

by way of Detroit, along the banks of the St. Clair and the Thames. In the east there was also considerable settlement in desirable locations in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Of those that entered Canada by the Niagara River, not a few were to find their way round the head of Lake Ontario to Toronto, accompanied by contingents of disbanded soldiery from the town of Newark, which on the division of the country into the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, was, in 1791, to become the western capital. This Loyalist emigration was composed, for the main part, of the middle and upper classes in the communities they had left—classes that, though well-to-do, were accustomed to hard labor, acquainted with bush life, familiar with the work of the farm, and possessed of a courage and endurance which, often put to the test, were to prove the best qualities for a pioneering life and the gifts most needed for subduing the wilderness. As has been said of them, no portion of the British possessions ever received so noble an acquisition, for they brought to Canada the materials for a nation ready made.

LIFE IN MEXICO.

A DAY AMONG THE FAR-FAMED FLOATING GARDENS—HOW THE ANCIENT AZTECS BUILT THIS CITY AND FORMED FLOATING FIELDS UPON THE BOSOM OF THE SALT LAKE, TERCOW—SOME CURIOUS CUSTOMS OF MODERN MEXICANS.

(Truth Special Correspondence.)

Throughout all Mexico the flowery gates of Spring are opened by a floral festival. The original intention of this *fiesta* was to duly observe *Viernes de Dolores* (Good Friday); but since the days of church power have passed away, it is as liable to occur upon one day as another—any time within March, April, or May—every city and village choosing its own date for a flower festival.

This year, as usual, in the city of Mexico, the *Paseo de las Flores* (Flower Promenade) was held along the *Viga*—that picturesque canal which stretches away between willows and poplars to the far-famed floating gardens of the ancient Aztecs. The scene along this historic causeway was an astonishment to foreigners—as charmingly peculiar as typical of a poetic and pleasure-loving people. They are early risers in this land of the sun, where breakfast is taken at mid-day, and everybody is enjoying a long siesta during those hours when Canadians are most actively at work. At sunrise the *Viga* and its boulevard were thronged with the aristocracy of the city, and a vast concourse of plebeians and Indians; and by seven o'clock festivities were at their height. For miles along the tree-lined avenue a constant procession of vehicles, horsemen, and pedestrians packed the space between leafy bowers on either side, while the canal was crowded with canoes and Venetian-like gondolas. Everything imaginable on wheels was here—the stately closed carriages of Mexican millionaires, open barouches, coupes, victorias, dog-carts, waggons, even velocipedes and tricycles; while thousands of horsemen galloped gaily between—the severe simplicity of the English and German style of riding-costume, contrasting well with the gorgeously caparisoned, silver-bedecked equestrians “to the manor born.” Most of the ladies were dressed in what we consider full ball or opera costume—pale silks or satins, no wraps or coverings for the head, except now and then a lace *mantilla* draped, Spanish fashion, upon the back hair, and such a flutter of costly fans and wealth of flashing jewels as these fair *Mexicanas* are

famous for. Though the laws of propriety are so rigorously strict that a gentleman may not ride in the same carriage with the lady to whom he is betrothed, yet

MOST DESPERATE FLIRTIATIONS

are openly indulged in, to an extent which would put to blush New York, Chicago, or San Francisco. Following a *senorita* up and down the promenade, and staring intently in her face, is an accepted mode of compliment—doubtless gratifying to the recipient, but fraught with danger to the adorer if she happens to have other devoted swains—and it not infrequently happens that duels are the result, she being pre-eminently the belle who can boast the greatest number of such encounters.

The canal was completely hidden by boats, big and little, the majority being long, clumsy, raft-like barges, each with a covered space in the middle, and a deck at both ends, propelled by three or four Indians, who push their long poles against the river bottom, singing as they go. Others were enclosed in an airy lattice-work of woven rushes, intertwined with flowers, thus shading the happy occupants; many, gay with flags and awnings, were scant imitations of Venetian gondolas; and thousands were simply dug-outs—the same primitive *chalupas* which Cortez found the natives using, nearly four centuries ago. Most of the canoes carried guitar-players, a few were seen with harps or viols, or reed instruments, which may have been patterned from that of “the great god, Pan,” among the river rushes. Here everybody sings, for these happy-go-lucky children of nature are full of music; and the air was vocal with their meaningless folk-songs, rendered in softest Castilian, or high-pitched patriotic hymns, which just now incorporate a great deal about the transcendent virtues of “Porfirio Di—i—i—az i” which rank of society shows the best taste in its mode of enjoyment—these simple people, or the proud patricians, shut up in closed carriages, in full dress and solemn silence on shore—I leave for others to determine; but Betsy and I invariably join the plebeian crowd, preferring to float lazily along the yellow water, and enjoy the sweet air, soft breezes and golden sunshine rather than the gilded discomforts of fashion.

The banks were lined with booths of green branches, festooned with garlands, wherein loads of flowers, lemonade of various colors, *chica* (a delightfully cooling drink, made from the seeds of a flower, and flavored with orange or pine-apple juice), pulyne, orchata, and other Mexican beverages were sold. The great attraction along shore was the flowers, offered for sale by

INDIAN GIRLS,

whose deft brown fingers darted back and forth like shuttles as they fashioned bouquets and “button-holes, with surprising rapidity. From earliest days Mexico has been noted for the beauty and diversity of its flora, and here were the choicest specimens in fragrant heaps, of which a carriage load might be bought for a few shillings. These bowers of living green set off the beauty of the flower girls to good advantage. Each was crowned with a poppy-wreath, black hair falling in long braids down her back, eyes shining like stars, glittering teeth—the whites by contrast to bronze cheeks, short red shirt hanging loosely from an uncorseted waist, and rebeco along over the shoulders with inimitable grace—an admirable foil to the queenly-attired patrician dames who patronized her.

Wicker caquets, lined with moss, were filled with carnations, pansies, English violets, lilies, forget-me-nots, and the most gorgeous roses—magnificent baskets—full, which in New York could not be purchased for less than \$25, here being sold for one or two *reals*. While you of the North are still shivering in biting breezes, the *habitués* of this summer's country are revelling in the height of the rose season.

Near the bridge of the Embarcadero was

an enormous bower of leafy branches, erected by the city council at a cost of several hundred dollars; and beneath it two fine military bands (also paid from the public treasury) played alternately during the day. In this delightful retreat, commanding a view up and down canal and causeway, chairs were let at a *real* (12½ cents) apiece. A detachment of *gendarmes* rode constantly to and fro as guardians of the peace, and police were stationed every twenty feet along the boulevard, from the Embarcadero to the bronze statue commemorating Guatimotzin—the youthful poet, priest, and soldier—King of ancient Mexico. It is estimated that fully 20,000 people visited the *Viga* on this “Friday of Sorrows.” All bore in their hands or on their heads some floral tribute, while boat-loads of blossoms were continually coming down from the great gardens beyond Santa Anita and the floating islands of Ixtacalco. The festivities were kept up, though in a diminishing scale, till late Sunday night. During all those days, the shrill, discordant rattle of TEN THOUSAND “METRACAS”

rose above the babel of human voices. These little instruments of aural torture are made of tin, iron, ivory, wood, even gold and silver, and in all imaginable shapes. Some are in the form of humming-birds, peacocks, birds of paradise, chickens, parrots; others are as gridions, frying-pans, musical instruments, fruits, flowers, or reptiles. Everybody must have one—from the dignified grandparent to the baby in arms—and by twirling them rapidly the wooden springs inside produce a most unearthly rasping, grinding sound. This hideous noise is intended to typify and ridicule the cries of the Jews—“Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” as they followed Christ to Golgotha. Not to be outdone by our neighbors, Betsy bought one in the shape of an ivory fiddle, and I a small bride dressed in white satin, flowing veil and orange blossoms, and, thus fortified, were enabled to add our quota to the general din.

Already the sale of Judases had commenced, for on the following Sunday the strangest of all Mexican ceremonies took place, in the burning of the traitor. An ugly, misshapen monster they represent the faithless disciple to have been—entirely forgetting that the accredited “plan of salvation” must have fallen through had he failed in his part of the programme, as “foreordained from the foundation!” During all Holy Week men were continually perambulating the streets, holding high above the heads of the multitude long poles, encircled by hoops, upon which were suspended the most grotesque figures, in every conceivable color, shape, and degree of deformity, all with horns, and crooked backs and twisted limbs. These are filled with fire-crackers, the mustache forming the fuse, and millions of them are annually exploded. Many are life-size, some having faces to represent unpopular political men of the present day (but those not in power, it is needless to add); while not unfrequently a *Protestante* figure in the same guise, or the hated Americans. Some are hung by the neck to wires stretched across the streets, or to the balconies of houses; every horse-car, railroad engine and donkey-cart is decked with one, and even every mule-driver has one or more tied to his breast. At ten o'clock on Easter Sunday, when the cathedral bells peal forth the joyful fact that Christ is risen, the Judases are all touched off at once, the air is

FULL OF FLYING TRAITORS

in streets, parks, yards, houses, everywhere over the length and breadth of Mexico. Little did the betrayer dream, when he sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver, that in the lapse of ages his effigies would be held up to the execration of a Mexican mob; that the secret bargain, perhaps whisperingly made with the fierce Jewish rulers, should be shouted forth eighteen hundred years thereafter, by an unknown people, in undiscovered lands beyond the sea!

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Franchise Bill.

The great attention now being given to the North-West troubles has largely drawn off the public interest from Parliamentary affairs at Ottawa. The party struggle in the House over the passage of the Franchise Bill has been of the most extraordinary character. No wonder that the country is not roused in regard to it to a much greater extent than it is. Either one party or the

other is seriously to blame for the state of things that has existed in the House of Commons during the past two weeks. On the one hand the Government has attempted to pass their Bill with very little explanation or discussion; and on the other hand the Opposition has resorted to every possible means of obstruction, so that days and days have passed without any progress being made in the work of legislation. The one party charges that an obnoxious measure is being passed by a brute force majority, and the other party retort that an organized attempt is being made to defeat an important measure by mere physical force obstruction. As it is, the scenes in the House have been most disgraceful. Party struggles, even in Canada, have seldom driven men to more desperate expedients.

The three leading objections of the Opposition to the new Franchise Bill are: 1. That a Dominion franchise law is not necessary, each of the Provinces having a franchise law of its own, and that these laws have worked well enough since 1867. 2. That the proposed appointment of revising barristers is a dangerous and an arbitrary step, likely to seriously interfere with the fair rights of the people. 3. That it is unwise and unjust to place at once a large number of the Indians of the Dominion on the list of electors.

TRUTH will not attempt any elaborate discussion of these issues just now. Like most of the independent journals it does not hesitate to express grave doubts of the necessity or propriety of the new government measure. Probably the Opposition has greatly exaggerated the evils that may come from such a law, but on the face of it there is a doubtful look. To carry into force the proposed law will involve a very large amount of additional work, and of expense, too, upon the country, when it seems possible to avoid it. If the Provincial franchise laws are allowed to remain to govern the Dominion elections, too, all the expense and trouble may be avoided. It has been estimated that the additional expense of the two hundred or more revising barristers, with all the additional machinery it will involve, will not be much less than half a million dollars a year. It does not seem possible that such a large sum will be required, but possibly each such additional official will represent \$1000 a year to the taxpayers. Whether the work of making out the list of voters under such a system will prove any more satisfactory is a matter of doubt. The preparing of the lists will, to a large extent, be out of the hands of the people and at the entire control of these officials. As they are appointed by the Government they will not be above suspicion so far as party preferences are concerned. It is a well known fact that nearly every important appointment by either Dominion or Provincial Government is, indirectly at least, a reward to some active partizan. We need not expect anything else in this case.

To enfranchise some thousands of the Indians at one time is certainly a step that will take the country by surprise. A good many of the Indians, of Ontario especially, are becoming educated, but we hesitate not to say that not one tenth of the Indians now retaining their tribal relations are yet fully qualified for the important exercise of the Dominion franchise. They have not familiarized themselves sufficiently with the questions before the country to have placed in their hands the power that may turn the scale on some of the important trade and other issues of the country. Few of them are familiarly acquainted with the laws we have; few of them have had business connections of any important character; and few of them, while dependent, as they now are, on the Government officials to transact all their legal business, which they have not authority themselves to do, have had inspired in them that spirit of independence so necessary in the selection of wise and judicious legislators such as Canada now stands so greatly in need of.

On the whole, the Franchise Bill may, if passed and put in operation, turn out a wise and judicious measure, well repaying all the extra cost and labor it will necessarily involve, but, just now, it looks very much as though we may be rushing into evils we know not of, rather than endure those we may have.