

IN THE LAND OF THE AZTECS.

(continued)

"There stood the city upon the farther shore ;
 Amid the shade of trees its dwellings rose,
 Their level roofs with turrets set around,
 And battlements all burnished white,
 Which shone like silver in the sunshine.
 I beheld the imperial city, her far circling walls,
 Her garden groves and stately palaces,
 Her temples mountain size, her thousand roofs ;
 And when I saw her might and majesty
 My mind misgave me then."—*Southey*.

And indeed, no richer, or more varied spectacle ever caressed the eye, than that which this famed city of Mexico presented to me from the heights of Chapultepec. The view opens over an extensive plain of cultivated fields and waving woods. From the foot of the heights upon which I stood, ancient, gigantic cypress trees, more than sixty feet in circumference, raised their heads. Towards the east is seen the surface of the lakes Tezcuco and Chalco upon which floated a dark blue vapor, like the heather that blooms upon the hills of Ireland. Towards the west, gigantic mountains, among which rose supremely the colossal mountains of Popocatepetl and Istacihuatl with their summits crowned perpetually with diadems of snow. On all sides long groves of elms and poplars lead to the city. As a matter of course our first day in Mexico was given to sight seeing and staring. We stared at everything. Rising early in the morning, we went, as became good Catholics, to mass. We found the church tolerably filled with most devout worshippers and many masses being said. Daily from 5 to 12 o'clock, masses are said in nearly all the churches of Mexico. Almost every church has from 5 to 12 altars and many of them are very fine. The churches are entirely without pews ; the people kneel, stand or squat upon the floor, and here for the first time in my experience, I saw the religious democracy of the Catholic Church. The rich and the poor kneel together: the poor Indian, in rags, alongside of the caballero and the lady in whose blue veins may flow the blood of the Cid. They feel, rightly, that they are all one in the house of their common Father. There was a time when the church of Mexico was among the richest of earth. It had

land and houses, and from their income supported the poor and the naked ; and endowed hospitals for the relief of every human ill. But Juarez and Lerdo came, and like dark spirits of night confiscated, as others of their stamp have done in Italy, Germany and France, the property of the church. The religious communities too, were expelled from the country, so that to-day there is not a religious body in the city of Mexico. Indeed the church is persecuted in Mexico as elsewhere ; our brethren there experiencing too the prophecy of the Master : "That you will be hated for My sake." Freemasonry prevails among the higher officials of the Government, and this, with infidelity, is the bane of the country. But as "virtue is strengthened in infirmity," so also will be the church of Mexico. Its clergy will learn to lean more on the people ; they will be bound to them by closer ties, and a more salutary feeling of mutual dependence will be engendered. We saw, with pleasure, that the clergy of to-day in Mexico, contrary to common belief, are a hard-working body of men. They may be seen in the confessional all day long. The confessionals, by the way, are all open ; the boxes have no doors, so that confessor and penitent are entirely exposed to view. The report has gone abroad that the men of Mexico do not go to mass. Doubtless there is some truth here. However, I will state what I saw. The second Sunday after my arrival in the city, I attended the late mass in the cathedral. It was a low mass. There was an immense congregation present—all standing, kneeling or squatting on the floor, I cast my eyes around and viewed them. Taking into account the immense size of the cathedral, and the mass which