

On the side opposite to the palace is a colonnade, which is not yet finished, and will occupy the whole side of the square. Under its portico are fancy and dry-goods shops, and between the columns various trades, or lace and fringe-makers are at work. In the evening, this becomes a most busy scene. Females, with large flat baskets before them, are vending shoes, fruit, and fancy articles; others are employed in cooking cakes, and the whole lighted up as it is with numerous candles, affords much amusement to the stranger, besides giving him an opportunity to see a large number of the inhabitants. The greater part of those present are females.

The mint occupies a whole square; it has never yet been completed, and has also suffered greatly from earthquakes. The operation of coining is in the rudest and oldest form, the same as practised in Europe in the last century. The rolling and cutting are done by mule-power, and the oldest kind of fly-press, with a great screw beam, having enormous balls at the end, is used. The dies they use are made from the male die, in the same way as with us, but they have not the same facilities, and want the modern improvements in the process. A toggle-jointed press was imported from France; but it was soon put out of order by the workmen, and there being no one to repair it, its use has been abandoned.

The library is extensive, containing several thousand volumes, which formerly belonged to the Jesuits, and many curious manuscripts relating to the Indians.

The amusements are not very remarkable. Santiago, however, boasts of a theatre, and a chingano. There appears to be little business doing, and it may be called a quiet city. The siesta is daily indulged in; even the shops were shut in the afternoon, and the city is as quiet as midnight. Towards the cool of the evening, the Alameda is resorted to. It is a beautiful walk, about a mile in extent, well shaded, and occupies one bank of the river. It is planted with a double row of poplar trees, which seem to thrive well here. Streams of water are constantly running on each side of the walk. Every few yards stone seats are placed, which are at times filled with a well-dressed population. The Alameda affords at all times a cool and pleasant promenade.

The evenings are generally passed at tertulias, in visiting socially, or in shopping in the colonnade. The inhabitants are much addicted to gambling. Monte is the game with the higher classes, whilst that of match-penny is the favourite of the lower orders. The Chilean ladies are remarkable for their ease of manner, kindness, and attention to strangers. They are fond of diversions of any kind, but more