

## The Rockwood Review.

Mexico as in the further south, doubtless because a cooler atmosphere enforces an indoor life for a greater part of the year. But so well conceived is the system of interior opening as adapted to tropical houses, that the most modern and Americanized house shows a judicious adherence to the "patio." Of this house in which we live, the patio has dimensions that approach sixty by forty feet in length and in breadth. Its eighty rooms are ranged in three tiers, none having other opening than that on the various balconies overlooking the yawning inner court. The lower floor is seldom occupied other than by the "portero" and his family. The life of the people has much which suggests the East. The old courtyard with its burros and their peasant riders, its water carriers, its groups of women squatting on the cobble pavement, and picturesquely attired in a web of cotton; these musty low archways, whose cobble stones are worn by barefooted or sandled wayfarers; these wayside pools near which a dirty unkempt dozen of wanderers with their wives stop to listen to a barefoot native preacher, not less unkempt, but much more wise than they, make up a scene which might well be witnessed in Palestine. Yet you feel that you are not in the east. It is the south unmistakably and markedly—that south which is and always will be lower, infinitely lower than the north.

To repeat myself, Mexico city lies in a beautiful valley, and away to the south, bewildering the distance, rise the guardian angels of the plateau. Popocatepetl and Iztacihuatl, clad in snows that are eternal, cheating the clouds of their silver and shadow, borrowing of the frosts their brilliancy, rivalling the moon with their mellow light, or giving to the valley their last beams of sunset and the first promise of dawn. The city proper occupies but little space in consideration of its three hundred and forty thousand inhabitants. My

first impression was that the streets were abnormally wide, and it required some effort on my part to readjust my estimate, not in comparison with the cities of South America, but with those of the north. Now, however, I can concur with the most recent Californian or Down Easter in abusing the modest dimensions of Mexico's streets. The Pasco and many other fine avenues must be excepted.

The business houses, wholesale and retail, cover an area twice as large as a similar business tract in Toronto. Many of these houses are fair examples of Spanish architecture, have three or four stories, well appointed for business and forming a nucleus for a great commercial centre. Many of the streets are well paved for a southern city, and quite up to date in all lighting, street-cleaning and sewer appointments. In fact, the central portion and several residential corners are beautiful in architecture and lacking in nothing that makes the modern city. So much had I heard concerning the streets and sewers, the native life and native dress before coming here that I was greatly surprised in finding Mexico one of the very finest cities on the continent. On this account I gladly refrain from taking you to the pungent and entirely indelectable back streets. Every city has its filth for those who relish it, and it would not be difficult to direct such to some yawning foully mouthed sewers.

In the "Zocalo," which was once the central part of the city, is the much famed Cathedral, built on the site of Montezuma's temple. It is indeed a beautiful structure, and one of the richest examples to be found in America. Its massive square, Spanish towers, rich in local designs, the bold outline of its single dome, and the wonderful stone carving on the facade are undoubtedly the highest expression of Spanish architecture on the continent. In the "Zocalo" are myriads of the kiosks, coach-stands,