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IMPRESSIONS OF HAVANA.

BY AN AMERICAN.

To an American visiting Havana for the first time, everything appears strange. He seems to have entered not only a new land, but a new world. He sees nothing in the remotest idea of home; but everything to remind him that he is among another and different people, whose manners and customs and peculiarities offer so strange a contrast to his own that he cannot walk the streets without being recognized as a foreigner or a Yankee. Every thing is strange and new. The women that he sees are almost unknown here. Instead of these, most of the houses are supplied with wooden shutters, outside of which, instead of glass, stand iron bars. The shutters being left wide open, during the cooler portions of the day, the apartments within are open to the inspection of every passer-by who chooses to look in. Of course, in a climate like this, no carpets are necessary—consequently they are never used. The floors are of marble, or more generally of flagstaved pavement. The parlors are furnished neatly enough; but very rarely with anything like pretension; though they almost invariably contain a piano, on which the women hang away for hours at a time, manifesting in this respect at least, a very considerable industry. The chairs are arranged in a peculiar style. They are placed in rows, parallel rows, perpendicular to one of the windows; one row being occupied by the men, and the opposite one by the women—an arrangement in which anything seems to be more considered than place.

The general aspect of Havana is in the highest degree picturesque. Houses are built of stone, and are painted some of one color and some of another, blue and white being the prevailing tint, relieved, occasionally, by red, yellow, or green. The houses are long rows of solid square brick houses, such as we see in American cities, and which so much fatigue the monotony of the scenery by assuming straight lines and right angles. There is nothing like uniformity in the streets of this city. The houses vary at every step, in size and color; they vary in style; they are not even the same throughout. The prevalence, or rather the universality of bright colors, gives a sparkling appearance to the city, which harmonizes with the brilliancy of the sky and atmosphere. The tendency to gay colors is visible everywhere in these southern climates. It is an illusion, if I may use the word, taste, fancy and is not without practical utility.

In northern regions under little pretension, as well in dress as in the coloring of the edifices, because there always shines a bright sun and with it the heat of the sun's rays. In the South, on the contrary, where coolness is so desirable, we see everything clothed in bright, reflecting colors, which, instead of absorbing the parabolic rays, throw back again into the atmosphere, which is then filled with light, instead of a brilliant transparency to every object. The southern climate exerts artistic effects as developed in a richer de coolest, while in the cabin regions of the North the effects of form and solidity predominate. Instead of looking upon the landscape, in one old city of Havana, that part lying within the walls, and covering perhaps about a square mile of ground, I find it to be composed of an extremely brief substance which makes it unsurpassed for driving. At the head and foot there is a fountain, and also one about midway; but these are all dry. I believe, though I am not certain upon the subject, or rather in graceful lounge behind their iron window-bars.

And though these iron palisades, by the way, are very not a very good sign of the economy of a Cuban household. Grass is unknown, and, with the exception of a few cases, almost unknown here. Instead of these, most of the houses are supplied with wooden shutters, outside of which, instead of glass, stand iron bars. The shutters being left wide open, during the cooler portions of the day, the apartments within are open to the inspection of every passer-by who chooses to look in. Of course, in a climate like this, no carpets are necessary—consequently they are never used. The floors are of marble, or more generally of flagstaved pavement. The parlors are furnished neatly enough; but very rarely with anything like pretension; though they almost invariably contain a piano, on which the women hang away for hours at a time, manifesting in this respect at least, a very considerable industry. The chairs are arranged in a peculiar style. They are placed in rows, parallel rows, perpendicular to one of the windows; one row being occupied by the men, and the opposite one by the women—an arrangement in which anything seems to be more considered than place.

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