By vows and grates confined;
Freely to all ourselves we give,
Constrained by Jesus's love to live
The servants of mankind."

It is not in this hidden and idle manner that one must serve his generation; but in earnest efforts to bring all souls out of sin, ignorance, evil habit, and all degradation. These monks of Mount Carmel fared sumptuously or sparingly; but the peon still bowed his head to his burden, and the Spaniard still robbed and murdered. Better far less introspection and more outward action. Thus only will the world come nearer Christ and heaven.

We left regretfully the ancient pile and its more ancient surroundings. At half-past three that torrid winter afternoon our last picnic meal was shared by no less than four dogs, who ate the crumbs under the table, and even the meats off of it. They were worth eating, as I can testify. An English gentleman purveyed and a good English cook prepared the store which thus evanished at last from under the table.

We rode through the cool, rich forest, and out into the blaze, which burned our backs and necks as if it came through a burning-glass. There were the same burdened mules and men, donkeys and boys, the same lounging soldiers, the same sad-eyed women; one group alone merry with laughter, as they chased a rat among their ragged huts. The sun drove the long shadows over the plains, disappeared in a crater of fire, that shot up flames from its black bowl, while Iztaccihuatl and Popocatepetl glowed rosily long after valley and hill-top were in shadow and slumber. The moon arose, and our spirits with her, for it grew perilous even on the highway as it grew dark, and we paced chattingly along the Empress Road from Chapultepec, taking a moonlight ride, that rarest and riskiest of pleasure jaunts in Mexico. It is too bad that to the very centre of the city there is no protection against robbery. We escaped, and entered our courts in four hours after we left that of the convent, tired and delighted with the ride, the fright, the tramp, the ruin, the whole of El Desierto.

X.

A RIDE ABOUT TOWN.

The Horse and its Rider.—Paseos.—Empress's Drive.—A Relic of Waterloo.—The Tree of Montezuma.—The Woods.—View of Chapultepec.—Baths of Montezuma.—Tacubaya Gardens.—The Penyan.—Canal.—Floating Gardens.—Gautemozin.—The Café.

This country is made for the horse, and the horse for the country. He paces and canters deliciously, and the air and the clime fit perfectly to his gait. Horseback in England and the States is a luxury pursued under difficulties. The first difficulty is in the horse, which is seldom trained to such service; and the second and worse one is in the weather, which is not sufficiently uniform to make the luxury a permanency. Here every morning is perfect, and about every horse. The saddle, too, is made for riding; far superior to the English saddle, it holds you on, and does not make you hold yourself on. So if you come to Mexico, take to the horse. Only gentlemen, however, indulge in this pastime, and very handsomely they ride: straight legs, laced with silver buttons, broad hat of white felt, with a wide silver band expanded into a huge snake-like swell and fold; their horses often gayly caparisoned, and delighting evidently in their lordly service. There is no more characteristic or agreeable sight in Mexico than these riders; far more agreeable than it is when witnessed a few miles out of town, more or less, and the graceful horseman politely requests of you the loan of your watch, wallet, horse—if you have one—and sometimes all your outer apparel. That is a sight not unfrequently seen, all but the last, close to the city gates. Two of these city riders were relieved by others of these city riders of horses and purses, our last Sabbath night, on the crowded and fashionable drive of the town, not a mile from the Alameda.

But it is safe to take these rides in the morning; and American ladies, with the bravery of their blood, are willing to take them also. The prettiest ride is to Chapultepec. At six in the morning is the hour. A cup of coffee, hot and hot, and a sweet cracker are the inward supports against the jouncing and rocking. The Alameda is pranced past, scowling at us from its deep thickets, its very smiles changed to frowns under the possibilities of its contents, for robbers and revolvers may suddenly appear from out its greennesses.

The paseos open at its upper end, broad, straight, and handsome. Two or three of these carriage roads come together here about a statue of a Charles of Spain, the only royal effigy allowed to remain, probably the only one that ever entered the land. The decayed bull-fight arena stands opposite the monument, itself a relic, like the effigy, of by-gone institutions—by-gone in the city, but still extant, if not flourishing, in the rural capitals. Two of these avenues go to the Castle of Chapultepec. The one that leads directly to its gates was built by Maximilian, under his wife's orders, and is now called the "Empress's Drive," but for many a year it was known as "the Mad-woman's Drive." It is straight as an arrow from an Aztec bow, lined with young trees, and besprinkled half the way to the castle. It is the favorite thoroughfare for coach and horseman, though these dare not usually go over half its length. That is why it is wet down no farther. To pass that bound is to become possibly the prey of robbers, so bold are these gentlemen of the road.

We canter carelessly on, mindless of robbers in the morning calm. Do you see that little old man who trots easily along? He was the author of the fortunes of the Rothschilds. He was at Waterloo in their employ the day of the battle, took boat before the official messengers, and bore the tidings of the fall of Napoleon to London, to his masters. They instantly bought heavily in European government stocks, and made immense fortunes by their speedy rise. It is odd to meet this representative of the first and most successful of modern private expresses trotting his nag, in his su-

per-eightieth year, on this drive, made by a creature of a third Napoleon from him whom he supposed on that day to be, in person and in family, utterly and forever overthrown; and that creature of his, too, a daughter of a king that succeeded that fallen emperor, and husband of an archduke, the nephew or grand-nephew of his own empress, Maria Theresa. Certainly history, even to-day, has curious combinations. You would never have thought that such a nugget could have been picked up on this far-off road. The hill and buildings rise majestically before you, more ancient than any other like fortress and palace in the world. It was a seat of power before the Spaniards entered the land. It is a solitary hill, apart from all others, thrust out into the plain like a nose upon the face of nature. It is a huge rock, whereon the waves of war have beat for a thousand if not for two thousand years,

"Tempest-buffeted, glory-crowned."

The gate is reached. A high wooden slat-fence keeps out the peon, but does not keep in the view. Soldiers as sentinels stand at its gates. The road winds through groves of ancient woods of Yosemite style in nature and in size. Not far from the entrance rises and spreads the gigantic tree known by the name of the Tree of Montezuma. It probably oft refreshed him before he dreamed of the terrible invasion of the white-face and the loss of his kingdom, and perhaps witnessed his bewilderment after that dread event. It is, however, silent on these scenes, unless these whispering leaves are trying to tell the story.

Farther on we enter a large grove of these large trees, a remnant of the vast forests of such that once overshadowed the land. Here picnics are held by city people, who forget the past in their momentarily happy present.

The road winds up the hill, past two Aztec idols hidden in the thick-leaved bushes, up the bare, steep sides which Scott's men bloodily mounted, and ends in a garden near the top. Here the passion-flower hangs along the walls, and a multitude of less hot-blooded kindred blossom by the pathways. Birds as brilliant as

THE TREE OF MONTEZUMA.

the flowers line the walls, and one without beauty of plumage conquers all with his wonderful beauty of song. It is the old law of compensation: "*Non omnia omnes possumus*"—"Every body can not do every thing."

The suite of rooms that compose the castle are large, and command a magnificent prospect. The city lies below, amidst green groves and gardens, with shining drive-ways and spacious fields between. The hills tower grandly beyond. It is a spectacle worthy of a king or emperor, or president—the worthiest of them all. No such panorama has any other palace in the world. Windsor, the next most beautiful, is tame to this. Schönbrunn, Potsdam, Fontainebleau, and all, are flat and cheap to this rare combination. But, then, one is apt to live longer in those palaces, and to die a more natural death, if one death is more natural than another,

and that makes their occupants content with humbler luxuries. From Montezuma to Maximilian, the occupants of this hill palace have many of them made a violent exit from their troublous honors. Juarez dared not stay here after night-fall without a large body-guard; and it is abandoned to occasional state breakfasts, the heart of the city being judged a safer residence. Maximilian enjoyed the retreat, and filled the palace with his own pictures and the imperial symbols, the only remnants of which are a few pitchers and basins with his monogram upon them. This is pretty near the estate to which the first and imperial Cæsar sunk. If his clay was utilized to a chink filling, the crown of Maximilian turns into this clay of a wash-basin.

A dining-hall in the rear of the front rooms, on the backbone of the hill—hog's back it might be called for sharpness and roughness—opens pleasantly upon both northern and southern views. Here Juarez gave Seward a breakfast, the last public entertainment in this hall, and one worthy to be made, the saved fêting his savior; for had it not been for Mr. Seward's army of sixty thousand men at the Rio Grande, under General Sherman, and his letter to M. Drouhn L'Huys, requesting his master to gratify the President of the United States by withdrawing his troops from Mexico, Juarez would have still been at Washington, if alive. Both chiefs died in a few months after that breakfast; died at scarcely a moment's warning. So all that are to come to greatness here must turn to dust, as all have turned. Not much to choose between the Spanish blooded prince slain by an Aztec, and the Aztec slain by a Spaniard. Ecclesiastes is profitable reading at Chapultepec. "*Vanitas vanitatum, omnia vanitas.*" Its woods are old, its rocks, its landscape, its mountains.

"Stars abide—
Shine down in the old sea:
Old are the shores:
But where are the old men?
I who have seen much,
Such have I never seen,"

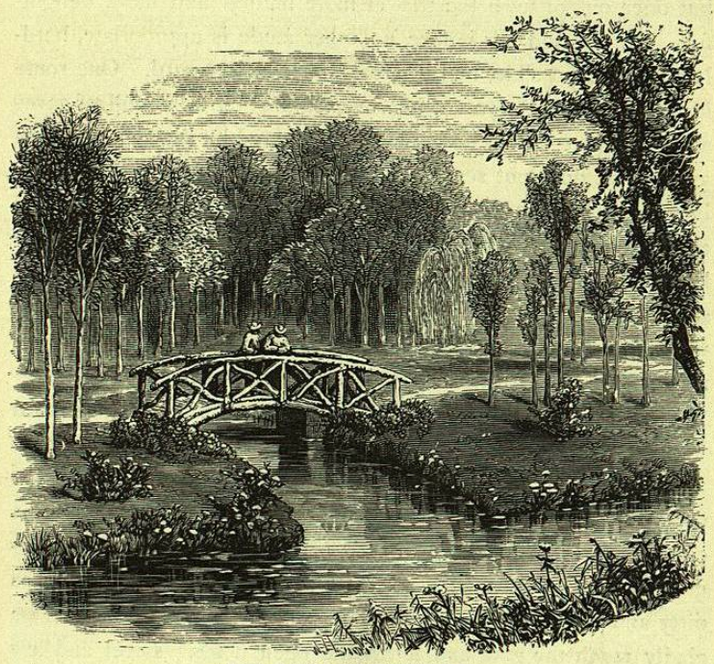
says the Earth-song, in Emerson. But Emerson fails to see why the earth sees them not, why the conscious lord of creation is its weakest victim. The earth has seen such. A thousand years was once their day. But only a day at that. Only a babe was Methusala to the earth, and the sea, and the stars. Ah, sin, sin, what hast thou done!

You can see from the southern windows the Molino del Rey, where the bloodiest of the battles of General Scott was waged. It is a white mill, not two miles off, on a spur of the mountains, and looking innocent of the fierce fighting which it had drawn around its thick walls and high hill-side. The Mexicans have erected a handsome monument there to their own valor, in withstanding with a whole cityful of two hundred thousand the shock of a little handful of a dozen thousand. It withstood for a season only, for they soon yielded and made their retreat good to this hill, whither the Americans followed, and whence they with steadfast step pursued them to the city and the President's palace. You can see the whole route of the troops, from their debouching between the snow mountains yonder, to their battles of Contreras, San Antonio, and Cherubusco, below the city round to Molino del Rey above it, and so hither, and into town.

But let us descend, for the sun is getting up, and we must be off.

Just before we reach the gate-way we see a pool, cut into the ground, partly filled with water. It is well walled, with steps descending into it, and large enough for a comfortable bath. This is called the Bath of Montezuma, and was probably used by him; but it was only a receptacle. The fountain whence it sprung is just out of the present grounds, and is the private property of Señor Escandron, who makes many a penny out of its waters. We pass out the gate, ride under shading willows by the water-courses, enter the gardens of the bath, and the inclosure of the spring. Here is a pool fifty feet square and forty feet deep. The water is so clear that you can see it breaking out of the rock-bed, a tiny hill-side and hollow amidst the ferns and grasses that cover that natural floor with a perpetual carpet. Here to plunge you will

find delightful in this rising heat of a January sun. An adjoining square the water flows into, whose floor is paved with tiles, and whose depth is not above your neck. So, if you are timid, you can splash in the artificial pool. A like bath for ladies is near by, and a saunter in the garden follows the refreshment.



THE BATHS OF MONTEZUMA.

If intent on a ride farther in this direction, we can keep on to Tacubaya, two miles farther out. There are found some superb gardens, the private grounds of the gentlemen of the city. Groves, ravines, rivulets, lakelets, mounds of flowers, tall Australian gum-trees, and a multitude of sorts we can admire but not name; views of the snow range, cooling eye and picture; a sumptuous house, with its broad courts open to visitors, encircled with flowers, sedans, and pictures; even a chapel for family worship; every conceivable thing, but—safety. The value of these owners is too high in the

kidnaping market for them to trust themselves so far from town overnight. So the place is deserted except for fêtes, when a body of troops is detached for their protection. A little less glory and a little less danger would be desirable.

Another favorite drive is southward. The exit is less agreeable, but once out of town the trip is more natural and more delightful. We pass on our horses, no other mode is appropriate, hardly any other possible, by the great square, southward. One route leads us to the Penyan, a hill overlooking the lake, full of caves and of robbers, whose horrid lair is surpassed by their more horrid aspect. It does not seem possible that human beings can fall so low. The Indians of the plains are hardly as fierce and degraded as these children, perhaps, of Montezuma and Cortez. There is but little comfort in pausing among them; for you must give baksheesh as surely as if at the Pyramids, and you may not get off with what you are willing to give. The views hardly repay the risk. So let us turn to a more agreeable company and scenery.

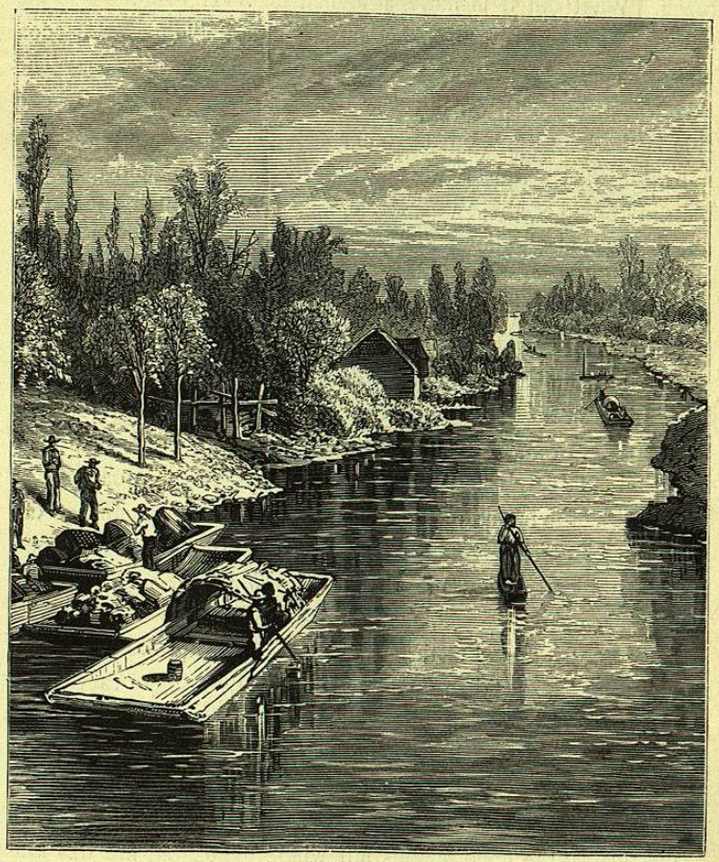
Leave the city by the south-western gate. You will have hard work to find it. The straightness of the streets gets so narrow and short that it has all the effect of crookedness, as a straight line cut into an infinite number of short straight lines may become a circle. So these bits and threads of lanes have all the bewilderment of Cologne, the head of crooked towns. The streets are as dirty and the huts as poor as it is possible for either to be, and we gladly reach the gate and touch the open fields. Level and low lies the land. The road is hard, though pulpy.

The canal is soon struck. This is the feeder of the city. Along its watery way for five hundred years, perhaps more, have the people and the produce of the region come to town. It is the oldest canal in the world, unless China ranks it, which is doubtful. It is not a canal for horses; the boats are pushed along by the boatmen.

Garden "truck" is the chief freight, though green lucern grasses, for the horses of the town, frequently load heavily the little craft. Pleasure and carriage boats ply the waters, long, narrow,

covered with awnings, and well patronized by the people on the line.

These canals were just as busy when Cortez first came over yonder pass as to-day. He saw and noted their traffic when he



THE CANAL.

marched along their side, the invited guest of Montezuma, to the doomed city. How many ages they had then been employed he knew not; no one knows.

Along their sides spring up villages, as the Erie Canal has made

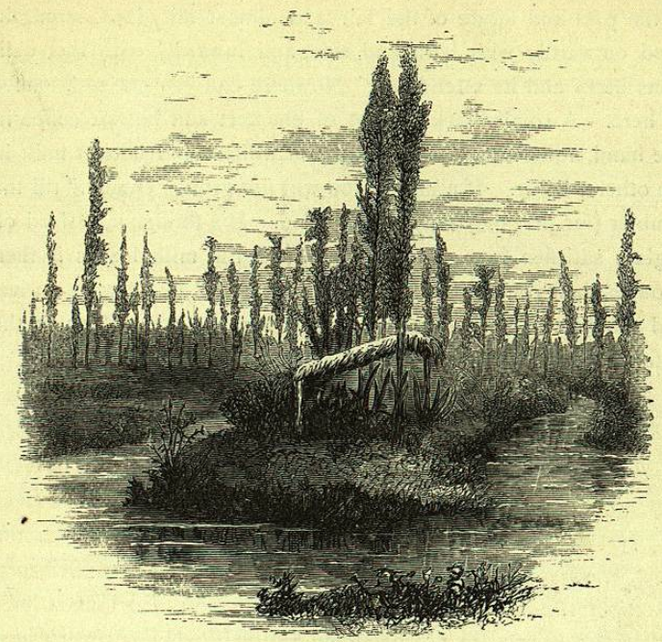
towns, great and small, beside its banks. Some of these villages rise to the dignity of towns; others are mere halting-places for the boats.

But what made the canal? Who and when, may be beyond our reach. What did it is more apprehensible. It was the floating island. That curiosity of this country is a veritable fact. As soon almost as you leave the wall, you perceive these novel lands. The ridgeway of the canal is wide enough for several horses. On one side is the long ditch, on the other many short ones, cut straight, not more than a rod or two apart, filled with water, and inclosing plats of ground of about a quarter of an acre. The ditch, cut square about these plats, allows the proprietor, lessee, or laborer to get easily around his lot in his bit of a dory, or scow, from six to twelve feet long, and two wide.

The ground is thus patchworked for miles. At times the spaces are larger; but that is their uniform character, at least near the city. Nearer the mountains they get into almost natural formations, and grow shrubs and even trees on their spongy foundations. This soil is largely made. The soft, saturated earth is superplaced with layers of muck and sand and other soils. These sink gradually by wash and by weather, and other soils are placed upon them. So they are kept up and made fit for culture, and grow deeper with every deposit.

They hardly float, but they rock and yield to a footstep. Farther out they are said to fluctuate somewhat, yet there they never float as a boat, but at the most wave a little to and fro with the moving stream. These gardens are cultivated the year round. "The plowman overtakes the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed." It is perpetual seed-time and harvest.

We ride by the once famous hill, where the sacred fire was kindled once every half-century, a black-purple peak, perhaps three hundred feet above the marsh. All the fires in all the land were extinguished, and out of flint and steel, from the bleeding heart of the human sacrifice, the new flame was here kindled, and sent throughout the land. On return we enter by the paseo, where the



FLOATING GARDENS.

bust of Guatemozin stands, on a pedestal in the centre of a square, with commendatory words to his valor, as the last of the Aztecs. It is another proof of how the sons build the sepulchres of those whom the fathers slew. Why a statue of graceful, gentle Montezuma has never been erected, nay stranger yet, why one of Cortez has never been carved, is each a mystery, or would be in any other land than this. Guatemozin is fortunate above his conqueror; for not a bust even bears his features to posterity. But he is not the last of the Aztecs. They are rising again to power. The last President was a pure blood; many of the present leaders are.

Our rides have wearied the horses, if not you. Let us go back to the Commodia, give them up to the mozos, and ourselves to a delightful breakfast at this choicest of cafés. You will find coffee and rolls, fried and sliced potatoes, and ice-water, and beefsteak, equal to the best in the Palais Royal. Here we can sit and talk

of the past and future of the fair and almost fairy-land, strengthened outwardly with bath and ride, and inwardly with this delicious berry and its attendants. Nowhere can you get such coffee as here. A small black tin pot of blackest and hottest coffee in one hand, a like small black tin pot of whitest and hottest milk in the other. Pour. If a native, you will not grunt "enough" till the tumbler (for that they use) is well filled. If a foreigner, a third of a glass satisfies from the coffee-pot, and the milk leaves it then stronger than you dare to drink it at home. This berry is native, and should replace with us the coarse Rio and costly Java, to the latter even of which it is superior.

XI.

A GARDEN IN EDEN.

A Temptation.—Up the Mountains.—The Cross of Cortez.—Sight of the Town and Valley.—The downward Plunge.—A Lounge.—Church of Cortez.—The Enchanted Garden.—Idolatry.—The Market-place.—The Almanac against Protestantism.—Palace of Cortez.—The Indian Garden of Maximilian.—A Sugar Hacienda.—The latter End.—All Zones.

In Eden was a garden. Eden itself was paradise, but the paradise had an inner paradise to which the outer delights were the same as brass and iron to the gold and silver in the age of Solomon. So Mexico may be an Eden, but there is a garden eastward and southward in this Eden that makes its other beauties tame.

My stay was drawing to a close, and a temptation to unite a little pleasure with business was too much for my feeble will to resist. So far I had made only one excursion of which the Church was not the sole end and aim—that was the two days and a night to the Convent of El Desierto, and even there I could not resist the conceiving, if not the planning, of a camp-ground in its ancient and magnificent woods.

But a cave of huge dimensions, second only to the Mammoth of Kentucky, if second to that, is reported to be three days to the south, less than two days beyond Cuernervaca. A party of ladies and gentlemen arranged to visit the cave. I was invited to join them. I hardly saw how I could take four days for recreation. In addition to the two already taken out of the sixty spent here, this would make a week's vacation—altogether too much time to tnrow away in this luxuriating clime. But if we were going back to some Ante-romanistic usages as well as faith, we might utilize the cave for hermit purposes, as the Desierto grounds are to be utilized, I hope, for camp-meetings; but we can hardly get Methodists to im-