

of the superstitious ceremonies which she one day saw. I had a note from my husband saying that he sent a carriage for us to go to the church of Guadalupe or the Sanctuary, to see the animals blessed. So I made the children ready, and soon we were on the broad drive of the promenade which leads to the church.

There we saw people and people, principally of the poorer classes. Boys were leading dogs with bits of bright-colored paper sticking all over them and twisted into the tail; men were leading sheep and goats with paper, ribbon, an artificial flower, or a great patch of blue, red or yellow paint on the head or side. There were horses with wide bands of the national colors about the body, and bits of fancy paper on their heads; and there were birds in their cages without number. One small maiden carried a gayly-decorated cage in her hand, and on her head was perched a large green parrot. All this crowd was moving towards the church.

When we reached the circular walk around the fountain, just in front of the church entrance, we found it swarming with people. There were fruit-vendors, candy-sellers, and tables with smoking hot dishes of meat, onions, peppers and garlic. Boys balanced trays of nice-looking cakes on top of their heads or on the palm of the raised hand. We drove around to the side of the church, where the *curato* or priest's house is, and from the door of which the ceremony was to take place.

The crowd there was a fascinating picture, a mixture of all classes and conditions, ranged along the whole length of the church. Right down through the middle of the crowd was a perfect stream of women with bird-cages, decorated in every conceivable way, with all sorts of ornaments—flowers, feathers, paper, paint, bits of cloth, ribbon—in fact, anything and everything bright.

On the outskirts of the crowd were the horses, cows, oxen, donkeys, sheep, goats and pigs, each one decorated. Some comical little dogs were wound round and

round with fancy paper ropes, others were trimmed with any quantity of paper fringe; chickens and birds were painted on the wings, and roosters were gay with bright streamers on their tails and artificial flowers on their heads or necks.

There were cats and chickens of a bright purple, blue or green. One great black ram had his horns beautifully gilded; and some white dogs were painted one color on the head, another on the back, and still another on the tail.

You can fancy what a noise there was, each animal giving his own peculiar note to the general concert of sounds. I saw one funny grey donkey kick his neighbor over and over again. He seemed to do it just for the fun of it. Once a rather frisky horse concluded to have a change, and began to charge around generally, whereupon there was a grand stampede towards a place of safety.

About five o'clock the priest came out—an old man with two lighted candles and the bucket of holy water borne before him. All the hats in his immediate neighborhood were taken off as he mounted a bench near the door, and the ceremony began.

He took the water in a sort of a gourd-like dipper, mumbled a few words and sprinkled as many as he could reach. The people, laughing and joking, crowded up near him, some almost throwing others out. They climbed up on the bench and fairly ran over each other in their eagerness.

The blessing is supposed to keep the animals from sickness, disease and death, and by the immense number that flocked to the church to-day, I believe that most of the people believed in this foolish superstition.

How I did wish that you boys and girls could have seen the picture! I am sure you never have seen such fancy-looking dogs, cats, chickens and pigs, as we saw this afternoon; nor such very, very ragged people. One mite of a boy was leading a scraggy black dog by one hand, and hitch-