We entered that city to the number of eighteen persons, eighteen horses, and several mules, and passed some people near the gates who were carrying blue-eyed angels to the chosen city, and who nearly let them drop, in astonishment, on seeing such a cavalcade. We were very cold, and felt very tired as we rode into the courtyard of the hotel, yet rather chagrined to think that the remainder of our journey was now to be performed in a diligence. Having brought my story up to civilized life, and it being late, I conclude.

LETTER THE THIRTY-FIFTH


PUEBLA.

You will be surprised when I tell you that, notwithstanding our fatigue, we went to the theatre the evening we arrived, and sat through a long and tragical performance, in the box of Don A——o H——o, one of the richest citizens of Puebla, who, hearing of our arrival, instantly came to invite us to his house, where he assured us rooms were prepared for our reception. But being no longer in savage parts, where it is necessary to throw yourself on the hospitality of strangers or to sleep in the open air, we declined his kind offer, and remained in the inn, which is very tolerable, though we do not see it now en beau as we did last year, when we were expected there. The theatre is clean and neat, but dull, and we were much more looked at than the actors, for few foreigners (ladies especially) remain here for any length of time, and their appearance is somewhat of a novelty. Our toilet occasioned us no small difficulty, now that we were again in polished cities, for you may imagine the condition of our trunks, which two mules had galloped with over ninety leagues of plain and mountain, and which had been opened every night. Such torn gowns, crushed collars, ruined pélérines! One carpet bag had burst and discharged its contents of combs,
visitors, etc., over a barranca, where some day they may be picked up as Indian antiquities, and sent to the Museum, to be preserved as a proof that Montezuma's wives brushed their hair. However, by dint of a washerwoman and sundry messages to peluqueros (hair-dressers), we were enabled to turn out something like Christian travellers. The first night we could not sleep on account of the innumerable ants, attracted probably by a small garden, with one or two orange-trees in it, into which our room opened.

The next morning we had a great many visitors, and though there is here a good deal of that provincial pretension one always meets with out of a capital, we found some pleasant people amongst them. The Señora H—o came in a very handsome carriage, with beautiful northern horses, and took us out to see something of the town. Its extreme cleanliness after Mexico is remarkable. In that respect it is the Philadelphia of the republic; with wide streets, well paved; large houses of two stories, very solid and well built; magnificent churches, plenty of water, and withal a dulness which makes one feel as if the houses were rows of convents, and all the people, except beggars and a few business men, shut up in performance of a vow.

The house of Don A—o H—o is, I think, more elegantly furnished than any in Mexico. It is of immense size, and the floors beautifully painted. One large room is furnished with pale blue satin, another with crimson damask, and there are fine inlaid tables, handsome mirrors, and everything in very good taste. He and his wife are both very young—she not more than nineteen, very delicate and pretty, and very fair; and in her dress, neatness, and house, she reminds me of a Philadelphian, always with the exception of her diamonds and pearls. The ladies smoke more, or at least more openly, than in Mexico; but they have so few amusements, they deserve more indulgence. There are eleven convents of nuns in the city, and taking the veil is as common as being married. We dined at the Señora H—o's; found her very amiable, and heard a young lady sing, who has a good voice, but complains that there are no music-masters in Puebla.

The fine arts, however, are not entirely at a standstill here; and in architecture, sculpture, and painting, there is a good deal, comparatively speaking, worthy of notice.
There used to be a proverb amongst the Mexicans, that “if all men had five senses, the Poblanos had seven.” They are considered very reserved in their manners—a natural consequence of their having actually no society. Formerly, Puebla rivalled Mexico in population and in industry. The plague, which carried off fifty thousand persons, was followed by the pestilence of civil war, and Puebla dwindled down to a very secondary city. But we now hear a great deal of their cotton-factories, and of the machines, instruments, and workmen, brought from Europe here, already giving employment to thirty thousand individuals.

In the evening we drove to the new paseo, a public promenade, where none of the public were to be seen, and which will be pretty when the young trees grow.

19th.—C——n went out early, and returned the visit of the celebrated Don N. Ramos Arispe, now an old man, and canon of the cathedral, but formerly deputy in the Spanish Cortes, and the most zealous supporter of the cause of independence. It is said that he owed the great influence which he had over men of a middling character, rather to his energetic, some say to his domineering disposition, than to genius; that he was clear-headed, active, dexterous, remarkable for discovering hidden springs and secret motives, and always keeping his subordinates zealously employed in his affairs. C——n also visited the bishop, Señor Vasques, who obtained from Rome the acknowledgment of independence.

We set out after breakfast with several gentlemen, who came to take us to the cotton-factories, etc. We went first to visit the factory established at the mill of Santo Domingo, a little way out of the city, and called “La Constancia Mejicana” (Mexican Constancy). It was the first established in the republic, and deserves its name from the great obstacles that were thrown in the way of its construction, and the numerous difficulties that had to be conquered before it came into effect.

In 1831 a junta for the encouragement of public industry was formed, but the obstacles thrown in the way of every proposal were so great, that the members all abandoned it in despair, excepting only the Señor Don Esteban Antuñano, who was determined himself to establish a manufacturer of cotton, to give up his commercial relations, and to employ his whole fortune in attaining this object.
He bought the mill of Santo Domingo for one hundred and seventy-eight thousand dollars, and began to build the edifice, employing foreign workmen at exorbitant prices. In this he spent so much of his capital, that he was obliged to have recourse to the Bank of Azúcar for assistance. The bank (Azúcar meaning pecuniary assistance, or advance of funds) was established by Don Lucas Alamán, and intended as an encouragement to industry. But industry is not of the nature of a hothouse plant, to be forced by artificial means; and these grants of funds have but created monopolies, and consequently added to the general poverty. Machinery, to the amount of three thousand eight hundred and forty spindles, was ordered for Antuño from the United States, and a loan granted him of one hundred and seventy-eight thousand dollars, but of which he never received the whole. Meanwhile his project was sneered at as absurd, impossible, ruinous; but, firmly resolved not to abandon his enterprise, he contented himself with living with the strictest economy, himself and his numerous family almost suffering from want, and frequently unable to obtain credit for the provisions necessary for their daily use.

To hasten the arrival of the machinery, he sent an agent to the north to superintend it, and to hire workmen; but the commercial house to which he was recommended, and which at first gave him the sums he required, lost their confidence in the agent, and redemanded their money, so that he was forced to sell his clothes in order to obtain food and lodging. In July, 1833, the machinery was embarked at Philadelphia, and in August arrived at Vera Cruz, to the care of Señor Paso y Troncoso, who never abandoned Antuño in his adversity, and even lent him unlimited sums; but much delay ensued, and a year elapsed before it reached Puebla. There, after it was all set up, the ignorant foreign workmen declared that no good results would ever be obtained; that the machines were bad, and the cotton worse. However, by the month of January, 1833, they began to work in the factory, to which was given the name of "Mexican Constancy." A mechanist was then sent to the north, to procure a collection of new machinery; and, after extraordinary delays and difficulties, he embarked with it at New York in February, 1837.

He was shipwrecked near Cayo-Hueso, and, with all the
machinery he could save, returned to the north in the brig Argos; but on his way there he was shipwrecked again, and all the machinery lost! He went to Philadelphia, to have new machines constructed, and in August re-embarked in the Delaware. Incredible as it may seem, the Delaware was wrecked off Cayo-Mcatraces, and for the third time the machinery was lost, the mechanic saving himself with great difficulty!

It seemed as if gods and men had conspired against the cotton spindles; yet Antúñano persevered. Fresh machinery was ordered; and though by another fatality it was detained, owing to the blockade of the ports by the French squadron, seven thousand spindles were landed, and speedily put in operation. Others have followed the example of Señor Antúñano, who has given a decided impulse to industry in Puebla, besides a most extraordinary example of perseverance, and a determined struggle against what men call bad luck, which persons of a feeble character sink under, while stronger minds oppose till they conquer it.

It was in his carriage we went, and he accompanied us all over the building. It is beautifully situated, and at a distance has more the air of a summer palace than of a cotton-factory. Its order and airiness are delightful, and in the middle of the court, in front of the building, is a large fountain of the purest water. A Scotchman, who has been there for some time, says he has never seen anything to compare with it, and he worked six years in the United States. Antúñano is unfortunately very deaf, and obliged to use an ear-trumpet. He seems an excellent man, and I trust he may be ultimately successful. We came out covered with cotton, as if we had been just unpacked, and were next taken to visit a very handsome new prison, which they are building in the city, but whether it will ever be finished, or not, is more doubtful. We also visited the Foundling Hospital, a large building, where there are more children than funds. They were all clean and respectable-looking, but very poor. Antúñano presented them with two hundred dollars, as a memorial, he said, of our visit.

C——n then went to the convent of El Carmen, to see the paintings of the Life of the Virgin, supposed to be original works of Murillo, particularly the Ascension and Circumcision; but which are ill-arranged, and have suf-
suffered greatly from neglect, many of them being torn. Indeed, in some of them are large holes made by the boys, who insisted that the Jewish priest was the devil. There is a Descent from the Cross, which is reckoned a fine painting; and it is a pity that these works should be shut up in this old convent, where there are about half-a-dozen old monks, and where they serve no purpose, useful or ornamental. Were they removed to the Mexican Museum, and arranged with care, they would at least serve as models for those young artists who have not the means of forming their taste by European travel. Zendejas as a painter, and Coro as a sculptor, both natives of Puebla, are celebrated in their respective arts, but we have not yet seen any of their works. C—n also visited the bishop, and saw his paintings and library, which we hope to do to-morrow; and from thence went to the college, the rector of which was attaché in Spain to the Minister Santa Maria.

We dined again in the house of Señor H—o. The manner in which his floors are painted is pretty and curious. It is in imitation of carpets, and is very rich in appearance and very cool in reality. A great many of the floors here are painted in this way, either upon canvas with oil colours, or upon a cement extended upon the bricks of which the floor is made, and prepared with glue, lime, or clay, and soap.

Señor H—o has four young and pretty sisters, all nuns in different convents. As there are no other schools but these convents, the young girls who are sent there become attached to the nuns, and prefer remaining with them for ever to returning home. After dinner, accompanied by Don N. Ramos Arispe, whom C—n formerly knew intimately in Madrid, and by various other ecclesiastics, we visited the boast of Puebla, the cathedral, which we did not do when we passed through the city on our arrival last year. To my mind, I have never seen anything more noble and magnificent. It is said that the rapid progress of the building was owing to the assistance of two angels, who nightly descended and added to its height, so that each morning the astonished workmen found their labour incredibly advanced. The name given to the city, "Puebla de los Angeles," is said to be owing to this tradition.

It is not so large as the cathedral of Mexico, but it is
more elegant, simpler, and in better taste. Sixteen columns of exquisite marble, adorned with silver and gold, form the tabernacle (in Mexico called el Ciprés). This native marble, called Puebla marble, is brought from the quarries of Totamchuanacan and Tecali, at two and seven leagues from the city. The floor of the cathedral is of marble—the great screens and high-backed chairs of richly-carved cedar. Everything was opened to show us; the tombs where the bishops are buried; the vault where a martyr lies, supposed to have been miraculously preserved for centuries, the gift of a pope to a bishop of Puebla. The figure appears to be of wax, enclosing the skeleton of the martyr, and has the most angelic countenance I ever beheld. It is loaded with false emeralds and diamonds.

We were also shown the jewels, which they keep buried, in case of a revolution. The Custodia, the gold stand in which they carry the Host, is entirely encrusted with large diamonds, pearls, emeralds, amethysts, topazes, and rubies. The chalices are equally rich. There are four sets of jewels for the bishop. One of his crosses is of emeralds and diamonds; another of topazes and diamonds, with great rings of the same, belonging to each.

In the evening we went with the M—— family, who have been very civil to us, to the theatre, where we saw a comedy better acted and more amusing than the tragedy which they murdered two nights before. We went early the next morning to the bishop's palace, to see his fine library and collection of paintings, where there were a few modern originals and many fine copies of the old masters. We then went with the Señora H——o, to return the visits of the ladies who had called on us. The young ladies invariably complain that they have neither music, nor drawing, nor dancing masters. There is evidently a great deal of musical taste among them, and, as in every part of Mexico, town or country, there is a piano (tal cual) in every house; but most of those who play are self-taught, and naturally abandon it very soon, for want of instruction or encouragement. We are now going to dine out, and in the evening we go to a concert in the theatre, given by the Señora Cesari and Mr. Wallace. As we must rise at three, to set off by the diligence, I shall write no more from this place. Our next letters will be from Mexico.