

All at once I espied, in the door of a shop, a familiar gray figure, with a sideways tilted hat, and hands in trousers pockets. I walked confidently up to the figure and said, "Pardon me; I see that you are an American. Can you direct me to the Hotel Coliséo?" The stranger looked right at me with his honest eyes—I don't know what color they were, but they were straightforward American eyes—gave me the required directions plainly and concisely, and touched his hat respectfully as I walked off, blessing the honest American eyes and the big American heart to which neither child nor woman fears to appeal.

Upon reaching the hotel I found Ahasuerus anxiously pacing up and down on the lookout for me. When I told him the story of my adventure he exclaimed, "Well, of all stupids I ever did see! Why on earth didn't you call a cab, and ask to be driven to the Coliséo?" And when I turned and looked at him little spurts of bright flame seemed to burst out, like a halo, all around his head, and then and there I fell down and worshiped the giant intellectuality, the unfathomable resource, of the American man.

CHAPTER X.

One of the interesting places in the City of Mexico, both on account of its beauty and for the historical associations connected with it, is the Cathedral. It is built upon the spot where formerly stood the old Aztec teocalli, or temple, in which the Indians offered sacrifices to their gods. The present building, which is upon the site of a former church, was erected in 1573, and is therefore 325 years old. It is of grand dimensions, but the beauty and the impressiveness of the interior are marred—as in most Mexican churches—by the choir, which is placed in the nave, and by the high altar, which is clumsy and inartistic. This altar is, at present, being redecorated with barbaric gilding and florid colors. Under the flashy altar of Los Reyes are buried the heads of Hidalgo, Allende, Aldama, and Jiminez, which were brought here from the prison hooks of Guanajuato. These men were excommunicated by the Catholic Church as heretics and traitors, and I do not know how the ecclesiastics explain their burial on consecrated

ground. The radical party in the republic wish the remains of the patriots to be interred elsewhere, and as soon as a suitable place can be provided doubtless that wish will be carried out. Under a neighboring altar lie the remains of the first emperor, Iturbide—called by his grateful countrymen the Liberator. These same grateful countrymen, by the way, did not forget to bestow upon him the reward of the Mexican liberator—death. Here at the great altar near which he lies the first emperor was crowned, and from the same spot, forty years after, Maximilian, that royal usurper, followed him along the road to death. From the same altar, a few years later, the triumphant government of Juarez took, for the aid of republican principles, the gold candlesticks and the gold and jeweled statue of the Assumption.

In the chapter house is a Madonna said to be by Murillo. In spite of my doubts, a sight of the picture convinced me of its authenticity. No one but Murillo could paint so adorable a baby. The peaceful mother holds the dimpled child in her strong, tender arms, while he, baby-fashion, springs toward the little St. John at the Virgin's knee. Over them all, with love in her old face, broods St. Anne. There are several other fairly good pictures in the Cathedral, but one—by the woman artist, La Somaya—which the guide-books extol, we could

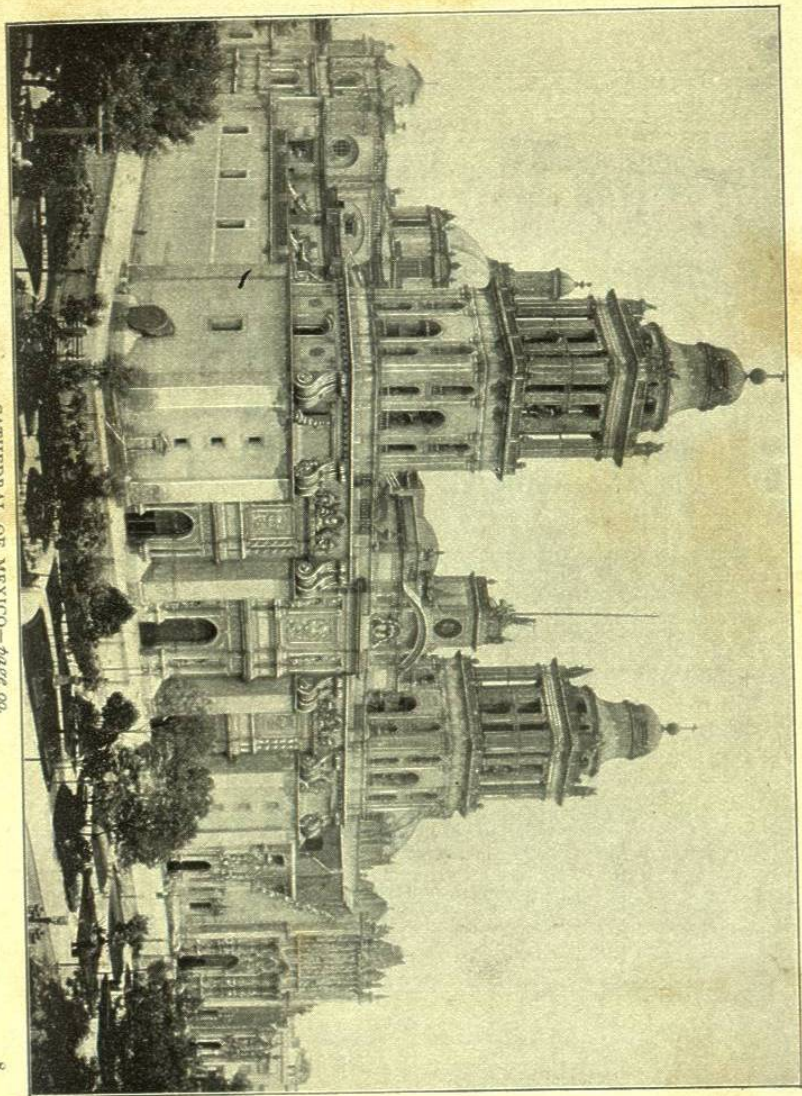
not find, and the sacristan seemed to know nothing of it.

The little zocalo or plaza beside the Cathedral is bright with flowers and fountains, and gay with the passing crowds. It is a good place to sit and hear the band play, to study Mexican types, and to listen to the boom of the great Cathedral bell, Santa Maria Guadalupe. This bell, which is nineteen feet long, is, with the exception of the cracked Kremlin bell of Moscow, the biggest one in the world. Santa Maria Guadalupe, however, is not cracked, and it has the further advantage of being in a climate where one can sit outside every day in the year and listen to its deep tones.

While you are in the mood for seeing pictures, living and on canvas, it is a good time to visit the old Academy of San Carlos, which is now the Museum of Art, and which claims to have in its collection pictures by Murillo, Velasquez, Rubens and Van Dyke. Some of the older Mexican artists, particularly Ibarra, who lived early in the seventeenth century, seem to have had no little feeling for art, but the modern delight too much in gay coloring, and strong shading; nevertheless many of the historical paintings are very interesting. The sculptures in the gallery, with the exception of the model of Juarez' monument by the Yslas brothers, are casts of Greek statuary.

The first time we went to the National Museum we were accosted by a guide who offered to reveal to us the mysteries of the collection for the modest sum of five dollars. When we offered him one dollar he accepted it, however, and seemed perfectly satisfied. It was certainly a dollar well invested, for he proved to be an intelligent man, who, strangely enough for a guide, really knew what he was talking about.

The most curious thing in the Museum is the Calendar stone of the Aztecs, which was found near the present site of the Cathedral. Archeologists now believe it to have been the base of the smaller sacrificial stone. Upon this sacrificial stone, which is curiously carved, and which is cut by a channel, down which flowed the blood of the victim to the vase beneath, perished annually from twenty to fifty thousand persons. The Museum contains troops of Aztec gods; Chac-Mool, the very unpleasant god of fire; the well-known "Indio-Tristé" (Sad Indian), who is anything but sad, some very realistic serpents, and several vases for holding the sacred fire. The hieroglyphics, and the picture dispatches sent to Montezuma announcing the coming of the Spaniards, are most interesting. On the second floor are the natural history exhibits, which are much like those of other Museums. The third floor is devoted to portraits and mementos of Mexico's great



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men. There is a portrait of Cortés, with the narrow head and sly eyes of a schemer and a bigot, and one of the blonde Maximilian, who, judging from his face, was not born for stormy times. Alvarado's armor, Hidalgo's standard, and Maximilian's plate and state carriage, are also exhibited. There are likewise humble souvenirs of Juarez, of Hidalgo, and of Morelos, their candle-sticks, their shabby garments—pathetically homely objects of daily use—which should be sacredly guarded from curious eyes. To me it seems as indelicate to display these homely objects of personal belonging as to read a man's love letters or to spy upon his prayers.

Near the National Museum is the National Palace, sometimes used by the President as a dwelling. It is official headquarters, and in the reception hall those who are fortunate enough to have letters to the President are generally received. Although the palace was, at one time, the abode of the luxurious Carlotta, the apartments are by no means magnificent, but the grand drawing-room and the study of the little Porfirio Diaz are interesting. The great reception hall should be called a mortuary chapel, for it is hung with the portraits of Mexico's heroes, most of whom have died violent deaths. On the wall hangs also an immense painting of the battle of Cinco de Mayo—fifth of May. This battle, which was fought on the hills back of Puebla,

determined the fate of Maximilian. At one end of the reception hall, on a raised dais, is the presidential chair, upholstered in velvet and gold and with the gilt eagle of Mexico above it. The whole apartment has much the air of a European throne-room, and the man who fills the presidential chair of Mexico is more potent than many continental sovereigns.

In the vicinity of the Cathedral is the Monte de Piedad, or national pawn-shop. This is a practical and beneficent charity, by means of which people in straits are enabled to obtain just rates on objects pledged. The owners of the property are given a specified time for redemption, but if unredeemed the articles are put on sale for the price of the loan. At the end of each month the price of the pledges is marked down, so that people who wish to purchase a certain article, can, by waiting a few months, buy at reasonable rates if the desired articles remain unsold. The Monte de Piedad is a sad place, filled with the wrecks of broken homes and shattered fortunes. Common household utensils, pianos, tawdry garments, valuable jewels, old saddles, painted fans, broken furniture, and point lace jostle one another, and hopelessly confuse the intending purchaser as to values. Nevertheless tourists may sometimes pick up at the Monte de Piedad valuable articles for reasonable prices, but so-called bargains

are not common. During the administration—or rather lack of administration—of Diaz' predecessor, President Gonzales, the Monte de Piedad suffered with other government institutions, and narrowly escaped bankruptcy. President Diaz has, however, put all government interests on a stable and, let us hope, a lasting basis.



AZTEC WOMAN WITH DISTAFF.

CHAPTER XI.

Sunday-morning all the Mexican world goes to the Church Parade in the Alameda. This function is less hilarious and, I think, in better taste than the London Church Parade, for the Mexicans seem very conscious of the absurdity of the whole affair; in fact, they have an air of being ashamed of themselves. Although most of the promenaders wear the American dress the crowd does not represent, as in London, the aristocracy of the city. The women, who are by no means as handsome as the pretty Cubans with their flirting fans and enticing mantillas, have a most execrable fashion of powdering their faces until they look like dough-balls; and I was not impressed with their escorts—the tiny warriors—who did not look as if they would be very terrible soldiers. It would seem that the Indian strain is less vigorous, as well as less joyous; than the negro, for I was struck with the sloping shoulders, narrow chests, and awkward carriage of both sexes. Indeed, I should think that a teacher of Delsarte would be in demand in Mexico. Still, in

spite of their physical defects, the Mexican soldiers have shown that they can fight, although Ahasuerus, who is authority on military matters, declares that they do not know how to stand properly, or how to hold their guns.

One Sunday morning, as we came from the Parade, we were met at the park entrance by a multitude of excited people, fleeing before the horses of mounted policemen, and before we could realize the situation, we were in the midst of a howling mob. To escape the crowd, which was hurling itself from the opposite direction upon us, and to avoid being trampled under the feet of the police horses, we climbed upon the pedestal of one of the big tigers at the park entrance. In vain we sought from our neighbors an explanation of this, to us, utterly incomprehensible excitement. No one heeded our inquiries, and we ourselves could see no cause for the outbreak, although we noticed that the fury of the rabble seemed to be concentrated upon a band of mild-mannered and trembling mandolin players, who formed the center of the mob, and who were evidently under the protection of the police. An article in one of the papers, a few days later, explained the mystery. It seems that Mexico, unlike most capital cities, strongly objects to innovations. So strong, indeed, is this sentiment that the first bicyclists who appeared upon the streets

of the city narrowly escaped injury at the hands of the mob. The unfortunate musicians whom we saw were guilty, first, of introducing mandolin playing upon the streets, and, secondly, of being Spaniards, which was, in those days of the wrecked Maine, an offense in the eyes of the republic-loving Mexicans. For ourselves the result of this experience was to give us an added respect for the strong man at the head of the Mexican government, who holds in check a people so excitable and so turbulent.

Sunday afternoon, from four to seven o'clock, the fashionable world drives on the Paseo, and here one sees elegant equipages, and beautiful, high-bred women. Down each side of the broad roadway extends a line of motionless troopers, sitting on their horses as if carved in bronze, and under their outstretched swords the carriages pass in line. The rigid position must be torture for the soldiers, but the ceremony gives a military and official air to the promenade. Although a fashionable function, the Sunday drive is not confined to the fashionables, and the poorer Mexicans will deny themselves the comforts of life for the whole week that they may save the needful money to hire a carriage for the drive on the popular promenade.

The Paseo extends from the little plaza of Charles IV. to the palace of Chapultepec, a distance of about

two miles. It was laid out by Carlotta in imitation of the Champs-Élysées of Paris, and, like the Champs-Élysées, has several garden-like *ronds-points*, or *glorietas*. The street is kept very clean by constant sprinklings with watering pots. Along the sides of the roadway are statues of Mexican patriots and rows of carved stone benches, from which one can watch the Sunday procession of gay carriages.

In the matter of public monuments the United States must look to her laurels, for in this respect Mexico bids fair to outstrip her. At the head of the Paseo stands the grand equestrian statue of Charles IV. of Spain, modeled after the statue of Marcus Aurelius at Rome. The Spanish monarch was no favorite in Mexico, but as a work of art the monument is allowed to remain. In another *glorietta* is the spirited figure of the young Columbus, and still further on that of the heroic Guatemotzin, the heir of Montezuma, and last of the Aztec emperors. A bas-relief upon the pedestal represents the torture by Cortés of the Indian prince, and other incidents in his career. The figure of the young monarch is strong and fearless, but the attentive face seems already to foresee its doom. The cruel conqueror of the last of the Aztec royal line died in Spain. His body was brought back to Mexico for burial, but after the independ-

ence of the country was proclaimed it was found necessary, in order to save the bones from the fury of the people, to return them to Spain. Montezuma



HILL AND CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC.

and Guatemotzin are household words in their natiaveland, but there is in all Mexico no monument to Cortés, and no street nor city bears his name.

Once again, posterity gives a righteous verdict.

The Paseo ends at the palace of Chapultepec, the beautiful home of the Mexican rulers. The present palace is built upon the site of Montezuma's summer home, and under the shade of its dark cypresses the melancholy prince often brooded over the encroachments of the Spaniards, and the fate that was before his people and himself. Chapultepec was, also, at a later day, the favorite residence of Cortés, and its woods are said to be haunted by the spirit of his Indian mistress, the gentle Marina. It is believed by the Mexicans that her shadowy form may be seen at twilight, flitting through the woods and gardens that she loved. It would seem but justice that this punishment should be reserved for her,

that she should come back to look upon the degradation of her own race, whom, for the love of a stranger, she betrayed and deserted.

The hill of Chapultepec, or Grasshopper Hill, upon which stands the castle, was besieged and taken by the American army in the Mexican war. The fortress was bravely defended by the boy cadets of Mexico, and a monument to the memory of the young heroes is erected at the foot of the hill. Since those dreadful days we have had an opportunity to show our friendship for Mexico, but at the grave of these little lads every true American must feel a tender contrition. Chapultepec, besides being the home of the president, is also the West Point of Mexico. The young cadets whom we saw strolling around, with their books under their arms, were pretty, bright-eyed, courteous boys, with modest and unaffected bearing—doubtless just such boys as those silent ones, who sleep below.

The view from the heights of Chapultepec is one of the famous ones of the world. The lovely valley of Mexico, with its shimmering lakes, its snow-capped volcanoes, its white-walled towns and villages, and its historic battlefields, lies at the feet of the gazer. No one, looking down on that picture of fairy land, could possibly imagine that such a thing as an evil smell or a dirty street was ever known to the favored inhabitants.

For a palace—which in my experience is generally shabby and uncomfortable—Chapultepec is quite satisfactory—in fact, really luxurious. Much of the beautiful furniture and drapery Carlotta brought with her from France. There is, however, one unpleasant feature about Chapultepec, and that is the custodian. Unlike his fellow-countrymen in general, he is not in the least courteous, and he seems to regard all Americans with suspicion. • Indeed, although as a nation we are admired by our neighbors, I think that as individuals we are not in particularly good favor with the Mexicans; and perhaps we should not marvel at their adverse judgment of us. When we seriously reflect upon the American occupation of foreign cities we cannot censure our neighbors for their criticisms. They judge us as we judge them, from what they see, and one who has traveled much must acknowledge that their strictures are often just. We crowd their revered ruins and their sacred art galleries with irreverent feet and chattering tongues, and treat their people as strange and amusing spectacles. We are so persuaded that our cars, our steam-heat and our overloaded hotel tables are the last triumph of civilization that we endeavor to impose our belief in their merits upon the world at large. And there are even worse offenses. The custodian at Chapultepec told us that a party of Americans who

had lately visited the place had cut the velvet tassels from the elegant hangings in Señora Diaz' boudoir. We saw the mutilated hangings and were forced to blush for our countrywoman—for only a woman could have committed such an outrage.

Fortunately we have the remedy for all these things in our own hands, and I am sure that I am safe in predicting that it will not be long before the American woman will be acknowledged abroad as the model of courtesy and honor. I suppose we must be resigned to rest, however, for all time under the ban of pious conservatives, like the sweet-faced old señora whom I saw one day in the City of Mexico. The señora, who, from her lace mantilla, evidently belonged to the old régime, entered the street car in which I was a passenger, seated herself beside me, looked me straight in the face, examined me minutely from top to toe, then crossed herself several times and began to patter prayers under her breath. Doubtless she considered me a dangerous creature, one of the great army of American adventurers, mineholders, railway and telegraph builders who are seeking to overturn the good old ways of Mexico.

Fortunately not all Mexicans are of the señora's way of thinking. President Porfirio Diaz is as intelligent and as progressive as the best American. Under his wise rule Mexico is taking great strides

forward, and it is to be hoped that his days may be long in the land. The most popular woman in the country is Señora Diaz, the sweet-faced wife of the president. This simply attired, gracious wife of a great ruler is a thorough gentlewoman. She received us with the most graceful courtesy, paying us the greatest compliment possible to pay a stranger by addressing us in our own tongue, and I blushed as I responded to her elegant English, knowing that I could not speak fifty words in her own language. Señora Diaz spoke in the kindest manner of the United States, and I was glad to answer her honestly that we were proud of our young sister republic and anxious to be on sisterly terms with her.

Although Mexico prides herself upon being a republic, and although loyal Mexicans almost always speak of the country as "la republica," and seldom as "Mexico," still the government is not, in our sense of the word, really a republic. Happily for Mexico, the franchise, as we know it, does not exist. The power is vested in a strong government, with a strong man at its head. Diaz has been president for eighteen years. He has continued the wise policy of the great Juarez, and has given to the country railroads, telegraphs, free schools, and libraries. He is the leader of the Liberal party, the party which stands for freedom and enlightenment,

as opposed to the more conservative policy of the Church. Diaz, who is a half-breed, born in Oaxaca, has been from his youth in military and political life. He is a man of iron will and tremendous pow-



PRESIDENT DIAZ.

ers of resistance. As an example of his rugged endurance, a surgeon in the Confederate army related to us that he found Diaz, after one of the battles of the French invasion, suffering from a

cruel wound, which had been greatly aggravated by the blundering knives of the native surgeons. A severe operation was necessary to save his life, but Diaz refused to take anesthetics, and bore the horrible torture of the operation with hardly a change of countenance. The one blot upon the record of this great soldier is his revolt against Juarez; but his patriotic zeal and his wise administration have blotted that error from the minds of his countrymen, and Diaz stands to-day for all that is best in Mexico. Unfortunately the Church party, fostered by the influence of the clergy and many of the good women of the land, is rapidly increasing in wealth and power. To this party even Señora Diaz, who is a patriotic woman and a devoted wife, is a most loyal adherent.

During the administration of one of Diaz' predecessors, a friend of the General remarked to him, "You will be the next president." "No," replied Diaz, "there will be no next president. By that time I shall be an American citizen"—meaning a citizen of the United States. His prophecy is in a certain sense fulfilled, since he is an American citizen as well as an American ruler, although he has no longer any expectation or desire of becoming a fellow-citizen of ours. Nevertheless he is anxious to imitate our virtues, while eschewing our faults, and to live in amity with us. This was also the

dream of the kindly Romero, whose death we are at this moment mourning, and that of Señora Romero, the American wife of one of the best-beloved of all the Mexicans. It is to be hoped that these generous sentiments will become universal and that the two sister republics, side by side, may unite in a kindly emulation for all the triumphs of free religion and civilization.