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DOWN TO VANDERBILT'S ADVENTURES IN MEXICO



CINCINNATI:
ROBINSON AND JONES.
1847.



ADVENTURES
IN
M E X I C O :

EXPERIENCED DURING A CAPTIVITY OF SEVEN
MONTHS IN THE INTERIOR—HAVING BEEN CAP-
TURED AT CAMARGO, BY CANALES' BAND OF
GUERRILLAS, WITH TWO OTHER AMERI-
CAN CITIZENS—MARCHED TO VAL-
LADOLID, BEYOND THE CITY OF
MEXICO, AND

SOLD INTO SLAVERY:

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR TREATMENT DURING CAPTIVITY—EX-
PEDITION TO THE INTERIOR—A VARIETY OF ROMANTIC INCIDENTS AND
ADVENTURES—DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY—ITS SOIL, CLIMATE,
AND PRODUCTIONS, RESOURCES, NATURAL CURIOSITIES, AND
ANTIQUITIES—CITIES, TOWNS, HACIENDAS, AND RANCHOS—
WEALTH OF THE CHURCHES, AND INFLUENCE OF THE
CLERGY—GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE—THEIR MAN-
NERS AND HABITS, SOCIAL RELATIONS, DOMES-
TIC LIFE AND AMUSEMENTS—DESCRIPTIONS
OF THE BATTLE-GROUNDS—FINAL ES-
CAPE, AND PERILOUS JOURNEY TO
THE UNITED STATES—WITH A
VIEW OF THE PRESENT WAR,

AND THE ULTIMATE DESTINY OF THE COUNTRY.

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BY C. DONNAVAN.  
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CINCINNATI:
PUBLISHED BY ROBINSON & JONES

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1847,

BY C. DONNAVAN,

In the Clerk's Office for the District Court of Ohio.

E. SHEPARD,
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P R E F A C E .

ON his return to the United States, the Author had not conceived the idea of presenting to the public a narrative of his adventures, especially in this form. True, he experienced much which was of great moment and peculiar interest to himself, yet he was loth to reconcile the belief, even upon the repeated assurances of his friends, that he should be able to interest others. To what extent he may have merited the partiality of those friends, the public will now have an opportunity to judge. The fact that numerous publications, already scattered over the States, purporting to describe the people, country, and institutions of a land to whose destiny all eyes seem now eagerly turned, is a circumstance foreboding the spirit of distrust in which a new production may be received. And in a narrative of this character, the public are apt to anticipate that national or individual prepossessions may produce an unfavorable effect upon the writer—that mere prejudice or passion may direct his thoughts or color his language. Indeed, it is no easy task to assure such a work against such an influence; and although the Author's treatment, while a prisoner, served to impress upon him no very high esteem or favorable regard

for those who held him in bondage contrary to all rules of civilization, it does not follow that he should hazard his reputation by venturing upon any intentional misstatement of material facts. It is natural, in depicting outrages inflicted by relentless oppressors, that the writer should evince, in some degree, those higher passions and sentiments which alone could have incited and sustained him in the dark days of trial, yet he does not deem himself justified in permitting his individual wrongs to impart a biased coloring or vindictive spirit to his narrative. Under such considerations he has endeavored to observe a proper degree of restraint and moderation, and to suppress any unjust feeling of resentment for those whom he has every reason to censure. With no pretension to profound views of men or events, nor to any elaborate elegance of diction, he has aimed at simplicity and truth, rather than striven to be ambitious for effect. From imperfect notes, sketched during the period of his captivity, and from memory, he has endeavored to present, in an abridged form, that which he conceives will be of most interest. The manuscript, as originally written out, was found to be too voluminous, and as it contained much of a strictly personal nature, was curtailed to suit the dimensions in which the work appears. This will account, in some measure, for the apparent abruptness of certain portions of the narrative. The writer had not the vanity to presume that a long and tedious detail of his private sufferings would elicit public attention, beyond the mere circle of his acquaintance, severe as those sufferings were. Satisfied, therefore,

in alluding as briefly as practicable to his individual privations, he has dwelt more upon the resources of the country, descriptions of scenery, its soil, climate, and productions, character, manners, and customs of the people—relating only such incidents connected with his own adventures, as may be relished by the general reader.

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ADVENTURES IN MEXICO.

CHAPTER I.

DEPARTURE FOR MEXICO—ARRIVAL AT BRAZOS—DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY—NAVIGATION OF THE RIO GRANDE—TRIP UP THE RIVER—REYNOSA—CAMARGO—MIER AND ITS NATURAL ADVANTAGES—STOCK—DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY, TIMBER, AND PRODUCTIONS—GUERRERO—SCENERY—CURIOSITY OF THE NATIVES—HOSPITALITY OF THE AUTHORITIES—SPRINGS—DWELLING HOUSES—COAL MINES—SILVER ORE, &C.—A CROOKED RIVER—GEOLOGICAL SPECIMENS—DEPARTURE FOR MATAMORAS.

THE excited state of feeling which followed the first authentic intelligence announcing the existence of actual hostilities on the Rio Grande, was only equaled by the promptitude and alacrity which characterized the conduct of our people, in offering to the country their services, and hastening to the scene of action. At the period when the first requisition for troops was made (in the spring of 1846), I was engaged as clerk on the steamboat Ontario—then in the Nashville trade. The immediate demand for vessels of the smaller craft, by the government, to transport troops and munitions of war, from the Brazos to Matamoras, induced the proprietors to transfer her to the seat of war; and more as an indispensable appendage to the crew, than from any inherent billegent disposition, I consented to continue the supervision of her finances, and accompany her to the enemy's dominions. Leaving New Orleans on the 21st of May, 1846, the Ontario, with a portion of the Louisiana volunteers, was towed across the Gulf by the brig Everett, and landed among the first boats at the Brazos, on the 28th of the same month.

Succeeding our arrival, numerous incidents continued to occur, almost daily, many of which possessing some degree of interest and coming under my observation, have already appeared in the public prints, in the form of "Letters from an Occasional Correspondent."

A recapitulation of so much of those letters as relates to the Rio Grande and its resources, will hardly be deemed out of place here, inasmuch as it will impart to the reader a more definite idea of that

country than he has been able to attain, unless having visited it in person.

Although the reading public has been recently overtaxed with almost every variety of statements, purporting to be authentic descriptions of that interesting region, and accurate accounts of its resources—yet few, if any, of the many adventurers, have succeeded in arriving at conclusions at all satisfactory to those who are familiar with the country, as it exists under ordinary circumstances. The great variety of opinions entertained of the country, is mainly the result of the variety of circumstances under which it is visited. The tyranny of first impressions is difficult to eradicate, and is ever liable to exert its influence over our better judgments. It is, therefore, matter of little surprise, that a large number of our volunteers, who, on their first arrival at Point Isabel and Matamoras, under the most untoward circumstances, and encountering trials at which their ideas of domestic comfort revolted, should arrive at original and diversified conclusions. Nor is it at all strange, that much of the dark and gloomy should be mingled in the creations of those whose bright hopes of speedy conquest have been supplanted by the more melancholy feeling incident to disappointment and disease.

The principal objection to the country of the Rio Grande, and, indeed, the larger portion of the Mexican provinces arises from the scarcity of timber. The ebony, musquite, rosewood, and a variety of other short, stunted, and thorny growths, almost insulated with vines of different species, and some of whose flowers bloom perennially, constitute the only woodlands—if they deserve that dignified appellation—in the vicinity of that river. Occasionally the willow and white cypress are to be found approaching the banks, but not in sufficient abundance to afford fuel, at a fair compensation. The ebony and rosewood are the “tallest timber,” but it is seldom that either reach an altitude of over forty feet. Both are well adapted to the manufacture of light cabinet ware, and would doubtless be appropriated by the Yankees to that purpose.

The rumor that extensive beds of coal abounded in the vicinity of Guerrero, a town on the Rio Grande, three hundred and forty-five miles from Matamoras, was sufficient inducement to visit that place, on a kind of exploring expedition. Although the practicability of navigating the river, above the mouth of the San Juan, had been doubted, yet it was easily accomplished; indeed, it has since been ascended to Laredo, a distance of some seven hundred and thirty miles from the Brazos. The chief obstructions to navigation consist in the rapidity of the current and the narrow passages between the reefs—the latter of which might be easily removed, at a trifling expense. The most remarkable of these are said to occur above the mouth of the Rio Salado—one of which is represented to be more than a mile in length. They consist of a spongy composition of coral rock, and bear a close resemblance to some of the specimens found in the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky.

After having made three trips from the Brazos to Matamoras, the Ontario left the latter place on the 14th of June (1846) and ascended to Guerrero, touching at the principal points between the two cities, all of which are on the Mexican side.

Reynosa, some forty miles below Camargo, is an inconsiderable place, but eligibly situated. It contains some fine brick buildings, and a population of perhaps one thousand.

Camargo, on the bank of the river San Juan, a short distance above its confluence with the Rio Grande, has, since the existence of the war, become a place of some note, though previously it was rather obscure and unimportant, save as the commercial depot for Monterey, the capital of the province of New Leon, and one of the principal scenes of the triumph of our arms.

The town of Mier, known as the place where Col. Fisher and his men were captured during the Texan war, contains over five thousand inhabitants. It is located on the Rio Alcantro, three miles above its confluence with the Rio Grande, and forty-five miles above Camargo. Under a different form of government, and with an industrious and enterprising population, such as is generally found in the towns in the United States, Mier would soon command extensive manufactures, and a flourishing trade. Its water power, which is now unemployed and unnoticed, would afford superior facilities for the manufacture of woollen and cotton fabrics, the raw material for either of which, may be produced in the immediate vicinity with little labor. Indeed, its natural resources are almost unsurpassed, but are destined to remain undeveloped, until American genius shall have been directed to that quarter. So soon as the navigation of the Rio Grande shall be opened to the commercial world, if that period find its manufacturing facilities in their present state of nature, the great variety of domestic manufactures of the United States will find a ready and profitable market along the whole line of that great thoroughfare. The inhabitants, at present, produce little else than stock, which requires no food but musquite grass and fodder; with Indian corn sufficient to supply themselves with tortillas. Single herds of cattle, numbering from five to ten thousand, and double that number of sheep and goats, are not unfrequently to be seen.

Ascending the river from Mier, a very material change for the better is observable in the character of the country. On either side, rich and extensive valleys stretch out to what is called the "table lands," presenting a strong and deep soil, in many places judiciously cultivated. In some of the prairies, extensive cotton farms, containing from ten to fifteen thousand acres, are to be seen. Beans, potatoes, wheat, and corn are here grown in greater abundance than in any other part of Mexico, a fact which taken in consideration with its commercial and manufacturing advantages, must ultimately render the valley of the Rio Grande, one of the most important regions of the South.

Ninety-six miles above Mier, on the Rio Salado, is located the flour-

ishing city of Guerrero. This place is approached by ascending the Salado to its rapids, one mile and a half below the town, and ten miles from its confluence with the Rio Grande. The rapids and adjacent scenery present a peculiarly picturesque and romantic view. The river here is small and the current exceedingly swift; and as its dark turbid waters leap and tumble over the black, dingy rocks, they seem endeavoring to imitate Niagara itself. Perhaps the effect produced is equal, but the grandeur is incomparably insignificant, when viewed in connection with that great and wonderful water-fall of the world! The scenery about Guerrero, however, is neither insipid or monotonous. Gigantic hills rise abruptly from the banks, which are covered with pine, magnolia, and various growths of evergreen, yet there seems to be a contention between the rocks and shrubs for the supremacy of the soil. Some leagues from the town, and as the sources of the Salado are approached, forest timber of large dimensions is said to abound.

The Ontario being the second boat to approach Guerrero, and the largest ever seen by the natives, great curiosity was manifested, and she was thronged by visitors. Their astonishment and interrogatories relative to the boat and its machinery, afforded a fund of amusement to the officers. The Alcalde remarked in Spanish, which when translated gave us to understand that, like "Capt. Scott's coon, he was in favor of giving in." He said he had been told that the Americans could send their letters by thunder and lightning, but never believed it—yet since he had seen, with his own eyes, that they could twist iron into so many fantastic shapes, and make it float against the current, he began to think they could accomplish any thing they chose to undertake, and it was of no use to fight against them. The Alcalde came on board soon after the boat landed, stating that one of his rancheros had informed him that the Americans were coming in a "sea-wagon" that split the waves and rocks in two, forcing its own passage. It seemed as if about half the inhabitants expected to be annihilated at once, so alarming was the commotion, until they were assured by the Alcalde that the boat, although breathing and snorting, did not possess animal life, and was perfectly docile. Whether through fear or affection, great friendship was manifested by the authorities, and the priests were highly delighted to find that the American Bible so closely resembled their own. Fandangoes were gotten up in the city, and invitations extended to many of our company. Those who attended seemed highly pleased with the beauty and enthusiasm of the women, but disgusted at the ignorance and incivilities of the men.

Guerrero contains a population of near 10,000, and is a popular place of resort among the better classes, on account of its sulphur springs. These springs are located above the city some twelve miles, and are said to possess the same medicinal virtues as the celebrated Blue Lick springs, of Kentucky. The first settlement was made at Guerrero, in the form of a missionary station, more than

one hundred years ago. It is the largest and decidedly the most pleasant place on the Rio Grande. Owing, perhaps, to the materials used for construction, together with the rude notions of architecture entertained by the natives, most of the towns in Mexico present an appearance of antiquity which does not in justice belong to many of them. The style of building is rather tasteful in effect, but meager and insignificant in detail. Most of the dwellings in Guerrero have their gardens and yards; and the entire place, in the absence of every thing like gaudy display, presents an appearance of ease and comfort, if not of wealth.

It was soon found that bituminous coal of excellent quality, could be obtained here in abundance. There exists several varieties, among which is one containing little or no sulphur, and which burns readily as it falls into water. This is a superior article for the use of blacksmiths, as was ascertained by actual experiment. Active preparations were making by a company of Americans to work these mines, which when opened, must become invaluable in a country where timber is so scarce and expensive.

Silver ore is found in the vicinity, and gold dust is said to exist in the alluvial depots above the mouth of the San Juan river. Red chalk, red and yellow ochre, brimstone and nitre, likewise abound within a circumference of ten miles of the town.

The Mississippi, which has long enjoyed the undisputed reputation of being the crookedest river on our continent, is hardly an index to the Rio Grande. It must have required an accomplished surveyor to ascertain the general course of the latter stream, flowing as it does to every point of the compass, and torturing itself to find some new direction. Boats frequently get fast in turning the bends, and were it not for the velocity of the current, pilots would surely get lost in its mazy labyrinths. The "oldest inhabitants" contend that birds seldom succeed in flying across—but almost invariably light on the same side from whence they take their flight. In width it varies from 100 to 300 yards. The complexion of its waters resembles those of the Missouri, while the rapidity of its current is even greater. In extent of volume it will hardly compare with the Ohio, at Cincinnati. It is navigable for steamboats of light draught, at nearly all seasons, to Laredo, seven hundred miles above the mouth.

To the scientific geologist, the upper Rio Grande could not fail to present a field of peculiar interest. There exist many novel specimens, and the earth is rich in mineral treasures. A large portion of the rock formation is of sand stone, which is constantly increasing. The intense heat of the sun, succeeding the heavy rains, soon converts the alluvial deposits into rock. Islands frequently rise from twenty to fifty feet above the surface of the water, composed of what might be termed calcareous conglomerates. They appear to be collections of large sea shells, with a great many fibrous petrifications of roots, bark, and grasses, and in some are found considerable quan-

tities of carbonate of iron. Many of the bluffs exhibit, near their bases, strata of the finest quality of clay, adapted to the manufacture of a superior article of delf. In short, this region affords every natural resource to attract the attention of capitalists and speculators, while there is little to allure the hardy pioneer of the West, who paves the path of civilization by hewing out his own home and fortune in the forest.

After lying at Guerrero three days, and taking on board over fifty tons of coal, the Ontario left, on her return to Matamoras, on the morning of June 22d, amid the acclamations of a large number of the inhabitants, of all ages, sexes, colors, and conditions, who had assembled to witness her departure, and who continued to wave their scarfs, handkerchiefs, blankets, and rebosos, till the boat had receded beyond their sight.

CHAPTER II.

RETURN TO MATAMORAS—CREOLE FEVER—TREATMENT—RECOVERY—BARRY AND CUNNINGHAM—VISIT TO PALO ALTO—BURIAL OF A SOLDIER—IMPRESSIONS—ARRIVAL OF VOLUNTEERS—SPECULATORS—GAMBLING—GEN. TAYLOR'S ORDERS—HIS PERSONAL APPEARANCE—ANECDOTE OF A DUTCHMAN—GREAT THIRST FOR GLORY—TRAVELING ON THE RIO GRANDE—MEXICAN WOMEN—ANECDOTE OF LIEUTENANT DEANS—COSTUME OF THE WOMEN—RANCHEROS—THEIR APPEARANCE AND DRESS.

SUFFERING from a severe and violent attack of "creole fever," which confined me to my room for four consecutive weeks, I arrived at Matamoras on the 25th of June (1846). Leaving the boat, I took lodgings at the United States Hotel, of which Mr. Howard, a warm-hearted and gentlemanly Kentuckian, was proprietor. Those who were so unfortunate as to be in Matamoras at this period, knew well how to appreciate a kind or generous action, for it was with some difficulty, among the vast crowd which then thronged the city, that those in perfect health could procure the ordinary necessities of life, much less could an invalid, prostrated by disease, look for those attentions called for in his suffering condition.

It was during this illness that I became acquainted with the two gentlemen who were afterwards my unfortunate associates in captivity—Dr. Barry, of Mississippi, and Mr. Cunningham, of Louisville, Kentucky. The assiduity which characterized their disinterested attentions, can never be forgotten, nor can I ever hope to extinguish the obligations under which their repeated acts of kindness placed me. Ceasing to cherish the memory of those who could turn aside from their occupations of dealing death and destruction, to alleviate, with a gentler hand, the afflictions of an invalid stranger, I should, indeed

be ungrateful. To their unremitting attention and kind ministrations, I perhaps owe my recovery from a disease which is there seldom eluded, during the process of acclimation; and in four weeks from the period of my attack, was sufficiently restored to health and strength, as to be able to accompany them on a visit to the battle fields of Palo Alto and Reseca de la Palma. The excursion was one of deep and mournful interest. It was on the occasion of the funeral of young Danford, a regular in the American Army, who had received his death wound at Palo Alto, and who, after lingering two months, died in the same hotel and in the same room I occupied. He had been taken to the hospital, but could not endure the idea of dying there, and was brought to the hotel on his own earnest and repeated solicitations. His last wish was to be buried on the battle field. He had been but a private soldier—yet, in the absence of the “pomp and circumstance,” which usually attends the last rites of those superior to him in station, the scene was a melancholy and impressive one. Pecuniary reverses and domestic misfortune had driven him to join the regular service, about a year before the present war. He was a native of Tennessee, and had been quite a favorite with his regiment, as well as in the social circle that he had once adorned. His comrades were all ready to sound his praises—and although his private history was comparatively unknown, his intelligence and unassuming manners, with his brave and manly bearing, had particularly attracted the notice and warm regard of his officers. His last day upon the earth was peculiarly appropriate to the closing scene, even of a warrior’s career. It was calm and clear, as the soul is, after the storm and struggle of ambition have past away. It was one of those mellow, golden days, experienced alone under a tropical sun, and the stars and stripes hung in motionless solemnity over the subdued city of Matamoras. Soldiers were collected together in small groups, whispering among themselves—and even the sergeant, when uttering his orders, seemed to dispense with half his authority. Soon the muffled roll of the drum was heard, and silent and dejected, with their eyes fixed upon the ground, and their arms reversed, the soldiers formed in procession. With measured pace they approached the battle-field. Arriving at the grave, the black pall, which covered a plain coffin, was removed, and the remains of the deceased were silently lowered into the earth, by his former mess-mates. The troops encircling the grave, the word of command was given, and the simultaneous discharge of musketry announced that a soldier had been deposited in his last, quiet resting place, beyond the din of battle and the strife for glory. But the roaring requiems from the arms of those who had survived him were proof that he had died as a soldier ought to die—full of honor—though not upon the field.

His old comrades retired, and as they walked mournfully away, casting back a lingering look upon the newly heaped up mound, I asked myself if these were the heroes who were carrying the fame of the American arms to the remotest regions of the earth, and un-

furling the flag of the free over half a continent—if men who could not witness, without the deepest emotion, the burial of a comrade, could ever have rushed so impetuously to the charge! Yet I knew that they had, and rejoiced to see that those who could fight valiantly, could also feel sensitively, and weep bitterly. But such have always been the character and sentiments of the American soldier—such must ever remain distinguishing features in the conduct of a people nurtured in the school of social refinement and constitutional liberty.

Resuming my situation of clerk on the Ontario, in July, I had the pleasure of meeting a number of old friends among the volunteers from the States of Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois, who were then arriving at Brazos Island. An almost innumerable swarm of speculators followed in their train, across the Gulf, anticipating a rich harvest, and a realization of speedy fortunes. The vulture-like avidity with which this class of people flocked around our army, was alike discreditable to themselves and to the character of our government. Disappointed in attaining their object, they were often found to be the perpetrators of outrages upon the persons and property of the enemy in cold blood; and for which acts of violence the volunteers were not unfrequently held responsible. Men were to be seen here from every known quarter of the globe, without visible means of support, and no resource but that of speculation and open robbery; in fact, the variety of "gentlemen of leisure" was complete, from the well-clad gambler to the common vagabond, with his dilapidated habiliments, descanting upon his "unfortunate" condition, and omitting no opportunity to impress the belief that he "had been better raised." Games of monte, "white or red," faro, and even "old sledge," were extensively indulged in, while every other stratagem was put in requisition to relieve the unsuspecting of their extra change. It was not long, however, before Gen. Taylor issued peremptory orders of ejection to this class of adventurers. And old "Rough and Ready" is the man to be obeyed. Plain and simple in his manners, he possesses the firmness and decision of Gen. Jackson, with much of the iron nature of that old patriot-hero. In his person Gen. Taylor is rather above the middle stature, and somewhat deficient in elegance of figure, yet in his regimentals he possesses a striking and manly appearance. In his tent, where he often appears in his citizen's dress, a superficial observer might regard him as no more than a common individual, but upon close examination his head will be found large, and formed on the finest model. His forehead is spacious and elevated—his nose a most prominent feature, and decidedly aquiline. His eyes grey, keen, and piercing—his mouth large, and chin well proportioned. He is remarkable for a deep depression between his nose and forehead, and a contraction of his brow, which gives to the upper part of his countenance an air of sternness, while the lower part is an emblem of mildness and benevolence.

Among other ludicrous incidents which occurred on the day of

general dispersion, was one serving forcibly to illustrate the shrewdness of Yankee character. A certain "Mynheer," of New Orleans, rather fresh from the other side of the water, had been retailing small-beer quite extensively among the soldiers, at one dime a glass. The dimensions of his temporary domicile being rather prescribed, he had arranged the barrel from which he drew the refreshing beverage, so that one end extended beyond the constitutional limits of his territory. On the last day of grace, notwithstanding his anxiety to sell out and close business, he found his patronage alarmingly diminished. His old customers came up to the bar as usual, to enquire the price of beer; but when he responded "ten cents a glass," they gravely informed him that his next neighbor was selling "the same article" at half a dime! Finally, the Dutchman, on walking round to the rear of his tent, found that a Yankee soldier had tapped the other end of the barrel, and actually sold out, at half price!

About this period the army was concentrating at Camargo, preparatory to a descent on Monterey, and the boat, on her upward trips, was crowded with volunteers. Officers and privates who had escaped the epidemic consequent upon acclimation, all eager to "meet the enemy." Many of the young Captains, who had perhaps never before unsheathed a sword, seemed particularly anxious to distinguish themselves. Distinction was the all-engrossing subject of conversation, and with their backs against a chair, their feet planted, in true American style, against the railing, they would sit smoking their sigaretto, or masticating James River, with no care to perplex them but the hope of glory.

Traveling on the Rio Grande is unlike traveling on the Ohio. Here, if a man's genius have a philosophical bend, he can give himself up to consolatory contemplations. He can look out upon the proud hills and the well cultivated vallies, as he passes swiftly over the glittering waters, and enjoy the homes of his thriving countrymen. He can read some favorite author, or chat with some old gentleman on the follies and vanities of the world in general—or he may while away the hours with an innocent flirtation with some witch of a girl, to whom he has been introduced, and wreath the fairy footsteps of old time with the flowers of poesy and passion. It is not so easy to find amusement on the dark and restless waters of the Rio Grande. There you must talk of battles, of surprises, heroes, and forced marches; and there is little to relieve this belligerent monotony except the occasional appearance of the laundresses of some neighboring rancho or hacienda, rolling up their gowns and wading into the water with a bundle of "duds," on washing day. Tubs seldom stand on their own bottoms in this part of Mexico, for such articles of domestic convenience have scarcely penetrated that half civilized region. As a consequence, their women perform this very necessary part of household labor, in the river, and from which novel custom they seem to have imbibed a sort of amphibious nature. It is by no means an uncommon occurrence, especially on

the San Juan and Salado rivers, to see droves of joyous young girls disporting like mermaids among the waves, with their long, black, disheveled locks, playing confusedly on the surface. Bathing seems to be a passion among Mexican females, and it is one mark of their superior knowledge in the science of promoting the health and vigor of the body.

Much has been recently said and written of the Mexican women, of whose personal appearance and peculiarities of character, we have been comparatively ignorant. The writer may, therefore, be permitted to hazard his own opinion among others, so far as the extent of his observation will warrant him in forming one. Those about the Rio Grande can scarcely be regarded as a fair specimen of the sex in the interior; yet even they, many of them in a half-barbarous state, with all their faults, possess many redeeming qualities. They are remarkable for their cleanliness, good behavior, and hospitality; and they look upon drunkenness and like vices with no degree of toleration. In the north-eastern provinces, particularly, they are a mixed and mongrel race, generally the illicit descendants of Mexican, Indian, and Spaniard, penciled occasionally with a faint outline of Anglo-Saxon ancestry. Their almost universally small feet and ankles, is just cause for regarding the *understandings* of our people with a degree of astonishment, and I have often seen them in ecstasies of laughter, while ridiculing the extensive feet of some of our volunteers. As a general thing they possess great symmetry of form, and their black, silken hair, pearly teeth, and full, dark eyes, modestly beaming with the most intense, and expressive emotion, is well calculated to bring vividly to mind Byron's picture of the "Dark-eyed Girl of Cadiz"—

"The Spanish girl is no coquette,
Nor joys to see her lover tremble;
And if she love, or if she hate,
Alike she knows not to dissemble."

It was a bewitching beauty, of this description, that so suddenly besieged the heart of Lieutenant Deans, and led him into *double* captivity. Before the army had crossed to Matamoras, and while occupying Fort Brown, it was customary for the American band to perform some national air, evening and morning. On such an occasion the "concert of sweet sounds," in the music of the "Star Spangled Banner," attracted the attention of crowds of Mexicans on the opposite side, among whom appeared a number of ladies. Lieut. Deans became suddenly enamored with one of them, and after mutual signs and tokens were passed, he plunged into the Mexican Hellespont, and landed on the other shore—but in endeavoring to capture his heroine, he was made a prisoner by the enemy. It is creditable, however, to the Lieutenant's constancy, that after the bombardment of Matamoras, and his trial for desertion, he married the object of his violent passion.

The style of dress adopted by the ladies is by no means prepossess-

ing. Among the more common classes, it usually consists of light slippers without stockings, a flannel petticoat, and a chemise that leaves a much larger share of the neck, shoulders, and that entire neighborhood, bare, than our sense of modesty would dictate. The *réboso*, or bonnet, when worn, not only covers this nakedness, but leaves one in doubt whether the head is a part of the body, or the body a part of the head.

The females are transcendantly superior to the males, not only in personal appearance, but in every essential requisite that contributes to moral refinement. The great mass of the men are ignorant, indolent, inefficient creatures, distinguished by but one leading trait of character—that trait is treachery. The *rancheros*, who compose the great body of the Mexican cavalry, constitute about the best portion of their native population, so far as energy of character and intelligence are concerned. They are half Spanish and half Indian in their extraction; gaunt, shriveled, though muscular in their frames; dark, swarthy visaged, and below the ordinary stature. They live more than half their time in the saddle, and are unrivaled horsemen. They are ever on the alert, and seldom surprised. When not in pursuit of plunder, they roam over the vast plains, and employ their time in lassoing buffalo and wild horses, which are to be found there in countless numbers. Killing these animals and preparing their hides for the market, is their means of livelihood. Their costume generally consists of a pair of tough raw-hide leggings, with sandals of the same material, bound together with leathern thongs, over which is a blanket, with a hole in the center, large enough to allow the head to be thrust out, and which falls rather gracefully over their shoulders, leaving ample room for the play of their arms—the head covered with a broad straw sombrero, and a lasso in his girdle, ready for use. Such is the appearance of the *ranchero*, in time of peace, or when engaged in his ordinary occupations. Add to this a long lance with a sharp spear head, ornamented with a strip of red bunting, on a horse as savage and unmanageable as himself, his belt amply supplied with pistols and knives, and you see him as a member of a troop of banditti, or as a soldier in the body of cavalry. Cowardly as they universally are in the open field, yet in a conflict among the chaparel of their own country, or in an ambuscade, they are indeed a formidable foe. Their power of enduring fatigue is almost incredible, and a scanty meal per diem, of jerked beef and plantain, will suffice them for months, under ordinary circumstances. Such was the personal appearance and character of the men composing the guerrilla band, into whose hands we had the misfortune to fall.

CHAPTER III.

A HUNTING EXCURSION—CAPTURE—JOURNEY TO MIER—PICKING POCKETS—APPEARANCE AND CHARACTER OF CANALES—THE FIRST NIGHT OF CAPTIVITY—NOVEL INTERVIEW WITH ONE OF THE RANCHEROS—SENTENCE OF DEATH—MEXICAN CHARACTER—INTERFERENCE IN OUR BEHALF—SENTENCE REVERSED—OUR FATE REVEALED.

On the thirteenth of October (that most unlucky day of all months), preparatory to departing on her downward trip, the Ontario ran up the San Juan river some half a league to wood. A number of passengers destined for Matamoras and the Brazos, were already on board, among whom were Dr. Barry and Mr. Cunningham, alluded to in the preceding chapter. While the boat was lying to, those gentlemen and myself, desiring a little recreation and amusement, went ashore for the purpose of shooting deer, armadilloes, or any other game which so abounds in the chaparel about Camargo. We had advanced perhaps a hundred yards in the thickets, when we saw a large herd of deer, slowly and lazily receding from us, as if conscious they were alluring us into difficulty. Forgetting, for the moment, that straggling parties of armed Mexicans were frequently seen prowling about in that vicinity, robbing and murdering indiscriminately, we continued the chase and ventured above half a mile from the boat, when a simultaneous discharge of our pieces brought down two fine stags. With that degree of enthusiasm which seldom fails to attend the first conquest in the career of amateur sportsmen, we eagerly rushed upon our fallen victims to apply the knife. Exulting in our success, and engrossed in contemplating the rich and sumptuous feast we should enjoy, and having settled the preliminaries, as to how the "saddles" should be served, the reader may imagine our surprise at finding ourselves surrounded by over thirty armed and savage looking Mexicans! Our carnivorous contemplations were quickly succeeded by a very different sensation about the stomach. Prompted by the same feeling, our first impulse was to offer a desperate resistance, and sell our lives as dearly as possible; but on attempting to re-load our guns, the banditti, with their glittering spears, rushed in upon us, and we were immediately captured and disarmed.

In such a crisis it is difficult either to describe or imagine one's feelings. From the notorious character of those into whose hands we had fallen, nothing better than an unceremonious and cruel butchery could be reasonably anticipated. The situation of Herr Driesbach, in his cage of lions and tigers, would have been an enviable one, compared to ours. But they gave us no time for reflection or condolence, even had the time or occasion provoked such a train of thought. Tying our hands behind us, they lashed us upon the backs

of their own mustangs, and thus conveyed us some thirty miles, before the sun set. The entire party halted for the night in the woods, within a few miles of the town of Mier, whither a deputation was immediately despatched to purchase a supply of muscal. Adhering strictly to the motto, that "to the victor's belong the spoils," they now proceeded to search our pockets, when to their evident mortification, they found only about \$70 about our persons. Of this amount, together with our pen-knives, pencils, &c., we were relieved, with that peculiar nonchalance, so characteristic of the Spanish brigand. Our fate was yet a mystery, and after binding us securely, hand and foot, and separating us at a distance of about fifty feet from each other, they commenced drinking muscal and playing at monte. The night was made hideous by the howling of half starved wolves, and the unceasing altercations and jangling of those who were unlucky at cards. Sleep, under such circumstances, was an "obsolete idea," and the morning, instead of bringing repose to our sore and jellied flesh, found us involved in dire regrets, and cogitating on the certain uncertainty of human events. Those few of our captors who had been permitted to fall into a broken and troubled slumber, were aroused with the sun, and the crowd gathered menacingly around us. From their gestures, it was obvious they had been disappointed in not finding more booty, and were grumbling over their ill luck.

A thought here struck me, which I doubt not was the means of rescuing us all from the jaws of death. With a very indefinite idea of the Spanish language, I endeavored to make them understand that two of us were practical printers—an announcement which I well knew would shield a man from robbery in the United States—and supposed it might be a satisfactory apology, even there, for the exhausted condition of our finances. They failed to interpret my Spanish, when a young man, rejoicing in the sobriquet of Poco Llama (little flame), accosted me in broken English, and demanded an explanation. To him I made an appeal, in all the eloquence such an occasion tends to inspire, and soon succeeded in eliciting his interest in our behalf. But he possessed no authority, save that which sprang from the respect and influence he had gained as an interpreter. The most prominent figure—the moving spirit and leader of the band, was Canales—brother of the celebrated Mexican General of that name—and the same who was recently shot at Cerralvo. He was an old man, and sat on a log, at some distance, leaning lazily forward, with his elbows on his knees, while he extracted with his jack-knife, the rich marrow from the thigh bone of one of the stags we had killed on the previous day—they having taken peaceable possession of the two dead carcasses, and brought with them the veritable "saddles" of venison which had excited such a yearning sympathy in our own bosoms. This old reprobate was eager for gain; he possessed a keen and insatiable desire for plunder. Ostentatious of display, he seemed desirous to impress us with some evidence of his superiority over his comrades in crime. With an

antique and dilapidated sombrero stuck jauntily on one side of his grey, bristly head—his leathery countenance expressing a kind of reckless good humor, shadowed out from his austerity, and which his present discontent could not wholly banish—he sat venting his wrath and disappointment through his old, toothless jaws, and sinful lips, in a succession of oaths and imprecations, and in a reckless and disdainful manner, that had long survived his youth. Assuming an air of anger and ferocity, he drew around him the entire party, whose exact number we had now ascertained to be thirty-three, and announcing that we should all be despatched at once, he ordered his men to perform the work of death! Although this intelligence was not unexpected, we could not suppress the deep drawn sigh which ever accompanies that stern and solemn verdict. How rapidly one will glance over the reminiscences of past life, to dwell upon the bright spots in his pilgrimage, when conscious that his career is about to close forever! Saints, in perfect health and security, may chant their choruses religiously asservating that “they would not live always,” yet when they come to give up the ghost, and find their last tracks on time’s territory suddenly sliding into the dark and unexplored regions of eternity, they are apt to manifest a desire to renew their lease upon life—and to hope, even in the darkest hour of despair. Such at least has been our experience. Entertaining, as we all did, the most supreme contempt for our “chivalrous captors”—knowing that they, as well as the whole Mexican army, were a people, who in point of treachery, degradation, and cruelty, stood pre-eminent among all nations under the canopy of heaven—yet we continued, even under their sentence, to hope that through some unrevealed intervention, our lives might be spared. The fact need not be concealed, that from their meanest soldier to their best general, they are a nation of liars and plunderers. There are a few honorable exceptions, it is true, but more modest epithets will not serve truly to portray their general character.—The gratification of their sensual desires seems to be the sole object of life, and money is their God. The eternal chink of change is their national music. It seems to burn in their pockets, and they shake it to keep it cool. Boasting of their freedom, they buy and sell their own *free* citizens! There is scarcely an officer in their army, from Santa Anna down to Gen. Requena, who has not been publicly bought and sold. Every man has his price, and such are their mercenary natures, that many of them consent to sell their souls, and stalk about in the miserable shell of mortality, moving libels on the human race, plundering and murdering those whose more virtuous deeds they have not the moral courage to imitate.

Our knowledge of this “ruling passion,” considered in connection with the fact that our pockets had signally failed to meet their anticipations of gain, gave us little to hope for, till Poco Llama conveyed to us the welcome intelligence, that through his “special pleading,” Canales had reversed his former sentence. We at once felt a

weighty debt of gratitude to the interpreter, and began to regard him as our deliverer ; when we found that his seeming disinterested interference had been prompted by the same love of gain which is the propelling lever to every Mexican heart. He had prevailed on Canales to spare our lives, on condition that he himself would sell us and divide the proceeds. We could enter no protest against this novel proceeding, although in our former capacity of political editor, we had been in the habit of preaching "give me liberty or give me death," and submitted to our fate with apparent good grace. Unarmed, and out-numbered as we were, ten to one, sophistry was our only available resource—so, feigning the highest regard for the people and institutions, which at heart we abhorred, we submitted to the humiliating spectacle of being placed "under the hammer," and marched off to be employed in some unknown Mexican printing office, upon a comparatively unknown language.

CHAPTER IV.

MARCH FOR CERALVO—DIET—PINTO INDIANS—INSULTS—NEW JEWELRY—SYMPATHY AMONG THE DUTCH—ROAD TO CARMILLO—SCENERY—HACIENDA OF SAN MATERO—ANCIENT RUINS—SLAVERY IN MEXICO—ARRIVAL AT CARMILLO—BEAUTY AND AMUSEMENTS—A ROBBER PURSUING AN INDIAN—A MOUNTAIN PASS—DEATH AMONG THE MUSTANGS—DESOLATION OF A RANCHO—ARRIVAL AT MONCLOVA—FAILURE TO SELL PRISONERS—CONFINEMENT IN PRISON—APPEARANCE OF THE PRISON AND INMATES—A MIER PRISONER—REFLECTIONS, &c.

AFTER an hours' consultation, in which each seemed entitled to a hearing, twelve of the party, with Poco Llama at their head, were deputed to guard us for the future. To convey us as speedily as possible beyond the reach of the American forces, each was again lashed upon a mustang, and we took up the line of march for Ceralvo, a distance of thirty-six miles. Inured to a degree of abstemiousness themselves, that would do credit to our "Grabamites," they had not furnished us with a particle of food during the twenty-four hours of our captivity, and with a promise of providing breakfast for us at the first rancho, some three leagues distant, we were galloped off at a rate which exercised our physical functions in a manner eminently calculated to sharpen the appetite. But sadly had we realized the melancholy fact that both rancho and repast existed only in the imagination of our inhuman masters, long before we obtained a mouthful of refreshment. Over hill and ravine—through plain and chaparel, the thorns of which had completely riddled our clothes, and even introduced themselves, in the most abrupt manner, to the "inner man," we were dragged and driven, till the night brought us up to a miser-

able meson (tavern) in the outskirts of Ceralvo. There we were feasted on tough beef, boiled in pepper sauce, seasoned with garlic, tortillas highly spiced, and milk which tasted like water thickened with chalk. Uninviting as would have been a collation, consisting of such arcotics, at any other time, the aristocracy of our epicurianism had now so resolved itself into democratic voracity, as to completely dispel all thoughts of luxury; and we continued to gormandize till a number of Pintos gathered around us, who, as if apprehensive that we were about to make a "clean sweep," sat down on the floor beside us, to help themselves. The tragic manner in which they went to work, justified the conclusion that they had starved as long as ourselves—so we quietly resigned the premises to our new adversaries. We afterwards ascertained that these fellows had composed a part of the Mexican army, and were engaged in the defense of Monterey on the 21st of the preceding month. For the period of the armistice they had been discharged, to shift for themselves, and were wandering through the towns *spunging* a miserable sustenance. They belonged to one of the numerous Indian tribes, and are called Pintos from the fact that, after arriving at manhood, their faces, from some cause or other, which I did not hear explained, become spotted—yellow and red. I presumed these veriegated colors to be the result of some mode of tattooing, though at the time felt quite indifferent as to their cause. They are utterly worthless as soldiers, for if fired upon once, they never stop to receive the second round. For some time we were permitted to sit and endure the taunts and insults of these barbarous bravadoes, who were soon joined by a new recruit of swarthy, ill-visaged citizens, to rejoice at our condition. In this predicament our ignorance of their language was rather blissful, as we failed to translate their personal insinuations. It was not until after we had made an earnest appeal to Poco Llama that we were conducted to our lodgings for the night, where we were locked up in a damp, dismal room, without a window, and left to select the softest place on a brick floor, upon which to recline our agitated frames—while the guard slept before the door, stretched out upon filthy mats. At sunrise, next morning, we were aroused to a breakfast of boiled rice and chili; or that which might be more appropriately termed pepper soup, to be swallowed *hasty* enough for any one.

Breakfast despatched, we were introduced to iron hand cuffs, procured for us in Ceralvo. These were an article of jewelry Dr. Barry peremptorily refused to wear, and it was not until they were forced upon his wrists that he consented they should ornament his person. The company being ready to start, a dispute arose between the landlord and our leader about the bill, when Poco Llama, giving us to understand we were destined to Monclova, told the landlord he had an unprofitable set of customers, and pushed on through town, leaving the bill to "settle itself." The next town of any importance on our route to Monclova, was Marine; but esteeming an approach to that place not entirely prudent, in consequence of its proximity to the

American army then at Monterey—twenty-six miles distant—we pursued a mountain pass 136 miles, across to Carmillo. Meandering along this narrow path over thirty miles, we halted on the third night at a small Dutch settlement, where the *vrouws* gave us some excellent buttermilk—the first article of the kind we had drank in the country, that was not liberally christened with water. The “grub” at this place was also quite palatable, and served by the women, whose gestures seemed to express a lively interest in rendering us comfortable, and sad regrets for our misfortunes. They could “nix-for-stay” the cause of our confinement in chains, until they extorted a lie from Poco Llama, who told them we had been detected and captured as spies. The doors had neither locks, bolts, or bars; so that seeing the signs of sympathy manifested for us among the Dutch, a guard was placed over us for the night.

Our route to Carmillo continued through a country sparsely populated, yet rich in rugged and romantic scenery. Alternately descending abruptly into, and rising from deep ravines, then passing over immense plains, containing little vegetation, except prickley pear, among a thin and dwarfish musquite chaparel, we traveled some thirty miles per day. Reaching the hacienda of San Matero on the 18th, we stopped for the night. This place presented one of the most interesting and novel pictures we had yet encountered. The hacienda is situated twenty six miles from Monclova, on the bank of a small, clear mountain stream, called Agua Pensativo (pure water), and near the center of a lovely basin some thirty miles in circumference. The spot bears every appearance of having once been a populous city. Stone foundations are to be seen, covering many acres. Innumerable columns and walls rise up in every direction, composed of both limestone and sandstone. The columns are built in a variety of shapes, some round, others square, and bear every imprint of the work of human hands. In many of them, the particles are so closely cemented as to leave scarcely a trace of their connection, while others are crumbling and disjointed at their base, as if once inundated in some mighty current that had swept all else away, leaving bare and bleached these isolated monuments of its power. For miles in the vicinity, the basin is covered with broken pottery of burnt clay, fantastically painted and ornamented with a variety of inexplicable designs, which, to some extent, serves to reveal the advancement of a fallen race in the mechanic arts. Whether these ruins have any connection with those of South America, is not known. But be this as it may, at some future day, when a civilized and enlightened people shall succeed the present population, some geologist or antiquarian may reveal the secret of their existence. The Indians pretend to preserve an imperfect tradition of these remains, while the Mexicans believe them to be the ruins of some ancient city of the Aztecs.

The hacienda of San Matero is a most magnificent and extensive seat, enclosing about ten miles square. The principal edifice is a large, two story, stone building, built in the usual style of that coun-

try. In the cultivation and supervision of his grounds, he employs over three thousand men, many of whom have wives and children so that the population must amount to at least six thousand, who reside in rude huts, scattered over the premises. Here, as on the haciendas of Mexico generally, the laborers are slaves—inconceivably more abject and servile in their condition than those of the United States. By a law of that boasted *republic* (?) the poorer classes are allowed the privilege of borrowing small amounts of money from the wealthy, who, to secure the payment of the inconsiderable sums, take a mortgage on their persons. The consummation of the marriage contract, in many of the provinces, is also a prolific source of servitude. The fee of the priest on such occasions amounts to from twenty to thirty dollars; a sum quite beyond the command of the great mass, unless they meet with the good fortune to steal it. The priest will seldom refuse to “tie the knot,” however; and in either of these cases a mortgage is executed upon the persons of those who voluntarily become indebted, and they are slaves, to all intents and purposes—liable to be transferred, indefinitely. It is true, the law does not openly recognize unconditional slavery, yet it justifies the mortgagee, in such cases, in charging those who are thus placed subject to his control, more for their boarding and clothing than their wages amount to; so that each succeeding year, instead of discharging any part of the original obligation, the laborer but increases his indebtedness, and is thus held in perpetual bondage. Their release depends upon one single condition: if from disease, or accident, or through any misfortune, they are rendered unable to perform labor, and thus become unprofitable subjects, they are at once set at liberty, and generally denied even a shelter, where they have perhaps toiled for years in servitude. To fathers is also delegated the privilege of subjecting their daughters to the provisions of this law, and for a trifling offence, handsome, young women are often placed in abject slavery for the period of their natural lives, by their unnatural fathers.

The evening of the following day brought us to Carmillo, a fairy-like village, whose beauties can scarcely be surpassed in all the expansiveness of the wide world. It is such an Eden as our young romantic dreams is apt to picture; where Flora is forever building up her bowers—where willow groves and fruit trees ornament the green fields—where the orange blooms while the golden fruit yet hangs upon its boughs. This village reposes at the foot of a majestic hill, whose one brow frowns upon the silvery currents of the Agua Pensativo, as they toss their white and foamy waves against the rocks, and whose other casts a delightful shade over the valley at noontide, as if to shield the pure and innocent flowers from the envious sunbeams that would rob them of their rainbow hues. We entered it through a beautiful grove of palmetto trees, nearly a mile in length, stretched along the narrow valley of the Agua Pensativo, where the Mexicans were actively engaged in horse-racing, as a kind

of farce, after the more tragic spectacle of their favorite amusement—a bull-fight, had just been concluded. A more delightful spot could not have been selected, and it was literally thronged with people of all ages, classes, and sexes—Mexican women selling pulque, beer, milk, fruit, cakes, candies, and other nicknacks—and every thing conspiring to remind one of a grand gala-day in the United States. With the exception of several groups of ferocious looking men, enveloped in thick, heavy blankets, and who were the living pictures of Mexican bravos, every body seemed just as happy, gay, and contented as if their unfortunate country was not overrun by the “hairy barbarians of the North—the degenerate sons of Washington,” as they politely term us. These men could not restrain their feelings of exultation, and as we passed on through Carmillo, they followed us, uttering their hideous yells of triumph over our helpless situation.

Stopping at a miserable rancho near Carmillo over night, in the fore part of the next day we approached a narrow mountain pass, when suddenly the deep solitude was broken by an Indian, who made the woods resound with the echo of shrieks from his stentorian lungs. He was pursued by a Mexican robber, who held his musket poised for a shot. Hurriedly, and unexpectedly, they dashed past us, from the woods upon a broad surface of rocks and sand interspersed with stunted bushes, at a pace which that starved and tangled chaparal will hardly ever live to witness again. The robber sometimes tripped and fell. The thorns and branches had torn away fragments of his clothing, and bared his grey head, but intent upon his victim, he cared for none of these things. All around towered high hills, half clothed with shaggy forests, while their precipitous crags and scars of avalanches give them an appearance of savage desolation. These hills, in the province of Coahuila, are the terminating ridge of that chain of the great Cordillera, called Sierra Madre, and are channeled with ravines, often extending from top to bottom, presenting the appearance of deep gashes cut in their sides. Many of them expand and grow shallow as they approach the base, where the torrent of earth and stone spreads itself over the valley. Up such an ascent, the unarmed Indian made his way, pursued by his furious antagonist. Our party all paused to witness the struggle. A little stream, whose waters at this season, trickled down the narrow chasm, spreading over the rocks, afforded a precarious foothold, but the frightened savage groped his way, the sides of the ravine towering above his head, and leaving only a strip of the blue sky visible between their verging edges. A “fire in his rear” was suddenly heard, and the mountains bellowed back the report; but the Indian climbed unhurt, gaining rapidly on his pursuer. At length a smooth rock, nearly perpendicular, arrested for the moment, the progress of the robber. He looked, and saw nothing of his prey. At the renewed activity of the savage, his anger and disappointment seemed to generate new fury, and he pressed on. His sole desire

seemed to be that of overtaking and slaying the Indian. With every physical faculty strained to its utmost tension, he worked his way up the precipice, over the steep, wet face of the rock; but here he was compelled to pause, and while his blood cooled, he became conscious of his danger. Above him he could find no crevices large enough in which to thrust his finger, nor a projection that his foot could rest against—beneath he saw the sharp angles of the rocks protruding from the sides of the ravine, and below which all lay in deep blackness, like a bottomless gulf. He tried to descend, but his feet found nothing to support them, and while dangling thus, over the awful chasm, his gun fell from his grasp, dashing from side to side, and splintered into a thousand pieces. The thought that he must perhaps soon follow, appeared to urge him almost to desperation. The grey bristles upon his old head began to take a perpendicular position, and perilous as was the task, he ascended to the top. His success was almost miraculous; and his limbs, aching from the long continued strain of every muscle—the ends of his fingers worn to the bone—the flesh rubbed from his bare knees—and his heart throbbing with a violence unfelt while he was climbing, his energies relaxed, and he sank down under the effort. In the heat of the excitement, our party had witnessed the scene, unobserved; and when we came up to the exhausted and prostrate robber, in an instant he bounded upon his feet, and assumed a belligerent attitude, as if expecting to meet the object of his pursuit. The stern rigor of his features soon changed to suppliancy, and he immediately began to warn our “brave captors” of the imminent danger of the pass, upon whose very threshold we then stood. We had approached the edge of the pass, and dismounted, preparatory to crossing, when a fierce shriek called one of our party back to the robber. But he had disappeared, and near the spot where we had left him, stood the Indian peering down upon his adversary from behind a stunted pine that projected over the gulf. He had turned upon his pursuer, and hurled him headlong into eternity, over the frightful cliff!

This pass is within seventeen miles of Monclova, and is regarded as the most perilous in the hills of Coahuila. Drove of mules or mustangs are seldom taken over it without serious loss. So narrow is the passage, that if an animal make a single misstep, he is precipitated down a precipice some six hundred feet, and if not dashed to pieces, is drowned in the water, unless rescued with the lasso. Two of the rancheros were accordingly stationed below, on the bank of the small, deep stream, with lassos, while two remained behind to drive the mustangs. Amid their shouts and a shower of stones, the animals commenced their perilous journey, with their noses down to the ground, literally smelling their way. They walked carefully along, till the leader had nearly crossed the most hazardous place, when he stumbled, and his hind legs were precipitated over the precipice. With his fore feet and nose, he continued to hold on

to the narrow path. His successor came up and, "following in his footsteps," was soon placed in the same perilous situation. The third mustang knocked the noses of those two off the path, and losing his own gravity by the act, heels over head, they all rolled down the steep slope together, and bounding in the air from a perpendicular off-set, they were plunged into the torrent below. We thought, of course, they were all killed, but they presently rose up from the surface, looking astonished at so uncereemonious an immersion, and commenced stemming the current. During this time, all eyes were turned to the scene below, and the other mustangs had stopped, evidently unwilling to proceed after witnessing the fate of their "illustrious predecessors." They were again started, however, and all accomplished the pass with no apparent difficulty. Only one of the number that had taken a telegraphic jaunt down the precipice, was rescued from the stream alive, and he was left on the ground in a dying condition.

This was a sad misfortune to us, as the loss of three mustangs left us without a conveyance. A *ranchero* is constitutionally opposed to predestrianism, and our ponies were at once taken to supply the places of those that had been lost. The prospect of being near the end of our journey was some consolation; so we set off, descending the mountain on foot, among the sharp stones, thorny shrubs, and wild maguery, which pierced us at almost every step. We soon arrived at a small, dingy looking rancho, where we expected to procure refreshments, but were sadly disappointed. The place was in a worse state of confusion than the people about Babylon ever dreamed of; and we learned that a party of Camancha Indians, twenty or thirty in number, had pounced down upon the unsuspecting denizens on the previous day, killing several of the men—plundered the houses—and carried off, in triumph, the women and children—leaving the survivors in a state of sorrow bordering on phrenzy. We could afford to feel but little sympathy for them, as that article was nearly exhausted from home consumption, and we knew that they only wanted the opportunity to be guilty of a similar outrage themselves.

Observing several mules about the premises, we proposed to Poco Llama, that he furnish us with the luxury of such a conveyance, but he disdainfully refused to do so, stating that we were now quite beyond the reach of the "*Americanos*," and that a little exercise might serve to remind us of our obligations to him for having permitted us to ride as far as we had, in the interior of their *republic*.

Just as the last glimpses of departing sunlight were fading in the far-off west, we entered the city of Monclova, the capital of the province of Coahuila. We found our quarters here quite comfortable, and our fare consisted of delicacies to which we had long been unused. We had been now over a week without a change of clothes, and the consequence was, we were more ragged, dirty, and lousy, than the *rancheros* themselves. Worn down by the fatigues

we had encountered, we were ready for almost any change which would place us beyond the control of our present masters. Monclova was the first place where we were permitted to enjoy the luxury of a decent bed, since our departure from Camargo, and after a night of uninterrupted repose, we were aroused by our "magnanimous leader," who had brought a purchaser to examine us. Slave dealers in our own country, like merchants, generally bestow some pains in showing off to the best advantage their articles of traffic, preparatory to a sale; but we experienced no such evidences of refinement, and presented, by no means, an imposing appearance. The purchaser was the printer of a small eight by ten sheet, called the "*Espanol*." He surveyed us in a good humored manner, and confessed that he should be really pleased to have a mortgage on us, but doubted his ability to raise the amount demanded. We did not learn what that amount was; and with the understanding that he would use his exertions in obtaining the funds, he departed, promising that in the event of his success he would return in the course of a few days, to renew the negotiation. After breakfast, we were somewhat surprised upon learning that we were to be conveyed to the common prison, to take up our abode in the *interim*. Without the least ceremony, however, we were marched off and confined in this common receptacle for all sorts of criminals. This edifice stands in the immediate vicinity of the city, within a large court yard, the entrance to which is secured by several iron gates, which it had not seemed necessary to close. The approach to the prison forms a succession of horrors, the gradual increase of which prepare the mind for those which are to ensue, and are a fit prologue to the unrevealed miseries yet behind. The massive doors, with their huge fastenings—the chains, of forms and sizes as various as the crimes which fill the heart of man, and hanging upon the walls, as if in mockery of the ornaments which usually adorn ordinary dwellings; the thick stone walls, through which the passages seem rather to be cut than built, cast a chill upon the blood when entering—and the heavy weight which falls upon one's animal spirits, serves more to check respiration than the damp, cold floor of the prison itself. This oppression is heightened, too, by the scarcely human appearance of the keepers, who swarm about the threshold; and who, if their features ever expressed the feelings of other men, a continued commerce with the most abandoned, and their familiarity with crime, have changed them to stoicism, and blighted every purer impulse. But painful as is the approach to this scene of horror, each succeeding step becomes infinitely more so. We were ushered into a long, whitewashed chamber, lighted by small windows, secured by iron bars. At one end lay the mattresses and bedding of the inmates, rolled up in as small a compass as possible, and at the other a leaden sink, furnished with water for the use of the prisoners, but to which, from every appearance, the premises had not recently been introduced, for the place was filthy, almost to suffocation. At the same

time so bare and desolate an appearance prevailed throughout the room, that if all other circumstances of horror had been absent, there was enough in the mere look of the place to make one shudder. But the people—the human beings who were to be our companions—formed a spectacle the most revolting.

During the day, after failing in repeated attempts to engage in conversation with those whom we found could speak only the French and Spanish languages, we at length came up to a pale, emaciated young man, who seemed to be in the last stage of consumption, and who, to our utter astonishment, we soon found to be one of the Mier prisoners! He had been kept in confinement since 1842. His name was Preston Oakley, and he was among those who were supposed to have perished in the hills of Coahuila, after the escape of himself and party from Salado. He had been picked up by a ranchero, in an unconscious state, produced from thirst and hunger, and after recovering, was placed in the mines at Lake Cayman, where he had remained in the bowels of the earth until last February, at which time, suffering the almost dying agonies incident to a broken constitution, he was brought to this den of vice and misery, for the purpose of recovering health and strength, to enable him to resume his labors. His sight, which he had entirely lost, in the deep, dark caverns, had not yet been wholly restored, and his pale features looked as if they had robbed the spirit-land of half its ghastliness. Five years without a syllable of intelligence in regard to the fate of his comrades, or from his home, his joy at meeting us may be appreciated only by those who have passed through the darkest labyrinths of affliction. The circumstances by which we ourselves were surrounded, and the unknown future that had yet to reveal our destiny, awoke at once our sympathy, and inspired us with a deep interest in the history of his sufferings, which, as he recounted, his lean, skinny hand would wipe an occasional tear from his cadaverous cheek. It was long before he had concluded his succession of enquiries. Sunk in the deep depression of despondency, he had no hope of ever returning to his native land: and he earnestly implored us, in the event of our release, to inform his friends where, and in what condition we had met him, and that he should soon be beyond the reach of oppression.

On the succeeding day, after breakfast, which was served on a long deal table, stretched across the room, with rude benches on either side, we began to tax our philosophy to invent some means of occupying the time. We endeavored to bury the realities of the present, by imagining ourselves in the "halls of the Montezumas;" but the groups of the haggard shadows of humanity, which gathered around us, forbid such a conclusion, and we finally sat down in our tattered and unfashionable garbs, while young Oakley pointed out some of the prominent characters, and gave us such information relative to them as had come to his own knowledge.

Near the chimney was a miserable, dwarfish looking old man,

wrapped in a blanket as venerable as himself, reading, or rather spelling, a hymn book, which had been given him by one of the priests, who are always about the prisons of Mexico. He had been arrested for stealing goats from a neighbor, and was awaiting his trial. On the opposite side, three men, each of whom were heavily ironed, were walking to and fro. At every step their fetters rung on each other, and the regularity of their paces, produced a dull, monotonous sound, as sad as the groans which may be imagined to proceed from the prison caverns of the damned. They had been condemned for burglary, a crime, although entirely fashionable, punishable with death, when committed on the property of the rich and influential. They seemed wholly unconscious of the presence of any other persons in the room. In their actions might be traced a bitter feeling of remorse—not repentence of their crimes—but regret that they had been reduced to this helpless and hopeless condition. A rather superior character to these criminals was a Frenchman, who sat near us. His mind had, to a certain degree, been refined by education and travel, and he conversed fluently in the English and Spanish, as well as French. His crime consisted in a refusal or neglect to observe a due degree of deference to the requisitions of the church ordinances. In a state of feverish anxiety, he was expostulating with himself, upon the injustice of his detention, and the impossibility of further punishment.

While engaged in curious speculations, and thinking what strange lessons of the human heart were to be learned in a school like this, we saw a woman enter the prison, dressed in a splendid, but somewhat awkward, manner. She was approaching a handsome featured young man, who was engaged in writing a letter at the further end of the table. She hung over him, as if whispering words of consolation and deliverance, and when she looked up, I recognized that “dangerous gift of beauty” which had lured so many of her sex to the most fatal destruction. The appearance of these two persons, in this place of unmixed wretchedness, and among people on whom privations and confinement had fixed their hard and degrading stamp, formed a distressing contrast. The young man was of pure Spanish blood, and had been an artist—respectable in his profession. He had long been pursuing a dishonest course, and being detected in counterfeiting, was condemned to death. The female had shared his short-lived prosperity, and now with a rare fidelity, clung to him in his lost and fallen fortunes, when all the world beside had abandoned him. This instance of the power of that passion which rules the world, struck me as being infinitely more remarkable than many of those proofs of female affection which are cited as heroic.

Here were two persons whose lives had been base and profligate to the last degree—that of the woman too vile to think upon—and yet that holy and purifying passion, which neither vice, nor crime, nor misery could extinguish, now seemed, as it were to triumph over all. And in the very hour, when it was the turn of the most hateful

qualities to have uncontrolled sway—when every inducement, even the opinion of the world—of that world by which both had been abandoned—was in favor of her deserting the man, she was impelled, by the unaided, irresistible power of her affections, to comfort his hapless wretchedness; to strip herself of all she possessed to lighten the burdens of a wicked soul that was about to be denied a frail habitation upon the earth—and this, too, for a man whose claims upon her affection, if they could have been estimated, were probably as such men's claims mostly are, less than that which he would have had upon a brute, destitute of reason! That intelligent and virtuous females know no limits in their exertions for men whom they love, excites no wonder, for it is the result of sincere, ardent, and pure attachment; but that a woman, divested of the most estimable attributes of her sex, degraded in mind and in person, regarded by the better part of society as an anomaly—a monster, belonging to neither sex, but the reproach of both—that she should, in the depth of her humiliation, practice, and in one instance, at least, feel the same devoted virtue which would have added dignity to the most exalted of women—that she should do this, with a disinterestedness which admits of no doubt; for the object of her love was a wretched criminal, whose days were numbered, and whose name was wedded to disgrace and contempt—this it is that excited my astonishment, and the highest veneration for the passion which can work such wonders.

“The treasures of the deep are not so precious
As are the concealed comforts of a man
Locked up in woman's love!”

CHAPTER V.

RELEASE FROM PRISON AT MONCLOVA—PUNISHMENT OF CRIMINALS—ADVANCE OF GEN. WOOL'S ARMY—OUR DEPARTURE FOR ZACHATECAS—MEXICAN EXPRESSES—PARRAS—NOVEL FUNERAL PROCESSION—BURIAL OF A MUCHACHA—LAKE OF PARRAS—RIO GRANDE DE PARRAS—DIET—MOSQUITOS—DEGRADATION OF FEMALES—IMPLEMENTS OF HUSBANDRY—AN INDIAN CITY—INDIAN FORTIFICATIONS—INDIAN WOMEN—CAPTURED BY THE INDIANS—CROSSING A RIVER—ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE—DROWNING OF A RANCHERO—TOWNS AND CITIES—FRESNILLO—CATHOLIC PROCESSION—ARRIVAL AT ZACHATECAS.

THERE are tragedies in real life, which, but for their every-day occurrence, would penetrate men's souls deeper than all the fabled woes that poets ever yet imagined. They consist of that war which crime is ever waging upon the dark soul of its victim; and it is revolting to be compelled to gaze upon sorrows one has not the means to alleviate—still more humiliating to endure privations he has no

power to avenge. During the brief term of five days' confinement within the gloomy walls of the prison at Monclova, among criminals condemned to die, I received impressions which years will not suffice to obliterate. It is impossible to contemplate, without the deepest pain, spectacles of degradation, which there became "familiar as household words." Laying aside the enormity of their crimes and the justice of their punishment, the discipline of a Mexican prison, and the tortured agony of its inmates are enough to paralyze the cold and rigid sensibilities of a Siberian serf. As I would sit and contemplate this mass of conscious helplessness and misery, my mind would naturally translate itself to my own country, and indulge in comparisons. I thought what a glorious field here presented itself for the benevolent purposes of Miss Dix, whose disinterested efforts to restrain the rigorous discipline of the prisons of the United States, have made many a penitent heart glad. But the melancholy history of unfortunate Mexico, records rare examples of pure and elevated virtue, combined with accomplishments like hers. Indeed, had "Solomon, in all his glory," lived out his days there, his remark—"who can find a virtuous woman?—her price is far above rubies!"—would doubtless have been esteemed as profound as in his own Oriental land.

The establishment of no penitentiary system is authorized by the penal code of Mexico. Capital punishment is frequently inflicted "by authority," for the most trivial offenses; but when the crime of the transgressor does not merit such severity, the laws condemn him to serve in the army, for a certain period of time, stipulated in accordance with the enormity of his offense. Thus, the position of a soldier in the defense of his own soil, which is every where else an honor, is there rendered a disgrace. The law's delay is often more annoying to the criminal than satisfying the ends of justice, when condemned. In the capital of each province is a prison, after the fashion of the one described at Monclova, in all of which men are frequently confined twenty years, without trial, conviction, or sentence.

No sooner had the rumor of Gen. Wool's approach towards Monclova reached the ears of our captors, than we were immediately released from our inhospitable abode, with a hope that we should not only find better quarters, but more agreeable companions. We soon learned, however, that owing to the rapid advance of the American army, we had the high prerogative of advancing before them, and were compelled, at once, to take up the line of march towards Parras, with a fair prospect of a pedestrian excursion to Zacatecas, four hundred and forty-five miles further into the interior. The authorities at Monclova received intelligence of the advance of Gen. Wool, three days before his arrival; and it is a remarkable fact, that although their facilities seem to be inferior, they always manage to compete with us in despatching an express. This may be attributed to the fact that the law authorizes the rider to supply himself

with a fresh mule or mustang, at every rancho if necessary, and to always take the fleetest.

In less than four days after our departure, we reached Parras, a distance of one hundred and forty-three miles from Monclova. This was "walking Spanish," with a degree of expedition which would do credit to the efforts of Evans, or any other pedestrian. On the night preceding our arrival in town, we remained at the rancho of Don Manuel Ibarra. The Don, with his brother, and several other citizens of the town, had been educated at Bardstown, Kentucky, and conversed remarkably well in English. Besides being quite civilized himself, he entertained us in a civilized manner; and his wine came very near raising our independence so far above zero, as to burst our chains, and declare in favor of the "largest liberty." He asked many questions about Bardstown, and seemed to revert, with peculiar zest, to the place of his schoolboy haunts; and while he made no effort to restrain his indignation at seeing us hand-cuffed, he offered no substantial relief.

Parras is a perfect paradise of a place. It is celebrated for the extensive vineyards which spread out in every direction from its vicinity, and for its manufacture of wines, pulque, muscal, and ardiente. The streets were all clean and in good repair, while in every door, and at every window, beautiful senoras and señoritas made their appearance, and who did not suppress their feelings of deep commiseration, as we passed. It was some high church day among the natives, and observed as a *fete*. The streets were thronged with Mexicans—men, women, and children, all of whom appeared to have been washed and dressed up, for once in their natural lives, at least. In the morning, before we arrived, there had been a grand and imposing procession, and during the remaining portion of the day there was a general cavorting or *ramosing* through the streets. Those of their soldiers who had participated in the battle of Monterey, had returned, under the weight of the laurels they had won in that bloody conflict, and were warmly applauded by the priests and ignorant officials, who seem to regard every engagement as a victory, however fatal to them the fortunes of the day.

All nations have their different customs, just as all individuals have their distinguishing characteristics; and in a strange country, to a stranger, both are often interesting. In the evening we witnessed a most novel ceremony. It was on the occasion of the burial of a *muchacha*, a small female child. The excitement created by the *fete*, had been the means of collecting together a large assemblage; so that the public places were all filled to overflowing, and our caravan, "horse, foot, and dragoons," experienced much difficulty in finding a place of entertainment. While sauntering through the streets, under the vigilant eyes of our haughty masters, our attention was first arrested by the sight of a priest, clad in a white robe, ornamented with various emblems pertaining to the Catholic church, coming out of one of the cathedrals, preceded by four small boys, in their

scarlet under robes and white mantles, each bearing a candle branch; while the dolefully discordant ringing of the bells apprised us that something unusual was on the tapis. They had not proceeded far till the priest entered a small house, around which had assembled a number of males and females. Our ears were soon saluted by an unearthly sound, which the natives dignify with the name of music, but which if Shakspeare meant should *move* all who were fit for nought but "treasons, stratagems, and spoils," he was quite mistaken. The sound was produced by three fiddles, and a venerable looking individual with a large violoncello, each playing a distinct and separate tune, if tunes they might be called, and accompanied by several voices, in an unintelligible chant. While this novel performance was going on within, three men without were engaged in throwing small rockets, which exploded, making a report as loud as that of a pistol. It was not long till the *padre* and altar boys came out, preceded by the musicians, and followed by the corpse, borne on the shoulders of four men. The bier was composed of a short, rough box, having an upright cross at the head, shrouded with white muslin, and covered with a profusion of artificial flowers, and other ornaments, tastefully arranged. At the top of the bier was a dingy brown figure, about two feet in length, enveloped in a velvet robe decorated with gold and silver tinsel, and upon its head a bright brass crown, confining a mass of long, raven hair. The hands of the figure were clasped closely over the breast, and presented, as did the features, the appearance of wax. From the house, the funeral procession, which was small, proceeded to the church, where we presume the service was performed by the priest. At least the fiddling and chanting soon ceased, and the procession came out. The body was then conveyed about half a mile, to a consecrated burial ground, unaccompanied by the priest, but still preceded by the fiddlers, and men with the rockets. Our captors, whether in respect to the deceased, or from a sense of *religious* duty, all joined in the procession, and we were also required to accompany them. Before arriving at the grave-yard, it was necessary to ascend a hill, at the base of which all the paraphernalia was left. Here, to our surprise, that which we had all considered a wax figure, sacred to the memory of the Virgin of Gaudaloupe, and which I have described, was the body of the poor little infant itself, whose soul had been transported to heaven, there to join its purer kindred spirits. A strange tradition is connected with the history of the imaginary Virgin of Gaudaloupe, and the annual festivals which are held in honor of her first appearance. The natives contend that she first introduced herself to an Indian shepherd, in the early conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards, and commanded him, "in the name of Mary, the mother of God," to summon the bishop to her presence. The bishop refused to attend until satisfactory evidence was produced that the shepherd had not conjured up an imaginary vision to deceive him—after which he erected a magnificent church on the spot

where she had first appeared to the Indian—and the anniversary of the day is yet observed as one of their holiest holidays. A wax figure of full size, representing the virgin, is often used on funeral occasions, which led us to an erroneous conclusion on this. The funeral obsequies of the child were brief, and I could not help remarking that there was no apparent expression of sorrow or regret among the friends, but it seemed to be more an occasion for rejoicing. A number of the Mexicans who mingled in the procession, perhaps from motives of curiosity, appeared highly pleased at seeing American spectators present, and one of them asked me if I did not think it *mucho bueno*, which I afterwards learned to mean very beautiful!

Parras contains about fifteen thousand inhabitants; it is located near the line, but within the limits of the province of Coahuila. In its immediate vicinity, on the west, is a beautiful lake bearing the same name, and the waters of which serve to irrigate the grounds for miles in circumference. We had remained in the city till the afternoon of the day succeeding our arrival, and after our departure, encamped for the night upon the banks of this lake, which is over thirty miles in length, and varying in width from five to twelve miles. It was sun set when we sat down at the end of our day's journey, and the dark blue hills in the neighborhood looked like chains of amethysts in a golden setting. The placid waters faithfully mirrored back the beautiful vision, only as with a light gauzy veil breathed over it. There were orange groves of no ideal kind; and the perfumes of odoriferous gums filled the atmosphere. Acacia shrubs, interwoven with wild lilac and blue-colored parasite, flourished on the banks, whose refreshing fragrance seemed infinitely richer than the breath of spring in our own fields and woods, during the fairest season of the year. The delusion was enough to make us forget the gloom which gathered round our own destiny, till the wild doves upon the palm branches in all their native liberty, set up their mournful, melancholy notes. Montazuma hens were gathered in clusters upon the banks, and a variety of water-fowl, some marble white, others raven black, were chirping out their monotonous evening songs. Large flocks of pelicans were floating over the lake, and occasionally the heron with his heavy-flapping wings, would agitate the bosom of the clear blue waters—for the birds in Mexico, like every thing else, animate or inanimate, are supplied with horns. After the sun had entirely sunk behind the Pacific, on his road to enlighten the Kong-wongs and the Che-mungs, of the Celestial Empire, the evening glow faded away, but a still softer radiance came to clothe the pale mountains with rosy tints. The shining stars had risen, looking out like angel's eyes upon the lake, with none of that glimmering, as if they trembled with cold, which is seen in our clear winter nights. Their bright shadows were mirrored in the lovely lake, across whose silvery flood, pueblas floated in their rude gondolas, as if between two heavens. Along the banks life was stirring. Fires were burning at the hearths, before the doors of the huts at the rancheros; flocks

of bleating sheep and goats were moving homeward; and the barking of smooth, hairless dogs, the singing of men, and shouting of children, swelled the concert and served to beguile the hours of a sleepless night.

For several consecutive days our route continued along the bank of the Rio Grande de Parras (Grand river of Parras), the waters of which flow into this lake; some nights stopping at rancheros and haciendas, others in the woods, with no shelter but the dark blue roof of the world. At the rancheros we found an addition to the usual diet in the shape of wild fowls, often well cooked, and whose carcasses we demolished with a decided relish. An improvement was also perceptible in the appearance of many of the women, whose pretty faces we could not well avoid looking at, and who, although they were rather shy and inclined to shun us at first, would generally approach us without much sign of fear before we left. The picturesque grouping of the mangrove and banana, to say nothing of the palm so abundant on the banks of this river, could not but excite our admiration. But it is seldom we experience a pleasing sensation unalloyed with something of the portentous or opposite; and while enjoying the incomparable beauty of this Mexican river, we were not only annoyed with an oft returning sense of wrongs inflicted by human hands, but by swarms of sand flies, and broods of mosquitos, of the largest size, and keenest bills, the loudest singers, and sharpest biters in the universe. Theirs is no guerilla warfare, but a bold, manly attack in front. The fatigues of a hard day's journey was no security against one of their charges, and even the tough skinned Mexicans were not impervious to their assaults—notwithstanding Poco Llama had proved himself constitutionally opposed to *settling bills*. We may talk as we will about the beautiful skies of Mexico, her balmy gales, and the gaiety of landscape, which can hardly be conceived in less sunny climes—it will fascinate the imagination, but will not shield us from the barbarous cruelty of her mosquitos—they are the reality of the romance, and dispel the brightest illusions, by their sanguinary onslaughts.

Near a village or hacienda, called Punta Velascos, in the province of Zacatecas, we witnessed a spectacle which, to the credit of the Mexican people, is by no means a common one. Repulsive as some of their customs are, we were not prepared for a scene of barbarism like this. We actually saw a number of females, harnessed like cattle, to the plough, dragging it through the soil, while men were lounging in the furrows, lazily swinging at the handles. Women were here emphatically degraded to the drudge of life, and it was enough to make the heart bleed to look upon the burdens they were compelled to bear. There is no affectation or sentimentality in this—it is a plain, but lamentable fact, which we were happy to find staring us in the face at only the one place during our progress through the provinces.

The ploughs and other instruments of husbandry, used by the na-

tives, were such as to excite our curiosity. They are all constructed of wood, with the bare exceptions of the pick and crowbar, which are pointed with iron. A Mexican plough is nothing more nor less than the fork of a small tree, the one prong of which, being sharpened, serves for the share, while the other is extended as a beam—with a pole or handle attached to the crotch, and you have completed the celebrated implement which furrowed out the fame of Cincinnatus himself. We learned that the "peacock," and other patterns of the improved plough, had at different times been introduced there, but rejected as "Yankee notions."

Between Parras and St. Catharina, we encountered several different Indian tribes, the first of which was the Yaquis, a small tribe, all of whom reside in a city called Yaqui, the population of which amounts to perhaps four or five thousand. The features and general appearance of these people bear a closer resemblance to the European or Anglo-Saxon race, than do those of the Mexicans. Docile and timid in their habits, they support themselves by agriculture, and cultivate extensive fields of Indian corn and potatoes in the neighborhood of their city. Their buildings are all one story high, constructed of unburnt brick; and those of each square consist of one solid block, all the rooms being in direct communication with each other. There are four streets diverging from the center, where stands, upon a high eminence, a temple dedicated to the sun. These streets divide the city into four distinct squares, or districts, each of which has its own municipal regulations. The whole presents a rather commanding appearance, and is certainly creditable to the taste and ingenuity of its aboriginal projectors. This tribe long since absolved all allegiance to Mexican authority—rejecting not only their government, but religion, and will permit neither their priests or civil dignitaries to come among them. Their manner of worship consist of the same forms and ceremonies as did that of the ancient Aztecs, with the exception of the sacrifices. They have ceased to immolate themselves upon the altar, probably from the fact that their race is nearly extinct. The history of this tribe is marked by repeated acts of the most cruel oppression. About thirty years ago they were all driven from their homes, and fled to the extreme north of the province of Sonora, where they founded a more extensive colony, and where a great portion of the tribe yet remains. Those who now compose the population of Yaqui, are such as were impelled to return, through the influence of that yearning, instinctive love for their native land, which is, to some extent, inherent in the breast of the whole human family; and which so attaches them to their early homes, that neither outrage nor oppression can drive them hence. Not only have they been assailed, plundered, and murdered by the Mexicans, but their honest labors are taxed to support another more barbarous and savage tribe, called the Taranechas, who annually rob them of a great portion of their substance.

The Taranechas are a hostile and heathen tribe, a number of

whom are to be found among the soldiers of the Mexican army, and particularly in the guerrillo parties; which entitles them to some favorable consideration from the government. Our route lay directly through their town or fort, which is on the bank of the Rio Grande de Parras, not far from the source of that river. The fort extends from the river bank to the top of a high hill, the country behind which is inaccessible, and altogether, commands a grand and enchanting prospect. The fortifications encircled the summit of the hill, and consisted of an enclosure of high palisadoes, firmly and closely secured; within this there was a thick, broad hedge, rendered impenetrable by the matting of ivy, junipers, briars, and other sorts of copse. These circular barriers had but two entrances, and within them stood the wigwams, forming another circle, with an intervening space of a most beautiful, verdant lawn, between them and the fortification. They appeared like a circle of arbors, constructed of young trees, twisted together and bent to unite in the form of a cone or dome, at the top, and so ingeniously covered with bark, and often in more elegant style with mats made of reeds, as to be dry and comfortable. An orifice at the top emitted the smoke of the fire, in the center of each, presenting a life-like and domestic spectacle. A grand circular area within the whole, was used as exigence required. In the evenings the young met in it, and joined in the festive dance. During the day it was a gymnasium for athletic feats of activity and strength, and exercises in arms and combat. On more important occasions, it was the forum of counsellors, who met to dispense justice, and regulate the affairs of the tribe. An elevated mound in the center of all, seemed to be a kind of observatory, from which arose a tall, straight pole, surmounted by a bull's head.

But we found the prospective far more charming than the place itself. The nearer we approached, the enchantment of its rural elegance was dispelled. The filth cast out before the doors of the wigwams, rose up in putrifying heaps. These corrupting offals disgusted alike the eyes and olfactories of all but the Indians. In the sunny space, the young Indians, like groups of grumpling quadrupeds, had crawled together in a state of primitive nakedness. Not yet able to walk, they sprawled and sported together, with that degree of careless indolence a voluptuous clime inspires. Their hair, which in riper years is jet black, was blanched; and the red color of their plump physiognomies was considerably heightened by exposure to the influence of a tropical sun. A rupture finally ensued among these little varlots, which soon called the squaws from their wigwams, and who came dashing like furies into the group. Each plucked her particular charge from the uproarious heap, and tossing it over her brawny shoulders, screamed in concert with the shrill pipes, raised to the highest key, of the outraged and inquiringurchin. The squaws, whom we learned were seldom on the most amicable footing with each other, kindling with the supposed inju-

ries sustained by their respective papposes, now turned the strife actively toward each other; and the juveniles clung to their mother's backs, grinning, and spitting wrath, as their guardians pulled each other's hair, and fought with nails and fists, till a number lay routed on the ground. Such clamor in the camp, seemed to be no usual thing, and called forth the interference of several warriors, who soon calmed the tempest. The shafts of their lances flourished about the disheveled heads of the insurgents like forked lightning; and battered and routed, the whole female force fled, growling and whining under their wounds, to the interior of their hovels. This insurrection brought to the doors of their wigwams, several feeble, infirm, and superannuated old fellows, who looked like successful candidates for "the hunting grounds above." Their heads were hoary and bald. Though emaciated and withered, they were not bowed and bent like our veteran mechanics and laborers, but straight as rushes; and through their furrowed, wrinkled, smoke-beared features, much of the Indian manly expression might be discerned.

While all these things were transpiring, a crowd, headed by the sachems, had assembled around us, and to our surprise, taken our captors captives; while they stared at us, with as much amazement as if we had just dropped from the moon, or Le Verrier's new planet. After learning the character of our captors, and the nature of their mission, a brief deliberation at the council-fires, resulted in permitting us all to pass on, unmolested; not, however, till after we had dined with the Indians, who feasted us on bean soup, and the meat of a venerable mustang, that, had a coroner's inquest been held over his defunct carcass, the verdict would have been, "came to his death from abstemious habits." While engaged in discussing the soup, for we did not feel inclined to disturb the dry bones of a "dead horse," our attention was drawn to a scene of another description. It was the Indian youth of the tribe, just returning from a pillaging excursion, with three other ill-fated prisoners. The conquerors of Parthia, on their triumphal entry, could not have felt or expressed higher exultation. They had burned and destroyed three families of Zamboes, whose scalps they had brought on long poles, to grace their pageantry. The prisoners, after promising to become initiated into the tribe, had been permitted to survive. This was a youthful feat, worthy of the fame of their choicest warriors, and in which they exulted with the enthusiastic warmth of youth. Though their features were of a heavy symmetry—all of a dark bronze color, some shades lighter than their jet, bushy hair, yet the fire of the soul animated the dark, round countenance with the highest marks of expression. Their large eyes seemed kindled; and the compressed lips, distended nostrils, and glistening ray that radiated and burst from their visages, exhibited the native energy of Indian character, which indolence and want of cultivation had combined to suppress. A shout burst from the midst of them. It was responded to by the young Indian females hastening to meet them. The

warriors joined in the deafening acclamation, and the fort rung with praise and triumph. As we retreated from the enclosure, they commenced a kind of fandango, or war dance, and it was long before their shouts of revelry died upon our ears.

Passing on through the old military and missionary station of St. Catharina, we crossed the Rio Grande de Parras, near Sombrerete, in a novel looking ferry-boat, made something after the fashion of an "Ohio broadhorn." Our passage was purposely delayed till the ferry-boat made her last trip, while six of the company were left to guard us. This was the first stream of any importance we had encountered during our journey, and apprised that we were to cross it, we had already concerted an attempt to escape. Being good swimmers, although our arms were confined behind us, we resolved to jump overboard, which resolution was carried into effect soon after the boat was pushed into the current. Quite unexpectedly, three of the Mexicans plunged in after us, one of whom went to the bottom to rise no more. Through the excitement, and by the unlooked for rapidity of the current, I was carried a half mile below, to the opposite shore, where those of the party who had previously crossed were awaiting my arrival. As they threw a lasso over my head, they laughed heartily at the futility of any effort we might make to escape. My companions, (Mr. Cunningham and Dr. Barry,) swam to the other shore, but were pursued by the rancheros on mustangs, and soon retaken. They made no effort to rescue the body of the drowned Mexican, but passed on to Sombrerete with the utmost indifference in regard to his fate. Considerably refreshed by this immersion, we set off on the ensuing morning for Fresnillo, over the best road and through the best cultivated region we had yet looked upon in Mexico.

A most striking difference exists between the *manner* of their population and that of the United States. From a variety of causes, such as scarcity of water and timber—as a means of defense against the banditti, and the existence of mineral resources, which constitute the chief wealth of the country, Mexico sustains nearly her entire population in the towns and cities, all of which will be found much larger than an American would be apt to anticipate. While in the country, instead of encountering farms or villages at almost every turn of the road, one will not unfrequently travel three days without seeing even a temporary habitation. Few of the towns in the interior and mining districts, contain a population of less than ten thousand, some as high as sixty thousand; and all having a number of churches, which are universally constructed in the Gothic style of architecture.

Fresnillo, within thirty miles of Zacatecas, contains a population of twelve thousand. Its neighboring scenery is rich and diversified; and its numerous gardens, luxuriant herbage and fertile fields, serve to render it one of those paradises, on a small scale, which so abound in Mexico. Our arrival in the place was just in

time to witness the closing scene of another grand Catholic procession, in honor of some of the saints—we did not inquire who. Many of the streets through which the procession had passed, were yet green with pine leaves, while across them, overhead, were arches of evergreens, variegated with flowers of different hues. As is usual on such occasions, all the church ornaments were conspicuously displayed at different parts of the city, and the windows of the wealthier portion of the inhabitants richly decorated with crimson curtains and silk flags of the most costly material.

On the following day we had a comparatively easy march, over a broad, well-constructed road, to Zacatecas. Added to this favorable circumstance, the prospect of approaching the end of our long journey, a very perceptible change for the better began to manifest itself in our feelings. Our condition was melancholy enough, and although we had little reason to hope for improvement, we knew that new cruelties could not well be inflicted—for we were almost ready to welcome death itself, as a relief from an existence offering so little charm for the future. Our clothes were so tattered and torn into shreds and strings, as to expose the bare skin to the burning sun; while at every ventilation, a blister of the same dimensions obtruded itself into the very face of the sun's rays—so the elements themselves appeared to conspire to *draw* us into fresh afflictions. As for boots or shoes, they had long since been dispensed with—their term of service having expired, not by virtue of limitation, but the performance of extra service. With bare feet and legs, lacerated and bleeding, and our physical energies almost exhausted after a jaunt of nearly five hundred miles, we entered the gates of Zacatecas on the evening of the 7th of November, depressed even more from anxiety to learn our final fate, than from what we had already endured.

CHAPTER VI.

ZACATECAS—PEACE PARTY—AMERICAN CITIZENS—THEIR HOSPITALITY—
OUR RELEASE—CONTEMPLATED RETURN—A MEXICAN EDITOR.

AROUSÉ from our slumbers early on the morning after our arrival in Zacatecas, we looked out upon its broad streets with new impulses. Situated in the beautiful valley of the Santander river, the towering peaks of Sierra Madre with their rich and hidden treasures seem to look down upon the city with a kind of paternal significance. As if limning on her largest scale, nature has here

made all her figures bold and colossal—all her features prominent and strongly marked.

Zacatecas, the capital of the province of the same name, was by far the largest place we had yet entered, during our progress through the country. It contains thirty-five thousand inhabitants, with well paved streets, and tasteful buildings. Its population is composed, not alone of the Spanish and Mexican races, but is mixed with a number of French, English, and Americans, and whose improvements, instead of being confined to chemical developments and the pursuits of trade, are convulsing the moral and political state of the country. A more enlightened feeling here pervaded, than in any other portion we had visited. The inert mass of the province had advanced at least one step beyond their neighbors, in feeling and asserting their importance. Perhaps it was the influence of example—this schooling of their dormant spirits—yet there seemed really to exist half an inclination to enter the palace of the Belshazzars, and write admonitions on the walls. The still small voice of popular rights which found utterance at the commencement of the Texan revolution, had not died away, but was yet audible, and almost ready to burst in thundering intonations.

It will be recollected that in the struggle between the Centralists and Federalists, when Texas boldly led off, the province of Zacatecas joined in what was denounced as a rebellion. Her people were soon overwhelmed, however, by Santa Anna and his army, and subdued. Since that period the most inveterate hatred of Santa Anna has existed among all the population, except perhaps, the priests and officers of the Central government. A peace party, numbering among its members many native citizens of influence and wealth, Americans and other foreigners, residing there, existed at the time of our arrival. This party was awaiting with much anxiety the appearance of Gen. Taylor and his army, whose advance upon the place was then daily anticipated. This gave to the Americans a degree of confidence and assurance, which, under other circumstances, they would not have dared to avow. Having heard of our arrival and almost perishing condition, a deputation of them, led by Dr. Hetzel, formerly a resident of Missouri, came to our quarters, and demanded an interview with us in private. This was at first peremptorily refused. Confined and guarded, as we were, within a room on the second floor of the *meson*, we looked down upon the mob, which was fast accumulating, with peculiar sensations—with that mingling of hope and fear which so strangely thrills the breast, at the evident approach of a crisis in one's destiny. We could not be mistaken in distinguishing among the crowd the faces of some of our own countrymen—for the Yankee never fails to betray his identity—yet we knew nothing of their strength or spirit, and could not even wish them to make a demonstration in our behalf, engaged as the two countries were in hostilities. They would thus forfeit their own claims to protection, and render their own persons and property liable to seizure. Their

purpose was soon accomplished, however, without any manifestation of violence. The mob growing stronger, momentarily, our captors, at first at a loss what course to pursue, settled at once upon the more prudent policy of admitting them; and upon witnessing the feeling displayed in our favor, with all the semblance of magnanimity, they offered to relinquish their claims upon our persons!

After briefly relating to our deliverers the manner in which we had been captured, and the history of the wrongs to which we had been subjected, indisputable evidences of which were deeply engraved upon our persons, we were conducted to the private and comfortable apartments of Dr. Hetzel. To the kind hospitality of our countrymen we were not only indebted for all the means by which to recruit our physical energies, and revive our jaded spirits, but for a complete revolution in our wardrobes.

All again comfortably clad, and decidedly improved, both in appearance and habits, we began to feel a strong inclination to return to our homes and country. But our proposition to depart for Saltillo, a distance of nearly two hundred miles, and where the American army under Gen. Taylor was then stationed, received no countenance among those to whom we owed our release and liberty. Indeed, the new dangers to which we should have been exposed, in the absence of an escort, rendered the contemplated expedition a most perilous one, and it required no effort of eloquence on the part of our new, but sincere friends, to induce us to remain and partake of their tendered hospitalities, until the advance of the American army should open a line of safe communication to the Rio Grande.

But we were far from being troubled with ennui at Zacatecas. The severe lessons of adversity we had learned in captivity, taught us, more than ever, how to appreciate the blessings of liberty. Besides this, every attention calculated to make our sojourn agreeable was bountifully bestowed. We were introduced to a number of the citizens, male and female, many of whom we found both intelligent and agreeable. Among them was Leandro Cabos, editor of the "*Heraldo*," the only newspaper printed in the city, and that a most decided advocate for peace. The editor expressed his sentiments in a manly and independent manner, and did not hesitate to avow, both publicly and privately, his predilection for "Yankee institutions." He not only refused to insert in his paper any thing favorable to Santa Anna and his party, but would publish conspicuously, all Gen. Taylor's orders which appeared in the least favorable to the Mexican people. We visited the mines, gardens, public buildings, besides several natural curiosities—observed the peculiar characteristics of the people, and, altogether, saw and learned much that was to us new and novel.

CHAPTER VII.

MEXICAN OPINION OF YANKEES—BUILDINGS IN ZACATECAS—CUSTOMS—MERCHANT'S SHOPS—BUSINESS—AUCTION SALES—PETTY THIEVES AND THEIR PUNISHMENT—GAMBLING—LOTTERIES—SUNDAY ENTERTAINMENTS—CHURCHES—CATHEDRAL AND ITS ORNAMENTS—PRAYING FOR A HUSBAND—BULL FIGHTS—DEATH OF A PICADORE—COCK FIGHTING—EXTENT OF SILVER MINES—GOLD DUST—NATURAL CAVE—GEOLOGICAL SPECIMENS—IRON, COPPER, AND COAL MINES—GARDEN OF DON ALONZO GOMERES—HUACO PLANT, ITS APPEARANCE AND DISCOVERY—MANUFACTURES IN THE CITY—POLITICS—JOSE MARIA LAFRAGUA—GOVERNMENT—CRUELITIES OF SANTA ANNA—BARBAROUS EXECUTION OF A YOUNG FEMALE.

THAT mankind generally, and the Mexicans in particular, are strange and incomprehensible animals, is among the "fixed facts." From the highly cultivated Anglo-Saxon, down through the whole grade of animate nature, to the blind and bigoted heathen of Hindostan, every one appears to be dissatisfied with his lot, and claims a better one; while, at the same time, every one is apt to consider himself better, if not wiser, than any one else—at least, he obstinately prefers his own manners, diet, dress, and religion, to all others, and will laugh at or pity those who differ with him. Among all nations, as well as individuals (except the Flat-head Indians), the organ of self-esteem is unchecked in its development—"in testimony whereof," the great mass of the Mexican people regard the sovereigns of the United States, just as the sovereigns of the United States regard them. We are free to denounce them as half-civilized cut-throats, and they retort by calling us adventurous barbarians; while in either case, perhaps the epithets deserve to be modified. True, the people of the two nations differ as widely as the poles, in their habits, pursuits, and conceptions of what constitutes refinement, yet many of these differences, unimportant in the abstract, are the result of the prejudice of education. Unalterable as were my prepossessions—strong as my antipathies—I have seldom been more favorably impressed with the appearance of any city, than I was after strolling through the broad streets of Zacatecas. In many respects it will compare favorably with some of the large cities of the United States. The buildings are of all sizes, fashions, and colors, from one to three stories high, the greater portion of which are constructed in the old Spanish style, with a court-yard in the center, which is often used as a stable. This makes a close neighborhood, and establishes a familiarity between the inmates of the house and stable, on many accounts disagreeable, but neither the one class or the other seem to mind it, for they appear to entertain the utmost respect for each other. There is one appendage about their better class of houses deserving praise above all others—the delightful balconies that almost universally grace them. To these is often added, on a level with the first floor,

a corridor or gallery, in which more airy situation the families spend the greater portion of their time, breakfasting, dining, or torturing some musical instrument, among which the guitar comes in for its full share of punishment. The doors and windows are on an extensive scale, the latter having neither sash nor glass, are filled with iron bars, through the broad interstices of which nothing but one's own sense of good breeding prevents him from seeing what the family are about within. It is the fashion to arrange some half a dozen chairs within, near the window, facing each other, where the company will sit gazing at, and talking to, each other with great vivacity. In passing through the streets innumerable groups of this kind may be seen, while elsewhere he may find them seated at a table playing monte, and often dancing, as if their salvation, like that of the shakers, depended on the exercise of their heels.

The stores and shops of the city, which are for the most part under the supervision and control of females, appeared to be well supplied with every variety of foreign goods that had found their way in through the ports on the Pacific, previous to the blockade. Business was said to be dull, owing to the fact that stealing had greatly improved since the war; and a number of the merchants were selling off at auction. At their auction sales a large forum is erected on the public square or plaza, in which a spear is fixed, surmounted by the Mexican colors. This is after the original Roman fashion, and the bidding is signified by holding up the fingers. The alcalde's permission is always necessary before the sale is confirmed. The forum is generally crowded with silver-smiths, or rather bankers' shops, where the articles sold are registered and sealed. By them the names of the buyers are noted, and the goods delivered under the authority of the alcalde. In this manner a semblance of the supremacy of law and order is kept up, while the small retail thieves seldom fail to come in for their share. Occasionally one of them is detected and punished. If the value of the stolen property amounts to more than six *reals* (75 cents), the thief is condemned to serve in the army—if under that amount, he is taken to the market place, undressed, and publicly whipped, with a thick, raw-hide lash, on his naked back; just as if eternal disgrace would arouse his sense of honor. One can get accustomed to every thing but such brutality, and a Mexican often gets accustomed to that, for I saw one laugh after he had been beaten till he bled.

The laws seem to oppose no restraint upon gambling, every species of which is indulged in publicly. Women, with their monte-banks, are to be seen at every turn and corner of the streets. A legalized system of lotteries, also, serves not only to lure the population from the ordinary pursuits of industry, but sinks their whole lives in the vortex of uncertain chance. This is owing chiefly to the cheapness of tickets, which puts it in the power of the very poorest to become adventurers. The most fascinating feature in a Mexican lottery is the worst. Tickets can be purchased for one

real ($12\frac{1}{2}$ cents), which in half an hour may gain fifteen hundred dollars. This induces all the poor people to take lottery stock, and servants sometimes rob their masters to procure the means. The doors of the numerous offices are always thronged, for the drawing does not cease. These offices are also kept by the women, to whom the government delegates the privilege, and it is not uncommon to hear an old hag cry out, "who will buy my dream, I dreamt of three numbers." The ugly women depend on their dreams to effect sales, while the young and beautiful attract customers by their bewitching smiles, which on Sundays are accompanied by some wild chant on the guitar.

Moralizers in our own country complain because the mail is conveyed, and steamboats are permitted to run on Sunday. They ought to go to Mexico. There it is the gayest, noisiest, and most business-like day in all the week, and there their doctrines of reform might be preached to some purpose. The streets of Zacatecas are kept in one continual uproar, and the noise of omnibuses, diligences, wagons, church-goers, water-carriers, grocers, and peddlers, seldom dies away before midnight. In the morning, at six o'clock, the bells of over sixty churches summon the people to mass. The performances are then slightly varied during the day. In the forenoon the regular service comes off, and the churches are surrounded by a host of carriages and wagons—men and women selling to the visitors fruits, cakes, pulque, and play-things. A crowd of *lazaroni*, half-naked, occupy the entrance, demanding charity. In strange contrast with this filthy, indolent crowd, is the Mexican priest, who, in his long flowing garments, covered with gold and silver, as a true and humble disciple of Jesus, passes majestically by them, as if a soul could never tabernacle in such an humble looking tenement.

Desiring to make the most of our time, we visited the cathedral, in company with Dr. Hetzel, who not only knew all the crooks and turns of the city, but the history of almost every important event connected with it. The cathedral is situated on *Calle de Patria* (Patriot street), and we soon came in front of its vast sculptured figures that have frowned or smiled down upon the street below for a hundred years. On or near the spot where it stands the first church in the province was erected about three hundred years ago. More than two centuries after this, the edifice was entirely destroyed by fire, and was rebuilt by the munificence of Hidalgo, a celebrated priest-general, who flourished his brief hour in the days of the revolution. It is an enormous pile, the construction of which occupied over twenty years. It would be idle to enter into an architectural criticism upon this church, but I may be allowed to say that were it not for its jumble of ornaments, by which all the effect of simplicity—one of the highest elements of beauty—is lost, it would be regarded with the most profound admiration by every beholder. The entrance is by three marble porches. It has two towers resting on the walls, one of which is remarkable for having been built with

money paid for indulgences to eat meat in Lent. The spire at the junction of the nave and transepts, is built of cast iron bars, with a geometrical staircase winding its way to the top, some 400 feet. It looks much like the frame of a steeple, but very little like a steeple itself. The interior is about 420 feet in length, and the height of the vaulting of the nave is 87 feet. The effect of the interior is exceedingly imposing, and is greatly heightened by the fine rose, and other windows of beautifully stained glass. It was not so much, however, on account of the beauty of Gothic arches and pictured windows, through which a flood of richly-colored light was shed over the delicate tracery and sculptured saints, or poured along the extended aisles, that I lingered in this cathedral. It was to dwell upon the lineaments of the proud priest's countenance. He was the son of Hidalgo himself, and was officiating in the funeral ceremonies of his distinguished father, whose remains had been exhumed from their narrow home at Dolores, to be deposited in the chapel at the cathedral in Zacatecas. He possesses the religious, but not the military, qualities of his father.

The churches of Mexico are not furnished with seats or pews, as in the United States; and on entering one is struck, not only with the uneasy and uncomfortable position of a large congregation on their knees, on a hard brick floor, but by the gold and silver pillars and ballustrades which surround the altar, the rich gold altar itself, and the countless images of saints and angels, with expanded wings, looking down from their eminent positions, as if to guard and bless the groups of half-clad and penitent men and women, kneeling around the altar beneath them.

The most implicit confidence is placed in the power of the saints, and the variety of distinct offices they have to perform, makes their catalogue so extensive, that he who is not particularly interested in soliciting their favors will seldom become familiar with their names. One of these saints, it does not matter about his name, is said to preside over Hymenial affairs, and the young ladies frequently pray to him for husbands till the drops of perspiration roll down their bare necks like the sources of a young river. This is really "getting into a sweat" for a husband, but it serves to show that they are free from the sin of coquetry. If they become favorably impressed with the appearance of a young man, they are unremitting in their devotional exercises, and, through their petitions to the saint, almost invariably succeed in *lassoing* his affections. This saint enjoys the moral reputation of never having directly interfered in granting a prayer which would deprive a married woman of her husband, but has frequently broken off engagements, at the earnest request of a pretty girl—a decided mark of gallantry, notwithstanding his absolute power over the affections of the young.

In connection with this subject a most amusing circumstance occurred on the morning of the fifth day after our arrival at the city. Mr. Cunningham (one of my companions), being a man of fine per-

sonal appearance, was called up at four o'clock by a man who delivered a note from a lady to whom he had been introduced a day or two previous, and with whom he had a very slight acquaintance, stating that her husband had died on the previous evening, and begged he would hasten to her assistance, as she had been most devoutly praying for him. He called upon the disconsolate widow, agreeable to her request, and has since often wished that the saint had granted her prayer, and thrown him into the arms of this Delila, instead of a prison-printing office.

But I have not completed an enumeration of the amusements that occupy a Mexican Sunday. Among the most interesting to the citizens was a bull fight, which came off in the public plaza, at 2 o'clock in the evening. So infatuating to the natives is this spectacle, that they would leave their prayers or meals half finished to witness it; though one sight will generally satisfy the curiosity of an American. The price of admission to the seats within the plaza was one dollar, where a promiscuous crowd of some ten thousand persons had assembled, composed of men, women, and children, of every rank and station. Two bands of music, the instruments consisting of drums, violins, violoncellos, guitars, flageolets, and French horns, besides the horns of five bulls, were engaged for the occasion. A man on horseback and three *picadores*, or footmen, were to fight the bulls, one at a time. The animals are confined in a small enclosure, adjoining the amphi-theatre, and after torturing each one about half an hour, with sharp iron-pointed poles, ornamented with ribbons, the gate is hoisted and he rushes into the plaza, with long strips of crimson silk depending from his horns and tail, and roaring like a full grown lion. His sonorous bellows are soon drowned, however, by the deafening acclamations of the crowd, and the horseman dressed in a cloak of rich and variegated colors rushes upon the brute with his lance. It was the bull's turn next, and being a strong, healthy looking fellow, foaming with rage, he thrust his horns into the horse and gored him to death in an instant. The rider and *picadores* *vamosed*, or vanished, as speedily as possible; but soon returned to renew the attack upon their adversary, who stood twisting his tail in conscious triumph. In making his second charge the horseman caught the bull by the tail, and passing it under his leg, wheeled his horse and brought his adversary to his knees, when he again wheeled and inflicted a severe incision in the bulls neck with his lance. At this the bull became rather "cowed," and was hissed off the stage. The second bull was then let in, and pitched into the horseman in the same unceremonious manner, but not with the success of his predecessor. A lick in the short ribs, by one of the *picadores'* pike poles, felled him to the ground, when they proceeded to pin a number of lighted rockets to his neck, the explosion of which instead of frightening the poor brute, as I presumed it would, caused him to stare in a most sarcastic and contemptuous manner at his persecutors. He then approached in a most menacing mood within a few feet of one of the footmen,

but the skill of the latter in wielding his sharp stick, enabled him to stand his ground and pierce the enraged animal till the blood gushed profusely from his nostrils, and he fell amid a shower of applause from the spectators. But the triumph was reserved for the last bull, who turned the after-piece into thrilling tragedy, somewhat in violation of the general programme. He was a lean, gaunt looking quadruped, but blessed with the nerve of a Hercules. Owing, perhaps, to his cadaverous appearance, they had not deemed it necessary to saw off the points of his horns, as they had those of the other animals, and upon the very first assault he despatched one of the *pica-dores* by thrusting his horns through his body, and, as if proud of his victory, thus carried him half a dozen times around the ring, when he tossed his lifeless body into a crowd of children, breaking the arm of a *machucha*. This, however, although not in the bills, was a part of the sport, and was as loudly cheered as any other portion of the performance. Indeed there was some show of justice in giving the bull a round of applause, as the animal seemed to have no friends there; and as it was next to be his turn, it was perhaps gratifying to die full of honors. The entertainment continued till the bull was victimized, when the company dispersed, all shouting at the top of their voices, "Ave Maria purissime los gallos viennen," which translated signifies, hail purest Mary, the chicken-cocks are coming! And proceeding to the cock-pit on the opposite side of the plaza, a great variety of the best specimens of that bird, so intimately associated with the party politics of our own country, were found ready to indulge their war-like propensities for the gratification of those whom it is well ascertained would much rather "look on" than do any fighting themselves. There is no limit to the betting, or to the amounts staked, and I have seen, more than once, fifty thousand dollars lost and won on a single cock-fight.

Here the world is seen tossing around in all its splendor, and the innumerable vices that splendor generates, by a base perversion of all the elements of happiness. Drunken Indians congregate at every corner to curse police officers, and laugh at the women in their stiff Sunday petticoats; while others scarcely clad at all, with half a dozen new editions at their heels, and one tied to their brown backs, promenade the thoroughfares, the very daguerreotypes of misery and shame. At night all this loose population assemble at different places of amusement—coffee-houses, dancing saloons, &c., until the hour of midnight mass, when the churches are again thronged.

But amidst all the confusion of tongues, the hum of a foreign language, the reckless poverty and unbridled vice, there are many redeeming associations connected with our brief sojourn in Zacatecas. Of all places in the world, Mexico is the last, where a foreigner should undertake to preach morals, or instruct in manners, if he wish to avoid being considered a decided bore. It is quite certain that much of their treachery and distrust are the result of an officious interference by foreigners, who have endeavored to instruct them in their

social and domestic relations. We were not there as missionaries, and our only prayers were, in the language of Florida's motto, "to be let alone." We visited the silver mines, in the adjacent mountains, which are among the richest in Mexico. Although not so extensively worked as they were some years ago, over twelve thousand men are employed in the mines, and more than three thousand persons in the mint, which is second in importance to that in the city of Mexico, and has frequently coined \$75,000 in the short space of twenty-four hours. The mines are entered by deep caverns cut in the sides of the mountains, through solid quartz, sometimes gradually descending, and at others ascending, a parallel distance of two miles, always following the vein. The ore is contained in the stone, which, when quarried, is ground into powder; the dust is then thrown into great reservoirs of water, where the precious metals are detached through a chemical process. It is asserted upon good authority, that the richest gold mines in the world exist in the vicinity of Zacatecas, but the instability and unsettled state of the government has offered no inducement to capitalists to engage in working them. We were shown the spot, at the confluence of two small streams, which wound through the steep and crooked ravines, where gold dust, valued at one million of dollars, was scraped up from the surface with the hand, only a few years ago by a French geologist.

Among the greatest natural curiosities of the country is a cave in one of these towering mountains; which, although of no very great dimensions, exceeds in beauty and sublimity any thing of the kind I have ever visited. The principal entrance is from the west, on the bank of the Santander river, where a passage has been excavated by the hand of nature, sufficiently large to admit several persons abreast, and which is about sixty feet in length. At the extremity there is a sudden bend, or rather projection of the lateral rock which, when passed, gives an unexpected and magnificent view of the interior cavern, presenting a circular chamber some hundred feet in diameter. Stalactites, ever varying in form and color, lend their magic effect to the scene, and reflect the light beams from the entrance to every nook of the subterranean apartment. Near the center is a calcareous spring, which imparts a coolness to the atmosphere, grateful in the extreme to those who have just escaped the heat of a tropical sun. A tufa is deposited from the waters, which has risen in a circular mound more than twelve feet from the surface of the place. Over this, on every side, the water pours, producing a singular and picturesque fountain, and makes it a favorable resort at all seasons of the year. Belemnites are to be found in the interior, and occasionally masses of siliceous matter, and crystallizations of salt. This shows a rather remarkable geological family connection, for while the stalactites are indigenous to a moist climate, saline matter is usually confined to one inclined to dryness. Throughout these mountains marbles abound and present a great variety. The Kaolin clays, the alumine earths, and other minerals necessary to the arts, such as iron,

copper, and lead, are found in innumerable places. Bituminous and anthracite coal are found in inexhaustible quantities, existing in mountain masses. The anthracite beds are directly accessible, requiring no sinking of shafts, and there are no choke dampers or gaseous explosions to be encountered in reaching it.

But the most desirable resort about the city is the garden of Andalusia, owned by Don Alonzo Gomeres. It contains an enclosure of some three thousand acres, and every thing is upon the most magnificent and instructive plan. The plants are set at a convenient distance in rows, like a nursery, and grouped together in classes and families, according to the natural system of Jussieu. By each specimen, elevated on a small rod, is placed a silver label, on which is inscribed its botanical name and the country to which it belongs, with a character distinguishing whether it is annual, biennial, or perennial; as also a black, red, yellow, or blue stripe across the top, denoting the plant to be poisonous, medicinal, ornamental, or edible. Besides these smaller labels for each species, there were larger ones at the head of each class or tribe. Thus, commencing with the mushrooms, mosses, and other cyptogamous plants, at the extremity of the enclosure, one can inspect row after row, gradually ascending to the proudest tree of the forest; including in all, some fifteen thousand specimens of the vegetable kingdom. Here trees may be seen growing within trees, and in every wild, fantastic shape which both the ingenuity of man and nature combined, can invent. Orange trees are stripped of their branches, then perforated through the whole length, and through the roots to the ground beneath; then young plants of the jessamine, fig tree, rose, and myrtle, are selected and arranged in twos or threes, according to fancy, and the size of the aperture in the trunk of the orange tree, and passed through so as to reach a short distance above the top of the latter—the roots are then covered with earth, watered and cultivated as if just planted. The tree and young plants then grow together, and will live and flourish for ten or fifteen years, presenting a most beautiful and novel appearance.

In this garden I became acquainted with the celebrated *huaco*, an herb so distinguished for its medicinal virtues, and which is a certain antidote for poison. It belongs to the *Gordonia* genus; and is a pretty shrub, growing from one to two feet high, with leaves petiolate, oblong, and toothed, shining above and pubescent beneath. The flower resembles that of the orange in both appearance and smell. The calyx has five unequal leaves, and the carolla has five spreading white petals like the rose. The first discovery of the medicinal qualities of the *huaco* is attributed to a large bird that feeds upon snakes and reptiles in the savannas of the south. Many years ago the natives observed that this bird, called the Guayaquil, after a combat with a snake, would search for the herb and eat it; hence they supposed it to be an antidote for poison, which experience has proved to be correct. An internal affection may be speedily cured by chewing the herb and swallowing the extract, while the extract is applied

externally to remedy the bite of a snake. The herb is also said to be an effectual cure in cases of hydrophobia; and so highly appreciated are its virtues, that a Mexican is seldom found traveling without it.

The manufactures of Zacatecas are inferior to those even of its neighboring cities. A few coarse cotton and woolen cloths are made, but the chief interest of the people is attracted to mining and merchandising. There are a number of potteries in the city, where a variety of wares are manufactured. The potters work in the open air, and shape their work with remarkable dexterity, on a simple wheel, horizontally arranged, and revolving close upon the ground, so as to permit them to sit, according to the custom of all lazy people. These wares are burned in large open ovens. They make tiles, and water and cooking pots; but the finer wares, manufactured in other countries, are unknown to them. Their most curious article is a large vessel for holding grain, much the shape of a chinese jar, and capable of containing several bushels.

Among the better and more intelligent classes in the province of Zacatecas, may be numbered more enthusiastic admirers of our own institutions, than in any other state of Mexico. The federal or state rights' party have ever been in the ascendancy there, and cast the vote of the province, at the last presidential election for Jose Maria Lafragua, the acting Governor, who was prompt in denouncing the measures of Santa Anna, as far back as the Texan revolution. He is a man of some experience in government and political philosophy; and although seduced by the rapid advancement and complete freedom of the United States, he would not countenance the dismemberment of the Mexican provinces; while he frankly confesses that a want of intelligence and energy among his own countrymen renders them incompetent to sustain a compact similar in construction. There is a great difference between the condition of the United States, founded and established under the shelter of institutions approaching republicanism, and that of the Mexican provinces, which have for three hundred years depended on a monarchical and despotic government. In the latter, democratic forms were new, and many of them opposed to the customs, habits, and inveterate prejudices of the people. In the former, little else was necessary but to vary the appointment of officers. Even the constitutional charters and laws of some of the former provinces of the United States, answered for the same when transformed into republican States. In Mexico it was necessary to change almost every thing which existed. There is nothing wonderful, therefore, in the anarchy which has characterized their existence—the laws were not adapted to the people. Mexicans who possess a knowledge of the world and of men, are fully apprised of these things; and it was a sense of the utter helplessness of their position, under a government without character or stability, that induced the Zacatecas to join Texas, in throwing off the yoke of a central and military despotism, to form an independent govern-

ment. Less fortunate than their new neighbors, they then received a reproof, the details of which, for the credit of civilization, have never come to the ear of the world. With the bloody butcheries of Santa Anna and his forces in Texas, most of us have become somewhat familiar; but of the dark and disgraceful cruelties which marked his advance through Zacatecas, we shall have no complete record. It was a most unhappy period, and if the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were enough to sink those cities, I could not imagine a punishment the severity of which would be comparatively appropriate in Santa Anna's case. At the head of military and civil authority, he marched an army among his own people, not only to murder, but to outrage their hearths and altars. A father had no security that his daughter or wife would not be corrupted by the officers of his own country, by means of the terror which they inspired, and the influence which their situation imparted. Any officer, who wished to free himself from the importunate presence of a father or a husband, or who desired to get possession of his property, instituted a process against him as an insurgent, and was sure that his superiors would applaud his zeal in the service of Santa Anna. No case of this kind made a more profound and lasting impression upon the inhabitants of Zacatecas, nor manifested more clearly the extent to which cruelty was carried, than that of Leonor Rovira. She was a young and handsome female, enthusiastically attached to liberty, favoring and giving aid to the oppressed patriots, and to those who, in the darkest hour had resolved to fly to the plains of Texas, from whence they hoped that freedom might yet come to their own province. She loved and was beloved by a youth who had been an officer of the province, and was now compelled to serve as a common soldier, in the desolating army of Santa Anna. Through the influence she possessed over him, he was induced to desert, and fly to Texas. Leonor made arrangements for the flight of a number of other persons, of whom several were of the army. She procured exact statements of Santa Anna's forces, with lists of the names of patriots and other persons who could be trusted, all of which she transmitted to Gen. Houston. Her lover and his companions were discovered and apprehended in their flight. The letters and other papers betrayed Leonor, who was with them thrown into prison. The cause was tried by martial law, and during its progress this young female is said to have manifested much presence of mind and the most unshaken courage. She would compromise no one by her declarations, and the judges could not elicit from her any confession of the means by which she procured the statements sent to Texas. Finally, she and forty others were condemned by a council of war to the punishment of death, and to be shot in the back. She is said to have heard the sentence with the utmost composure and tranquillity, preparing herself for death like a Christian and a heroine—and walking to the place of execution with a firm step, she bitterly reproached her murderers for their barbarous cruelty. And exhorting

her companions to die with the character and firmness of freemen, she announced, in a clear and audible voice, that her blood would soon be avenged by the deliverers of her oppressed and degraded country. She was shot in the principal plaza. Her constancy and courage astounded even the iron hearts of a rapacious soldiery, and the memory of her premature sacrifice has doubtless served to keep alive the burning embers of revolt in Zacatecas, to the present day.

CHAPTER VIII.

IMPENDING DIFFICULTIES—SANTA ANNA AT SAN LUIS POTÓSI—PRIESTS HEADING GUERRILLA PARTIES—ARRIVAL OF A DETACHMENT FROM SANTA ANNA'S ARMY—RECAPTURED BY THE MEXICANS—ARREST OF CITIZENS OF ZACATECAS—MARCH TO SAN LUIS POTÓSI—MEXICAN SOLDIERS AND THEIR MANNER OF ENLISTING—CITY AND PRISON OF SAN LUIS POTÓSI—EXECUTION—MODE OF INFLICTING CAPITAL PUNISHMENT—INVITATION TO JOIN THE MEXICAN ARMY—OUR INDIGNANT REFUSAL—DEPARTURE FOR ACAPULCO—ESTATE OF JORAL—DOLORES—CITY AND CHURCHES OF GUANAJUATO.

THE endearments of home and friends—the love one bears for his native land, and the partiality he feels for its institutions, can never be fully realized till placed beyond their reach and influence. Then it is that the natural yearning of the heart will vividly recall endearing associations; and burying all the little animosities and faults we may find with our government when at home—he will be sensible only to its virtues and its blessings. It is a remarkable, though a very inconsistent, trait in the character of an American, that however much he may dissent, dispute, deplore, in the heat of party conflict at home—and even prophecy the impending ruins which are to be the inevitable result of each succeeding presidential election—let him hear the very same sentiments uttered in a foreign land, or the eternal permanency of his country's institutions for a moment doubted, and his indignation will have no bounds. In the true Yankee spirit, he will ever be found ready to "argue the question," by contrasts, which are always sure to redound to his own advantage.

We had been one week in Zacatecas. Although in the full enjoyment of personal freedom, the circumstance of our release had to some extent exasperated the authorities, and with no assurance of safety for any definite period, the approach of the American army was daily looked for with an anxious degree of solicitude.

Santa Anna was at this time concentrating his forces at San Luis Potosi, only 190 miles distant, where he had arrived on the 8th of October. Our former captors had not been seen after holding a con-

sultation with the priests and authorities, on the memorable morning of our release. Companies of soldiers and rancheros were to be seen in the streets, however, at almost any hour; and Santa Anna having issued his most eloquent appeals to the clergy, many of them were induced to doff their sacerdotal robes, for the time, and join in the last desperate struggle to retain their supremacy. The priests, ever jealous of their power and influence, even became so fanatical as to place themselves at the head of guerrilla parties, raised in the neighboring mountains. Weak and apparently inactive as these bands at first were, they daily gathered new strength, till they began to assume a more intimidating character. Although formidable in point of numbers, the peace party had issued no *pronunciamento*, which is the first act preparatory to a revolution. They gave unreserved expression to their opinions, yet they assumed no attitude of open hostility towards the authorities of the central government. Revolt was not surmised either by the friends or enemies of Santa Anna, and the avowed object of the guerrilla bands was to join a division of his forces to be sent from San Luis Potosi in the event of Gen. Taylor's expected arrival.

Those accustomed to a well-regulated government seldom feel secure in Mexico, either in their persons or property; and at this crisis many of those who had figured rather conspicuously in the peace party, would have evacuated the place had not retreat been more hazardous than to remain. Their only hope, as well as our own, was in the advance of "Old Rough and Ready," who at that time would have been welcomed in a much more hospitable manner than he was at Monterey.

On the 13th of November the thunder of artillery announced the approach of an army, and it is impossible to portray the confusion and out-bursts of enthusiastic rejoicing it created among all classes. The peace party hailed it as Gen. Taylor's anticipated advent, the authorities and clergy knew it to be a detachment from San Luis Potosi, while others, enveloped in total ignorance, shouted because the crowd did.

The mystery was soon revealed, however, when the green roundabouts of the Mexicans became visible, and the army, over three thousand strong, under command of Gen. Requena, marched into the city and quartered on the principal plaza. It was soon ascertained that this force had been despatched by Santa Anna, to quell certain indications of revolt in the city of Zacatecas, of which the clergy had promptly given him information.

The night which followed was one of consternation and horror. It was just one month from the date of our captivity at Camargo, and one week after our release from the hands of cruel and unfeeling tyrants at Zacatecas. With Dr. Hetzel, John Allman, Lucius Enfield, and George B. Gentry, all Americans, we were the first to be arrested. After the arrests commenced, many escaped through the gates, and took refuge in the neighboring mountains, while hundreds

of citizens were dragged from their homes, and placed under guard, to be tried as rebels, their property confiscated and destroyed, and their sanctuaries entered and desecrated by the mob. The citizens, unarmed, could make no resistance against a force which, including the guerrilla bands, amounted to more than seven thousand men, had they been disposed to do so, and they submitted to trial. Many were discharged, others were condemned to serve in the army; while we, with six other Americans, were sent to San Luis Potosi, and again incarcerated in the common prison, with the most abandoned felons.

If we had before held our lives by a precarious tenure, what could we now expect, after inciting almost a rebellion and arousing the indignation of Santa Anna himself. We had never entertained a very flattering opinion of his humane disposition, and his former persecution of the Zacatecos, with a knowledge of his cruelty to the Texans, was poorly calculated to elevate him in the esteem of any one.

Approaching San Luis Potosi, from Zacatecas, we passed through the flourishing towns of Pinos, Ojocaliente, and Aguascaliente, each containing some 12,000 or 15,000 inhabitants.

Under a strong guard, we entered the city of San Luis Potosi, on the evening of November 19th, preceded by a large company of new recruits for the Mexican army. These recruits consisted of Indians, who had been forced from their homes—and required to serve during the campaign. Their hands were bound to their backs, and they were paired off and tied together. This is the manner in which the ranks of their army are filled, so that it is little wonder they express great surprise at our system of volunteering.

San Luis Potosi is situated in the valley of the Panuco, a river falling into the Gulf at Tampico, and which might be navigable for steamboats as far up as Tula, over one hundred miles from the mouth, and seventy miles below the city. In importance it is the second city in the republic—in population the third—containing 60,000 inhabitants. It is located in a rich mining region; but from some cause these sources of wealth have been greatly neglected within the past ten years, and the attention of the citizens directed more to manufacturing. The Panuco river affords excellent facilities for manufacturing, which are to some extent improved. Woolen and cotton cloths, hats, boots and shoes, and other articles, are here made for exportation to all the surrounding provinces. Some attention is also paid to education, and they have a magnificent college. The buildings of this institution, together with those of the mint, Governor's palace, and cathedral, present a commanding view. The buildings generally are inferior in size, and mostly constructed of stucco.

The prison at San Luis Potosi is on a more extensive scale than that at Monclova, and includes within its walls a much larger family. On the morning of the 20th of November, after remaining in

the prison over night, we were all conducted to the gate, passing by the place of execution, in one corner of the large walled square, where the officers were fulfilling the ends of justice, by executing a lot of condemned criminals. There was so little ceremony attending their operations, and such a carelessness about their manner, that we did not dream they were performing the work of death. As our guard delayed to open the ponderous gate, however, and we saw them toss two dead bodies into rough looking boxes, placed on equally rough wagons with wooden wheels, we were apprised of the nature of their employment, and, indeed, began to think we might probably be the next victims. Their manner of inflicting capital punishment is more refined than in the United States: In the first place, they do not make a public spectacle of an execution. Within the walls of the prison enclosure, the condemned culprit is seated in a chair, when an iron collar is placed around his neck, made to expand or contract, as may be necessary. In the back part of this is inserted a sharp pointed spike, moved at pleasure by the executioner by means of a screw, and on turning which the spinal marrow is penetrated by the point, causing instant death. This ingenious machine, for the perpetration of legalized murder, is called the garotte.

As we beheld this scene of dissolution between body and soul, we felt that the last ray was quivering upon the dial-plate of our own destiny. To be forcibly driven into the presence of Santa Anna—into the very grasp of his insatiate soldiery, was enough to make us think seriously of preparing our last will and testament. But we had not yet suffered enough to glut their cruel propensities, and marching us to the barracks, they gave us to understand that we were to serve in the *republican* army of Mexico! We all joined in thanking them for this mark of proffered promotion, but declined, stating that if they would spare our lives till the American forces commenced knocking at their gates, and they had any curiosity in seeing us fight, we might give them a specimen, by exercising our organs of combativeness under other colors. It was an insult that our sense of patriotism could not brook, and we felt it more keenly than all the outrages we had endured.

Santa Anna did not make his appearance in person, but finding our resolution to place at defiance such a demand, irrevocably fixed, he sent his *kitchen general* (Requina) to inform us that we were to be immediately marched off to Acapulco. What object he could have had in view in sending us to that miserable place, has never revealed itself to me. Acapulco is a port of some importance on the coast of the Pacific, nearly eight hundred miles from San Luis Potosi, and owing to the malignity of the climate, and the still more malignant character of the inhabitants, few who go there ever return alive.

Through our new associates, who had been brought from Zacatecas, and who were to accompany us to Acapulco, we learned that Santa Anna had been informed by the clergy of the former place, that

we had been captured as spies. In no other way could we account for the apparent lenity by which our lives were prolonged, than to attribute it to their desire that the catalogue of our sufferings should be complete in this world, before despatched on a mission to eternity.

Accordingly, under new masters, commissioned by Santa Anna to guard us, we commenced our journey to the Pacific, on the 20th of November. Including the new accession from Zacatecas, our own party was now swelled to nine in number, while our guard, increasing in a greater ratio, consisted of forty-six, well armed, able-bodied, and mounted men. We could not but think of the disappointment of poor Poco Llama and his rancheros, and although treated with more humanity, we almost regretted the transfer; for we had abandoned all former hope of returning to our own country, and instead of expecting to be sold into slavery, with a prospect of being released at the termination of hostilities, we felt, as we ploded on towards the setting sun, that

"Our hearts, like muffled drums, were beating
Funeral marches to the grave."

Thirty miles from San Luis Potosi we entered the dominions of the almost unlimited estate originally owned and occupied by the house of Jorol, of the Spanish nobility. This is represented to be the largest and most magnificent estate in Mexico. At the commencement of the revolution, the amount of stock was reputed to number 350,000 head, and the tenantry engaged in cultivating the grounds to over 30,000 men. In extent of territory these possessions will equal about four of our ordinary counties, and the single farm is larger than the State of Delaware. The unsettled policy of the country has driven the proprietor from his possessions, and the estate now bears evident marks of decay and dilapidation. Another immense hacienda is Dolores, the original seat of Hidalgo, the leader of the first revolutionary movement in Mexico. Near the center of this estate, comprising some 20,000 square miles, is the town of Dolores, with a population of 7,000.

Four days travel brought us to Guanajuato, on the Sierra Santa, the capital of the province of the same name, situated in the richest mining regions in all Mexico, and containing 40,000 inhabitants. I have never seen a more quaint and singular city than Guanajuato. The street by which we entered the place is broad and straight enough for a Philadelphian, but the moment we left it, and turned off into the narrow, hilly avenues, we were in a perfect labyrinth. They are so narrow and crooked that carriages can scarcely pass each other in the most of them. Our guard here took the precaution to dismount, in order to convey us through the city in a hollow square kind of procession. In these narrow streets there are no side-walks, and but for the commanding appearance of our crowd, upon which all eyes were turned, we should have been crushed against the buildings by some lumbering dilligence. Threading the torturous and

crowded lanes, we frequently came out upon some magnificent church, which if it could be made to stand apart from the world of small buildings, tumbled in together as if about knee-deep around it, would be regarded as almost a wonder of architecture; and which even now, with the imperfect view which can be obtained, between unmannerly dwellings and ware-houses, charms the beholder like the glimpses of a fairy scene. Hurried through the city as we were, there was little opportunity to acquire much knowledge of its character or extent; but I could not help noticing the antique buildings, the unusually active and energetic population, and the strange dresses that were perhaps in the height of style about a century ago. Passing through the city to the suburbs, we stopped for the night in a convent building, not exactly among the nuns, but with the *padre* of the place, whom we found remarkably hospitable and inquisitive. The heavy rains which commenced falling, detained us here till the middle of the following day, when we left for Valladolid.

CHAPTER IX.

ARRIVAL AT VALLADOLID—CURIOSITY OF THE CITIZENS—A FRENCH PUBLISHER—HIS HISTORY—ANOTHER SENTENCE OF DEATH—NEGOTIATION FOR OUR RELEASE—"BARGAIN AND INTRIGUE"—SOLD INTO SLAVERY—MEXICAN CHARACTER—OUR PRICE—DR. BARRY—A MEXICAN PRINTING OFFICE—SPANISH PRINTERS—EL REPUBLICANO—SUPPORT AND CHARACTER OF MEXICAN NEWSPAPERS.

In ten days we performed a journey of 310 miles, and arrived in the city of Valladolid on the evening of December 1st, 1846. The day had been the occasion of some religious festival, and the streets and public houses were so thronged that our guard determined to confine us during the night in the city prison, that they might, unembarrassed, participate in the concluding ceremonies, which we understood were to consist of a *fandango* and masquerade.

After a delegation had been dispatched for the keeper of the prison, and to make the necessary arrangements for our security, many of the citizens crowded in the *meson* to get a sight at us. Had our guard been gifted with a little of that Yankee tact which turns every thing to count in the way of a "shilling," they might have made a handsome "speculation" by exhibiting us. The marvelousness of the natives was excited to a greater extent than is usually manifested by the boys of our own villages in the United States, when the "show-men come to town." Indeed, we were great lions, in our way, for few of the citizens of Valladolid had ever seen a Yankee, and they opened their eyes, as if determined this opportu-

nity should not be unimproved. From among the crowd an elderly looking man emerged, and advancing, accosted us in unbroken English—"Are you American citizens? I had thought that that announcement was a free passport the world over." There was more meaning expressed in his countenance than his words, and although his bearing was rather scornful, his English surprised us; but as it was the first sentence we had heard uttered in our language beyond our own immediate circle, since we left Zacatecas, we did not attempt to evade his presence or his interrogatories. We replied that had our memory ever been at all treacherous in regard to the place of our nativity, the contrast we had experienced in treatment, since passing beyond its borders, was calculated forcibly to remind us that we had once been citizens of the United States.

The old man seemed inclined to continue the conversation, and soon revealed the most important facts connected with his individual and somewhat eventful history. He stated that his father's name, which was all he had inherited, was Mons. Buffam—that he himself was a native of France, but had in early life emigrated to England. In 1835 he left England for the United States, and on landing at New York was so disgusted with its appearance, and the intense coldness of the climate, that he immediately sailed, with a cargo of goods for San Blas, on the Pacific coast. Cruising around to the small English colony of Balize, he changed his destination to Acapulco, and anchoring in that harbor, at the time of the difficulties between Mexico and Texas, he found it an easy matter to purchase from the Mexican authorities a *permit* to import goods free of duty. On returning with his second cargo, he learned at the custom house that his *permit* was worthless, as the former authorities had been deposed, after the battle of San Jacinto, and the new government was not responsible for the *private contracts* of the old custom house officers. He sold out his cargo at a sacrifice, and abandoning the mercantile business in 1839, he had settled down in the city of Valladolid, where he was engaged as one of the publishers of "*El Republicano*" newspaper.

In listening to him we manifested a degree of interest always gratifying to the narrator of events in which he is the master spirit; and when, in turn, we came to tell him that we had for several years been connected with the newspaper press of the United States, and that two of us were practical printers by profession, he evinced symptoms of confusion and surprise for which we were at a loss to account. Our interview was abruptly closed, however, by the command of the guard, who gave us to understand that they awaited our company to prison.

During the night and on the day following, our guard indulged freely in *pulque*, and had become so "gloriously drunk" as to apparently lose all their distinguished consideration of us. Towards evening, however, our new acquaintance of "*El Republicano*," accompanied by his associate, Senor Gomez Peyrelades, a native

Spaniard, and editor of the paper, visited and informed us that the commander of our guard (Gen. Requina), too beastly drunk to navigate himself, had ordered his men to conduct us from the prison, one at a time, and deliberately shoot us down in the public plaza. They then consulted us in regard to our willingness to serve them in the capacity of compositors, should they intercede and procure our release as prisoners. We did not long hesitate in choosing between being shot, going to Acapulco, or taking "*situations*" in a printing office. In clinging to the latter "horn of the dilemma," we might possibly avail ourselves of an opportunity to escape, at least after the close of the war.

After an absence of about an hour, during which time they held an interview with Gen. Requina, they returned and stated they had "come to terms"—that they had paid \$1,900 in consideration of securing our services, for an indefinite period, and that if disposed to ratify the negotiation, we might signify our intentions by being guarded to the printing office.

Here was a scene for philosophical reflection. We had often accused our brother editors of being "bought and sold." In the heat of party warfare we had been somewhat lavish in the use of such reproachful and disgusting epithets as "British Whigs" and "Bank-bought federalists." We had stigmatized our own countrymen as being sold into the servile slavery of party; and had reprobated the idea of "*white slavery*," in the most earnest manner. But this was only the enthusiastic romancing incident to youth, led away by the tyranny of party discipline, in the excitement of a heated political contest. We had now come to experience some of the realities of a *purchased editor*, and humiliating as was the "bargain and intrigue" to our native sense of justice, we found ourselves transferred into unlimited bondage.

It was useless that we should demand the authority by which such an outrage upon our own feelings, as well as all rules of civilization, was perpetrated. Power is the only authority recognized in Mexico, and if, as I have before remarked, men will sell their own souls, they will hardly hesitate to sell the bodies of their enemies.

The character of the great mass of that people may be assimilated to that of a spaniel dog. Give them uncontrolled sway and they are cruel and inhuman—but "the more you whip them the better they will like you"—and when subdued they are far more servile and humble than the negro slaves of our Southern states.

Under all the circumstances, we had some reason to congratulate ourselves upon this change of masters. We had escaped from a second sentence to be shot down as common food for the more common buzzards, while we had substantial evidence of the esteem in which we were held by our new owners, from the round sum they had paid for us. It is so natural, that when a price is set upon a man's head he is ambitious to bring as much as possible, and we

consoled ourselves by a knowledge that we had sold for a greater amount than we could possibly have brought in our own country, even with a few dips in Ethiopian dye.

[And here, although somewhat out of place, the author must be permitted to correct an erroneous statement which has appeared in the New York "Spirit of the Times," and the New Orleans "Delta," since his return to the United States. He has been "undervalued" by an article which appeared in those papers, and copied into various other respectable prints, asserting that he had been sold for the contemptible sum of \$350! The mistake is no doubt an innocent one, yet it is calculated to detract from the *value of a printer*—and for the credit of the craft, it should be understood that he not only sold for \$950, but that his associate brought the same price.]

Our mutual friend, Dr. Barry, being now left in confinement with the Zacatecan prisoners, suggested that he should consider it an especial favor if a similar disposition could be made of his person to an apothecary, if "hereabouts he dwelt." In fact he possessed every requisite qualification for that place, according to the idea of the poet, for

"Sharp misery had worn him to the bones;"

and there is little doubt but that Gen. Requima would have gladly dispensed with all the prisoners on similar conditions, but it seemed we had supplied the demand. In a few days, after becoming sober, the entire company departed for Acapulco with the other prisoners, leaving Mr. Cunningham and myself to enter upon our life-apprenticeship in a Mexican printing office.

The office, which occupied the third story of a large stone building, and is entered through a pylon, a court, and then a massive gate, was a perfect museum of curiosities to an American printer. The room was large and commodious, but filthy almost beyond description. In printing, as well as other arts, mechanics, and agriculture, the Mexican people are at least two centuries behind the age. Their *type* and *presses*, like their muskets, are generally the worn out and cast-off materials from England. The old *Ramage presses* were so venerable they could scarcely stand alone, and at each successive revolution of the *rounce* their shrieks would grate upon the ear, as if exercise was as painful to them as to the Spanish printers who were torturing their poor old joints. There were two of these machines, each having a stone *bed*, and a ponderous weight, like a Dutch cheese press. The face of the *type* was barely visible, and it was with some difficulty one letter could be distinguished from another, while the *body* was worn as round as a rusty nail. Such an improvement as a *roller* had never been dreamed of, and the *balls*, long since banished from our western borders, there retain supremacy. An *imposing stone* has never invaded the original prerogative of the *press bed*, and an *iron chase* would be regarded as a retrograde movement in "the art preservative of all arts." The *chases*, *sticks*, and *galleys* were all

composed of wood, though, being made of mahogany, they serve nearly as well as metal. The *cases*, instead of being mounted on *stands*, are spread out on the floor, as the Spaniard, being too lazy to take a perpendicular position, prefers to *sit down* to *set up type*; and on a filthy mat, thrown out upon the floor, he sprawls himself at his occupation, where he will sometimes succeed in setting three thousand em's per day. In making up a newspaper *form*, the *annuncios*, or advertisements, are inserted promiscuously with the reading matter, without any such encumbrances as *brass rules*.

The Mexicans are by no means a literary people, and they have few newspapers. "El Republicano" is a super-royal sheet, issued daily, resembling in mechanical appearance, Ann Royal's "*Huntress*," more than any other sheet to which I can compare it. It is sustained by contributions from individuals and the government, and contains very little intelligence besides official announcements. Occasionally a horrible murder will adorn its columns; and it is a prevailing epidemic among the young people of the "upper ten," to give publicity to their amorous verses, generally stupid and prosy, but sometimes possessing the fire of poetry.

CHAPTER X

CITY OF VALLADOLID—CLIMATE AND PRODUCTIONS—VOLCANO OF JORULLO—NEW THEORY OF THE GULF STREAM—CHRISTMAS—BUILDINGS IN THE CITY—CUSTOMS OF THE INHABITANTS—MATRIMONIAL INTRIGUES—MUSIC—GOVERNOR OF MECHOACAN, AND HIS PLAN OF WARFARE—IGNORANCE OF A MEXICAN EDITOR IN REGARD TO THE UNITED STATES—CORNWIN'S SPEECH—NEWS OF THE BATTLE OF BUENA VISTA—GREAT REJOICING—SENTIMENTS OF THE MASSES.

VALLADOLID, the capital of the province of Mechoacan, is situated on the western declivity of the Cordillera of Auhuač. It contains a population of 27,000, and is noted as being the scene of the first revolutionary movement in 1810, and the birth place of Iturbide, the first and only emperor, after the conquest by Cortez. It is about eleven hundred miles south from Camargo, one hundred and seventy west from the city of Mexico, and nearly two hundred east from Zacatula, the nearest port on the Pacific coast, at the mouth of the Balsas river. The valley of Auhuac is the Italy of America, where spring reigns unbroken. The mean temperature of the climate is 70 degrees, Farenheit, never varying more than ten degrees. The productions of this immense valley consist of sugar, cotton, rice, cocoa, indigo, cochineal, oranges, lemons, pine-apples, grapes, palms,

plantains, bananas, yams, figs, tamarinds, pomegranets, mangostans, almonds, and every variety of tropical fruits.

Among the majestic, in the natural way, Mechoacan has within her territorial limits, the magnificent volcano of Jorullo, of nearly one hundred years, and 1650 feet standing. In the fall of 1759, from a subterranean eruption, which covered with a sea of lava the broad plains of Malpais, rose the towering peak of Jorullo, which, although constantly burning, seldom emits lava. At an elevation of 1450 feet above the base, it is covered with perpetual snow. The only eruption, within the memory of the inhabitants, occurred about twenty-eight years ago, when it is said that the streets of Valladolid were covered with cinders and ashes to the depth of twenty inches.

Recently a new and very plausible theory has been suggested, accounting not only for the high temperature of the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, but for the existence of the Gulf stream itself. It is surmised that a subterranean current, connecting the waters of the Pacific with those of the Gulf, passes through a cavity or excavation, caused by the eruptions of the five volcanoes—Colima, Jorullo, Popocatepetl, Orizava, and Tuxtla, which are situated in nearly a direct line between the Pacific and the Gulf. Indeed, there is much evidence in support of this theory, the waters of the Pacific being at a considerable elevation above those of the Gulf, would afford sufficient fall, and the great heat so increases their impetus, as to compel the current to the shores of Asia. Besides, I learned that in an attempt to sink an artesian well a few years since at Patzcuro, near Jorullo, and on a parallel line with the volcanos, the blue waters, resembling those of the Pacific, gushed up, already heated to a sufficient temperature to boil an egg.

When Christmas arrived, the whole city was in commotion. All shops and business operations were closed for one week, to give full swing to religious ceremonies. Left to take care of our own souls, we could only amuse ourselves by looking out from our prison-house upon the Catholic processions in their strange cavortings and unaccountable gyrations through the streets; and watch the various intrigues and stolen glances among the belles and beaux.

The warmth and geniality of the climate renders the use of glass in the windows entirely unnecessary, and to keep out intruders the windows are all grated with iron bars, about an inch in diameter, with shutters on the inside, to be closed when occasion may require it. These windows are very large, and open from the floor to the ceiling, and being the most pleasant part of the house during the heat of the day, are almost always occupied by the ladies of the family. As the great majority of the houses are only one story high, and built close upon the streets, this custom of sitting in the windows affords fine opportunities for lovers to steal an occasional interview. The ladies being thus constantly exposed to the gaze of the public, become accustomed to it, and do not deem it rudeness for entire strangers to stare at them, or even stop and ask them questions. But

it was not long before we learned to distinguish when a favorite came along, as the lady would then manage to get her lips through the interstices, to greet him with a hearty kiss. And they are not to be blamed for such advances, by any means; for paternal tyranny is carried to excess in most of the cities of Mexico—a gentleman being permitted to visit a lady but three or four times (and then only in the presence of her mother, aunt, or *duenna*), before declaring his intentions. If his proposals are acceptable, the preliminaries of the marriage are forthwith arranged, without consulting the feelings of the one most interested. This being the case, it is not to be wondered at that matrimonial infidelity and intrigue are so common among all classes, and that husbands and fathers should resort to bolts and bars to secure that virtue for their wives and daughters which should have been instilled into their minds from infancy.

But notwithstanding all the vigilance of fathers and guardians, "love laughs at locksmiths," and lovers can invent a thousand ways to hold converse with each other; so that elopements are as common there as births in the "log cabin" of a Hoosier. The inferior classes usually sell their daughters when they become marriageable, for \$160—sometimes for less—and often for a "mess of pottage."

We were at times the unperceived witnesses to matrimonial intrigues, and although removed beyond the voices of the lovers, could not fail to anticipate their emotions from their earnest gestures; which, if we interpreted aright, always signified that they would take great pleasure in dying for each other. In the evenings we could sit upon the windows and listen to the "poor man's opera," which, unlike the *animated* instruments by which he is regaled in our own country, consists of a band of musicians, who play on the plaza every night, from eight till ten o'clock, for the benefit of all who are susceptible of being "moved by the concord of sweet sounds."

During the first two months of our confinement, we were employed in the composition of a "Reprint of the Ordinances of the city of Valladolid," which entitled us to an occasional visit from the Governor of the province (Melchor Ocampo), who superintended the publication. He is among, if not at the very head of, the *great men* of Mexico, and was a candidate for president at the last election. Ocampo is about thirty-eight years of age, rather below the middling size, but well built. His fine olive complexion looks darker than it really is, from the jetty blackness of his hair, which hangs in ringlets about his face, and from his extensive mustachios and sparkling black eyes. In his manners he is perfectly easy and gentlemanlike, and though the first impressions would be, from his extreme politeness, and continual smiles, that he was a good natured and silly fop, yet one could soon see from his keen, inquisitive glances, which involuntarily escaped him, that he concealed under an almost childish lightness of manner, a close and accurate study of mankind. He speaks fluently five languages; and having been an accurate observer of human nature, *can* make his conversation extremely in-

structive, though he seldom took the pains to gratify us by doing so. His political talents are of the first order and his mental resources great. He seems to have every confidence in his own power, but has not that personal firmness and hardihood of purpose to lead in a revolutionary movement. Nor can he be called cowardly, for he has on many occasions resolutely placed himself in situations he knew to be dangerous; yet when the danger arrives he unfortunately loses his coolness and presence of mind, and imbibes that impetuosity of Spanish nature so fatal to all prudence. He openly denounces Santa Anna as a tyrant and usurper, but is the warm friend of Anaya, at that time the Substitute President. He is a most strenuous advocate of the war, and his plan of conducting it seems to show his sagacity and his perfect appreciation of the character of the Mexican soldiery. He would have the people join the guerrillas, abandon the towns and cities, and carry their property off to the mountains. We heard him assert, with decided emphasis and decision, that "should Mexico consent to make peace with the Yankees, he would fight the inhabitants of the other provinces as soon as a foreign foe." Such is his aversion to a treaty that would "tarnish their integrity or infringe upon their nationality, that before he would sanction it—even were his own Mechoacan to do it—he would rather expatriate himself than yield to it and live in a dishonored country." But with all his patriotism, he suffers his personal feelings and individual enmities to get the better of him; and I believe he would sooner subject his country to the Turks than have Santa Anna get the credit of saving her—for "his own Mechoacan" did not contribute a soldier to the army, nor did the contributions in funds by the clergy of Valladolid, at all correspond with the demands and expectations of the government. While other bishoprics were highly commended for their liberality, his was strongly condemned as niggardly in its appropriations, and even threatened with official and popular displeasure.

Creditable as is the intellectual character of Melchor Ocampo to himself and state, it would seem that he had made a monopoly, at least of geographical knowledge. It is true our opportunities of judging of the intelligence and capacities of the people were limited; but the interrogatories of Senor Gomez Peyrelades, the editor of "*El Republicano*," who, from his position, ought to know something of the world beyond the limits of the Chinese shoe, in which his faculties seemed to be cooped up, and which may be regarded as an index to the acquirements of the educated portion of the population, we could arrive at no very favorable estimate of their sprightliness. Among other equally silly questions, he asked us in a most grave and apparently candid manner, through his associate, "if all the United States embraced as much territory as the province of Mechoacan, and if the population exceeded three millions." He remarked that he "had recently had a dispute with the bishop, who contended that the United States was larger, both in extent of terri-

tory and population, than the whole of the republic of Mexico, but he had imputed such an extravagant idea to the priest's ignorance." The fellow's sympathy for the bishop's *ignorance* vastly exceeded his own knowledge; and when we assured him that our country was much more than double as large as all the Mexican provinces, that it contained a population of twenty millions, and could at any time send out an army of three million men, he began to think we wished to intimidate him by an exaggerated statement. He was eventually induced to "swallow the truth," however, our assertions being supported by the evidence of his partner, Mons. Buffam, who had heard something of the power and resources of the United States, in England, during the war of 1812, and had himself touched at New York, at a later period.

But the most difficult matter of comprehension to the editor was, how "whig generals" should be placed at the head of the American army, while the administration was opposed to the whigs—and when Corwin's speech against the war was received through "El Monitor," from the city of Mexico, we were asked if Senor Corwin would not immediately raise a company of *volunteers*, issue a *pronunciamento* and attack the president! The editor was delighted with the speech, and republished it, by inserting some two columns daily. He esteemed Senor Corwin as far superior to Senor Polk, in sagacity and eloquence. But poor fellow, he knows but little of the enlightened state of parties in this country, where officials can abuse each other with impunity, and where greater revolutions have been consummated by the pen than were ever accomplished by the sword.

On the 12th of March intelligence of the battle of Buena Vista was received at the office of "El Republicano." The official dispatches of Santa Anna, representing the total defeat of the American forces, were hailed by manifestations of unbounded joy, by the people, though the governor did not participate in the demonstrations of respect paid to Santa Anna, by a few of the more fanatical adherents of the war party. At night rockets were sent heavenward, till the very stars had to "hide their diminished heads," and the bells of more than forty churches pealed the notes of the triumph of the cross. We began to think that father Miller was not so far wrong after all, in his elucidation of Daniel's Vision, for if a Mexican army could defeat Gen. Taylor and his volunteers with half a chance, there was evidently something wrong in the elements. For some days we were compelled to credit the reports, till the arrival of a bundle of New Orleans papers, which they always graciously permitted us to peruse, brought a reliable statement; and caused a very perceptible elongation in the swarthy visages of the more intelligent Mexicans, who found they had shouted long "before they were out of the woods," but they suffered the great mass to enjoy the bliss of ignorance, and encouraged the conclusion that they were invincible.

It should not be inferred from this premature manifestation of joy at the supposed success of their arms, that the people of the province

of Mechoacan, are decidedly hostile to the United States. The truth is, they know nothing of our people, country, or institutions; and the ignorant dupes of a few blind leaders—the victims of passion and impulse, they prefer to rejoice on any occasion. In the last presidential canvass their legislature voted unanimously for Herrera, the peace candidate.

CHAPTER XI.

EASTER, AND ITS AMUSEMENTS—VISIT TO THE CATHEDRAL—DESCRIPTION OF THE EDIFICE—OUR EMPLOYMENT—THE SPANISH ALPHABET—CHANGE IN DISCIPLINE—IMPROVEMENT IN DIET—MASTICATING MONKEYS—THE LADIES—THEIR HOSPITALITY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS—LOVE AND ITS DOINGS.

EASTER came. Again all the markets, shops, and stores were closed. Though the holidays, instead of being a relief to us, were oppressive; and Easter is the greatest of them all. Immediately after morning mass, there was a general run, ride, and drive out of the city to a neighboring palmetto and cocoa grove, where tents were erected, plays established, and joy and pleasure reigned supreme. This continued for eight days, and at the end of the amusements, all went to the church-yard, where every grave bears its name and particular sign. Here wine, pulque, bread, and steak, and whatever else will gratify the stomach, is brought, and they eat and drink over the graves—drink complimentary toasts to the dead, and amuse themselves rurally and morally. In this manner they recompense themselves for the long forty days fast, in which their religion prevents them from eating meat, eggs, butter, milk, and cheese, and during which period we lost a good deal more flesh than Shylock demanded of the Merchant of Venice.

More out of "familiar inpertinence" than any other motive, we solicited the privilege of going to church on Easter Sunday. Our request was promptly and unexpectedly granted, and we went, more to gratify our curiosity than any hope of being seriously benefitted. Our masters employing an escort of twelve men, we were for the first time, since our confinement, permitted to enter the streets of the city. There are over forty churches in Valladolid, but we had signified our desire to see the Cathedral. Passing by the church of San Francisco, whose tripple portals might be considered fine specimens of the florid Gothic of the fifteenth century, and whose wooden doors elaborately and beautifully carved, are certainly well worthy the attention of the curious; we hastened on to see the finest buildings in the city; a church that in size, purity of style, and excellent work-

manship, far surpasses the Cathedral in Cincinnati, and would vie with Trinity church, in New York. Indeed it is regarded as among the finest Gothic edifices in the world, and certainly its effect is fine beyond description. In twenty-five years the building was commenced and completed, and was dedicated at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Being built before the revolution, when the country enjoyed repose, the same plan was pursued from beginning to end, and there was a simplicity attained—a certain kind of judicious finish and ornament, that gives to this mass of “stone and mortar” such an air of completeness—of being done—that, as we looked upon the work, we involuntarily uttered “Amen.” The central tower is 250 feet in height, and is composed wholly of open arches and tracery, crowned by an octangular band of flower-de-luce. It is certainly the most graceful and beautiful tower I ever beheld. But the interior is, if possible, more imposing than the exterior. The extreme length is 440 feet, and the height 100. The finest specimens of Spanish oil paintings adorn the walls, while the altar is of beautiful marble, and the railing, ballustrades, and images are of pure gold. I do not know how to describe the elegant, quiet simplicity of the interior, that, in spite of my prejudices, charmed me more and more, till I forcibly tore myself away from gazing. The light is peculiarly strong, owing to the immense size of the clerestory windows, and yet the rich coloring of the stained glass softens it down to the most agreeable mellowness.

While we stared at the church, we were stared at in turn by the congregation, and fearing the priest would become jealous of the attention the comparative lightness of our complexions elicited, as soon as the last thundering notes of the organ concluded the vespers, we returned, passing through the public plaza, and taking a view of the Governor's palace.

We were fast growing in the favor and esteem of our new masters. True to the policy we adopted on the first night of our captivity, we omitted no opportunity to flatter their vanity, and had not only succeeded in inducing the belief that our respect for them was unbounded, but that we had become so allied to their customs, as to have little desire to return home. These declarations were received in better faith than they were made, so far as the author is concerned, yet they were not relied on with the most implicit confidence. The trifling annoyances we had at first encountered in becoming familiar with the *case*, the *alphabet*, and the *accented letters*, were now avoided, and we could compose in Spanish with almost as much facility as in English type. Indeed, the alphabets of the two languages are almost identical—the former dispensing with our *w* and adopting three double letters—*ch*, *ll*, and *rr*—increasing the number of characters to twenty-eight. At our suggestion the *caçes* had been placed upon *stands*, the type completely cleansed, and we had introduced rollers, which were as great an innovation upon *balls*, as our steamboats were upon “broadhorns”—we had renovated “El Republicano,” so that

even its most familiar acquaintances could scarcely recognize it. In fact we had produced a revolution in the appearance of things generally, quite creditable to our ingenuity. And our enterprise redounded greatly to our advantage. These little acts of kindness, which cost nothing, resulted in affecting a complete change in our prison discipline. We were fitted out in new linen gear—each adopting the French *blouse*, in imitation of the “better classes.” The hours of labor were curtailed from twelve to eight per day, and instead of bringing our tortillas, chili, and bean soup to our prison room, the entrance to which was always secured, and feeding us like caged animals, we were permitted to take our meals with the families, on the second floor of the commodious building. These were courtesies that our most sanguine anticipations had not reached; and we had been so long accustomed to dining like Turks, that we felt really awkward and embarrassed in resuming such weapons as a knife and fork at the table! But the excellence of the diet surprised us more than all. Aside from the immoderate use of pepper and garlic, which completely usurps the original flavor of every dish—it was such as to excite the admiration of an epicure. Added to the usual luxuries to be found on the tables of hotels in the United States, we here found every variety of tropical fruits—oranges, figs, bananas, yams, &c., besides monkeys and parrots. At first, we confess we felt some compunctions of conscience in devouring such a delicacy as the carcass of a dead monkey—alarmed at such an advance towards cannibalism. But the force of example soon reconciled our misgivings, and the very idea, at first revolting, became a luxury. Monkey stock is not to say plenty in the province of Mechoacan; yet they abound in Yucatan, and being taken when very young, they are fattened like pigs, and sold in the markets. They are an excellent dish, possessing a flavor far superior to that of our squirrel, and highly prized by the Mexicans. The parrot, when fat, and served in the same manner, could not be distinguished from the American pheasant. Chocolate is a favorite beverage, and is manufactured, though not to any great extent, in Valladolid.

But the ladies—it would be ungallant to leave them unnoticed. In our new relation, we were ushered into the society of no less than six—the wife and daughter of Mons. Buffam, and the wife and three daughters of Senor Gomez Peyrelades—the latter, all of the pure Castilian blood. In age the young ladies varied from 14 up to 26, only one of whom could be called really handsome. But they soon became the most familiar and inquisitive creatures I had ever met with in any country. I would recommend all timid bachelors to go to Mexico, at once. They spoke the Spanish and French languages fluently, and had a slight smattering of the English. It was not long before they commenced paying us very handsome compliments, and apprised us of the important fact that they—having understood we were both entirely white—had been in ecstasies ever since our arrival, to have us introduced into the family, and that

they had at last succeeded in accomplishing their wishes. To us there was something rather mysterious connected with all these new tokens of hospitality, but we "bore our blushing honors meekly." We had fallen upon strange times, and the dark shadows which had hung gloomily over our destiny were fast receding before a brighter future.

For who is impervious to the dark eyes and soft smiles of woman? Our names and awkward manners afforded them curiosity and amusement—for the Spanish ladies are excessively polite, in their own way. My name commencing with *Don*, I was regarded as a descendant from the Spanish nobility—but it was difficult for me to reconcile such a conclusion under existing circumstances. For aside from my humble position as a *slave*, I was mortified by being frequently reminded of the fact that I was not so *buena* as Senor Cunningham. This partiality, however just, I attributed in some measure to having imprudently revealed my connubial responsibility in the United States. My friend Cunningham had yet no such desirable encumbrances, though his prospects were becoming flattering. The large black eye, the dark expressive glance, the soft blood-tinged, olive glowing complexion of Policarpa Peyrelades, the belle of the establishment, made him unwillingly confess the majesty of Spanish beauty. And though he readily acknowledged that the soft, blue eyes, and delicate loveliness of his own country-women, could awaken more tender feelings of interest, he would deny or dispute in vain the commanding superiority of this dark-eyed and finely formed damsel. And she was sensible, too. She had even learned what precocious children in our own "best circles" often do—that her father was a fool. Without discussing the justness of her conclusion, we will present some evidence of her accomplishments. Cervantes was her Shakspeare, most of whose productions she had committed to memory. Besides singing "divinely," and playing on the guitar and piano, she was a poetess! Her effusions frequently graced the columns of "*El Republicano*," and some of which, in our uninitiated judgment, possessed decided merit. The passion of love inspires a passion for poetry; and being beyond the influence of either, I will be pardoned for introducing a specimen of her production. The lines were addressed to my friend Cunningham, after he had so far advanced as to assure her she was his.

"FIRST LOVE.

[TRANSLATED FROM '*EL REPUBLICANO*']

"Guard well within thy memory the love that youth repays,
Nor seek in winter's snowy breast affection's flame to raise;
For the loves which fill the guileless heart, while from suspicion free,
Are dearer far than after ones, how true soe'er they be.

"The *purchased* loves of life's young morn, when every thought glows warm,
And fills the clouds with sapphire towers and many a fairy form;
Oh, lose them not by cold neglect, or hope not to regain,
The plant of love once chilled with frost will never spring again.

"The dream of passion's spring-time hour—the full heart's overflow,
Chilled by the world's cold frown are hushed, and quenched their genial glow,
And life's dull, dread realities, in all their bitter truth,
Impart to us the lesson learned—'We have no second youth.'

"Go wander through the labyrinth of fashion's giddy throng,
And view gay pleasure's masquerade, or list her syren song;
Taste every cup of bliss, and roam where fancy's voice may call,
Yet shall the thought of 'love's young dream' be dearer than them all.

"Cherish thy first young love, then, as a principle—a part
Of that pure bliss which heaven itself enshrines within the heart;
It is the clear untainted fount of undefined desire,
The substance and the essence pure of the Promethean fire."

CHAPTER XII.

NEWS OF THE INVESTMENT OF VERA CRUZ—BATTLE OF CERRO GORDO—CHARACTER OF CUNNINGHAM—INFLUENCE OF LOVE—UNFAVORABLE CHANGE IN TREATMENT—ESCAPE FROM VALLADOLID—PASSING THE GATES—DEPARTURE FOR QUERETARO—TOMATOES—A RANCHO—HOSPITALITY OF THE WOMEN—BAKING TORTILLAS—ASSUMPTION OF A NEW CHARACTER—RIO GRANDE DE SANTIAGO—BANYAN TREES—MOUNTAIN SCENERY—AN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN, HIS CHARACTER AND KINDNESS—EDUCATION OF LIZARDS—CITY OF QUERETARO—A MEXICAN DILLIGENCE—ARRIVAL AT THE CITY OF MEXICO.

INTELLIGENCE communicating the defeat of the Mexican forces at Cerro Gordo, following the receipt of the official statement which announced the investment of Vera Cruz, by the army under Gen. Scott, did not fail to produce sensations of alarm among the ranks of the war party at Valladolid, and it was even conceded by the editor of "El Republicano" that the capital was speedily destined to fall into the hands of the invading army. Although our situation had become comparatively agreeable, save the close confinement to which we were subjected, we could not anticipate the consequences that might ensue to us, either in the event of a subjugation of the country, or a cessation of hostilities. Isolated and remote as we were from the capital, our condition could not be made known there. During the period of seven months we had been prisoners within the power and at the mercy of the enemy, we had never been permitted to communicate a syllable to our friends. We did not ask to transmit our confidential thoughts, but merely to apprise our friends of our fate and confinement. This privilege, however, they would grant us under no considerations. Nor were we allowed to see or communicate with our own countrymen, several of whom we had learned were residing in the city; but who, had they known and been disposed to reveal our situation, would have been detected, as

no communication can leave the city without first having passed through the hands of an inspector, clothed with authority to suppress whatever his judgment may dictate.

It is certainly mortifying enough to have one's genius eternally cramped within the narrow limits of our best printing-offices in the United States, but in Mexico he will find its expansions most rigidly prescribed. After four months' labor, without any compensation but the bare supply of "food and raiment," we had grown not only weary of our situation, irksome and monotonous as was the routine of our duties, but daily experienced an increasing desire to return to our own country. Added to all this, a partiality for my friend Cunningham, which could not be concealed, had in a measure alienated him from me. He was one of those frank, ardent, high-minded companions, to whom a soul might be intrusted; and his ready fund of wit and sentiment, as occasion required, had served to beguile many a weary hour, in the long night of our mutual perils. From the nature of our position, we had formed a kind of alliance, offensive and defensive; and amid the hum of a foreign language, for a time incomprehensible, had indulged in the sweet sounds of our mother tongue. Fellow-sufferers, engaged in kindred pursuits, linked in the same uncertain destiny, we had shared each other's joys and sorrows, and studied each other's domestic habits, somewhat after the amiable manner of the Siamese twins. But the man was now "in love," and his character had undergone a total change. Mankind are too apt to conclude that others can feel the same interest in their individual affairs, that they do themselves—especially is it so with *lovers*, who suppose the world is as completely convulsed as their own overflowing hearts; and who, when they fairly surrender, the victims of that passion, are about as fit for society as a Mexican is for the enjoyment of enlightened liberty. They are "company" for no one but themselves, creating as they do, a kind of world within themselves. I could not censure or reprove my friend, for I had been a victim to the same influence—nor did I wonder that the citadel of his heart was no more successful in resisting an attack from the fortress of the fair Policarpa, than were her countrymen from the well poised charges of the "army of occupation." Yet I was the sufferer. While he was cared for and caressed, I became neglected. Mine was a most unenviable lot—shut up in prison, and shut out from the last claim I had upon human sympathy—I stood "solitary and alone, amid the jeers of an inconstant world." While at night I was securely locked in the narrow room in the garret, which we had jointly occupied, to sleep upon a rude bed made of strips of cow-hide interlaced, he was conducted to better apartments, to sleep with I know not whom, for traveling through this world "makes strange bed-fellows," and in Mexico I have known "broad hints" to be given even by fathers.

Under such an unfavorable combination of circumstances, it is not to be wondered at, that if from no higher motives than to avoid the

constant evidence of the inferiority of my position, I should eagerly embrace the first opportunity to escape. On the night of the 3d of May (1847), from some cause, which will probably never be satisfactorily explained even to myself, I awoke about the hour of midnight and found the door of my room unlocked and open. This room, which had no window, and but the one door, communicated with the printing office, where, after drawing on my new Spanish habiliments, I procured the small cords from several bundles of printing paper, and tying them together, carefully secured one end near a window in the hall of the office, and taking the other, through that aperture, I let myself quietly down into the street. It was the first time I had ever found myself dangling in the air at the end of a rope, and I trust may be the last—though I confess it was “pulling hemp” to some purpose. It was an undignified, unenviable, and indelicate position, and in describing it I must have the license of undignified terms. The truth is, what little of *dignity* I ever possessed was pretty well compromised while in a state of menial servitude.

Free in the city, I yet had to pass the gates, which I managed without difficulty, through the knowledge I had acquired of the Spanish language. During our confinement, I had carelessly made enquiry about the roads to the city of Mexico, Queretaro, and various other places. Of the gate keeper I enquired the road to the city of Mexico, but instead of following it, to avoid pursuit, I took the road to Queretaro, and with a peculiar mingling of hope and fear, bid adieu to the city of Valladolid. I did not experience the confusion which characterizes the conduct of a culprit, for I felt conscious of my rights, if ever I should have the good fortune to recover them; and this stratagem may have prevented my being overtaken and recaptured. Being an accomplished pedestrian, with an extensive practice, I must have traveled some twenty miles before daylight; when leaving the road I secured myself for the day among the chaparel, where I had the company of a family of lizards as numerous as the John Smith's. Whether pursued or not, I neither learned nor cared, after escaping.

Taking up the line of march, early on the second night I came in sight of the town of Charo, which I avoided by a kind of semi-circle and zizzag manœuver through the mountain paths of the Cordilleras. Here I met with the good fortune to encounter a tomato patch, a vegetable of spontaneous growth, and on which I gratified my appetite and subsisted for the first three days. On the morning of the third day after my escape, arriving in the delightful valley of the Rio Grande de Santiago, I ventured to make a call at a rancho. Here I found the miserable looking excuses for men stretched out upon their floors in a state of profound somnolency. Permitting them to enjoy their repose, the ladies most generously and hospitably prepared an excellent breakfast, consisting of venison, fregoles, chili, chocolate, and tortillas. The latter is a kind of corn cake, which is the only bread found among the inhabitants of Mexico, out of the towns and

cities. The process of making them I had never before witnessed, and the *Senoritas*, although they did not know me from Adam, seemed to take great pleasure in initiating me into the mysteries of their manufacture. The common Indian corn is, in the first place, put into an earthen vessel containing lime-water, where it is soaked to remove the husk—it is afterwards crushed between two stones, shaped for the purpose, into a thick paste, made into flat cakes and baked on a clay griddle. A very liberal sprinkling of pulverized chili (a small red pepper from which cayenne is manufactured), is usually introduced to the dough, making it “go off like *hot cakes*” in reality.

The ladies were as inquisitive as the verriest Yankee from Vermont, but I had prepared a tale for them. Robberies being of common and almost every day occurrence there, I represented myself as an English merchant from Guanajuato, returning from Zacatula, on the Pacific, and as having been attacked by banditti, who stripped me of not only my money, but the mustang on which I had been mounted, and came within a “squirrel’s jump,” of taking my life in the bargain. Englishmen stand high in the estimation of both the people and the government, and their sympathies for me were unbounded. I made an apology for being unable to remunerate them, when they gave me to understand that it was an insult to Mexican character to offer such a thing, even were I loaded down with jewels.

Leaving the rancho, as I proceeded down the valley of the Santiago river, I passed through a large grove of banyan trees. This tree has been regarded as one of the wonders of the world, and is certainly among nature’s most admirable productions. It is a growth only of those climes where she has lavished her bounties in the greatest profusion and variety. The main trunk throws forth its branches in long, hanging, and at first, tender fibres, which on reaching the earth take root, and become in their turn parent trunks, sending forth their own branches. A grove thus formed, presents one of the most beautiful and luxuriant views that can be imagined. The leaves are large, soft, and of a lively green; the fruit is a small fig, when ripe of a bright scarlet, affording sustenance to monkeys, squirrels, peacocks, parrots, and birds of various kinds which dwell among their branches, and were indulging in their peculiar antics.

Upon crossing the Santiago, and entering the province of Quere-taro, I again approached the mountains, the defiles of which, at first open, soon became so contracted as scarcely to leave a passage, while the hills on either side became wilder and more lofty. On their surface was a low brushwood of oak and holly, scarcely hiding the dark rocks that were piled loosely above one another, and ready to crush down at the slightest impulse. Within these narrow ravines, mountain rivulets were collected in strong currents, which rattled among masses of huge rock, and often swept, in broad flakes of foam, across the narrow road which wound through the valleys.

In approaching the city of Queretaro, through the province of the same name, I found the country more thickly populated than any other portion of Mexico I had visited. After receiving such tokens of regard at the first rancho at which I had stopped, I did not hesitate to call at others, and on relating the same plausible story, received similar demonstrations of kindness. Within two miles of the city I was overtaken by a gentleman on horseback. He was riding the noblest looking animal I had seen in the country, and from his complexion I was at once convinced that he was not a native, although he addressed me in Spanish. We had proceeded but a short distance, till, arriving at his residence, he invited me in. Fearing to enter the city of Queretaro, and hailing this as the only source through which to receive the necessary information by which my course might be regulated, I availed myself of his politeness. Upon a mutual interchange of the ordinary inquiries, I found him to be a native of Maryland, and a practicing physician, who had amassed immense wealth by his profession during his residence in Mexico, where he was living in princely style. I had found another bright spot, an oasis, in the great desert of my perilous pilgrimage. To him I revealed my true character, and the history of my adventures. Being an American, a man of generous sympathies, and more than ordinary sagacity, he readily proposed to assist me, without at all compromising his own safety. After my journey of 112 miles, I remained with the doctor (Stevenson), during the following day to refresh myself. When we had dispatched an *unpeppered* dinner, and were enjoying our cigars under a broad spreading tamarind tree, his lizards came down to repel the attacks of the mosquitos. It is astonishing what education will accomplish. The doctor's kindness for animals has developed instincts and awakened affections that would not discredit a race of intellectual beings. When he returns from the city, his beautiful fan-tailed pigeons come with their familiar greetings to his carriage and perch upon his shoulders, and his lizards jump from the trees into his hands. He related an incident which occurred several years since, while he resided near Vera Cruz, showing the remarkable instinct of these reptiles. A huge lizard that had the misfortune to lose his tail by some accident, marched into his office with the dismembered limb in his mouth, and approached him as if seeking relief! This looks like a rather remarkable "snake story," but is nevertheless asserted by him as a fact, and he regards the circumstance as a tribute to his surgical skill.

The succeeding morning found us driving to the city of Queretaro. Instructing me to retain the assumed character of an English merchant, on our arrival at the city I was introduced as such, though my ignorance of "*the trade, stocks,*" &c., poorly qualified me for sustaining it. I played the somewhat difficult part, however, without suspicion, so far as I know, and through the influence of Dr. Stevenson, I was tendered a seat in a diligence, which was to leave in a

few days for the city of Mexico, in company with a *real* English merchant. This arrangement perfected, after furnishing me with means, and a note of introduction to Mr. Black, the American consul, he left me enjoying high hopes and spirits, and a heart overflowing with gratitude; for it was then taken by general consent, that Gen. Scott and his army were "reveling in the halls of the Montezumas."

During the evening we took a stroll through the city, which surpasses in point of beauty, cleanliness, and industry, all others in Mexico. The buildings are handsome and commodious, and exhibit a refinement of taste in their construction seldom met with in that country; while the streets are wide, well paved, with spacious sidewalks. Included within its walls are three large public plazas, beautifully adorned with shrubbery and a rich variety of flowers. The population is supposed to reach 50,000; and the magnificence of its public buildings almost challenge competition. Among its most splendid and extensive public works, is a stone aqueduct, by which the city is supplied with water, and which is some ten or twelve miles in length.

On the morning of the 14th we took our seats in a Mexican diligence, which resembles more than any thing else, a common bedstead inclosed with green painted canvass, on wheels, with four mules hitched abreast; and passing through the unimportant towns of San Juan, Huitoke, Tula, and Guatilan, arrived safely in the city of Mexico on the 16th of May.

CHAPTER XIII.

CITY OF MEXICO—PUBLIC GROUNDS—PUBLIC BUILDINGS—THE MINT—COIN-
ING GOLD—HOTELS—THEATERS—NEWSPAPER PRESS OF THE CITY—LIT-
ERATURE—SOCIETY—MANNERS AND CUSTOMS—DRESS—SUBURBS—CEME-
TERY—POPULATION, &c.

I was disappointed in my ideal picture of the city of Mexico. Like many others, I had imagined it to be a counterpart of the great Venice across the waters, only with the additional attractions of floating paradises, in the shape of flower gardens, instead of gondolas, upon the bosom of its watery streets. But the city has been cruelly modernized in this particular, and there is little of that romance we read of, justly belonging to it now. It occupies only a part of the seat of the ancient Tenochtitlan—the city of the Montezumas—and instead of being built on a cluster of islands, is at least two miles east of the lake of Tezcuco. The valley or table land on which it is located, is 7,400 feet above the level of the sea, and about one hundred and fifty miles in circumference. This valley

is surrounded by mountains, ranging in height from three to nine thousand feet. In geniality of climate, and fertility of soil, it is almost unequalled in the wide world. It is covered with the most luxuriant herbage, and timber of almost every size and species. The cypress here reaches enormous dimensions, sometimes measuring twenty feet in diameter. The city has been represented as being the finest on the American continent, and in many respects certainly is so. It occupies a vast area—the walls by which it is surrounded enclosing a square about five miles in extent either way. I have seen as handsome buildings, and as beautiful trees, but, altogether, the gently undulating, yet nearly level plain, the uniformity in the height of the buildings, the long straight streets, crossing at right angles; and above all, the magnificent public grounds, artificial lakes and canals, I must say that, in these respects, it presents attractions far beyond any of the cities of the United States. The architecture is of the most fascinating style. The buildings generally are constructed of porphyritic and basaltic stone, from the neighboring mountains, tastefully hewn, and are three stories in height, with flat roofs and terraces. Some of the fronts are of porcelain, laid off in large squares, in which are painted pictures representing "Christ crucified," "the ascension," the "Virgin of Gaudaloupe," &c. But as a general thing, the fronts are of smooth stone painted either crimson or light green. The gates, ballustrades, and railing are of iron beautifully bronzed—while the fronts are adorned with corridors and balconies—constructed of the same material, and richly ornamented with fruit and flower trees. The floors of the houses are universally of tile or brick. The principal streets are from two to three miles in length, somewhat roughly paved. They are not constructed on the same plan of ours, with side walks and gutters, but gradually descend from each side to the center, where there is a drain, covered by broad flag stones, which may be removed at pleasure. These gutters are drained by a large sewer, some twelve miles in length, cut through the mountains, and emptying into the river Tula; which also serves to carry off the water when the lakes overflow during the rainy season, and prevents inundation—the surface of the water in the lakes being higher than the streets of the city. This outlet also affords a waste-way for the canal from the lake of Chalco, which supplies the city with water. After the European style, each street presents its particular class of shops—the jewelers are confined to one street, the dry-goods men to another, grocers to still another, &c., while fruits and flowers of every variety and hue are to be found in all.

But the public grounds of the city constitute its great attraction. They will compare with those of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and New Orleans, just about as the "Eighth street space" in the Queen city will compare to the "New York Battery." The chief plaza in the center of the city, is one of the finest business squares to be seen in any city in the world. It contains some twelve or fif-

teen acres, and is beautifully paved with large hewn stone. It is surrounded by public buildings—the cathedral occupying the east side, built upon the spot where stood the ancient temple of the sun. On the west is the bazaar, and a long row of public offices, adorned with piazzas which project over the side-walk—the national palace on the north, formerly occupied by the viceroys of Spain, but more recently by the presidents; and on the south the public market and museum. But the rural retreats within the city furnish a far greater source of admiration. Groves are liberally interspersed, at appropriate distances, containing from fifteen to seventy-five acres, planted with every variety of trees, shrubbery, and flowers, and in some of which artificial lakes are to be seen, abounding in gold fish, that wildly sport in their pure, native element. Among these enclosures, the Alamenda, near the western limits of the city, is the most conspicuous, and whose graveled walks, odoriferous flowers, and marble fountains, dispel all thoughts of the indolent, and half-civilized occupants without. It is a kind of Eden scene; and while I gazed upon it I did not wonder that poor, persecuted Eve should have been tempted, for where every thing was clad in the rich profusion of beauty, who could think of sin and misery! Besides these, there are numerous private gardens, of magnificent beauty, handsomely laid out, with their flagged walks, bordered with hundreds of luxuriant pots of flowers whose bloom never dies.

The public buildings are very numerous, and more than two hundred spires proudly peer above the city. Perhaps the most striking of all the characteristics of their architecture, are the pyramidal masses of masonry, far exceeding in height every other part of the edifice, between which the portals, not only those that form the main entrance, but the passages between its courts, are placed. In these apparently useless masses the architect seems to have sought to imitate the hewn face of the lofty rocks in which the entrance of the excavations are usually formed. Especially is this the case in regard to the building called the President's Palace, but which resembles more a penitentiary than the abode of a sovereign. It has but three doors opening on the first floor—its windows are small and barbarously arranged—and altogether, it is the most tasteless and ill-shaped building in the city. The halls of the Senate and House of Deputies are also on the second floor of this uncomely edifice, besides the offices of the ministers of finance, foreign relations, heads of departments, &c. It may be, however, that the cathedral, so far eclipsing this building in point of beauty and splendor, causes one to view it with severer criticism than he otherwise would. From the descriptions I had read of this cathedral, and from the magnificence of similar buildings in the inferior cities of Mexico, which I had seen, I was induced to form opinions of its splendor on too extensive a scale to be realized. In proportions only, it excels the cathedral at Valladolid—in beauty of architecture and grace, it cannot compare with the latter. It occupies an area of five hundred feet in depth, by

four hundred and fifty in width, with a tower that commands a view of the entire city, and its suburbs for miles in circumference, including the lakes of Tezcuco, Zumpango, San Christoval, and Chalco. The walls are of immense thickness, and constructed of solid stone, while the deep, tall windows, with their finely painted glass, impart to it rather an inviting appearance. Yet one's admiration scarcely commences till he has entered within the walls. Here it is that he is awed by the enormous wealth and splendor of the interior. In richness of decorations, it must surpass any similar edifice on the continent—at least any that I have visited. The main altar, near the center, is of polished marble, ornamented with solid gold and silver, surmounted by numerous images manufactured of the same material, and which, notwithstanding the costliness of their composition, have to perform the menial service of candle-sticks. Extensive lines of balustrades also surround the choir, and images of golden saints and angels are stuck against the walls with a prodigality that would induce the beholder to believe the wealth of empires had here been lavished to gratify the gods. Three costly images of full grown, and handsome virgins, clad in petticoats and short aprons, strung with emeralds, pearls, and diamonds, occupy conspicuous positions, where they receive the addresses and adorations of the high and the low, the rich and the poor, notwithstanding their countless wealth and aristocratic attire—religion making no distinctions, they are to be approached by all.

Among the other public buildings are the Hospital, the Franciscan Convent, the Public Library, and the Mint. The latter is the most extensive establishment of the kind in the world. It employs 3000 hands, and has coined \$100,000 in a single day. There are to be found among its superintendents several Yankees, from one of whom I learned the interesting process of coining gold. Most of the gold found in Mexico is brought to this mint to be coined, as silver only is coined at the mines of Valenciana (near Guanajuato), and Zacatecas. The gold dust is usually melted into bullion before it is brought to the mint, to find the value each parcel has to be *assayed*. The assaying is the most curious and scientific business connected with the mint. The gold dust being cast into bars, the bars are weighed accurately, and a piece cut off for the assayer, who melts it with double its weight in silver, and three times its weight in lead. It is melted in small cups made of bone ashes, which absorb all the lead, while a large portion of silver is extracted by another process, and the sample is then rolled out to a thin shaving, placed in a small vial, called a matrass, containing nitric acid. The matrasses are then placed on a furnace, boiled for some time, when the liquid is renewed, and the process repeated, till the acid has extracted all the silver and other mineral substance, leaving the sample pure gold. By the difference in the weight before, and after assaying, the value is estimated. After this the bars are melted, refined, and being mixed with a due proportion of alloy (equal portions of silver and copper),

they are drawn into long strips, cut into round pieces with a sort of punch, and milled, or the edge slightly raised, when they are placed in a stamping press and come forth perfect coins. The mint in the city, as well as other similar establishments, belongs to the government, to which, altogether, they are a great source of revenue.

The hotels in the city are numerous, and some of them very extensive and well regulated. I have seldom partaken of more elegant or sumptuous entertainments than at the public house at which I there stopped. The table was loaded with a profusion of meats, fruits, confectionaries, and wines. The services of china were rich and beautiful, and the courses followed each other in succession, perhaps to the amount of ten or fifteen in number. Such of the private dwelling houses as I entered, which were few, although of splendid exterior and spacious apartments, did not seem to be as well furnished as those of the United States usually are in our cities.

There are three theaters in the city, all of which are nightly thronged. The "Principal," which is visited by the military officers and aristocracy generally, is an edifice of some credit to the drama, but the other two, the "Puente Quebrada" and "Nuevo Mexico," are any thing else. I did not visit either, but was informed that the representations were, if any thing, in a more deplorable state than the buildings. They constitute, however, the chief source of amusement for most classes, as bull fights in the city have been almost entirely abandoned.

The newspaper press of the city might be considered respectable, especially as compared with that of other portions of the republic. In mechanical execution, some three or four of their journals may be regarded as approaching neatness and taste. There were seven daily papers published in May, and a new one, the "El Sol Central," has been since established. Their newspapers, however, do not contain the same variety, nor are they conducted with the ability of ours. Among the first acts of Santa Anna, when he resumed the power of the government, was to annul the law restricting the liberty of the press; and although nominally free, it was yet held in check by Gomez Farias and Anaya.

El Republicano, is the oldest and perhaps the most influential of the newspapers, though none of them exercise any thing like the influence over society they do in the United States. Its politics are not very remarkable for consistency, yet it has sustained the war party from the commencement with energy and ability. It is supported chiefly by the high functionaries and large proprietors, and its principal aim seems to be to uphold the existing state of things. It is the champion of the present—cares little for the past, and less for the future. Instead of rushing into plans of reform, and theories of social melioration, it follows closely the progress of events, and shapes its course accordingly. The subscription price of *El Republicano* is \$15 a year.

Le Courier Francais, printed in the French language, is perhaps

the best *newspaper* in the city. The editor does not indulge much in the political controversies and official squabbles which eternally agitate the population, but devotes his sheet almost exclusively to news and literature, and has the reputation of giving the "earliest intelligence."

El Monitor is conducted with more ability and independence than any of its cotemporaries. The editor is always ready to discuss any subject, and he writes with a degree of freedom and ease, peculiar to himself—yet he is full of malice and deception, and plays with his phrases as a juggler does with his balls. He denounces Santa Anna in the most violent and bitter terms.

Buletin de la Democracia, a new paper by Senor Jimeney, and the especial organ of Gomez Farias, is ably conducted, and has acquired some character both for wit and keen sarcasm, by its frequent collisions with the organ of the peace party.

El Razonador, the peace paper, presents not only profound and unanswerable arguments, but at times infuses in its politics a degree of railery and cutting criticism, decidedly amusing. It opposes, and sometimes ridicules, every project or idea advanced by the ministry or provisional government, being careful at all times not to assume a factious attitude, or render itself liable to the restrictions hanging over it.

There are other papers, the *Diario Gubernativo*, the *Iris Espanol*, &c., but their characters are of little interest or importance. The sentences of the editor of the former seem to run out from his pen like thread unwinding from a spool—with about as much care, and perhaps as little effect on the public.

Their literature, like the poor and unpitied *lazaroni* who swarm the streets in countless hordes, is in a state of beggary. The inestimable advantages of education have been extended to an inconsiderable portion of the population. The great mass have been doomed to grope through life in the cinemerian darkness of absolute ignorance. Few books are printed—still less are read—as the tendency of society is more to sensual than intellectual enjoyment.

A transient visiter to this great metropolis is certain to form an exaggerated opinion of its morals, or rather its immorality. The deplorable ignorance of the population—the loose opinions that prevail—the infidelity which totally disregards all obligations of the marriage vow, naturally shock the feelings of those reared under happier influences. There seem to be no kindly and elevated affections to preserve the young from the contaminations of the world into which they are precipitately launched, without a home. There is no sanctuary for virtue like a *home*—and even in our own land of happy hearths, how many would be lost in the hour of trial, but for the thoughts of wounding and disgracing those they have there learned to love. Most of the Mexicans, in our sense of the word, have no home. They lodge in hired apartments, and spend their days at the cafes, billiard rooms, lotteries, and places of public amusement, yet

the criminal calendar is not so dark as one would be induced to anticipate from their habits of ignorance and indolence. They are much addicted to gambling and its kindred vices. We are apt to imagine that they have no affinity to us—that they are a totally distinct and isolated race. Such a conclusion is erroneous. Man, from his earliest authentic history, and perhaps long before, of whatever grade, clime, or color, has been the instrument of passion. His chief pursuit is the greatest amount of happiness, employing every energy and straining every nerve to reach the source of the fountain from whence he is to be blissfully wafted down the stream of time, or like the drunkard with his bed, taking a longitudinal position, and quietly awaiting the revolution of events, which is to bring him ease, and luxury, and repose, as the case may be. However we may differ in habits, and the minor relations which serve as teguments to bind up the social compact—the object, aim, and end are the same. The Mexicans eat, sleep, and talk, much as we do, yet their routine of duties and pleasures is quite dissimilar. Indeed, they seem to have no *duty* but that of pleasure, and while the poorer classes seek it in those hells which abound to a greater or less extent in every city, the streets and roads in the vicinity, at all times, are thronged with the splendid carriages of the wealthy.

Among the most pleasant drives in the vicinity, are those to the village of Tacubaya, the country seat of the Presidents, four miles distant, and the Catholic burying ground, two miles beyond the city gates. I visited the latter, according to my universal practice in entering a strange place, as I consider it a matter of some importance to ascertain the extent to which grave yards are *patronised*. I found it to be a most lovely rural spot, though not to be compared to Mount Auburn, or Greenwood. Yet there is something so striking and peculiar in the construction of a large number of Catholic tombs as at once to challenge our admiration. Instead of monuments or stones, there is erected over each vault, a little chapel, some three or four feet wide, six or eight in length, and five in height, surmounted by a cross. A neatly grated door in front, and a little stained-glass window in the rear, enables one to see the inscriptions, busts, wreaths of flowers, and other objects within, which usually consist of a chair, a prayer-book, a crucifix, or small image of the Virgin, wax candles, and other conveniences for their forms of devotion and intercession for the departed. Emerging suddenly from the noise and bustle of the city of the living, and catching a first view of these little funeral temples, thickly strewn and dotted over the level plain, the thought irresistibly forces itself upon one, that he is traversing the city of the dead. Here are epitaphs in almost every language; and, here, side by side, friends and foes, and the natives of far distant climes, quietly repose in their last long sleep together.

As a people, the citizens seem more to be actuated by impulse than judgment. There are few conventional forms and enlightened restrictions observed in society; so, that, whatever is said or done,

comes from the heart. In their habits and manners, the French forms prevail over all others; but there is a degree of unaffected politeness peculiarly their own. The ladies are seen only in the streets in the evening, or on holidays, in carriages. Black is the universal color of the dress worn by the Spanish and Mexican lady, and while among the higher classes it is remarkably elegant, generally adorns a very perfect shape, without any of that assistance which nature so often receives in our own country. The robe is usually of black velvet, tastefully worked and vandyked. The mantilla, or *reboso*, is here seen in its highest state of perfection. It is a kind of veil, of black silk or lace, thrown over the head, and leaving the face uncovered, falls gracefully over the neck and shoulders, and is confined at the waist by the arms of the wearer. Thus clad and standing in her neat, close-fitting, satin slippers, with her face at times half-concealed by a gaudily pictured paper fan, the scientific gyrations of which convey a language more eloquent than words, the Mexican lady may be seen at almost any hour of the day among the bright flowers of her balcony, often enjoying the luxury of her *Sigaretto*. Every body smokes in the city—man, woman, girl, and boy, almost down to the baby just escaped from the cradle.—The men belonging to the higher classes dress in long Spanish cloaks, laced and tasselled, a low crown, broad brimmed white hat when in the streets; but the greater portion of the males I saw were military officers; who at that time almost overrun the city, and who were even proof against the appeals made by “El Republicano” to the government, suggesting the propriety of starting them out to fight the Yankees.

Upon the whole the city of Mexico, with a population of at least 200,000, presents a motley grouping, with no distinguishing national characteristic, save, perhaps, its 10,000 filthy-looking water carriers, who supply the city with water from the canal; and its 30,000 *leperos*, with that awkward display of pride in rags, which prompts them to resist labor as an indignity, while they regard alms-taking, or light-fingering, as praiseworthy accomplishments.

CHAPTER XIV.

MAJOR BORLAND—PUBLIC SENTIMENT IN THE CITY—DEPARTURE FOR PUEBLA—PASS AT RIO FRIO—TEMPLE OF THE SUN—CITY OF PUEBLA—MANUFACTORIES—PUBLIC BUILDINGS—CATHEDRAL—INVESTMENT OF THE CITY—GEN. WORTH—DISAFFECTION AMONG THE SOLDIERS—ASSASSINATIONS—MURDER OF AN AMERICAN OFFICER IN A CONVENT—PEROTE—ARMY UNDER GEN. SCOTT—JALAPA—BATTLE-GROUND OF CERRO GORDO—NATIONAL ROAD AND BRIDGE—COL. SOWERS—VERA CRUZ—CASTLE OF SAN JUAN—PASSAGE ACROSS THE GULF—ISLAND OF LOBOS—ARRIVAL IN THE UNITED STATES—BARRY AND CUNNINGHAM.

DURING my brief sojourn in the city of Mexico, I had the pleasure of meeting with Major Borland, one of the Encarnation prisoners, who was captured with Cassius M. Clay, Major Gaines, and others, and who was then on parole, entitled to the privileges of the city. His was the first familiar face I had encountered for more than seven months, although I had received repeated manifestations of kindness among strangers, upon whose generosity I had no claim. With Major Borland I had become acquainted in 1839, and was employed at that time in his office, when he presided over the editorial columns of the "Western World" newspaper, at Memphis, Tenn. To him I am indebted for numerous courtesies, and I doubt not that it was through his kind solicitude in my behalf, that a safe conveyance was provided for me to Vera Cruz. Through American citizens and our Consul, he had acquired much information in regard to the condition of parties, and the agitated state of feeling then convulsing the political circles in the capital.

On the day previous to my arrival, the legislature had cast the vote of the province for Angel Trias (former Governor of Chihuahua) for President. Santa Anna had arrived from Puebla, and been driven from the city by the mob. The news of Gen. Worth's occupation of Puebla, of which he had taken possession two days before, had just been received, and the advance of the army under Gen. Scott, upon the city, was confidently anticipated; though no measure of public defense had yet been considered, and it was asserted that there were only five pieces of artillery there at the command of the authorities. The peace party, and I believe a majority of the better citizens, were looking forward to the occupation of the city by the American forces, as their only hope of security against the thieving propensities of the Mexican soldiery, who infested it, without paying that strict regard to the rights of property so desirable to the owners.

A number of American citizens, who had been engaged in different business pursuits, together with the American Consul, were preparing to leave; and availing myself of the protection afforded by the Mexican authorities to this company, as well as the kind attentions of Mr.

Black, I left with them on the morning of the 18th May for Puebla, seventy-six miles east of the capital, on the National Road.

After passing the gates of the city, the road for several miles is thrown up over the bed originally occupied by the water of the Lake of Tezeuco, and which is now only a flat marsh. For a number of years the waters of the lake have been gradually receding, and only in the rainy seasons is this marsh inundated. The lake itself is ill-shaped and shallow, containing many islands, and covered with myriads of wild ducks and other water-fowl; the delightful illusion of *Chinampas*, or floating gardens, having totally vanished.

The road is a broad, smooth, unobstructed thoroughfare, passing between parallel canals and beautiful rows of luxuriant lombardy poplars. It was not till we had reached the deep ravine of the Cordova Mountain that we passed beyond a view of the towering peaks of Popocatepetl, and Iztaccihuatl, on the south of the city, whose colossal summits are elevated 17,000 feet above the level of the sea, and are covered with perpetual snow.

At a distance of thirty-six miles from the capital we arrived at the small walled garrison of Cordova, after traversing the celebrated pass of Rio Frio. This pass is perhaps a mile and a half in length, being a steep rugged descent through the mountain of Cordova to the garrison, and at the foot of which winds the small stream of Rio Frio, or Cold River. The place is inhabited by a suspicious looking race of beings, whose only occupation is to plunder and assassinate. It is situated about mid-way between the cities of Puebla and Mexico, and is generally made a point or stopping place for the night; but our organs of caution and love of order, prompted us to seek a shelter at a rancho, some five miles this side.

On the following day we passed through the ancient city of Cholula, whose ruins have so long been an object of interest to antiquarians. This city, before the conquest, is said to have contained a population nearly equal to that of Mexico, but is now reduced to some 5,000. Here may be seen the remains of the temple of the sun, so sacred to the early inhabitants. It is a huge pyramid 1400 feet square, and 200 feet in height. Its base would, perhaps, cover Washington square in New York, while its summit would rise above the pinnacles of the University. It is surrounded by many smaller pyramids, which are said to have been devoted to the worship of the stars.

On the evening of the second day after our departure, we arrived safely in the city of Puebla, decidedly the most American looking town in all Mexico. It contains a population of 80,000, with broad elegantly paved streets, and handsome stone buildings. The streets are much more cleanly than those of the city of Mexico, and are built up more densely, presenting none of the ragged suburbs which so detract from the beauty of many of the cities in that country. There is also a greater degree of industry among the inhabitants, who wear better clothes, and a more civilized appearance than most

of their neighbors, although entitled to less confidence. It is the only city in Mexico where cotton fabrics are manufactured to any extent; being located on a branch of the Nasca river, affording abundant water privileges. The number of churches and convents is almost innumerable, and the priests constitute about half the population, all of whom are unscrupulous in their denunciations of Santa Anna, for having taken the liberty to appropriate to his own use a large portion of their golden church ornaments, on his precipitous retreat from the city. Puebla is the capital of the province of the same name, and is a purely Spanish town, having been built since the conquest. Among its most conspicuous public buildings, are the Governor's palace, and the great Cathedral, the latter of which is represented to be the richest in the world. Whether this be true or not, it would be a task to undertake to compute the wealth treasured up within its walls. The building, like all the churches there, is of the Gothic style. In looking at these splendid edifices, what most astonishes an American is the beautiful and substantial masonry by which the parts are firmly knit together. The material used in the construction of this cathedral is different from that of any other—being a species of pale blue stone, hewn in heavy blocks, supported by huge pillars, which terminate in towers filled with bells. These towers are differently shaped, uniformity seeming to be by no means essential to good looks. But on entering, one is apt to be inspired with feelings of awe at seeing so much splendor, and so many things, the purposes of which he is unable to divine, and which can be regarded only as the relics of a by-gone age—the images of virgins, dressed in rich embroidered satin, with strings of pearls and diamonds dangling down about their knees, and crowns of gold, inlaid with emeralds, around their brows. But the eye is only arrested by their brilliancy, and confused by the multiplicity of these figures; and we are led to contrast the strange encounter of splendor and misery by which we are surrounded—the massive marble altars, surmounted by gold and silver candelabras, occupied by the numerous priesthood, and the niches filled with statues of golden saints, while the people stand, kneel, or use hired chairs from persons in attendance, and look as if even their hopes of heaven were not their own. In the interior of this immense edifice is another species of ornament which commands attention, it is the profusion of carving in wood, which is to be seen about the choir in the greatest perfection. A large figure of St. Peter is represented in this style most admirably. Depending from the center of the great dome is the gigantic chandelier of solid gold and silver, exceeding ten tons in weight, and for merely cleaning which the “lamp-lighter” charges the round sum of \$4,000. A strange tradition, representing the *angels* to have assisted in the erection of this building, at night, imparts to it a degree of veneration, to which, perhaps, no other in the world has ever set up a claim, and which has given to the city the name of “*Puebla de los Angeles*.”

On the 14th of May, six days previous to our arrival, Gen. Worth

with about 6000 men, had taken possession of the city without firing a gun, though there had been repeated assassinations by the Mexicans after the army had taken up its quarters within the walls, and great dissatisfaction prevailed among the Americans on account of the lenity which was extended to the perpetrators. In point of personal appearance and military capacity, Gen Worth is esteemed among the first officers of our army. He is indeed a noble looking specimen of the Anglo-Saxon, but he failed to reconcile his men to a policy subjecting them to severe punishment for offenses which, committed by their enemies, would be "winked at." There were open and repeated murmurings among our soldiery, who were compelled to lie in the open air at night, without tents, while they might, by the right of conquest, have occupied at least the public buildings of the city. Besides, some of them were stabbed or poisoned almost daily, with impunity; and it became a by-word in the army, that a Mexican was rewarded for what an American would be punished.

The character of the population of Puebla is notorious for cunning, and they are regarded as the most expert robbers and assassins throughout Mexico, where there is no lack of such. On the night succeeding our arrival there, a deed of horror was perpetrated, fully corroborating the character they sustain, and which would be regarded as a daring attempt, even among the accomplished murderers of Paris.

On the evening of May 19th, two American officers belonging to some of the volunteer corps, attended the Cathedral, where certain services were held appertaining to the nuns at the convent of San Francis, situated in the western part of the city. The Cathedral was filled, as usual, with a large crowd of the faithful, and at the conclusion of the ceremonies, when they were dispersing, the two officers lingered in the church, gazing at the expensive ornaments. As they were also in the act of retiring, a nun, who remained behind the rest of the sisterhood, made a sign to the officer who was slowly following his comrade, that she desired to speak to him. Returning to the nun, a dialogue ensued, in substance, as follows:

"You are an American?"

"I am, madam, and but recently from that land of Yankees."

"I presume, sir, you are a man of honor and discretion?"

"Those qualities, added to courage, make up the composition of an American soldier."

"Are you willing to render me an important service?"

"You have but to command me."

"I will not conceal from you that the service I ask at your hands, requires not only discretion, but extraordinary intrepidity. Knowing this, are you still willing to assist me?"

"Yes, I am determined."

"Very well, when you hear the convent bell strike twelve to-night, be at the side gate; I shall be there to open it, and on your knocking

three times, you shall learn what it is I require of you. Will you be faithful to the rendezvous?"

"I shall be faithful if I live."

"Well, I will depend upon you, adieu."

They parted, and the officer rejoining his companion, as they pursued their way to the American quarters, related to him all that had transpired, and asked him if he should fulfill the appointment. The other advised him to do so, by all means, and for fear of accidents, offered to accompany him to the gate at the appointed hour. Supposing the affair was to end in one of those innocent adventures so common in Mexico, and taking it for granted that the lady had been suddenly struck with his personal appearance, the officer with his companion repaired to the gate according to agreement, and upon giving the concerted signal, the entrance was opened by the nun. The chosen officer entered, without the least apprehension of fear, and was saluted by the nun:

"You are truly a man of courage and honor, and are entitled to my warmest gratitude."

After conducting him to her cell, where a lamp was burning, she politely invited him to sit down, and producing two bottles, requested him to take a glass of wine with her—a request which a man and a soldier is not apt to treat with indifference. Filling him a glass out of one bottle, she took a little herself out of the other, and after he had finished his, she told him to go to the opposite side of the bed from herself. The officer, still innocent, obeyed, when the nun addressed him:

"Well, we are all alone—is my door bolted—look!"

And at the same instant, to his utter horror and amazement, she discovered to him the dead body of a monk, whose clothes were stiff and matted with blood; while she continued:

"The favor I require, is, that you take this body on your shoulders and convey it beyond the gates of the convent. I will light you to the gate of the first court. Obey, instantly, or your life shall be in peril, for if you attempt to escape I will shoot you through the head."

And suiting the action to the word, she drew a pistol from her bosom and presented it at him.

"I know," added she, "that my own life will be the forfeit, for after dispatching you, I have a poniard for myself—the same with which I stabbed that miserable monk!"

Seeing no other means of escape, the officer took up the body, and accompanied by the nun, who carried a dark lantern, proceeded to the gate by which he had entered, and on issuing from it, threw down his horrible burden at the feet of his comrade, who was waiting to enjoy a laugh, at what they had both imagined would terminate in a pious love intrigue.

After recounting to his friend the almost incredible adventure in which he had been engaged, they both resolved to communicate the circumstances to Gen. Worth in person; but they had proceeded

only a short distance from the convent, when the officer who had brought out the body, began to complain of the most violent and excruciating pains. He soon fell upon the pavement and expired. The events were related by his comrade, and the circumstances submitted to the clergy, but the demon who perpetrated the double murder, instead of being arrested and punished, was suffered to escape, through the protection afforded by the priests. And while such offenses were suffered to go "unwhipt of justice," American soldiers have not only been reprimanded for refusing to "touch their beavers" to the priests, but for the commission of comparatively trivial crimes, have had one side of their heads shaved, and paraded through the streets of Puebla, to gratify the scoffs and scorns of a miserable Mexican throng. It may be humiliating to them to reveal the truth, but enduring the punishment is far more so—and many of them have sadly realized that the discipline of our army is not adapted to volunteers, who leave their own homes and shores to fight the battles of their country.

In company with a train under Capt. Varney, I left Puebla on the 23d of May, for Vera Cruz. At Perote we met the army under Gen. Scott, to whom I communicated briefly my own adventures, and gave him a statement in regard to Mr. Cunningham, whom I had left confined at Valladolid.

The town of Perote is a small place, some distance from the castle of the same name. The sight of this castle brought forcibly to mind the sufferings endured for years by many of our countrymen, who, like myself, had been within the power of a cruel and unfeeling people, and was therefore an object of interest and curiosity. I had always been accustomed to associate with my ideas of this place a towering castle on a high hill, but was quite disappointed. It is situated upon a broad, sandy plain, several miles in extent, covered with verdure, and beautifully cultivated. The castle is of stone, strongly built, and commanding the country for miles around. The main entrance is through a high wall, which is succeeded by a deep ditch, then another wall, then the castle, mounting a large number of guns of every size. The enclosure is over an acre in extent, and surrounded by two story buildings, the upper rooms of which had been occupied by officers of the Mexican army, and the lower ones used as barracks. In the lower part of the castle are the prison cells, which look far more gloomy and uninviting than did the Valladolid printing office, and afforded me the consolation of realizing the fact that I had not been an inhabitant of the worst place on top of the earth—for men are apt to reason by comparison. No defense was made by the enemy at Perote, notwithstanding the strength of the place, and the army under Gen. Scott were enjoying peaceable possession of the fortress, and preparing to take up the line of march for Puebla, on the 25th of May.

Between Perote and Jalapa, we passed the splendid hacienda of Santa Anna, situated a short distance from, but within plain view of,

the road. The estate is a very extensive one, delightfully situated, and is said to be the favorite retreat of the dictator.

The distance from Perote to Jalapa is thirty-three miles. After passing over five miles of smooth road, handsomely paved or flagged, we reached this picturesque city on the evening of the 24th. Jalapa is justly celebrated for the beauty of its women, and its profusion of fruits and flowers. It is located on the back-bone of a ridge, receding to the east and west, and so steep and tortuous are the streets, that a carriage can only pass along the main road. The houses are built of stone, and are of the most tasteful architecture—the only public building of importance is the convent of San Francisco, from the tower of which is a splendid view of the city of Vera Cruz and the Gulf of Mexico, sixty-six miles distant. It contains 12,000 inhabitants, and is among the most pleasant, healthy, and beautiful cities in Mexico. After the battle of Cerro Gordo, the authorities received the victorious conquerors in a most hospitable manner.

From the village of Las Viegas, a few miles east from Perote, to Vera Cruz, the road descends more than 7,000 feet. Leaving Jalapa early in the morning and after alternately climbing over hills and sinking into ravines, we soon came upon the battle-ground of Cerro Gordo, situated nearly midway between that city and the National Bridge. The scene of this great triumph of American arms is a sort of double ridge, on the summit of the western elevation of which the enemy was fortified. So that to make a successful attack, our army had first to rush down a precipice, then climb to the brow of a succeeding one, in the very mouth of the cannon of the enemy. The history of this fierce and desperate conflict, and the amusing manner in which Santa Anna decamped, leaving his carriage, preserved meats, and flavored Havanas, like Joseph's, at Vittoria, to the spoil of the victors, is well known to the country; yet the unspeakable horrors which surrounded the scene even a month after the engagement can scarcely be conceived. The gorge of the ravine was clogged up with the half-naked bones of the dead bodies of the flower of the Mexican army, over which black clouds of buzzards were hovering, eager for the banquet. The enemy had no time to halt to perform the last sad duty for their fallen comrades, and while some were left as food for the vulture, others who had been so wounded as to be unable to escape, had been taken to the hospitals, where their agonizing groans fell upon the ear like low, hollow sounds from the charnel-house. The Mexican cannot face danger and meet death like the Yankee. He may possess that impetuosity which is sufficient only to impel him to a single and desperate charge, but he has not the lasting courage, to meet the fatigues and dangers of a tedious conflict, where men are required to overcome natural obstacles, and rush onward while death is raining among their ranks. And even after the excitement of the battle, when the blood becomes cool, and the energies relaxed—a time when the sick and wounded are expected to murmur and complain—while the American bears his

sufferings with a manly fortitude, the poor Mexican, in his misery, will be found raving like a maniac.

The Puente Nacional, or National Bridge, across the Antigua river, some thirty miles from Vera Cruz, is a massive work of stone. This was once a strong fortification, the ruins of which may yet be seen on the adjoining hills. About two miles on the other side of the bridge we saw the broken diligence of Col. Sowers, who was killed with seven of his escort, by a guerrilla party, on the day previous to our passing the bridge. Col. Sowers was bearer of despatches from Washington to Gen. Scott.

The National road, leading from Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico, is a thoroughfare which would be creditable to the enterprise of any country; it is broad, generally well graded, and McAdamized. Passing through Santa Fe, a small village on a stream about ten miles from Vera Cruz, we arrived at the latter place early in the evening of May 26. The train with which I came from Puebla consisted of fifty-six men.

As no vessel was to leave Vera Cruz for some days, I awaited the arrival of the James L. Day, Capt. Wood. The *vomito* was raging among several companies of volunteers. The war-worn veterans from Illinois were there, straggling back in squads from Cerro Gordo, and they presented a most sad appearance. They looked like any thing else than "revelers in the halls of the Montezumas," and worn down by sickness and fatigue, were the mere shadows of men. Among their trophies was a splendid brass six-pounder, to be sent to the State of Illinois as a present in token of the gallantry of her sons.

Vera Cruz extends more than two miles along the sandy coast of the Gulf. It was once the greatest commercial city on the American continent, but is now left far in the rear of many rivals, having declined since the revolution with Spain. Its streets are well paved, and seemed quite cleanly. The walls of the city are constructed of coral rock, and are very thick, with a fort at each extremity of the water front, where parapet guns have been placed. The city contains a population of 8,000, and is supplied with water from cisterns. The Governor's Palace in Vera Cruz is a fine public building, but the plaza on which it is situated is the most diminutive I saw in any of the towns of Mexico. The city presented a sad and ragged picture, a large number of the buildings having been demolished during the bombardment. The distance from Vera Cruz to Mexico is 280 miles.

The castle of San Juan de Ulloa is built on an island of rock, more than half a mile from the shore, fronting the city. The depth of the water between the island and the shore is many fathoms, so that vessels lie there in perfect safety. Boats are continually passing and re-passing between the island and the shore. The castle occupies the entire island, forming an enclosure of about twelve acres, almost square. Massive walls of masonry compose the outer works,

which are so high that inclined planes are constructed within, so as to facilitate the ascent of oxen with their heavy ordnance. There are, within this enclosure, more than twenty fortresses, each independent of the other, and elevated above the outer wall. These fortresses are mounted with batteries, and arranged so as not to interfere with each other when employed in the defense of the castle. The basements are occupied as stores, and in time of peace a lively trade is carried on. Thus the appearance of a small walled city is imparted to the interior, with its paved side-walks, and stores. Should the enemy gain the outer wall, these store-rooms can be converted into batteries, by letting the guns down from above. Within the walls there are cisterns, sufficiently commodious to contain a year's supply of water, besides wells for the powder magazines, where that article is placed beyond the reach of bombs. The castle is said to have cost forty thousand dollars, and when built by Spain, was considered impregnable.

On the morning of June 3d, comfortably situated on the James L. Day, we pushed out into the Gulf, leaving the numerous spires of Vera Cruz to fade away in the horizon—and on the succeeding morning, upon going on deck, I found the "Day" anchored off the fairy-like island of Lobos, where she had been driven in the night by a slight gale. This island, about two miles in circumference, ten from the shore, and one hundred and forty miles from Vera Cruz, is formed entirely of coral, studded with banyan trees, and vines of luxuriant growth, covered with flowers of the most mellifluous odors. Taking an easterly direction from Lobos, the vessel arrived at New Orleans on the 10th of June, where, after an absence of fourteen months, and after traveling *sixteen hundred miles* through the interior of Mexico, I again found myself *free*, and on my native shores, quite satisfied with what I had seen of the *elephant*.

I here learned that my friend Dr. Barry, with the Zacatecan prisoners, had made his escape from Acapulco—that he had arrived in New Orleans some two months before me, where by letter he communicated to my friends the first information they received of our fate. It is presumed that Mr. Cunningham is yet where I left him, in Valladolid, amusing himself with the Spanish type, and the fair Policarpa; at least I have had no intelligence from him, since the memorable night of my unceremonious elopement.

It may be thought strange that I did not attempt to facilitate his escape, at the time of my own departure. But the reader must recollect that I have already stated the fact of our occupying separate rooms, and in such an adventure I might myself have been detected. Besides, it was a question in my mind, whether he would be willing to resign his dear *senorita*, for nothing so domesticates a man as *love*.

CHAPTER XV.

MEXICO—EXTENT OF TERRITORY—SOIL—CLIMATE—MAGUEY PLANT—COCHINEAL—VANILLA—COTTON AND SUGAR—POTATOES—CHILI—TIMBER—WATER—TOBACCO—COMMERCE—CONQUEST—REVOLUTION—INDEPENDENCE—INFLUENCE AND WEALTH OF THE PRIESTHOOD—SANTA ANNA—GEN. ALMONTE—GOMEZ FARIAS—GEN. HERRERA—SEÑOR ALEMAN—EDUCATION—THE WAR—MANNER OF CONDUCTING IT—DESTINY.

THE Republic of Mexico is composed of twenty provinces, or states—Tamaulipas, New Leon, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Sonora and Sinaloa, Durango, Jalisco, Aguescalientes, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosi, Queretaro, Guanajuato, Mechoacan, Colima, Mexico, Puebla, Vera Cruz, Oajaca, Tobasco, and Chiapas. Besides these might be included the dependencies of New Mexico and California.—In extent of territory they may be compared to the states of our union, though they are generally larger; the whole extending from latitude 16 to 33½, and forming a line of coast on the Pacific and Gulf of California 3,000 miles in length, bounded on the east and north by the Gulf of Mexico and the Rio Grande. The distance from the shores of the Gulf to those of the Pacific varies from 1,000 to 120 miles, including an area of some 1,600,000 square miles, and a population, according to their own estimate, of twelve millions.

During his involuntary tour through the country, the author visited twelve of these provinces—Tamaulipas, New Leon, Coahuila, Zacatecas, Aguescalientes, San Luis Potosi, Guanajuato, Mechoacan, Queretaro, Mexico, Puebla, and Vera Cruz, situated in the very heart and richest region of the republic, and presenting every variety of surface, soil, and climate. The two great chains of the Cordillera Mountains, the Sierra Madre and Sierre Santa, being a continuation of the Andes of South America, diverging from the Isthmus, stretch across the country near its eastern and western borders, the former gradually diminishing in the hills of Coahuila, while the latter continues and connects itself with the Rocky Mountains of Oregon. Between these two great ranges is included what is termed the table lands of Mexico, at an elevation of from 4,000 to 8,000 feet above the level of the sea. These table lands comprise over three-fifths of the whole territory, although varying in altitude, frequently stretch out in broad plains and prairies, unsurpassed in fertility of soil.

There has been so much said and written in regard to the climate of Mexico, that little can be added which will not assume the appearance of repetition. Yet those who have been beneath its sunny skies and inhaled its balmy atmosphere, receive impressions differing immaterially in the abstract, and degrees of admiration; while few can repress a disposition to record the emotions to which any warm and genial clime intuitively gives birth.

In the construction of their dwellings, such an appendage as a chimney, or fire-place, is not thought of, and the very necessary and essential domestic duty of cooking is performed out of doors, in the yard or streets. In the streets of all the cities the eye meets the daily spectacle of the poorer, houseless and homeless part of the population, cooking their scanty fare on small furnaces erected for the purpose. This, more than any thing else, will serve to explain the nature of the temperature.

The climate seems to be influenced more by altitude than latitude, the three grand divisions of elevation above the level of the sea, presenting in all parts of the country about the same degree of temperature and producing the same species of vegetation. Between Vera Cruz and Perote, a distance of one hundred miles, almost the same variety and gradation of climate will be observed as in traveling from the equator to the arctic circle, that is, if one have the curiosity to ascend the snowy peak of Oraziba, near the latter place, the summit of which is covered with perpetual snow.

Tierras Calientes includes the low lands on the coast, where the climate is excessively hot, and adapted to the production of sugar, coffee, indigo, cotton, rice, cocoa, cochineal, oranges, bananas, olives, and every variety of tropical fruits. To the decomposition of the rank vegetable substances of this region is attributed the cause of the epidemic called *vomito*, so fatal to the health and life both of natives and visitors.

Tierras Templadas includes the vast table lands, in which the climate seldom varies more than ten degrees during the entire round of the seasons, and where one eternal spring reigns unbroken. In less elevated portions of this region most of the tropical fruits are produced, though it is better adapted to such growths as corn, maguëy, tobacco, chili, peaches, cherries, melons, strawberries, &c. Three and four crops of corn are here produced in one year, and as a consequence it is cultivated to a greater extent than any other grain, affording the chief article of food for the population. Green corn is to be seen as well in December, January, and February, as in June, July, and August.

Tierras Frias is the still higher region, or mountain slopes, and subject to greater variations of temperature. Wheat, rye, oats, barley, potatoes, &c., constitute the chief productions of this division, which is usually covered with large oak and pine timber, as high as twelve thousand feet above the level of the sea.

Among the most remarkable productions of Mexico, with which we are unfamiliar in the United States, may be mentioned the maguëy plant and cochineal. The maguëy is produced in every degree of temperature, and is uninjured by heat, cold, or drought. In the best soil it grows to an enormous size, from twenty to thirty feet high, and will often measure around the trunk as much as three feet in circumference. It generally arrives to maturity in five years, in the *tierras calientes*, but in the *tierras frias* it seldom ripens short of

twenty years. After flowering, the top is cut off, the soft substance or pulp removed from the interior, so as to form a kind of bowl, in which daily accumulates some two gallons of mucilaginous acid, during a period of five or six months. Upon fermentation this becomes what is termed by the natives *pulque*, and which, by a process of distillation, is made into whisky. The population in many districts where there is no water, use this only, as a beverage. At first it has a most disgusting taste, and still worse smell, but one will soon become accustomed to it. From the fibrous substance contained in the bark and leaves of the maguey, paper, ropes, and even clothing, are sometimes manufactured. The root when properly prepared is a most palatable and nutritious diet; while the thorns of its leaves serve as pins for the ladies' garments. The maguey is regarded as the most profitable growth in the country; and where alone cultivated, or extensive haciendas, often yields a yearly income to the proprietors of \$50,000.

Cochineal is a production of the nopal, a plant of the cactus species, which is cultivated in rows like Indian corn. On every leaf of the nopal is pinned a short piece of hollow cane, in which a number of the insects are confined, where, as they multiply, the young ones crawl out and take up a permanent residence on the leaf of their nativity, upon which they feed. At the close of the dry season these insects are brushed from the dead leaves and dried. The cochineal is an insect little larger than a common tick, and in early times was supposed to be the seed of the plant—it is used in dyeing silks, for which the female is alone valuable, and is in some of the provinces of Mexico extensively raised for exportation. Vanilla, which is used in the manufacture of chocolate, to impart the flavor, is also cultivated to some extent.

The table lands of Mexico will produce almost every species of vegetation, in a higher state of perfection and greater abundance than any other portions of the North American continent; yet seduced by the great wealth of her mineral resources, the population bestow little attention to agriculture. Cotton and sugar will, doubtless, at some future day, form the staple productions of these lands, which, with the exception of an occasional sandy desert, under proper cultivation, might be made to yield abundant harvests. As yet neither of those articles have been grown to a sufficient extent to supply the home demand—the cotton crop never exceeding 90,000 bales. The low lands are well adapted to the production of rice, and if ever cultivated extensively, will perhaps be appropriated to that purpose.

What is usually called the Irish potatoe, is a native of Mexico, and was first found there after the discovery of America. It has a prolific yield, but the varieties are not so numerous as in this country, where attention has been given to its improvement and culture.

Chili, the small red pepper, grows spontaneously, and is also cultivated as an indispensable article of diet. An almost inconceivable amount of it is consumed by the inhabitants, who devour the pods

by the dozen, in their primitive state, besides using it in nearly every dish they eat.

In most regions the timber is of a low, shaggy growth, though groves of pine, cedar, cypress, and oak, are often to be found growing as large as in any country. Such a spectacle as a rail fence never meets the eye—the inclosures all being made of hedge, for which most of the stunted, thorny growth, and maguey, seems purposely adapted, the contrast between the long lines of deep tangled shrubbery and vines, decked with wild flowers, and the dull, lifeless-looking rail fences of the United States, deeply impresses one with admiration for the former.

I was not prepared to find water so plentiful as it really is, from the accounts I had previously read of the country; and in only one instance, during our entire journey, did I suffer from thirst. This was in a sandy desert in Coahuila, where we found no water in three days travel. Rain seldom falls in Mexico except in July, August, and September; these months are called the rainy season, during which time a large amount of water falls in showers, or steady rains, of almost daily occurrence. As a consequence, artificial irrigation becomes necessary, but there are few districts of any considerable extent which could not, by the construction of simple hydraulic works, be sufficiently supplied with water, the only manure required, to produce at least one hundred and fifty bushels of corn to the single acre, annually.

Large quantities of tobacco is produced in many of the provinces, but this is a government monopoly, the leaf, when cured and baled, being purchased of the growers at a price fixed by the government. It is collected in ware-houses in the different districts, and conveyed to the capital, where a segar manufactory, sufficiently extensive to supply that article to the whole population, is carried on under the supervision of the government.

Notwithstanding the immense wealth of the country, its commerce is limited and diminutive. Its chief exports are confined to the precious metals, furnished from some twenty or thirty mining districts, and which have produced annually from 20 to 25 million dollars in gold and silver. An inconsiderable trade has been carried on in the article of cochineal, indigo, logwood, jalap, and vanilla, but including all, the annual exports have never risen above \$20,000,000, while the imports have never exceeded \$15,000,000. Owing to the vascillating character of the government, and the inordinate thirst for gold, which has always characterized its officers and people, and which still exists, an immense contraband trade, so fatal to legitimate commerce, is kept up, under every change of rulers. Large amounts of bullion from Zacatecas and other mining districts, are smuggled out of ports on the Pacific, while various articles of merchandise from foreign countries are received with unblushing impunity, through the bribery and the infidelity of custom-house officers, whose ideas

of "tariff" and "free trade" are of such convenience as generally to conform to their own interests.

The precise amount of the population of Mexico is difficult to determine. At present the inhabitants estimate it at from ten to twelve millions, though no census has been taken for a number of years. The inhabitants are made up of almost every color. The pale face maintains its aristocracy among all, although the negroes are allowed to vote. Few of the male population are to be found without the tinge of a fair mulatto, though his blood be pure, which is attributed to the influence of the climate and atmosphere. The ladies of pure blood are often very nearly as fair as our own. The white population is not numerous, and will not amount to over one million in the whole country. Descending one degree below the white is the Mestizoe, made up of a great variety, white, Indian, and negro. Of this class there is over three millions. Next is the Zamboo, a progeny of the Indian and negro, which class, with the Indians, negroes, and quarteroons make up the balance of the population. Of the negro race there is not over one hundred thousand, while the Indians, who are often the best citizens of the country, number five millions. The difference in the dialects of the people in the different provinces, is about the same as that in the shires of England—and it is sometimes with difficulty that they can understand each other.

It has been no part of the author's object to enter into the early history of Mexico. To those who desire such a work, reliable in fact and detail, he would recommend that of Dr. Young, recently issued. The early conquest of Mexico by Cortez is a familiar story even to our school-boy days. The city of golden idols, human hecatombs, a populous empire, and the overthrow of the unfortunate Montezuma, has often risen up to our vision like the incredible and enchanted scenes of the Arabian Knights. The country was then inhabited by the aborigines, who had so far advanced in civilization as to build a greater and more splendid city than now occupies its place—the work of their conquerers. In 1521, when Spain in her turn, enjoyed her proud supererogative of power, the banners of her cross floated in triumph from the heathen temples of the natives, who, knowing nothing better or sublimer to adore, worshipped the sun, as their more enlightened but heartless invaders did the living God. For three hundred years her power thus attained, was acknowledged and respected in the colony by a people, who, accustomed only to the tyranny of rulers, and living in an enervating climate—occupying a country whose wealth was beyond computation—were lured into ease and luxury—who, with no impetus to stimulate their energies, and mingling promiscuously with the aborigines, gradually retrograded in the scale of intelligence, till they began more to represent the natives they had vanquished, than the conquerers from whom they were descended. That there were exceptions—men who thought and felt that their country was retrograding, rather than advancing with the spirit of the age and times, is doubtless true—but they were

allied more to the slavery of the church, than to civil liberty. Stimulated by some motive, for the purity of which his own soul is perhaps responsible, in 1810, the slight murmurs of insurrection which were kindling to a flame, burst into open revolt through Don Miguel Hidalgo, a Catholic priest of Dolores; who, at the head of a large army, raised under the standard of the "Virgin of Gaudaloupe," commenced the work which finally resulted in emancipating his country from the thralldom of Spanish rule. He met the fate which all pioneers in a great cause are almost certain to encounter. After a short career, in which his success was brilliant, he was betrayed and beheaded. Other Generals arose in his place, among whom may be mentioned Morelos, Guerrero, Victoria, and Matamoras, and for a period of nearly three years a fierce and sanguinary war pervaded throughout the land. But from 1813 to 1820, peculiar circumstances operated to retard the progress of the country towards independence, to lengthen out their struggle with Spain, and to produce opposite parties, divisions in sentiment, chimerical or false principled notions, and even the horrors of civil war itself. The vast territory was, and is even yet, thinly inhabited, by a population confined principally to the towns and cities, then divided into *capitanias*, or viceroyalties, having little or no mutual communication, or means of concerting combined resistance to Spain. The people themselves, as a body, being deplorably ignorant, and divided into numerous castes, all of whom opposed each other, either from feeling or interest, could not unite in a common cause. Yet they had all contracted a habit of obeying Spanish princes; for no where had the maxim of passive obedience and the divine right of kings been so earnestly inculcated by all the power of the priesthood. Second only to the clergy, in means of influence, were the Castilians, or European Spaniards, whose power and riches were, of course, actively engaged in sustaining the authority of Spain; and by engrossing all the important offices, they deprived the Creoles, or those of Mexican birth, of any opportunity for obtaining the requisite qualifications for public employments. Such are the gradual encroachments of tyranny, tamely submitted to, that were it unrestricted by a mightier power, would steal away both body and soul. Besides, Mexico had so long enjoyed a profound peace that its inhabitants possessed little more military knowledge than did the Aztec race, whom their ancestors had dethroned. They were even destitute of arms and munitions of war; all these being in the arsenals of the government, or in the hands of the small body of troops, which it maintained in convenient stations upon the sea-coast. Owing to these unfortunate circumstances in their condition, they had the whole structure of independence to begin from its very foundation. Those who are familiar with the history of the revolution in Mexico, and in the several governments of South America, will readily call to mind the untoward events produced by the circumstances here adverted to. Yet in the dark hours of their adversity, the free world did not fail to sympathise with them, and numbers of our own countrymen left

their homes and firesides to join them in their struggle for independence. In fact, perhaps no other circumstance exercised so powerful an influence to prompt the thinking and well informed inhabitants of Mexico to long for liberty, as the example of the United States of North America. It was truly a most brilliant and alluring spectacle, that of a new people rending asunder the strong ties that had bound them to England, and who had rendered themselves independent—who, organized as a great republic, enjoyed the most perfect liberty which man can possess in the social state—who, under wise and beneficent institutions, had prospered and augmented with astonishing rapidity—who, in fine, were Americans, more recently settled on the continent than those who held the soil in Mexico, and who seemed destined to the same high career with their brethren of the North, could they but establish their independence of Spain. It was impossible that these ideas should not spread with celerity among intelligent Mexicans, and that they should not prepare the elements of a wide conflagration.

After a struggle of eleven years, through the disorganization of the mother country itself, Mexico became independent—independent of Spain, yet their emancipation brought with it little else than confusion and anarchy. The want of intelligence, of population, of resources, made several provinces mere dead limbs for a union, even had one been contemplated; and a Central government, entitled the "Plan of Iguala," was adopted; and through dissensions among the demagogical leaders of factions, Iturbide, by his own intrigues, sustained by the influence of the church, ascended the throne. He had not long worn his "royal robes," however, till in his turn he was compelled not only to abdicate his place, but was banished from his country, and finally executed on his return in 1824. In the same year, what is called the federal constitution was adopted, modeled principally from that of the United States, excluding the provision which recognizes the right of trial by jury, and establishing a provision recognizing the Catholic as the only religion of the country. It entitles all citizens of whatever grade or color, to the right of suffrage—yet this is a mere formality—a mockery to the sovereignty of the mass, where the church wields the supreme power. The priesthood of Mexico, including the monks and nuns, amounts to about ten thousand persons, and the combined wealth of the clergy is estimated at \$200,000,000. No chapel dedicated to any other faith is to be found or suffered to exist in the country, and the Catholic priesthood have unlimited control of both soul and body. Owning more than half of the property and wealth of the country, they are of course entitled to the exercise of the privilege entailed upon their possessions, of giving to the people their manners and morals; and to their examples in the cities, may be justly attributed many of the vices which prevail among their ignorant followers. To repeat here the profligate indulgencies attributed to the city priesthood, would be too great an infringement upon all rules of modesty; yet their licen-

tiousness is no more a secret there, than the open and unblushing manner in which they visit the degraded haunts of gaming houses, cafes, and other resorts of infamy, to sanction their corruptions and participate in their amusements.

It is proper to remark, that the *curas*, or country clergy, sustain quite the opposite character from their city brethren; and besides being pious and devotional in their habits, exercise a kind of monitorial supervision over those placed under their pastoral charge, and who regard them with a high degree of veneration—asking and following their advice in all things. Indeed, the conduct of many of the *curas* is characterized by a degree of generosity and kindness to the poor, worthy to be imitated in our own enlightened land.

It is a great mistake in those who have propagated the idea, that the clergy of the city of Mexico court the approach of the American army as a means of security to their church treasures. If there is any thing sacred in the eyes of a Mexican (a problem which has not yet been satisfactorily solved), be he *ranchero*, brigand, or lepero, it is his religion and the property of his church. Whatever may have been the revolutions—whatever may be—the church has been, and will continue to be, safe from direct spoliation.

We may talk as we please of Mexico, and sticklers entertaining circumscribed views, may deplore as they will her loss of independence and nationality—yet what is that independence, what that nationality? The only independence studied is, how to *live independent of labor*, while their nationality is in the hands of demagogues, entertaining no sympathy for the ignorant mass, and who would sell their country, rather than submit to innovations recognizing an equality of rights. In looking upon the Mexican race as it now exists, knowing nothing of it, one would be tempted to ask, by what accident of birth or circumstance, they exhibit so grotesque a character in so serious a drama—at first contending for empire and honor, then for independence and nationality! This apparent inconsistency is all explained, however, upon acquiring a knowledge of their condition. Their government, as it has ever been, since the date of the revolution, is without energy—without stability—destitute of moral honesty and means. Party spirit, unlike the cool and calculating collisions of sentiment which often agitate our own body politic, divides her citizens—discord waves her incendiary torch—anarchy and confusion exists among themselves, and their soldiery are left unprovided and uncared for; as the church, being the treasury, can make no disbursements till it ascertains which is the stronger and most likely to succeed of the factions. The monster, party spirit, so rocked and cherished in the cradle of their revolution, is now grown to full manhood, and convulses all who are at all susceptible to such influences; and the invasion of their territory, which should bring out all the patriotic energies of man, has best convinced the world of their weakness, egotism, cowardice, and truculence, according to the various changes of the scenes.

Santa Anna has long been the ruling spirit of the land, and with all his cruelty and pomposity, possesses a stronger intellect and a more perfect knowledge of the nature and disposition of his people, than any man in Mexico. His prominent trait of character has seemed to be to create expectations which he never intended to fulfill, but possessing the tact to turn every thing to his advantage in the end, has been the secret of his success. He is known to be a deceiver, yet he knows how to deceive, and where there is a total lack of confidence in all, the choice among rogues generally devolves upon the most accomplished among them.

Gen. Almonte, who was arrested and confined in prison last May, in his own country, on a pretended charge of having compromised his position, by making certain disclosures and overtures to the United States, is the first, in point of ability, and perhaps the only honest public man in Mexico. Almonte has spent much of his life in this country, and was long the minister of Mexico to our government at Washington. He is the illicit son of Morelos, one of the most distinguished of the revolutionary Generals, who fell in the defense of his country. His intellect is highly cultivated, and he possesses all the qualities of a polished gentleman.

Gomez Farias, the scenes of whose life and career have been chequered with events much after the fashion of Santa Anna, is a man of deep thought. The cause of his being superceded by Anaya as Provisional President, was owing to his proposition to tax the church property. Had he been sustained in making his proposed levies, the Mexican government would have presented a more vigorous resistance at Vera Cruz—a more numerous and better provided army at Buena Vista—a more effective plan and a more vigorous defense at Cerro Gordo, and altogether a far more serious resistance than has attended the overthrow of Farias and his plans.

Gen. Herrera, recently a prominent candidate for the presidency, is a great favorite of the church party, and in the absence of Santa Anna would doubtless exercise a controlling influence. During the canvass he was represented as the peace candidate, but would in the event of his elevation be subject to the control of the clergy.

Senor Aleman is among the most influential men in the country, especially among the priesthood, over which he exercises almost absolute control. Reports were currently circulated, that Aleman, in behalf of the church, had opened a correspondence with the European powers, in regard to forming an alliance, by which some prince from the other side of the water was to be elevated to the throne of Mexico. Reports and surmises of this character are often the result of political speculators, though this was sufficiently plausible to receive general credence, and seemed to surprise no one in Mexico.

Generals Ampudia, Arista, Ricon, Bravo, &c., are men of creditable capacities, but possess none of those prominent traits of character calculated to distinguish them, with all their opportunities.

Generals Sallus, Valencia, Requena, and a host of others, consti-

tute the third class of the "great men" of the republic, and who have perhaps never imbibed an idea beyond their individual preferment and egotistical self-conceit.

It should not be supposed that among the private circles of society in Mexico, there are no men of cultivated manners, refined taste, and profound intellect. This would be an anomaly indeed, in a population of at least 10,000,000. As profound scholars, as accomplished gentlemen, and as hospitable hearts may here be found as in almost any quarter of the globe; yet their number is comparatively limited, and out of the entire population, perhaps not one hundred thousand, or one of every one hundred, can read. Here lies the great secret of their misfortunes; and it is not an uncommon spectacle in all the cities, to see among the multitudes who crowd the streets, confidential scribes, supplied with a stool and writing apparatus, whose business it is to indite letters to order for the ignorant population who keep them profitably employed. There are no schools for the mass!

Under such a state of things what apparent folly it seems to be, among our tenacious politicians of any party, to grieve about the dismemberment of a neighboring republic! However the war may terminate, God has doubtless designed it for the accomplishment of his own high purposes. If any part of those purposes be to open a new era upon this China of the new world, it is already accomplished in embryo. That philanthropy which would prescribe the blessings of enlightened liberty to certain limits, deserves not the name; and there is a narrow selfishness far behind the age, in the policy which would justify us in the tame enjoyment of the freest government on earth, while our nearest neighbors are sunk in the very depths of ignorance and vice—not even permitted to choose a God to worship! That the war has cost treasures, perils, and lives, no one will deny—yet it will produce new treasures, happiness, and new life!

The justness or the *injustice* of the war is a fit subject for politicians to quarrel about, and may be decided by those whose knowledge of international law will qualify them to render a satisfactory verdict; though the propriety of arguing the question, and openly advocating the cause of the enemy during the existence of hostilities, may be doubted.

The expediency of such a course of conduct is certainly questionable; for among an enemy who know nothing of our institutions, and who very naturally judge the dispositions of men and governments by comparisons at home, arrive at the very plausible conclusion, that serious dissensions exist; and but for this simple fact, there is little doubt that the war, so much regretted by these very men, would now have been terminated. Like most foreigners, they misconceive the nature of our institutions. They are not aware that our internal battles consist only of a "war of words," and that an American editor or representative may give free utterance to his individual views, while reason and the fiat of an intelligent constituency are left free to

combat and correct them. Very different is the state of things in Mexico; while dissensions really exist among her people, nothing is to be heard but vapor, boast, and fume, and to read their manifestos, the natural conclusion would be that they are the most warlike and unconquerable people under heaven. Those who really favor peace, and in truth a large portion of the better class would rejoice in the occupation of the country by our people—seldom give audible utterance to their sentiments—fearing that they might be reasoned with in a rather summary manner. Hence, those ignorant of the facts, conclude that there is no peace party in Mexico, and that the voice of all is for open war. Their papers and proclamations are filled with predictions of future victories, to the utter exclusion of present defeats, and while they seem, with one accord and one heart, to proclaim their own invincible determination never to surrender, they seldom face their adversaries, and never without disastrous defeat.

To one who has been over the battle-grounds, traversed the interior country, suffered with the many who have suffered, and become familiar with all the important circumstances of the present war, the manner in which it has been conducted presents itself without a single mark of sagacity. It would seem that it has been prolonged for no visible object, except to create patronage for partisans; though for the credit of humanity such a motive should not be attributed to its prosecutors. It is much easier to prophecy after we have been apprised of events which are to transpire, and one can look back upon his errors with far greater facility than he can distinguish and correct them in the future. But the policy of sending two small armies into the wild regions of New Mexico and the Rio Grande, without a sufficient force to retain possession of the country after it was conquered, and for the apparent object of affording only an opportunity for brilliant exploits, in conquering a half-barbarous race, and then leaving them to resume their power and places, is totally inexplicable, both before and after its adoption.

When hostilities first commenced, the true wisdom of legislation would have suggested the raising of fifty thousand volunteers, who were then offering their services to the government in countless regiments; all of whom could have been landed at Vera Cruz in October (1846). Such an army, levying contributions on the country for its support, might have marched at once to the capital, and subdued the country at half the cost, both in blood and treasure. Instead of such a vigorous prosecution of the war, to a speedy termination, a sort of tampering policy has been pursued, and our forces have moved with a degree of tardiness, inducing one to forget that Napoleon had so recently instructed the world in the art of warfare. These halting, timid, undetermined movements, inspire the enemy with renewed confidence; and after a continued conflict of nearly twenty months—sufficient time for us to have whipped all Europe—Mexico bids fair to exhibit one of those horrible catastrophes which stand out boldly and distinct in the annals of human

calamity. The agitated condition of the country since 1810, has bred her public men in the school of turmoil, and they have learned to look upon scenes of blood with comparative complacency. With their last hopes staked, they may not be deterred by any consideration of social consequences; and with an object akin to that of the desperado, they would cheerfully blow up the strong holds of our army as they enter, and involve in one common ruin the conquerers and the conquered.

There is much speculation in regard to the result of the present war, and notwithstanding little doubt hangs over the final issue, the proclamation of a guerrilla warfare, giving authority to every score of ruffians to concert their own plans—make their own attacks, and murder without regard to age, sex, or condition, may prolong it to an almost indefinite period, unless a new degree of energy shall be infused into the American forces.

But it requires no extraordinary gift of prophecy to foretell the consequences that are inevitably to result—they can be none other than the subjugation of the country. Mexico is already by the hand of fate blotted out of the list of nations. The lamp which lit up the brief hour of her independence is burnt down to the socket; and whether “annexed” to this Union or not, torn and divided by intestine commotions, she can never withstand the shock which will not only depose her military despots, but arouse her people from the Rip Van Winkle slumber of their ignorance. He who thinks that a lasting and beneficial peace can be made with that country, knows little of Mexico, or of her people—he starts in his belief from false premises—and judges of a race by the ordinary rules which govern mankind—when it is notorious that they have ceased to regard all such rules, and have hurled them at utter defiance.

The growing greatness and energy of the Anglo-Saxon race, which is destined speedily to overrun the whole of North America, will soon occupy the vast *tierra templadas* of Mexico. And they will carry liberty with them—not in name, but in fact—and the influence of their example will impart a tone of vigor to the efforts even of the humblest individual. They will give confidence to thought, and energy to action. This is by no means a visionary speculation, but will be realized, as in the natural course of events things assume the shape of realities; and before ten years shall transpire, steam cars, which would be regarded by the present population with as much wonder as was the thundering artillery of Cortez by the natives, will take the place of their caravans of pack-mules, and “Yankee clock pedlars” instead of guerrilla bands, will throng the mountain paths of the Cordillera. Our people will have seen its resources and there can be no restraint placed upon their enterprise.

Under the control of the United States or the Anglo-Saxon, and in the full enjoyment of liberty and security, its extended plains, which now repose in peace, would stretch out before the eye like gardens magnified immeasurably. The loneliness of the vast forest, conse-

crated for ages to solitude and God, would echo the voices of new and more ardent admirers of their never dying foliage. Its cities would swarm with active and industrious New England mechanics, the music of whose implements would wake the slumbering energies even of the dull and plethoric *pean*. A canal, connecting the two great oceans, would stretch across the Isthmus of Tehmantepec, concentrating within the Northern hemisphere the commerce of the globe. Through the huge and rugged mountains, that rise up like stepping stones to heaven, railroad cars would roll with the lightning's speed, the rich treasures of the land to the lap of trade. And as the soul of the sunny clime became steeped in sublime thought, which the boundless and magnified variety of its natural scenery is fitted to call into being—when the heart is entirely imbued with the influence of republican institutions, and when the mind of this land, springing from its new myriad sources, shall grow up from its present night of infancy to manhood, glowing with an ardent perception of the unrivalled beauties of the clime, it will burn on, bright and unwasting, forever.

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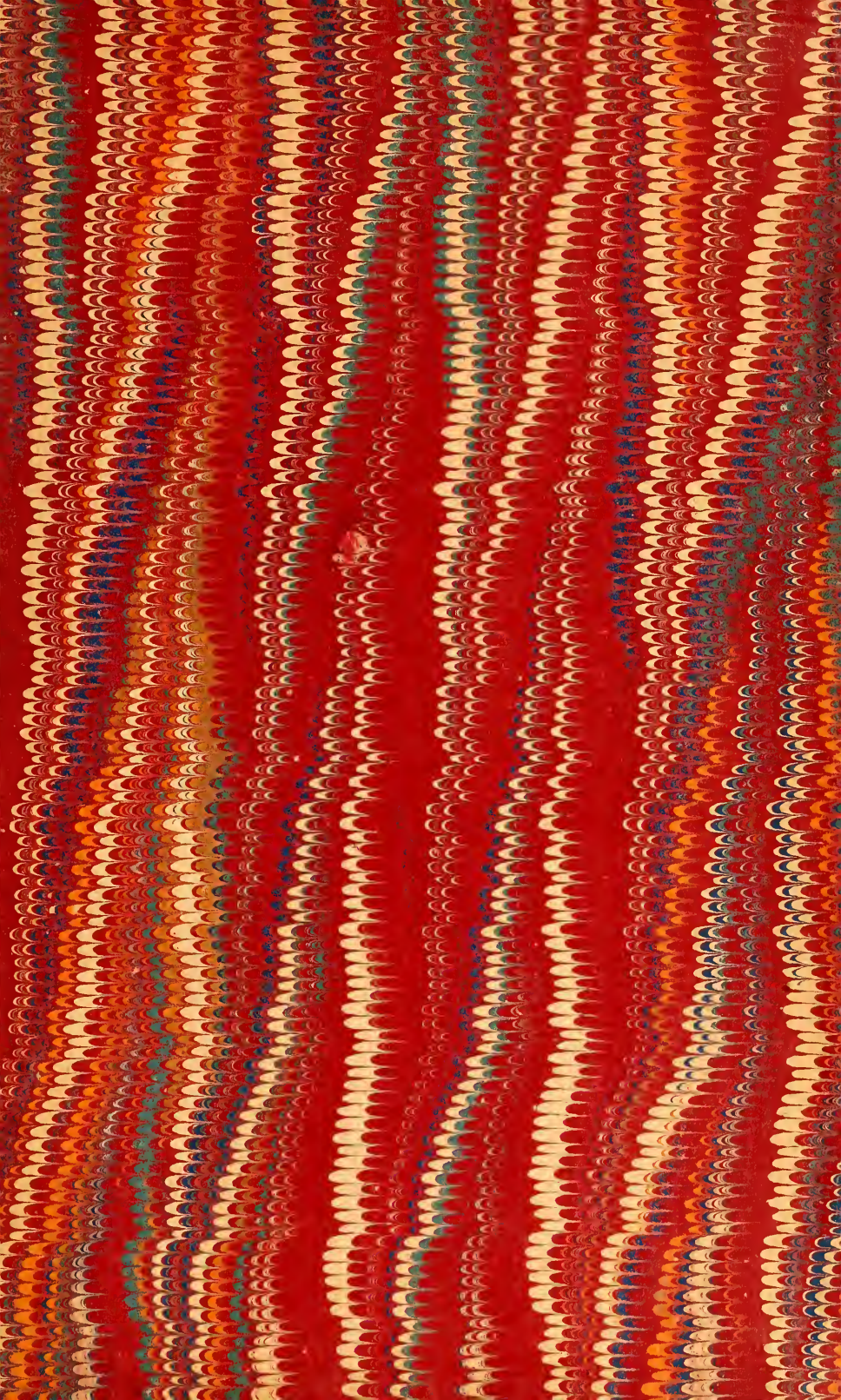












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