

should take part in it (*la gente decente* the white Creoles like to consider themselves in opposition to the Mestizoes), because the common people so easily crowd themselves in." — The old lady cast a significant glance at the speaker, and blew the smoke of her cigarette through both nostrils — "but papa said that would not do, because the second *alcalde* and the *regidores* (common council) could not be excluded. And I don't see any objection either; there are honest people besides ourselves although their colour" — "Silence!" cries the mother, who has lost her patience over this philanthropic development of the daughter, and directs the conversation to other topics, particularly to the question whether we shall go on foot or on horseback. The young ladies prefer riding, but the mother shows herself inclined towards the infantry, and I declare myself of her opinion from purely selfish motives. According to the custom of the country we should be under the necessity of calling for the ladies and of offering them the saddle; and I trembled for the back of my good horse, who would not only have the enormous weight of the dame to carry, but also my own, because it is the fashion for us to mount behind the saddle and play the devoted knight to the fair one. The judge came most opportunely to the rescue, and decided at once with his better half, and we parted light of heart, to meet again at the cock-fight.

About noon when the market closes, the people crowd into the shops, partly to make purchases and partly to drink. No regular beer-houses are found in all Spanish America. Sitting and drinking together is something entirely unknown. Whoever wishes to drink, calls for what he chooses, and drinks it standing before the bar. In the cities there are a peculiar sort of wine-houses, in which apart from the various kinds of wines, all sorts of distilled liquors are to be had. In the villages, the booths for the most part deal in dry goods, groceries of all kinds, and drinks. Nearly all sell bread, chocolate, sugar, spices, soap, candles, oil, Spanish wines, brandy etc. We may be asked perhaps, if there are no hotels how the traveller finds entertainment? In almost every village there is an inn (*meson*) where the stranger can find shelter for himself and his horse. These establishments resemble the oriental Caravansaries. They are huge structures built around a square court, with a multitude of little rooms, each with a separate entrance from the court. The furniture of the rooms consists of a fir-table, a rickety bench, and a board bedstead. Whoever wishes to sleep in a bed must bring his own with him. Great stables are attached to the dwellings. Sometimes one is able to obtain something to eat in these "mesons" by ordering it, and sometimes one is obliged to seek it in the gambling-houses (*fondas*). This is a Spanish custom which has maintained itself to the present day, and moreover a very inconvenient one. Upon the main thoroughfares, and in the large towns, hotels are now everywhere established. In less frequented regions no sort of public entertainment whatever, is found in the villages, but every Creole or Mestizo gladly offers his hospitality, as in the days of the patriarchs; and whatever the house affords is never withheld, so that the stay of the guest may be made as pleasant as possible. I call to mind many happy hours which I have enjoyed in the families of these friendly Mexicans, whom I by chance have asked for

a night's lodging on my journey. Only the way-worn traveller in a strange and thinly peopled land, or above all the sick man, who has received sympathizing attention among foreign people, knows properly how to appreciate a noble hospitality. I have become acquainted with this virtue in many ways, and rejoice in being able to extol it.

XIV.

THE MESTIZOES (CONTINUED).

Let us now return to the shop where our peasants, whose homes are scattered about the country, are making their purchases of bread, chocolate, sugar; soap etc. The daughters are admiring the beautiful calicoes and silks, and begging the mother to buy them something. The latter stands looking inquiringly at the father, who insists that he has no more money. The tradesman knows how to avail himself of the favorable moment, and offers credit to any extent desired. If the husband now has already been taking a glass with his neighbour or god-parents, as is most likely the case, his heart is tender, and he says: "Buy what you will." Whole mountains of goods must come down upon the table: everything is examined, turned, and overturned, and the choice is made with as much difficulty as if the welfare of the house depended upon it. This indeed may also be seen in every city of Europe.

In the streets one sees many families journeying homewards to their farms, nearly all on horseback; for the Mestizo can dispense with anything rather than his horse. This is natural, for from childhood he has grown up with this domestic animal. The mother has the infant on her arm as she rides along, the elder children sit behind the saddle of the parents, and when six years old they are able to ride alone. On the wedding-day, the bridegroom brings and presents to his bride a saddled mare on which she rides to church; the father presents the son with a colt in order that he may break it in himself, and even the aged man takes pleasure in the horse that has so long borne him. When these *Rancheros* meet, they entertain themselves for hours about their horses, each praising his own for fleetness, intelligence and endurance, that one would really suppose each to be the direct offspring of Mahomet's famous mare; but on seeing them, they are often found to be hacks, hardly worthy of being converted into dogs' meat. The wealthy young Mestizo spares no expence in procuring a good horse, together with a beautiful saddle and trappings. Silver must glitter

upon the bridle, the housing is embroidered and adorned with tassels, and the dress of the horseman has something elegant and knightly about it. We shall form his acquaintance, at the festival of the shepherds, at which the Ranchero appears in his glory.

The Mestizo lives in general more simply than the Creole; indeed the majority have nearly the same mode of life as the Indians, but with somewhat more comfort and convenience in their houses. We commonly find, however, simply a bench and a table, and some board bedsteads covered with mats, and having a few sheeps-kins for pillows and bolsters. One usually meets with a kitchen detached from the house, where the family take their three meals a day, in order that they may have their maize bread warm from the fire. At meals the men sit upon low stools and take the plate upon their knees; the women sit upon mats. Knives and forks are not used. The food of the Mestizoes is distinguished from that of the Indians, by consisting chiefly of meat. The cooking is very greasy, and they eat in general much pork. On festive occasions there is a great slaughter of hens and turkies, for the Mestizoes raise poultry in abundance, and greatly enjoy eggs with their beans at breakfast: Fruits and confectionary are a necessity with them, and after every meal a lump of sugar is eaten to prepare them for drinking copious draughts of water.

The manners of the white Creoles have for the most part passed over to the Mestizoes; among the wealthier, one will hardly find a difference, while the poorer portion more nearly resemble the Indians in simplicity of life and household arrangements. This lies in the nature of the case, since the Mestizo constitutes a connecting link between the two dissimilar races, an organ through which the white race gradually assimilates itself to the brown.

The report of a dozen rockets was the signal for the cock-fight. In the great court-yard behind the town-hall the theatre was arranged, *i. s.* a circle of perhaps six feet in diameter was fenced about a yard high with boards as an arena for the spurred combatants, and a dozen benches of unplanned boards formed a half circle as the seat of honour for the ladies and guests of distinction. I will introduce my courteous readers, and the master of the ceremonies will take it as a great honour to be allowed to place such distinguished spectators in boxes of the first tier. Before the play begins, I will make you acquainted with the order of the day. Tradesman A. has challenged upon five tapadas; he bets a hundred pesos (dollars) upon the chief cock, upon each of the others fifty. Planter B. has taken up the glove. These tapadas, or blind fights are those where they who lay the wager bring their cocks concealed, and consequently no one knows beforehand the adversary that his bird has to contend with. These wagers are laid for weeks in advance, in order that each may have time to train his cocks. Amateurs breed whole menageries of these birds, and have several keepers for them. Each gladiator sits in a separate cage, the comb is cropped off smooth; by constant intercourse with men, he loses his rudeness, and becomes so far civilized as to allow himself to be caught without making an uproar, and bristles up his neck-feathers, and crows upon the arm of his keeper with an air of true military self-reliance. The care of them requires great attention. The utmost cleanliness and the strictest diet are observed, and

every day they are tethered in the open air, in order that they may enjoy the sun, and wallow in the sand; every day too they are practised in fighting. This takes place in the following manner. One cock is let loose and another is held before him. The one at liberty must now make the attack, fly aloft against the keeper who holds his adversary in his arm, and, in short, make a regular onslaught. Thus his courage is brought to the sticking-point. It requires great experience and discrimination to select a cock of ability. He must be of good family, of proper osteological structure, firmly built and powerful, with black eyes, a short black beak, and a full sonorous voice, that can hold out clearly two measures. Perhaps I shall be taken for a connoisseur in this matter. Alas! I am not even a dilettante, for my tender heart rebels against cock-fights and bull fights, and all sorts of fights, whether of two or four-legged animals; but I was once initiated into the mysteries of "gallomany" while on a visit to a valiant Mestizo. I had gone to bed late and tired, and fell immediately asleep. It might have been eleven o'clock when an infernal uproar terrified me out of my sweet dreams. At about the same instant fifty cocks set up their trumpet concert in the immediate vicinity, accompanied by a furious flapping of wings, and as it was in December, the musical contest continued the whole night through, so that most undoubtedly no evil spirit ventured himself within a hundred paces of the house. The next morning I told the host my troubles. But the man was an enthusiast, and considered it as an attention to his hobby, and had no doubt I had heard but the divine voice (*el canto divino*) of his first and favourite concert singer, who had already come forth victorious from six combats, and could not be purchased for hundreds of dollars. I must accompany him forthwith to his galleria (cock cabinet) and receive upon the spot fundamental instruction both in the theory and practice of the science. It availed nothing that I gave repeated assurances of my regard for the patriarchal virtues of this lord of the feathered court, and moreover the gastronomical interest I took in him; I must promise him to cultivate this illustrious race, to which end he made me a present of a pair of breeders. Thus you see that really against my will, I attained to some instruction in this matter, which afterwards misled me now and then to institute cock-fights myself.

But see now how many people are entering with cocks under their arms, and tying them up in the shade. When the first regularly appointed fights are over, these take their turn. Now one of them enters the lists with his cock, and says how much he will bet upon him. Others take up the bet and furnish an adversary. The entrance of the *bon ton* of the village, together with the betters A. and B. awaken the attention of the public; the ladies take seats, the men make a few arrangements in regard to the umpires, who enter the arena; an orchestra of four guitars commences an overture, and now a rocket ascends. On this signal two men step forth with the hooded heroes of the arena, the covering is withdrawn, and we behold the noble pair. Immediately at sight of his antagonist one of the cocks crows, which is regarded as a good omen. Now they proceed to arm them, for the spurs have been sawn off close, and in their stead, sharp-pointed, curved knives, nearly three inches long, and of the strength of pen-knife blades, are bound to the feet. While this is going on, the spectators are laying their wagers. "Three

dollars on the red one!" "Three on the black one", cries another. The money (one is only allowed to bet with ready specie) is put into the hands of a third person, and whoever wins receives the whole. Many bets are made. The champions are now ready armed, excited by presenting other cocks at them, and exasperated still more by pulling out small feathers; and now the two are opposed to each other, and held apart by the tail feathers. All is breathless silence; every eye is directed thither, the neighbouring trees are laden with boys, and at the kitchen-window of the adjoining house, an old woman stands with her head thrust out as far as possible.

"Let them go!" cry the umpires, and the infuriated animals fly at each other like dragons. The contest is a desperate one; blood flows on both sides, but neither yields an inch, neither has received his mortal wound. They become exhausted, both are taken from the ground at the same time, fresh water is sprinkled upon them, and then they are let loose again. Now the one collects his last remaining strength, and makes a mighty thrust at his adversary, who meanwhile has also used his weapon; he falls indeed lifeless to the ground, and the victor utters his crow of triumph; but at the same time reels and falls: great, glorious, a hero!

The world, i. e. the witnessing spectators, give vent to their enthusiasm in praise of both the noble dead; a few minutes after they share the booty. The criticism and strife over, gain and loss drown the lamentations over the fallen. O bitter satire on human life!

Now other contests quickly follow, which do not all end so heroically as the first. There was one disgraceful flight, one victory through the fall of one of the foes, one undecisive combat because neither antagonist could longer keep his legs, etc. Let us go! for who can witness the sight of so much bloodshed. The past suffices for us. This sporting people offer up yet a whole army of valiant cocks simply to gratify their cruel selfishness.

On our proposed walk we find ourselves again in female society, for the fair sex is better represented than the other, who still remain at their barbarous sport. It is the most glorious weather; the sky is perfectly cloudless and of the deepest blue. No breath of air is astir in the leaves, and the dark green orange trees around the cottages of the village are so richly laden with golden fruit, that they can scarcely bear their burdens. Upon the tall bushes of the *datura arborea* glisten the white flower-bells and among them the scarlet *euphorbiae* and tree-like dahlias. The temperature of the air is mild, like that of spring in spite of the almanack's assertion that it is the 12th of December. To day we celebrate the festival of our dear Lady of Guadalupe, the tutelary divinity of the land, whose image, in the contests against the Spaniards, had shone forth in splendour upon the standard of the native-born. According to the tradition, the virgin had appeared to an Indian in the sixteenth century upon the mountain of Tepeacac, a league from Mexico, and had given him as a token a wreath of flowers; and when the unbelieving bishop only laughed at the Indian, she appeared to him the second time, let her mantle fall upon him, and left in colours of light her image upon it. The Indian, Juan Diego, brought

the fresh token to the prelate, who convinced, sank down upon his knees and worshipped it. The pope recognized the miracle, and declared the 12th of Dec. a festival for Spain and the Colonies. A hundred years later, a rich cathedral was built upon the spot where the miracle was performed, and the preservation of the holy relic is given over to regular canons, who still enjoy the fat livings.

In the wars of independence the Mexicans chose their virgin as the leader of their battles, the Spaniards Our Lady of Succour (*Nuestra Señora de los Remedios*), a wonder-working picture of the Virgin, that Cortes' companions had already brought from Spain with them, and from that time had adorned a celebrated pilgrim-chapel six leagues from Mexico. Both virgins were the battle-cry of the contending armies, and so great was the enmity, that the Spaniards once held a court-martial on the brown virgin, the Indian, as they called her, and condemned her to be shot in effigy as a traitress, which, if I mistake not, was actually carried into execution near Puebla. Incredible vagaries of human understanding in the nineteenth century!

The Creoles maintained the mastery, and consequently her festival is solemnly celebrated throughout the land. Guadalupe is a very common Christian name for both sexes, and therefore the day is celebrated as an anniversary in many families with dance and song. The children play cock-fights in the streets with great hilarity; here they have their cock-chicks, and let them peck each other; there, two little brown bare-footed fellows must improvise the part of the cocks; they are held by their frocks by two older ones, and spring at each other, to the amusement of a great troop of old folks, who congratulate themselves on the rare endowments of their offspring.

Our expedition is not led out in close columns, but is scattered into various groups between the gardens and the Indian quarters outside the village. The Indians always live together, and do not place their houses near the road, but plant them round with shrubbery and fruit-trees, so that the garden-hedge shall border upon the highway. By this means in places of mixed population it is easy to distinguish where the Indians dwell. Everywhere as we passed along to-day, inquisitive women were gazing after us, standing in their narrow garden-gateways with their crowds of children about them, who always conceal themselves when any one attempts to approach them.

As we step into the open fields, the shrubbery is green and gorgeous with the rich bloom of autumn. It is the compositae that unfold themselves in greatest abundance at this time of year, especially the eupatoria and sun-flowers. The maize-fields begin to turn yellow, and are swarmed by immense flocks of tortos (cassius) and green parrots, which the thong of the keeper frightens away as often as they attempt their invasions.

Our way leads along over a green plain to an eminence covered with forest, behind which the heights rise up wild and steep into lofty mountains; a splendid sight, this bold outline against the clear blue sky. "We have chosen our day fortunately", remarked a countryman who was walking beside me; "this mildness and