

different degrees of civilization of the different nations to whom they belonged. A great many of the vases of tecal, and of the candlesticks in clay, curiously worked, were taken from excavations in the Isle of Sacrifices, near Vera Cruz, Oaxaca, etc., and from the suburbs of Mexico. There are also a collection of very ancient medals,—to the number of six hundred,—a bronze bust of Philip the Fifth, and about two hundred Mexican paintings,—comprehending two collections of the portraits of the Spanish viceroys, many of the celebrated Cabrerias,—and various dresses, arms, and utensils from both the Californias. In the cabinet of natural history there is a good collection of minerals, together with some very fine specimens of gold and silver.

The Minería, or School of Mines, is another interesting place to visit. This magnificent building is a palace whose fine proportions compare well with those of any famous edifice in Europe. This was the work of Tolsa, Mexico's famous architect and sculptor. All is on a grand scale, its noble rows of pillars, great staircases, lofty roofs, and spacious apartments witnessing to the munificence of the rich Spaniards who contributed to its construction.

I should not omit to notice the great national pawnshop of Mexico, El Monte de Piedad, the funds of which are supplied by the government, an institution under the superintendence of a distinguished and virtuous man. Persons who are pressed for money and have anything to pawn take the article there and have it valued, receiving in money two-thirds of the sum at which it is valued.



STATUE OF CUAUTEMOC, ON THE PASEO.

El Monte de Piedad was founded by Señor Don Pedro Romero de Terreros, who was born in Spain in 1710, and educated at the University of Salamanca. His father came to Mexico on business, and while returning died in Vera Cruz. His son, Don Pedro, came to arrange his father's business matters, and afterward established himself in Querétaro with an uncle, who placed him at the head of his business, where he showed great business talent and rapidly acquired wealth. Upon the death of his uncle he invested in mines and became

fabulously rich, but at the same time gave generously to the poor and to charitable institutions. The King of Spain, hearing of this, conferred upon him the titles of Caballero de la Orden de Calatrava and Count of Regla.

Although he had aided so many, he wished to establish an institution which should be a perennial fountain from which the needy could derive succor, and thus he conceived the idea of this institution,—El Monte de Piedad Nacional.

The building fronts upon the plaza, opposite the cathedral. The staircases are cut from blocks of lava from Popocatepetl, and the horrible heads which Cortez had placed over the doors and windows are still there, while in the patio are the flag-stones trodden by "the grandest filibuster and most pious and heroic butcher of all time."

There are employed two appraisers, a mean of whose estimates is adopted. On diamonds and articles of unchanging value they lend up to seven-eighths of the value. The interest ranges from three per cent. to nine and three-fourths per cent. per annum. If the interest fails to be paid, the article is placed in the vault for seven months; a value is then placed upon it by appraisers, and it is sold. If more is received for the article than covers expenses, the balance is placed to the credit of the depositor or his heirs, and is subject to his or their orders for one hundred years. If not called for in that time, it reverts to the bank. Amounts loaned vary from one dollar up to several thousand. For seventy-five years the profits went to pay for masses for the repose of the soul of the founder, but since then they have been devoted to establishing branch institutions; but, as one connected with the institution remarked, after seventy-five years of prayer his soul would probably be out of hot water, if ever.

Of all the spots in Mexico, the Alameda is the most beautiful. It is a public square on the western border of the city, containing about forty acres, enclosed by a stone wall. It is covered with a thick growth of poplar trees, whence the name. The whole square is intersected with walks paved with flag-stones. All these walks unite in the centre, where there is a beautiful *jet d'eau*, and from this point they diverge in every direction, to unite again in four or five smaller circles. There is a carriage-way inside of the wall entirely surrounding the square.

A short distance from the Alameda is the Paseo,—the fashionable ride. The people drive every day, from five to seven, along the Paseo, which was planned from the walls of the city to the castle of Chapultepec. This boulevard, three miles in length and two hundred feet in width, with double avenues of fine trees shading stone sidewalks, with seven great circles, each three hundred feet in diameter, breaking its long, level straightness, makes a fit setting for the brilliant display it holds. The centre of each circle is to be filled with a monument or statue, surrounded by a garden with fountains and flowers, around which, on either side, the avenue sweeps superbly. Through this magnificent drive-way hundreds and hundreds of brilliant equipages pass and repass in the late afternoon,—the carriages full of brightly dressed ladies, the servants in splendid and showy livery, and gilded youth in fine array dashing on small fiery steeds through the central space; the young girls with flowers in their dark hair, the elders with head and shoulders draped in soft black lace, which lends grace to even a homely woman; the cavalier, valiant in picturesque bravery; all these meet there with nods and smiles and that fascinating little Mexican greeting which is



THE NOCHE TRISTE TREE.

spoken with the fingers. Sometimes, I may venture to say, one may see a thousand carriages on the Paseo. When I return to Mexico I shall go to the Paseo, the Bois de Boulogne of that city, with the utmost confidence of meeting all my acquaintances, and, indeed, everybody else, there. It is a habit of their lives to ride on the Paseo in the evening and to go to the theatre at night.

The Zócalo forms a centre from which radiate many of the principal streets, making the Plaza Mayor one of the best known localities in the city. In the centre of the plaza is the Zócalo, screened with groups of orange-trees, choice shrubbery, and flowers. There are also a fountain and a music-stand, where out-of-door concerts are given by military bands in the evening.

The principal market-place in the city, until a few years ago, was situated at the southwest end of the Zócalo. In the plaza is a curious monument to Enrico Martinez, the famous engineer by whom the drainage of the valley was effected by the cut of Nochistongo. On a base surrounded by an iron railing having bronze lamps at its angles is raised a square pedestal of marble supporting a female figure in bronze, emblematic of the city of Mexico, modelled by the sculptor Noresa.

What stories the Zócalo might tell of human sacrifices and stern Aztec priests, mad fights of Spaniards and fierce natives, brilliant processions of Castilian viceroys, enthusiastic patriots, clerical bigots, and red-handed revolutionists!

The Zócalo is in a lively and beautiful plaza, both by day and by night, and, whether in the sun's blaze or in the mellow rays of the moon, it is always a scene of varied and engrossing enchantment. The walks are as smooth as marble, the flowers are grouped in exquisite designs, snowy statuary gleams through the veiling foliage, and from the centre of this grand park issue delicious strains of music. There is no place on earth that compares with this in the gayety and variety of the types it presents. It is a living, moving, breathing kaleidoscope of all nations, colors, types, and costumes, from ladies and gentlemen of the most exalted rank to groups of bull-fighters, poor peons, and ragged Indians. So fairy-like and bewildering is the scene that one can scarcely realize that it is a nineteenth century reality and not a dream of the time of the Arabian Nights.



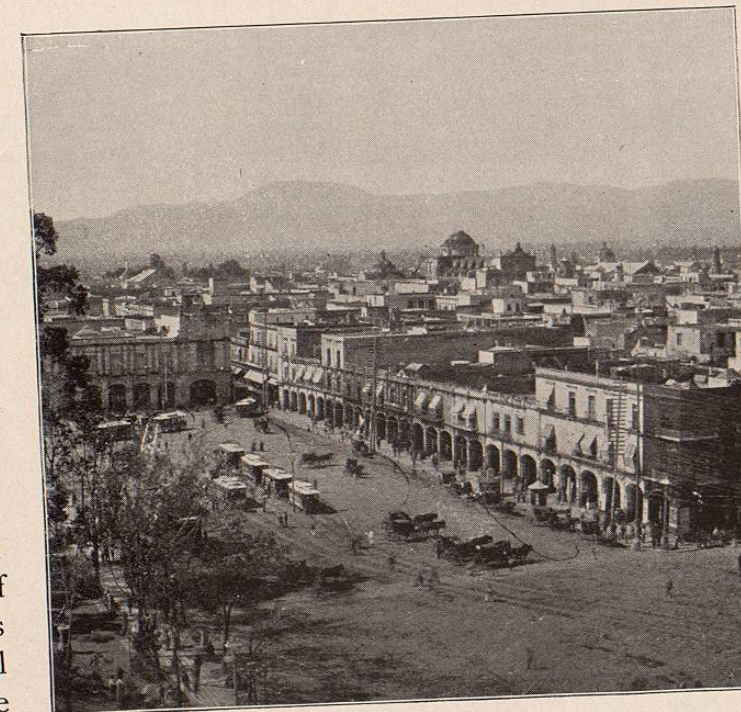
CHAPTER VIII

THE MARKETS AND CHAPULTEPEC

VISITORS to Mexico are always attracted by the markets, and writers invariably devote many pages to their description. In the markets may be found all the flowers, fruits, and vegetables of a tropical climate. Most of them are raised near the city or on the floating gardens of La Viga, and on the canals may be seen hundreds of boatmen paddling along with their crafts filled with gay blossoms.

In the markets are many characteristic types. Each class of the population wears a garb which is the uniform of its occupation. The water-carrier, in armor of leather, bears his heavy jar suspended from a band around the forehead; the ochre-man, stained like a terra-cotta image from head to foot, carries his package of brick-colored clay above his matted locks; the fruit-vender, crying his luscious wares in sudden shrill monotone, balances his enormous pannier on his head, and steps as airily as if he were beginning a fandango. Under the open arches of the portales the crockery-merchant sits before his pile of Guadalajara jars and brightly glazed pottery; Indian women carry their double load of baskets and babies with the superb indifference to fatigue which marks their race; dealers in "frozen waters" call their sherbets in prolonged piercing notes like those of a midsummer locust; sidewalk cooks squat on their haunches beside small fires of mesquite, over which bubble earthen dishes of stewed vegetables, frijoles, or crisp tortillas; and flower-girls sit in the midst of piles of glowing poppies, pyramids of heliotrope and pansies, baskets of scarlet cactus blossoms, and tangled heaps of superb roses magnificent in color and perfume, which fill the atmosphere with fragrant beauty.

In every direction the roads running out from the city of Mexico are broad, well-kept avenues, and there are none of the squalid mean districts so characteristic of the suburbs of Northern cities. These roads wind between massive cottonwood-trees, through flourishing



THE ARCADES.