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HOME LIFE IN MEXICO.
A Mexican Dinner, the Menu, Table Manners and Customs.

The Dining Room and Kitchen, Tortilla Making.

Dish-washing with the Dirt Floor for a Table.

Special Correspondence of THE BEE. ALIILLO, ESTADODE COAHUILA DE ZARAGOZA, October 25.—I invite you to dine with me to-day, dear friends, in a Mexican. As I am myself a guest, we must touch the subject tenderly. While the truth may be told at all times, we would not abuse the generous hospitality shown us on every hand by indulging in invidious comparisons. In a spirit of mutual good feeling, then—remembering that the habits and customs of all lands differ from each other, and that many of the ways here are doubtless better than some of ours—let us repair to the dining room. The words "vamos a comer" (let us go to dinner) are welcome ones, for in Mexico we do not breakfast American fashion, but take only a small cup of chocolate with a tiny loaf of Mexican bread, without butter or other accompaniment, immediately on arising. Therefore, by 1 o'clock p. m., our healthy appetites are "sharp set" enough to do justice to any dishes, however an unguessable a conundrum their ingredients may be.

THE CORRIDOR, unlike the other rooms in the house, is seldom paved or cemented, but has mortar earth for a floor, and is never carpeted—for obvious reasons, as we shall see by and by. Much sweeping and shoving about of chairs has worn this dirt floor—which is almost as hard as stone—into hollows and gulleys. Below a few inches below the level of the court, which are frequent in this latitude, small floors of wood and makes little lakes in the hollows aforesaid, which the servants bale out with plates. Our one window, with its absence of glass, and shutters like those of a barn, is never unclosed, but as there is no communicating passage between the dining room and kitchen the outer door is hospitably wide open, both summer and winter. In rather ungenerous contrast to the floor, is a handsome side-board, with much glassware shining upon some distracting pieces of old blue china and quaint articles of Guadalupe pottery in the way of pitchers, which we long to possess. Wash stands, with bowl and towel accompaniment, adorn the corners, the convenience of which is apparent in hot finger-bowls. The most distinguished guest is given the post of honor at the head of the long table, and other guests are seated at his right and left, while the host and hostess place themselves wherever it happens. There is nothing upon the table but a heap of knives, forks and spoons, a pile of plates, and a cluster of goblets, all at one end where the host waiter stands. Among the better classes dinner is always a copious meal, each dish served separately in courses, necessitating a number of plates to each person. There is little variation in the bill of fare, one dinner being nearly the exact counterpart of all others during the year. As the servants emerge from among the flowers of the sunny court,

we think of fairy tales and the Arabian nights—only these irades do not greatly resemble orthodox fables, nor is the food they bring the aroma of our imagination. If the waiter is a woman, her head and shoulders are always wrapped in her rebozo, and if a man he wears no coat, but retains his wide sombrero. First broth is served in small China tea cups, each cup covered with a pot *tercilla* (pan-cake made of crushed corn and water) and is set upon a plate which also holds a huge brass spoon. Mexicans have a great fondness for fat of all kinds, a passion for chili, and consider onions as much a necessity of life as we do salt. Hence the broth (and every other dish for that matter) is always very greasy, very garlicky, and reddish with chili pepper. If there happens to be any ripe grapes in the house they are put into the broth and eaten with it. The other day I saw with delight a young man, with a luscious-looking peach being carried into the corridor, and I went to dinner in happy anticipation of something like home. But what do you think was done with those peaches? They were sliced, every one, into the garlicky, greasy broth.

The second course is always *sopa*—either vermacelli, macaroni or rice, first boiled and then fried in oil with much garlic, and garnished with slices of green peppers. With it goats-milk cheese is served, most persons crumbing the cheese into it, and eating the exceedingly oily mixture with a spoon. Then comes the main dish which never varies—the same at three hundred and sixty-five dinners to the year, through a Mexican's natural life—always boiled beef or mutton, with cabbage, onions, small green apples or pears, with various queer tropical roots, seeds and bulbs, all boiled together in one pot. It is served with chili in some shape—generally made into salad with anaquates, to which red hot coals are a mild comparison. The amount of pepper which the smallest children calmly devour, as ours do candy, is something astonishing, and inclines one to the belief that the Mexican "inner man" is

the merest approach to roast meat comes in the fourth course—a piece of pork or kid, stuffed with spices, herbs, chili and chopped onions, and "boiled down" in the pot till the surface is slightly browned. What we consider a roast is no more obtainable in the Mexican market than a beefsteak. In the first place the cattle are the leanest and lankest of creatures, and when killed the meat is cut into lumps and strips, regardless of "grain," in a way that would strike an English butcher dumb—with especial reference to boiling, as there are no conveniences for roasting and broiling such as we possess with our stoves and griddles.

Then follows a variety of entrees, each a separate course—such as *chili con carne*, meat cut into small bits and stewed with oil, tomatoes and chili; large green peppers stuffed with chopped pork and onions, and fried in better; pork hashed with onions, cheese and scrambled eggs; cheese or sour milk boiled with chili; *tamales* and *inoholadas*—tortillas spiced with chopped meat, onions and chili, rolled up, and served with tomato sauce, etc., etc. The last dish, both for dinner

and supper, is always the same in every Mexican household, viz. stewed frijoles, (red beans). The laws of Medes and Persians may change and death and taxes be evaded, but this Mexican habit of "topping the frijoles, never!" Some "pour pincillo (molasses) over their beans, others mix them with sour milk, or crumble cheese into them, but many prefer them "straight," and in that manner we take them. To neglect to eat frijoles after each meal is not only a breach of etiquette, but is considered an indication of bad breeding and execrable taste. At frequent intervals during the meal, tortillas are served, smoking hot from the griddle, and always either native wine or imported claret. After frijoles, we sometimes have fruit or "dulce," (jelly), but generally no dessert, and then the repast is concluded with small cups of strong, black, bitter, native coffee, with sugar if desired, but this consumption needs no further comment. This coffee requires much time but nobody is ever in a hurry in Mexico. If the servants are slow and keep you waiting a quarter of an hour or so between the courses, the hostess is not in the least disturbed thereby, for conversation never flags, and there is nothing to be done after dinner, but take a long siesta till chocolate time. If bread is used at dinner it is laid, in the loaf, upon the table cloth, and if one desires a piece he cuts it to suit himself.

TORTILLAS are not brought in on plates, after the manner of our griddle cake, but the servant puts them in a pile upon the table-cloth, beside the master or mistress of the house, who distributes them around the table with a dexterous toss, exactly like shuffling cards.

During more than half a year's residence in Mexico I have not seen a bit of butter, a potato, beef-steak, chop, cake, pie, pudding, tea, or the usual vegetables which we consider indispensable. Napkins are rarely used, but each person wipes his or her face and hands upon that portion of the tablecloth nearest himself. Eating with forks is not at all according to etiquette, but the knife or spoon must be used, or still more properly, a tortilla. They manage the latter with as much dexterity as the Chinese does the chopsticks, curving it between the fingers till it forms something like a spoon, and scooping up the food with it. The very old people and the lower classes use tortillas altogether in lieu of knives, forks and spoons, the latter being of comparatively recent introduction. It requires considerable practice to successfully manage the tortilla scoop, as I have learned by sad experience.

After the meal is finished, and at intervals during its progress, if one feels so inclined, the mouth is filled with water from the goblet, mixed with more or less emphasis, and then the water is squirted between the teeth upon the floor. In this process all become expert, from the mistress of the house to the smallest child. When the fresher water is desired that in the glasses is carefully tossed on the dirt floor, where it does no harm. While waiting for coffee, and afterwards, and during pauses in the conversation, the gentlemen of the family, and very frequently the ladies also, settle back gracefully in their chairs and smoke a cigarette or two.

After the first dinner I took in Mexico it was at a hotel table, and a stranger Mexican seated beside me, having finished his dinner first, innocently leaned back to enjoy his usual smoke. In my ignorance, regarded it as a personal insult, and made an idiot of myself by indignantly leaving the table. But since then I have become "learned in the ways of the Egyptians," and can not only tolerate the natural custom with equanimity, but (be not horrified, oh fastidious friends!) occasionally

myself. When one is in Rome it is well to do as the Romans do. These tiny Mexican cigarettes, rolled up in corn husks or tissue paper, are not at all like the strong-smelling things we have in the "Elsados Unidos del Norte." These are not much larger than a straw, the husk is sweet to the taste, and they have a delicate fragrance while burning which is exceedingly agreeable. In Mexico everybody smokes, at all times and in all places, at the theater, in the ball room, everywhere. In making formal calls or more extended visits, politeness demands an immediate and frequent exchange of cigarettes and "lights," with many polite bows and courteous words, exactly as our ancestors were wont to offer and accept the civilities of a cigar. Every Mexican lady's pocket is supplied with cigarette holder and match box, of more or less elegance, and the dainty fingers of many a fair young senorita, who would scorn to touch the slightest thing pertaining to household labor, are discolored at the tips like polished bronze from much cigarette rolling.

In a Mexican household, at 5 p. m., when I have breakfast or coffee served with bread as at breakfast, or with little cakes resembling sweetened crackers. Late in the evening, at any hour from 9 o'clock till midnight, is supper—which is almost as ceremonious a meal as the dinner, and its counterpart as to menu minus only the broth and the boiled meat.

A MEXICAN KITCHEN is a study, and to do it and all its strange utensils just would require a column's space. There are no stoves, or even anything like the fire-places of our grandmother's days. One side of the room is occupied by a sort of shelf, built into the wall, about breast high, in the center of which a little heap of wood is kept burning, and around it the wooden cooking vessels are set. If the family is not very poor, the method is sometimes improved upon by building a charcoal fire in an earthen pot, and setting the smaller cooking pots within it. Many houses have a mud oven at the end of this shelf or somewhat where out of doors, (in which a fire must be built to heat it), but generally an oven is quite unnecessary, as

enter not into the household economy. In the center of the kitchen stands the *metate*, for tortilla making—a hollowed stone, the size of an ordinary bread-bowl, which has two legs about four inches high at one end, inclining it at an angle of forty-five degrees. The cook kneels upon the dirt floor at the elevated end of the *metate*, and the corn having been previously boiled and still quite wet, crushes it into paste with a sort of stone rolling-pin, the mixture gradually sliding down the inclined plane into a dish placed to receive it. When a quantity has thus been crushed, it is rolled into balls and left until cool. It is astonishing what an amount of corn a family of ordinary size will eat in a day, it being here the "staff of life." When a meal is on the tapis, after everything else has been cooked, the last thing is to heat the griddle, or a very small lump of tin called *pan* called *comparte*, shape it into thin, round cakes with a little cold water and much

loud clapping of the hands, and bakes them brown in a jiffy. As a substitute for bread, one might go a great deal farther and fare worse than subsist on tortillas, (pronounced *tor-tay-yas*). The best chocolate I ever tasted is made in Mexico. No water enters into its composition, and while the well-sweetened milk is heating, they dissolve the chocolate in it by putting into the vessel a wooden implement called a *molinillo* which is whirled rapidly between the hands until the whole is one mass of foam and richness.

Whatever else the American housewife may find worthy of imitation in Mexican methods, I am quite sure that

as that disagreeable duty is practised here, will not be one of them. The Mexican dishwasher sets herself serenely upon the floor, beside a pail of hot or cold water, with a little amole root sliced in it, which forms a lather stronger than soap. She leisurely laves the dishes with the aid of a brush, like our smallest whisk brooms, and then, without wiping up in any way, she turns them upside down to dry, occasionally on a shelf or wooden tray, but generally on the floor against the wall. Strange to say, they always come to the table clean and shining, but fancy their condition if the average Irish or negro servant were allowed to do likewise!

Every Mexican household has a great number of servants in proportion to the size of the family, and how they all occupy themselves is a mystery. There is one whose sole business it is to make tortillas; another to do the marketing and act as steward; another who does nothing but cook; another to keep the house tidy; others to wait on the table and attend the children, besides gardeners, hostlers, valets, etc. But

SEVA'S KEEPING IN MEXICO is a very different thing here than in the United States. Here they do not demand the salary of a Congressman, nor require days "out" and company in, nor grow so important that the mistress of the house is barely allowed to remain providing she is sufficiently polite. Mexican credos consider four dollars per month a munificent salary. They sleep rolled up in their sarapas, on the floor in the court whenever it happens, and are always pious and apparently contented. Indeed I have observed that the poorer they are and the lower down in the social scale, the more contented and pious they seem. As a class they are the kindest, most honest, and simple-hearted folk I ever met. Each wears his precious charm, blessed by the priest, around his neck, and tells his beads many times a day. When dangers or annoyances arise the words "balga me Dios" (protect me God) rise to their lips as naturally as the breath they draw. Whatever is said of Catholicism it is surely good in this, that the lowly and ignorant are made better by its superstitions, and sustained and comforted by them, live and die in calm content.

An Editor's Testimonial. A. M. Vaughan, Editor of the "Greenwich Review," Greenwich, O., writes:—Last January I had a very bad cold, and was caused by a runaway horse. I used almost every kind of salve to heal the wounds, which turned to running sores, but found nothing that would do me any good. I was recommended HENRY'S CARBOLIC SALVE. I bought a box and it helped me at once, and at the end of two months I was completely well. It is the best salve in the market, and I never fail of telling my friends about it, and urge them to use it whenever they need a salve.

ROYAL ROSCOE. An Interesting and Exciting Court Scene in Which Roscoe Conkling Figures.

Trenton (N. J.) Herald. Seldom has there been heard a more interesting examination of witnesses than that made to-day in the case of Wm. D. Dinmore, asking for a preliminary injunction against the Central railroad of New Jersey, to restrain the Philadelphia and Reading railroad from obtaining control of the franchises of the former corporation. Mr. Roscoe Conkling displayed all the cutting satire and exasperating manner of inquiry in his examination of the principal witnesses of which he is capable. Edwin H. Faulkner, whose examination in New York was interrupted yesterday, was first placed upon the stand. Mr. Conkling began the attack at once. The witness, insisting upon adding an explanation to his answer, which brought forth from the great lawyer the remark: "Will you be good enough not to start off again unless you can hold yourself in?" "I want to tell you all; you can have the whole truth if you want it." "From you?" "Yes, from you?" "Yes, I want to tell the whole truth." Mr. Roscoe asked that the testing of witnesses be stopped, and Judge Dixon was sent for to protect the witnesses from the insults of the counsel.

Conkling handsly begged the clerk to overlook these outbursts on the part of the counsel on the other side. "They are paroxysms due to internal disorders over which he has no control." Gowen insisted on his motion; he had never heard such opprobrious epithets applied to a witness in any court as the counsel delighted to heap upon the witnesses in this case. "Did you say opprobrious, or appropriate?" interrupted Conkling. Judge Dixon was in the room, and Gowen passionately appealed to him, in the name of the profession and the law, to protect the witness from the violent, brutal and outrageous abuse of the counsel on this case. Judge Dixon was called from the room for a few minutes, and while he was gone the men glared at one another in silence. When he returned he said: "Mr. Examiner, what is the trouble now?" After the clerk had stated the case, Conkling declared that the foul-mouthed assertions of the counsel on the other side were entirely unassisted by anything which himself or his associates had said to the witness. He outlined Faulkner's testimony on direct examination, and he declared that he proposed on the cross-examination, out of his own mouth, to convict him of either being a blackmailer or a lunatic. "This may be brutal, but it is the purpose of my question, and I propose to state it fully to your Honor. I shall defend myself most fortunate if your Honor will remain and listen to the questions and answers."

After torturing Faulkner for nearly three hours and until the man was in a state bordering on frenzy, Conkling said: "Well, Mr. Witness, I think I'll let you say a large majority."

Gowen then began a redirect examination. As he was asking a question, Conkling, who sat some distance from Faulkner, said in a low tone, referring to the witness, "That man is a scoundrel."

Gowen overheard the remark, and turning quickly to the stenographer, exclaimed, "What do you call that witness a damned scoundrel?" Conkling coolly replied, "No one would

repeat a side remark made under such circumstances except a blackguard." "Then you are the blackguard," shouted Gowen angrily. Conkling sprang to his feet, his face flushing angrily, and said, "I made the remark to another person, in a low tone of voice; no gentleman would repeat such a thing unless he forgot himself."

Gowen stood up, his beardless face working with passion. The audience became excited, and pressed forward to the railing. The lawyers rose to their feet and bent forward to watch. Beside Conkling was Seward, half out of his chair, a look of his long hair hanging over his forehead. Secretary Robeson's fiery face was thrust forward excitedly between the combatants. Little Koerber, squeezed between Gowen and the big table, smiled nervously, and pulled his mustache.

"I am perfectly willing," shouted Gowen, "to be assailed for protecting a deaf gentleman like the witness from the outrage imposed upon him by the counsel. It was the part of human nature to do so. I feel proud to have done it."

The audience applauded the sound of his voice, as the words could scarcely be distinguished in the confusion. "They're going to fight," shouted some one, pointing to the two men, who were glaring into each other's faces.

"If this disorder is repeated the officer will clear the court room," said Clerk Oliphant. "Proceed with the examination."

When quiet reigned again the witness continued his long stories intended to explain away the facts brought out by the cross examination. When he had ended Conkling went at him and succeeded in making him contradict himself in important particulars. Gowen asked a few more questions, and finally, at nearly 5 o'clock, the witness was allowed to go.

Jay Gould's Mausoleum. From the Cincinnati Commercial Gazette. New York, Nov. 4.—The Gould mausoleum in Woodlawn cemetery is so far on the way to completion that on Thursday last the final slab was set in place. It was on the interior decoration has begun. The structure is impressive by reason of its simplicity, harmony of design and massiveness. Its form is that of an Ionic temple, raised on a platform three steps above the level of the sward surrounding it. The workmen say that the foundation of the platform is a mass of concrete that makes it practically a single stone 8 feet in thickness by 36 or more in length and 28 in width. The structure is wholly of finely hammered Western granite, without a single band or panel or other surface that is polished. Thirty graceful columns 11 feet high by 13 inches in diameter surround the mausoleum and add to the support of its massive roof.

Space for 20 bodies is afforded within. In the front of the tomb will be a bronze door of Grecian design, pierced so, as to afford a view of the interior. A window representing a choir of angels will occupy the space now left in the rear wall. It is understood that the inner walls will be of delicately shaded marbles, arranged so as to present simple and pleasing effects. No brick or metal is employed in the construction of the tomb, excepting the bronze doors and the necessary lead in the window. It stands in the center of a circular plot of three or four acres, on the highest ground in the cemetery, in Lawn avenue, near Central avenue, and is surrounded only by grass, not a single tree or shrub as yet rising on this ground.

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A Close Shave. Las Vegas Gazette. A miner in the hills near Socorro, New Mexico, made a lucky strike in a wonderful manner lately. Two weeks ago, while tramping over the rocks, the prospector suddenly discovered that his harrow was on fire, caught probably from the condensation of the sun's rays, by a prospector's glass which he carried in his kit. Now the harrow contained about six pounds of blasting powder, and our hero dropped the bundle and got out of the reach as soon as his legs would carry him. The bundle of caps fell into a crevice in the rocks, and the powder soon exploded. The prospector returned mournfully to gather up such of his effects as were unharmed by the explosion, when something in the appearance of the shattered rock struck his eyes and he examined it closely—it was horn silver. The now jubilant miner located a claim at once, which he called "Close Shave," and in less than a week disposed of one third of his interest at \$13,000. The name of the honest son of the pick and shovel is John Quincy Adams, and he hails from western Ohio. John is well known in Somerset County, and receives the congratulations of his friends in a modest manner. John Adams' "close shave" is a by-word now in the mining camps.

Woman Suffrage in Vermont. St. Louis Republican. In Vermont women have been accorded a limited right of suffrage for three years. The law of 1880 giving to females who pay taxes the privilege of voting at school elections and of holding school offices. But the law is nearly a dead letter through the indifference of those who were intended to be its beneficiaries, the women of Vermont being as averse to voting at school elections as those of Boston are.

In the city of Burlington, which is the centre of intelligence, public spirit and progressive ideas in the states there were only sixteen female votes cast at the first school election under the law, at the second only five and at the third only eight—a signal proof of the apathy of the Vermont women in the appreciation and exercise of a right extended to them after long years of agitation and struggle. Burlington is only an example for a few women appear at the polls, but the great majority of them care nothing about voting. Of 241 town in the State twenty have this year, chosen women, chiefly clergyman's wives, as superintendents of schools, but this has been done chiefly by male voters a proof of the willingness of the stronger sex to facilitate and encourage the entrance of females into the political field. Suffrage agitators from Massachusetts have attempted by meetings and speeches in various parts of the State to rouse the women to an appreciation of their new dignity and duty, but the effort is said to be a complete failure. It is asserted that in Wyoming territory, where female suffrage prevails, the few women to be found there make a business of voting as so they do, too, in Utah, when they have special reasons for throwing their ballots in favor of polygamy, but the experiments in older communities certainly do not indicate that the gentler sex are enamored of the new right.

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