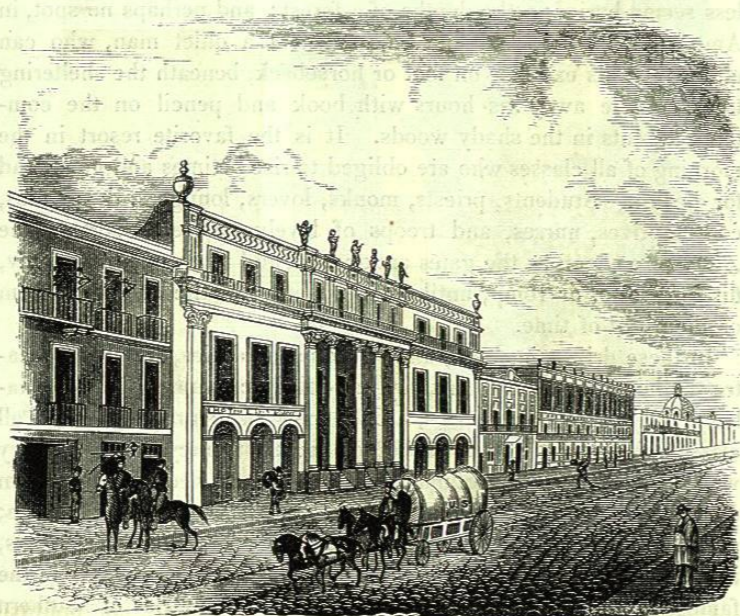


PASEO DE LA VIGA.

Paseo Nuevo. It occupies a space of ten or twelve acres, enclosed by a substantial stone wall, which is surrounded by a deep and flooded moat. The gates are closed daily at the *Oracion*; and the spot is thus protected carefully from all improper uses as well as from wanton destruction. Around the whole of the inner wall, lines of substantial stone seats are erected, and, in front of them, an excellent carriage road affords a drive for those who are not disposed to mingle in the gayer circle of the *passeos*. Within this highway the plantations begin. Paved paths cross and recross the dense groves in a labyrinth of lines, while, at intervals, fountains and secluded benches break the uniform solemnity and quietness of the spot. In the centre of the enclosure a massive fountain, surmounted by a gilded statue of Liberty, rises nobly in the midst of a broad area, whose top is almost *domed* with the arching branches of the trees, which admit a scant but lovely light through a narrow aperture, like the sky-light of the pantheon at Rome. The birds, unassailed for years within this grove, have flown to it as a sanctuary, and the branches are forever vocal with their natural music. Situated as it is on the edge of the town, and surrounded by houses, it nevertheless seems buried in the depths of a forest; and perhaps no spot, in America, is so fitted for the enjoyment of a quiet man, who can either take his exercise on foot or horseback, beneath the sheltering trees, or wile away his hours with book and pencil on the comfortable seats in the shady woods. It is the favorite resort in the morning of all classes who are obliged to rise betimes and go abroad for health. Students, priests, monks, lovers, loungers, dyspeptics, consumptives, nurses, and troops of lovely children resort to the *Alameda* as soon as the gates are opened, and study, meditate, pray, flirt, exercise, or romp, until their appetites or the sun warn them of the flight of time.

In these drives, in dress, dining, domestic duties, mass, and theatre the hours of a Mexican's day are chiefly consumed. This catalogue of "idle occupations," does not, of course comprise all classes, but includes that portion of the aristocracy which is every where set apart by its fortunate exemption from necessary toil. In a country so rich as Mexico this class must necessarily be large; and, if it begins the day in plain black, and on its knees in chapels, it ends its waking hours amid the blaze of dress and jewels in the family box in the theatre. In most of the countries of southern Europe, and in all their old colonial possessions, the theatre is one of the necessities of life, and a box is as indispensable as a dwelling. It forms a neutral ground upon which all can meet without the

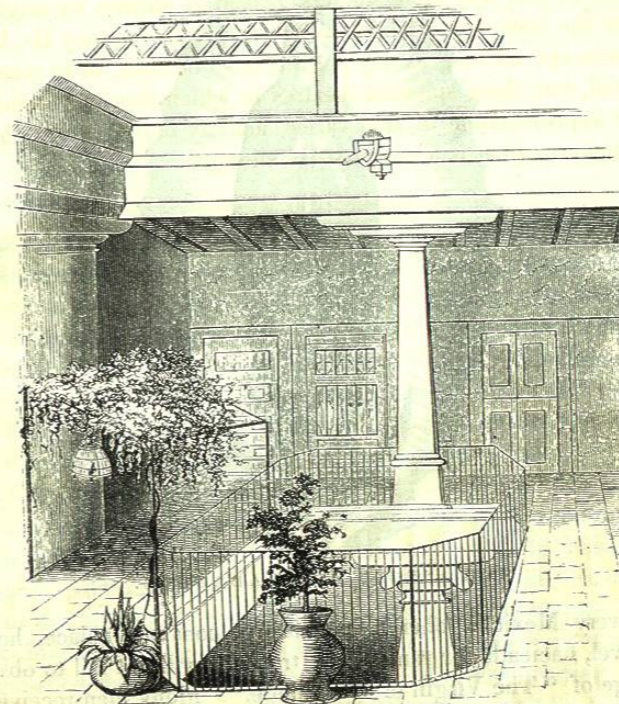
requirements of a forced hospitality, and consequently it affords all the pleasures of general society without the necessity of expensive entertainment. There are great disadvantages attending upon this constant dwelling in the public eye and in the blaze of artificial light; yet it is so agreeable a mode of killing time in Mexico, that the habits or the nature of the people must change essentially before we may expect to find them surrounding nightly the domestic hearth instead of the dramatic stage. Yet we should not be unjust to the Mexicans in this condemnation of one of their agreeable habits, which originates perhaps as much in their climate as in their tastes. Fine skies and genial atmospheres drive people into the open air. Wintry winds, desolate heaths, ice and snow, gather and group them into the nestling places of home. When houses become in this way mere shelters instead of shrines we might well pardon the taste which leads a sensitive people to enjoy the beautiful landscape as long as day permits it to be seen, or to retreat, at nightfall, into those splendid theatres in which they may behold the mimic representation of that varied activity of life to which their monotonous career is a comparative stranger.



NEW THEATRE.

Nevertheless, a well-bred Mexican family is one of the most delightful circles into which a genteel stranger can be admitted. The

formal manners of the Spaniards have descended to the Mexicans. You are received cordially but carefully, and you must either be useful or *known*, before you are admitted into the confidence of a family. Until this occurs your reception and departure from a Mexican dwelling are quite as ceremonious as your initiation into a Masonic lodge. Bows, gestures, shrugs, grimaces, and all the ordinary rites of external politeness are plentifully bestowed on the stranger; — “But sad is the plight of the luckless knight,” who imagines that these elegant formalities literally mean what they profess. Americans, especially, whose extraordinary and loose social facilities habituate them to an unrestrained intercourse with all the members of families as soon as they are either prudently or imprudently introduced to them, — are often in danger of making this



INTERIOR OF A MEXICAN HOUSE.

sad mistake in Mexico. Neither wealth, education, nor political position, entitle an individual in that republic to pass the threshold of distant and civil intercourse. The Mexican's house, purse, or daughter, are not at “your disposal,” although he tells you that

every thing he possesses is "*à la disposition de Usted!*" Yet, when his acquaintance has ripened into friendship, and he understands that you appreciate his tastes, his country, his language, his prejudices, his religion, and his habits, or do not visit him, as many foreigners have done, merely to scoff and condemn,—then, indeed, the social manners of the Mexican relax into intimacy, and the attention he bestows on you may be more firmly trusted because it was so cautiously yielded. The stranger who penetrates a Mexican house under such circumstances, finds its hospitality unbounded, and its generous inmates his devoted and faithful servants either for life or until he forfeits their esteem by treachery or misconduct.



THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE.

In every Mexican church, monastery, convent, palace, house, hut, hovel, hacienda, or rancho, the traveller will not fail to observe an image of "The Virgin of Guadalupe." Many men receive the name of "Guadalupe," in baptism, and almost every woman has it added to the others she receives from her parents or sponsors. A saint whose tutelary influence is at once so national and so curious deserves especial mention in the notice of a country over whose people she is supposed to exercise a mysterious dominion; and we therefore present the reader the following translation from the Span-

ish of Don Ignacio Barillo y Perez, in which the history of her miraculous appearance is set forth with more detail than we have elsewhere encountered.

The story of the Virgin is implicitly believed by the great mass of the people; and the wonderful picture, described in the following account, adorned with invaluable precious stones, is now preserved in a massive golden frame, in the collegiate church of Guadalupe erected at the foot of the hill of Tepeyacac. On the 12th of every December, the anniversary of the miraculous visit, the people pour forth from the capital to the sacred shrine and witness the splendid rites instituted in honor of the saint. In the temple and at the holy well, they are met by crowds of country folks and Indians, who come from far and near on the same errand, while the whole pompous ceremonial is countenanced by the presence and apparent devotion of all the high officers of government including the president himself.<sup>1</sup>

LEGEND OF THE APPARITION OF THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN MARY OF GUADALUPE; THE PATRON SAINT AND PROTECTRESS OF MEXICO.

Tepeyacac is a small mountain whose southern side is a scarped and inaccessible precipice which looks to Mexico, situated on the south of it at the distance of about three miles. Its ascent, by whatever part undertaken, except that of the pathways made to facilitate the access, is extremely rough and stony. Its whole surface is covered with crowsfeet, buck and hawthorn, which are common to such sterile wastes. The Indian name, Tepeyacac, signifies the abrupt extremity or termination of hills, and in this bluff, terminate all the hills to the north of the capital.

It was celebrated in the days of heathenism for the worship paid in this place to the mother of the false gods of the Indians, but it is more celebrated at present for the adoration which is worthily paid to the Mother of the true God in her beautiful temple.

As Juan Diego,—an Indian recently converted, of pure and unblemished morals, though of lowly birth, was passing by this place on Saturday, December 9th, 1531, on his way to hear mass and participate in the Christian worship which the Franciscan fathers taught in the district of Tlatelolco, at the hour of early dawn, he heard, upon attaining the brow of the little mountain, which he

<sup>1</sup> See also, "Mexico as it was and as it is"—p. 63, for a full account of the ceremonies of the Collegiate church, and of Archbishop Lorenzani's sermon, preached in 1760, confirming the miraculous history.

was ascending on the western side, a sweet, sonorous and harmonious music, as of little birds upon its summit. The ravishing tones and rare melody attracted his attention and arrested his steps. On looking up, as was natural, he saw a white and shining cloud, surrounded by a rainbow, and in its centre a most beautiful lady, like the image we now venerate in the sanctuary, who calling with a sweet and gentle voice, addressed him in his own language with wonderful suavity and told him she was the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, whose mass and doctrine he was going to hear, and she commanded him to go to the bishop and tell him that it was her will that a temple should be built to her upon that spot, in which she would show herself a pious mother towards him, his nation, devotees, and as many as should solicit her support and protection in their hour of need. She directed him to tell all he had seen and heard, and added: 'Be sure, my son, for whom I feel a delicate and tender love, that I will repay all you do for me; I will render you famous; and I will endow you with benefits for the diligence and labor you display. Now, my servant, in whom I delight, thou hast heard my desire, go thou in peace.'

The Indian promptly obeyed and went to the palace of the bishop, the illustrious Señor Don Francisco de Zumarraga, who since the year 1528, had resided in Mexico with the title of Protector of the Indians, and who afterwards became the archbishop. The prelate heard him with surprise, and prudently directed him to return on some other occasion, when having well considered and examined into so singular an event, he might deliberate as to what was proper to be done by him.

The Indian returned with the answer to the Most Holy Virgin whom he found in the same place. Prostrating himself before her, with words of submission peculiar to the Indians, he repeated the reply of the bishop, adding that, in order to secure compliance with her will, it would be necessary to send some person of authority and credit, as it appeared to him he was not believed because he was an humble man and a plebeian. The Most Holy Virgin, with no less benignity and suavity than on the previous occasion, replied: 'To me neither servants nor followers whom to send are wanting if I should wish, since I have multitudes at my command; but it is agreeable to me now that *thou* shouldst perform this mission, and make the solicitation. Through your intervention I wish to give effect to my will, and desire you to speak again with the bishop, and tell him he must build a temple in honor of me on this spot; and that it is the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of the true God,

who sends you to him.' Juan Diego answered: 'Do not be offended, my Queen and Holy Lady, at what I have said, which is not intended to excuse me from this office.' Desiring to satisfy the Most Holy Virgin, although fearful the bishop would not give credit to his story, he pledged himself to repeat the message the next day; and promised, that at the setting of the sun, he would be at that spot once more with the reply. Bidding adieu to the blessed apparition with profound humility, he went to his village and his house, but it is not known whether he mentioned to his wife, or other person, his strange adventure.

The following day, Sunday, December 10th, 1531, Juan Diego went again to hear mass and participate in the Christian worship. Upon the conclusion of the service, he went diligently to discharge his mission, and although the servants of the bishop delayed him a long time at the entrance of the palace, he succeeded at length in coming into the prelate's presence. With lively expressions of feeling, which made that dignitary shed tears of tender pleasure, he prostrated himself before the bishop, and told him he had a second time seen the Mother of God, who commanded him to return and repeat that it was her will a temple should be built in honor of her on the spot at which she appeared. The bishop listened with great attention, and examined him with many questions, in the answers to which he could detect no discrepancy; and, in fine, knowing it could neither be a dream nor fiction of the Indian, he told him that what he had said was not sufficient to ensure credibility; that he must ask some *sign* from the Holy Lady, by which it might be known that it was really the Mother of God who sent him.

The Indian, with intrepid confidence, replied that he would ask whatever the bishop desired; when the latter, observing that he was not abashed, but offered to ask for the signs, ordered him to go, but, meanwhile, secretly despatched two confidential members of his family to follow the Indian, and to observe with whom Juan Diego spoke on his arrival at the hill of Tepeyacac. They did so; but when they arrived at the bridge over the river that empties, at the foot of the hill, into the lake which lies to the east of Mexico, the Indian disappeared from the spies who were watching him. They examined the summit, brow, and circumference of the hill, without failing, in their anxious solicitude, to explore every ravine, fissure, and fragment of it, but not finding him in any part, they concluded that the native was a deceitful impostor, and confirmed in that idea, they returned to the bishop, begging him to punish the Indian if he repeated his imposition.