

Business and Trades in Mexican Capital

MEXICO CITY—Come take a walk with me through the business sections of Mexico City and see how our lively sister republic buys, sells and gets gains. It is now 2 p. m. and we are on the Avenida de San Francisco, in the heart of the capital. It is the busiest hour of the day in Washington, Berlin, Paris and London. Here the streets are deserted, the stores are closed and their show windows are covered with blinds of corrugated iron. The front doors of the chief business establishments are locked with great bolts, and the town makes one think of the dead city of Nijni-Novgorod on the Volga when the fair is not on.

What is the matter? Has the revolution again broken loose and have the people fled for their lives? Nothing of the kind. These are the business conditions at 2 o'clock every week day all the year through. The stores have been open from 8 until 1, and they will open again from 3 until 7. They are closed now for breakfast, and the whole city, merchants and clerks, drummers and customers, have gone home for their breakfast or mid-day siesta. The average Mexican family has only coffee and bread upon which, and its first real meal of the day is now serving. The city will take two hours to eat and start it on the road to digestion, and will then go back to work.

Take your stand on the corner and look up the street. An hour ago it was black with people, and the automobiles and carriages flew back and forth so that you could not cross without the risk of your life. Now there is not a car nor horse to be seen and the only men are the policemen who stand and mope at the corners.

Transportation in Mexico City.

But let us go down to the Plaza and wait till the street cars bring the crowds back from their breakfast. The Plaza is the street car center, to which nearly every electric line comes. They run on trains, a dozen often being used to take on the same track and the midway traffic forming a big part of the receipts of the road. Our tramway companies get only one trip out of the business man every day; that is, his fares morning and evening. Here there are two more fares at midday, for almost all go home to their meals. The cars wait for the stores to knock off and run in long processions when bringing them back.

The service is good and the average fare is equal to 3 cents of our money. Or, if you go second class, they are cheaper. All kinds of traffic here is lower than ours. Cabs cost 50 cents gold per hour and you can have an automobile taxi at 15 cents for the first three-quarters of a mile and at 5 cents for every additional quarter thereafter. Waits are charged for at \$1.25 per hour. This is so, notwithstanding the cabs are as good as our own and they go quite as fast.

Men's Hats Which Cost \$40.

But it is now 3:30. The cars have emptied the clerks and customers into the stores and business is well under way. Let us cross the Plaza and stroll through the arcades which run along its west side, with stores at the back. Between the pillars are booths, where peddlers are selling all sorts of wares. The stores have goods of many descriptions behind their old-fashioned glass windows. The most interesting of all are the hat stores. They contain headgear of all sorts, from the most modern men's shapes of New York and London to the gigantic sombreros of plush and felt which the old-time Mexicans wear. These sombreros are loaded with gold and gold in the shape of embroidery and most of them have narrow bands of gold braid round their crowns.

Some Queer Signs.

But let us go on with our walk. Look at the sign over the store in front of which we are standing. You might think these letters spell "Hats and Sombreros." They do not. They read "Puerta del Sol," or "Gate of the Sun." A little further on is a barber shop called "La Perla," or "The Pearl," and around the way a tobaccoist sells cigars and cigarettes under the sign of "The White Cat." I know of a pulque saloon—pulque is the beer of the peasant, which goes by the title of "The Sanctuary," and in the street of the Holy Ghost there is another called "The Hang-Out of John the Baptist." Some stores have such names as "Vesuvius," "The Violets," "The Pearl of the Occident," "The White Rose," "La Perfumista," and "The Drinking Place to Hidalgo." The old-time merchant never puts his own name over the store, but like the Chinese, chooses instead some fanciful title which gives no indication of who he is or what he is selling.

Let us stop and look at some of them. Here is a hat as big around as the tire of a limousine. It is of bright red, trimmed with silver. The embroidery runs round the crown, and it has eight strands of silver wire as a band. That hat which hangs above it is gray. It is embroidered with leather, and at the right and the left are two bands of black, laced back and forth with great bands of silver. There are hats as green as the wing of that parrot which the peddler has thrust into our eyes, and hats of plush as white as snow, with golden embroidery woven about them. I take up one of these sombreros and put on a blanket to make myself look like a Mexican, and am photographed to show how they look. My hat weighs several pounds and it is worth \$40.

Other clothing costs almost as much.

I go into a tailoring establishment further on up the street and look at some



Corn Husks for Wrapping Paper A Game-Chicken Man

riding trousers of buckskin, with solid silver buttons lining the seams. A fine pair costs \$20, and the short roundabout jackets embroidered with silver are likewise as high. I enter a saddle establishment next door which has saddles and bridles with trappings of silver, and am told that the hacendado often spends several hundred dollars on his equestrian outfit in addition to the cost of his horse. This land is one of the rich and the poor. The rich have so much that they squander their money, and the poor are so desperately so that they do not realize how poor they are. The most of them dress in cotton with a blanket which costs not more than a dollar. They have leather sandals which are nothing more than strips of thick cowhide large enough to cover the sole of the foot and tied on with strings. Such footwear costs about 3 cents a pair.

Odd Business Methods.

The customs inside the stores are as strange as the signs. It is only the department stores and principal shops which have any fixed price, and you are usually asked three times what the merchant thinks you will pay. This is especially so as to foreigners, whom the clerks are sometimes allowed to charge what they please, in which case they may receive a percentage of all over the regular price. There is but little cutting of prices. Our motto is quick sales and small profits. The motto of the Mexican merchant is big profits no matter how slow the sales, and he keeps his goods on the shelves until the price is paid. He buys on long time and one and two years' credit is not uncommon. He sells largely for cash and he often gives credit. But I am told he will not pay cash, even if he has idle money when buying new stock.

I find that mercantile credits here are as good as those of the United States.

Although many men charge that the Mexicans are tricky in dealing. They are said, however, to meet their bills, and it is claimed that 90 per cent of these long credit sales are paid in full. The English and Germans understand this and take advantage of it, whereas the American more often demands cash with the order, thereby losing a sale.

Fine Stores in Mexico City.

There are now many American stores in the Mexican capital, and most of them have fixed prices marked in plain figures, but, even so, you can get some reduction in these days of hard times. About the finest establishments are the jewelry stores. They are filled with gold and silver trinkets from Paris and with precious stones of all kinds. I find such places in almost every block, and along the Avenida Francisco are many which would be a credit to Boston or New York. There are also big groceries, dry goods stores and hardware establishments. They sell Mexican drawn work, stamped leathers in the shape of pocketbooks and purses, and Spanish fans, laces and mantillas. Nearly every such shop has a half peck or so of opals, which it sells by the piece or the handful, according to quality. Some of these stones are beautiful, and an especially fine one will bring \$100 and upward. Others, which may reflect all the colors of the rainbow, are bunched together and sold at a few dollars a pint.

There are cigar stores everywhere.

Every one in Mexico, from the lately weaned baby to the gray-haired old grown-up on the edge of the grave, smokes cigars or cigarettes. This is so of male and female. Mexico makes excellent brands of tobacco, and that about as good as in the states. You can find a fairly good cigar for a nickel, and one that costs 10 cents here would be worth 25 cents in the United States. The cigarettes, which are often put up in black paper, look deadly, but the tobacco in them is mild and I am told they are good.

American Shops.

As to the men who are doing the business, Americans own most of the stores selling curio, hardware and drugs. The French have the fine dry goods business, and the Germans have big establishments of various kinds. Many of the latter are bankers and others are wholesalers. The German merchants as a rule speak Spanish, and not a few of them have Mexican wives. As to the Spaniards, they hold somewhat the same place that the Italians do in the United States. They have the corner groceries, and they also peddle goods all over the country. Some of them stay here only a short time, and then go back to Spain to spend what they have made.

Lead of Small Businesses.

Mexico has many house industries, and there are towns that make certain kinds of wares which are peddled about over the country or sold in small shops by the natives. About every city market you will find booths devoted to fancy work, pottery, shoes or cheap dry goods and notions. Every town has its plaza or public square, and around this are arcades upheld by pillars which run along in front of the stores. These arcades

are filled with petty merchants, whose establishments consist of cupboards and counter set against one of the pillars. These peddlers sell all sorts of things, and they are of all ages and of both sexes. Here the wife of a shoemaker stands with her back against the wall and a half dozen pairs of sharp-toed children's shoes on the floor before her. Next her is a blackbearded man peddling bridle bits and ornamental Mexican spurs, while near him, perhaps, is a cane peddler who has carved sticks to catch the eye of the tourist.

In all the villages there are little stores run by Indians and here there are peddlers and market men who do not average more than \$5 or \$10 a day in the amounts of their sales.

Peddling Goods at the Capital.

Mexico City is full of peddlers and they account for an every block. There are hundreds of men and women selling lottery tickets. I met one such every time I go outside my hotel. He is a native Mexican, six feet tall and as heavy as former President Taft. He has a bright colored blanket over his shoulders and on his head a sombrero as big as an umbrella. He also wears a red shirt and trousers and a brown jacket, gaily embroidered. This representative of Dame Fortune walks up and down 16th street of September street all day long asking every one to buy his lottery wares. I photographed him today and he insisted on having a copy of the picture the moment I snapped it. There are many lottery ticket sellers about the cathedral and in front of the national pawnshop and also at the entrance to the ring where the bull fights are held.

There are street peddlers selling clothing, some selling straw hats and baskets and some who are loaded with toys and trays of candy and sweetmeats. I saw a man today who had a score of birdcages tied to his back. He was peddling canaries and parrots. Near him was a woman with an open umbrella filled with picture postcards and farther on walked a porter loaded with dressed chickens, which were tied by the legs in a great bundle. He offered them to the passers-by at so much a piece. There are men who carry kids over their shoulders and peddle them from house to house and boys who go along with great screen-like frames of sheeting tied to a stick. There are some men peddling books and others with mirrors and notions for women. There are some who drive live turkeys through the streets so that you can buy your Thanksgiving bird on the hoof and know it is fresh.

The Game-Chicken Sellers.

There are even peddlers selling game cocks. Think of the demand that such a trade must imply. There is a game chicken man now. We can see only his legs, which show out below the great framework of baskets covering his back and reaching high over his head. Out of each basket waves the tail of a cock, and as he goes by we hear a great squawking. Each of the baskets contains a game cock and the best of them will bring twice as much as a turkey. The cocks have their heads inside the baskets that they may not peck at one another. Cook fighting is a favorite sport and game chicken peddling is a regular business.

They Sell by the Pile.

It is wonderful how small the sales of these street peddlers are. In many places the merchants sit on the street, with their goods spread out before them. About the cathedral are scores who sell candies, peanuts and fruit. The peanuts are not measured out by the glass or the pint as with us, but are counted. You can get about ten for a cent. Another pile may be four or five candies, and a third may be four oranges laid up like a pyramid.

In the great market, where most of the Mexicans do their meat and vegetable buying, are little piles of potatoes containing a dozen tubers not more than an inch in diameter. Such a pile will sell for a nickel. Onions and green peppers are counted, and squash and pumpkins are cut into pieces and sold by the slice. I saw women today buying cabbage at one cent a slice. Think of a cent's worth of cabbage! But there are many poor here, and a cent's worth will flavor a stew. These small piles are for the poor with whom ten or fifteen cents may buy a whole morning's marketing.

Vegetables and Fruits.

You must not think however that the market business is made up of small trading. It is one of the finest markets on the continent, and I doubt whether better fruits and vegetables are anywhere sold. The celery and lettuce are especially delicious. Nearly every vegetable can be bought all the year round, and the great variety of climates gives you apples, peaches and pears and also oranges, bananas, pineapples and lemons. You can have strawberries for breakfast from January to December. You can buy a pineapple as big as your head for a nickel, and fairly good oranges cost a half cent apiece.

Porters go along with great baskets of fruit.

As we stop to look at some peapone one who has two bushels of pineapples on his head slips as he passes and the great rosy fruit rolls over the floor. No one laughs, however, and the natives help him pick up his wares.

Outside the Market.

Some of the most interesting peddlers are outside the big market. The streets surrounding it are lined with booths in which Indians are selling wares of all kinds, which have been brought in from the country. Here is one man who has pottery, consisting of balls, cups, saucers and carafes, all made of burnt clay. He also has plates for the children as big around as a copper cent, and cups the size of a thumb. Near him an Indian who has clay savings banks in the form of little red pigs with slot holes in their backs, and next him is a man peddling whistles. They have as shrill a noise as that of any policeman's whistle made of nickel. You can buy two for a cent.

A little farther on is a man peddling rat traps made of steel hoops, and beside him are two Indians selling turkeys which are thrown over their shoulders. I price the great birds and am told I can have one for \$1.25. We weigh it and it kicks the beam at twelve pounds.

But here comes an Indian carrying a load of wrapping material tied to his back.

It consists of bundles of dried corn husks and will be used by the butchers and other market people to wrap up small purchases of every description. Every market man and market woman keeps a stock of these corn husks on hand, and the great load which the Indian carries will be easily sold.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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The Doctor's Advice by Dr. Lewis Baker

The questions answered below are general in character, the symptoms or diseases are given and the answers will apply to any case of similar nature. Those wishing further advice free, may address Dr. Lewis Baker, College Bldg., College-Blvd. St., Dayton, O., enclosing self-addressed stamped envelope for reply. Full name and address must be given, but only initials or fictitious name will be used in any answer. The prescriptions can be filled at any well stocked drug store. Any druggist can order of wholesaler.

field haircut, 1 oz.; and syrup sennaparis, 1 oz.

"Clara" writes: "I have had a cough for about a year and feel I shall never be rid of it, as it gets worse with every fresh cold I contract. Could you give me a remedy?"

"Answer: I can give you a remedy that I am sure will cure you, and one that is absolutely harmless and pleasant to take. Make a syrup with one pint of granulated sugar and one-half pint of boiling water put on the fire and let it come to a boil, then cool and add the contents of a bottle of Dr. Lewis Baker's Cough Syrup, which you can purchase at any drug store, and you will have a pint of the finest cough syrup on the market today. It is about eight times cheaper than ordinary labeled cough medicine and will last much longer.

"Mrs. G." writes: "I have a very severe case of catarrh of the head and throat. My blood is bad and my stomach and bowels are affected. I would like a cure as I suffer greatly."

"B. F." writes: "I would advise the following local treatment: Wash the nose several times a day, to a half teaspoonful add one pint of warm water and from the palm of the hand pour the water through the nostrils several times a day. Mix a level teaspoonful of the Vaseline powder to one ounce of oil or vasoline and apply this balm to the nostrils as far up as possible. For internal treatment use the following: Obtain the following ingredients at any well stocked drug store, mix by shaking well: Syrup Sennaparis Comp. 1 oz., comp. fluid haircut 1 oz., fluid cal. buds 1 oz. Take one teaspoonful four times a day.

"J. Y. Z." writes: "My hair is harsh and does not incline and my scalp is covered with dandruff. Can you help me?"

"Answer: Get a 4 oz. jar of plain yellow mineral oil and use it regularly and your hair will become soft and fluffy and it will bring back the natural color to the hair; your dandruff will be cured and you will be rewarded with a healthy growth of hair.

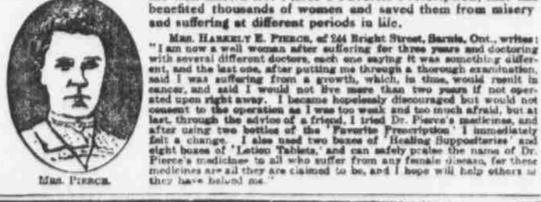
"Mrs. G." writes: "I was something to increase my weight about 15 to 20 pounds. My blood is thin, watery and I have a pale complexion. Doctors say I am anemic."

An Unfailing Prescription for Kidneys and Bladder

The following simple prescription has proven one of the best remedies known for weak, deranged kidneys or bladder: Get six ounces good pure gin, add to it one-half ounce Mux Compound, one-half ounce fluid extract Buchu. Take one to two teaspoonfuls of this mixture after each meal and at bed time. It is surprising how quickly this stops backache, rheumatic pains in the joints, disagreeable pains in the groin, or other frequent annoying symptoms that are well known. For best results, good pure gin should be used in this prescription, also genuine Mux Compound, which comes only in sealed wooden tubes. Any substitute will not work so well. Almost any fluid of weight has these ingredients. Any of the following diseases, chronic rheumatism, advanced diabetes come from neglected kidneys. Treatment should be given at first sign of disorder to avoid the serious forms of kidney disease.—Advertisement

A WOMAN'S GOOD LOOKS

Depend on her general health and freedom from pain. Many a woman looks old before her time because of those irregularities which are essentially feminine. Starting from early womanhood, she suffers from frequently recurring derangements that upset her womanly health. If she be beautiful she grows into that mellow age without wrinkles and crowfeet about the eyes or the blue circles underneath. It is invariably the rule that such women suffer little, or not at all, from womanly derangements which sap the health and leave in the face the tell-tale story of pain and suffering. Dr. R. V. Pierce, the famous specialist in the diseases of women, found a prescription in his early practice that soothed the organism peculiar to womanhood—oiled the machinery, as it were, of the human system—and helped the woman to pass those painful periods that scar-lined and aged her face. This remedy became the well-known Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, that has benefited thousands of women and saved them from misery and suffering at different periods in life.



Man. HAZARD E. PIERCE, of 241 Bright Street, Saratoga, Ont., writes: "I am now a well woman after suffering for three years and doctoring with several different doctors, each one saying it was something different, and the last one, after putting me through a thorough examination, said I was suffering from a growth, which, in time, would result in cancer, and said I would not live more than two years if not operated upon right away. I became hopelessly discouraged, but would not consent to the operation as I was too weak and too much afraid; but at last, through the advice of a friend, I tried Dr. Pierce's medicine, and after using two bottles of the Favorite Prescription I immediately felt a change. I also used two boxes of Healing Suppositories, and eight boxes of Laxative Tablets, and can testify to the name of Dr. Pierce's medicine to all who suffer from any female disease, for these medicines are all they are claimed to be, and I hope will help others who have been helped me."

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