

The drivers are compelled by law to carry horns and to blow them whenever a crossing is approached, keeping up a perfect pandemonium in populous quarters.

In Mexican society street-car conductors are gentlemen of considerable importance, with their silver-garnished sombreros, embroidered linen, breeches bedecked with silver buttons up the outside seams, and handsome pistols protruding from their belts. Why the pistols, I do not know—but a conductor always wears two of them conspicuously displayed, probably because otherwise he doesn't consider himself in "full dress."

Indeed, almost any Mexican would as soon go out of doors without his coat as without his pistol. He wears it to church, to the opera, to see his best girl—in short, wherever he goes you may see a glistening bit of nickle-plated steel sticking out from under his coat-tail. Every day, when my teacher of Spanish (a swarthy young man in a jacket of yellow kid and pointed-toed boots with enormously high heels) comes to give me the customary lesson, he is obliged to unbuckle his belt and deposit a big revolver upon my table before he can sit down to business.

When the men persist in wearing such extremely large hats, it seems a little queer that the ladies wear no hats at all, and one cannot but feel impressed with the idea that if they could be persuaded to "split the difference" and average up their head-gear fashions the result would be more comfortable for both sexes. The most ordinary sombrero costs not less than \$15, while the more universally popular ones—those profusely garnished with bullion—range in price from \$60 to \$600.

Of late years the upper strata of society cover their heads exactly as do gentlemen in London, Paris or New York—but a genuine Mexican of the middle class still invests all his surplus capital in his hat. A serving man, whose wages are not more than \$12 per month, patriotically puts a year's income into the expensive national sombrero, though he economises to make up for it in the matter of shoes, wearing ox-hide sandals of his own manufacture. An American gentleman tells me that, after being absent about three months, he paid his footman \$42, back wages: and before night the fellow had invested \$35 of it in a new hat, and devoted the remaining \$7 to the wants of his numerous and needy family. While many a thoroughbred Mexican sports a sombrero whose value is away up in the hundreds, the boy, ragged, who blacks your boots, is the proud possessor of one which cost him at least 150 "shines."

But the most stunning spectacle of all is the Mexican equestrian. Horseback riding being the favourite amusement of the male population, the streets are full of galloping *caballeros*, particularly in the cooler hours of morning and evening. An equestrian may easily spend \$1,000 on his outfit—of course exclusive of the horse he rides—and then find himself eclipsed by many of his neighbours. First, his magnificent silver-mounted saddle costs all the way from \$100 to \$500; gold-mounted bridle, \$125; silver spurs, of marvellous size, as much more; sword \$50; the buttons of solid silver, set in double rows up his trouser-legs, \$100; hat, jewelled whip, etc., all his means will allow. Indeed, Solomon, in all his glory, was never so arrayed; and, if not, strictly speaking, "a thing of beauty," he is something to be admired and wondered at from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. Generally he wears a short jacket of kid or tiger-skin, or one of cassimere, heavily embroidered with gold and silver thread; a silken sash of pale blue, pink, or crimson, partially concealing the silver-mounted belt in which are a couple of revolvers; while the rows of buttons on his trousers are linked together by little loops and chains of silver, which jingle as he rides, like the adornments of that historic lady, who wore "rings on her fingers and bells on her toes," and, like her, he also has music wherever he goes.

Riding suits for small boys, from six years old and upwards, can be purchased here for about \$250, with full outfit from sombrero to sword. And exceedingly comical a black-and-tan youngster looks when thus tricked out, huge spurs and all, as we frequently see them riding beside their wealthy papas, or followed at respectful distance by a groom—the very miniatures of their elders.

Mexican ladies generally take their exercise in closed carriages, as etiquette forbids them to ride on horseback, unless accompanied by husband, father or brother. For a gentleman to ask his first-cousin to go out with him, either on foot, on horse, or in a carriage, would be resented as a deadly insult, and give sufficient cause for a duel, since to accept the invitation would seriously compromise her good name.

On pleasant afternoons (and all afternoons are pleasant here except during the rainy season), everybody who owns a carriage, or is able to hire one, drives out to the Alameda or Paseo—the fashionable *boulevard* attached to every Mexican town. In all Mexico there is not a phaeton, or any other open vehicle above a cart; but though hermetically sealed up in closed carriages, one may catch glimpses of bright eyes and beautiful faces—for the fair occupants are not averse to admiration, despite their rigid adherence to etiquette, and are generally about the easiest creatures in the world to flirt with.

Many of the handsomest carriages of the wealthiest people are drawn by mules, for "blooded stock" of that description brings fabulous prices here. In truth, a pair of snow-white mules, closely clipped and carefully groomed, decorated with gold-mounted harness and bunches of red roses at the base of their ears, make a turn-out by no means to be despised.

Mexican ladies even shop in their carriages, and compel the clerks to bring out to the curb-stone the goods they wish to look at. A row of carriages jammed close together before a fashionable store, and a row of bare-headed salesmen bargaining with the occupants, is a common sight; while other clerks rush to and fro in a frenzy of excitement, bringing out box after box and piece after piece of goods, matching shades, samples and trimmings, etc.

None but servants and foreigners stand at the counters and buy. In

a few of the stores the merchants have fitted up private parlours where ladies may sit, if they like, and have the goods brought to them—but even this is considered "questionable."

Shopping is a serious undertaking here, for merchants never classify their goods, but keep silks and cottons, woollens and linens mixed up together on their shelves in wildest confusion. If you step into a store and ask for a pair of gloves, nobody has any idea where the kind you require are to be found, and a grand search commences. The obliging clerks tumble over drawers in which are shoes and ribbons, bustles, laces, perfumery and what not until the desired articles are discovered.

Nor are goods ever delivered by the merchants at the residence of the purchaser. If a package is too bulky to take in your carriage (and never under any circumstances would a Mexican lady or gentleman be seen with a bundle in his hands), you pay a *cargador* to take it to your address. These licensed carriers are similar to the district messengers of northern cities, except that these leather-aproned functionaries are always men and never boys. The *cargador's* fee is fixed by law. Each wears a brass badge bearing his number, and if he does not deliver the goods promptly and in good order, you may report him to the police and he will be heavily fined. On the other hand, if he cannot find your residence, or if there has been some mistake in the directions, it is his duty to take the package to police head-quarters, where you may recover it on proving property.

FANNIE B. WARD.

THE VOICE OF THE SEA.

I LISTENED to the sea,
As it broke upon the shore;
And in monotone it moaned to me
A song of mournful lore.

I listened to the sea,
As it rippled on the shore;
And in jubilant strain it sang to me
A song of mirthful lore.

How is it then, O sea,
As thou playest on thy shore,
That, day by day, thou singest to me
Songs of such varying lore?

"Not I," replied the sea,
"As I play upon my shore,
Not I make the songs that come to thee
Sing of such varied lore."

"The Life in land and sea,
Thrilling for evermore,
It beats from me as it beats from thee,
Songs of all varied lore."

J. CLARK MURRAY.

IMPERIAL FEDERATION.

MR. GOLDWIN SMITH, in *Macmillan's Magazine*, writes: "Frame constitutions as elaborately as you will, through all their mechanical intricacies the real power will assert its preponderance. Great Britain would never allow the votes of her Colonies to turn her away from the path of her interest or her safety. Under the formalities of Federation she would drag them with her in her course, and they would very soon become tired of being dragged. Colonists in London, especially if they have any particular object, political, social, or financial, in view, are apt to make themselves so pleasant that the British mind is filled with visions of Colonial devotion and self-sacrifice which on the day of trial would fade away. The French Canadians are bent on the consolidation of their own nationality, and are radically hostile to Imperial Federation or anything that would tighten their tie to Great Britain. It is surprising to me that anyone with this patent fact before his eyes can talk about Imperial Federation with reference to Canada. France, as people in England seem to feel, is the most likely antagonist of Great Britain in any future war; what she wants is to heal the smart of her military vanity, and she naturally thinks that she is more likely to do this by attacking England than by attacking Germany, from whom she has got what she will not forget for half a century. In such a war the heart of the French Canadian would be with France, and though he would probably be content to remain passive, an attempt to make him fight on the British side, either with musket or purse, would unquestionably provoke him to rebellion.

It is found convenient to keep the tariff question in the back-ground. Nevertheless that question would force itself to the front as soon as the process of Confederation began. What the Canadian Protectionist means is that England shall discriminate in favour of the Colonies, sacrificing the bulk of her commerce to the Colonial trade, while he shall continue to impose protective duties on her goods. The continuance of protective duties is with him not only an essential condition of any arrangement, but his first object, however high-flown and however heartfelt his professions of loyalty may be. But of this, it is plain, the British people would never hear. In fact it would probably be futile to propose to them Imperial Confederation without Imperial Free Trade. Even to frame the constitution and get it ratified by the members would, it seems to me, be a matter of extreme