

an inch thick. Then the black shell known to us is reached, and inside of that, not the thick white substance we find on opening it, but a thin soft layer, or third rind, the most of the hollow being filled with milk. Later in the season the milk coagulates to meat, and the cocoa-nut of commerce is completed. It is cultivated extensively here, both for home use and the Northern market.

The people are chiefly Indians, not of the Aztec, but Toltec variety. This is a nation hundreds of years older than the Aztecs, and who are supposed to be the builders of the famous monuments of Central America, and to have been driven from Mexico southward about a thousand years ago. They are of the usual Indian tint, but, unlike our aborigines, live in comfortable houses, are engaged in industrious callings, and dress in a comely manner.

Both sexes wear white, the men and boys having often one leg of their trousers rolled up, for what purpose we could not guess, unless it be for the more cleanly fording of the brooklets and mudlets that occur. It was a token of neatness; if that was the reason, that was very commendable.

The women wear a skirt of white, and a loose white waist separate from the skirt, and hanging sometimes near to the bottom of the undergarment. This over-skirt, or robe, is ornamented with fringe and borders worked in blue. The head-dress is a shawl or mantle of light cotton gauze, of blue or purple, thrown gracefully over the head and shoulders. One lady, evidently thinking well of herself and her apparel, had a ring on every finger of each hand, and gold ornaments hanging profusely from her neck. I have seen many ladies who, if they distributed the rings singly on each finger, would not find both hands sufficient for their display. This light-brown laughing madam had her limits seemingly, beyond which she would not go—eight rings and no more.

As a proof of the industry and intelligence of these natives, let us go to a hacienda, or farm, a mile out of town. Though it is a short walk, yet having ordered a fly for a longer ride, we employ it on this excursion. We did not take the carriage of the country, which is a basket on two wheels, about the size of a cot-bed, which cot-bed itself lies on the bottom of the basket, and on which sit the passengers. A wicker covering bends over about two-thirds of this bed; the rest is open to sun and rain. Three mules abreast make this fly fly.

Our three little mules drag a sort of covered coach on high springs, narrow and jolty. They run under the whip and scream of the muleteer. The gate of the hacienda is soon reached. A lazy Indian boy opens it. We rush between a green wall of cocoa-trees a score of rods to a thatched-built house, large, well-floored, high-roofed, clean. The brown lady of the mansion welcomes us, and I try to buy a hammock. She asks three dollars. I have no gold, and she despises greenbacks, whether of Washington or Havana. So the bargain fails. The same thing I have since seen offered in Boston for less

money. It is cheaper sometimes to buy your foreign curiosities after you get home.

Her boys take us to a cocoa-nut orchard, pluck off the nuts, split them with a sharp cleaver, and pour their milk into a glass. We drink in honor of the host. An old man runs up to us, with nothing on him but a pair of white pants, a cleaver stuck in his girdle behind, and a straw hat. He offs his hat with both hands, and bows low to the ground. Had Darwin seen him he would have protested that he was the man primeval, built ages before the English Adam, who is (to Darwin) the height of attained, if not attainable civilization. His face looked very much like a monkey's, and his posture also. Yet this ape of modern false science was a gentleman of fortune, and industry, and sagacity, who had subdued five hundred acres of this wild land, and made himself a property worth six thousand dollars even here, many times that in the States. He raises hemp and cocoa-nuts, and is rich. His manners were gracious, and when he found he could not talk with us, he bid us good-bye politely, and hastened away as fast as if he had a note to pay, and only five minutes more left to pay it in, and no money to pay it with. His boys remained, and waited on us. One of our party offered him a couple of cigars, which he passed over to a little girl of his tenant's, being too much in a hurry, if not too much of a gentleman, to smoke. So our primitive gorilla disappears in a farmer of to-day. So will all scientific humbugs disappear.

The chief business of this place is the raising of jenever, or hemp, pronounced heneken. It has the thick, green, sharp leaf of the cactus. A large traffic has sprung up in it at this port; not less than five thousand bales are exported annually to New York, or two million pounds. It is used in making ropes, and has a growing and extensive value. It is worth six cents a pound here, and pays about ninety-five per cent. on its cost of culture, so that it is a very valuable article of commerce. Its finer varieties are as soft as silk. It is destined to be more and more a source of union between Yucatan and the United States.

We roll in the warm surf of the sea—a Christmas luxury not enjoyed at Newport and Long Branch, but which was delightful at Progress—and dine at our friend, the collector's.

#### THE BUZZARD IN VERA CRUZ.

Another and a more important source of its cleanliness is the buzzard. I had been taught to detest the buzzard, perhaps because it was black. I had heard how unclean a thing it was, and was exceedingly prejudiced against it. But I find, to my surprise; that here this despised and detested creature is the sacred bird, almost. It darkens the air with its flocks, roosts on the roofs, towers, steeple-tops, everywhere. A fine of five dollars is levied against one who shoots one of them. It is the most privileged individual of the town. The reason why? It is the street-cleaner. It picks the offal from gutter or sidewalk, and nothing escapes its hungry maw. Its