



STONES OF AZTEC TEMPLE.

barred window, and a gateway or doorway, having heavy oak doors carefully guarded by the porter and locked after six in the evening. Entering the gateway a carriage drives to the inner flagged court, around which are the offices, rooms of the porter, and the stables. This court opens to the sky, and hence receives the name of *patio*, and, according to the depth of the lot, may be divided into one or more similar courts. The stables are always on the ground floor, and open on the court. The resident of this self-contained abode almost always lives on the first floor or second story. A stairway with several square turns leads from the court to the landing, which is railed off from the *patio*, and, according to the size of the residence, is a narrow walk sometimes of three feet, or, as in the Hotel Iturbide,—the palace of the first emperor of free Mexico,—it is a covered piazza running all around the square court, on which the rooms of the family open.

The *patio* is ordinarily to one side, leaving space for a tier of rooms along the side of it. To the front of the *patio* is the parlor or *salon*, with one

or more bedrooms, while behind the court are the dining room, kitchen, bath-room, etc. With slight variations, this will describe the home of the well-to-do resident of Mexico.

In one or two newer houses, occupied by Canadians, the ground floors are becoming living rooms for the families. This practice will become more common as the drainage improves and as the ground-water lowers; but the ground floors have not been healthy and have been hitherto turned over to the servants.

The house interiors, as in all southern countries, with their courts, give many opportunities for decorative art. The patios, opening to the sky, are decorated with flowers in pots and flower urns of various descriptions, the climate allowing roses to bloom throughout the whole year. It is a land of sunshine and flowers the year round. House decorations have hitherto been Parisian in style and manufacture; but within the past twenty years, with the advent of railways, German, English and American merchants have pushed their wares, and to-day one sees in the costumes of