

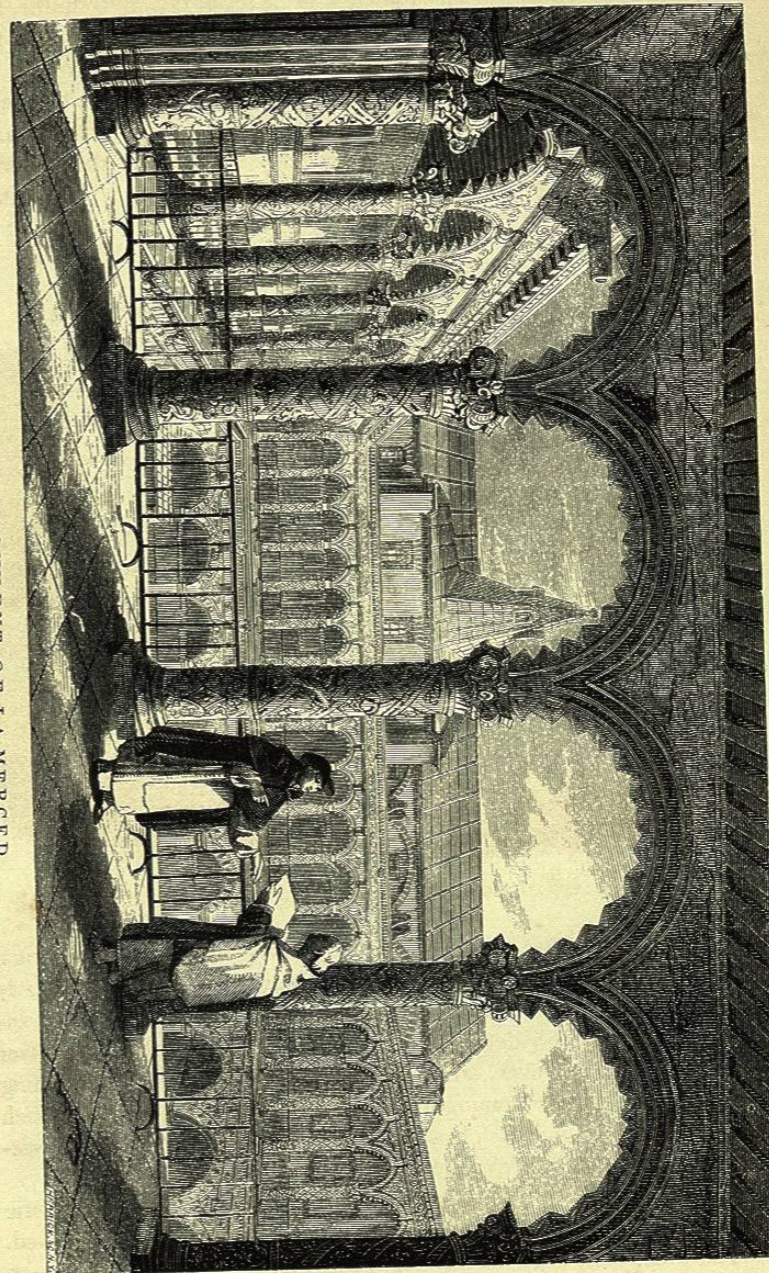
western, beyond the Calle Plateros, or street of the silversmiths, are protected by a broad and massive corridor or portico, called the *portales*, in which the traveller will constantly find crowds of hawkers, pedlars, shopmen, letter writers, clothiers, fruit sellers, liquor venders, crockery dealers and book hucksters. A few squares west of the plaza, is situated the magnificent palace of the Minería, or School of Mines, one of the most elegant edifices in the capital.



COLLEGE OF MINES—(EXTERIOR.)

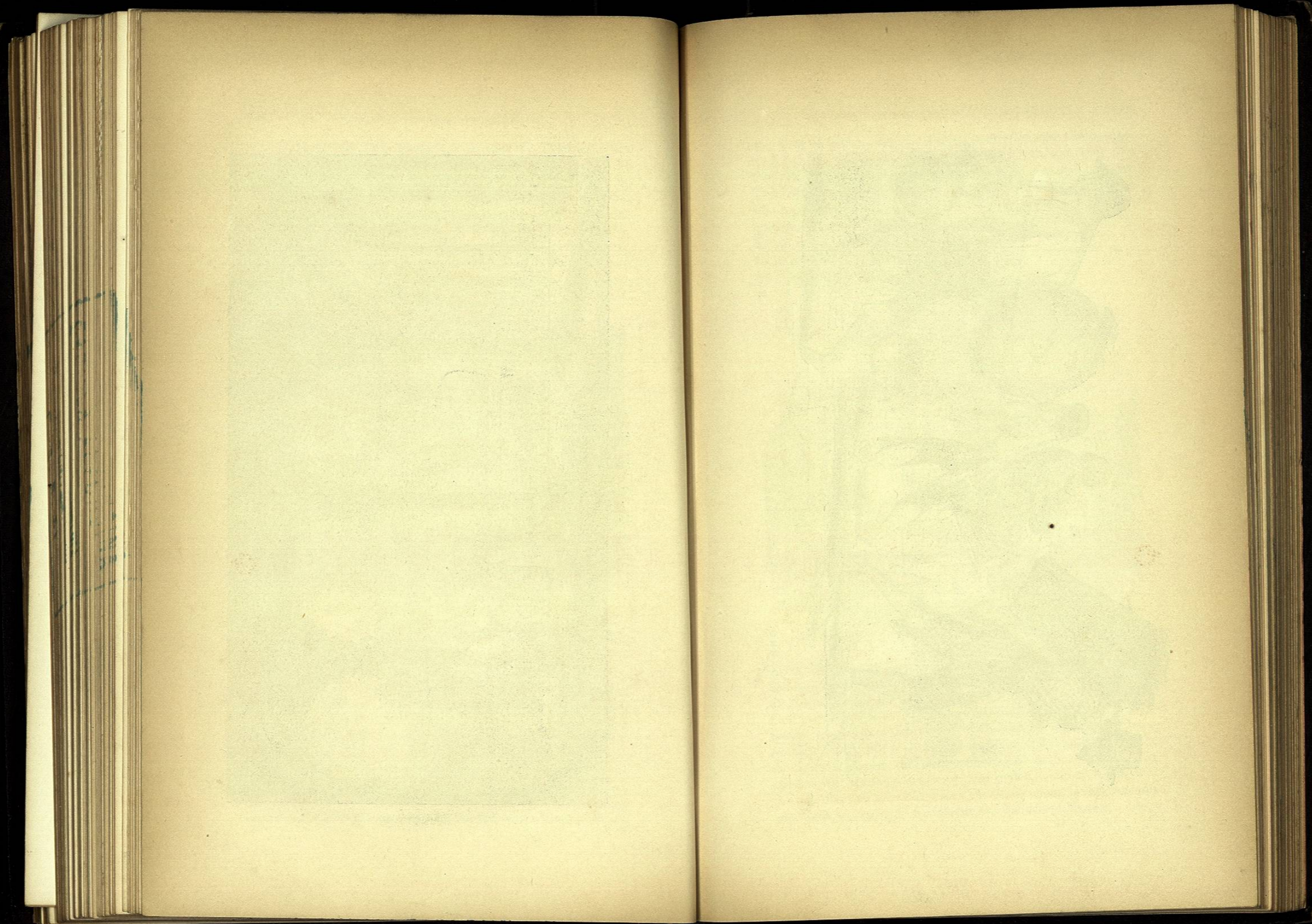
In noticing the general splendour and luxury of ecclesiastical architecture in Mexico we should not omit to mention particularly the beautiful convent of La Merced, a view of whose elegant interior court and corridor is presented in the opposite plate. Gloomier recollections, however, are conjured up from the past by beholding the church of San Domingo and the neighboring inquisition, which was the prison and the place of torture to so many unfortunate victims during the viceregal government of New Spain.

It is, in the centre or heart of the city, that all the characteristic habits and costumes of the people may be most readily observed. The great body of the crowd is, of course, composed of the common classes—the males in their shirts and trowsers with a blanket thrown

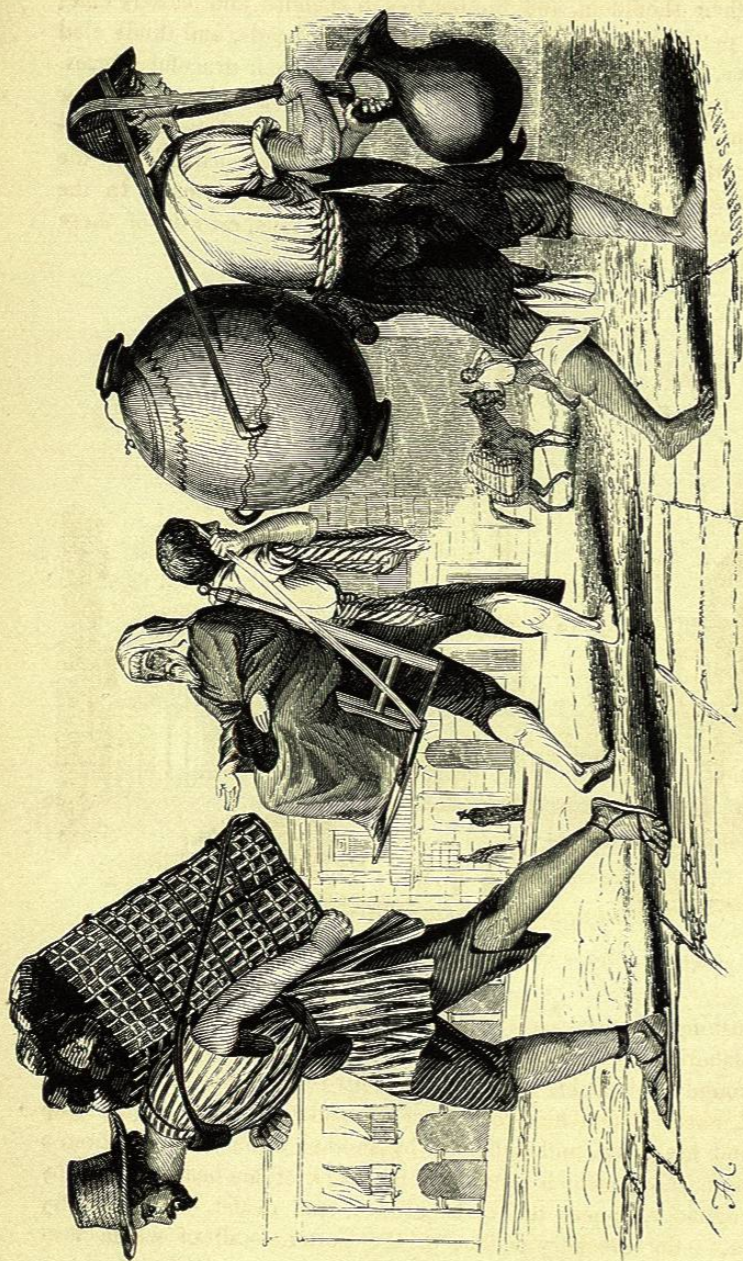


CONVENT OF LA MERCED









AGUADOR

BEGGAR

CARBONERO

over their shoulders, and the females in chemise and closely cinctured petticoat of fanciful colors, whilst their heads, and thinly clad bosoms, are folded and partly concealed in their graceful *rebozos*. Then there are the wretched *leperos*, whose long and tangled hair falls in wierd strands over their tawny necks and dirty brows, beneath which flash the sharp black eyes that are constantly on the watch for something to do, to drink, to eat, or to steal. In the neighborhood of the *pulquerias* or liquor shops, crowds of these social vermin swarm and sleep.



CHURCH OF SAN DOMINGO AND THE INQUISITION.

Pushing his way, eagerly and industriously through the crowd, the laborious *aguador*, or water carrier elbows his way, as he trots his rounds to fulfil his daily task with his twin jars of the refreshing fluid, one of which he bears upon his back, suspended by a strap around his brow, and balanced by another which depends from a leathern thong, which rests upon the back of his head. Hard by the *aguador*, appear the *carbonero*, or coal dealer,—the poultry seller,—the crockery pedlar, or the porter,—all of whom bear their burdens on their shoulders, and move along in that ambling trot which is peculiar to the laborers and Indians of Mexico. Large



numbers of women with oranges, pears, potatoes, tomatoes, onions, lemons, guyavas, aguacates, chirimoyas, plantains, fish and eggs, swell the increasing crowds. The butcher drives along a diminutive donkey, on whose saddle he has erected his peripatetic shambles, filled with beef or mutton, whilst, at the corners and on the edge of the side walks, sit long rows of Indian women with pans of savory *chile* sauces and heaping baskets or cloths of steaming *tortillas*. All these eager venders of the necessaries and luxuries of life, engage public attention by shouting the quality and value of their wares at the top of their voices. Sound and motion are the predominant features of the varied panorama; and the stunned stranger is glad to retreat into quiet nooks and byeways in which he meets the stately gentlewoman and cavalier, dressed in the becoming habiliments of their station. When ladies go abroad in Mexico to shop or visit, they universally use their coaches; yet every woman daily *walks* to mass,—and, whilst engaged in this religious pilgrimage, exhibits the old and habitual costume of black silk gown and lace mantilla, which she has derived from her Spanish ancestors. This is a charming dress. It exposes the black, lustrous hair of the graceful wearers, and fully develops that majestic yet feminine gait with which the Mexican women seem to glide and undulate along their path. The inseparable fan, —her constant companion, play thing and interpreter, in the saloon, the ball room, the theatre or the church,—rests carelessly, in her right hand, which coquettishly clasps the folds of her mantilla; and, from beneath its silken folds, her large lustrous eyes gleam soft and languishingly above her pale but healthful cheeks. If Mexican ladies are not so variously beautiful as the women of northern lands, in whose veins the blood of many nations has mingled, they are most loveable creatures in spite of the uniformity of their national type. There is a degree of exquisite tenderness, and an expression of affectionate sincerity, in the face of Mexican women, which instantly wins not only the respect but the confidence of the gazer. Nor does their character in real life contradict their amiable physiognomy. Faithful as a friend and as a wife, the Mexican lady is a person, who, with the educational advantages enjoyed by their northern sisters, would rightfully maintain as high a position in the social scale, with, perhaps, a more delicate degree of sensibility.

The lower classes of females are of course different from the upper ranks both in appearance and personal qualities. They are of impure blood. Spaniard, Indian, Negro and Malay, have con-

