

***NELLIE  
BLY***



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IN MEXICO***

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**Nellie Bly**

# **Six Months in Mexico**

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## **CHAPTER I.**

### **ADIEU TO THE UNITED STATES.**

One wintry night I bade my few journalistic friends adieu, and, accompanied by my mother, started on my way to Mexico. Only a few months previous I had become a newspaper woman. I was too impatient to work along at the usual duties assigned women on newspapers, so I conceived the idea of going away as a correspondent.

Three days after leaving Pittsburgh we awoke one morning to find ourselves in the lap of summer. For a moment it seemed a dream. When the porter had made up our bunks the evening previous, the surrounding country had been covered with a snowy blanket. When we awoke the trees were in leaf and the balmy breeze mocked our wraps.

Three days, from dawn until dark, we sat at the end of the car inhaling the perfume of the flowers and enjoying the glorious Western sights so rich in originality. For the first time I saw women plowing while their lords and masters sat on a fence smoking. I never longed for anything so much as I did to shove those lazy fellows off.

After we got further south they had no fences. I was glad of it, because they do not look well ornamented with lazy men.

The land was so beautiful. We gazed in wonder on the cotton-fields, which looked, when moved by the breezes, like huge, foaming breakers in their mad rush for the shore. And the cowboys! I shall never forget the first real, live

cowboy I saw on the plains. The train was moving at a "putting-in-time" pace, as we came up to two horsemen. They wore immense sombreros, huge spurs, and had lassos hanging to the side of their saddles. I knew they were cowboys, so, jerking off a red scarf I waved it to them.

I was not quite sure how they would respond. From the thrilling and wicked stories I had read, I fancied they might begin shooting at me as quickly as anything else. However, I was surprised and delighted to see them lift their sombreros, in a manner not excelled by a New York exquisite, and urge their horses into a mad run after us.

Such a ride! The feet of the horses never seemed to touch the ground. By this time nearly all the passengers were watching the race between horse and steam. At last we gradually left them behind. I waved my scarf sadly in farewell, and they responded with their sombreros. I never felt as much reluctance for leaving a man behind as I did to leave those cowboys.

The people at the different stopping-places looked at us with as much enjoyment as we gazed on them. They were not in the least backward about asking questions or making remarks. One woman came up to me with a smile, and said:

"Good-mornin', missis; and why are you sittin' out thar, when thar is such a nice cabin to be in?"

She could not understand how I could prefer seeing the country to sitting in a Pullman.

I had imagined that the West was a land of beef and cream; I soon learned my mistake, much to my dismay. It was almost an impossibility to get aught else than salt meat, and cream was like the stars—out of reach.

It was with regret we learned just before retiring on the evening of our third day out from St. Louis, that morning would find us in El Paso. I cannot say what hour it was when the porter called us to dress, that the train would soon reach its destination. How I did wish I had remained at home, as I rubbed my eyes and tried to dress on my knees in the berth.

"It's so dark," said my mother, as she parted the curtains. "What shall we do when we arrive?"

"Well, I'm glad it's dark, because I won't have to button my boots or comb my hair," I replied, laughing to cheer her up.

I did not feel as cheerful as I talked when we left the train. It had been our home for three days, and now we were cast forth in a strange city in the dark. The train employés were running about with their lanterns on their arms, but no one paid any attention to the drowsy passengers.

There were no cabs or cabmen, or even wheelbarrows around, and the darkness prevented us from getting a view of our surroundings.

"This has taught me a lesson. I shall fall into the arms of the first man who mentions marry to me," I said to my mother as we wended our way through freight and baggage to the waiting-room, "then I will have some one to look after me."

She looked at me with a little doubting smile, and gave my arm a reassuring pressure.

I shall never forget the sight of that waiting-room. Men, women, and children, dogs and baggage, in one promiscuous mass. The dim light of an oil-lamp fell with dreary effect on the scene. Some were sleeping, lost for

awhile to all the cares of life; some were eating; some were smoking, and a group of men were passing around a bottle occasionally as they dealt out a greasy pack of cards.

It was evident that we could not wait the glimpse of dawn 'mid these surroundings. With my mother's arm still tightly clasped in mine, we again sought the outer darkness. I saw a man with a lantern on his arm, and went to him and asked directions to a hotel. He replied that they were all closed at this hour, but if I could be satisfied with a second-class house, he would conduct us to where he lived. We were only too glad for any shelter, so without one thought of where he might take us, we followed the light of his lantern as he went ahead.

It was only a short walk through the sandy streets to the place. There was one room unoccupied, and we gladly paid for it, and by the aid of a tallow candle found our way to bed.

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## **CHAPTER II.**

### **EL PASO DEL NORTE.**

"My dear child, do you feel rested enough?" I heard my mother ask.

"Are you up already?" I asked, turning on my side, to see her as she sat, dressed, by the open window, through which came a lazy, southern breeze.

"This hour," she replied, smiling at me; "you slept so well, I did not want to rouse you, but the morning is perfect and I want you to share its beauties with me."



The remembrance of our midnight arrival faded like a bad nightmare, and I was soon happy that I was there; only at mealtime did I long for home.

We learned that the first train we could get for Mexico would be about six o'clock in the afternoon, so we decided "to do" the town in the meanwhile.

El Paso, which is Spanish for "The Pass," is rather a lively town. It has been foretold that it will be a second Denver, so rapid is its growth. A number of different railway lines center here, and the hotels are filled the year round with health and pleasure seekers of all descriptions. While it is always warm, yet its climate is so perfect that it benefits almost any sufferer. The hotels are quite modern, both in finish and price, and the hack-drivers on a par with those in the East.

The prices for everything are something dreadful to contemplate. The houses are mostly modern, with here and there the adobe huts which once marked this border. The courthouse and jail combined is a fine brick structure that any large city might boast of. Several very pretty little gardens brighten up the town with their green, velvety grasses and tropical plants and trees. The only objection I found to El Paso was its utter lack of grass.

The people of position are mainly those who are there for their health, or to enjoy the winter in the balmy climate, or the families of men who own ranches in Texas. The chief pleasure is driving and riding, and the display during the driving hour would put to shame many Eastern cities. The citizens are perfectly free. They speak and do and think as they please.

In our walks around we had many proffer us information, and even ask permission to escort us to points of interest.

A woman offered to show us a place where we could get good food, and when she learned that we were leaving that evening for the City of Mexico, she urged us to get a basket of food. She said no eating-cars were run on that trip, and the eating gotten along the way would be worse than Americans could endure. We afterward felt thankful that we followed her advice.

El Paso, the American town, and El Paso del Norte (the pass to the north), the Mexican town, are separated, as New York from Brooklyn, as Pittsburgh from Allegheny. The Rio Grande, running swiftly between its low banks, its waves muddy and angry, or sometimes so low and still that one would think it had fallen asleep from too long duty, divides the two towns.

Communication is open between them by a ferryboat, which will carry you across for two and one half cents, by hack, buggies, and saddle horses, by the Mexican Central Railway, which transports its passengers from one town to the other, and a street-car line, the only international street-car line in the world, for which it has to thank Texas capitalists.

It is not possible to find a greater contrast than these two cities form, side by side. El Paso is a progressive, lively, American town; El Paso del Norte is as far back in the Middle Ages, and as slow as it was when the first adobe hut was executed in 1680. It is rich with grass and shade trees, while El Paso is as spare of grass as a twenty-year old youth is of beard.

On that side they raise the finest grapes and sell the most exquisite wine that ever passed mortals' lips. On this side they raise vegetables and smuggle the wine over. The tobacco is pronounced unequalled, and the American pockets will carry a good deal every trip, but the Mexican is just as smart in paying visits and carrying back what can be only gotten at double the price on his side; but the Mexican custom-house officials are the least exacting in the world, and contrast as markedly with the United States' officials as the two towns do one to the other.

One of the special attractions of El Paso del Norte (barring the tobacco and wine) is a queer old stone church, which is said to be nearly 300 years old. It is low and dark and filled with peculiar paintings and funnily dressed images.

The old town seems to look with proud contempt on civilization and progress, and the little *padre* preaches against free schools and tells his poor, ignorant followers to beware of the hurry and worry of the Americans—to live as their grand- and great-grandfathers did. So, in obedience they keep on praying and attending mass, sleeping, smoking their cigarettes and eating *frijoles* (beans), lazily wondering why Americans cannot learn their wise way of enjoying life.

One can hardly believe that Americanism is separated from them only by a stream. If they were thousands of miles apart they could not be more unlike. There smallpox holds undisputed sway in the dirty streets, and, in the name of religion, vaccination is denounced; there Mexican convict-soldiers are flogged until the American's heart burns to wipe

out the whole colony; there *fiestas* and Sundays are celebrated by the most inhuman cock-fights and bull-fights, and monte games of all descriptions. The bull-fights celebrated on the border are the most inhuman I have seen in all of Mexico. The horns of the *toros* (bulls) are sawed off so that they are sensitive and can make but little attempt at defense, which is attended with extreme pain. They are tortured until, sinking from pain and fatigue, they are dispatched by the butcher.

El Paso del Norte boasts of a real Mexican prison. It is a long, one-storied adobe building, situated quite handy to the main plaza, and within hearing of the merry-making of the town. There are no cells, but a few adobe rooms and a long court, where the prisoners talk together and with the guards, and count the time as it laggingly slips away. They very often play cards and smoke cigarettes. Around this prison is a line of soldiers. It is utterly impossible to cross it without detection.

Mexican keepers are not at all particular that the prisoners are fed every day. An American, at the hands of the Mexican authorities, suffers all the tortures that some preachers delight to tell us some human beings will find in the world to come.

Fire and brimstone! It is nothing to the torments of an American prisoner in a Mexican jail. Two meals, not enough to sustain life in a sick cat, must suffice him for an entire week. There are no beds, and not even water. Prisoners also have the not very comfortable knowledge that, if they get too troublesome, the keepers have a nasty habit of making

them stand up and be shot in the back. The reports made out in these cases are "shot while trying to escape."

In the afternoon I exchanged my money for Mexican coin, getting a premium of twelve cents on every dollar. I had a lunch prepared, and as the shades of night began to envelop the town, we boarded the train for Mexico. After we crossed the Rio Grande our baggage was examined by the custom-house officers while we ate supper at a restaurant which, strangely enough, was run by Chinamen. This gave us a foretaste of Mexican food and price.

It was totally dark when we entered the car again, and we were quite ready to retire. There were but two other passengers in the car with us. One was a Mexican and the other a young man from Chicago.

We soon bade them good-night, and retired to our berths to sleep while the train bore us swiftly through the darkness to our destination.

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### **CHAPTER III.**

#### **ALONG THE ROUTE.**

"Thirty minutes to dress for breakfast," was our good-morning in Mexico. We had fallen asleep the night previous as easily as a babe in its crib, with an eager anticipation of the morrow. Almost before the Pullman porter had ceased his calling, our window shades were hoisted and we were trying to see all of Mexico at one glance.

That glance brought disappointment. The land, almost as far as the eye could carry, which is a wonderful distance in the clear atmosphere of Mexico, was perfectly level. Barring

the cacti, with which the country abounds, the ground was bare.

"And this is sunny Mexico, the land of the gods!" I exclaimed, in disgust.

By the time we had completed our toilet the train stopped, and we were told to get off if we wanted any breakfast. We followed our porter to a side track where, in an old freight car, was breakfast. We climbed up the high steps, paying our dollar as we entered, and found for ourselves places at the long table. It was surrounded by hungry people intent only on helping themselves. Everything was on the table, even to the coffee.

I made an effort to eat. It was impossible. My mother succeeded no better.

"Are you not glad we brought a lunch?" she asked, as her eyes met mine.

We went back to the car and managed to make a tolerable breakfast on the cold chicken and other eatables we found in our basket.

But the weather! It was simply perfect, and we soon forgot little annoyances in our enjoyment of it. We got camp chairs, and from morning until night we occupied the rear platform.

As we got further South the land grew more interesting. We gazed in wonder at the groves of cacti which raised their heads many feet in the air, and topped them off with one of the most exquisite blossoms I have ever seen.

At every station we obtained views of the Mexicans. As the train drew in, the natives, of whom the majority still retain the fashion of Adam, minus fig leaves, would rush up

and gaze on the travelers in breathless wonder, and continue to look after the train as if it was the one event of their lives.

As we came to larger towns we could see armed horsemen riding at a 2:09 speed, leaving a cloud of dust in their wake, to the stations. When the train stopped they formed in a decorous line before it, and so remained until the train started again on its journey. I learned that they were a government guard. They do this so, if there is any trouble on the train or any raised at the station during their stop, they could quell it.

Hucksters and beggars constitute most of the crowd that welcomes the train. From the former we bought flowers, native fruit, eggs, goat milk, and strange Mexican food. The pear cacti, which is nursed in greenhouses in the States, grows wild on the plains to a height of twenty feet, and its great green lobes, or leaves, covered thickly with thorns, are frequently three feet in diameter. Some kinds bear a blood-red fruit, and others yellow. When gathered they are in a thorny shell. The Mexican Indians gather them and peel them and sell them to travelers for six cents a dozen. It is called "tuna," and is considered very healthy. It has a very cool and pleasing taste.

From this century-plant, or cacti, the Mexicans make their beer, which they call *pulque* (pronounced polke). It is also used by the natives to fence in their mud houses, and forms a most picturesque and impassable surrounding.

The Indians seem cleanly enough, despite all that's been said to the contrary. Along the gutters by the railroad, they could be seen washing their few bits of wearing apparel,

and bathing. Many of their homes are but holes in the ground, with a straw roof. The smoke creeps out from the doorway all day, and at night the family sleep in the ashes. They seldom lie down, but sleep sitting up like a tailor, strange to say, but they never nod nor fall over.

The whirlwinds, or sand spouts, form very pretty pictures on the barren plain. They run to the height of one thousand feet, and travel along the road at a 2:04 gait, going up the mountain side as majestic as a queen. But then their race is run, for the moment they begin to descend their spell is broken, and they fall to earth again to become only common sand, and be trod by the bare, brown feet of the Indian, and the dainty hoofs of the burro.

Some one told me that when a man sees a sand spout advancing, and he does not want to be cornered by it, he shoots into it and it immediately falls. I can't say how true it is, but it seems very probable.

We had not many passengers, but what we had, excepting my mother and myself, were all men. They all carried lunch-baskets. Among them was one young Mexican gentleman who had spent several years in Europe, where he had studied the English language. He was very attentive to us, and taught me a good deal of Spanish. He had been away long enough to learn that the Mexicans had very strange ideas, and he quite enjoyed telling incidents about them.

"When the Mexican Railway was being built," he said, "wheelbarrows were imported for the native laborers. They had never seen the like before, so they filled them with earth, and, putting them on their backs, walked off to the



place of deposit. It was a long time before they could be made to understand how to use them, and even then, as the Mexicans are very weak in the arms, little work could be accomplished with them.

"You would hardly believe it," he continued, "but at first the trains were regarded as the devil and the passengers as his workers. Once a settlement of natives decided to overpower the devil. They took one of their most sacred and powerful saints and placed it in the center of the track. On their knees, with great faith, they watched the advance of the train, feeling sure the saint would cause it to stop forever in its endless course. The engineer, who had not much reverence for that particular saint or saints in general, struck it with full force. That saint's reign was ended. Since then they are allowed to remain in their accustomed nooks in the churches, while the natives still have the same faith in their powers, but are not anxious to test them."

"Come, I want you to see the strangest mountain in the world," interrupted the conductor at this moment.

We followed him to the rear platform and there looked curiously at the mountain he pointed out. It rose, clear and alone, from the barren plains, like a nose on one's face. It seemed to be of brown earth, but it contained not the least sign of vegetation. It looked as high as the Brooklyn bridge from the water to top, and was about the same length, in an oblong shape. It was perfectly straight across the top.

"When this railroad was being built," he explained, "I went with a party of engineers in search of something new. Through curiosity alone, to get a good view of the land, we decided to climb that strange looking mountain. From here

you can not see the vegetation, but it is covered with a low, brown shrub. Can you imagine our surprise when we got to the top to find it was a mammoth basin? Yes, that hill holds in it the most beautiful lake I ever saw."

"That seems most wonderful!" I exclaimed, rather dubiously.

"It is not more wonderful than thousands of other places in Mexico," he replied. "In the State of Chihuahua<sup>[1]</sup> is a Laguna, in which the water is as clear as crystal. When the Americans who were superintending the work on the railway found it, they decided to have a nice bath. It had been many days since they had seen any more water than would quench their thirst—in coffee, of course. Accordingly, some dozen or more doffed their clothing and went in. Their pleasure was short-lived, for their bodies began to burn and smart, and they came out looking like scalding pigs. The water is strongly alkaline; the fish in the lake are said to be white, even to their eyes; they are unfit to eat."

I give his stories for what they are worth; I did not investigate to prove their truth.

"We do not think much of the people who come here to write us up," the conductor said one day, "for they never tell the truth. One woman who came down here to make herself famous pressed me one day for a story. I told her that out in the country the natives roasted whole hogs, heads and all, without cleaning, and so served them on the table. She jotted it down as a rare item."

"If you tell strangers untruths about your own land can you complain, then, that the same strangers misrepresent it?" asked my little mother, quietly.

The conductor flushed, and said he had not thought of it in that light before.

While yet a day's travel distant from the City of Mexico, tomatoes and strawberries were procurable. It was January. The venders were quite up to the tricks of the hucksters in the States. In a small basket they place cabbage leaves and two or three pebbles to give weight; then the top is covered with strawberries so deftly that even the smartest purchaser thinks he is getting a bargain for twenty-five cents.

At larger towns a change for the better was noticeable in the clothing of the people. The most fashionable dress for the Mexican Indian was white muslin pantaloons, twice as wide as those worn by the dudes last summer; a *serape*, as often cotton as wool, wrapped around the shoulders; a straw sombrero, and sometimes leather sandals bound to the feet with leather cords.

The women wear loose sleeveless waists with a straight piece of cloth pinned around them for skirts, and the habitual *rebozo* wrapped about the head and holding the equally habitual baby. No difference how cold or warm the day, nor how scant the lower garments, the *serape* and *rebozo* are never laid aside, and none seem too poor to own one. Apparently the natives do not believe much in standing, for the moment they stop walking they "hunker" down on the ground.

Never once during the three days did we think of getting tired, and it was with a little regret mingled with a desire to see more, that we knew when we awoke in the morning we would be in the City of Mexico.

[1] Pronounced Che-wa-wa.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CITY OF MEXICO.

"The City of Mexico," they had called. We got off, but we saw no city. We soon learned that the train did not go further, and that we would have to take a carriage to convey us the rest of the way.

Carriages lined the entrance to the station, and the cab men were, apparently from their actions, just like those of the States. When they procure a permit for a carriage in Mexico, it is graded and marked. A first-class carriage carries a white flag, a second-class a blue flag, and a third-class a red flag. The prices are respectively, per hour: one dollar, seventy-five cents, and fifty cents. This is meant for a protection to travelers, but the drivers are very cunning. Often at night they will remove the flag and charge double prices, but they can be punished for it.

We soon arrived at the Hotel Yturbide, and were assigned rooms by the affable clerk. The hotel was once the home of the Emperor Yturbide. It is a large building of the Mexican style. The entrance takes one into a large, open court or square. All the rooms are arranged around this court, opening out into a circle of balconies.

The lowest floor in Mexico is the cheapest. The higher up one goes the higher they find the price. The reason of this is that at the top one escapes any possible dampness, and can get the light and sun.

Our room had a red brick floor. It was large, but had no ventilation except the glass doors which opened onto the

balcony. There was a little iron cot in each corner of the room, a table, washstand, and wardrobe.

It all looked so miserable—like a prisoner's cell—that I began to wish I was at home.

At dinner we had quite a time trying to understand the waiter and to make him understand us. The food we thought wretched, and, as our lunch basket was long since emptied, we felt a longing for some United States eatables.

I found we could not learn much about Mexican life by living at the hotels, so the first thing was to find some one who could speak English, and through them obtain boarding in a private family. It was rather difficult, but I succeeded, and I was glad to exchange quarters.

The City of Mexico makes many bright promises for the future. As a winter resort, as a summer resort, a city for men to accumulate fortunes; a paradise for students, for artists; a rich field for the hunter of the curious, the beautiful, and the rare. Its bright future cannot be far distant.

Already its wonders are related to the enterprising people of other climes, who are making prospective tours through the land that held cities even at the time of the discovery of America.

Mexico looks the same all over; every white street terminates at the foot of a snow-capped mountain, look which way you will. The streets are named very strangely and prove quite a torment to strangers. Every block or square is named separately.

The most prominent street is the easiest to remember, and even it is peculiar. It is called the street of San Francisco, and the first block is designated as first San

Francisco, the second as second San Francisco, and so on the entire street.

One continually sees poverty and wealth side by side in Mexico, and they don't turn up their noses at each other either; the half-clad Indian has as much room on the Fifth Avenue of Mexico as the millionaire's wife—not but what that land, as this, bows to wealth.

Policemen occupy the center of the street at every termination of a block, reminding one, as they look down the streets, of so many posts. They wear white caps with numbers on, blue suits, and nickel buttons. A mace now takes the place of the sword of former days. At night they don an overcoat and hood, which makes them look just like the pictures of veiled knights. Red lanterns are left in the street where the policemen stood during the daytime, while they retire to some doorway where, it is said, they sleep as soundly as their brethren in the States.

Every hour they blow a whistle like those used by street car drivers, which is answered by those on the next posts. Thus they know all is well. In small towns they call out the time of night, ending up with *tiempo serono* (all serene), from which the Mexican youth, with some mischievous Yankeeism, have named them *Seronos*.

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## CHAPTER V.

### IN THE STREETS OF MEXICO.

In Mexico, as in all other countries, the average tourist rushes to the cathedrals and places of historic note, wholly

unmindful of the most intensely interesting feature the country contains—the people.

Street scenes in the City of Mexico form a brilliant and entertaining panorama, for which no charge is made. Even photographers slight this wonderful picture. If you ask for Mexican scenes they show you cathedrals, saints, cities and mountains, but never the wonderful things that are right under their eyes daily. Likewise, journalists describe this cathedral, tell you the age of that one, paint you the beauties of another, but the people, the living, moving masses that go so far toward making the population of Mexico, are passed by with scarce a mention.

It is not a clean, inviting crowd, with blue eyes and sunny hair I would take you among, but a short, heavy-set people, with almost black skins, topped off with the blackest eyes and masses of raven hair. Their lives are as dark as their skins and hair, and are invaded by no hope that through effort their lives may amount to something.

Nine women out of ten in Mexico have babies. When at a very tender age, so young as five days, the babies are completely hidden in the folds of the *rebozo* and strung to the mother's back, in close proximity to the mammoth baskets of vegetables on her head and suspended on either side of the human freight. When the babies get older their heads and feet appear, and soon they give their place to another or share their quarters, as it is no unusual sight to see a woman carry three babies at one time in her *rebozo*. They are always good. Their little coal-black eyes gaze out on what is to be their world, in solemn wonder. No baby smiles or babyish tears are ever seen on their faces. At the

earliest date they are old, and appear to view life just as it is to them in all its blackness.



They know no home, they have no school, and before they are able to talk they are taught to carry bundles on their heads or backs, or pack a younger member of the family while the mother carries merchandise, by which she gains a living. Their living is scarcely worth such a title. They merely exist. Thousands of them are born and raised on the streets. They have no home and were never in a bed. Going along the streets of the city late at night, you will find dark groups huddled in the shadows, which, on investigation, will turn out to be whole families gone to bed. They never lie down, but sit with their heads on their knees, and so pass the night.

When they get hungry they seek the warm side of the street and there, hunkering down, devour what they scraped up during the day, consisting of refused meats and offal



boiled over a handful of charcoal. A fresh tortilla is the sweetest of sweetbreads. The men appear very kind and are frequently to be seen with the little ones tied up in their *serape*.

Groups of these at dinner would furnish rare studies for Rodgers. Several men and women will be walking along, when suddenly they will sit down in some sunny spot on the street. The women will bring fish or a lot of stuff out of a basket or poke, which is to constitute their coming meal. Meanwhile the men, who also sit flat on the street, will be looking on and accepting their portion like hungry, but well-bred, dogs.



This type of life, be it understood, is the lowest in Mexico, and connects in no way with the upper classes. The Mexicans are certainly misrepresented, most wrongfully so. They are not lazy, but just the opposite. From early dawn until late at night they can be seen filling their different occupations. The women sell papers and lottery tickets.

"See here, child," said a gray-haired lottery woman in Spanish. "Buy a ticket. A sure chance to get \$10,000 for

twenty-five cents." Being told that we had no faith in lotteries, she replied: "Buy one; the Blessed Virgin will bring you the money."

The laundry women, who, by the way, wash clothes whiter and iron them smoother even than the Chinese, carry the clothes home unwrapped. That is, they carry their hands high above their head, from which stream white skirts, laces, etc., furnishing a most novel and interesting sight.

"The saddest thing I ever saw," said Mr. Theo. Gestefeld, "among all the sad things in Mexico, was an incident that happened when I first arrived here. Noticing a policeman talking to a boy around whom a crowd of dusky citizens had gathered, I, true to journalistic instinct, went up to investigate. The boy, I found, belonged to one of the many families who do odd jobs in day time for a little food, and sleep at night in some dark corner. Strung to the boy's back was a dying baby. Its little eyes were half closed in death. The crowd watched, in breathless fascination, its last slow gasps. The boy had no home to go to, he knew not where to find his parents at that hour of the day, and there he stood, while the babe died in its cradle, his *serape*. In my newspaper career I have witnessed many sad scenes, but I never saw anything so heartrending as the death of that little innocent."

Tortillas is not only one of the great Mexican dishes but one of the women's chief industries. In almost any street there can be seen women on their knees mashing corn between smooth stones, making it into a batter, and finally shaping it into round, flat cakes. They spit on their hands to keep the dough from sticking, and bake in a pan of hot

grease, kept boiling by a few lumps of charcoal. Rich and poor buy and eat them, apparently unmindful of the way they are made. But it is a bread that Americans must be educated to. Many surprise the Mexicans by refusing even a taste after they see the bakers.

There are some really beautiful girls among this low class of people. Hair three quarters the length of the women, and of wonderful thickness, is common. It is often worn loose, but more frequently in two long plaits. Wigmakers find no employment here. The men wear long, heavy bangs.

There is but one thing that poor and rich indulge in with equal delight and pleasure—that is cigarette smoking. Those tottering with age down to the creeping babe are continually smoking. No spot in Mexico is sacred from them; in churches, on the railway cars, on the streets, in the theaters—everywhere are to be seen men and women—of the *elite*—smoking.