

romance. Like Granada, encircled, but not frowned upon, by mountains; fondled and adorned by water, like Venice; as grand in its buildings as Babylon of old; and rich with gardens, like Damascus;—the great city of Mexico was at that time the fairest in the world, and has never since been equalled. Like some rare woman, of choicest parentage, the descendant of two royal houses far apart, who joins the soft, subtle, graceful beauty of the south, to the fair, blue-eyed, blushing beauty of the north, and sits enthroned in the hearts of all beholders—so sat Mexico upon the waters, with a diadem of gleaming towers, a fair expanse of flowery meadows on her breast, a circle of mountains as her zone; and, not unwoman-like, rejoicing in the reflection of her beautiful self from the innumerable mirrors which were framed by her streets, her courts, her palaces, and her temples. Neither was hers a beauty, like that of many cities, which gratifies the eye at a distance; but which diminishes at each advancing step of the beholder, until it absolutely degenerates into equality. She was beautiful when seen from afar; she still maintained her beauty, when narrowly examined by the impartial and scrupulous traveller. She was the city not only of a great king, but of an industrious and thriving people. If we descend into details, we shall see that the above description is not fanciful nor exaggerated. Mexico was situated in a great salt lake, communicating with a fresh-water lake. It was approached by three principal causeways of great breadth, constructed of solid masonry, which to use the picturesque language of the Spaniards, were two lances, in breadth. The length of one of these causeways was two leagues, and that of another a league and-a-half; and these two ample causeways united in the middle of the city, where stood the great temple. At the ends of these causeways were wooden draw-bridges, so that communication could be cut off between the causeways and the town, which would thus become a citadel. There was also an aqueduct which communicated with the main land, consisting of two separate lines of work in masonry, in order that if one should need repair, the supply of water for the city might not be interrupted. The streets were the most various in construction that have ever been seen in any city in the world. Some were of dry land, others wholly of water; and others, again, had pathways of pavement, while in the centre there was room for boats. The foot-passengers could talk with those in the boats. It may be noticed that a city so constructed requires a circumspect and polite population. . . . There was a market-place twice as large as that of the city of Salamanca, surrounded with porticos in which there was room for fifty thousand people to buy and sell. The great temple of the city maintained its due proportion of magnificence. In the plan of the city of Mexico, which is to be found in a very early edition of the Letters of Cortes, published at Nuremberg, and which is supposed to be the one that Cortes sent to Charles the Fifth, I observe that the space allotted to the temple is twenty times as great as that allotted to the market-place. Indeed, the sacred enclosure was in itself a town; and Cortes, who seldom stops in his terrible narrative to indulge in praise or in needless description, says that no human tongue could explain the grandeur and the peculiarities of this temple. Cortes uses the word "temple," but it might rather be called a sacred city, as it contained many temples, and the abodes of all the priests and virgins who ministered at them, also a university and an arsenal. It was enclosed by lofty stone walls, and entered by four portals, surrounded by bastions. No less than twenty truncated pyramids of solid masonry, faced with a polished surface of white cement that shone like silver in the sun, rose up from within that enclosure. High over them all towered the great temple dedicated to the god of war. This, like the rest, was a truncated pyramid, with ledges round it, and with two small towers upon the summit, in which were placed the images of the great god of war (Huituidopochth) and of the principal deity of all (Tezcatlipuk,) Mexican Jupiter. — *The Life of Fernando Cortes, by Arthur Helps, Author of "The Spanish Conquest in America."*

—*How History is Written.*—Some of the papers here (writes a *Daily News* Paris correspondent) are debating the question whether Delescluze be dead or not. It is pleasant to see the Parisian press in doubt as to its facts—the sight is so rare. And if the Parisian journalists could know how completely they have been and are in error as to the fate of most of the Communal leaders, they would in future be very chary of committing themselves on any subject by hasty assertions. Perhaps it is the discovery of some journalists that most of the stories afloat as to what has become of the leading spirits of the Commune, are mere fictions which have led to the suggestion that Delescluze is not dead. I may assure these sceptical Thomases of the Parisian press that they may dismiss their doubts. Delescluze is really dead. He was shot near the Chateau d'Eau. I will state another fact which I believe I am the first to announce. His suc-

cessor in office was Varlin. It is announced most positively in the record of the Paris newspapers, that Varlin was taken in the neighborhood of Rue de la Fayette, on Saturday, the 25th of May. I do not know about this. I should doubt it very much. Late in the afternoon of this Saturday, the last day but one of the Commune, he was directing operations at Belville, and it would be strange if he could be captured at the same time, in the west of Paris, and taken to Montmartre to be shot. There is an order of his in existence couched in the following terms:—"May 27, 1871, 2.30 of the afternoon. Order to beat the rappel, and the generals to collect the battalions. The Civil Delegate for War, Varlin." This document is by no means decisive as to the question of his being shot or not on that Saturday afternoon. It is chiefly interesting as evidence of Varlin's succession to Delescluze. Observe that it is now six weeks since the death of Delescluze—and yet, as I believe now for the first time, it is announced he had a successor in the War Office, and that his successor was Varlin. It is one of many illustrations which might be produced of the difficulty of getting at facts relating to the Commune. Facts! Why to listen to the men of the Commune themselves you would imagine that nothing on earth was capable of demonstration. No fact is supposed to be more certain than this—that the Commune burnt a great part of Paris. During the last six weeks I have seen the misguided men of the Commune both in London and Paris. In the face of day upon the boulevards, I have talked to notoriety of the Commune. I have said to them, "Well, you have crowned your iniquities by the destruction of Paris. Why did you attempt this wickedness? Why did you turn your political opinion into a criminal one?" Nearly the invariable answer I have received is, "What proof have you? How do you know that it was the Commune which burnt Paris? It was the army of Versailles." It was easy to reply—"You announced your intention of destroying Paris rather than give it up to the Monarchists, as you called them; the orders of the Communal authorities are in existence commanding the burning of various quarters of Paris, and your people were caught also in the act." I have been told vociferously that all this is calumny; that the written orders are forgeries prepared by the enemies of the Commune, and that if some individuals connected with the Commune, may in a moment of madness, have been so lost as to destroy any building in Paris, it ought not to be laid to the account of the rest. Of course, I do not give you these details as worth a straw; but still they have a sort of interest as showing how self-delusions arise, and how history may be falsified. I have no doubt that some of my interlocutors at least—I do not say all—were perfectly sincere when they denied most strenuously that the Commune had set fire to Paris, and that this was the act of the Versailles troops.

—*American Newspapers.*—Colonel John W. Forney said, not long ago, at a dinner given in his honor: "I have given you a few details of the condition and number of newspapers in the United States in 1775 and in 1810. But in 1870 we count fifty-five hundred news periodicals of all degrees, with a probable annual circulation of not less than seven hundred and twenty-five millions. Of these, four hundred and seventy-five are dailies, circulating nearly two millions of copies every twenty-four hours: one hundred and sixty are agricultural journals, circulating over half a million; and about three hundred religious periodicals, circulating over two and a half millions of copies of each edition—an aggregate, without counting our monthly literature, larger than that of the rest of the civilized world. In fifty years, when our population shall have attained, on the present ratio of increase, to one hundred and fifty millions, the boy of seventeen to-day will have a far different story to tell."

—*French Constitutions.*—During the eighty years which have elapsed between 1791 and 1870, France has been governed by fifteen Constitutions, averaging in duration five years and four months, although some lasted much longer. As it may be a matter of historical interest, we give these Constitutions. First, the Constitution of September 3d, 1791, lasting fifteen months. Second, the Constitution of June 24th, 1793, which lasted fifteen months and ended in the fall of Robespierre. Third, the Constitution of the Nineteenth Vendemiaire, of the second year of the French Republic, which lasted three months. Fourth, the Constitution of the Fourteenth Frimaire of the second year of the French Republic, which lasted fifteen months. Fifth, the Constitution of the fourth Fructidor of the third year of the Republic, which created the "Directory," and lasted four and a half years. Sixth, the Constitution of the twenty-second Frimaire of the seventh year of the Republic, which established the first Consulate and lasted for two years. Seventh, the Constitution of Thermidor of the tenth year of the Republic, which established the second Consulate, and lasted