

some of the finest churches here on the continent made of mud. The great cathedral of Lima, which cost millions, is a mud structure, and could you take a sharpened rail and shove it against one of its massive towers it would go through the wall like a bird cage.

But let us get up on the roof of our hotel and take a bird's eye view of the city before we begin to explore it. We are now in a vast field of flat roofs, above which here and there rise the massive towers of the great churches for which Lima is noted. At the back of us, at the edge of this field, are the bleak foothills of the Andes, gray and forbidding, their tops in a smoky sky and with white clouds rushing here and there on their sides. On the edges of the city we see the green crops of the valley of the Rimac river, and over there are the three bridges which cross the stream as it flows through Lima. Look down upon the roofs all about you. They are more like garden beds than the coverings of houses. Don't stamp your feet, or walk heavily as you move about. The roof trembles under us and with little effort we could push our feet through. The supports of many of the roofs are merely cane poles, on which dirt is spread. On some matting is first put and then a layer of earth, sand or ashes. It is supposed to never rain here, and from year's end to year's end Lima has not a shower. Waterproofs are unknown and the umbrella mender's cry is never heard. It is on this account that these mud walls stand throughout the generations, and it is, indeed, through lack of rain that Lima exists. A big shower would reduce the town to a mud heap, while a two week's pour would wipe it out of existence. Even here, however, nature sometimes varies her course. Last year the people were horrified by hearing the raindrops pattering on the roofs. The water which fell would have hardly been called a sprinkle in some parts of the world, but it did more damage here than an earthquake.

Much of the light of the Lima houses comes from the roofs. Each house has a court in the center, and many of the larger buildings are cut up by courts, around which the rooms run. When there is a double row of rooms the inner ones are lighted by little dormers which extend up through the flat roofs, and which look like chicken coops from where we are standing. It is difficult, in fact, to tell the dormers from the chicken coops. There are thousands of chickens which are born, lay their eggs and grow fat on the roofs of this city. There is a hen cackling on the opposite roof now. I am awakened every night by the crowing of the roosters above me, and the noise of the early morning in the middle of Lima makes me imagine myself in a barnyard. There is one asthmatic old rooster which crows me awake regularly at 5 a. m. and another that sometimes makes the air shake at midnight. I have not yet seen a cow on the roofs, though I am told that some families have their stables so located, the cattle not being taken down until they are ready for killing.

From such buildings you might think the houses of Lima would be always tumbling down, and that the city would be in constant danger from fires. This is not the case. The houses are almost earthquake proof, the larger buildings often having their first story walls from four to six feet thick, though those of the second story are thin. These mud walls never take fire. The furniture may go up in smoke, but so on as the roof is ablaze it falls in, and the mud which covers it puts out the fire. There are, indeed, but few losses from fire here, and even out in the country away from the fire companies houses like these are insured for one half of 1 per cent. Such a thing

as a block or square burning down is unknown in Lima.

From the hotel roof we get some idea of how compactly the city is built, and we see more of this during our walk. There are no gardens and very few back yards. The larger houses cover a great deal of space, as they are confined to one, or at most, two floors. The smaller ones are in many cases so small that it is hard to imagine they are houses at all. There are hundreds of little blind alleys which are reached through doors in the walls along the main streets, which have cell-like rooms, not over ten feet square. Each of these rooms is a house, and in one such alley which I visited today I was told that the average was about eight people to each tenement. Such houses have back yards about six feet square, surrounded by high walls. They have no windows, and the light comes in through the front and back door. None of the houses of Lima have chimneys. The most of the cooking is done over charcoal fires. Even the best houses have few windows on the ground floor, and as a rule the light comes from the interior courts or the roof. In the two-story houses of the better class, galleries run around the courts, and the rooms opening out into these are very large and airy. All outside windows and doors are barred with iron, and the better parts of the city make you think of a long row of prisons. There are many fine homes, which are entered through iron-barred gates, and the doors going into what seem to you blank walls lead into palatial mansions, surrounding courts filled with flowers.

In the business sections the people live in the second stories, which are divided up into flats or apartments. There are many floors rented out, and only the rich have large houses. The ground floors are stores and shops open to the street. The stores have no windows and the doors run the full width of the store, so that the whole front is shoved back or taken away during business hours. The light is usually from the front, though the larger establishments have courts and extend a long distance to the rear. Many of the shops are more like caves than anything else. They are cells, separated only by thin walls, and a walk along the Mercadores is more like a journey through a museum or an American department store than along the chief business street of a city. The business streets are from 20 to 30 feet wide, more often the former, and the sidewalks are not over four feet in width. Four people cannot well walk abreast, and a party crowds you off the pavement. A donkey with panniers took the right of way from me this morning, and I stepped out into the road to let him go by.

The street scenes of Lima are interesting. Let us stop under the arcade, which runs about the plaza, and watch the crowds. Here are some of the best shops of the city. They are full of fine goods, and here between 4 and 5 o'clock every afternoon the people come to buy and do business. These hours are the gayest of the day, and the crowd is now as thick as that of lower Broadway at noon. It is a far different crowd, however. No one hurries. The men saunter along or stand on the street and chat with their friends. We see little knots of men every few yards, and the messengers, the merchants and clerks seem to have time and to spare. Nearly every one is well dressed. There are many plug hats and big gloves, and nearly every man, old and young, carries a cane. They are very polite. They bow, smile, shake hands and lift their hats when they meet, and bow, smile and tip their hats when about to leave. They are the pink of perfection as far as form

goes, and you would imagine them gentlemen of leisure rolling in wealth. The truth is, most of them are poor. Peru has been playing a losing game with fortune for years, and the day of her enormous riches has long since gone by. If you will look closely you will see that many a coat is shiny at the seams and that many of their silk hats are fast losing their nap. There are, perhaps, more reduced gentlemen here than in any other city of the world. The Chileans looted the country some years ago and took away its chief sources of revenue. The Peruvians have been losing from that day to this. They have been patronizing the pawnbrokers and the foreign bond buyers until the people nationally and individually are comparatively poor. They are not a business people, and having fallen, do not know how to get up. The business of the country is, in fact, in the hands of foreigners, and there are not two big Peruvian business houses in this Peruvian capital. The young Peruvians are clerks in the stores or the government offices, while their fathers, as a rule, are skipping along on the remains of their once great estates.

But we must not forget where we are. We are in one of the main streets of Lima at 4:30 p. m., and some of the prettiest women south of the equator are going to and fro past us. If you could drop this street down in an American city, how our young men would stop and open their eyes. How their mouths would water as they saw the luscious lips all about us, and how they would drink in the beauty of the Lima girl's eyes. The young ladies of Lima! They are a class nearer perfection in beauty of form than any girls I have ever seen. They are straight and well rounded, and their soft, round, beautiful faces, with their luxuriant black hair combed high up from the foreheads, are lighted up with eyes which fairly shine with the souls of their owners. If you could drop Lima down in New York the men would think the city had been taken by young widows or female orphans who had just gone into mourning. All of the ladies of Lima dress in black when they go out to walk. They do not wear bonnets, but wrap fine shawls of black goods about their heads, pinning them fast on their backs, so that the face alone shows. The background adds to their beauty, and the costume, on the whole, is a good one. It saves the buying of new hats and bonnets, and is easy to put on or off. Many a seedy waist and frowzy head are, I doubt not, hidden under those black shawls, and the wearers are never bothered by the question which one of our girls asked her mother, when preparing for an evening function, calling over the banisters, "Ma, shall I wash for a high or low neck dress?" The Peruvian woman needs to wash only her face for the streets, for the rest of her person is hidden. As a rule, I am told, she often dispenses with washing her face, for in Peru they say that cold water brings fevers and that frequent bathing is productive of all kinds of diseases. There is much powder used and Lima has as many perfumery shops as any city of its size in the world. Both men and women are fond of sweet smells, and at carnival time they go about with squirt guns and atomizers with which they drench their fellows of the opposite sex. The girls throw powder upon the boys and men, and women dash water into each other's faces. Sometimes a crowd of Lima belles will catch hold of one of the beaux and souse him in a bath tub full of water. I met yesterday a young man who was suffering with fever on account of a cold gotten from such a ducking not long ago.