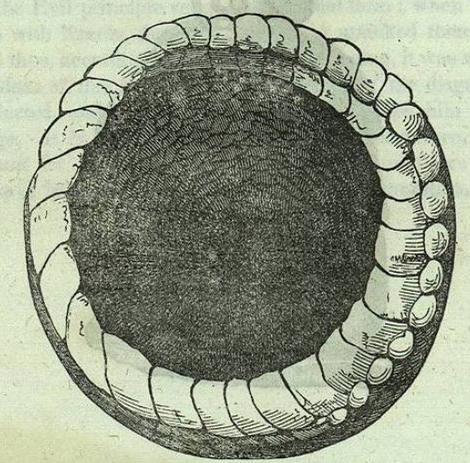
* Sometimes called "Centeotl," sometimes "Temazcalteci."

found on the Hill of Tezcosingo, near the town of Tezcoco, on the eastern side of the lake. The Indians from that portion of the country say that it represents the God of Silence. The mouth, where the lines in the cut mark a square, is painted red on the statue, but Mr. Gondra believes that the color was added by the Indian who discovered it. Next to this is

PERRO MUDO.

a figure of the Perro Mudo—or dumb dog. This carving was also found in the Calle de St. Teresa, and was doubtless an Indian idol. Silent dogs, were said to have been plentiful at the period of the Spanish conquest; and, although they have been destroyed for food, in the southern and middle parts of Mexico, they are still found, it is alleged, among the Apaché Indians. The figure is of basalt, like the god of Silence, and is one foot and ten inches high.

By the side of the "Perro Mudo," on the bench against the wall, is an Indian Mortar;



the edge of the bowl is surrounded, as you perceive, by the figure of a coiled serpent, exquisitely carved in basalt. Next to this is a head, also beautifully cut in the same material.

I was unable to find any one who could explain its signification, or inform me of the place where it was discovered.

But of all the figures within this inclosure, none struck me so much as that of the INDIO TRISTE—or "Sad Indian."

This remarkable statue was discovered behind the Palace, beneath the street which now bears its name. It is three feet four inches high, and two feet broad, and was disinterred in the year 1828. It is rather the figure of a surly, than a sad Indian. His brows are drawn together with anger. His eyes are wide and glaring. His tongue is slightly protruded from the mouth. Around his neck is a cape of feathers, and his feet are sandalled. His hands are joined by the points of the fingers, and an aperture is thus left to insert a staff or pole—the bottom of which evidently rested in a socket cut in the base of the statue, between the feet, as indicated in the engraving. This figure was probably set on the wall, or at the portal of some edifice, and in his hand was erected a banner or insignia of command. There is a fixed, stony gaze of imperturbable surliness and impudence in the face, which always struck me as making it one of the most characteristic remains in the Museum.

Although there is ample material around me for further illustration of the curious idolatry of the ancient Indians, I will not trouble you with more sketches at present, and conclude this part of my description of the Museum by simply saying, that the remainder of the idols are chiefly images of dogs, monkeys, lizards, and rabbits—the proportions of which

are greatly exaggerated, so as to make them deformed and hideous. If their worship was a worship of pure propitiation, they seem to have adopted the idea of the Chinese, and prayed rather to the Evil principle of things than to the Good. "God is too good," said a Chinese to me once—"God is too good to hurt us, but Ki—the Devil—will; I therefore pray to the devil to let me alone!"

It may be readily imagined that people, in the dawn of religious ideas, will personify every ill that assails them under the shape in which it becomes most annoying. They imagine when they are assailed by serpents, that the Evil principle vexes them in that form; when their houses are overrun with lizards, that the demon has attacked them in another shape; and thus, according to their simple reasoning, it was wise to manifest their ideas of this wicked Spirit in statues of the disguises he had himself selected, and under those forms to appease him by worship and offerings. It is by imagining a system of this nature, that we can alone account for the extraordinary and fanciful creations of Mexican art which have been preserved until our day and generation.