



THE CATHEDRAL OF PUEBLA.

easy, as the mountains near by keep the streams from becoming dry. The hills to the east go down to the Gulf. Orizaba's white dome flashes among them, the most perfect and most dazzling pyramid that nature has tossed up into the sky for the envy and the despair of ambitious mortals. What is Cheops's gray hill to this polished marble glory? How petty even Emerson's lines sound here :

"Morning opes with haste her lids,
To gaze upon the Pyramids."

What cares morning for that five hundred feet high of matched granite? As much as the proudest statesman for the infant's house of cards or blocks. It is a pretty specimen of childish ingenuity, and that is all. Nature in every line leaves art as matchless as God leaves man. She is its offspring, and what are our petty imitations to His creations? No. Morning sees Orizaba and Blanc and their co-creations not only long before, but with far

deeper emotions than it looks on our feeble products, even such as may seem very grand when compared with our meanest efforts.

To the north of east rises Malinche, brown and green to its summit, and sometimes white there also, and red even, and black, when the smoke and fires of the volcano mix their colors with its snows and sides. This was named by Cortez for his Marina; his Indian interpreter, and himself also, being known to the Indian allies and foes by the name of Malinche. It is the only one of the volcanoes that lost its old Indian name. The three grander ones preserved their original titles while they changed owners. It lies nearest Puebla, and looks not five miles off, though it will be twenty ere you reach its base, if you gallop from this plaza.

Farther to the north, and trenching a little on the west, is a range of whitened cliffs, without any vegetation seemingly, at this distance, or possibility of any. These scarred bluffs, that look as if made of salt, are Tlascala, the next most famous spot in Mexico to Mexico herself. For there was the little republic of mountaineers that never submitted to the Aztec yoke; whom Cortez first conquered, and who never failed to be his allies afterward; on whom he relied to carry him through all his perils, and to whom he gave his banner, that still hangs in the church of the town; to whom also he gave political liberties that have never been taken away. A railroad station is not three miles from their city, called by the name of the pluckiest, worst, and best specimen of the Mexican of to-day—Santa Anna. So closely is Cortez linked to this present.

It was from that hill fortress that he marched on Cholula because they told him not to; so his line of march is visible to the eye from this tower. Across these low spurs of these inclosing mountains his band of less than four hundred footmen, and a score or two of horsemen, moved slowly upon the priestly town, confident in their arms, their horses, their faith, their leader, and themselves—a five-fold cord which was not easily broken, though often attempted in the terrible strain of the eighteen months which followed.

One feels a growing respect for that general as he stands among these scenes of his career, even if one American traveler has sought to belittle his achievements, and to make his conquest of the Aztecs a mere brush of trained troops with untrained savages. Our trained troops had many years of hard service ere they rooted out the untrained savages of Florida, and have not yet subdued those of the West. But this general in a year and a half brought these organized and warlike Aztecs into such submission that they have never raised their heads in rebellion since. And they are vastly superior in every respect, military included, to the Indians of our frontier. They are the soldiers of the republic, and can fight as well as the soldiers of France, as they showed in this very Puebla, where they won one of their brilliant battles against their invaders, and made the 5th of May famous in their annals. It was something to subdue such a people.

Turn now due west, and fill your gaze with the grand Snow Range. It is all embraced at a glance. Unlike the Alps, which you can never see around, these Mexic Alps are all compassed at once. You can see where they leave the plains, and where they come back to them. You can ride clear around them if you please. From the first breaking of the soil on the east, between Malinche and Tlascala, you go gradually up to Iztaccihuatl, descend enough to allow a pass across to Mexico—the pass which Cortez and Scott crossed—climb again the steeper, taller, smoother, and handsomer sides of Popocatepetl, and “coast” down his western side into the valleys and lakes that come between him and the Toluca range, of which Ajusco is the chief peak—a range that shuts in Mexico city on the south.

I leave you looking at this complete picture while I look at this grand bell and its half-dozen smaller sisters; for the clock is about to strike. Three times a power below pulls back that huge copper hammer before it lets it fall on the huger rim, to send forth a thunderous tone that makes us look to our ears, and almost fear that we shall have no further use for these rudimental wings, as Mr. Darwin might call them, did he choose to detect in man a descent

from angels rather than from apes. The power that slowly and thrice swings the hammer ere it strikes the blow, seems so labored and so human that we are sure it must be man. It is so, we find, but man changed into a machine—oiled, and burnished, and operating like clock-work exactly.

You will notice here the number of the churches. Though French cannon have blown some of them to pieces, and Mexican changes have opened streets through others, still the domes and turrets are very numerous, much more so than the needs of the city. Chief of these are the Campaña, or Jesuits' church, and the San Francisco, which stands near the eastern gate, over against the Alameda, with its paved court along the street-side, covering an acre or more; its deep arcades once used for priestly refreshment, now as barracks for soldiers; and its tall, square, ungainly towers, that look as if they could stand many an earthquake and bombardment, as they have already done for a hundred years and more. They all have one model: a dome over the centre of the cross, and two towers at the front or long end of the cross. That is the model of the Mexican church; no pinnacle, no shaft, no Gothic arch—Moorish and Spanish, and that only.

Descend and look at this cathedral. It stands, four feet above the street, on a raised pavement that is of vast proportions. It is not less than three hundred feet before you reach the church from the beginning of this rock-built terrace. The effect is very majestic. A plaza spreads beyond this outside church floor, with a garden and flowers, surrounded by a street, and inclosed by a very wide and shaded arcade, filled with curiosity seekers and sellers.

The side wall of the church rises vast, almost windowless and pillarless, a naked wall of dark gray rock. Enter. The effect is grand and profound; more so, I think, than in any edifice I have seen on this continent, and surpassed by but few on the other. The towers rise in grand proportions, and the bells drop down the richest fruit of melody. Its pillars are of the same dark porphyritic rock, but are built up in stones about two feet in width, laid in white cement, which relieves the pillars by regular lines of light.

These vast columns, ninety feet high, support a vaster roof, that seems almost ærial in its height and grace. The springing arches bend like a hand of heaven, each ridge a finger, above the prostrate worshipers. The altar is of polished pillars of marble, with each groove edged with gold plate. The effect is very brilliant, the play of gold on the variegated marbles being strange and striking. One could hardly tell if they were not all gold. Inside these flashing



CONVENT OF SAN DOMINGO, CITY OF MEXICO.

columns is a mass of polished green and almost translucent marble, and above and around it hang all manner of images: popes and ecclesiastics, angels and apostles, and, over all, Mary, God blessed forever in this ornate idolatry.

The chapel in the rear of the high altar is a mass of gilded and graven images, as are all the chapels in the chief churches in all the cities. None is more resplendent than one in the old Church

of Santo Domingo near at hand. Every crevice of the large chapel is covered with carved wood, tossed up into airy forms like the filigree work of a gold setting, and every bit of this carved wood or clay, on roof, wall, side, and every spot but the floor, is covered with gilding. It is a little antique, but when first opened it must have well-nigh blinded the eyes of the worshipers. So yet are some of the chapels of the cathedral in Mexico. One can but feel, as he looks on all this display, the fitness of one of Hood's puns:

"Just like a button is his soul,
All cased in triple g(u)ilt."

This church, in its service and its life, its doctrines and devices, is very like these gorgeous gildings,

"All cased in triple g(u)ilt."

That Santo Domingo is a specimen. Come with me out of that dazzling chapel into this corridor of the convent to which that chapel is attached. Here was another like glittering room, where a rich Pueblano paid four hundred dollars to have his body rest a night on its way to the grave. Back of this gorgeous preliminary to the sepulchre and the worms, you see this closed-up hole in the wall. Knock it open. There is a room there, if room it may be called, where two or three can crouch, and none can walk or hardly stand, with a stone bench, and a hole big enough to pass a piece of bread through. In that wall were confined those suspected by the friars of St. Dominic, who said mass so ornately in that golden chapel. Here they were fed, and here, when the order came, food ceased to come, and they ceased to live. Buried with Christ were these his saints—buried alive.

Close by that living tomb a hole was broken in the wall, and out of it rattled a heap of skulls and other human bones, which had been tossed into a vault at an opening above, and which bottom of the vault was thus opened to the light, and all their deeds became manifest that they were wrought of the devil and not of God.

This Convent of the Inquisition was located in the very heart

of the city. The stone whence the town radiates is opposite its entrance. A new street was cut through it, and a portion of it, including that place of sepulture and revelation, has been purchased by the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. That is a sweet and sacred revenge, and the martyrs will feel that their sufferings are truly avenged, when the place of their living burial becomes the seat of a living Church, preaching the faith for which they suffered even unto the death.



PRISONERS OF THE INQUISITION.

The service at the cathedral Sunday morning seemed dry and husky. The robes of the officiators were faded, the young preacher was afraid, and the singing as hollow as if performed in some non-Roman churches I wot of in Boston and New York. But the evening service, which the bishop conducted, was intense enough. It showed how fervid yet was the faith of Puebla, and how easily it might burst into a volcano of persecution. The audience was not over four or five hundred, but they gathered round the pulpit on their knees, and repeated the Litany as I never heard it before—so intense, so united, so devotional. The tents and altars of camp-meetings do not surpass them in earnestness of response.

Some of their utterances were so powerful that my companion asserted that the organ accompanied them. This I denied, and though we both sat directly under that instrument, it is a disputed point between us to this day whether there was any sound but the human voice. I heard none but that was full of deepest and strongest and most united exclamation. Puebla is very religious, as was Athens, and very superstitious, and worships the unknown God with a devotion worthy a clearer faith. May it soon attain this needed grace!

It is likely so to do. The brisk business men begin to see that it needs closer relations with the outside world. It was left thirty miles off the track when the road from Vera Cruz to Mexico was laid out, though it was offered direct connection if it would build that thirty miles. Its refusal to make this investment is charged to its priesthood, and that does not make them any the more popular. It will make connections with other routes, and regain some of the trade it is losing. This ambition makes it more willing to tolerate all faiths, and to adjust itself to the future of Mexico. Still that toleration in this town will be slowest of the slow. Persecution must precede such liberty.

That Sabbath night the crowds in the Alameda showed little thought of the bitter wailing of the cathedral company. A multitude in carriages, on horseback, and afoot, thoughtless, fashion-following, were without God, if not without hope in the world. The golden glory on the snowy brows of the mountains—was it a sign of a new advent that should make the Sabbath a delight, holy unto the Lord, honorable?

There is a cross to be taken here by the saints of the Lord ere that grace dawns. On the show-bills, at the entertainment for the next Sabbath night at the Theatre Hidalgo, was a play entitled "The Destruction of the Protestants" (*La Destruccion de los Protestantes*). I do not know but that I would have overcome two scruples, visiting the theatre and breaking the Sabbath, had I been there that Sunday, in order to have seen of what spirit some of the Pueblanos yet are, and how they would have received the portrayal

of a Saint Bartholomew's day. The two scruples have been overcome once and again, though not at the same time, since I have visited a theatre, for religious purposes, on Sunday, and have witnessed Sunday-school exhibitions which imitated the theatre in every thing but artistic excellence and success.

That this was a sort of Sunday-school exhibition was clear, from the fact that that Sunday night the play was to be "Samson." So even in their sports the angels of Puebla are pious. Probably their Sunday bull-fights are with the sacred bulls, such as Egypt once worshiped; not those of the pope—these they never fight.

That play shows what their earnestness yet is, and what Protestants may have to suffer ere the city is truly redeemed to Christ. Yet they are willing to suffer. Twelve brethren and sisters gathered round their beloved minister when the storm broke over him of pistols and paving-stones. Sixty gathered to hear the Word. They will come together again. The government must protect liberty of worship, and Puebla be indeed, in heart as well as in name, the City of the Angels; religious with a happy religion that does not wail with ceaseless confession, *Mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*, "My fault, my greatest fault," but exclaims in joyful confidence,

"My God is reconciled;
His pard'ning voice I hear;
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba, Father, cry."

May that soon be the blessed experience of this City of the Saints and the Angels!

VIII.

THE MOST ANCIENT AMERICAN MECCA.

On Horse.—Irrigation.—Entrance to Cholula.—Deserted Churches.—Plaza Grande, and its Cortez Horror.—A wide-awake Priest.—A wide View from the Summit.—A costly Trifle.—The Ride back.

PUEBLA is a modern and made-up Mecca, an imitation, and not an original. Let us to the true. Horseback is your only mode of riding here, and the horse is made for the business. In the States you run small chance of getting trained steeds for such service. Here you find none else. In Mexico city are fancy teams, but even there the back is the favorite part of the horse. Especially is it so everywhere else.

Mr. Marshall, an American Englishman, whose two sons were educated at Lowell and Chicago, furnishes us with horses, four in all. A gentleman and his wife accompany us, with the guide, an old gentleman, whose pantaloons, like Mr. Grimes, the ancient's, coat, are all buttoned down, though not before, but on the side, silver buttons too, and as thick together as it is possible to place them. Some of these garments, it is said he has, worth five hundred dollars. It would better pay his wife to wear the breeches than in ordinary cases of uxurious usurpation. His horse was as much thought of as his pantaloons, and the one danced and the other shone, and warmed the cockles of the old man's heart, so that he sang love-songs with a voice approaching the childish treble and a sentiment equally infantile or senile.

The morning was magnificent, as all mornings are here, when this company of ten galloped through the yet empty streets of Puebla. The country is soon reached, and the volcanoes rise up before us as only a mile or two away. How grand they glowed in