

THE “CORPUS” OF GUATEMALA

At El Porvenir C.A.

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One of the great Thursdays of the year, the one in which the religious festival of “Corpus Christi” is marked, is the starting point for joyful Sunday fairs and true exhibitions of feminine beauty.

It is not only at Christmas that children enjoy special parties and entertainment. Corpus Christi also leaves them with pleasant memories, and they drive the family and the neighborhood crazy, making the whistles that they are given on those days of Corpus Christi in Guatemala sound and resonate.

On Big Thursday, Indians and non-Indians occupy the side of the plaza in front of which is the cathedral. Monkeys in a more extensive variety than can be found in our American jungles; whistles whose sound tears the ears, and other kinds of toys after which the glances and desires of the little ones go, form a part of the trade. The beautiful pears, not as good as the small ones that are produced in Los Altos and that give off an intoxicating smell; the provocative and tasty peaches, the peaches mixed with the albérchigos, the rosaries of chamomile, the nances, in short, all the fruits that are typical of the Guatemalan area, excite the desire to buy them, to eat something from them, for good measure, while He returns to the house, carrying the tempting load of the day's purchases.

From the early hours of the morning, the influx of walkers circulating through the Plaza de Armas is notable. The sun is scorching, and the indifferent ladies gather, chat, laugh, defending themselves from the burning rays with the weak protection of their umbrellas. Men are automatons who obey the will and follow the direction of women. Many seem nailed to the ground and only your gaze can move on them. They are lovers who contemplate their girlfriends or intended ones in ecstasy. Some, strong spirits, look at them and declare them possessed of invincible dementia.

Meanwhile, time has advanced, and the ringing of the bells announces that the solemn procession customary on the day takes place inside the temple. In Guatemala, the inconvenient occupation of public roads, erecting altars there, is no longer permitted, as happens in El Salvador and Costa Rica, for example. Catholicism cannot leave the natural limits of its churches.

It is typical of these processions that an Indian orchestra appears in them, and alongside the sacred chants and the harmonies of the organ, one hears the strange noise of the whistles and drums with which the native race expresses the fervor that dominates it. As for the distinguished classes, they reveal more compliance with fashion than passion for dogma and cult practices.

However, the Cathedral Corpus Christi is just the first word, the festival with which other more brilliant and popular ones begin, which even when they are of the same genre, have recognized importance and are famous for undenied traditions, such as the Corpus Christi of San Sebastian, Calvario and Cerro del Carmen, true solemnities in Guatemala.

Above all, the last one gives the opportunity for a beautiful show. This newspaper has already published the view of Cerro del Carmen, a small eminence located north of Guatemala City. On the afternoon of the day of the festival, the street that leads to the hill, the slopes and the top of it barely give room for the crowds that come to those places to spend sweet, pleasant and unforgettable hours.

The celebration of Corpus Christi is general throughout the Republic, and there is a town, in the vicinity of Antigua Guatemala, where anyone who wishes to form an idea of how the Indian has within himself beautiful conditions to progress, should go to witness it. when well directed. The town we are referring to is San Antonio Aguascalientes and during the rainy season, nothing as picturesque can be found as the road between Antigua and that charming little town.

In the furrows, the green leaves of the cornfields that are beginning to develop and of the bean bushes, new and shiny, brighten the eye and take the memory back to the memory of the Georgics. There is not a piece of land, neither in the plains nor in the mountains, that has not been cultivated by the diligent hand of the Indians. The road, well maintained, clean; the fences of the fields perfectly pruned. White, very white the hamlet. The streets were as clean as the most scrupulous hygiene could require. Paper hangings, curtains, etc., as decoration... In the corners of the main square, four masonry chapels and in them the altars for the procession. The same fair and the same sales items. The Indians, robust, with short pants, exhibiting muscles that will put up invincible resistance in the struggle of work. The Indian women in their gala dresses and with wax torches, lighting the procession, and multitudes of people who come from various points, to spend a day that is always pleasant and memorable.