



THE CATHEDRAL, CITY OF MEXICO.—The Mexican Cathedral is the most imposing structure in the city. Its corner stone was laid in 1573, and the building covers the site of the great Aztec temple destroyed by the Spaniards when they captured the capital of the Montezumas in 1521. The entire cost of this cathedral was about two million dollars. The great bell, nineteen feet high, in one of its towers, alone cost ten thousand dollars. It is built of stone and its dimensions are impressive, the length of the edifice being nearly four hundred feet, and the towers two hundred and three feet in altitude. The interior, though grand from its magnitude, is somewhat disappointing. Its wooden floor is hardly worthy of so prominent a shrine as this, and the decorations are neither tasteful nor comparable to those of the notable European cathedrals. An enormous amount of money, however, has been expended here. Its high altar is said to have once been the richest in the world, but has been repeatedly plundered of its treasures. A balustrade of great value still surrounds the choir. Some of its chapels have fine paintings, but one can hardly appreciate them in the dim light which only partially reveals their beauty. Here are buried many of the old Spanish Viceroyes, as well as the first Emperor of Mexico, Augustin Iturbide. In front of this cathedral is the Plaza Mayor, the great square of the city, which always presents a very animated appearance, and quite near the sacred edifice is the attractive flower-markets where Indian women offer superb bouquets of flowers for a mere trifle.