

MUSINGS IN CHAPULTEPEC.

By Linn A. E. Gale.

Sunday afternoon in January.

A typical Sunday afternoon in Chapultepec Park, the garden spot of Mexico City.

The golden sun high above in a mighty ocean of azure sky and fleecy clouds, poured its torrid rays in unstinted measure upon me as I sprawled out in dreamy, torpid ease on the soft, comfortable couch of green grass.

Some rods away I could see the continuous stream of automobiles and carriages and fashionably dressed men and women passing to and fro along the wide drive that leads to ancient and historic Chapultepec Castle.

A clump of bushes and small trees in another direction partly hid from view the beautiful lake, the lake house and the groups of children gathered at the water's edge.

An occasional tree, a bit of underbrush and a stray plant, here and there, dotted the slightly undulating lawn on which I lolled at full length in languid contentment. A gentle breeze, faintly fragrant with the pleasing and delicate odor of Mexican flowers, lightly brushed my face at times. A lone bird chirped cheerfully from the limb of a nearby tree, relapsing into periodical silences as if lacking sufficient ambition to sing continuously.

Half — dozing, half-awake, vague thoughts wreathed themselves in and out of my mind as cigaret smoke curls up one moment and then dissolves in air and fades away the next....

The day, the scene, the very atmosphere, were all so characteristic of Mexico — the serene, tranquil, primitive Mexico of majestic mountains, winding valleys, unceasing sunshine and rich and prodigal soil — the drowsy, indifferent Mexico that lives and lets live, uninterested in the gelid calculations of modern commerce, the savage competition for profit and power, and the mad race for the capture of foreign markets.

Here, where I lay and mused, had once strolled the Indian aborigines, living in native solitude and contentment until the greedy, querimonious foreigners came with itching palms and feverish brows, to build counting houses, mills and stores among the beautiful pueblos, hills and plains of "Nueva Espana".

Here the liberators of the race, Hidalgo, Juarez and those who came after them, had looked lovingly on this land of wealth and plenty, and vowed to make it truly free for the humblest and lowest.

Altho a little way off gay crowds were motoring in the broad boulevard, dining in Cafe Chapultepec, listening to the music from the band stand by the park entrance, witnessing a ball game in the public diamond or watching the children speed across the open-air skating rink, latter-day civilization had made little impress on this refreshing spot at once so vernal and verdant.

An oasis of Nature, free from uptodate "conveniences", sordid shop cries and the bedlam of "business", the very place seemed redolent of rest and repose.

The Class Struggle? There was no Class Struggle here.

War? These conquettish, laughing sunbeams, slowly waving grasses and whispering zephyrs know no war. They neither slay nor urge others to slay.

Only Man, brutalized and debased by a cruel, senseless system, stoops to such iniquities as wars. The blockade of Russia, the starvation of women and children, the financing of bandits to provoke intervention in Mexico, the sinister propaganda that would embroil the nations in another orgy of blood-letting — Nature knows nothing of these things.

What a relief to escape from the poisonous, pestiferous stench of capitalism and inhale the sweet, wholesome air of a retreat near to Nature's warm, generous heart!

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Like this balmy, reposeful field, just away from the clatter and clamor of the noisy street, is Mexico — a quaint, primeval land of glorious landscape bright flowers, luscious fruits and fresh, health-imparting air that half-intoxicates with its delicious ozonescent — a country pristine, immature, untainted with the virus of commercialism....

Crude, archaic, uncultivated, is this "backward" Mexico of ranch and river and llano. It has no skyscrapers, no roaring "L's", no money-crazed mobs that push and crowd and rush in never-ending nervousness and hysterical haste for the sake of the Almighty Dollar. Hills and dales still constitute the greater part of the country. Its cities are scattered and few. There are luxuriant parks even in the smallest villages. The humblest adobe hut no less than the splendid residences of Spanish and American architecture, has its flower pots, foliage and plants.

Let not the harsh hand of international capitalism and militarism profane this flowery oasis that, untamed by the tools of greed and uninfected with the germs of gold-getting, still sends its bloom out in the world-wide desert of death and desolation, avarice and anguish!....

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Brisk, metallic voices smote my ear and woke me from my reverie — voices of "efficient", energetic business men absorbed in developing the country and exploiting its rich resources.

"Fine building lots this park would make", said one of them. "Of course, you'd have to keep some of it for a park, but it's a hell of a shame for it all to be wasted in this fashion.

"God! What a fortune there is here, with proper development and under a decent colonial government with Americans to run things! And labor is cheap as dirt here!".....

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My musings were over....

Capitalism is omnipresent like the Deity.

One cannot escape it even in a secluded spot. In beautiful Chapultepec Park on a gorgeous Sunday afternoon.....

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