

The German Club occupies some handsome rooms at the corner of Colegio de Niños and Independencia. The same kind of *patio*, which forms so great an attraction at the Jockey Club, may be found here, the trees and flowers giving an air of luxury and beauty which the members and their many guests thoroughly appreciate. The reading-rooms, billiard-rooms, dining-room, bar, library and ball-room are all of handsome dimensions, and in the last named are held a number of agreeable social entertainments during the course of the year.

The French Club is on Calle Palma, and also has a fine *patio*, and all the necessary accommodation to make it a comfortable and attractive place of resort. The French element has of late years become exceedingly influential, and many of the members of the community have amassed considerable fortunes, principally through banking and finance. Very attractive and well attended entertainments are given here by the members to their friends, and on the "14th July," the great National French holiday, the whole Club is lavishly decorated from top to bottom. With their natural good taste and innate courteous hospitality, the French make as excellent hosts and charming companions in Mexico as they do everywhere else.

Even the Chinese, who form no inconsiderable or unworthy part of the heterogeneous collection of foreigners in Mexico, have their Clubs, there being two in the City of Mexico alone. One is at the Plazuela Tarasquillo, and the other at 1015, 3A Calle de Colon. The appointments of these houses are thoroughly comfortable, and the conduct of the various members above reproach. The first-named club has the countenance of the Chinese Chargé d'Affaires, Liang Hsun, who, indeed, opened it in March of last year. There are, at present, between 300 and 400 members. Being very fond of weird, soft music, as may be heard in their own Flowery Land, one of the principal attractions at the Chinese clubs are the hidden orchestras which play during dinner hours and in the evenings. The effect of this curious, concealed music is singularly soothing and delightful, and visitors who have once listened to its charm are always ready and anxious to repeat the experience.

## CHAPTER XXV

Hospitals and charitable institutions—Federal and State control—Mexico City's principal hospitals and charities—The American hospital—Doctors and physicians—Fees charged—Public places of amusement—Theatres—Music-halls—Games and pastimes—Golf—Spanish ball—Bowling—Mexico City teams.

HAD Oliver Wendell Holmes, the famous American essayist and unconventional humorist, known anything about the conduct of hospitals, especially those to be found in the Republic of Mexico, he never would have allowed himself to write: "I firmly believe that if the whole *materia medica* could be sunk to the bottom of the sea, it would be better for mankind and all the worse for the fishes."

It is not unusual for great writers to scoff at the medical profession, at least until such time as they may require their services; and then occasionally they change their opinions. Certainly no one who has had any experience of the merciful and beneficent institutions having for their object the care of the sick and the dying would join in this senseless condemnation, and might even feel some indignation at its utterance.

Well-managed hospitals and many free dispensaries exist throughout the Republic, and both the Federal and State Governments look well after the bodily ailments of the poorer classes. Upon many of the large haciendas, likewise, medical service is provided free; while upon some others a small fee, amounting to a few centavos only, is demanded from the poorer patients, so as to prevent any abuse of the privilege taking place. Usually, the peon will not call in a doctor except in extreme cases, believing more in the efficacy of the priest than of the medico.

The principal hospitals in the City of Mexico are the Concepcion Beistigui, the Hospital del Divino Salvador, the

Hospital de Jesús Nazareno, the Hospital Municipal Juarez, the Casa de Maternidad, La Cuna, the Hospital Morelos, the Hospital de San Andrés, the Hospital de San Hipólito and the Hospicio de Pobres (the building of which has lately been demolished and the hospital moved elsewhere). Most of these establishments were originally founded by pious and charitable individuals during the time of the Spanish occupation, but they have since passed into the hands of the municipalities, by whom they are maintained and conducted. Perhaps the oldest of all is the Hospital de Jesús Nazareno, founded by Hernán Cortes in 1590, and almost entirely supported by money from his own purse. The Hospital del Divino Salvador was established in 1698, for the care of mad women, and has been in use for this purpose ever since.

La Cuna is a founding hospital, and was established by Archbishop Lorenzaga in 1766, being supported by his alms as long as he lived, even when he had left Mexico and had returned to Spain. The Hospicio de Pobres is largely patronized, its main support coming from the funds or the profits of the Public Lottery, which, no doubt, indirectly helps to bring many of its votaries sooner or later to the poor-house.

The American Hospital, a comfortable building situated well away from the traffic, is an admirably conducted institution, an immense boon to the community at large; for although called the "American" Hospital, it admits and tenders patients of all nationalities. The best attention and most skilful treatment are to be met with there. Patients pay what they can afford; and so well are they looked after that the majority are loath to leave its cleanly, comfortable, and cheerful roof. The terms are reasonable, and the accommodation provided is the best of its kind. I can only compare the American Hospital in Mexico City to that other admirable institution, the British Hospital in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the two establishments having much in common, both in the character of their management and their popularity.

The medical profession in Mexico is efficiently represented, not alone by the native doctors, the great majority of whom are both cultured and competent men, but by a large number of graduates from the United States. Taken as a whole, I know no country where the practice of surgery and general



MEXICO CITY TRAMWAYS.—Type of modern Funeral Car.—see pp. 232-6.



MEXICO CITY TRAMWAYS.—Type of Passenger Shelter.—see pp. 232-236.

medicine is more thoroughly-well carried out. Moreover, the fees charged are extremely moderate, the usual medical fee being \$2.00 (4s.) or, if the attendance be at night, \$3.00 (6s.). In a great many cases the doctors attend the poor without asking or expecting any remuneration, and a great deal of kindness is experienced from the large body of practitioners to be found in the Republic.

I cannot but compare this state of affairs with that prevalent in Brazil. Here not only are the majority of Brazilian doctors grossly ignorant of the first essentials of their profession, but they are permitted by law to demand whatever fees they please, and even to refuse to give their services without prepayment. I remember one practitioner who for three attendances, where no special skill or treatment was demanded or granted, asked a fee of £5. He assured me that but for the fact that I was "a friend of a friend of his" his fee would have been £15.

In Mexico my medical attendant at the termination of seven visits, some of which had extended well over an hour, asked me but \$14.00 (say £1 8s.), or at the rate of 4s. a visit. This fee did not include any dispensing; but then neither did that paid to my Brazilian attendant. In the one case, also, the doctor was a highly-qualified graduate of Columbia, U.S.A., and a gentleman; while in the other it was a case of a very ordinary practitioner and—a Brazilian.

The theatres of Mexico City, if not perhaps numerous in proportion to the inhabitants, are found sufficient; and, when the new and magnificent building, the National Theatre, now being erected, is completed, which will be in 1910, the Capital will have about the finest and most luxurious play-house to be found in any part of the world. The Teatro Principal, situated in a business street and with a far too narrow entrance, has existed since 1753, undergoing several alterations, including an entirely new façade and a glass awning. The performances given here are not first-class, neither are the audiences; but the place is well worth visiting as an example of a real Mexican play-house, unaffected in any way by the encroachment of foreign ideas or of foreign compositions.

The Teatro Renacimiento, located in the Calle de Puerta Falsa de San Andrés, is the most fashionable play-house at

present, and will probably rank always as a favourite theatre among the *élite* of Mexican society. Here are performed Italian and French opera, and high-class Mexican and foreign comedies. The seating capacity of the house is about 1,900. The Teatro Arbeu, situated in the Calle San Felipe, is a tolerably modern house, dating from 1875. It is frequently used by American theatrical Companies, and is fairly comfortable; the acoustics are tolerably good.

The prices of admission to Mexican theatres are based upon the number of acts which constitute the representation. It is possible to pay for the whole performance or for such portions of it as one may select. The prices vary, but average about 25 centavos (6d.) an act, or *tanda*; and a money-taker passes through the alleys where the audience are seated and collects from each one the amounts due between the acts. All sorts of refreshments, sometimes supplied by very soiled and tattered attendants, are offered during the interludes, while drinks are consumed at a bar located outside the auditorium. Smoking is freely indulged in in all parts of the house, and the curious spectacle is presented of the men donning their hats immediately the curtain descends, reminding one strongly of the scene in the House of Commons during question time, or in a Court of Justice, directly the presiding Judge has disappeared into his private room.

Besides the theatres there are several concert and music halls, circuses, panoramas, and biograph shows; while, of late months, some enterprising Americans have erected a sort of Earl's Court show, upon the grounds of the beautiful Avenida de Chapultepec, which they call "Luna Park," and where merry-go-rounds, switchback railways, peep-shows, etc., are indulged in amid the shrill and discordant noises which usually accompany entertainments of this kind.

It seems regrettable, upon purely sentimental grounds, that a concession should have been granted for this form of amusement, since the neighbourhood is becoming rapidly a high-class residential one, and is situated in the immediate vicinity of the one fashionable rendezvous of the City. It is as if Barnum and Bailey's "Greatest Show on Earth" or Lord George Sanger's Circus were permitted to encamp in Hyde Park, or to erect their tents within the sacred enclosure of Belgrave Square.

Probably, had the matter been referred to the public as an *arbiter elegantiarum*, the concession would never have been granted.

Practically every city and town in the Republic boasting of a population of over 10,000 inhabitants has its own theatre. Some of the buildings, such as those at Guanajuato, Guadalajara, Parral and Chihuahua, are substantially stone-built and elaborately ornamented, costing anything from \$30,000 to \$100,000 (say, from £3,000 to £10,000) apiece. Unfortunately, except when a first-class opera or theatrical troupe visits the towns, the houses remain closed, and this means that sometimes they are unopened for a year or so at the time. For the poorer classes the theatres would seem to have but little attraction, although Mexicans are keen and appreciative critics of good music and clever dramas. But they prefer the excitement of the bull-ring, where also the prices are lower and the length of the performance usually greater. The Circus, likewise, secures more patronage than the theatre, and while there are usually three or four circus troupes touring the Republic at the same time, they would all appear to do well, judging from the repeated visits which they pay.

The game of ball, known as "Frontons," is very popular with the more educated classes, while football has of late caught on amazingly in the City of Mexico, but it is somewhat erratically played, and rather irrespective of the closest Association rules and regulations. Races at the Indianilla and Peñon courses are held under the direction of the Racing Association and of the Mexican Jockey Club. They are not very first-class, but the betting is attractive, and is freely indulged in.

Golf is a very popular game in Mexico, and in the month of February 1905, six prominent professionals from the United States visited the Republic for ten days, taking turns at teaching local players how the fine Scotch game should be played. The champions were Willie Anderson, holder of the open championship of the United States three times; Gilbert Nichols, runner-up in 1904 contest; Bernard Nichols, western champion; Alex and Willie Smith, two exceedingly graceful and accomplished players, and George Lawson of Redlands, California. Each year a tournament is held in Mexico City,

and this is attended by nearly every golfer from different parts of the Republic, and by many prominent players from the United States. Liberal cash prizes are given, and local amateurs are poised with professional players, the matches attracting a great deal of public interest.

The principal racing track in the City of Mexico is the Peralvillo, and the course is under the jurisdiction and supervision of the Jockey Club, which occupies a fine building in the Calle San Francisco. The Racing Committee of the Club have direct control, and are nominated by the Committee of the Club. Until recent years, the efforts of the Club to instil any permanent life into horse racing proved abortive; and in 1900 it came to a standstill altogether. In that year it was found impossible to hold any Spring or Autumn meeting, while the grandstand at Indianilla, after existing for several years with more or less success, was torn down. A new racing track is at present in course of construction at the favourite suburb of Chapultepec, and no doubt the future of the sport under the new auspices, and with the increasing number of English-speaking residents attracted to Mexico City, is brighter to-day than it has ever been before.

The game of Spanish-Ball is the national recreation of Spain. In Mexico City it is played in a large court or *fronton* known as Fronton Nacional, in the Calle Iturbide near the Avenida Juarez. The players meet on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and, of course, Sundays, as well as on all public holidays or *fiestas*, of which there are a considerable number during the year. The game commences at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m., and the public are admitted at prices ranging from \$1.00 to \$2.00, the seats being numbered and reserved. Boxes cost anything between \$5.00 and \$10.00. Heavy betting takes place on the game, and large sums of money not infrequently change hands.

Bowling is much played by the British and American elements, but so far has made only moderate headway in the esteem of the Mexicans themselves. The game is played in much about the same way all over the world, and I need hardly say at one time it was the great national game in England.

The following teams form the League in Mexico City:

Independents, National Railroads, Bachelors, Mexico Mine and Smelter Supply Co., Mexicans, Insurance men, Mexican Central Railway, Bankers, Professional men, and Directors of the Young Men's Christian Association (who really established the first bowling alleys in the City). Matches are held three times weekly.

It is only within the ordinary course of events that wherever Americans predominate automobilism should reign triumphant. Americans far outstrip other foreigners in number, wealth and influence in Mexico, and consequently some of the finest motor-cars belong to them, although the opulent Mexicans, always ready to follow a good lead, run them very closely in regard to the excellence of their machines. Mexico City, indeed, offers great inducement to use motors, since the roadways are generally in first-class condition, there are no speed-limits once outside the city boundary, and a number of fine runs through the city and out to the open country being available, while a superb stretch of road from Mexico City to Toluca, a distance of some 73 kilometres, is a favourite resort for those who like to make the pace and at the same time enjoy some ravishing scenery. Another road is now being built from Mexico City to Puebla, about 30 miles.

One of the handsomest machines, a superb 28 h.p. Mercedes, is owned by the President, who makes good use of it. It was a present to his Excellency from an admirer.

The first automobile house was opened by the firm of Charles L. Seeger, in May 1901, and since then numerous firms have been launched upon the same profitable business. Careering about the City, in all the colours of the rainbow, may be seen Mercedes, Panhards, Pope-Toledos, Cadillacs, Fiats, Pope-Hartfords, Ramblers, Oldsmobiles, Reas, Duryeas, White steam-cars, Franklins, Napiers, Wintons, and a number of makes unknown as yet to fame. Owing to the large number of accidents which have occurred in the City, the Governor of the Federal District has recently introduced some strict regulations as to limit of speed, leaving cars unattended in the streets and carrying conspicuous number-plates, which are, moreover, being rigorously enforced. Infringement does not mean merely a fine, but imprisonment, and in some cases for a sufficiently unpleasant period.

## CHAPTER XXVI

Mexican City tramways—Early concessions—British company formed—Wernher, Beit and Co.'s interests—System described—Increased mileage—Track—Plant, rolling-stock—General Manager resigns—W. W. Wheatly's services—Some former officials.

THE first tramway launched in the Republic of Mexico was in the year 1856, the undertaking being in the hands of a group of influential but very inexperienced Mexicans, who, for years, struggled in vain to make a financial success of their enterprise. It was not, however, until 1890 that the wealthy South African firm of Wernher, Beit and Co. entered Mexican business circles, and formed a limited liability company to take over the greater part of the existing tramway system, which they gradually electrified and started upon its subsequently highly successful career. Fresh construction and development proceeded in all directions, the company being efficiently represented in the Republic by Mr. Breitmeyer. One by one new electric traction-lines and extensions into the several beautiful suburbs of Mexico City were opened to public traffic, and to-day there are few parts of the city which one cannot reach by electric car or by one of the different railway termini, of which there are now 5 situated in various localities. So much money was expended on the improvements of the system, that I fear little went into the pockets of the shareholders, especially those holding the ordinary shares; for since 1900, when a distribution of 3 per cent. dividend took place, the ordinary shareholders received nothing. Just at the period when it might have been supposed that the increased facilities afforded and the largely augmented revenue would have resulted in something like a further modest distribution taking place, the tramways were sold, lock, stock and barrel to a new set of owners, a powerful

Syndicate of Canadian financiers already in possession of the Mexican Light and Power Co. of Mexico City, and who have since extended their holdings to Puebla, their system to-day covering 27 kilometres of street railway of standard gauge, but single track.

The tramway system in operation in Mexico City consists of about 160 miles of track, of which 90 are operated by electric traction, 13 by steam, and 57 by animal-traction. That, at any rate, was the position of affairs when the new owners came into possession; but I understand since that date several additional mule-drawn lines have been electrified, while further extensions have taken place in other directions.

It is now proposed to expend several million dollars upon improving the roads, rails and rolling-stock, and the extension of further lines; while it is intended, if possible, to consolidate into one central company the whole of the tramways of the City of Mexico.

The Mexican Consolidated Electric Co., Ltd., which is the designation of the new enterprise, was incorporated in London towards the middle of last year, the capital being placed at \$8,000,000 (gold) (£1,600,000). The scope of the company's operations, with which there is no competition, may be gauged from the fact that the district over which they operate covers an area of about 600 square miles, and has to-day a population of something like 650,000, a number which is continually increasing. Very considerable economies will, for the future, be effected in regard to the motive power used, since the same operating company owns the vast electric power station at Necaxa, which supplies the whole City of Mexico with its electric light and power.

The tramway company at present owns a little over 600 cars, including electric and mule, and a considerable number of new electric cars are on order. The newest type, which was constructed from a plan made by the late General Manager of the line, Mr. W. W. Wheatly, possesses many excellent features, which cannot be met with in any other part of the world. In every respect regarding comfort, light, and accommodation, the cars of the Mexican Electric Tramways are the best that I have seen. The passenger traffics have increased in a consistently satisfactory manner, and in

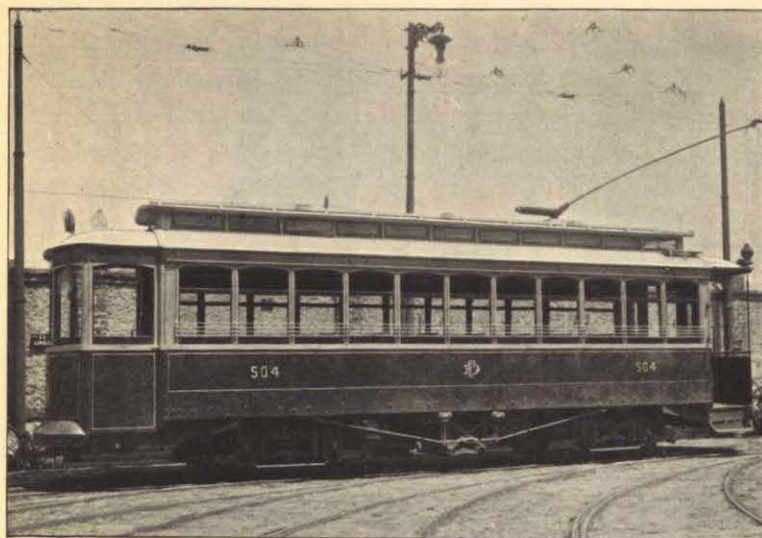
view of the great amount of new building going on in every direction, especially towards the suburbs, there can be no question that these traffics will continue to augment year by year. The following figures show the kind of progressive movement that has taken place during the past four or five years :

Year.	Number of Passengers.	Nett Profits earned. \$
1901	26,709,225	825,459
1902	31,132,032	961,958
1903	36,478,584	1,178,958
1904	42,602,194	1,393,711
1905	47,746,002	1,465,731
1906	50,000,000	1,724,000

I am not in possession of the figures for the current year, but I have every reason to believe that they will show a very high increase upon those of the preceding 12 months.

The Tramway Company conduct about 90 per cent. of the funerals which take place in Mexico City, and, I am sorry to say, the death-rate is a very heavy one. Funeral cars and their trailers carrying the mourners are met with at all times of the day *en route* to the Pantéon de Dolores, the public cemetery, and this traffic proves highly remunerative to the Tramway Company. During the past few months the entire funeral service of the Company has undergone a radical change, mainly instituted by Mr. Wheatly before he resigned the position of General Manager.

Elsewhere will be found illustrations of a funeral-car drawn by mules and an electrically propelled car, both of which are still run by the Company. To-day practically all the old hearses (which are always open with the coffin fully exposed to view) and funeral cars have been withdrawn, and the service of the Company generally improved almost out of recognition. As an instance of what has been done, I may say that the old, shabby silk hats worn by mutes in many different countries, and familiar to the public in this conservative land for years, have been consigned to the dust-heap. The motor-men who drive the funeral cars, as well as the attendants, are attired in neat mourning uniforms, with black caps having a gold band around them, and a narrow gold braid upon the uniform, to relieve its extreme sombreness. Even a



MEXICO CITY TRAMWAYS.—Ordinary passenger car.



MEXICO CITY TRAMWAYS.—Interior of passenger car.

barber's shop has been instituted by the Company, where all the funeral car employes are shaved free of charge by a professional barber, so that upon their journey they may appear both clean and wholesome. Their shoes are likewise blacked free of charge, and they are encouraged in every way to present a smart appearance.

I have referred to the services rendered to the Company by Mr. W. W. Wheatly, whose resignation from the position of General Manager towards the beginning of this year (February 1st) was received with very general regret. Mr. Wheatly had been manager for 8 years, and as evidence of the high esteem in which he was held by the British company owning the lines, at the general meeting of the Mexico Electric Tramways Co., Ltd. (before its final dissolution), Sir Charles Euan Smith, the Chairman of the Board of Directors, paid a high tribute to the services of Mr. Wheatly, accompanying his observations with the substantial addition of a cheque for £3,000.

Among the earliest improvements made by Mr. Wheatly during his control of the system was the establishment of the present electric signal station at the Zocalo, by means of which hundreds of cars are taken out of that place according to a schedule and dispatched to their various destinations throughout the Federal District, the whole proceeding with the utmost quietness and orderliness, and absolutely faultlessly. During Mr. Wheatly's management street accidents were reduced to a minimum, as the safety of passengers invariably demanded his closest attention. On all lines time schedules were improved, and the manner of handling large crowds on national and religious feast days was brought to a point of perfection.

Mr. Wheatly's resignation was accompanied by the simultaneous departure of Mr. James A. Pierce, General Superintendent of the Tramway system, and who, having been connected with Mr. Wheatly for many years in various capacities both in the U.S.A. and Mexico, resigned so as to join him in his new enterprise, the Industrial Engineering and Supply Co., of which I make mention elsewhere. Mr. J. W. Sherwood, Assistant to the General Manager; Mr. A. B. Wells, Superintendent of the 1st Division; Mr. John Moore, Assistant-Superintendent of the 1st Division; and Mr. Frank



Loza, Chief Dispatcher at the Zocalo, all handed in their resignations upon the institution of the new management.

In the City of Puebla active preparations are in hand for electrifying the whole of the tramway system, under the auspices of the Mexican Light and Power Co., who have the monopoly here, as they have in Mexico City. No doubt, in course of time electric traction will be introduced into other States, such as Guadalajara, Oaxaca, etc., which are at present served only by mule-drawn vehicles. This latter class of traction is prevalent in nearly every town of importance throughout the Republic, some lines being from three to four miles in length, at which distance from the cities several railway stations are situated, notably in the case of Leon and Cordoba.

As a general rule, the tramcars, although of a cheap and unpretentious character, are found to be clean, comparing favourably with those of a similar and even "superior" class in the Argentine and Brazil. In both these latter Republics many of the cars are so filthy that any passenger having regard for his personal comfort and safety would hesitate to ride in them. In no case in Mexico have I seen anything to complain of in the way of lack of cleanliness. The mule-flesh, also, is of a higher quality than that in either of the Republics I have referred to. Without any compulsion from the police, the owners of the tram-mules keep them in thoroughly good order, the animals presenting the appearance of being well-fed and cared for.

In the City of Guanajuato, the Tramway Co. has hitherto driven a flourishing trade, since every passenger has from necessity to make the journey from the railway terminus at Marfil by this means to the City of Guanajuato, the tram-fare being 25 cents. (6d.) for a distance of four miles.

Owing to the influence of powerful vested interests in the City of Guanajuato, very severe opposition to the advent to the railway has up till lately succeeded in keeping the scheme in subjection. The spirit of progress, however, has now proved too strong, and the Guanajuato tramways' monopoly has none too soon been broken down by the advent of the new branch of the Central Railway, which is now carrying its line from Marfil right into the heart of the city.

## CHAPTER XXVII

Sport in Mexico—Wild-fowl shooting—Varieties of small game—Wholesale destruction of ducks—Favourable localities—Tarpon fishing—Mexican and Florida waters compared—Notable catches—Big-game—Bear—Deer—Peccary—Wild-cat—Jaguar—Mountain lion—A good day's sport—Cock-fighting—Value of birds—Methods of training.

THE time will undoubtedly come when sportsmen from all parts of the world will regard an annual visit to Mexico of as much importance as bear-hunting in the Rockies, wild-game shooting in Africa, or tiger-shooting in India. Game is found practically all over Mexico, but naturally local conditions are such that certain districts offer far greater attractions to hunters than others. In considering the sport of the country, it may be advisable to divide it into three sections—namely, fowl, fish, and big-game. In regard to the former, I know of no place in the Americas where such an immense number of wild-fowl congregate: pelican, swan, goose, brant and duck of every variety, snipe, curlew, and sandhill crane are found by the millions. In one district, namely, that of Lake Chapala in the State of Jalisco, hundreds of thousands of duck are shot every year, and sport is here so cheap and so easy that it is a marvel to me that it is not more largely indulged in than it is. I feel certain that if the average American or Englishman knew of the magnificent sport awaiting his gun in Mexico, little could keep him from participating in it. Neither does it vary much from year to year, the breeding of the fowl being so regular that fine sport may always be depended upon.

A very favourite way of hunting ducks and geese is by stalking them from a canoe. The rushes make it easy to approach the feeding birds, while their tameness and their abundance permit of a very large number of flocks being stalked in the course of a day. About twenty miles south of