

we decided to go and see the sight. We proceeded to the Cannon Street Station, and were soon wending our way out of the great city, and in a short time are put down at Windsor. Before us rose the massive walls of Windsor Castle, from whose lofty battlements floated the Royal Standard. Our objective point was where the military display was to take place, and though we would have been pleased to loiter on the way, the crowds that were pressing on warned us that if we wished to see anything we must pass on too, and before we got through we discovered what passing through a crowd and in a crowd of some three hundred thousand people meant. Our experiences in this matter also might furnish material for an amusing paper. However, after various adventures and numberless squeezes—sometimes so severe that breathing was a task of much difficulty—worked our way towards the grand stand, and succeeded in getting a good position to see. There were nearly two hours' delay in the arrival of Her Majesty, but presently the Royal carriage appeared through the trees that adorn the great park, and the cry ran through the vast assemblage, "They come." As the carriage drew near the staff from which the Standard of Britain proudly waved, the clapping of hands, waving of handkerchiefs, and the chorus from hundreds of thousands of human throats was a revelation to an untravelled Canuck, long to be remembered. It is difficult to imagine the noise, either in volume or kind, such a multitude would make. It seemed to me like the roar of the sea. The Royal carriage passed by the Standard, while the Shah, mounted on a white Arab charger, and his suit, took up their position by the Persian Standard, and both were surrounded by a brilliant group of Royal and other great personages. The march past now began, and as the crack regiments of the British service, led by their celebrated bands, moved on with the precision of a clock, the enthusiasm reached its highest point. It was a grand sight to see, and which caused a thrill of patriotism to tingle every nerve. My space will not permit me to enlarge on this interesting and exciting display. When it was over my friend and I, though we had been where we could see the Queen and those around her very well, as desired, if possible, to get a nearer look at her, and so made off in the direction of the castle. Our object in this was furthered by the fact that the great majority, to whom the sight of Her Majesty was not a novelty, were anxious to see the Shah. We took up a place on the edge of the principal roadway leading through the park to the Castle, and waited patiently for an opportunity. After a little the carriage came slowly along followed by the Shah and his attendants. In passing we got what we came for, a good look at our noble Queen. It is hardly necessary for me to attempt a description of a personage made so familiar to every Canadian by the numberless prints that have appeared from time to time throughout Her Majesty's long reign. It seemed to me then, and does now, that if I had met her anywhere, unattended even by the trappings of royalty, I should have known the Queen. The impressions I had formed had not changed in any way by the closer view, and the glance I caught as I stood by the roadway, with lifted hat, the expression of the face, slightly flushed from the excitement and warmth of the day no doubt confirmed me in the estimate I had made of the appearance and character of Her Majesty. Under the circumstances we might have looked for considerable display, but there was none. The dress she wore

was a plain black, trimmed with white; no ornaments and no jewellery that could be seen. If I had never read of the loving wife, the devoted mother, the earnest Christian woman, the noble Queen, I should have felt that I had seen her to-day. We watched the carriage and its cortege as it drew near the castle for a few moments and then turned away and proceeded with all possible speed to the station, where we were glad to get standing room in the guards van, and were soon starting back to London, where we arrived at nine p. m., very weary, it is true, but in the humor, nevertheless, for supper, which we did ample justice to I am certain.

LIFE IN MEXICO.

THE VIGA CANAL—SNOW-CROWNED POPOCATEPETL—A DUCK PRESERVE—FULFILLMENT OF THE PROPHECY—INSATIATE APPETITE OF OLD HUITZILHUITT—ROWS OF GRINNING SKULLS.

(Truth Special Correspondence.)

One of the most delightful excursions which can be made anywhere in the world is up this Viga Canal. A covered boat, with awnings, movable benches, and two Indians to propel it, can be hired for about \$3 per diem. It is best to make up a party of "congenial spirits"—if they can be found in this far-away country—to provide enormous lunch-baskets, and to start at the first peep of dawning, that there may be ample time for picnicing among the floating gardens at mid-day, and a glimpse of the evening festivities at Santa Anita.

Leaving the Garita de la Viga (an old Spanish water-gate, at which toll is taken from the market boats) before sunrise, one meets multitudes of canoes coming down to the city, each with overflowing cargoes of fruit, flowers or vegetables. Every mummy-like figure, wrapped to the eyes in reboso or zerapho (for the morning air is chilly) murmurs a musical *Buenos dias, senoras*, as you pass, generally supplemented by the solicitous query, *cómo pasa V. la noche?*—"how did you pass the night?"—for the poorest of these people are wonderfully polite. The *chinampas*, perhaps the very same used by Cortez's Indian spies, are each managed by a single native, who stands upright in poses fit for a sculptor, and plies his long pole with marvellous dexterity. Not uncommonly it is an Indian girl alone—and a very pretty figure she makes, encased among her market produce: or flat-boats piled high with fragrant alfalfa; or canoes laden with tobacco, castor-oil beans, or freshly-gathered rushes with which to decorate the doors of pulque shops; or a load of poppies and marigolds, to strew the floor of some church for a *fiesta* or a funeral.

Gliding along under the bending willows, the scene upon either side is surpassingly beautiful. The hills which environ this far-famed Valley of Anahuac are still wrapped in their misty robes *de nuit*, but the first rays of the rising sun flush

SNOW-CROWNED POPOCATEPETL, and the dead giants, Ixtaccihuatl, stretched on her bier beside him. To the left rise those heights upon which the signal fires of the Aztecs were kindled during the early days of Spanish invasion; and a little farther on is "The Hill of the Star," where the sanguinary priests of Montezuma sacrificed a beautiful female captive at the end of each cycle of fifty years, believing the world would not last unless the gods were thus propitiated. The few houses in sight are mostly of wild cane, thatched with Spanish-dagger leaves; here and there a gray or pink-tinted adobe villa, with private water-gates, is slowly moldering upon the banks, apparently unhabited for cen-

turies, and a proper prowling-place for spooks. Numerous old churches,—most of them now ruinous and disused,—point crumbling towers toward heaven, on both sides of the way, for in olden times the Catholic law-makers granted lands and perquisites to pious souls who built churches. The shallow salt marshes on the right are a literal hunter's paradise, being blackened with wild-duck, millions of which both winter and summer here. The lands not diked into gardens are kept submerged, a kind of

DUCK-PRESERVE,

and leased for "happy hunting-grounds." The Indians have a singular mode of committing wholesale slaughter, which has at least the merit of effectiveness. Several hundred musket barrels are planted in hollowed logs, so arranged that half of them point horizontally along the water to sweep the birds that are sailing, while the rest are elevated at an angle of 45 degrees to rake those that rise. The guns are all touched off at once, by a fuse or electric battery, and the execution is terrific.

The *Chinampas*, or "Floating Gardens," are generally disappointing at first sight to the tourist who has read much of Prescott. But, though the soil is now mostly solidified, time was when it actually floated, and in that condition bore crops. To this day expanses are found which are kept in place only by stakes, with four feet of water running below them, yet strong enough to sustain grazing cattle. Farther on we meet wandering strips of verdure appropriately called *cucutas* (ribbons), drifting about wherever the current carries them. We are told that in earlier times these floating fields, with their growing cargoes, were sometimes wrecked, like vessels, by bumping together in gales of wind, or being driven violently ashore; and that robbers and political refugees have been known to defy pursuit by diving under the illusive areas, to "bob up secretly" elsewhere. The gardens of to-day, which liberally supply the markets of Mexico, are formed by the division of what was once all water—but now made earth—into small square patches, intersected by narrow canals. The gardens are so tiny that the owner, paddling around them in his canoe, can irrigate his entire estate by tossing on water with a gourd.

But though these celebrated *chinampas* no longer float, they are curious because of their origin. No human being knows how many years, or ages, after the roving Aztecs had wandered from their unknown "Aztlan, the country of Herons," they reached this valley of Mexico, and settled first near Chapultepec, the "Grasshopper Hill" of their predecessors, the Toltecs. Being persecuted here by the princes of Tlatoacan, they took refuge (about 1245) in a group of islands to the south of Lake Texcoco. But here they fell under the grovelling yoke of the Texcocoan kings, and soon fled to Tlacopan, where—as a reward for assisting those chiefs against their petty princes—they were set at liberty and allowed to establish themselves in a city, which they called *Mixtcalcingo*. But even here the Aztecs could not be contented, for their priests were still searching for that spot foretold by the gods, which would be indicated by an eagle perched upon a rock-rooted cactus. The long-looked for

FULFILLMENT OF THE PROPHECY

came in 1325,—and to-day a queer old monument in the heart of the modern capital marks the exact spot (then covered by Lake Texcoco) where believing Aztecs behold that snake-eating bird, calmly breakfasting upon a prickly-pear, which grew out of a rock washed by the waves.

During all their wanderings the Aztecs cultivated the earth and lived upon what nature gave them. Surrounded by enemies, and in the midst of a lake where were few fish, necessity compelled them to form floating fields upon the bosom of the water. They wove together the roots of aquatic plants, intertwined with twigs of light branches, till a foundation was formed strong enough to support soil, which they drew from the bottom of the lake, washed free from salt, and in it sowed maize and chili, which, for them, comprised the necessities of life. These floating gardens were about a foot above the water, in the form of a long square. Many of them held also the bamboo hut of the owner—his only habitation; and when the neighborhood was not to his liking, (for the early citizens of Tenochtitlan lived mostly in huts, erected on piles over the water) he had but to assemble the family and paddle his canoe away! So strong was this natural love for flowers that soon the useful was secondary to the ornamental, and the little gardens became gay with blossoms and aromatic herbs, which were used in the worship of the gods or to bedeck the palace of the emperor. Truly, the ancient city, with its watery avenues and floating fields, must have been far more interesting than the modern town—a charming place for tourist's visits, barring such inconveniences as the Sacrificial Stone and the insatiate appetite of old Huitzilhuiti for the hearts of human victims.

Santa Anita, the first village on the Viga behind the city of Mexico, is the universal rallying point on Sundays, for both natives and sight-seers from the capital. There is always a *fiesta* at Santa Anita, and there the Indians are eternally fandangoing, ballad-singing, and pulque drinking. On arriving at this village, the first business of everybody is to secure a wreath of poppies and corn-flowers, which the women wear upon their tangled hair and the men upon their sombreros—though, perhaps, the "human form divine," thus beautifully crowned, may be but partially covered with scant and dirty rags. Lovely wreaths sell for a *medio* (six cents) apiece, and the woman, young or old, who is not wreathed before the day is over, is either deep in disgrace or hopelessly out of fashion. This native love of flowers is a direct heritage from the swarthy founders of these floating gardens. History tells us that the most valuable gift which Montezuma presented to the Spanish ambassadors at his court, was accorded by a rare bouquet—and a strange anomaly it must have seemed, this love of the beautiful combined with this blood-curdling religion. Baron Van Humboldt remarked upon it centuries afterwards. To-day those who sit in the market places must embower themselves in green branches garlanded with flowers, while even prosaic pulque-barrels are wreathed with roses, and mugs and pitchers similarly bedecked! The poorest village church has its floor strewn with blossoms, and fresh bouquets are arranged upon all the altars before service begins. The babe at its christening, the child at its confirmation, the bride at her wedding, the corpse in its coffin, are alike adorned.

At the Indian village next above Santa Anita is a rare old church, built by Cortez in 1533, and still in daily use. It is well worth a visit, and if the doors chance to be closed, a few cents will induce the custodian to produce the key and unveil all its treasures of antique ugliness. In the rear is a weed-grown grave yard, with

ROWS OF GRINNING SKULLS

ragged along the arms of its central cross, which is surrounded by the inevitable pile of human bones. In front of the church