

ther it were friend or foe. Some succeeded in swimming their horses across; others failed.

The carnage raged fearfully along the length of the causeway. The struggle was long and deadly.

The first grey of the morning was now coming over the waters. It showed the hideous confusion of the scene that had been shrouded in the obscurity of the night.

The cavaliers found Alvarado unhorsed, and defending himself with a poor handful of followers against an overwhelming tide of the enemy. His good steed, which had borne him through many a hard fight, had fallen under him. He was himself wounded in several places, and was striving in vain to rally his scattered column, which was driven to the verge of the canal by the fury of the enemy. Alvarado stood on the brink for a moment, hesitating what to do. Unhorsed as he was, to throw himself into the water, in the face of the hostile canoes that now swarmed around the opening afforded but a slight chance of safety. He had but a second for thought. He was a man of powerful frame, and despair gave him unnatural energy. Setting his long lance firmly on the wreck which strewed the bottom of the lake, he sprang forward with all his might, and cleared the wide gap at a leap! Aztecs and Tlaxcalans gazed in stupid amazement, exclaiming, as they

beheld the incredible feat, "This is truly the Tonatiuh, the child of the Sun."

Cortés and his companions now rode forward to the front, where the troops in a loose, disorderly manner were marching off the fatal causeway. The attention of the Aztecs was diverted by the rich spoil that strewed the battle-ground; fortunately for the Spaniards, who, had the Aztecs pursued them, would, in their condition, have been cut off, probably, to a man. But little molested therefore, they were allowed to defile through the adjacent village or suburb it might be called, of Popotla.

The Spanish commander there dismounted from his jaded steed, and, sitting down on the steps of an Indian temple, gazed mournfully on the broken files as they passed before him. Though accustomed to control his emotions, or, at least to conceal them, the sight was too much for him. He covered his face with his hands, and the tears which trickled down, revealed too plainly the anguish of his soul.

Such were the disastrous results of this terrible passage of the causeway; more disastrous than those occasioned by any other reverse which had stained the Spanish arms in the New World; and which in the national annals, have branded the night on which it happened, with the name of the 'NOCHE TRISTE'

PRESCOTT.

### The City of Mexico in 1519

The ancient city of Mexico occupied the same spot covered by the modern capital. The great causeways touched it in the same points; the streets ran much in the same direction, nearly from north to south and from east to west, the cathedral stands on the same ground that was covered by the temple of the Aztec war-god; and the four principal quarters of the town are still known among the Indians by their native names. Yet the Aztec of Moctezuma's day, could he behold the modern metropolis, would not recognise its site as that of his own Tenochtitlan. For the latter was encompassed by the salt floods of Texcoco, which flowed in ample canals through every part of the city; while the Mexico of our day stands high and dry on the main land, nearly a league distant, at its centre, from the water. The cause of this apparent change in its position is the diminution of the lake, from the rapidity of its evaporation.

The rude founders of the ancient city built their frail houses of reeds and rushes on the group of small islands in the western part of the lake. In process of time they were displaced by more substantial buildings. A quarry of red stone was opened in the neighborhood of the city, and from

this stone, edifices were constructed, with some reference to architectural solidity, if not elegance.

Mexico was the residence of the great chiefs, whom the sovereign encouraged, or rather compelled, to spend part of the year in the capital. The mansions of these dignitaries, and of the principal nobles were on a scale of rude magnificence corresponding with their state. They were low, indeed seldom of more than one floor, never exceeding two. But they spread over a wide extent of ground, were arranged in a quadrangular form, with a court in the centre, and were surrounded with porticoes embellished with porphyry and jasper, easily found in the neighbourhood, while not unfrequently a fountain of crystal water in the centre shed a grateful coolness through the air. The dwellings of the common people were also placed on foundations of stone which rose to the height of a few feet and were then succeeded by courses of unbaked bricks. Most of the streets were mean and narrow. Some few, however, were wide and of great length. The principal street, conducting from the great southern causeway, penetrated in a straight line the whole length of the city and afforded a noble vista, in which the long lines of stone edifices were broken occasionally by intervening gardens, rising on terraces and displaying all the beauty of Aztec horticulture.

The great streets, which were coated with a hard cement, were intersected with numerous canals. Some of these were flanked by a solid way which served as a foot-walk for passengers, and as a landing-place where boats might discharge their cargoes. Small buildings were erected at intervals, as stations for the revenue officers who collected the duties on different articles of merchandise. The canals were crossed by numerous bridges, many of which could be raised, affording the means of cutting off communication between different parts of the city.

## PART SECOND

The population of the city in the time of Cortés was probably about three hundred thousand, and the number of houses about sixty thousand. The extent of the city was said to have been nearly three leagues in circumference.

A careful police provided for the health and cleanliness of the city. A thousand persons are said to have been daily employed in watering and sweeping the streets, so that a man—to quote the language of an old Spaniard—"could walk through them with as little danger of soiling his feet as his hands." The water in the city was very salt;

but a liberal supply of fresh water was brought from Chapultepec. It was carried in an earthen pipe, along a dyke constructed for the purpose. In this way a column of water of the size of a man's body was conducted into the heart of the capital, where it fed the fountains and reservoirs of the principal mansions. Openings were made in the aqueduct as it crossed the bridges, and thus a supply was furnished to the canoes below, by means of which it was transported to all parts of the city.

Moctezuma encouraged a taste for architecture. It was in his reign that the famous calendar stone, weighing, probably nearly fifty tons, was brought from its native quarry, many leagues distant, to the capital.

Not content with the spacious residence of his father, Moctezuma erected another on a yet more magnificent scale. It occupied the ground partly covered by the private buildings on one side of the modern Plaza. The pile of building was so large that it might have afforded ample room for knights to ride their horses.

Adjoining the principal edifice were others, devoted to various purposes. One was an armory, filled with weapons and the military dresses worn by the Aztecs, all kept in the most perfect order, ready for instant use. The emperor himself was very expert in the management of the Indian

sword, and took great delight in witnessing the athletic exercises of the young nobility. Another building was used as a granary, and others as warehouses for the different articles of food and apparel contributed by the districts charged with the maintenance of the royal household.

There were also edifices appropriated to objects of another kind. One was an immense aviary, in which birds of splendid plumage were assembled from all parts of the empire. Three hundred attendants had charge of this aviary, who, in the moulting season were careful to collect the beautiful plumage to furnish the materials for the Aztec painter. A separate building was reserved for the fierce birds of prey. No less than five hundred turkeys were allowed as food for these creatures. Adjoining these aviaries was a menagerie for wild animals. There was also a collection of reptiles and serpents, remarkable for their size and venemous qualities. The beasts and birds of prey were provided with apartments large enough to allow of their moving about. The whole was placed under the charge of numerous keepers, who acquainted themselves with the habits of the prisoners, and provided for their comfort and cleanliness.

There was also a strange collection of human monsters, dwarfs, and other unfortunate persons of similar character.

Extensive gardens were spread out around these buildings, filled with fragrant shrubs and flowers, and especially with medicinal plants, whose virtues were perfectly understood by the Aztecs.

In addition to the above there were ten large tanks well stocked with fish, whose habits were carefully consulted by the keepers.

But the most luxurious residence of the Aztec Monarch was the royal hill of Chapultepec, whose base was, at that time, washed by the waters of Lake Texcoco. Moctezuma's gardens stretched for miles round the base of the hill.

### PART THIRD

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The Market-place of Mexico was one of its chief features at this time. It was surrounded by deep porticoes, and the several articles had each its own quarter allotted to it. Here might be seen cotton piled up in bales, or manufactured into dresses and articles of domestic use, as tapestry, curtains, coverlets and the like. There was the quarter assigned to the goldsmiths, where the purchaser might find various articles of ornament or use formed of the precious metals, or curious toys, made in imitation of birds and

fishes, with scales and feathers alternately of gold and silver, and with movable heads and bodies. These toys were often garnished with precious stones.

In another part of the market were collected specimens of pottery, coarse and fine, vases of wood elaborately carved, varnished or gilded, of curious and sometimes graceful forms. There were also hatchets made of copper alloyed with tin, the substitute, and not a bad one, for iron. The soldier found here, all the implements of his trade. Here were also razors and mirrors of hard polished metal. Other stalls were tenanted by apothecaries, well provided with drugs, roots &c. In other places blank books or maps for hieroglyphical picture-writing were to be seen, folded together like fans, and made of cotton, skins, or more commonly the fibres of the agave, the Aztec papyrus. Under some of the porticoes, animals both wild and tame were offered for sale, and near them, perhaps, a gang of slaves, with collars round their necks.

Meats of all kinds were exhibited for sale; domestic poultry, game from the neighbouring mountains, fish from the lakes and streams, fruits, green vegetables and the unfailing maize. Along with these were cooling or stimulating beverages, including pulque. All these commod-

ities were set out, or rather smothered with flowers.

On certain occasions the city swarmed with strangers, not only from the vicinity, but from leagues around, and the lake was darkened with canoes filled with the traders.

The exchange was conducted partly by means of barter, but more usually in the currency of the country which consisted of bits of tin stamped with a character like the letter T. They had also little quills filled with gold-dust. In their dealings it is singular that these people should have had no knowledge of scales or weights; the quantity was determined by measure and number.

The most perfect order reigned throughout this vast assembly: officers patrolled the square, and it was their business to keep the peace, to collect the duties imposed on the different articles of merchandise, to see that no false measures or fraud of any kind were used, and to bring offenders at once to justice. A court of twelve judges sat in one part of the market, and exercised their power with extreme severity.

PRESCOTT.

### The decisive Battle of Otumba. July 8th, 1520.

The contest had now lasted for several hours.

Cortés himself had received a second cut on the head, and his horse was so much injured that Cortés was compelled to dismount, and take one from the baggage train, who carried him well through the turmoil of the day. The sun rose high in the heavens and shed an intolerable heat over the plain. The Christians, weakened by sufferings, and faint from loss of blood, began to relax in their desperate exertions.

Their enemies, constantly supported by fresh relays from the rear, were still in good heart, and, quick to perceive their advantage, pressed with redoubled force on the Spaniards. The horse fell back. The tide of battle was setting rapidly against the Christians. The fate of the day would soon be decided; and all that now remained for them seemed to be to sell their lives as dearly as possible.

At this critical moment, Cortés, whose restless eye had been roving round the field in search of any object that might offer him the means of arresting the coming ruin, rising in his stirrups, saw at a distance, in the midst of the throng, the chief, who from his dress and military cortége he knew must be the commander of the barbarian forces. He was covered with a rich surcoat

of feather-work; and a bunch of beautiful plumes, gorgeously set in gold and precious stones, floated above his head. This chief, whose name was Cihuaca, was borne on a litter, and a body of young warriors, whose gay and ornamental dresses showed them to be the flower of the Indian nobles, stood round as a guard to his person.

The eagle eye of Cortés no sooner fell on this personage than it lighted up with triumph. Turning quickly round to the cavaliers at his side, he pointed out the chief, exclaiming. "There is our mark. Follow and support me!" Then, shouting his war-cry, and striking his iron heel into his weary steed, he plunged headlong into the thickest of the press. His enemies fell back, taken by surprise and daunted by the ferocity of the attack. Those who did not were pierced through with his lance or borne down by the weight of his charger. The cavaliers followed close in the rear. On they swept with the fury of a thunderbolt, cleaving the solid rank asunder, strewing their path with the dying and the dead, and bounding over every obstacle in their way. In a few minutes they were in the presence of the Indian commander, and Cortés, overturning his supporters, sprang forward with the strength of a lion, and, striking him through with his lance, hurled him to the ground. A young cavalier, Juan de Salamanca, who had kept close by his

general's side, quickly dismounted and dispatched the fallen chief. Then, tearing away his banner, he presented it to Cortés as a trophy to which he had the best claim. It was all the work of a moment. The guard, overpowered by the suddenness of the onset, made little resistance, but, flying, communicated their own panic to their comrades. The tidings of the loss soon spread over the field. The Indians, filled with consternation now thought only of escape. In their blind terror, their numbers augmented their confusion. They trampled on one another, fancying it was the enemy in their rear.

The Spaniards were not slow to avail themselves of the marvellous change in their affairs. Their fatigue, their wounds, hunger, thirst, all were forgotten in the eagerness for vengeance; and they followed up the flying foe, dealing death at every stroke and taking ample retribution for all they had suffered in the bloody marshes of Mexico. Long did they pursue, till, the enemy having abandoned the field, they returned, sated with slaughter, to glean the booty which he had left. It was great; for the ground was covered with the bodies of chiefs, at whom the Spaniards, in obedience to the general's instructions, had particularly aimed; and their dresses displayed all the barbarous pomp of ornament in which the Indian warrior delighted. Cortés

now called his men again under their banners, and they renewed their march across the now deserted valley. The sun was setting, but before the shades of evening gathered round, they reached an Indian temple on an eminence, that afforded them a strong and commodious position for the night.

Such was the famous battle of Otumba. The whole amount of the Indian force is reckoned by Castilian writers at two hundred thousand, that of the slain at twenty thousand. The victory was undoubtedly, one of the most remarkable achieved in the New World. And this, not merely on account of the disparity of their forces, but of their unequal condition. For the Indians were in all their strength, while the Christians were wasted by disease, famine, and long-protracted sufferings; without cannon or fire-arms, and deficient in the military apparatus which had so often struck terror into their barbarian foe. But they had discipline on their side, desperate resolve, and implicit faith in their commander.

Yet even all this must not be referred to superior discipline and tactics. For the battle would certainly have been lost, had it not been for the fortunate death of the Indian general. It is indeed, one among many examples of the influence of fortune in determining the fate of mil-

itary operations. The star of Cortés was in the ascendant. Had it been otherwise, not a Spaniard would have survived that day to tell the bloody tale of the battle of OTUMBA.

PRESCOTT.

#### A visit to the Colegio Vizcaino in 1840.

A lady who spent two years in Mexico in the year 1840, describes her visit to this School in the following words:—

The Countess C . . . having been kind enough to procure an order for permission to visit the Colegio Vizcaino, which I was anxious to see, we went there with a large party.

This college, founded by the gratuitous charities of de Francisco de Echeveste, Manuel de Aldaco and Ambrosio de Méave from the province of Biscay, is a splendid institution. It is an immense building of stone, in the form of a square, on the model, they say, of the palace of Madrid, and possesses in the highest degree that air of solidity and magnificence which distinguishes the Mexican edifices, and which, together with the width and regularity of the streets, the vastness of the public squares, the total absence of all paltry ornament, the balconies with their balustrades and window-gratings

of solid iron and bronze, renders Mexico one of the noblest-looking cities in the world.

The object of this college is to provide for the education of the children of Spaniards, especially for the descendants of Biscayans, in Mexico; a certain number being admitted upon application to the directors. There are female teachers in all the necessary branches, such as reading, writing, sewing, arithmetic, &c; but besides this, there is a part of the building with a separate entrance, where the children of the poor, of whatever country, are educated gratis. They spend the day there, and go home in the evening. The others are kept on the plan of a convent, and never leave the institution while they belong to it; but the building is so spacious and airy, with its great galleries, and vast court and fine fountains, garden and spacious azotea, that the children are perfectly well off. There are *portières* and sisters, pretty much as in a convent; together with an old respectable *Rectora*; and the most perfect order and cleanliness prevail through the whole establishment.

We first visited the poor scholars, passing through the large halls where they sat with their teachers, divided into classes, sewing, writing, embroidering, or casting up accounts, which last accomplishment must, I think, be sorely against the Mexican genius. One of the teachers made



a little girl present me with a hair chain which she had just completed. Great order and decorum prevailed. Amongst the permanent scholars in the upper part of the Institution, there are some who embroider astonishingly well—surplices, altar-hangings, in short, all the church vestments,—in gold and silk. All the sleeping rooms are scrupulously neat and clean, with two green painted bedsteads in each, and a small parlour off it, frequently ornamented with flowers and birds. The girls are taught to cook and iron, and make themselves generally useful, thus being fitted to become excellent wives to respectable men in their own rank of life.

We visited the chapel, which is extremely rich and handsome, incrustated with gilding, and very large. The pupils and their teachers attend mass in the gallery above, which looks down upon the chapel and has a grating before it. Here they have the organ, and various shrines, saints &c. We were afterwards shown into a great hall devoted to a different purpose, containing at one end a small theatre in which the pupils act plays. All the walls of the long galleries are covered with old paintings on holy subjects, but many of them are falling to pieces from damp or want of care. The building seems interminable, and after wandering all through it for several hours, and visiting everything—from the garden

below where they gave me a large bunch of roses and carnations, to the azotea above, which looks down upon every street and church in Mexico—we were not sorry to rest on the antique, high-backed chairs of a handsome apartment, the walls of which were hung with the portraits of the different Spanish directors of the college in ancient court costumes. Here we found that the directors had prepared a beautiful collation for us—fruit, ices, cakes, custards jellies, wines, &c, in great profusion.

Rested and refreshed, we proceeded to visit the pupils at their different classes. At the writing class various specimens of that polite art were presented to us. That of the elder girls was generally bad, probably from their having entered the college late in life. That of the younger ones was much more tolerable. We saw some really beautiful specimens of embroidery. Having returned to the hall where there was a piano, some of our party began to sing and play.

It is impossible to see any building of this size kept more perfectly clean and neat. These old Spanish institutions are certainly on a magnificent scale, though now for the most part neglected and falling to ruin.

*Madame Calderón de la Barca.*

Scotch wife of the first Spanish Minister after Mexican Independence; a personal friend of Prescott the historian.

### Legends of The Streets Manrique & Tiburcio.

Juan de Dios Peza tells in verse the following stories;—One day Cortés with a party of soldiers was passing through the street now called La Calle de Manrique, when an old Aztec woman rushed up to him and roughly seized him by the beard.

Cortés uttered a cry, and tried in vain to release himself from her grasp. Seeing his awkward situation, one of his soldiers came to the rescue; but, just as he was about to attack the old woman, she suddenly dropped down dead, still clutching in her bony hand the beard of Cortés. Strange to say, it was found impossible to release the hand even after death. The soldier therefore drew his sword and severed the hand at the wrist. On learning the name of the soldier, Manrique, Cortés told him, that, in memory of this deed, the street in which they now were should ever after be called La Calle de Manrique, and also gave him as a reward, a piece of land in the same street.

In the Calle de Tiburcio once lived a very rich man named Don Suero Monclova y Galvez. He was born in Asturias. By careful attention to business, he had amassed a large fortune, and lived a very quiet life. He was a man of excellent

character, and was loved and respected by all who knew him. He was very charitable; and those in distress never appealed to him in vain. He lived many years in ease and comfort on the large income derived from his business, which was carried on by two very confidential employés, Tiburcio, an adopted son, and Lopez.

One morning, an old and devoted friend came rushing into Suero's room, crying out, "Bad news! bad news! the two men in whom you placed so much trust have robbed you of everything, and have left the city, and gone, nobody knows where."

"Is it possible," said Don Suero "that Tiburcio is an accomplice in the infamous deed; he whom I have raised from his cradle, and nourished as my own son?" "It is too true," said his friend.

Poor Don Suero was sadly afflicted at the dreadful news, but bore his misfortune with resignation, and took no steps to prosecute the offenders; in fact, it was impossible to do so, as it was not known where they were. He, therefore, dismissed all his servants except two; and these, out of affection and respect for him were happy to live with him, though he could afford to pay them but little for their services.

It was a great consolation to Suero to find that all his former friends still remained faithful to him, and treated him with the same respect

and consideration that they had shown him in his former state of prosperity.

Matters went on thus for about six months, when, one morning, as Don Suero was sitting at his breakfast, without a word of warning, Tiburcio rushed into the room, and threw himself at his master's feet. He brought with him a large casket, containing the stolen money of six months before.

He then told his dear old master the true story of the robbery. He had not been an accomplice, but had followed the thief Lopez from place to place for six months, watching for a chance to be revenged on him for his horrible crime. The opportunity at last presented itself; he recovered the greater part of the stolen money and killed the villain.

The poor old man was overcome with joy at the faithfulness of his servant, and, to perpetuate the memory of the event, he said the street in which it happened should be called Calle de Tiburcio.

## Mexico City in 1625

INTERESTING ACCOUNT FROM MEMOIRS OF A DOMINICAN FRIAR

The following description of the manners, customs and conditions in Mexico City early in the seventeenth century were gleaned from the leaves of a diary which was kept by one of the Dominican friars, Tomas Gage, who visited this country in 1625. The ancient manuscripts have but recently come to light. In these days of the modern and progressive city of Mexico, these memoirs are particularly interesting, as they will enable the reader to compare the past with the present, and look down through the vista of centuries upon strange scenes, the vestiges of which may yet be seen to-day. He says:

At the time of my stay in Mexico it was estimated that the number of Spanish residents reached the 40,000 mark, all of them so rich that more than half that number had a carriage; so that it was authoritatively stated that there were in the city of Mexico more than 15,000 private carriages.

It is a proverb in the country that there are four beautiful things in the city of Mexico; the women, the garments, the horses and the streets. A fifth might be added, the equipages of the