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AFTER THE STORM;

OR,

JONATHAN AND HIS NEIGHBOURS IN 1865-6.

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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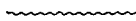
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AFTER THE STORM.



CHAPTER XXIII.

FREEDMEN IN TENNESSEE.



Kicking a dead dragon, with other diversions — My hat is measured — I am introduced to King Cotton.

No lack of employment for coloured or colourless citizens of Memphis, but all heartily at work, and getting through as much business as is done in any place of equal size! This was my conclusion, after seeing the “Bluff City” during the last days of November, 1865.

Memphis lies in the south-west corner of Tennessee, far from that Unionist section of the State where Andrew Johnson worked his way to prominence. For many miles round the Chickasaw Bluffs, cotton has been, and still is, the one important product. No rice or sugar is produced hereabouts; no

lumbering or stock-raising occupies the people. It is a cotton country, and was, until recent changes, entirely dependent upon slave labour; whilst Memphis is a cotton city, and was largely interested in the local slave trade. This then was a district, both country and town, in which to appreciate the revolution that had taken place since 1860. A glorious revolution, though dearly purchased—I mean the change from slavery to freedom!

Here there should be a word of explanation for the benefit of such persons in England as have been led away, by their admiration of Confederate pluck, from a proper English stand-point in regard to slavery. However much some among us may have sympathized with the weaker side in a struggle, because it was the weaker side, and whatever doubts may be entertained in regard to the productiveness of Southern plantations under a system of free labour, there can be no question that an incubus has been removed from Southern society by the abolition of the “peculiar institution.” Blacks will be enabled for the future to contract legal marriages, and to learn to read. Whites will have great temptations to cruelty and other sins removed from them. Let us have done with all shallow sophistries about a great wrong, and half-fledged excuses for the same, invented because its champions happened to fight bravely. Slavery was an accursed thing, and we may thank Heaven that it is over.

Now, bear in mind, courteous reader, that I do not wish to urge you to what Americans call "nigger-worship," nor to convince you that more cotton can be produced by giving wages than by "cow-hiding." But if you should be unsound on the main question of letting a negro be paid, instead of whipped, for his day's work, of letting him be allowed the exclusive possession of his wife and the custody of his children, then, sir, you must be a degenerate Englishman, and I want your company no further. Do not, if you persevere in coming, grumble at me, after this warning, for my pleasure at the change in Southern institutions.

I had been in the border Slave States when they were still under the reign of terror, which was kept up by a few desperadoes to scare away everything that savoured of Abolitionism, and I had felt oppressed by the strange moral atmosphere then prevailing. There were pleasant, hospitable people, who bore themselves like gentry in the old country, and who showed every disposition to welcome an Englishman; but there were also ignorant and brutal whites, loud-oathed and sharp-knived, who were fit for little more than slave-driving or the chase of runaways. To mix amongst the pleasantest slave-owners of the border, was like visiting a monomaniac in a powder-magazine; whilst to exercise a Briton's freedom of speech amongst the lower class would have been as dangerous as choosing the aforesaid magazine for a

pyrotechnic display. The Southern newspapers were filled with advertisements for runaways, which told volumes in half-a-dozen lines as to the practical working of slavery, and captured fugitives might be seen, as I saw them, brought back manacled, in charge of a man who promised to "make them remember it when they got home." This humane individual further informed me, that he would as soon lay his whip "across the back of a *wench* (negro-girl) as of a mare."

Now there is a clearance of inhuman advertisements from the Southern press; auctions are announced in plenty, but they do not comprise men as articles of sale; rewards are offered for runaway mules, and the walls are placarded with statements that so many labourers are wanted in this or that locality. In a word, light has broken in where there was utter and dismal darkness, and free speech is almost safe in Memphis, which, for the south-west corner of Tennessee, is saying a great deal. The 'Bulletin,' a Memphian daily paper, was thus lately criticised by some admirer of good old times, and note the criticism:—

The 'Bulletin' and the Negro—Its extraordinary course.

Whatever the degree of worldly wisdom, the 'Bulletin' certainly manifests unexampled boldness in dealing with the negro question. Is it boldness or folly? Shall it be said that a Southern newspaper, edited by a Southerner, the ex-owner of slaves, who is now surrounded by men who, from sheer force of

habit, call him master—shall such a journalist publish and approve a leading editorial from Greeley's 'Tribune' and still live in the South? What wonderful changes the war has wrought! If the 'Bulletin' of Friday had appeared in this city on the first day of December, 1860, its habitation would have been razed to the ground before the noon-day sun had seen its face mirrored in the bosom of the Great River.

Up to recent advices, the 'Bulletin's' office has not been razed, and I will give a specimen of its "unexampled boldness in dealing with the negro question," which is certainly far from what Englishmen call "Abolitionism":—

"We believe servitude to be the normal condition of the African, as freedom is that of the Indian—as civilization of the Caucasian." And, again—"The negro flourishes only in chains, and the white man in civilized, Christianized freedom." Friend 'Bulletin,' you have much yet to learn; but, since your opinions are thought progressive by those who have more to learn, I congratulate you upon your freedom from Lynch law.

If there was no lack of employment in Memphis, neither was there lack of persons to be employed. Coloured folk came trudging into town, with battered hats and dusty clothes, or waited near the Freedman's Bureau, willing to be hired when the moment for hiring came, and content, meanwhile, to stare about them, which is, undoubtedly, a freedman's privilege. But there was less idling than I had been led to expect. Black men rolled bales of cotton on

the levee, drove waggons, and helped in the warehouses. They ran on errands, acted as servants and porters, performed every function of a labouring class. Contracts for plantation work were hourly entered into by ex-slaves, under the superintendence of General Dudley, of the Bureau; and if some darkeys carried liberty to the extent of loafing, why, so did many whites. I tried to look at things in Memphis impartially—to forget what institutions had been, and to judge by the same standard as I should apply to an English town. Thus looking and thus judging, it was clear that freedom had not greatly demoralized any but those who were out of pocket by the change. No one asked alms of me in Memphis, nor was I rudely hustled by darkeys when we met on the crowded pavement; nor did the black men to whom I spoke fail to answer me civilly. I was informed that they now bore concealed weapons, and would resent any aggression with violence, but as this was exactly my own case, and that of every white citizen with whom I was acquainted, it appeared less shocking than might have been supposed. Freedmen only imitated what free men had done for years past in Tennessee.

As to Memphian trade, there were thirty thousand bales of cotton stored in the city, which holders were reluctant to part with, as they looked forward to a rise of price. Hardware was in great demand, and one dealer complained to me of his inability to pro-

cure a sufficient supply of first-class goods. New buildings were wanted, and town lots were extravagantly dear. The inhabitants felt sure that Memphis would become a rival to St. Louis and New Orleans; and they feared no competition, short of those places, whether up or down stream. If money must be spent freely in the Bluff City, it could be easily made. A little capital commanded its own terms, and day labourers might earn from two to three dollars a day. Irish navvies on the railway had permanent employ at thirteen and a half dollars a week, whilst mechanics were able to obtain almost whatever they asked.

Although devoted to business in the autumn of 1865, Memphis had seen somewhat of the war when warlike deeds were rife. I heard how, after Island No. 10 had been taken, a Federal flotilla appeared before the Chickasaw Bluffs, and engaged the Confederate gunboats which lay off the city. Regardless of stray shells, an immense crowd assembled to watch the battle. Men could see the vessels manœuvring almost at their feet, could hear the crash when one ship ran into another, and were as much excited as if they had been themselves amongst the combatants. It was remembered with pride that the Confederate gunboats, though of inferior force, made a stout resistance; and then came less pleasing recollections of a summons to surrender from the Federal Commodore, of trains, heavily loaded, departing south-

ward in haste, and of a panic in the city. There was some merriment when a Yankee officer, ascending to the roof of the Post Office to hoist the Stars and Stripes, found himself locked in, and unable to come down. But the Commodore would not thus be played with, and threatened to open fire unless his officer were immediately released. A Federal detachment landed to take possession of Memphis, and more merriment was caused by the enemies' difficulty in regard to a Confederate flag which had been nailed to its staff. Citizens were in a dangerous mood, so no one liked to climb up and cut away the flag. "He would have been riddled with balls, whatever they might have done afterwards," said my informant; "and though a reward was offered to any man who would climb up, there waved the flag, there stood the Federals surrounding it in hollow square, and outside was a crowd of angry citizens. It ended in an order to cut down the flag-staff."

But Uncle Sam, in his slow, methodical way, swallowed up Memphis from thenceforward, and made it a Federal town. Yankees and Germans settled there; coloured troops formed part of the garrison; and my next historical gleaning was of a street skirmish, when Forrest made a dash at the place to divert his opponents' attention from some manœuvres which he was anxious to complete without interruption. A street skirmish? A guerilla war? General N. B. Forrest obnoxious to the Federals,

and hated by the coloured troops for his conduct at Fort Pillow? Curious country! Incomprehensible people! Here is the bold rebel, the skilful leader of Confederate troops, taking to peaceful pursuits in the midst of a hostile soldiery. In yonder barrack-yard are sable warriors laughing and joking; on this foot-way are other sable warriors strolling vaguely along in blue uniforms and white cotton gloves, as soldiers off duty will stroll. At the corner of the barrack is a sentry with glittering bayonet, who grins his friendly recognition to the pretty quadron just before me, and there, not twenty yards removed from the bayonet of the sentry and the white cotton gloves of the strollers, is a stout red-faced man, with a bundle of papers in his hand. This is his card, published in several journals, which English contemporaries will please copy:—

It will be seen that I have associated myself in business with the firm of Tate, Gill and Able. I propose to try, by close attention and correctness of dealing, to make it to the interest of my old friends to extend me a fair share of their patronage.

N. B. FORREST.

The *Gayoso Hotel* at Memphis, whatever its shortcomings, was strong in juvenile waiters. Boys of twelve, and lads of sixteen, with every shade of colour in their cheeks, every degree of crispness in their hair, rushed out to fetch dishes as though possessed, and walked back into the dining-room as if walking for a wager. They were playful at odd

times, but ever ready in the service of the guests, and ever attentive to the low whistling signal of their chief. It seemed impossible that these youngsters could have learned to wait as other trades are learned. They must have been naturally gifted with a talent for dodging swiftly between tables without tripping up, and balancing numerous plates upon the curve of the left arm. Instinct taught them what to bring, when guests made a dab at the bill of fare, and said, "Let me have all them!" Promotion did not go by size, for, though all were small and dark, the smallest and darkest waited at General Dudley's table. How such a little creature could carry supplies for the General's staff was a mystery. But he did so with unfailing vigour. I enquired what wages the boys were paid, and was told that the younger among them received ten dollars a month and their board, whilst the elder were given as much as twenty dollars a month, on similar conditions. "They often leave us," added the grave sad-looking head-waiter; "there is such a demand for labour that a boy can get a good place anywhere." I had noticed that he treated them very gently, and gave no cause to wish for a change, so there must, as he said, have been strong outside inducements.

One remarkable feature of the management of the *Gayoso* was a discrimination between boarders and transient guests, pushed to an extreme in favour of the boarders. The daily charge was four dollars; the

monthly board, with rather greater attention shown you, came to forty dollars; so that it was less expensive to live at the hotel for a month than for eleven days; or, in another way, you might consider that, after ten days' residence, the proprietor invited you to a visit of three weeks. "Bear hard on transients," was the *Gayoso* principle, from which it will be imagined that they constituted a majority. Of course there were many of them, but the boarders were likewise fully represented. Private dwellings being impossible to be procured, many families stayed at the hotel. It was a centre of life and interest, with strangers constantly arriving. Merchants and speculators came thither to open connections in the Bluff City, or to see what might be done in cotton, Northerners and Southerners crossed each other on their way home, for there had been a great carrying of people to a distance during the war, for twenty different reasons, and now there was a steady filtering of them back—a few in this train, and a few on that steamer, but always some returning. Amongst these persons the class most numerous was that of enterprise and emigration.

A gentleman hailing from Baltimore, but who had been through every State of the Union, and done business in most of them, told me that he intended to set up a store in Memphis, and another at New Orleans. He felt certain that any amount of trade might be developed along the Mississippi valley,

and mentioned one fact which proved that, in clothing at least, there was room for competition. Coats which cost eighteen dollars in New York, were selling at Memphis for from thirty-five to forty dollars! My informant was of Southern birth, but strong Union feeling. "I had seen the Yankees at home," he said, "and I knew they could whip us, but my father and brothers, who had never travelled ten miles from —, were death on State rights, and thought secession a big thing. Father's a mechanic, and earns two dollars a day, so you may think he got frightened when he found I was doing a hundred thousand dollar business. He said I should smash. Why, sir, it's as easy to do a large business as a small, and if I do smash, it'll be time then to take to father's trade, as I tell the old man. The Yankees have gone ahead of us by their enterprise, and be d——d to them, so we must look out for a share of the money to be made in our own section, or else we'd better clear the track by going to Brazil."

This gentleman was liberal in his views on negro education, and spoke more kindly of the blacks than was usual with his class. He lowered his voice, as we stood talking in a public bar-room, and whispered, "There are some here that would take it ill if they heard me say so much, but I am for elevating the nigger as high as he can be brought, before we make up our minds how much he's worth. I hate all Abolitionists, though I can't help feeling that the

‘institution’ was the grind-stone which broke us up. You see it got tighter and tighter, as the end drew near, until my folks at home persuaded themselves there was something Providential about it, and we never owned a nigger either.”

So, sir, those are your views, and spoken out like a man though in a somewhat moderated voice, which was more required by politeness than by prudence. People may now say what they like, and ask what questions they choose, provided that they keep within limits much wider than of yore.

We will bear down towards that group of coloured women sitting near the steamboat landing-place, and hear what stories they have to tell. Nothing in particular can be gathered from their appearance, which is anxious and dispirited. They evidently wait the coming of male relatives to continue a long journey; most of the children with them are asleep, and their baggage is so light that it will hardly afford pillows to the sleepers.

“Going by the boat, ma’am?” say I, to a slight sickly woman, whose dark eyes stare vacantly at me, and whose manner betrays some trepidation at the sudden approach of a white man.

“No, sir, we’re gwine hum.”

She is not willing to make me a confidant, so I caress a pretty little child that runs up to her, and say, “Is this yours, ma’am?”

“No, she’s my sister’s.”

Silence again, with a disposition to be petted on the part of the child. Its woolly head is rubbed against my leg, and it looks at me with large wondering eyes. Perhaps the small darkey thinks that I am that Massa Chusetts of whose strange doings it may have heard; for there is perfect confidence in the grip on my forefinger and in the smile which lights up the coffee-coloured face. But the woman is less friendly. She pays no attention to a remark that it is a pretty child, and only replies when I ask if its mother is alive—

“Master had a plantation in Alabama, and sister was sent there when baby was a year old.”

“Well, what then?”

“Why, she died at the cotton-picking. Most do.”

“But they need not now,” say I (perhaps I am an incendiary for so saying, but “Britons never will,” &c.) “You can earn money enough to live on without over-working.”

The woman looks dreamily up, and observes, “There’s been a heap of money made in this country. They’ve made it out of us.”

“And now you can make it for yourselves, if you will be sober and prudent.”

“I can’t!” cries the woman, with a fierce snort; “my health’s gone; I can only do a little sewing for our people.”

“Was your master cruel, then, that he broke your health?”

“No, sir, master war kind, and never gave me a lick. But another man hired some of us of master, and he beat my head, so it always hurts me.”

Near this woman sits a fine old lady, whiter than the rest, and with the best cared-for appearance in the party. The old lady is willing to converse. She tells me something of their plans and movements, and explains how they are travelling back to a district where most of them were raised. “We’ve had much suffering, and a hard time in the war,” she said.

“And did you like the family that you belonged to, ma’am?” I enquire.

“Oh yes, sir, they treated me like one of themselves.”

“Then I suppose you didn’t care for emancipation.”

“Not care for it! We had prayed and waited patiently for years,” says the old lady, with sparkling eyes. “They were kind to me, but my children were sent cotton-picking, and they might have been sold away any day.”

“Was your owner a Confederate?”

“Of course he was; they all were about our section.”

“And you wished them to whip the Yankees?”

“No I didn’t. I should have felt sorry if master had been killed, but I wished the Yankees to win because they would set us free.”

The old lady speaks hopefully of the education

which may now be given to coloured children, though she remarks that they hardly know what to expect until new laws are passed. I wish her good-morning, and walk away along the levee, where a dozen gangs of deck-hands are rolling cotton-bales, where draymen are cracking their whips and shouting at their mules, whilst a brass band sounds loudly from the barrack-yard upon the bluff.

Having been invited by a Memphian friend to visit him at his country residence, I took the afternoon train on the Memphis and Ohio railroad, and set forth in primitive fashion along with many other travellers. Be it recorded, before describing our journey, that Southern hospitality, though greatly hampered by the loss of its "servants," and threatened with the difficulty which Northerners experience in regard to "help," is by no means an extinct virtue. Invitations were not few, and I regretted both that my time was limited, and that I differed from such agreeable fellows upon a question which I thought one of principle, and which they were not disposed to drop. But slavery, being dead, was no longer the social nuisance that it had been in former years, and we could talk of Confederate achievements without danger of quarrelling. They had fought gallantly down South, and as to abuse of Yankees, why the men who had made wooden clocks might have made wooden nutmegs for aught I could tell.

The Memphis and Ohio railway was at this time deficient in rolling stock. Its passenger cars had been taken south and lost in the war, so that the public was obliged to be content with such accommodation as freight cars with benches in them could offer. These make-shift vehicles had no windows, but only an open door on each side to give light. People entered by a ladder—for American freight cars stand higher than ours—and were stowed away like Shem and Japhet in a toy Noah's ark, Ham, or rather his supposed descendants, being separately accommodated. After an entire suspension of traffic even this railway train is something. The line was open for fifty miles from Memphis, and would soon, they expected, be open to a distance of eighty miles; not freshly made you must understand, but, like the country at large, reconstructed—new sleepers laid down here and there, new metals placed upon the track, and bridges made passable. Tennessee wanted railroad communication, wanted capital and labour, as did other States; but capital and labour would not come of their own accord, at least Governor Brownlow and the legislature at Nashville saw no sign of their approach, so a committee had been appointed and had sent in its report, a bill had been prepared, and the railway companies were to receive State subsidies to set them going. But I now speak of when they had neither received nor expended the sum thus assigned to them. Things were incomplete.

We started on this particular line from a point in the outskirts of the city, where a station might have been, but was not; where the hindermost car rested against the embankment of the street, for there was a few feet difference of level between carriage-road and railway; and where a crowd of small darkeys and white boys, innocent of soap, had collected to witness our departure.

Riding on the engine is regarded as a doubtful privilege by most of us after we have attained our majority, but here, with a wood fire and a speed of eighteen miles an hour, the engine was better than a perch on the roof of a freight van or a berth in Noah's ark. We moved along a narrow track, where trees grew close on each side of a single line of rail, or fields extended to the ends of the sleepers. It was a "sensation" to cross those bridges, destitute of floor or parapet; which looked as though they must break beneath our engine's weight. Now an empty barrel is espied on the track, where a country road passes over the railway. No gates or signal-post, with telegraphic arms, can be seen; no company's servant is in sight. We give a loud whistle, ring the engine bell, and splinter the barrel on our cow-catcher. Again an obstruction of some sort! This time it is only a billet of wood lying upon the left hand rail. Our engineer is more troubled than he was by the barrel, though troubled is a forcible expression for his state of mind. He shuts off steam

and puts on the break until we are reduced in speed from eighteen to eight miles an hour. Bump! Jolt! the log is knocked aside, and away we roll with all steam once more. Such travelling does not greatly resemble the breathless holding on to an English engine, whilst objects flash past as in a dream, and your lives depend upon having the rails clear of everything larger than a crown piece. But it is more amusing to go slowly, as we do in Tennessee, and more like rambling through the woods.

There was a halt for taking in fuel, and another stoppage to set down a passenger at the point nearest to his dwelling. What stations were reached and left behind I decline to say, nor will I state how many miles from Memphis is my friend's house. Suffice it that there be horses which would trot the distance in an hour.

K— had resided on the same spot during the whole period of civil war, and could tell of Federals and Confederates skirmishing in the field next to his garden; how a Northern detachment, ill-disciplined and inexperienced, had marched out from the city to reconnoitre, how an equal number of Tennessee lads, good shots and daring riders, had here encountered the enemy, skirmished with him, and captured his entire force. "The elder children were frightened," said my friend, "but little Willie clapped his hands and thought the fight was got up to amuse him. One man was killed just by those railings."

At another time three Confederate officers had come to have their horses shod at the smithy down the road. A Federal patrol dashed suddenly upon them, and the grey-coats were nearly captured. They galloped by with bullets whistling at their heads from the Federals, who were in full pursuit. A boy was walking along the road, and as ill-luck would have it, he ran for shelter into K——'s house. My friend was not at home, but his wife concealed the fugitive, refusing to give him up when a dozen troopers were battering at the door. She parleyed with them, pistol in hand, until K——'s return, and then it was explained that the boy was not a belligerent, and he came forth from his hiding-place. "Lickering" was suggested, which exactly met the Federals' humour. They waxed polite, and begged pardon for asking to see a permit to keep the pistol above referred to. Whilst the soldiers licked, K—— had managed to transfer twelve hundred dollars in gold from his desk to the ash heap, though how far this precaution was proved to have been necessary I did not learn.

Once my friend was robbed by a bushwhacker, who afterwards suffered suspension; and, on another occasion, when driving home with his wife, he was stopped by a party of armed men, who unharnessed the horse that had brought him thus far, and gave in exchange a broken-down screw which could scarcely draw the buggy home. These were ad-

ventures to be expected in war time, and nobody thought of complaining vaguely of his fate, though he did complain to commanding officers, as in the bushwhacker's case.

From where K—— lives, in a comfortable wooden house mounted on wooden piers, it is not far to a doctor's office, a grog shop, and a smithy. The three institutions thus classed together had each its share of patronage as I first beheld them; that is to say, each had a group of loafers collected before it—grave at the medical department, impatient at the smithy, and jovial at the grog shop.

“Hullo, Mister, hold on there a minute!” was shouted from this last, as my footsteps, after lingering near the smithy, were turned towards K——'s abode, and two gentlemen of haggard appearance stalked up to me.

“In what can I oblige you, sir?” was my question to the wilder looking of the pair.

He hesitated, as though embarrassed and doubting how to proceed, but his companion remarked huskily that they'd “got to do it, so there was no use making a long speech.”

I may have seemed surprised and inclined to refuse any concession, for the wilder looking man observed, with a grim smile, “No offence, Mister, only there's a treat depending on the size of your hat, and we're the committee to measure it.”

“Gentlemen,” I replied, handing them the pro-

perty in question, "Kench and Son would be proud to think that they have astonished you."

The husky gentleman anathematized all hatters for the prices they were charging, whilst he of the wilder looks measured my hat with an air of triumph. They then muttered some indistinct thanks and quitted me abruptly to make their report at the grog-shop door.

Everybody hereabouts was not loafing. Some whites and several black men were hard at work in the immediate vicinity. A coloured smith was shoeing horses, a white carpenter was hammering at one frame house and a black carpenter at another. Most of the passing waggons were driven by ex-slaves, and the only idlers of colour whom I saw near K——'s abode, if idlers they could be called, were half-a-dozen pedestrians striding towards Memphis, with bundles slung upon their sticks. Town wages were tempting them to seek their fortunes on the levee, or in the warehouses. As a rule there was nothing like wholesale desertion in this neighbourhood. One planter informed me that he had still a hundred and thirty negroes on his estate, who were "working pretty fairly," and other persons had enough labour at their disposal to keep things in order for the time being.

My friend took me on a pleasant excursion to see somewhat of cotton planting. We drove along a neglected road, with fords at the sides of the broken

bridges, and ruts two feet deep in many places. It was a yellow road with yellow banks and ditches at the sides; the ditches, worn as if mountain-torrents passed through them at times, though mountains there were none to be seen; the banks, surmounted by huge fences, whose weather-beaten rails were laid zig-zag in approved American style. There were fields covered with coarse grass, that had been exhausted by frequent cotton crops, and now lay useless, for, with abundance of new land, manuring is not thought of. There were patches of uncleared forest, and new fields full of stumps, with planters' houses occasionally to be seen, which had their range of negro quarters, like outworks to a citadel.

But I must no longer delay to introduce you to the great personage himself, Cotton as he appears in his infancy, before he has been picked and packed and shipped, and spun and reeled, and handed over the counter by the young man with elegant whiskers. Germans rightly call him tree-wool (not the young man, but the cotton), such being his early character. A wide extent of currant bushes, set in regular lines, with little white tufts all over them, as if a thousand pet-lambs, newly washed, had been driven through the field and left their wool behind to a preposterous degree; this is infant cotton ready to be picked, the most profitable crop which can be grown, and the cause of more cruelty than any plant, except, perhaps, the sugar-cane. It is not harvested at one time, but

gathered in three or four separate pickings, so as not to leave the earlier tufts to spoil whilst the remainder ripen. When K—— took me with him down the yellow road of fords and ruts, most of the fields that we passed had been thrice picked, yet there was a sufficient show of tree-wool to prove that the thousand pet-lambs must have escaped with tattered fleeces.

We met strange caravans on the road, and solitary horsemen enough to start a score of mediæval novels. Here came a waggon, laden with cotton-bales, and drawn by three mules, an old negro riding postilion on the near wheeler, a white man of clerical aspect perched upon the bales. In its rear trudged several coloured children, two lean hounds, and a boy of fifteen with a rifle. Soon after this there appeared a well-mounted gentleman, whose spurs and saddle told of military service, though he had now abandoned the profession of arms for the pursuit of grey squirrels, and carried a number of them dangling at his side. Squirrel shooting, with a small-bore rifle, is good practice in its way. Americans take the squirrel sitting, aim at the head and will often bag six or eight brace in a morning. We had not long passed the gentleman on horseback, when a covered waggon hove in sight, bearing what seemed to be furniture and baggage. There were women, who marched close behind the waggon, and a negro with an immense whip, who directed the oxen. Then came father and son of guerilla cut, armed

to the teeth ; and, lastly, a coloured girl leading a pack-mule. On account of their furniture, we conjectured this party to be engaged in house-moving.

Other waggons and more horsemen did we meet, as also many darkeys, who saluted us respectfully—a remnant, I suppose, of servitude, since touching your hat to superiors is not an American custom. My friend pointed out to me several cavaliers, whose spurs and saddle were like those of the squirrel-hunter, and mentioned that they had been Confederate soldiers. Yet here they were returned to private life, neither wishing to become outlaws, nor treated as such by the Government. Would that civil wars in Europe could have ended as bloodlessly !

We left the yellow road and drove on to a piece of rising ground, where was the cotton-gin that we had come to visit. You may fill in the landscape with trees and stumps and autumn leaves ; imagine a rough fence or two stretching across it, and some planters' houses just visible in the distance. Then you must picture an upper-story barn immediately before us ; the basement occupied by mules, which go round and round, turning a shaft to supply motive power ; the upper story crammed with cotton, and as white as a flour-mill. There are long wooden steps leading to this higher region, and a waggon, fresh from the field, standing close to the steps. In

the waggon is a black girl, blacker through contrast with her fleecy surroundings. She loads a basket with seed-cotton newly picked, and helps a man of white complexion to shoulder this basket, which he presently carries up the steps, and discharges at the feet of a second white man who is feeding the gin. We follow to the higher region, and are welcomed amid heaps of seed-cotton and cotton-seed. The gin is accepted on faith, as a machine of rotary constitution, and its achievements are noted with pleasure. Down go the tufts of tree-wool, disappearing for ever from the scene; out fly cotton-seeds by bushels at our feet, looking like digestive pills, and the cotton itself descends like a snow-storm into an abutment called the lint-room. You would know what further is done? Well, come with us and see.

Outside the barn is a wooden erection, not quite like anything used in English agriculture. It might be a disabled merry-go-round or a gymnastic contrivance of some kind, to judge by its look; but it is an old-fashioned cotton'press, in which the contents of yonder lint-room will be squeezed under that heavy vertical screw, by the dragging round of those worm-eaten beams, which slope on each side nearly to the ground. After sufficient squeezing, cotton quits his infancy and enters upon his boyhood. The packing that has lain beneath him in the press is folded over and strongly corded. He becomes a bale of recognized individuality, ragged from the first,

with patches of white showing through the cover, but never actually falling apart. As a bale he is rolled and thumped, clawed at with steel hooks, and, after a parting squeeze in a steam press at the port of shipment that he may stow better, is taken half across the world.

CHAPTER XXIV.

VICKSBURG.

High-pressure boilers — A famous battle-ground — Freedom and short commons.

UNPUNCTUALITY is the foible of river steamboats. You think my assertion too sweeping? Well, then, amend it by adding the word Mississippi, and after that listen to reason. The 'Peytona' was behind time when she left Memphis, because a furious head-wind and shoal-water in many places had delayed her so much that she reached the Bluff City six hours later than she was advertised to have quitted it. No fault of the captain's, who was a jolly old fellow, and as anxious as any one else to get forward; nor of the clerk, who did his best to make passengers comfortable. But Mississippi voyages being long voyages, must needs be somewhat uncertain.

Very early on December 3rd we were under way, bound to New Orleans, and by breakfast-time had

arrived at a point far below Memphis. The 'Peytona' will require only a brief introduction. She was clean and well arranged, having the usual characteristics of first-class river boats—the pilot-house in a commanding situation, the active coloured waiters, and troops of brawny deck-hands. These last were, on this vessel, black and white men in about equal proportion; whilst of the mate, who superintended their labour, I must in justice say, that he spoke gently to his subordinates, and carefully avoided statements upon oath.

It was a windy day, with fierce ripples upon the river, and clouds of dust flying over the sandbanks that we passed. There were snags occasionally to be seen above water—dreary wooded islands which had been submerged at the last overflow, and trunks of great trees that lay as dead giants along the shore. It was the Mississippi again, only with better soundings than I had remarked above Memphis: in fact, they seldom hove the lead; when they did, they had two or three fathoms to report. We bargained for fuel with a man who would not come to terms. He asked five dollars a cord; and so the steamer, which had rounded to in full expectation of doing business, was backed off and slipped away before the grasping wood-cutter could change his mind. If "he could do without us," as he had said, we could do without him; and the passengers, who always sympathize with their ship, were indignant at such a display

of avarice, especially on Sunday. Our next stopping-place was Helena, Arkansas, where could be seen some coloured infantry in new uniforms, looking smart and soldierly, and a little further down we touched at the Yazoo Pass to land an emigrant family with all its belongings.

This pass, which now appeared as a dry ravine opening into the river a little above its surface, is navigable in flood-time for good-sized vessels, and it leads, through a network of creeks and tributary streams, to the upper waters of the Yazoo River. We could hardly realize that Federal gun-boats had been able to use the dry ravine for penetrating the interior of the country. Such an achievement smacked of light-draft clippers; that would sail across a meadow on the morning dew; but then it is difficult to fancy what high tide will be like when we stand at low-water mark.

The emigrant family was landed in heavy marching order. A detachment of children led the van, with a wife and baby in arms. Emigrants always have babies in arms; it is their normal condition. Did not olive-branches crown their union, why should they seek new plantations? After the baby went an antique cabinet, evidently an heir-loom, a cradle, a crib, and a cooking-stove. You must understand that these articles were carried ashore by our deck-hands, as were sundry chests and boxes, chairs, tables, barrels of pork and sacks of Indian corn. Then fol-

lowed two horses, carrying themselves, and kicking viciously; the various parts of a waggon and suitable harness, taken by our deck-hands; a grown-up boy and girl laden with small articles, such as umbrellas, axes, and rifles; and, lastly, an anxious father, whose presence was required in twenty places at the same moment. He counted over his goods with one of our officers, and discussed some payment with another; greeted an earlier settler, who had come down to receive him; helped his boy to restrain the horses, and ran after a cask which was rolling towards the water. As we departed, the family gathered itself together round the waggon wheels, probably "recoiling for a spring."

There are diversities of character and opinion to be studied on board the 'Peytona.' A gentleman of sallow cheeks and much river experience is relating how he saw the mate of a steamboat knock a hand down dead for moving slowly; "They smartened up after that, sir," remarks he, with a hard smile.

"But it is not fit to do; it is tyranny!" cries a second gentleman, with tawny moustache and German accent.

"Was he punished?" I enquire.

"No, sirree; without we'd shot him down, who was to punish him? He'd only killed an Irishman."

The German becomes more indignant at so flagrant a want of justice, and the sallow traveller entrenches himself behind an assertion, that "it was

several years ago," and "he reckons things ain't quite so rough now."

I am presently engaged in conversation with a staunch Unionist, who denounces the Confederate "rebels," and calls slavery a "bust up institution." He is going to "locate South," where he thinks that money can be made. A sudden change is it from this man to my neighbours at the tea-table. They ascertain that I am English, and then they speak on politics. "Why did not England help them against the Yankees?" "It was a great mistake to let the South be conquered." I could not understand about State rights! Of course I could not; no foreigner could! I should be unwilling to accord State rights to Ireland? Ah, that was quite a different question! The Yankees had provoked a quarrel, and were to blame all through! I mention President Johnson. My neighbours shrugged their shoulders, and would not yet vouch for him. He might prove to be a sound man, and aid in reducing the niggers to their proper condition; but who could tell what influences Abolition fanatics would bring to bear upon the President? One lady told me how it shocked her to see black soldiers; and another enquired whether we were not troubled in England by the presence of Abolitionists. Here an elderly gentleman sitting opposite remarks, that he believes all Englishmen are more or less tainted with Abolition principles, and further says, that "slavery is his religion."

The elderly gentleman has agreeable manners, and a temper sufficiently calm for argument, so, at a later period, we argue to our heart's content, each remaining unconvinced, which is the natural result of such controversies. How lucky it is for the balance of parties, and the general equilibrium of the world, that men cannot go about as moral giants, felling their opponents by a few weighty words, but that persuasion is as difficult as to kindle a fire by rubbing two sticks together.

My adversary terminates the contest with this envenomed shaft, "Coloured people cannot take care of themselves!" and I am soon afterwards listening to the adventures of a swarthy fellow-subject from Canada, who not only takes care of himself, but of property enough to give him a vote on British soil. He finds it more profitable to work in the United States, but his domicile is in Canada, whither he often returns. He is a civil, good-natured darkey, has sailed to Liverpool several times, and seen service in a U.S.C. regiment during the late war.

"I was glad to have a slap for my people," he says. "Will freedmen work?"

He guesses "they will, and they'll get all their rights too, now that the thing's begun, only it'll be a long while first. Americans may say what they like, but there's a great deal in British soil!"

Amongst other things of interest in the 'Peytona' were passengers' pistols. They did not obtrude

themselves on your notice ; did not go off suddenly and cause disturbance, or bulge out our breast-pockets to an unsightly degree. But there they were, in every variety, large revolvers and small revolvers, four-barrelled breech-loaders and single-barrel ditto. It needed only a fine afternoon, when the gentlemen were lounging on the upper deck for'ard, and a bird, a stump, or some other tempting object, to bring forth these unobtrusive companions. Then woe to poor birdie, and let King Log beware !

We had some deadly shots on board. That comfortable man, with the wife and children and baggage, who looked as peaceable as a Quaker, whipped out his Colt at sight of three water-fowl about sixty yards away, missed them the first shot, and, steadying his right hand with his left, hit one of them as they rose at the second discharge. Comfortable man, I would not fight with thee save over a handkerchief ! Nor was the grey-whiskered merchant, who despaired of free-grown cotton, to be despised when he handled his "shooting-irons." We had touched at a settlement where several stumps appeared above the water, about a stone's-throw ahead of our vessel. A young fellow began to fire at one of these stumps without success. Then the merchant, producing a breech-loader of pocket-size, discharged it twice, and hit the stump both times.

December 4th.—A fine warm day on the Mississippi. We steamed forward between wooded shores,

past sand-banks and log-cabins, rude barges floating down stream, and crowded steamboats cleaving their way against the current. There were signal-whistles exchanged between our craft and those which we met, with a warning to be seen on the way of how collision might result. The 'Niagara,' U.S. mail-packet, had been sunk a few days before by another vessel called the 'Postboy,' and she now lay on the bottom of the river, with her upper deck just above the water level. Two hundred Union soldiers had been drowned on the main-deck, where they were fast asleep when the accident occurred, and this circumstance gave the 'Niagara' a mournful interest.

Fuel at four dollars a cord! This might be had by landing on the Arkansas side, where we found a whole tribe of darkeys engaged in wood-cutting. From old grey-headed folks to small children, all ages were represented. They clustered round those of us who went ashore, and talked frankly of their prospects. Vanish all thoughts of comic plantation-hands! These men—slaves until a few months back—spoke English in much the same way as plain hard-handed Britons. There was neither cringing nor insolence in their manner, but they answered the many questions which were put to them as best they could, enquiring in turn if we passengers knew anything of their absent master. A powerful fellow, jet black, whose neck and shoulders might have served as a model for Hercules, seemed to be the leader of these poor

people. He leant upon his axe-handle whilst speaking, and more than once expressed his confidence in being able to earn a livelihood by wood-cutting should master never return to set them on at cotton again. Their master had been kind, "so we've waited to see whether he would take us before hiring out to any one else," said the darkeys.

It was a curious mass of adventure that they had to relate. After Mr. —— went away, his slaves were taken by Confederate authority, some to Alabama, others to Texas. A complete break-up of the different coloured families which had belonged to this plantation was effected, and thenceforward the object dearest to every negro was to return hither as a rallying-point for finding his wife or children. Some died of the hardships they experienced, others were killed by various accidents, but the larger part survived to be set free when peace was made — to earn money enough for the journey home, and to be happily re-united on "óle master's" property. The provoking creatures would not call him "massa."

"Wal, sar, when a few of us had come here from Alabama," said the Herculean black, "and found only them two ole folks about the place, we began wood-chopping to get a little money. The steamers would give us four dollars a cord, and I could cut eighteen cord a week, so we soon made enough to send a man to Texas to bring home our folks that was thar, and another man up North to see if master was alive."

The sometime emissary to Texas here broke in with a grin and a chuckle. "Yes—he—he, sar, I'se bin thar, that's so." On being pressed to describe his adventures, the emissary relapsed into another chuckle, and, recovering himself with difficulty, vouchsafed this piece of information: "It's a mighty big place down thar, took me a time getting back, tell you!"

Hercules, interrupting his friend, to relieve our curiosity: "They had a long journey from Texas, above four hundred and fifty miles I think, sar. That gal she marched all the way, but some of 'em rode in the waggon. We'd sent money enough to buy a waggon."

I thought of the querulous complaints amongst Confederates as to negro vagrancy, and marvelled no longer that the oppressed race should have been inclined to roam for the first few months of their emancipation. Not only had they to find old masters, to which even ex-slaveowners would scarcely object, but there were a thousand heart-breaking separations still remembered by the darkeys, and many a resolve, now that freedom had come, to seek out absent relatives.

They presented a picturesque appearance, those Arkansas freedmen, gathered round the heaps of newly-cut firewood, the women with bright-coloured kerchiefs and their husbands in coarse garments, more or less patched. There were dusky children

peeping at us from behind grown people's skirts, and other little woolly heads coming boldly forward to obtain a nearer view of the travellers.

"What wages do you expect when Mr. — comes home?" I enquired of the strong man.

"Wal, sar, we want to have as much as other hands, and we'll work too if the ole master will take us; but we've been talking together about having a share of the crop instead of wages."

"Yes we have, that's so," affirmed the sometime emissary to Texas, with a tremendous grin.

In the evening, part of the 'Peytona's' saloon was cleared of furniture and we danced to the music of two Italian harpers, who were working their passage through America by their minstrelsy. When I say that we danced, you should rather understand that a few couples performed before many spectators, than that the whole company betook themselves to giddy mazes. Yet dancing there was, and the damsels who had pouted angrily when "Yankee Doodle" and "The Star Spangled Banner" were played at dinner-time had now the treat of a quadrille which contained "Dixie's Land." Our musicians seemed quite unconscious of any pleasure or offence connected with the tunes which they produced, but looked happy and abstracted as they swept their fingers over the chords.

It was a dark night, with fog upon the river. We had to slacken speed and steer very cautiously,

keeping the deep water shore in sight. At one moment the vessel grazed over a snag, with a shock that made people run out of their state-rooms to see what had happened; at another we drifted quietly forward with our machinery stopped; and at last the captain resolved that he would moor his vessel to the bank until daylight.

December 5th broke rather gloomily with promise, afterwards fulfilled, of heavy rain. There was flat country on each side of our course for some distance; then an indication of higher ground to the eastward, as we passed the mouth of the Yazoo River; and presently the experienced travellers pointed to some buildings which rose above a low peninsula on our starboard bow. Every one brightened up and all eyes were fixed upon this first glimpse of Vicksburg.

“Felt kinder bad, waiting outside that place month after month, and losing so many of our boys,” says a Northern gentleman.

“Wal, sir, we felt bad inside with your big shells falling among us,” replies a Southerner.

They fraternize on the strength of having both assisted at the famous siege, and many incidents may be gathered from their animated talk.

There is the spot where Grant endeavoured to cut a canal across the neck of the peninsula! How little trace of that canal remains; and how rich the neighbouring fields must be with thousands of

Federal soldiers buried beneath them! Now a range of hills opens out to view, and we can see the strong position of Pemberton and his Confederate army. Had the Mississippi been a sober-minded stream it would long ago have flowed in the line of Grant's canal. But instead of so doing it turns eastward, runs swiftly against the Vicksburg Bluffs, hurries past them with a narrow surface, though with immense depth, and glides away towards the west, making a complete horseshoe bend.

The city stands upon the left bank and overlooks the river, with a sloping front of houses, street above street. On the highest part of Vicksburg, as also along the bluffs to each side, were planted batteries, which could send a plunging fire against the peninsula stretched out before them, and the stream that came circling within pistol shot of their guns,—modern pistol shot is here signified; a convenient expression, as, thanks to rifled barrels, it may mean anything between twelve paces and half a mile. Warm work must the Federal transports have had in running past those Vicksburg batteries when Whistling Dick and his redoubtable gunner, supported by a host of minor cannons, sent their shot splashing into the stream. Yet transports did run past, and it was surprising to hear that so many of them had escaped uninjured.

A different approach to Vicksburg had we in the 'Peytona.' Whistling Dick had long been silenced.

There was no attacking force on the peninsula, but only the wooden huts in which freedmen were living. No sharp-shooters or barricades to hinder our landing on the levee, but heaps of cotton-bales waiting for shipment, and a crowd of negroes rolling more bales to join these heaps. The 'Peytona' took her place at the floating-stage of the Atlantic and Mississippi Company, and our deck hands set to work in earnest bringing cotton on board. They were assisted by several coloured labourers, who received twenty-five cents an hour and acted in pairs, each man having a partner with him, so that the two together could independently tackle a cotton-bale.

Vicksburg is not an easy place to describe as regards its physical geography. When once you have ascended the slope of the bluffs, and reached the upper portion of the city, there is something vague, like scenery in a dream, about the hillocks and ravines, the irregular knobs of sandstone, forty or fifty feet high, and little grassy hollows, just large enough to hold a few cottages. There is a large white court-house on one elevated spot, and a modest wooden dwelling on another. A redoubt in good repair, with sentry pacing at its entrance and flag-staff reared above it, occupied the highest position, whilst many points, almost as high, had been chosen for private dwellings. Inland there were batteries and breast-works lying much as they had been left by Pemberton's garrison; and in most of the hillocks

just mentioned were curious little caves, excavated by the Vicksburgers for their shelter during bombardment. A narrow opening would lead to a chamber large enough to contain a whole family, and in such chambers families had been glad to live, for the huge shells of the Federals were not to be lightly braved.

It was a famous siege, and although the American gentlemen who declared that Sebastopol was nothing to it were going a trifle too far, yet, as we had not formed ourselves into a historical debating society, I let them remain uncontradicted. But what puzzled me in Vicksburg was the number of old and substantial houses which had survived 1863. Yonder court-house on the sandstone knob was not perceptibly injured, nor was the wooden building, conspicuous near the redoubt, nor were a hundred others that I passed, though a citizen told me that almost every dwelling had needed some slight repair. And was this all, with monster pieces playing upon the city?

You remarked, worthy sir, as we strolled together through Vicksburg, that our pop-guns had, you believed, failed to destroy the houses of Sebastopol. Well; your big cannon had been at work here, and you could not show me one dwelling in five that had about it a pretence of being less than three years old. I begin to think that for a clean knock down the lower part of Sönderborg cannot readily be

matched,* and I am encouraged as to the chances in favour of Brighton, should an American fleet ever summon that delightful resort to make good the losses of those who have suffered in the States by knuckle-dusters of English manufacture.

Vicksburg had been attacked and defended, the armies had shouted and the cannon had roared, citizens had hidden themselves in their little artificial caves, whilst soldiers had manned the now deserted earthworks. The people, whom one met in the street, could many of them remember these things. They could tell, from personal experience, of shells hissing through the air, and half rations disconsolately eaten behind any available shelter. How Grant had changed his base of operations, and landed at a point below the city, where Farragut joined him with a squadron which had run past the batteries of Port Hudson. How there was a fight on the Big Black River, in rear of Vicksburg, and lines of circumvallation drawn to cut off the Confederate supplies. U. S. Grant, true to the accepted meaning of his initials, would only treat of "unconditional surrender." Pemberton's garrison had resisted bravely, but they could not live without food, so, on July 4th, 1863, Vicksburg was surrendered. This too the men in the streets could recollect; for, as history goes, it

* Sönderborg castle escaped the bombardment though it stands nearest to Broagerland, but other buildings in the lower town were hammered quite flat.

was an affair of yesterday. But events had crowded upon each other rapidly in America. The war was over, the Confederacy at an end, and Vicksburg might have been besieged by Lord Cornwallis and not by General Grant so far as appearances went.

The river showed no sign of iron-clads and mortar-boats; merchant steamers, heavily laden, were at the levee; drags and waggons creaked along the streets; one hotel was doing a brisk business, a second was about to be re-opened; the stores were full of goods and full too of customers; house-rent was very high, and mechanics were receiving from four to six dollars a day.

I saw plenty of well-dressed prosperous-looking coloured people, and plenty of black men toiling with a will to earn their livelihood. There were also groups of sable loungers, and these attracted my companion's attention.

"There, sir," cried he, "you see those lazy niggers won't work."

I stepped up to the particular persons indicated, and asked one of them whether he could get anything to do.

"Spects I could," replied Sambo with a grin, "but I've always been workin' since I war that high, and now I'se lookin' round a bit."

"That's so," adds another loungee, "we'se boun to work, only we want to wait till our money's gone."

This was improvident, and would enable an employer to make harder terms with them, but they

seemed so sleek and happy in "looking about," that I reserved a discourse on savings' banks, which rose to my lips, continuing my walk up the street without further remark.

A fiery Southerner, discovering me to be English, avowed his liking for our nation, on the broad ground that we were "not d—d Yankees." He furthermore assured me, by all that is holy, that they (in Mississippi) would have back slavery some day, as it was the only proper system for the South, and he looked forward to "cleaning out all Yankees from that section."

They were not by any means cleaned out when he spoke, since shoals of them were coming South to trade, and Vicksburg contained what my fiery acquaintance disliked even more, namely, a force of coloured troops. Quiet, orderly soldiers, he confessed, if viewed only as soldiers, but terribly deficient in Caucasian hue. I conversed with some of them, and their manner reminded me more of the disciplined politeness of our red-coats, than of the hearty, free and easy slap-you-on-the-back style, cultivated by Jonathan's boys in blue.

"Should you like to be mustered out?" said I to one darkey.

"Wal, sar, I would for one thing. Thar's my mother and two children she's got with her. I don't know where they are; but I'se gwine to find them!"

Another soldier said, smiling, that he'd no one he

cared about, and would like to stay in the service as long as he could.

From the armed blacks, whose presence formed an exception to what I have said about no sign of war being visible at Vicksburg, to a little colony which showed the least pleasant side of emancipation, was not many steps. Descending into one of the grassy hollows behind the city, I found a collection of huts and tents in which coloured people were living. Not freedmen, so much as freedwomen and children, here suffered from destitution. Strong men, or those who had fathers and husbands to protect them, needed no pity, for there was plenty of work to be done at good wages; but the old institution, by denying legal marriage, and changing partners as seemed expedient to increase the stock, had made family ties depend entirely on affection. Then war had broken up families, such as they were, and freedom had removed the former guardianship of owners, such it was.

In one hut I chatted with a white-headed darkey, who was lame and nearly blind.

"How I'se to git through the winter, de Lord only knows," said he, "I'se too sick for work, dat are a fact. But I 'spects a son ob mine to come to me from Carolyn, if he ain't dead." The poor old fellow laughed at some antics performed by a juvenile neighbour, and told me how he could dance himself before he grew so stiff.

In another hut, of somewhat better appearance, was an athletic young soldier, who had been blinded by an explosion of gunpowder. He still wore the Federal uniform, and a green shade was placed over his eyes. Upon enquiring as to a pension, I learned that he had not yet received any.*

"He'se got no one belongs to him, that he can stop with," said a voluble woman of coffee-coloured complexion, "so we'se jist letting him hold on here."

The soldier nodded in confirmation of her statement, and explained that he had been told he might be cured if he went to some men up North, that was very smart about eyes, but he couldn't write, and the folks he was with couldn't write, and they'd no one to git at like to help him.

The voluble woman here broke in with an account of her earning something, by washing I think, and not being able to earn more. Yet she was glad he had come to them, and reckoned they'd git along, if prices rose no higher.

Further down in the hollow, past a cabin where a banjo was being played, and a small farm-house, at which a whole family, from oldest to youngest, was working, I reached the tiniest imaginable tent, as of a gipsy in reduced circumstances. This tent was the abode of a crippled woman, who had been bedridden for several months. Her bed almost

* His case has been brought to the notice of the authorities.

filled the interior, whilst a wood-fire smouldered at the entrance. By the fire sat a very small girl, with eyes that were large beyond all proportion to the dusky face from which they stared.

“Was it her own child?” I asked of the bed-ridden woman.

“No, but she comes round to help me whiles; she’s a good gal, and knows I can’t do much for myself.”

A cheerful invalid, though with the narrowest of quarters, was this sometime cook to Mrs. —, and she had a husband still living in Texas, who would come back before winter was over.

I left the colony of freedom and short commons, wondering how the tax would succeed which is levied upon coloured folk who can work, to sustain coloured folk who cannot. Jonathan is welcome to import English poor-law officials (workhouse porters, &c.), for in so noble a cause we should not grudge them to him.

Back through the busy streets, where are the waggons drawn by oxen, the cotton-bales and news-boys, where things look well for Vicksburg’s prosperity. It is not to be another Palmyra, lying desolate after its capture, but is to go ahead, until its trade shall exceed that of former years.

CHAPTER XXV.

FROM COTTON TO SUGAR.

Sensible Planters — A Parish Election.

As our vessel proceeded southward from Vicksburg, the climate grew deliciously mild. We passengers could sit out all day on the hurricane-deck, enjoying the breeze or looking at the autumnal tints on the larger timber, and the bright green of the undergrowth. Mossy festoons hung from the trees, and grass grew rankly amongst them. There were quiet creeks to be seen, half-filled with huge logs and tangled roots, the refuse of the last flood.

At Natchez we came to a range of bluffs upon the left bank, as lofty as those of Vicksburg, and more precipitous towards the river. On these bluffs the town is built, commanding a fine view westward over miles of level country. Business was active here, so far as I could learn during our short stay, and wages were high. Below this place we passed other bluffs, to the left hand, and presently landed on the right or

Louisiana side of the stream. Fuel was what our captain sought, and fuel he now obtained in plenty. There was an immense quantity of firewood, cut and corded, lying ready for all comers. The owner of the plantation, General York, late of the Confederate army, who had served under Stonewall Jackson and lost an arm at Winchester, came down to parley with us. He spoke of his trip to Washington to obtain a pardon, and added, that when "he came back a freedman, he was glad to find a lot of other freedmen" (his old hands) "upon his property," and he had set them to work at wood-cutting, and gave a dollar a cord wages. The General was closely questioned by some of our party as to what he thought his "hands" would do.

"They'll work," he replied briskly, holding himself bolt upright, and looking, with his empty sleeve, every inch a soldier; "they have worked in chopping this wood, and I am confident of getting a thousand bales next season. I shall make it worth their while to stand by me, and by —— if they do, I'll stand by them." He then explained to us, that he had brought the hands from his other plantations to this—"concentrating his forces," as he called it—and meant to spare no effort to raise one good crop out of the whole estate.

An election for the Louisiana parish—here meaning county—in which we stood, was taking place on this very afternoon, and the ballot-box of the precinct was

close at hand. I perceived behind the piles of fuel, a small wooden house into which several persons leisurely strolled. There were horses tethered amongst pools of muddy water at the door, and a knot of idlers assembled in the creaking verandah, where also was a substantial repast just laid. Accosting one of the idlers, I enquired where they put their tickets, and he politely introduced me to the interior of the cottage. Some beds and a few chairs surrounded a centre table, on which was a tiny box, evidently homemade, with a hole cut in its lid. Near the box lay a heap of printed tickets, with the candidate's name upon them—he was unopposed—and at the table sat a clerk with a book. This was all. The candidate was chatting with the General outside; the free and independent electors, who appeared to number about a dozen, loafed round with frequent oaths; two aged negroes looked on respectfully at the political mystery, and some coloured children made dirt-pies in the background.

There presently came down to the shore a Frenchman who had settled in Louisiana many years ago, and whose resolution to grow cotton was as determined as that of General York. He affected no high-flown generosity towards the black, though admitting that he had been trained to think slavery wrong. "Yes, Sare!" said he, "two hundred bales I vill have next year, if I scratch de ground vid my fingers and my toes! I have promise my men half de crop, if

only dey vill vork; and I have de hope dat dey vill. Dis a fine country; vid half de crop, yes sare, only half de crop, I am paid. But," shrugging his shoulders, "it is not de life here. When I have made money, I shall to Paris."

Before re-embarking, I questioned three young darkeys, apparently from thirteen to sixteen years old, as to the extent of their learning. It would have been ill-bred under most circumstances so to do, but, with stripling freedmen, there was an excuse for curiosity.

"Can any of you read?" I asked.

The three brown faces were puckered into so many grins, and one of the lads replied—"No, we can't; ain't had a chance."

"There's to be a school up here, they say," observed boy No. 2; "and if it comes, reckon I'll learn."

Boy No. 3, who seemed the brightest of the party, looked at me wistfully. "How much is the fare, Mister, from here to New Orleans?" he enquired; adding a moment afterwards, "I'd like to travel all over the United States."

These boys were working for the General at wood-cutting, and could earn from a dollar to a dollar and a half a day. "'Spects he'll do right by us," said the eldest lad, indicating his master by a jerk of the head; "I shall soon be able to chop two cord a day, only I ain't used to it yet."

At this point we were interrupted by some Federal

soldiers, travelling in the steamer, who began to tease my young coloured friends by pelting them with chips. A lively skirmish ensued, in which one of the darkeys was caught, amid peals of laughter, and threatened with a ducking. He succeeded, however, in breaking away, and scampered to a spot whence pantomimic defiance might be safely exhibited. The steamer's bell now rang as a signal of departure, she had taken on board enough fuel to give the deck-hands three hours' occupation, and our captain was anxious to make up for lost time; so, when once started, we made a long stretch; stopped for only a few minutes at the mouth of Red River, and, as no fog endangered our progress, steamed ahead throughout the night.

December 7th.—We passed Port Hudson at so early an hour, that most of us were not much the wiser concerning this well-known stronghold. The Confederate works had occupied the high ground on the eastern bank—completely overlooking the river, and they long withstood every Federal attack from the southward as did Vicksburg from the northward. The two hundred and fifty miles of river between these points were thus kept open to the Confederates for bringing across supplies from their trans-Mississippi department. But Port Hudson, though stubbornly defended, had no better fortune than Vicksburg, and was surrendered to General Banks on July 8th, 1863, only four days after the fall of its sister fortress.

When daylight came, we were moving down a broad sluggish stream, no longer fringed by tangled thickets and wild masses of forest, or encumbered by huge sandbanks, but flowing slowly between sugar plantations, with country seats scattered along either bank, and a continuous village of huts and houses stretching to right and left of us. Snags had disappeared, whilst alligators were so chary of their presence, that the most vivid imagining could not make them a feature of the scene. We might have been sailing through Holland, only that there were no windmills in sight, and the continuous villages of early French settlements, bordering the great river, brought Lower Canada to mind, despite the absence of clear water and picturesque banks. But neither Holland nor Canada could have afforded such a pleasant climate on December 7th. It resembled what we often enjoy in the beginning of May, and I envied the proprietors of certain small sailing-boats, which were gliding up stream before the breeze, or beating down against it.

The Mississippi has a less violent rise and fall at this point than further north. In the rich country below Baton-Rouge, it does not suddenly change its course, wear away fields, snap off stout trees, and throw up sand-banks; but like the fierce and bearded soldier transformed into the portly justice, it here flows forward weighted by the accession of many tributaries, and far too deep to indulge in capricious

gambols. From a variation of forty or fifty feet between high-water in flood time and low water in the dry season, the utmost difference sinks to such small figures as fourteen or fifteen feet; and thus it is that those old-fashioned chateaux have stood uninjured through several generations close to the river side. They are surrounded by gardens and shrubberies, with fine timber on the avenues leading to some of them. Negro quarters and a sugar-mill complete the picture in nearly every case, the "quarters" more comfortable than average Irish cabins, the sugar-mill, a necessity of sugar planting, as sugarcane from its bulk and weight is so costly to transport, that it must be crushed where it is grown. Newly-made plantations do not even have their mills near the river, but placed in the very centre of the crop, to avoid, as far as may be, all carrying of the raw material.

"Fine country, sir!" cries an ex-Confederate, as we watched bend after bend opening out, with plantations dotted along the shore, and sugar-mills within rifle shot of each other—"but you should have seen it four years ago!"

So say many of my fellow-passengers, and they speak regretfully of an *ancien régime* in which sugar hogsheads blocked up the levee so that you could not land without walking over them, in which planters had more money than they knew how to spend, and negroes were given a ball every Saturday even-

ing. Cross-examine these enthusiastic admirers of what was, catch them by a few innocent questions and an affected interest in threadbare arguments. Very ugly gaps may then be detected in the completeness of their sugared Utopia. Accidents did occur, things were done, which the benighted European would call atrocious crimes. There was a pile of hogsheads, worth so much a pound; a planter, so polished in manner, who had travelled in France and Italy; and—an overseer, who “understood how to make the hands work.” Let us remain friends, oh ex-Confederate of many expletives, and talk once more about Lee and the Chickahominy, for you have seen hard fighting in your day, and borne yourself well too, unless your looks belie you; but, as I hold a man to be worth more than a hogshead of sugar in a place the opposite of that to which you make constant reference, it will be hard to convince me that slavery was a blessing. It is a pity that one cannot think aloud without giving offence, for my thoughts might perhaps amuse you. Yet I would not willingly affront a defeated soldier, so we will change the subject without any plain speaking. Put aside slavery as a matter that Englishmen are incapable of understanding, from a fault in their early training, and return to the Potomac, where your cause showed most of the cavalier and least of the nigger-driver.

The sugar crop of 1865, such as it was, had been gathered, and there was nothing to distinguish the

plantations which we passed from wide level fields that had yielded any other harvest. On the levee were occasional piles of firewood, cut from drift-timber, but otherwise there was no sign of industry; and indeed there were few inhabitants to be seen. The houses and mills remained, showing not a trace of hostile occupation. The negro quarters were apparently untouched, though dull and tenantless. It was evident that labour had been disorganized, and that much would have to be done towards the reconstruction of private fortunes.

From the levee the ground sloped back on either side of us, descending gradually to the swamps which bounded our view, and with their luxuriant growth of forest shut in the cultivated district. This was the style of scenery for the last hundred miles of our voyage to New Orleans. Then came a closer array of buildings on the eastern bank, with a cloud of smoke to be seen further down; there was a Federal encampment by the water-side; more houses beyond the encampment; and a bold sweep of the river which brought us to the "Crescent City."

It was a day of national thanksgiving for the return of peace, and a day, moreover, on which the Presidential Message to Congress was printed in the New Orleans papers. Political memories were awakened, with much of political bitterness, but the thanksgiving was hearty from Unionists and Confederates alike, both having had enough of blood-

shed; whilst, although the Message was less favourable to their section than many Southerners had hoped that it would be, yet others considered that it might have been worse.

December 7th passed off quietly in New Orleans. There was service in the city churches, and every Federal regiment was paraded at the early hour devoted by mankind to military parades and chimney-sweeps, that the soldiers might hear President Johnson's Thanksgiving Proclamation.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A RELIC OF JOHN LAW'S BUBBLE SCHEME.

Changeable weather—The man who admired Butler—A nightmare that could not be shaken off.

THE first surprise in New Orleans is, negroes speaking French—Louisiana French, such as is termed irreverently “creole gumbo,” but French still, and good enough to make the pretty coloured girls with bright kerchiefs on their heads who thus speak, more *piquant*es than similar young women with similar kerchiefs who converse upon a Saxon basis. Little dusky boys too, how clever they seem, to have acquired such knowledge at their early age, and I am reminded of Albert Smith's respect for the Boulogne *gamin* founded on this kind of lingual precocity. The second surprise is, no mosquitos! Have these remorseless insects quarrelled with the dealers in mosquito bars and gone away to spoil their enemies' market, or is it true that the first frost proves fatal to them? They have certainly gone, and it is a good

riddance, if I may believe the stories of their blood-thirsty conduct last summer. A third surprise in New Orleans is caused by our familiar friend the weather. There is no climate, only changes of wind. On one day we have heat and dust, crowded thoroughfares, and well-stocked fruit stalls at the corners; everything that might have been anticipated in the sunny South. Then comes a deluge of rain, perfect waterspouts descending into the muddy streets, miniature torrents rushing through the gutters, with umbrellas and waterpoof coats at a premium. After this rainy period, there is a cold biting "norther," the puddles are frozen over, and the natives of all colours look wretchedly benumbed and uncomfortable, whilst strangers from Europe breathe more freely. Yet one can sympathize with the benumbed in their enjoyment of a warm fire on the hearth and sit with them round it declaring that "here is something like winter." So it is at 9 P.M. when "an extra blanket" would be the watchword to unite men of all parties. But about midnight the "norther," which has reminded us that there are snow-covered plains and forests not very far away up stream, gives place to a southerly breeze that brings a whif of the atmosphere of the tropics. No extra blanket, no blazing fire, is to be thought of next morning. We breakfast with open windows, wear our summer clothes, and sit reading in a public garden amongst orange-trees and bananas. There is more rain and more cold weather.

Then Christmas-day, after a promise of being seasonable, turns out as hot as was the 4th of July in New York, with crowds of holiday-makers thronging the pastry-cooks' shops to eat ices, with the church windows open, and ladies fanning themselves during morning service.

That Christmas-day in New Orleans smacked strongly of our English Fifth of November. Crackers were fizzing and banging from sunrise until long after sunset; small cannon were loaded and fired as fast as their happy possessors could perform the operation, with a dozen friends to help at each piece; and rockets went hissing through the air the moment that it became dark enough for them to be seen. Everybody was merry. Some persons carried their merriment to the point of intoxication, and there were many conflicts of a rough-and-tumble nature between citizens thus disguised. It was a noisy feast, celebrated, as in Roman Catholic countries, more with expenditure of gunpowder than with wholesome observance of plum-pudding.

I have introduced you thus far to the city without describing its appearance. Our heroine has spoken, as modern heroines will, before the reader is informed whether she be short or tall. Now La Nouvelle Orléans is somewhat majestic, "a tall place" in the American sense, though flat as a pancake with regard to the level of its foundations. People cannot even be buried in the damp oozing

soil, but lie in vaults of solid masonry raised above the surface. Every house has a large cistern to preserve rain-water, for wells yield a dingy tincture of Louisiana, and the Mississippi has brought down so many deposits from north-western banks as to be no pleasant beverage. There are two principal districts in New Orleans; the American quarter, west of Canal Street, the French quarter on its eastern side. A head centre* of business and pleasure is this same Canal Street. Running back inland from the river, it has a system of horse-railroads midway in the broad thoroughfare with plenty of room on either hand for carts and carriages, and with pavements that afford a pleasant promenade on fine afternoons in winter. There must be more than enough sunshine in summer time, where the opposite houses are so far off, and the best thing is to travel northward until the next cool season.

Everything of interest and importance about New Orleans lies within range of Canal Street. It is but a step to Lafayette Square in the American quarter, or to Jackson Square in the French quarter, to the St. Charles Hotel and the Opera House, and to the Museum of Living Curiosities. You can take a horse-car, as I did, and journey to the battle-ground of 1815; but before you start, observe a statue of Henry Clay, which faces down street towards the river. Read the inscription on the pedestal of that

* Patrick, I thank thee for the word.

statue and smile, if you choose, at what our boys would call a "sell."

When secession and civil war were regarded as barely possible contingencies, it was arranged to do honour to the memory of Henry Clay, the eloquent Southern statesman. His statue was placed in Canal Street, over which it gazed quiet and unchanging as statues will, so that any meaning might be given to its presence there. No inscription, however, appeared upon the pedestal, for men were now too much busied in politics to think of the dead politician, and it was not until after New Orleans had been entered by Federal troops that Henry Clay was made to address the passers-by, in words which were his own when he lived, but which had not been intended for the pedestal by those who erected it:—

If I could be instrumental in eradicating this deep stain, slavery, from the character of our country, I would not exchange the proud satisfaction which I should enjoy, for the honour of all the triumphs ever decreed to the most successful conqueror.

You have smiled, as I gave you leave to do, or perhaps gone off into a discussion upon that second generation of statesmen which succeeded the Fathers of the Republic, and helped forward the work of national progress begun by them. Of all Henry Clay's famous speeches, none has struck me as being more telling and dramatic in the circumstances which attended its delivery than that in which he welcomed Lafayette, when the old warrior revisited America in 1824. Clay then spoke of the changes in his country

since their illustrious guest was last among them, and of its giant strides towards civilization and empire. But the orator would have been astonished to see his statue thus inscribed, standing upon the principal thoroughfare of New Orleans. There was a greater change yet to come, when Clay welcomed Lafayette, than any which had then been accomplished.

Welcomed Lafayette, did I say? 'Tis well! We speak of a Frenchman—*parlez du soleil*, you know—and here is the most unmistakable son of France, riding with me in the horse-car to Jackson's battleground. A horse-car the vehicle was not, because it was drawn by a mule; but let that pass, as also my speculations concerning an ingenious little machine that guards the honesty of the driver, by not trusting passengers' money to his hands, and makes him in consequence careless whether they pay or no. Monsieur is at my side claiming attention. He perceives me to be English, strange bond of sympathy between us. "*Grâce à Dieu*, I am not an American!"

“Can Monsieur speak the language?”

He regrets that he is unable to do so. Although some years resident in Louisiana, he arrived too late in life for learning.

“What does he think of local politics?”

He does not trouble himself. “Ce Butler is the only great man possessed by the North. There truly was administrative vigour. I respect, though I detest

that general," cries Monsieur, with enthusiasm. "He alone understood the régime of order, and put a mal-content to death."

We talked of emancipation, and the Frenchman told me how it had been his ruin."

"Behold me in Martinique," said he; "young and wealthy! I invest part of my fortune in a British colony, and your Parliament liberates the blacks! Then there is an interval of tranquillity in Martinique until Louis Philippe's overthrow, when the Republic at home gives our blacks their freedom! Impoverished and sad, I retire to Louisiana, and am again happy during many years. But, *Grand Dieu!* emancipation follows me always; and, for a third time, I suffer."

On being questioned as to his future movements, the victim to liberty declared an intention of ending his days at Havana. Slaves were necessary to him; though, taught by experience, he should not seek to own many of them, even under Spanish rule.

The battle-ground of fifty years ago has been made to seem a landmark of very ancient history by all that has lately happened. I was interested, nevertheless, in seeing how strong a position the American army then occupied, and what natural difficulties hampered the English advance. There was the river on their left and an impassable swamp on their right, with just one plantation's width of open country in front, and here stretched a rampart of cotton-bales

with Andrew Jackson's volunteers behind it. I could fancy what hurrying and shouting there must have been along the river-bank, how it was more like a siege than a battle, with terrified women expecting every moment to behold the red-coats in their streets, and men a little terrified too, but more afraid of that stern officer in command than of the enemy outside. A sorrowful thought would come, as I looked over the spot where our people had stood, of those brave lads who fell whilst striving to reach the cotton-bale breastwork, and, though it was half a century ago, there is still bitterness in remembering that a treaty of peace had already been signed when so much blood was shed.

From Andrew I., by abrupt transition, to Andrew II. They would have made their mark both of them on their times had they practised kingcraft, and been known only by Christian names. The American Andrews have played conspicuous parts, though one is less happy than the other, inasmuch as his career remains yet to be finished. And I am his contemporary, which is something, though not so much to boast of, as it is a common advantage now-a-days.

A brisk walk along the levee, with the air just cold enough to make exercise agreeable, brought me back to town more pleasantly than could the horse-car which I patronized on going down. My return route afforded a view of river and shipping instead of blank walls and garden railings. There was a large

barrack near the shore, with coloured soldiers lounging about it, who wore new uniforms with brass epaulets. Then I came to straggling shops and houses, vessels moored to the levee, and appliances of sea-faring life lying ready for Quilp to purchase them second-hand. The city gradually developed its crescent form as the river trended away westward. Church steeples in the American quarter, that had seemed to belong to the opposite suburb of Algiers, were now clearly on the same side as the Cathedral of St. Louis in Jackson Square. There were more vessels and more houses, the levee covered with merchandize, the streets crowded and noisy. Here was the French market with a babel of tongues and amusing mixture of races—Gallic and Saxon, white, black, and brown. A group of native Indians selling their basket work on one side, Germans or Spaniards bargaining loudly on the other. I' faith, those who would buy have need to bargain, for meat and butter are very dear, whilst fruit costs about twice as much as in England—tolerable eating apples five cents a-piece, oranges ten cents, and so on. If you reach New Orleans in December do not buy sugar-cane for a suck. Its young sprouts may be delicious, but the mature plant resembles deal shavings sweetened with treacle. An orange, even at ten cents, will prove a better investment than a ten cent cane.

The French market is close to Jackson Square, in

which is a handsome equestrian statue of the General, having on its pedestal this inscription :—

The Union must and shall be preserved.

Thus Jackson had thought, and thus it had been intended to point the moral of his greatness; secession intervened, but, when Butler came, he ordered that the original idea should be carried out.

You may not care to spend much time in examining the plants or flowers which surround that stern old Unionist on his prancing steed, for the plants are clipped into formal regularity, and the flowers are few in winter time. But you must admit that those children with bareheaded nurses are fashionably dressed, and that the whole scene reminds you of the gardens of the Tuileries. The military element wanting? Not altogether: for here are some rough boys in blue on their way from Texas to be mustered out. They examine yonder statue carefully and stroll away, satisfied that "the old hoss ain't secesh."

Shall we enter that quaint court-house beside the Cathedral and listen to a few police cases, tried now in English, now in French, before a recorder without a wig? His remedy for drunkenness appears to be stereotyped in the sentence, "Five dollars or ten days." Of course there is a British sailor waiting to pay for his shipmate, "who didn't mean no harm when he took a drop last night," and a workman from Green Erin prepared to swear that "Mike hit nobody

at all until they began to *bate* him." You have seen enough? Then we will return to the levee and pass among a regiment of cotton-bales placed on end, and columns of sugar hogsheads ready for removal to the line of river steamers which here succeed the sea-going vessels. It is a long line, gleaming with white paint and surmounted by countless double smoke-stacks. There are planks put out to the shore, deck-hands and cotton-rollers, loud-voiced superintendents shouting and swearing, and men with little flags to mark the different ownership of goods. "Roll these to the red flag!" cries one; "Take them to the red and yellow!" says another; "Put a blue flag over those!" exclaims a third voice, whilst "Hurry up there, all of you!" is the constant utterance of many throats. If blacks will not work for wages, and work hard too, then are we gazing on sable phantoms of prodigious strength. Bales and barrels roll before them, sacks are lifted, mules are driven, the phantoms do as much as could be expected of ordinary flesh and blood.

An incident on the levee, which I observed somewhat later than my visit to the battle-ground, shall here find place. There was a darkey leaving one of the steamers, and as he stepped ashore he brushed slightly against a white passer-by. Whitechap hit Sambo in the face, whereupon Sambo paused for a moment to consider his position, remembered that he was free, and followed the aggressor with a broad grin.

“What do you want, you d——d nigger?” enquired Whitechap, on perceiving that he should have to say something.

“What do I want? d—— you!” responded Sambo. “Jist hit me agin, that’s all. Why, I’d whip two of you.”

They faced each other during several minutes, and Sambo endured a torrent of oaths unmoved. “Hit me agin! that’s all!” said he. But his opponent, not having a taste for rough-and-tumble played at by two, though willing to perform a solo on the human countenance, slowly evaporated amid the jeers of the spectators.

“Yes, sir,” remarked an elderly gentleman, who was present, “there has come a sad change in society here; the nigger couldn’t have spoken like that formerly without being shot down. If he’d done it to me now I’d have taken a stick or something and tried to break his skull.”

There is a metropolitan bustle and variety in the Crescent City. It has something of what makes New York so full of interest to strangers. Not only are manufactured goods, rowdies, and newspapers, circulated from this point over the surrounding country, but foreign flags are seen among the shipping and foreign seamen in the streets. There are consulates of all nations, and vessels about to sail for widely distant ports. Then New Orleans has its full share of public amusements. The opera and museum have

been already mentioned, with Italian singers in the first, and a man whose beard measures five feet long in the second. Theatres and lecture halls, the stage on which Charles Kean is appearing as Hamlet, and the building wherein Artemus Ward tells his audience about Mormonism. It is a lively season, after years of depression, and the very shoeblacks about the door of the great white-fronted hotel have more work on hand than they can well get through. These shoeblacks are provided each with his chair for the accommodation of customers. Might not our brigade adopt the chair system with advantage? It would be a relief to sit down and have your boots "shined," instead of standing on one leg just when you are most tired and dusty.

To understand on how narrow a strip of ground between lake and river New Orleans is built, and how much of that ground is still unreclaimed swamp, a trip should be made on the Pontchartrain Railway. Its city terminus has not been arranged with any thought of exclusiveness, and people can walk on the rails or off them as they please. But what does that matter? What though waggons can be driven unceremoniously between the goods department and the passenger platform? Well-regulated minds will not so drive when they hear the engine-bell.

I found a small crowd waiting for the train. There were children and coloured nurses, with white folks who might be the parents of the children and black

folks who might be the cousins of the nurses. There was also an array of baggage suitable to the direct route for Mobile. The train presently arrived—I believe that they had but one train and one engine on the line—and, when up-passengers had alighted, those took their places who were bound for Pontchartrain. A shorter or more humble railroad you cannot imagine. No mysterious branches and extensions; everything visible to the public, from the goods shed and tiny wooden station-house at one end, to the station and goods shed at the other.

We left behind a dreary building, with “States Hotel” very large upon its front and “Confederate” just scraped out, and rattled away along a single track, without side-fence, gates, or cuttings, over a perfectly level country with water oozing to the surface. Now we stopped at the edge of the swamp to set down passengers for Gentilly, and then continued our journey over fathomless mud, upon a light embankment supported by fagots. Here was such a swamp as could only be explored in boats. The woodcutters who brought fuel to the side of the track paddled themselves about in shallow punts or canoes formed of a hollow log. They had little winding canals leading from the places where the wood was stacked, to those spots at which trees of some size still flourished. It was strange to leave the great city at one moment and in the next, before a man might eat a Banbury cake with moderate haste,

to be surrounded by scenery such as we associate with the Everglades of Florida.

Our train reached a small village, consisting apparently of three public-houses on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain, and advanced slowly along a wooden pier which led to the station-house and to the steamer for Mobile. There was a wide expanse of water before us, the largest that I had seen since leaving Chicago, and the breeze came over it fresh and invigorating. At the pier-head lay a fine steamer, like those on the northern lakes, with an upper deck of top-heavy appearance, but a sea-worthy hull, notwithstanding. She was to sail for Mobile that afternoon, and I could either make this voyage, as most of the railway passengers were about to do, or return to town with the train. A ticket had been handed to me, available for that purpose, which appeared not to cost anything extra, and I had the privilege of choosing my car out of four vehicles more or less in want of paint. Sambo could only choose from two, as his colour limited him to the first and last of the procession. How one ought to soap to be worthy of such honour on account of whiteness, and what a shame it was that the three or four ragged loafers who shared with me my dignity of dominant race, had so neglected their persons! Sambo looked twice as good company where he sat in his best attire, sleek and smiling, at the window of the coloured car. I went and spoke to him, finding my brother domi-

nants unconvertible. He answered readily, was intelligent and polite.

Did he enjoy being free?

“Never been anything else, sar. I war free, and mother too. I’s always worked for wages.”

“Then you gained nothing by this emancipation?”

“Wal, sar, see here. We feel safer like now that slavery’s over; and many of our friends has got their freedom.”

Long before 1863 there were thousands of free coloured persons in Louisiana, especially among the French-speaking population and in the City of New Orleans. They were oppressed by the law and despised by society, much as were the Jews in the Middle Ages. But many of them owned property to a large amount, and some obtained a good education, by spending their youth abroad. These free coloured people, with more white than black blood in their veins, afford perhaps no sample of what may be hoped from liberated Africans, but theirs is a natural position of leadership amongst the mass of those whose disqualifications they are compelled to share. Doctor Roudanez, who studied in Paris, where he was the college companion of Dumas, *fils*, might pass, anywhere out of America, as an accomplished gentleman.* I enjoyed his conversation,

* We can scarcely follow our cousin Jonathan through the intricacies of his colour prejudice, nor can most of us agree with him that all white men, however brutal, must be superior to all coloured men, however refined.

and was glad to have made his acquaintance. Yet he is ranked among persons of colour. He would not be admitted to places where the last swindler escaped from Europe might enter without difficulty, and his cause is that of the humblest negro, so far as social prejudice goes, though he can feel social injustice more bitterly.

It is, perhaps, well that a class of educated men, like Doctor Roudanez, whose name I have taken the liberty to mention, should be bound to the interests of the common people, for these last, having been kept by law without book-learning and then suddenly set free, need some one to plead their cause or make known their complaints. Everybody rushes into print now-a-days, so that those who cannot shed ink in their quarrel stand but little chance. It is not enough to have it shed at a distance; the printing must take place close at hand. Doctor Roudanez thus thinks, and as proprietor of the 'New Orleans Tribune,' a daily journal published in English and French, he sustains the freedmen's cause. It is one vessel engaging a whole squadron, for the Crescent City has plenty of newspapers, which, in different degrees, according to their view of politics, prescribe the limits that should be set to negro freedom. The 'Tribune' boldly replies by claiming a right to vote and equality before the law. I wonder whether New Orleans would tolerate free discussion and let the office of that saucy 'Tribune' stand,

should General Sheridan's head quarters be withdrawn from Lafayette Square and no more sentries pace up and down under the star-spangled bunting. Military rule, as a rule, is a bad thing, but it is better than government by mobs or a bloody conflict of races. Since you have tried this new system, Uncle Sam, hold on a bit and carry it through. •

The Yankees say that New Orleans has been a cleaner and quieter place since they took possession. However that may be, I can bear witness that the city was quiet enough on a certain frosty night soon after Christmas. There were policemen beating their rounds by giving three loud raps on the curb-stone, as each round was completed, and a few foot-passengers, of harmless appearance might be seen. As to the hack-carriages, they stood waiting; it is their view of business to stand expectant rather than come down in price, and the wonder is how it can answer anybody's purpose to keep a carriage on show, yet there the vehicles are, waiting by night as they do by day. You may converse with a dozen well-to-do residents in the city and not find one who has been inside a hack-carriage for the last month. The gentleman who drove out every afternoon during his stay was reported to be Rothschild's agent, so wild did such an expenditure seem.

In the opera-house, where it is not so frosty as in the street, though colder than could be wished, is a German company performing to a German audience.

It is not one of the Italian nights, when diamonds sparkle in the dress circle, and an array of Southern beauty is gathered together to grace the entertainment; but it is a time of artistic and critical enjoyment to a crowd of fair-haired Teutons. The building has no great pretensions, though large enough to do justice to actors and singers. Need I add that order is preserved? If any one felt inclined to make a disturbance, there would be deterring cause in that guard of Federal soldiers, sitting stiffly upright with their rifles between their knees.

Across Canal Street to the American quarter, past the St. Charles Hotel with its lofty portico—it is only an hotel, but grand enough to be a palace or a parliament house—and we have reached the Academy of Music. Here is a varied performance going on in a much smaller building than is the Opera House. As we enter, peal after peal of laughter shakes the walls; the Federal guard so far relax as to laugh heartily along with ex-Confederates; the gallery, full of coloured people, is positively convulsed. Real and ideal have met. The delineator upon the stage tickles his originals who are gazing down upon him. The banjo, the tambourine, double-shuffle, and broken speech—all these things tickle Sambo in verity beyond belief, whilst Sambo in outward seeming is encouraged to cut wilder capers and to utter a more unintelligible jargon. Yon military guard should preserve a dignified calm. But they do nothing of

the sort, and, if their necks were not free to swell convulsively, half of them would be suffocated.

From John Law's planting of his Mississippi colony and naming of a city after the profligate Regent Orleans, to Admiral Farragut's appearance with a Federal fleet at the river's mouth, is a considerable stretch, and reaches over a great deal of history—the French administration of Louisiana, the period of Spanish sovereignty, the territorial concession by First Consul Bonaparte to President Thomas Jefferson, and the forming of a Southern Confederacy under President Jefferson Davis. Farragut appeared in the river's mouth, like an ugly nightmare to Confederate New Orleans, but, unlike a nightmare, there was no awaking from him. He bombarded the forts seventy miles below the city, and steamed ahead until his vessels could bring their guns to bear upon the foot of Canal Street. Against such a man what could be done? Further resistance meant simply being blown to atoms. New Orleans was conquered. Out went General Lovell with his garrison, and in came General Butler with his. It is not true that he caused the first brass band which landed to play "Picayune Butler is coming to Town," for, though ordered to perform it, they had not with them the score of that popular "secesh" ditty. But it is true that he straightway proceeded to the St. Charles Hotel, forbade all thought of shutting up, and made himself quite at home there.

General Butler quitting New Orleans after about six months tenure of power, General Banks succeeded him. People were glad of a change, and the new commander, with the negative advantage of not being Butler, set about the inauguration of free labour and loyal State government in Louisiana. He simply revived the old constitution of the State, omitting all guarantees to slavery. Those who were in open rebellion, or who would not take the oath of allegiance, had nothing to do with General Banks' Louisiana. Elections were to be held, though only one man in ten might prove able to vote, and negro suffrage was to be left entirely to the State Legislature. At a time when Confederate armies still fought on the Tennessee and Potomac, reconstruction was a bold experiment; so was education for coloured children, which General Banks did not hesitate to ordain. Now, when the war is over, and every Southern State has been partially reconstructed, the Louisiana constitution is thought cumbersome. It does not keep pace with what has been done elsewhere.

But here is the coloured school, open in broad daylight, protected from attack and doing wonders amongst troops of juvenile darkeys. No more hunting of teachers, as when Mrs. Brice went round at night in New Orleans giving lessons by stealth. All is smooth and legal, up to the point where white children begin. Here is a school, did I say? Nay!

here are many, with scholars of every shade, from the fair-haired girl, whose tinge of African blood can only be detected by connoisseurs, to the boy at her side, as black as a chimney-sweep. They were prohibited from learning, all of them alike, on account of colour, and the elder ones are backward for their age. But in this room, where I stop to hear the arithmetic class examined, there is one little boy of calculating talent, who does long sums at an astonishing pace. When we come to geography, there are more who can distinguish themselves. They point to the outline map of America, showing States in creditable style. They answer questions from their geography-book very glibly. It only needs time and these children will be equal to average young people anywhere, so far as their studies extend. I had come late for seeing the slave-auction, and the whipping-houses were closed; but it was interesting, though less sensational, to visit so great a novelty as a coloured school. There is magic in learning to read; a whole chapter of the children's future destiny in every letter of the alphabet. Deny Sambo what you will, and let him read, he can then enjoy pleasures which no social prejudice can take away. Poet and novelist, whether they wish it or no, will be levellers and speak as amusingly to him as they do to you or me.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MINE HOSTELRY.

Miss Malcolm's guitar in skilful hands — A prospective fusilade.

I FOUND it by the merest accident, in the French quarter, near Jackson Square. There was a plain doorway, between two gaily-stocked shop-fronts, and a lantern covered with cobwebs which indicated that an hotel stood within the doorway. A stone-floored passage led to a quiet courtyard having galleries running round it, and to a staircase that nobody seemed to have used since very long ago. But there came a sound of scrubbing and voices from the higher gallery which encouraged me to proceed. A merry-looking black man proved, on further investigation, to be the scrubber, whilst another man, with the slightest possible tinge of colour, whose head might have served as a study for some Scripture painting, stood in an adjoining room, busy with paste and paper-hanging. They were getting the hotel into order, the second of them being its new landlord, and

the black officiating as almost everything in such an establishment which a landlord is not. He scrubbed and dusted, was porter, waiter, and messenger. Yet I would not imply that he had a single-handed place, for, besides the landlord's son, who helped in all that was done with right good will, there was Charles, our regular waiter—Charles so nearly white, that anywhere out of America, he would not have been questioned as to his pedigree; with brisk, neat-fingered ways, and a cough which made us fear for his lungs. You will perceive that I have skipped over preliminaries, settling myself snugly in a front room of mine hostelry. Nor am I its only guest, for the "we" just used does not signify a royal or an editorial rank, but implies the presence of other bill-paying mortals. Take notice, reader, that throughout this work, I have scorned to shelter myself behind a plural pronoun, when facts would not warrant the so doing. "We," always means a collection of passengers or other persons, as your ingenuity may determine, and Balbus is a real Balbus,—not a phantom introduced to give weight to *ego*. You object to excuses, then *we* will drop the subject—ha! my friend, I have thee there, to question that last "we" is to deny thyself entity.

There was rivalry among the guests at first, as to which of them was the oldest inhabitant. Each new comer was eyed with interest, as an important step towards making ours like other hotels; nay, we

felt quite proud if he or she brought plenty of baggage. The landlord worked hard to drive the hobgoblins and cobwebs as fast as possible out of his rooms. With whitewash and bright papering they were conquered back to civilized life. What a treat it was to that man of anxious, careworn smiles, and picturesque head, when he had acquired another duchy, as it were, by his own right hand, from the rule of infidel dust and paynim spider. He would take some of us to see the room, and show, with pride, how much had been done. Wages were so high, especially for skilled artisans, that our landlord—he was not sleek enough to be called “mine host”—could only afford to have in a carpenter and glazier for a few hours. But this gave him the satisfaction of feeling that he saved ten dollars a day, at least, by his own and his son’s exertions. How many more dollars were saved by the merry black man, it would have required Professor Hutchins to calculate.

And fresh arrivals took possession of every corner of the ——— Hotel. New Orleans was so full as Christmas time approached, that our landlord was obliged to turn away many travellers, from not having anywhere to stow them. The bell which had hung idly in the quiet court-yard, now tolled forth its summons to meals. The once deserted galleries echoed to constant footsteps, and the stairs were rushed over by children at play. An additional waiter helped

Charles in the dining-room ; which apartment began to be crowded, so that more chairs were called for and more tables promised to be the next demand. Our evenings in the parlour, from having been as select as paucity of guests could make them, came to be hampered by unknown lookers-on, and it was an embarrassing question whether these last should be made at home, or whether the whole company should become strictly formal.

We had music in the parlour almost every evening, for the son and daughter of our landlord would play and sing to us with no little skill. Then, too, there was Señor Narvez with his guitar. His guitar it was not, so far as proprietorship went, but, by adoption and use, the guitar undoubtedly belonged to Diego Narvez. Without that instrument he would have been simply a Mexican gentleman of small stature and polished manners ; with it, he was an artist, a composer, a troubadour. His dark, weather-beaten face, which bore a look of sadness at most times, lighted up as he sang ; his voice grew loud and confident to imprecate destruction upon "*los tiranos*," or melted into rich, soft, accents whilst chanting the praise of some lovely *señorita*. Diego Narvez had come among the first of us, and had waited on, day after day, for letters which were to direct his course towards the Mexican frontier. He readily warmed at a display of sympathy in his lonely position, and told us how it came that he was thus

cautiously returning to his native land. An adventurous life was that of which we heard. Civil war against reactionists, with alternate success and defeat, with escapes to the mountains and summary disposal of prisoners. Then came a tranquil period, after our friend abandoned a soldier's career to enjoy the society of his family, when, as he expressed it, the days were bright with music and dancing and singing. But "Monsieur Napoléon's Zouaves" now appeared upon the scene, and Narvez re-buckled his sword to meet these new enemies. He served during the siege of Puebla, where he was taken prisoner severely wounded. It was at that time a regular war between France and Mexico, not a guerilla contest such as afterwards disturbed the repose of Maximilian I.; so, instead of being tried by drum-head court-martial, our friend along with a number of other prisoners was conveyed to France, and spent a year at the city of Tours. Frenchmen were not hostile to Mexicans. They pitied those who had suffered in defence of liberty. Yet French troops were imposing a detested ruler on Mexico, and Narvez was glad to be dismissed one fine day from the custody of "Monsieur Napoléon." He left without condition or promise of any sort, refusing to recognize the new order of things at home, and receiving the assurance that he had better not be caught again upon Mexican soil. Here followed Diego's wanderings in the character of an exile, his

journey through Spain, and his long illness in Cuba, where fortune seemed utterly to have deserted him, and where he was reduced to his last *peso*. A friendly Yankee took him to the United States on board an American sloop of war. He was furnished with means by the Juarist minister at Washington, and when we made his acquaintance had got thus far on his way to the Texan frontier.

Thanks be to you, worthy Miss Malcolm, for lending the Señor your guitar. It promoted general sociability more than anything else could have done. All the guests did not understand what Narvez said, but all could enjoy what he sang, and we were able, with moderate attention to the words, to avoid looking fierce at love passages, or simpering inanely when called upon to exterminate Miramon. Our Mexican had been knocking about for two years amongst utter strangers, which made him keenly appreciate the smallest sign of friendship. There was something inexpressibly winning in his way of telling us all his plans, and showing us the articles that he most valued. The major's commission under Juarez, the pocket-atlas, not to be equalled for clearness or portability, the well-worn uniform that he should wear when he entered Mexico, and the photographic album fitted with portraits of his friends. Hear it, Claudet, for whom the sun shines as he will not shine for others! Take courage, Finlayson, cheap and trustworthy! A modern knight-errant requires *cartes-*

de-visite in addition to the cloak and sword which contented his forefathers.

Señor Narvez showed us this album gleefully. Now were we to behold those friends whom he had loved when he was happy, before he lost all for "*la libertad*." But as the leaves were turned over, and one moustachioed face succeeded another, Diego's countenance darkened, and his words were hissed out with angry vehemence. This one had been murdered by Reactionists. That picture represented a traitor high in favour with Maximilian. Here was a brother who had fallen in battle; there a brother fusiladed.

His father?

Fusiladed.

And this his uncle, what a fine man! Is he still alive?

"No, Señor, alas! he was taken and shot."

So had it fared with many more. We were moved at the recital. Judge then of his feelings, and of how he regarded traitors.

Then the album was put aside with a sigh, and the bronzed cheek flushed hotly as Diego declared that Mexican independence should "never, never be abandoned. They may fusilade me too. I care not. I have nothing to lose. But our cause cannot die."

"Why do you go back, Señor, if you are sure you'll be shot?" says one of a practical turn.

"Ah, Señora, I cannot help going. My sentiments of honour forbid me to stay away. But pardon this

emotion;” continues Narvez, “I had promised to sing to-night, and you must tell me which song you will choose.”

They have asked him for a favourite Indian piece, and he touches the guitar lightly, almost merrily. It would not be well-bred to let us dwell upon the thought of that prospective fusilade, in which he is to figure with an open grave at his feet and a handkerchief bound across his eyes.

Miss Malcolm lent her guitar, and has already been thanked for so doing. You will, of course, suppose a young lady possessed of such an instrument romantic and golden-haired, with a freshly-picked rose as her only ornament, and millinery to suit. Not a bit of it! She has nursed in military hospitals, and taught coloured soldiers to read, and her story is scarcely less connected with political events than is that of Diego Narvez. Now she looks forward to the superintendence of a school for coloured children, to be opened amongst unfriendly neighbours, who will snub her in every possible way as an emissary of the faction they abhor. There is risk of personal violence, and, though this risk may not be very great, it makes the certainty of loneliness still more depressing. Yet she is cheerful and resolute. I cannot help comparing her in my own mind to Diego Narvez, for each is an enthusiast in a difficult cause, though you would smile at the thought of comparison if you saw them together. She, tall and serious; he,

the shorter of the two, with a lively manner, and what was once known as "Frenchified ways;" her notions of religion formed amongst Puritans, his those of a doubting Romanist, driven from Rome by dislike of the Mexican priesthood. Narvez would look with wonder at Miss Malcolm, as a *señorita* who was sociable without badinage, and warmly kind without coquetry. She evidently regarded him as a strange being, small and bright, whose ways were worth observing, whilst his misfortunes claimed polite regard.

Other guests, with interesting stories to tell, were waited on by Charles, or exercised the lingual talents of Corinne. There was a German ex-Confederate, drafted into the service before he knew what his new countrymen were fighting about. He was still at a loss to reconcile the subjective and objective phases of the rebellion, and had not seen enough of Sharp's Patent to lessen his profound admiration for the *Zündnadel Gewehr*. Then we had a sometime overseer, remembered by Miss Malcolm as dealing cruelly with the hands on a plantation which she had visited. This overseer resembled in one particular a coloured gentleman immortalized by Shakespeare—his occupation was gone. Nor did we see much of him, for he sat alone at the dining-room fire, staring into the red caverns and yellow flames, as though curious recollections shaped themselves before his eyes. It was a relief when he ceased to be associated with our

daily life, and we fancied him setting sail for Cuba to resume the old trade.

I will say little of the remainder of our party—of the circle, I mean, which was first formed at mine hostelry—and nothing individually of those outsiders who arrived at Christmas time. A picture must have its principal figures, as two or three persons of quality, or a Roman soldier with his head on the Briton's lap, to occupy the foreground; while pages respectfully attend the quality, and other legionaries walk away from their distracted friend. You and I, dear reader, should be quite content to appear as a page or a departing comrade. If it were a battle piece we might even rest satisfied with being handed down to posterity in a frightfully disagreeable position amongst horses' feet, and leave the sword-play above us to be done by our betters—artistic betters—with more beard or fiercer eyebrows.

Corinne is of African descent. She has no pretence to an admixture of Caucasian blood, and no beauty, if measured by a Caucasian standard; yet her woolly locks look neat and crisp when she has on her best attire, and her face wears a smile of perpetual good humour. Strong is she beyond the strength of average chambermaids, though seemingly too small for lifting heavy burdens. "Dat ain't no account," says Corinne, when shown some box which in its owner's opinion she cannot move, and she drags the object aside with a sniff of conscious power. But her

chief accomplishment is modern languages, to wit, English and French. I said that the guests exercised this talent, and so they did, for, albeit most of them spoke English, there were still enough who relied upon the tongue of Mossoo to render an interpreter useful, besides which there were sundry people calling with things to sell and others who wanted to know if this wasn't where Mr. So and So lived. For these Corinne's French was invaluable. She was often summoned to attend, and it appeared that such notice, far from puffing her up with pride of learning, left her the same humble creature as before, with not a smirk of dignity on those jolly, shining, features.

One day there was an arrival which deserves especial notice. There appeared upon the scene a well-dressed man of middle age, of portly and sedate appearance. He was a Mexican, and, after cautious advances on either side, from the suspicion that each was meeting a traitor, Diego Narvez recognized him with delight to be General Aquilla, a zealous Liberal. How they talked of old times, and how enthusiastic they were for the cause! But Aquilla dwelt rather on the bright side of things. He going to be fusiladed? Not at all! The tide would soon turn, Napoleon would retire from Mexico, and Maximilian would seek change of air in Europe. The General was confident of success, as generals should always seem, and if he had doubts in his own mind, they were carefully kept out of sight. Was not recruiting

for the Republic carried on vigorously in Texas? Did they not obtain arms and money from New York? Americans were with them in feeling, and five hundred leagues of frontier was open for the importation of supplies. President Juarez would have thirty thousand regular troops under his command by the first of March, and be able to threaten St. Louis Potosi, and perhaps Mexico itself. Even whilst we spoke the President was again in Chihuahua, so we must not pity our friends over much or think that they were about to be uselessly slaughtered.

Narvez brightened up as he listened to the solid, comfortable, reasonings of Aquilla, yet I fancy that it was more on account of having the society of a countryman with whom he could discuss familiar subjects, than because he believed in easy victory, or in victory of any kind save after wearisome delay. He believed though in the General as his superior officer, showing a deference to him which amused the Americans of our party. "Why," said they, "we haven't got that notion of discipline. Once out of the camp with us and all respect for rank is over."

There were snapdragons in mine hostelry at Christmas time, for which I was responsible, to the extent of several burns produced on fingers by playing the game too earnestly and a confusion in the minds of our Mexican friends as to how far the observance was held sacred amongst us. Narvez thrust his hand

into the dish with conscientious vigour, but Aquilla, smiling at such unnecessary rashness, picked up a few raisins which had been knocked out on the table. He was a tactician, who understood the advantage of attacking your enemy outside his stronghold. We had dancing in the parlour and roast turkey in the dining-room. Everything was seasonable but the weather, which happened to be in one of its warm moods. Yet, despite this single drawback, it was as merry a Christmas within doors as it was noisy and pyrotechnic on the public thoroughfares.

When, at last, Aquilla and Narvez were ready to take their departure, when the letter that they expected had come to hand and a goodly collection of fire-arms had been packed for conveyance to Mexico, we realized how hazardous was the enterprise on which those two men were bound. To fight against highly-trained Europeans, at the head of a small, ill-provided force, knowing that there is a decree for your execution within twenty-four hours after capture—this is not a tempting prospect. Yet our friends were cheerful and determined. All that they cared for in this world was in Mexico. It was their country, and it should be freed from foreign rule. So they went on a bright breezy morning by the Galveston steamer. General Aquilla had taken formal leave of all our party the night before, expressing a hope that he might see us some day in his native town; whilst Narvez had sung the Mexican hymn, and returned

the guitar to Miss Malcolm with a thousand thanks. He followed me into the passage when we retired to rest and gently held my arm. It was a small favour, such as he did not feel ashamed to ask. Would I carry a message to his widowed mother? "You are going, Señor, to Mexico, and there is the address," said he; "call and tell her that I am with the Republican army. She will care to know no more." He released his hold of my arm and hurried away without further speech. But in the morning there appeared a little note slipped beneath my door, that was signed "Diego Narvez," and contained just three lines of farewell. They were going on board too early for him to see me again, therefore he wrote his adieu, and I hope, without breach of neutrality, that Narvez may pass safely through the war.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

BENEFICENT BUREAUCRATS.

Free labour tried as an experiment—Taking tea with a man
in possession.

WHAT the Sanitary Commission was to Northern armies in the field, the Freedmen's Bureau is to Northern ideas in the reconstructed States. But the Commission was an effort of private charity, quite distinct from the Government, though warmly devoted to its support, whilst the Bureau, as a public institution, is sustained by the full weight of Federal authority.

There was dire confusion, at the outset of the civil war, with regard to rights of ownership over coloured people. No definite plan as to how such folks should be treated had been announced from Washington. Some generals set free the slaves who fell into their power; others returned them to their masters when requested so to do. I have heard that on many occasions the Northern soldiery performed rough

pranks upon gentlemen who came among them seeking runaways. They would arm the darkey if he seemed a likely fellow, and tell him to fight old Massa for his freedom; at the same time inviting this last to come on and take his slave. Or, perchance, the soldiers would profess indignation at being supposed to be man-catchers, and would settle the matter by ducking old Massa in the nearest pond.

So matters continued, until General Butler discovered that slave property was "contraband of war;" and this legal, or illegal, fiction, enabled Federal officers to deal more effectively with the coloured folks. Intelligent contrabands soon became the favourite sources of newspaper intelligence. They related how President Davis looked desponding at breakfast, or how many thousand cavalry were under J. B. Stuart. We can all remember the contraband stage of negro life; and Smith, who is a guileless youth, firmly believes to this day that smugglers had something to do with it. But the civil war went fiercely on; Northern men were driven into a decided course by the logic of events. It was Robert Lee's skilful generalship and "Stonewall" Jackson's devoted courage that paved the way for complete emancipation; the Confederates were shedding their blood for a good cause, that was little beloved in the Confederacy. President Lincoln, after due notice to all whom it might concern, issued his famous proclamation, which took effect on the 1st of January,

1863. Again I am treating of what we can all remember. And we can remember the raising of coloured regiments, the more and more decided stand taken by Unionists with regard to slave institutions, and the chequered course of the war tending gradually to Federal victory. But all of us in England may not have heard of General Banks' negro policy in Louisiana, or may not remember though we did once hear. I have spoken elsewhere of the State Constitution restored by him, and would now only touch upon such of his acts as directly affected the rights and duties of freedmen.

Louisiana was so far occupied by Northern troops in 1864 as to afford an opportunity of trying the experiment of free labour such as did not occur in most other parts of the South until hostilities had ceased. Yet all of Louisiana that was under General Banks' rule had been exempted, like certain border Slave States, from the liberating effect of Lincoln's proclamation. Planters could still come to New Orleans and demand their runaways, in accordance with the letter of the law. Many of them thus came; and the General, while he acknowledged the abstract legality of such demands, professed himself unable to see by what tribunal they could be enforced. Military law was the only law at that time in Louisiana, and it could take no cognizance of property in human beings. This answer did very well to rebuff the masters, but there was need of some systematic

action on behalf of the men. For then free labour was wanted, rather than the mocking freedom to starve; education was wanted, and protection against the resentment of their former possessors. General Banks met these wants boldly. He issued what is known as his Labour Order, whereby a coloured labourer was permitted to choose for whom he would work, whilst wages were added to food, clothing, and lodging, as part of the remuneration to be received, and schools were established for the instruction of coloured children. There was perhaps some harshness in the working of Banks' order, especially at first, when the runaway slaves who had flocked into town were returned to the plantations. However this may have been, a great advance had taken place, and the general in command had well-nigh exceeded his authority to try an experiment which Abraham Lincoln viewed with deep concern.

Thus Louisiana was foremost in having a practical labour system for the emancipated blacks, as her new State Government may be said to have heralded reconstruction. Thanks to the fortune of war for these improvements; thanks also to a general officer with moral courage.

In the last winter of the war, a bill was passed through Congress to create the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.* This Freed-

* To remain in operation until one year after peace should have been proclaimed.

men's Bureau was organized about the time of President Lincoln's death, and placed under the direction of General Howard. It was not, technically speaking, a separate department, being a sub-office to the War Ministry, with much of the military character hanging about it. But the task of the Bureau was more difficult than is often assigned to either soldier or civilian; for, though, at some points, especially in Louisiana, there was little more to be done by its assistant commissioners and agents than to continue what the commanding generals and provost-m Marshals had already begun, yet, at others, an entirely new edifice had to be built up.

Texas, for instance, had not felt the presence of Federal troops, and whole battalions of Confederates had gone home with arms in their hands when Kirby Smith surrendered. The Texans were "unwhipt," and could scarcely realize what a change had come over their country. They were fierce, rough, men, little accustomed to obey any laws, and the new doctrine that negroes had personal rights seemed preposterous to them. Here, then, was a field for the energetic Assistant-Commissioner in Texas, General Gregory. He set about his work in such a manner as speedily convinced whites and blacks alike that the Bureau must be respected. Throughout November and December of 1865, the stout-hearted old soldier rode hither and thither, with a small escort, addressing mass-meetings of coloured people, and

urging them to make contracts for labour. Whilst I was in New Orleans there arrived an officer from Texas who told me how glad the planters in that section were to have General Gregory amongst their freedmen. "We can do nothing with our niggers, but they'll mind what he tells them," was the common exclamation, and, as Texans admire nothing so much as courage, they held the General in high esteem because he spoke and acted fearlessly. His conduct, in a certain bloodhound case, produced the best possible effect upon those who persisted in carrying out forbidden measures of severity against the blacks.

There was a large meeting, and General Gregory uttered his usual plain straightforward advice to those who had been slaves, cautioning at the same time those who had been slave-owners as to how they might treat their workmen in future. A negro stepped forward and said, "Is it right, General, that we should be hunted with blood-hounds?"

"No!" thundered old Gregory, looking sternly round; "who has dared to do so?"

"That man," replied the negro, pointing to Judge ——, a wealthy citizen, standing at Gregory's side. "He hunted me last week."

"Did you, sir?" asked the General, turning upon his neighbour.

"I did, sir," answered the Judge, with unfeigned surprise at such a small matter being taken up seriously.

“Then, sir,” cried the General, “it is my duty to have you arrested!”

And Judge — was arrested accordingly; nor would Gregory hear of any compromise, but vowed that the prisoner should be brought to justice.

Although in some States the agents of the Bureau have seemed disposed to purchase popularity by sacrificing blacks to whites, and although discreditable frauds have occasionally been discovered, it cannot be denied that the institution has proved a blessing to both races, in smoothing difficulties between them. The Bureau has interfered when courts of law have attempted to enforce statutes at variance with the existing state of things or to sustain decisions adverse to negro freedom; whilst, on the other hand, it has exercised a useful control over coloured men, has found shelter for starving refugees, and has enforced the fulfilment of labour contracts. As to its care of abandoned lands, I suppose that the proprietors would rather have taken care of them themselves; but Southern planters had an advantage over defeated partisans in our English civil commotions, inasmuch as they were ousted by a public department, without unity of purpose, instead of by greedy court favourites, who would machinate against their obtaining pardon.

At the head quarters of the Bureau in New Orleans I found courteous officials ready to give all desired

information, and printed forms, and account-books, and other things that are not much when described. But you may like to share a trip to a colony not far from town, in which refugees, freedmen, and abandoned land can be studied together. This colony is to be reached by water, so, if you wish to accompany me, you must come down to the river side.

It was dry weather, and the levee exhibited a scene of unusual bustle. There seemed to be more sugar-hogsheads, flour-barrels, and cotton-bales, than I had noticed on my first arrival; whilst there certainly was a far larger number of darkeys working and darkeys looking on. The coloured population was travelling in earnest too. Well-dressed family groups, with their baggage, were on the move, preparatory to settling down in new places after the Christmas holidays. In the vessel on which I took passage—a coast-steamer, so called, meaning one that touched at small settlements along the shore of the river—were people of every class known to the varied society of New Orleans. English-speaking whites and French-speaking whites, negroes addicted to the use of either tongue, with acclimatised Germans and unacclimatised Northerners, who were making the most of a cool season.

The bell had been rung, a little more cargo taken in, and the bell rung once again. At last we were off; our deck-hands sung their parting song; our bow was turned up stream; and the passengers, feeling chilled

by a breeze that would scarcely have made Englishmen put on their great-coats, withdrew from outer air to gather round the stove in the saloon. How often we stopped, or how much fuel we took in at spots where drift timber had been chopped and corded, I cannot say; but there appeared to be a constant craving for firewood, and a tendency to land one person at every quarter of a mile.

There was talk of bales and hogsheads in the saloon, as also of that all-important question, negro labour. One gentleman was positive that nothing but severe measures could keep the hands on a plantation. Another ex-slaveholder, who professed his willingness to accept what had been done as final and to make the best of existing laws, told me how valuable preaching had been found in keeping the negroes steadily at work. "Why, sir," said he, "long before this emancipation, I knew a hard old sinner that was running a place with several hundred people on it, and he found punishing them seemed to do no good. Well, he bought a fiddler and got a dancing-room fixed up, so that every Saturday the niggers might have a ball. They're mad on dancing, and this fiddler made the hands more cheerful like, so as only a few of them would go off to the swamp. But that warn't enough. The old man wanted his place to be perfect, so he bought a preacher, an ignorant coloured preacher, you know, sir. Well, them darkeys are death on preaching. The old man got a

chapel fixed for his pious nigger, and by G—, sir, he found his overseer might give them h—l before they'd run, with dancing and preaching going on together."

My informant paused, but as I felt by his manner that there was more to be heard, I muttered, "Pray, proceed," or "Your story interests me," as do obliging theatrical characters, when the hero is allowed a moment to recover his breath.

"Wal, there *is* more of it," he said, with marked emphasis; "that old man would sometimes step in to hear the preacher himself. He was proud of owning a nigger that could keep it up just like a real minister, and, sir, one day the darkey converted him. After that, old Massa would sit just as regular as Sambo to hear the preaching, and he swore if this one died there should be another bought, for it did them all good. By G—, sir, it was a hard place, and they wanted some enjoyment, I can tell you."

When I landed from the steamer at Rost Home Colony, we had spent so much time on a voyage of twenty-five miles that darkness was fast approaching. The garden in front of Judge Rost's sometime abode looked gloomy, with its mass of evergreens and the house itself, though commodiously built, had a black desolate appearance. There were a few coloured children playing round the back door, and a sentry of dusky complexion, in light-blue overcoat, keeping guard at the front of the premises; but, despite these signs of life, one felt that the house was deserted.

Its owner would not presently come forward, for he was not there; the system of domestic government had been changed, and the power which gave a peculiar character to plantation life had vanished for ever. There stood the negro quarters at a convenient distance; there was the sugar-mill; and, further back, a goodly extent of cultivated land bounded by the rank vegetation of the swamp. But should all this be restored to the pardoned Confederate, as other plantations have been restored, there would now only be a country gentleman living on his estate, with black workmen under him receiving wages, and not a planter paying an overseer to drive his slaves. It was this departed power—this spirit of evil laid to rest at length in torrents of kindred blood—which threw so much interest about the house, and yet left it so desolate.

If Judge Rost should happen to read the foregoing paragraph, he must not suppose that I intend to point a moral at his particular expense. Far from such being the case, I would mention that he enjoyed a better reputation for humanity than did most of his neighbours, and I would apologize for having visited in his house during the owner's absence. True, that a stranger seeking knowledge might reasonably go where the Government of the United States had established one of its departments; true, also, that the managers of Rost Home Colony showed great respect for fixtures, and were by no means Vandals.

Yet there was something between amateur burglary and taking tea with a man in possession, in the feeling with which I roamed through the Judge's domain.

It was a fine, well-ordered place at the time that I saw it, though without the industrial mainspring of former days. There was a mansion of considerable size, having deep verandahs and high-pointed roof, a front garden full of shrubs and flowers, and a paddock in rear, at the end of which stood the sugar-mill. From the front garden you passed by an iron gate on to the high road, and just across the road was a terrace on the river bank, with a wide-spreading tree and rustic bench. Hence could be obtained a view of all the passing traffic, and, judging by its well-worn aspect, the terrace must have been a favourite lounge. About two hundred yards from the line of the garden-house and sugar-mill were the negro quarters, in a sort of village street running parallel to this line. You turned in from the high-road and passed on your left the neat wooden house of the overseer, on your right the plantation hospital. There were strong gates at the entrance of the quarters, and a palisade surrounding them which it required no small activity to surmount. Twelve snug two-storied cottages stood on each side of the street, and other strong gates were at its further end. The cottage floors were raised a couple of feet or so above the ground, so that the lower stories might be free from damp, and, although built of wood, these dwellings far exceeded

in comfort many homes of English and Irish peasants. Then, too, there was that hospital opposite the overseer's house, wherein sick negroes might be tended, and behind the hospital was a small chamber with the iron rings still remaining to which negroes were tied down to be whipped. A still smaller chamber, a mere sentry-box not a yard square, also with iron rings, stood beside the whipping-room, and it had been used, they told me, as a place of little ease.

There were many things to be learned at Rost Home, besides the manner of arranging first-class negro quarters. There was the treatment of sugarcane and the working of the sugar-mill, with details of official experience in regard to dealing with freedmen. This colony was not composed of the former slaves of Judge Rost so much as of refugees from all parts and aged persons too feeble for work. The Bureau supplied them with food, issued clothing to those who needed it, and required labour in return from every one capable of being useful to the colony. Here, in fact, was a work-house and a model farm carried forward under military superintendence, whilst the commandant of the place exercised large though somewhat indefinite powers over neighbouring estates, to enforce contracts for labour, and to protect the negroes from being imposed upon.

Captain F—— was a quiet, practical, man. He seemed anxious to win the confidence of the people, and had resolved that the colony of which he was in

charge should become a self-supporting concern. It would only be held by the Bureau for a time, as Judge Rost might any day obtain a pardon at Washington, and return to claim his own again; but, while it was held, the estate should not lie idle. Those blacks who were old or blind or feeble need do no work; the rest were to have regular contracts for 1866, and to be paid proper wages. More extensive quarters should be built to accommodate the influx of refugees, and a school should be maintained. Yet with these plans there mingled, as I have said, a remembrance that the Judge might return before long, and care was taken that he should not find his property injured. Uncle Sam's Bureau seemed to be specially tender of fixtures and improvements.

On the day after my arrival a scene was enacted which illustrated the wide range of Captain F——'s duties.

There was the tenant of a plantation not far from Rost Home, the heir to a landlord deceased, a judge, a sheriff, and a matter of rent, forming the groundwork of the piece.

"Pay him," said the Judge, "he is the heir."

"Pay him not," said the Bureau, "he is a Rebel."

Enter sheriff and posse, who take possession. Tenant is bewildered.

To them enter Captain F——, and sable warriors. Grand tableau. Conflict of authority. Sheriff is informed that the Bureau will take charge until the

heir shall have received his pardon. The tenant is not to be disturbed for obeying an order from the Bureau.

Awkward pause.

Sheriff, concluding that he had better "back down," takes the thing pleasantly and exit with his men.

Captain F——, having vindicated the powers that be, departs on opposite side of the stage, accompanied by sable warriors.

The tenant is left rejoicing.

Those must have capital who would start a sugar plantation. For planting cotton very little money at the outset will suffice, since a cotton-gin is not an expensive machine, and the crop can, at worst, be taken, without much trouble, to some one else's gin, should the planter possess none of his own. But sugar-cane is so heavy that to make it profitable it must be crushed on the spot, and a sugar-mill is no small matter. The mill at Rost Home cost, I understand, a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and thirty thousand dollars is the lowest sum for which an effective mill can be built. As to the growing of sugar-cane, when once your place has been started, there appears to be less difficulty with that than with cotton, until the crisis in November. Then, unless you can command constant labour, your whole crop may be destroyed. It is worse than the period of cotton-picking, because whilst picking can be spread over three or four successive weeks, the cane must

wait for one frost, and be cut before another frost comes upon it. Thus, at least, they work in Louisiana.*

The cane is cut with broad-bladed knives, and laid along the furrows ready to be taken away for crushing. If once properly reaped it will not spoil for some little time, which makes the cutting the most important operation, but your crop is scarcely safe until it has been crushed and boiled; so you should take it to the mill without delay. A ton of sugar to each acre of tall strong canes! This sounds as though a few paternal acres might effectually sicken boyhood of sweets, and it is a quantity that you may reasonably expect to obtain.

I was shown over the mill at Rost Home, seeing many tanks and boilers, troughs, valves, and empty hogsheads; enough, I should have thought, to account for the expenditure of a million dollars instead of a hundred and fifty thousand. There stood the massive rollers, unused this year, but capable of squeezing up anything which Captain F—— and his freedmen might be able to grow. And there was the apron composed of two chains with staves fixed between them, which passed up from an adjoining shed, came into the mill at some height above the ground, dived under the rollers, wound away out of

* Cuban sugar-cane is not exposed to frost and will flourish for fifteen years; the cane of Louisiana, if I mistake not, for only three years.

sight, and returned to the afore-mentioned shed. Sugar-cane had been thrown upon this apron where it passed through the shed, and had ridden away swiftly to be crushed. • Of course there was a tradition that somebody one night fell asleep over his work, and, slipping amongst the canes took the fatal ride. It might easily have happened. Not far from the mill lay a heap of canes thickly covered with leaves and already beginning to sprout at their joints. These were to be laid upon the field, and ploughed up as seed for the ensuing crop. That there would be a crop, if Captain F—— had his way, no one could doubt. The men reposed great confidence in government officials, and were willing to work hard when they felt sure of being paid. Nor was any severe discipline found necessary for keeping order amongst them. Blows were never inflicted, and the utmost penalty of the plantation code, at this time, was a day's imprisonment on bread and water.

I mentioned sable warriors in connection with the checkmating of a certain sheriff. You must not, however, fancy a large force stationed at Rost Home. No swarming myrmidons obeyed the orders of the commandant, but only a sergeant's guard of the 96th coloured infantry. The sergeant was as smart a young soldier as you could wish to see, with a smile on his face and plenty to say for himself when spoken to. He wished to be mustered out,

that he might earn higher wages to support his family.

A French-looking negro who stood near—how he managed to look French, being quite black, I cannot explain, but he did—remarked that “for him *la vie militaire* would very well do.”

The sergeant was interested in hearing of Liberia, and asked me if I thought that “they’d have slaves much longer down in Cuba?”

A third darkey, of Saxon speech, was in no hurry, he said, to be mustered out. He would rather be with the regiment than detached on special service, for a man had more chance to learn soldiering and get to read and write well, if he was at head quarters.

Had he any wish to travel?

No, it was all the same to him *whar* he stayed, ’cept he’d like some day to see Ole Virginy agin. He’d been sold away long before the war, and spent fourteen years working on a sugar plantation; but it “wouldn’t feel like home till he see’d the Blue Ridge.”

“What when you are mustered out?” said I.

“Why, sar, I’m strong and willin’. ’Spects I’ll make enough to get back to Virginy.”

There was a stalwart trooper from Tennessee, of white complexion, who had been detailed to do duty with Captain F——. The Tennessean could tell more about Federal and Confederate tactics than most of

the combatants on either side, for he had been drafted into the Southern army, and fought at the second battle of Manassas. Then, making his escape, and wandering through the hills, he returned to Tennessee; and, soon after, took part as a Unionist in some of the desperate conflicts that made havoc in his native State. He was peculiarly bitter against Secession, showing more partisan feeling than is common amongst Northerners. With him it was not a question of almost national sentiment between wide tracts of country, but a quarrel for life and death between the people of adjoining villages, or very often of houses in the same village. The Tennessean would not have agreed with Gustavus Adolphus, that cavalry should use the sabre rather than the pistol, for he doubted the possibility of coming to close quarters with an opponent properly armed. "Where's the good of a sword, or a stick with a spike on the end, if they shoot you down a hundred yards away?" cried he. "No, sir! the best plan in a cavalry charge is to dismount, leave every fourth man to hold the horses, and skirmish right up to them."

I gave a lesson in reading to a couple of tall young fellows, who were about the place as house servants. They were olive-cheeked, though woolly headed, the nephews of a neighbouring planter. It was surprising to see such intelligent, well-mannered, lads so ignorant of letters; but the State laws had

forbidden that they should be taught, which must account for their uncle's negligence in this respect. They appeared to be quick at learning, having the advantage over many of our own provincials in being familiar with the language of educated people. Very anxious were they to read. The accomplishment signified, in their minds, an approach to social equality, which they had white blood enough to covet dearly; and it was pleasant to see those grown-up faces, no darker than a gipsy's, bending at last over the spelling-book, and to watch those large bony fingers moving slowly along line after line. There was good promise that when the Christmas holidays were over, and the school at Rost Home was fully established for adults as well as children, my pupils of one morning would make swift advance.

The negro quarters were worth a visit, for more than their neatness of arrangement. This quality it was fair to note down to the credit of the proprietor; but, after seeing the neat exteriors, you would have been amused by a peep within. Children sat staring at the stranger, and old folks hobbled forward to give their welcome, whilst men and women of middle age, who had some business in hand, looked up from their work with a friendly nod, as though to say, "All right, sir, make yourself at home."

The old folks were the best company. They had pet grievances, which is always a help to conversation. One man, with white hair and a frame bowed by years

of toil, complained to me that he was not rated amongst the working hands. "I'se from Virginny, sar, and dat gib me more strenph like. Why, thar ain't many of the boys can do the work I will, and I'm to be put wid de ole folks. Ugh!" To my suggestion, that the time had come when he might properly rest, Uncle Ned replied; "Wal, sar, I'se ageable I knows, but gib me cotton to pick, or wood to chop, and jist see what I can do!" We further talked of the labour question in general, which Uncle Ned thought would come all right if masters gave their men a bit of land each to cultivate for a garden, and let them have Saturday "a half-day, with a treat like when the crop was got in." His personal grievance consisted in not being about to receive wages such as had been promised to the younger men, and he laid the blame on his white head, which made him "seem so ageable."

There is a blind negro, too, taken by his wife to fetch firewood. "He's willin'," says she, "and does all he can to help, but we must lead him everywhere." Then I pass a very old man, who nods to me, and stretches out his hand. It is a hand shrunken and withered, though it still has a nervous grip which shows how strong it may once have been. That hand has held not only the hoe and the cane-knife through two generations of servitude, but the club and the javelin, long ago, when he was free in Africa. I ask whether he can speak his native

tongue. "No, he has forgotten it," they say, "and most all his English too; for he won't say much more than Glory! glory! And it's a wonder, sar," observes the smiling mulatto woman who is near him, "that he ain't gone home yet, for he's drefful old; more than a hundred years, they say; and he never 'spected to see 'mancipation—did you, uncle?"

Here I have drifted under the fire of heavy controversial batteries. More than a hundred years old, did they say? Infatuated woman! You do not study the London daily press, or you would be aware that nobody ever lives a century; and you have tempted me for a moment to believe what is impossible. Tut! tut! amend your declaration. He is ninety-nine, depend on it, with every nail knocked into his coffin!

We had prayers in the sugar-mill on the last day of 1865, and a crowd of coloured people attended. They were earnestly devout in manner, keeping their eyes fixed upon the preacher's face, while uttering such exclamations as I had heard from a similar congregation at New Orleans. The negroes were told that they were now for ever free, as the amendment prohibiting slavery had become part of the Constitution of the United States.* They were exhorted to prove themselves worthy of freedom in the year that would soon begin, and assured that their children should be taught to read the Bible.

* See Appendix.

This is a thing by which they set great store. Their eyes will dilate with wonder at a recital of the deeds of Hebrew prophets and kings, at the blessed words of the Gospels, and at the mysterious promises of Revelation. All between then and now is a blank, so that the Bible history seems near to their own times, and doubly real.

CHAPTER XXIX.

INTO THE TROPICS.

O'er the glad waters — Arrival at Havana.

It was easy to trace a direct route upon the map from New Orleans to Vera Cruz. Nothing could be more simple. Go straight across the Gulf of Mexico, and there you were. But in January, 1866, a traveller was obliged to take Cuba on his way and to make a couple of tacks like a vessel beating to windward. Without detailing the difficulties of the land journey, or guerilla side of the question, and the uncertainties of the "immediate dispatch" of merchant schooners direct to Vera Cruz, I had better at once suppose myself on board a British steamship bound to Havana and commence my account of our voyage.*

January 13th.—I found the vessel to be small and second-rate, her captain a very pleasant fellow,

* There are now steamers plying direct from New Orleans to Vera Cruz.

good attendance, and cabin overcrowded; but heard that the Company was putting on first-rate craft as fast as it could, so resolved to suppress this particular vessel's name. Such resolution being formed many hours later than our departure is here chronologically out of place; but what does that matter? We left New Orleans in torrents of rain, which were presently succeeded by rolling clouds of mist upon the river. Half-steam ahead as a consequence of the mist, and plenty of shouting to the man at the wheel. "Starboard!" "Aye, aye, sir, starboard!" "Steady!" again from dimly seen officer in communication with the pilot. "Steady, sir," answered by the man at the wheel. Joy of English passengers at these familiar sounds. American passengers vote them old-fashioned, and think the wheel-house for'ard a better plan. Perhaps it may be, though we would not willingly rob a sailor's life of its full-lunged shouts, hail the maintop through a gutta-percha speaking-tube, and have a musical box to give the "Yo, heave ho!" Darkness settled down upon the Mississippi, and the fog became so dense that we cast anchor a few miles below New Orleans to wait until morning.

January 14th.—We advanced cautiously through a moist, fleecy, atmosphere, bright sunshine overhead, and everything visible that was forty feet above the water. Our pilot was stationed in the foretop, whence he gave his orders with great energy, im-

pressing those who stood upon deck with the idea that he could see many things of which they little dreamed. Yet, when the mist cleared away, there was nothing to be seen but flat swampy shores, occasional plantations, diminishing in scale to a tiny planter's house and a pair of tinier negro cabins. We passed between Forts Jackson and St. Philip, which are immediately above the delta of the river, saw their bristling cannon and groups of lounging soldiers, noted the impassable morasses which protect what may be called by courtesy their land side, and steamed away through the south-west pass. No alligators would show themselves, but they were known to be hibernating in untold depths of mud, and grey logs from far up country, floating on the stream, looked so like what those absent reptiles might have looked, that we professed ourselves content.

The land rather faded away than was left behind at any particular point. It grew more and more watery, trees gave place to rushes, and a strip of open sea could be observed beyond the reedy shoals that bordered our course. Here was a village inhabited by pilots; there a telegraph station and lighthouse. Fresh clouds of mist now hid everything from sight. We grounded for a few moments on the bar (in two-and-a-half fathoms), got off again, moved forward slowly until our pilot was put on board a little schooner barely visible through the

fog, and then went ahead at full speed, with the waves of the Gulf crunching and gurgling under our bow.

Farewell, Mississippi, miasma, and paper money. The Confederates on board, who have come away without taking any oath to their conquerors, can now boldly avow themselves unpardoned "Rebs;" whilst all of us are glad to be safely over that formidable bar, on which vessels often stick for a week at a time.

January 15th.—A fresh breeze blew from the southward, warm as the warmest of our August breezes and indescribably balmy. It was gratifying to know when they hove the log, or, in modern sea phrase, "hailed the reel," that we were making eight knots an hour. Those who spoke of ocean steamships generally going much faster were considered dangerous innovators. We sat under the awning on the poop and perched upon the cotton-bales which formed our deck cargo, looking out for natural wonders. Where were the sharks that should have glided round us and been killed by a daring swimmer, knife in hand? Where the flying fish? But stop! These last did make their appearance, and flitted high above the surface of the water, and dived beneath it, and came up once more, as though they had been little white birds instead of fish. Yet persons well acquainted with them maintained that fish they were, nevertheless. And now a waterspout

could be seen, not far off, on our port bow. From a dark cloud hanging low over the sea came a curious kind of hose, like a petrified flash of blue lightning, and this hose was sucking up gallons of water in the most mysterious way. Upon the surface there appeared about as much disturbance as if a forty-two pound shot had just alighted at that particular place, whilst between the top of the spray on the surface and the bottom of the hose in the sky was an interval in which only those with keen eyesight could perceive anything. We heard that cannon were sometimes fired to break down a waterspout by the concussion, as it would be very imprudent for a vessel to receive the shower-bath which a cloud, thus recruited, could pour upon her; but our experience went to show that nobody on board save the passengers seemed to care whether there were three or thirty waterspouts in sight. There was none of that awe-stricken attention to a strange phenomenon which is found in books of useful knowledge for boys, no pale helmsman straining every nerve to avoid the threatened danger, no six-pounder rammed home with breathless eagerness; only a man at the wheel who might have looked pale if he had washed his face and who held on sleepily to the polished spokes before him, and a small cannon supposed to be amongst the ballast.

January 16th.—The weather was calm and hot. Few vessels came in sight; our voyage was declared

to be growing monotonous. Another waterspout could be distinctly seen, though at such a distance as to afford no sensation even to the passengers. The cabin was so warm that few of us were willing to remain below, and we accordingly stayed on deck, despite heavy showers of rain. Then out came the sun, and it was hotter than ever. We speculated on what the temperature might be in our gallant vessel's stoke-hole, and marvelled how any human beings could be found to earn their livelihood in the tropics by feeding the furnaces of a steamer.

Some among us talked politics in sheer despair—American politics, I mean—although we could tell each other nothing new and come to no definite conclusion. One ex-Confederate on board had, in disgust, tried living out of the States ; had discovered his mistake ; and was about to return home, bag and baggage, from foreign parts. He was now on his way to fetch the said *impedimenta*. A second grey-coat was bent on visiting Brazil, where he believed that slavery might long exist. Others among the Southern gentlemen of our party had no definite plans, merely intending to keep out of the way for a time, until either by-gones were forgotten, or Federal misgovernment produced a fresh attempt at secession. We had such a variety of language and nationality in the ship as might have been expected. Strike off half our passenger-list for Uncle Sam's good boys and naughty boys, then fancy the remainder

composed of English, Spaniards, and Frenchmen. Mark the grave long face of Don Alvaro, who is great upon cigars, and is thought to own a house full of them at Havana. Hear him complain of this chilly winter season. Why, señor, what possible climate would suit you, short of the furnace? but we must not anticipate. Yonder are two of our Gallic allies discussing Shakspeare. There was a great man—a genius! He wrote Hamlet all himself. Dumas only translated it. From Hamlet they pass to Richard III., and we are appealed to respecting Cœur de Lion. Those Richards are truly confusing. One of the Frenchmen is an accomplished linguist; his friend is a young man of fortune, who has travelled in many countries. That is enough, dear reader, to disarrange your favourite theories respecting Mossoo; and I will say no more.

January 17th.—What lovely weather, bright sea, and cloudless sky! The wind is just strong enough to flutter out our British colours as we approach the castle on the rocky point, and the Cuban coast, which has been slowly rising into view, lies close before us, green and smiling. Forts, ships, and cannon; Spanish flags, French flags, Stars and Stripes; the water intensely blue and the houses intensely white—this is Havana when first viewed from the deck of an inward-bound steamer. Every one looks cool and comfortable, in white clothing; the boatmen who scramble on board to secure our patronage are cleaner than the

fondest imagination could have pictured them ; the custom-house officers, in faultless straw hats, are refreshing to behold ; and even that charge of a dollar each person for being put ashore is justified by a pleasant sail across the harbour with no dispute at the end about an extra tip for luggage. Magnanimous conduct of a person who peeps into my portmanteau ! He is not bribed, unless some unknown benefactor tampered with him in my interest, and yet he merely peeps, disturbing nothing.

January 19th.—Having looked round for a couple of days, and remembering the rate at which modern opinions are formed, I feel no hesitation in pronouncing Havana to be well worth seeing. It is a picturesque city, of foreign aspect—a Spanish city transported to the tropics, and slightly Americanised. There are narrow streets, with flat-topped houses, high stone archways, and paved courtyards, that look deliciously cool to the passer-by. Every one who has a spare tenpence in his pocket and wishes to go from one spot to another hires a *volante* or a *victoria*, as a matter of course. The *victoria*, or something very like it, may be seen on Ramsgate sands, but the *volante* is peculiar in make. It has a pair of large wheels behind, and, coming from the axle of these wheels, a pair of lengthy shafts on either side of a mule stuck far out in front, and between the shafts it has a hooded body slung that will contain two passengers. On the mule is a negro postboy, shabbily

dressed for hired vehicles, though in gorgeous livery when he has charge of some grandee's equipage. *Mem.*—To make a negro look his best, he should wear a green jacket slashed with gold, your mule should have silver-plated harness, and the ladies who occupy your *volante* should wear lace mantillas. Then, sir, you can claim to have sent forth a handsome turnout in proper Cuban style and retire to the shade of your courtyard to enjoy a real Havana. They call cigars "tobacco" hereabout, set great store by a paper cigarette, and regard a pipe as barbaric folly.

The city is full of soldiers, his Excellency the Captain-General having more than thirty thousand men in Cuba, of which force a large proportion is stationed in and about Havana. There has been a numerous addition to the garrison of the island consequent upon the recent withdrawal of Spanish troops from San Domingo; and at this moment filibusters should beware, for the colony bristles with bayonets. Colonies are said to bristle when they have one strong fortress and two thousand miles of coast; and Havana is the most bristling point in the whole island, with sentries at the gates, and detachments marching through the streets, so it may well claim a military character.

I met a young soldier yesterday evening at the house of some friends made known to me by Diego Narvez, and we had a long talk upon the position of

Spain. He thought that his country would recover some part of her former power. The people had been misgoverned, but now they were fast adopting ideas of progress. They had some colonies yet left—the relics of their great empire—and would cling to these more firmly than ever. We spoke of the war against Morocco, which had given them confidence in the efficiency of their army. Then came an allusion to Spanish tactics. It was bad, he said, to have too few officers in a company. They had five when stationed in the Indies; the captain, two first lieutenants, and two second lieutenants; one more than when at home, on account of the fever.

“Did soldiers object to such a bad climate?”

“No, because they gained two years of service by coming abroad. Some might object—those who feared the fever certainly would—yet who knew what was to become of him?”

We presently touched on the subject of Mexico. My young soldier frankly stated his disbelief in republics, and thought that a judgment had overtaken those who made haste to renounce the rule of Spain. But blood is thicker than water; the Mexicans were to him as are North Americans to us; and he could not be happy in seeing Frenchmen dictate a form of government to a people speaking Castilian. His principles were with monarchy, his sympathies with President Juarez.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE ISLAND OF CUBA, AND THE RUN TO VERA CRUZ.

Slavery in full swing — Mr. Seward's trip — A glimpse of eternal snow.

To modern ideas, which favour ventilation even at the cost of a sunstroke, the western suburb may seem preferable to Havana within the walls; but I am so far behind the age as to enjoy narrow shady streets. My quarters were amongst the narrowest and most sheltered, where a small courtyard surrounded by a heavy pile of masonry made the hotel seem like a donjon keep or other baronial messuage. It was solid enough to be cool, yet not large enough to be gloomy, evidently the donjon of a second-rate nobleman, who, unable to make both ends meet, had given place to licensed victualling. We had tiled floors and a feeble attempt at painting on the walls like a washed-out imitation of Pompeii. There was no office with clerk and account-books in American style, nor that elegant waiter in evening coat and

white cravat, common to the hotels of England. From the aforesaid courtyard, entered by a stone archway, a flight of stone steps led to a sparsely-furnished lobby, where you might or might not chance to find some one who would answer your questions. Everything was quiet and dreamy, viewed in the light of ordinary hotel life—a stone gallery, with Venetian blinds, on which the bedrooms of the guests opened; a dignified parrot, who spoke but rarely and then in choice Castilian, as he swung in his cage; and a recess supposed to contain our landlord's *batterie de cuisine*.

At meal times the lobby blossomed forth with table, chairs, and spotless linen. Attendants appeared upon the scene, and the chairs were occupied by gentlemen bowing gravely to each other as they seated themselves. Then was it that repasts of no mean quality emanated from our landlord's recess, while the parrot, rousing at sound of so many voices, conversed solemnly with all mankind. We were not overawed by the neighbourhood of a grandee who dined alone in this room waited on by a negro, and, before we rose from table, there was such impassioned talk as would have made you think that a fight must follow. Yet it was only the Spanish energy of discussion; no one felt aggrieved with any one else, and our party broke up as formally as it had assembled. The guests retired, the furniture was moved aside, and once more silence reigned.

I wonder whether Havana contains a proper proportion of fat-headed men. If so, they do not give themselves a fair chance, for the city, as a city, stays awake all night. Shops are open and business going forward until ten o'clock at least; after which hour, people continue to drive about in *volantes* for an indefinite period and to walk past smoking the choicest of cigars. I was preparing for an early start to Matanzas on January 20th, the train going out at half-past five A.M., and the instinct of not being left behind caused me to keep watch upon the small hours of the morning. At two o'clock there were voices and footsteps in the streets, with carriages every few minutes. At three o'clock there were more footsteps and voices, with just as many carriage-wheels to be heard as there had been at any hour of the previous evening. Policemen, bearing pikes and lanterns, stood whistling mysteriously to each other at the street corners. Havana was wide awake, though individuals might choose to make believe that it was bedtime. When four o'clock came there was a trampling as of labourers going to their work, and at a quarter to five I passed out of the hotel, which was dark and quiet, closed the front gate that I had found half open, and secured a *volante* without trouble, as though it had been the middle of the afternoon. Have you ever tried to catch the first down train from London, and did your servant search wildly for a cab but found it not? Even at that dull period between Sir Roger de Coverley and the milk-

man, or rather what would be between them with us, Havana was stirring.

The railway station was full of passengers for Matanzas and other places who were waiting to buy their tickets. Here I met the young Frenchman, who had travelled with me from New Orleans, and we exchanged compliments on being up so early. Each had expected the somewhat barren honour of finding himself alone, but it was better to have company on the trip, and there was a "good all over" feeling in getting away at half-past five with bright starlight showing the feathery tops of palm-trees as we cleared the suburbs of Havana and rumbled out into the open country.

American cars, an American engine, a well-laid track, superior to dozens in America—these were the broad features of our journey. To tell how there were cane-bottomed seats in the first-class, a separate car for persons of colour, and an opposition line running to Matanzas, is to approach details that may weary you, so I will only add that one line was charging half as much as the other, without bringing its rival to an abatement of price, and will leave railway men to explain the phenomenon. We profited by it, paid half and asked no questions. A good rate of speed was maintained, which almost made up for the longer distance of the cheap journey, and when day dawned we were far on our way. The rich vegetation that could now be clearly seen, the palms and bananas, the acres of sugar-cane, and tangled thickets

of many different shrubs gave this Cuban landscape a novelty of appearance which reminded us that we were in the tropics. There were Chinamen at work in some fields and negroes in others, while the two races might often be seen labouring together.

The coolie system and the slave system side by side! Put down your money and take your choice; only be warned as to John Chinaman (*de las Filipinas*) who has a provoking habit of making away with himself when discontented. A Cuban landowner told me that one of his coolies ran off for "nothing at all," and, on being brought back, deliberately committed suicide. Another coolie was so long missing that they supposed him to be dead, though his body had not been found.

It was very hot, for a winter's morning, when we reached Matanzas. The sun shone brightly upon a broad blue bay where many vessels lay at anchor, upon a white-walled town, and a range of picturesque hills in the background. There were *volantes* waiting for the railway passengers, and great clumsy carts, drawn each by a pair of oxen, taking sugar hogsheads to the waterside; white men in straw hats, black men in straw hats; dark-eyed ladies peeping into the street through iron-barred windows; negresses and half-castes looking as if this was indeed a climate to suit them, whilst they walked bareheaded in the hot sunshine with ample skirts and gay-coloured shawls.

The snobbishness of disliking to see inferiors smartly

dressed, seems not to exist where those inferiors are part of one's personal property. At Havana, as well as at Matanzas, I have seen slave women elegantly attired in clothes of the same fashion as those worn by their mistresses. But, as we are to speak anon of the Cuban darkey, it will be best for the present that I should relate what became of the Anglo-French expedition.

My companion was an amateur artist, and, during our walk along the shore of the bay, where a fresh sea-breeze brought wavelets rippling to our feet, he selected a spot from which to sketch Matanzas as we returned cityward. I, meanwhile, planned a dip in the clear water behind some rocks that would keep away any possible shark. That house to our right was a study in itself, with the avenue of cocoa-nut palms leading up from the sandy high road and the fancifully-painted walls and the low flat roof. What gorgeous butterflies fluttered before us! How the lizards scampered away as we traversed a thicket of underwood and approached the Cave of Bellamar!

We lost the cooling breeze, which seemed to come no further inland than high-water mark, but the sunshine remained—bright, glaring, sunshine that made us glad to open a good-sized umbrella as we advanced at a snail's pace beneath it. January, forsooth! Why, for the last ten minutes, up to the cave's mouth, it might have been July anywhere. The cave's mouth has a refreshing sound. You think of

great damp rocks with a crevice between them, and fancy yourself passing from the light of day, the glare, the hum of insects, into noiseless darkness. So thought I, remembering the entrance to the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, and I looked suspiciously at the neat wooden building towards which we were directed. There was, however, no cause for distrust. Glimmerings above heralded genuine wonders below. The drinks on sale, the photographs and geological specimens; nay, even a gasometer and a charge of a dollar a head could not disenchant the beautiful stalactite cavern which we presently entered.

Descending a flight of stairs which might have led to a coal-cellar, we found ourselves in the *Templo Gotico*, whose delicate tracery would have done honour to the masons of the middle ages. Gas-jets lit up this portion of the cave, but when our guide, candle in hand, led the way into a winding passage of irregular height we felt more like subterranean explorers. Sometimes we were obliged to stoop low, where the stalactites looked as though, with a little encouragement, they would reach the floor. At others, we passed through spacious chambers, that had every possible device of stone and stonework hanging from their ceilings. There was a fountain of clear water, which the guide invited us to taste, and a pool consecrated by tradition as the bath of an American traveller. Rash man, to

bathe in such cold water, if he experienced as warm an atmosphere as did we. Far from being cool, our ramble threatened to make us lighter by several pounds, and, after fifteen minutes spent in a forward movement, we halted. Was there much further to go?—this to our guide. “Further, Señores, unlimited, immense; you may walk on and on.” He waved his hand, signifying the vast distance to which the cave extended, but added that we had seen the prettiest part. So the expedition countermarched by a passage parallel to that which it had first entered, and returned through the Gothic temple to upper day.

We lingered by the sea shore on our way back to Matanzas. I enjoyed the dip already planned, and my companion completed his sketch before it was time to seek the railway station. To seek it literally, for, of course, we took a wrong turn and had to ask our way of various persons ere we were set right. They all treated us most civilly, from the young ladies at the grated windows, who smiled when we spoke, though calling their duennas to help them in answering us, to the negro who made a little speech expressive of his pleasure in being of service to such distinguished cavaliers.

Beyond the gates of Havana is a wide boulevard, the Paseo de Tacon, much exposed to the noonday sun, but a pleasant resort in the evening. There are crowds of gentlemen strolling up and down, and

many ladies taking carriage exercise (I use the word "exercise" under protest), fashion in Havana permitting only the sterner sex to go on foot. A statue of Isabella II., a large theatre, and an *Hôtel d'Angleterre*, are on the boulevards. There is also a horse-railway that comes winding round from the port to avoid the narrow streets of the old town. That *Hôtel d'Angleterre* bears a familiar name. When I travelled with Jones upon the Continent we were always seeing *Hôtels d'Angleterre*, and the circumstance pampered our national pride most agreeably. So it was like meeting a former acquaintance in Havana, to find the well-known inscription, albeit in Spanish guise. None of your Fremont Houses and International Hotels, but a title redolent of 'Galignani's Messenger.'

Is the Cuban darkey stultified by the existence of the Cuban bloodhound, or does he flourish in a congenial climate, and afford but little sport to the dog of evil fame? This is a question which it would require months of serious study to answer in all its bearings, so I will only speak of a few stray glimpses of the system that caught a stranger's eye.

First and foremost there is no Canada, approachable by land, to shelter refugees; there is no underground railroad to help them off; and no public agitation of abolition sentiments. Slavery in Cuba is all snug and hearty, doomed, we may hope, to pass from the stage along with bull-fights, cock-fights, and duen-

nas, but existing at present in comfortable drowsiness. The Spanish interest favours emancipation, and the Creole interest leans rather toward political privileges for the whites; yet, so far as can be seen, neither party cares to excite itself about changing the *status quo*. Spain keeps a large force at hand to maintain her rights and does nothing against Cuban institutions. The Creoles, being allowed to govern their darkeys, submit themselves to be governed from a distance. Thus much for one glimpse through the spectacles of well-informed residents. Should you doubt its accuracy, come, see for yourself; and, by the way, Havana is a delightful place in which to spend six weeks of winter. A shilling will there last you about as long as will a groat in England. The coinage principally used consists of American 10 cent pieces, and, when once a doubloon has been converted into these, your change goes like wildfire.

But, to return to my glimpses of Cuban servitude. Negro lads pass by who are talking in some husky dialect of Africa. They cannot have been long imported, yet the slave-trade is theoretically over, so I must either conclude that they have kept up their mother tongue under every disadvantage, or that their arrival has been winked at by somebody. There are strict laws for regulating the power of masters, inso-much that an industrious slave can—theoretically, like the end of the slave trade—buy himself free. Yet, plantations are cruelly worked, if one may believe what

planters say of their arrangements. It is difficult to compare the institution that was in America with that which is in Cuba. The first seemed more odious by contrast with democratic forms of life and was rendered more severe by its useless struggle against abolitionism. The second is protected and softened to some extent by entirely different surrounding. Then, moreover, the prejudice respecting "colour," that exists in the United States, is scarcely felt by Cubans. They are, perhaps, too proud to show their pride of race by insulting their inferiors, or too lazy to take the trouble of bullying. I noticed a score of trifling incidents which showed the personal tolerance accorded to slaves, whilst free coloured persons were evidently quite at their ease. In the cathedral, among the dames of pure Castilian blood who knelt before the altar, with liveried pages waiting beside them, were many black and brown women richly attired. On the pavements, which are mere delusions not wide enough for one beamy passenger, negroes would often take the wall of their pale-faced townsmen. Slaves take the wall of *caballeros*. Hear that, ye New York shoulder-hitters, and remember that the said *caballeros* are better born and bred than yourselves. You visit a station of the city firemen, and find a black sentry with rifle and bayonet pacing before the door. Other blacks are ready to work the engine should it be called into play, and their white officer sits smoking his cigar as tranquilly as if arming

black men would cause no convulsion of nature. You learn that Spain has a force of coloured infantry in Cuba; that 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' (*La Choza de Tomás*) is circulated as an interesting novel in this slave-holding community; and you are completely puzzled. It must be more like the slavery of the ancient world, when the system was taken for granted without any cant being uttered about the destiny of certain races and the thickness of African skulls; without any trying to make last night's finery look well by daylight.

All hands are smokers in Havana, ladies and gentlemen alike enjoying the fragrant cigarette. John Chinaman, though he may miss his pure uncoloured tea, need not relapse into opium, for it is curious, but true, that good tobacco can be obtained in Havana. You can, so to speak, get fish at the sea-side, and I suspect the natives of sending abroad their worst tobacco, for, sure, they make use of a very fragrant weed. The coolie has that advantage in common with his patron. But poor John Chinaman in Cuba strikes me as a melancholy individual, playing a middle part between blacks and whites—not so merry as the former, not so free as the latter, his faithful mate left far away, and his chance extremely small of returning home with a fortune. Yet the coolie trade, under proper regulations, may be a means of peopling many regions now lying waste. Bring John Chinaman into the market, if it can be done justly and

humanely ; but bring also Mrs. John Chinaman along with him.

January 23rd.—Reflections on board the *Eider*, British mail-steamer, as she lay in Havana harbour.

All countries should be visited, if they are happy enough to possess sea-ports, by vessels of this class. Benighted foreigners should have the opportunity of passing between each other's countries in shipshape and comfortable style. The ingenious Gaul, the enterprising Yankee, may beat us on some points, but they cannot beat our ocean steamers. Take the *Eider* as a specimen. Observe her elegant model, her flush deck, passing neatly over cabins and machinery, and her funnels just raked enough to be in character with those well-proportioned masts. Then enlarge upon Britain's naval greatness, or take shares in the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, as your disposition may incline.

We are to sail next day for Vera Cruz, and are coaling in hot haste ; hot, indeed, for the men, who shout and perspire at their work, though chiefly dusty, so far as we non-labourers are concerned. The *Eider* is on the same line as was the *Trent* of historic fame, but now superannuated. She runs from St. Thomas, viâ Havana, to Mexico, performing an important part of the West India mail service, and here she is, with her sable crew, who seem to be always on the broad grin, and with her passengers in danger of temporary blackness by reason of coal-dust.

The harbour of Havana is very amusing ; not that boys dive for halfpence, or sharks scramble for stray bits of food ; but it is amusing, as a harbour, from the cosmopolitan assemblage of vessels, the native boats with permanent awnings rigged in their sterns, and the shore covered with forts and houses. There is a Swedish frigate, and there, further back, a couple of French transports, and a whole fleet belonging to Spain, decked with its holiday colours in honour of the fête of the King Consort, which decking has been imitated by Swede and Frenchman out of compliment to Her Catholic Majesty. Yonder steamer that has an engine-beam high in air, and a deck-house, and an upright stem, requires no bunting to announce that she is American. She has brought a distinguished guest to Cuba, and rumour is busy with his name. Mr. Seward has come for his health ; he needs repose and sea air ; his doctors have recommended a change to a mild climate. So here he is at Havana, though only to remain a few hours longer, as important business will compel his return to Washington. Such are the more moderate reports. But other stories attribute deep significance to the presence of the all-powerful Secretary of State. He has come to negotiate with the Captain-General for the purchase of Cuba ; he is on his way to a personal interview with Maximilian ; he has resolved to buy St. Thomas from Denmark and make that island a military port. Anything, everything, may be possible,

when a politician so famous sets out on his travels. Certain it is, that the Captain-General gave a banquet last night in honour of Mr. Seward, and that forty "covers" were laid. This is a substantial fact from which to project your favourite theory.

January 24th.—We got under weigh at sunrise, and steamed out of the harbour in a glow of yellow light that made the anchored vessels look like *Flying Dutchmen* off duty, and the coasters hovering near Morro Castle like birds with wide-spread wings. You should have seen some of these last-named craft to understand what promising clippers bear the Spanish flag in this latitude. It was a hot day, with an agreeable expanse of awning over the quarter-deck of the Eider. Many miles of Cuban shore were passed, and some mountains of considerable height could be seen. In one part the country, pointing upwards in a multitude of distinct hill-tops, appeared like the surface of a file, with teeth of seven hundred or a thousand feet long. Then the shore grew dim as it gradually trended away from our course, and by nightfall we had entered upon an unvaried expanse of sea. Nightfall does not imply such a late period of the afternoon as would harmonize with English notions; the balmy summer-like climate which banishes all thought of overcoats, and makes our deck an agreeable lounge until the bed-time of reasonable beings. Soon after six o'clock the sun goes down and up comes the moon, her familiar face

looking smaller, though brighter, than at home. So bright is she, that one may read fine print by her aid, if disposed to find employment for Düsseldorf oculists. Melancholy fact that practice should not make the eyes perfect!

We have amongst our passengers an urbane Prussian diplomat who speaks English or French as fluently as his native tongue and converses freely with all who can give him information. He is accredited to Maximilian of Mexico. There are other passengers of less distinction than the minister plenipotentiary, and of varied nationality. I am greatly interested in three among them—three working-men from the North of England engaged to superintend a cotton-mill which a Mexican capitalist has just established. They are plain, practical, men, full of knowledge concerning their business, and full of determination to succeed in the present enterprise. Their engagement is for three years certain, so they have bought phrase-books and dictionaries for learning Spanish. Enough to live on will be given them in Mexico, and the rest of their wages paid over to their families in Lancashire. Would not a few thousand recruits like these do more for the new Empire, than any amount of Algerine or Egyptian infantry? But it is too early to discuss what the Empire may require most. We had better get there, and see for ourselves.

January 28th.—After a four days' voyage in the

pleasantest possible weather land was sighted this morning, to the apparent satisfaction of all on board. Show me the man who is not glad to see land after even a four days' voyage, and I will try to obtain for him a berth in some Trinity House lightship. Mexico lay spread out before us and the vessel was steaming towards it as fast as she could go. A country this of excellent differences; its geographical features easy to comprehend at the first glance. There lies the "Tierra Caliente," the hot level land which borders the sea. There, further back, a whole day's journey from salt water, are clearly visible the mountain slopes which form the "Tierra Templada," the region of moderate heat. And, rising from the mountain slopes are lofty mountain summits, with the snow-capped peak of Orizaba, seventeen thousand feet above the sea, to represent the "Tierra Fria," the land of cold.

As we approach Vera Cruz and can see the cathedral tower, the masts of vessels, and the island with a fort upon it, those mountain tops form a less important part of the scene than they did at first. The Tierra Caliente appears to be a wide district, instead of a mere strip at the foot of the rocks, while the higher ground seems still far away. It is lucky for us that the weather is not stormy, for with north winds blowing it is impossible to land at Vera Cruz, and we hear that, on one occasion, a party of travellers baffled by an obstinate norther came hither in vain,

went on with the mail bags to Tampico, could not land there again because of the norther, came back after two days' waiting to Vera Cruz, to be baffled once more, and returned to Havana without quitting their ship. That must have been an obstinate norther, legendary, I fancy, rather than historical; but Mexico sadly needs a Plymouth breakwater at her principal port of entry.

Casting anchor inside the island, our vessel is quickly boarded by an English man-of-war's boat, seeking for latest news, and by an Austrian man-of-war's boat to enquire for the Prussian minister. A gig is lowered to take the mails ashore, for in that matter the Eider will be beholden to nobody. Native boats are fast assembling to accommodate the passengers, who must reach land as best they can, and a crowd of idlers can be seen to gather on the stone jetty near the Custom House. It is not a large city, nor a large island, nor a spacious anchorage, yet there is novelty about the whole effect; and a flood of sunshine glitters on the smooth water, and on romantic, ruffianly-looking, boatmen, obedient to our beck and call, who ought, if appearances went for anything, to be pirates or artists' models.

CHAPTER XXXI.

UP COUNTRY TO THE CITY OF MEXICO.

Jack's Beanstalk — Wayside crosses — A glorious view.

GOING up country does not here imply leaving the greater degree of civilization for the less. It is not with Vera Cruz as with Rio Janeiro and New York, for then indeed would Mexico be, on a small scale, a western Sierra Leone, with fever around you, should you stay, and "gorillas" before you should you ramble. Check any tendency to foolish play upon words, dear reader, leave those ubiquitous Mexican *guerrilleros* to confound themselves with common *ladrones*, and genially accept the proposition just laid before you. I need hardly say that every reader of the present time is supposed to be genial, and to view things in a kindly spirit, which attributes, resembling the "esquire" upon a modern envelope, cannot politely be withheld from any one.

Vera Cruz has about ten thousand inhabitants, according to the statistical table printed upon the

margin of my pocket atlas, though I should have thought six thousand nearer the truth. There is a fine public square, in which stand the cathedral, the prefecture, and the principal hotel. There are paved streets that have gutters down the middle, and blank looking two-storied houses with interior courtyards, and an army of turkey-buzzards to do duty as scavengers. Those useful birds may not be killed under a penalty of fifty dollars for each victim, so they perch by hundreds upon the roofs of the churches, stalk gravely along the housetops, and inspect the gutters with an air of official authority. Whether they are liable to be attacked by yellow fever I did not learn, but am disposed to think them thoroughly acclimatised, and to fancy that they must view with disdain the feebleness of man in succumbing to so savoury an atmosphere.

Persons desirous of knowing the cab-fare in Vera Cruz, can only be satisfied hypothetically, since there are no cabs to have a fare, no cheap *victoria*, no smooth-running *volante*. You must walk to the hotel from the custom-house, and hire a porter to carry your baggage, nor will such a walk fatigue the average traveller, Vera Cruz being conveniently small, with its points of interest close together. There are horse-cars running from the public square to the *Paseo*, or fashionable promenade, just beyond the ramparts, but this line seems to be a superfluity, introduced to remind Vera-Cruzans of the progress of

the age in which they live, and as an example of the shortest sixpenny ride ever devised.

There are fortifications surrounding the town, as has been hinted above; ancient stone walls with batteries here and there along them, and loophole curtains at the gateway—such defences as might be found at Tiffinpoor in the Carnatic, or Gebel-Burton in Arabia; and, to make an Oriental simile still more appropriate, there are Egyptian infantry keeping guard at the gates, and strolling along the thoroughfares. Magnificent fellows from the Upper Nile, flat-backed, and strong-limbed, with loose white trowsers and red sashes, their fez caps set jauntily over faces of shining black, and their expression fiercer than that of American coloured troops. If you ever get a chance, Sambo, of measuring yourself with yonder tall Mahommedans, they will be foemen worthy of your steel. Why dress negroes in dingy uniforms when they present so fine an appearance if properly clad? Let Jonathan drop all thought of equipping certain among his white sons as spurious Zouaves, but let him give his darkeys an Algerine costume. He need not trouble himself about teaching them Arabic, as, though a language of great power, it is not everywhere understood. Thus in Vera Cruz, the Egyptian garrison, albeit on good terms with the townspeople, is less comprehensible than could be wished. I saw one of their officers endeavouring, with the help of a dozen French words, to negotiate the postage of a

letter which he had addressed in flowery characters that no one could read. Another officer was bargaining in dumb show for some ornament that had attracted his notice, and laying coin after coin upon the shop counter with the air of Captain Cook addressing a friendly savage.

Now for going forward on our journey. A single day was enough to spend in Vera Cruz. Many who landed from the Eider had not spent more than a couple of hours, taking the first train to Paso del Macho, and I found many more of my fellow voyagers at the railway station on the afternoon of January 29th.

There was greater hurry than pomp about our departure; tickets sold by a man in a shed who spoke several languages; labels stuck on to every article of baggage by an excited porter with an immense *sombrero*. He labelled my waterproof coat before I could prevent him, and would have labelled my umbrella had he not been thrust aside at the critical moment and compelled to attend to some one else. We noticed that the railway carriages were of English, not American design, and that there was a guard of Egyptians with two small cannon mounted upon the train. Then we took our seats and started up country with a reasonable confidence that guerillas could be repulsed if they tried to renew their recent exploit.

Away we sped; through the city wall; past a battery

in which the picturesque sentinel was either named Hassan or ought to have been; across the end of the *Paseo*, where promenaders had not yet assembled, and out into the native jungle of the *Tierra Caliente*. Fields could be seen with cattle browsing on the rank vegetation, and huts of slender build, and Indians slightly clad. But the prevailing effect was jungle; dense tangled thickets, small trees, and large shrubs, that might hide a thousand men for every acre or might only afford refuge to insects and reptiles. We gradually rose from the level of Vera Cruz, and at one place came to a deep ravine through which water was flowing. There were soldiers at each station on the railway, and detachments patrolling its entire length; here, dark-featured Egyptians, whose fez caps seemed to afford them shade enough from the broiling sun; there, Mexican Imperialists, prancing by with sombreros that were hat and parasol in one. How could anybody live in such flimsy huts as were grouped around the railway stations? and how could a population, ignorant of the *Romano jib*, look so like Mr. Borrow's friends? Was the whole thing a pic-nic of Europeans in the country, with plenty of gipsies at hand picturesquely tending kettles of fish? Or did a solid government exist behind those lofty mountains which shut in our view? Here was the railway, as a civilized fact, quite apart from fortune-telling, and there, *honneur aux braves!* was a monument to a French company, which had fought

until only one man survived. The jungle lay for many miles behind us, the chain of mountains rose before us and shut out the setting sun. Again, as on shipboard, we could form no opinion, but should press forward and see what might be seen.

Paso del Macho, as a place of temporary importance destined to be eclipsed when the railway advances a little further, is not strong in hotels. A modest dining-shed with pigeon-hole bedrooms round it offered us shelter on the evening of our arrival, a meal to relieve our present hunger, and a promise of being called by human agency at four o'clock next morning. The inhabitants themselves were very wakeful, so were their mules. I doubt whether any but strangers slept at all that night, and, if any did, they rose betimes. At 4.30 A.M., coffee and chocolate were ready for departing guests; at five o'clock we were rumbled away, with moonlight bright enough to show what ruts and stones there were upon the road.

Our convoy consisted of two solid coaches on the American plan, with nine inside seats, and half-a-dozen front places outside. Our baggage was packed in rear, twenty-five pounds' weight being allowed to each passenger; our money was carried in circular notes of the Diligence Company, as a precaution against being robbed; our bodies were prepared for jolting, and our nerves for guerillas. Thus we set out from Paso del Macho; the first coach containing

unofficial passengers, the second containing the Prussian Envoy with an escort of three French soldiers. Into ruts and over stones, round sharp corners, and up a steep ascent; we had tasted the difficulties of the journey before sunrise, and were already mounting to a level far above Paso del Macho when day fully dawned. There was a splendid view down the valley to our left, where volumes of mist lay like a lake between the dense growth of timber on the hill-sides, and, presently entering another valley, we sighted the snowy peak of Orizaba. Mountain rose beyond mountain, as though nature herself had heaped up barriers to oppose our progress, whilst above them all towered that white-topped volcano, white even in the hottest days of summer, though glittering beneath a tropical sun.

Gentlemen vain of their driving should come and see our large-hatted charioteer with mahogany complexion and marvellous leggings. Drive four in hand, forsooth! Child's play, sir! This coach is drawn by nine mules, two wheelers, four leaders, harnessed abreast, and three extras cantering in front also abreast. Our charioteer grasps his bunch of ribands firmly with one hand, and uses a long-lashed whip with the other. He shouts encouragement to the willing workers, and roundly abuses those who hang back. Now we come to a sudden turning, where the cattle are closed up together well in hand; then they stretch away at full speed on a favourable

piece of road, whilst the whip cracks loudly above their heads. Deep ruts are avoided, awkward stones are given the go-by, as we sway from side to side and bound forward under the careful guidance of our large-hatted one. There is presently a check where the road becomes somewhat steep. Down scrambles an assistant, who has been perched beside the great man, and proceeds to punish the leading mules. We are trotting once more, whilst the assistant scrambles up again without a moment's pause in his favour. There are many critical points to be passed and few tolerable pieces of road, so no wonder that those who would drive a Mexican diligence must serve a four years' apprenticeship.

Life upon the highway, as we saw it during our journey, was quite a different thing from such life as may be studied out of railway-carriage windows. We had a continuous picture spread out before us of Mexico in the time of Maximilian. The gipsy-like peasants were tramping barefoot behind their pack-mules, or driving covered carts of mammoth proportion, to which four lean animals were harnessed abreast. At short intervals there were huts, with one window in front for the sale of cakes and fruit, not to mention a small array of bottles indicative that something could be had to drink. Here an itinerant bread vendor might be seen with a tray of fresh rolls on his head. Further along there was a butcher's establishment, where strips of meat were

being hung in the sun to dry. Some travellers cantered past on horseback, having pistol and carbine ready at hand. Others made the best of it on foot, with a thick stick as sufficient protection for the little they possessed. There were heavy waggons creeping forward beneath loads of foreign merchandise, and waggons that bore railway iron slowly to its destination, and carts with railway iron, and, at one spot, a gentleman with shining instruments surveying the country, whilst his swarthy following stretched a chain along the roadside. Steam was coming, beyond a doubt, though how that gentleman of scientific appearance intended to carry his line through the mountains we could not guess.

Steam was coming, and, meanwhile, our coaches did full justice to the old system. No time was lost in changing at the post-houses, no opportunity of quickening the pace to a trot was thrown away. It would be unfair, when the state of the road is considered, to translate our driver's achievements into so many miles an hour. I would rather count by the new prospects which opened upon us as we advanced, the valleys that were a mass of luxuriant vegetation, the roadside banks covered with wild flowers, and the bare mountain tops which stood out sharply against the sky. We met strong young peasants with burdens on their shoulders of which they made nothing, and funny little copper-coloured children gnawing diligently at sugar-cane. The

women had an oriental look, which suited well the presence of those turbaned Algerines who kept guard upon the road. You have, perhaps, seen their bright blue uniform in Paris, so can fancy a score of them marching at ease in the hot sunshine, though you will find it more difficult to imagine how rich are the fields of coffee and banana through which they pass. Now we are called on to halt, not by Algerines or guerillas, but by a detachment of red-trowsered Frenchmen. Half a dollar each person is the payment demanded on the plea of public security; a formal receipt is given to us, and we are at liberty to feel either safe or imposed upon according to taste.

The little town of Cordova was entered soon after this taking of toll. Here were breastworks to protect the principal square, and soldiers lounging on the shady side of the street, and inhabitants peeping through their barred windows. Here also was an hotel, where the coaches stopped for breakfast, and where a number of down passengers might be seen who had just partaken of that meal.

On leaving Cordova, our escort was reinforced by a couple of Austrians. They came into the foremost or unofficial coach, and sat wedged up so as to be of no possible use against any but courteous enemies, who might give them time to step out and prepare for action. One Austrian was a smart, intelligent jäger, who had served in Italy and Denmark, spoke tolerable French, and had already picked up

enough Spanish to make himself understood. His companion was a dismounted hussar of silent temperament and much befrogged jacket, who slumbered heavily despite the chance of being called on in haste to defend himself. I accounted the hussar a material guarantee that those who knew best thought our journey would be uninterrupted.

From Cordova to the city of Orizaba was a fatiguing drive for the mules and a hot one for all concerned. The inside was warm and stuffy, the outside was scorching. We could see plenty of shade, and could feast our eyes on masses of green foliage, but upon the road it was neither green nor shady. Dust rose from the carts with railway iron, dust circled above the pack-mules with tinkling bells. It was a relief to look up at the mountains and think that they were out of reach of dust. We had fine views of the surrounding country as we wound along hill-sides or rattled down into valleys. There were coffee berries spread out to dry before every cottage, and the coffee plant growing thickly under the shadow of broad-leaved bananas. Then we came upon a space of level ground amongst the hills, where cattle could be seen pasturing to right and left of us, and presently our convoy trotted into Orizaba.

No time could be afforded for sight-seeing. Food and sleep were the necessities of the moment. To arrive at 3 P.M. and start again at 1 A.M. was a tire-

some programme; but so the diligence proprietors had arranged our journey, and so we must travel or not at all. These diligence proprietors abjured every sort of responsibility. We took our baggage, light as it was, at our own risk, and forfeited our places if we were late in appearing, and were advised not to carry valuables with us. It was very well to rise with the lark, supposing that his habits in Mexico be regular, which I leave ornithologists to determine, but why steal a flight on so early a bird by taking coach at 1 A.M.? Why, indeed? The question remained unanswered, the coffee and chocolate were ready at half-past twelve, and we huddled into our places more than half asleep.

First there came a clattering over the stones, and then a steady swinging trot of several hours. I was conscious that we advanced in bright moonlight, between ranges of hills which gradually drew nearer to each other, and I have a dim impression of passing cultivated fields and white-walled *haciendas*. There was a second edition of coffee and chocolate to be obtained at one house where we changed horses; there was also a tendency to think themselves wide awake amongst passengers who quietly slumbered, and to continue their conversation in a vague, random way when they had been roused by the approaching dislocation of their necks. It was very cold for the two hours before sunrise, and daylight showed us that we had come to the end of a valley which was

shut in by an abrupt wall of mountain, such as might form the end of the world in a fairy tale. Up we wound by a zig-zag road, scaling the face of the wall which we could not avoid. Now a waggon was overtaken, stopping for its dozen mules to rest; now a cart with railway iron, which told us as plainly as iron could that steam might be expected here some day. Up we wound, higher still above the valley, through a cold atmosphere that made the muleteers upon the road gather their blankets round them, and that rendered it more pleasant to walk than to sit shivering in the coach. Now we had reached one of the summits—*las cumbres*, as they are called by Mexicans—and found whole caravans of carts and pack-mules getting under way; some men crouching round watch-fires, others busy with their harness, whilst not a few were singing merrily. We descended for a short distance to the bottom of a valley that crossed our route, and wound up another zig-zag with plentiful whipcracking over our weary teams. I enjoyed the fresh breeze on the mountain-side, and had a tempting glimpse of valleys and hill-tops to the southward. How easy it seemed on foot to cut straight across the zig-zags and leave those creeping coaches behind.

Here was a drove of strong, sleek-looking donkeys, each with his two chests of merchandize slung across his back, and their leader wearing a bell to guide the rest. I bow to the Indian lads who are in charge

of this humble convoy and wish them good morning. Off come their sombreros in polite acknowledgment.

“Are they going far?” I enquire.

“Yes, sir, a long way; to the City.”

Then one of them with an insinuating smile—he is a gipsy fortune-teller in appearance, but does not know it—asks whether I am French. No? Nor German? “Thanks be to God!”

A second lad suggests that I am *Americano*, and their countenances brighten at having found me out.

Another denial, with a statement that I am English, seems to puzzle them, until the first lad recollects that he has seen Englishmen, and enquires whether our language is not a dialect of American. “You make yourselves understood one with another,” he continues, “that much I know.”

The second lad expresses a wish to learn many languages.

“He wishes it, Señor,” says his companion, “because many strangers come to Mexico.”

I ask whether they like to see strangers among them; a delicate question which is answered with that same fortune-telling smile.

“Who knows? Some strangers please us, others are our enemies.”

Referring to their journey, I mention that thieves are reported to attack people who travel this road. “Is that the truth?”

“There are thieves, they say, but we care nothing about them.”

And so it really is. Coaches are stopped, and travellers are relieved of their portable property, but waggons and mule-trains are seldom interfered with, the Robin Hood recipe for making brigands income-tax collectors being strictly adhered to.

We reached the top of the ascent, and our cattle enjoyed a few minutes' rest, whilst those passengers who had walked up resumed their seats. Then we trotted forward on to a vast plain which stretched away mile after mile and seemed to have no end. There was an air of “once upon a time, very long ago” about this Mexican table-land, such as Jack must have observed in the country spread out before him when he had climbed his beanstalk. Low hills skirted the plain for some distance on either side, as if to guard its inhabitants against tumbling off to the world below. There were odd-looking prickly-pear trees covered with dust, and aloes and dwarf palms, but verdure there was none. Columns of sand, whirled aloft by the morning breeze, floated over us like clouds. The fields lay bare and parched or had only dry stubble in them. It was evident that a rainy season would benefit the giants and fairies on whose dominions we were trespassing.

Benefit giants and fairies? Nourish the beanstalk by which Jack must descend? Alas! we could not travel by diligence out of our common-place life.

Here were those clumsy coaches jolting us cruelly; here was very palpable dust pouring down our throats. Granted that we were thousands of feet above the sea, in a temperate region beyond the power of yellow fever, that the giant Orizaba was in full view, his silver crown all radiant with sunshine, still we were outside Fairyland. Railway iron confronted us, hard and unmistakable. It had been brought hither with much trouble, with creaking of wheels and straining of luckless mules; but here it was at last, in a dozen broad-wheeled carts that well-nigh blocked the road and made our driver swear. Doomed driver! Doomed coaches! Steam will come and will sweep you into oblivion. How it will shriek and tear madly forward when once upon the plain. That scientific gentleman whom we left making survey of coffee and bananas will presently ascend to a temperate clime, will avoid the *cumbres* up which our mules have toiled, seek other *cumbres* of easier gradients a few miles northward, and complete his labours with a triumphant advance on Apisaxo junction.

Notes of our journey for guidance of future travellers in the pre-locomotive period:—

I. Keep your mouth covered to avoid suffocation. If you happen to possess a respirator put it on; as also green spectacles.

II. Avoid small purchases of food at the village where you change horses, as your convoy will stop at

Palmar for breakfast, and it is difficult to do yourself justice unless you begin by being hungry. There is a uniform charge for meals on this route; to wit, one dollar, and a traveller has more set before him than he can eat.

III. Beware of sunstroke even in winter. Two of my fellow-passengers suffered seriously by exposing themselves to the heat at mid-day on the strength of the cold they had experienced at midnight. It is a variable climate, requiring a great-coat and parasol.

Reflections on the journey which may occur to many who undertake it:—

I. Maximilian's government is said to throw dust in the eyes of foreign visitors. A sheer calumny, since no one in his senses would trouble to do what is so effectually done by nature herself.

II. The people of this country make no effort to conceal unpleasant facts. Every here and there along the road are plain wooden crosses to show where somebody has been murdered. Why should not our railway companies adopt a similar plan, putting up a cross, or other device, on the scene of each fatal accident?

There was little to see beyond aloes and prickly-pears, dust clouds, and pepper trees, as we travelled steadily across the plain. Barefooted peasants were working in a few of the fields, whilst others, equally devoid of shoe-leather, travelled from village to

village under heavy burdens. We met a party of French soldiers returning home on furlough; bronzed, hardy men, who marched so lightly through the heat and dust that they appeared determined to reach Vera Cruz at a single stage. Then came several waggon loads of invalided French, with more able-bodied soldiers to guard them. Then a drove of mules, a native gentleman travelling with his armed servants, a half-dressed Indian boy watching his flock of sheep and goats. We wondered what these creatures could find to live on hereabouts, and supposed that they were going to pasture on the distant hill sides. Such amongst us as knew the country in its rainy aspect combated the idea that it was always parched and barren. The dry ravines through which our convoy bumped would become brimming water-courses, the road would be deep in mud instead of dust, the fields would be fresh and green. At this point a coach had been well-nigh washed away only last August. There was a hollow that might have floated a good-sized vessel! They were doubtless correct in their statements; for how, otherwise, could farming be carried on over a district so thoroughly baked at the time of which I speak? But we felt rather aggrieved by tantalizing allusions to rain, and we wished that certain persons would accept dust as a final condition.

You would have felt secure in travelling with a military escort. What could guerillas do against

highly-trained European troops? Now we, who saw the said troops, the jäger and hussar already described, stowed away in the Minister's coach, and who knew that those three Frenchmen with double-barrelled carbines had been left at Orizaba, were not desirous of an encounter, though our enemies should number only ten. Ten was the smallest force assigned by common consent to a guerilla band, whilst two hundred was thought more likely to prove the exact figure. It was not a cheerful subject to discuss, that of highway-robbery, when so many crosses stood beside the road, yet it had the strange fascination possessed by sea-sickness in a Dieppe packet. One of our party had been robbed three times, so was considered an authority. He gave it as his opinion that you should have something in your purse, wherewith to gratify the assailants. If baffled by circular notes or letters of credit, they might treat you roughly, whilst if propitiated with a gift of ten dollars they would probably behave like civilized beings. However much you might admire the plan of paying your hotel bills by an entry on the circular note of the Diligence Company and thus avoid all necessity for cash in hand, it would be well to remember that some whom you were likely to meet preferred ready-money transactions.

What queer incrustated objects those Lancashire weavers became as they stoutly maintained their post on the outside of the Minister's coach, defying dust

and sunshine. They had made up their minds for a rough journey, they said, when they started, and nothing seemed to daunt them. There were other English workmen in our party, bound to the mines of Pachuca, and a pleasant-faced young Teuton fresh from the fatherland, who intended to settle in Mexico. Then there was a French officer, with long moustaches, who believed that "the cavalry could still make itself respected." No dismounted dragoons for him; no firing from a distance; but charge straight home until your sabre comes into play. As to this country, one thing was certain, the people must be all killed and then order might possibly be established. "Ah, pardon, I used but a military phrase." Monsieur is somewhat confused, despite his off-hand manners, for that pale youth in the corner has flushed up and looks half inclined to reply with warmth. The youth is a Mexican. An awkward circumstance, since good breeding forbids you to speak of exterminating a man to his face. Yet, "who could guess his nationality when he spoke such good French?" Monsieur has completely rallied, as would his troopers after being scattered by an ambuscade. "It is a fine country, a magnificent country: all must agree that its people are wonderfully polite."

The cavalry officer dropped all allusion to that vigorous plan for re-establishing order, and covered his retreat with a rapid discharge of small talk. He

refrained from a discussion of passing events, until, at our next halting place, when the Mexican youth chanced to be out of earshot, he gave a cut all round with the following proverb:—

“Gentlemen,” he cried, “the people here understand us perfectly. They may dislike every stranger, but they can distinguish one nation from another, and this is what they say of us—‘When Frenchmen meet you, fly; when Austrians come, stand your ground; when Belgians appear in sight, throw yourselves upon them.’” The proverb was given with perfect *bonhommie*, and as if all his hearers must enjoy its sentiment as much as did Monsieur himself.

In one small town on our way there was a temporary amphitheatre for bull-fighting, erected like a travelling circus in England, and here we saw a clump of spears with tri-coloured pennants borne by Mexican Imperialists. It must seem strange to the Austrian contingent to defend a red, white, and green flag, so closely resembling that of Italy. In Amazoc, a somewhat larger town, there were a dozen boys round the coach windows with ornamented spurs for sale. Amazoc is famous on account of its spur-making, and I argued from the number of beggars who besought our charity, that the place must suffer through unequal distribution of wealth. Leaving behind us both spurs and mendicants, we passed a curiously-shaped mountain, called Malinche, the

name of the Indian girl so useful to Cortes, and at about eight o'clock in the evening we arrived at Puebla.

Rattling over stones, turning sharp round street-corners, driving by shops and houses, soldiers and civilians, sustained the belief that here was a city of seventy thousand inhabitants, second only to the capital in importance. But there was no time to verify this impression, for stood we not in sore need of repose who must start again at 3 A.M. or risk indefinite detention? Tyrant Diligence Company, beware! Steam will avenge our sleepy quarrel by wafting you away. Yet perchance, like other tyrants, you are but a creature of circumstances, and make haste in order to oblige the impatient public.

Did we dream of a dinner eaten by lamplight, and of retiring to rest in rooms which opened on to a stone gallery round the courtyard of the hotel? Was that display of coffee and chocolate at half-past two a reality or a delusion of art-magic? I can say nothing positive, though I incline, from the appearance of my circular note next morning, to think that at any rate we had paid our bills. Some passenger raised a disturbance about not having his proper place; somebody came with a lantern and looked in at the coach window. There was a cathedral with the moon shining upon it, and a gate where we stopped before getting clear of the town.

When daylight came our convoy was far from Puebla. We were advancing over a tract of open country which sloped gradually towards a lofty mountain chain. To our rear was Malinche, with its summit like a human face, standing out against the glow in the eastern sky; whilst straight before us, as twin giants keeping guard upon the Valley of Mexico, are Popocatepetl and Iztacihuatl. Hard names these, which I rejoice to set down, for, of course, you will enjoy pronouncing them. Sound the first boldly, *Popo-cate-pettle*, and make a rush at the second by saying *Ista-see-wattle*. Should this recipe puzzle you, apply to some intelligent native, and remember that my liability to explain is limited. But apart from their names, which, however hard, I would not have changed to Mount Grant and Mount Sheridan, they are glorious old giants. So unpretending withal, not fenced off by a crowd of big retainers, but showing their full proportions to a stranger's gaze, so that we doubt as we draw near them whether they can be more than ordinary hills. Yet there are crests of eternal snow upon their heads, and wide strips of barren rock next to the snow, and wider strips where stunted pine trees flourish next to the barren rock, and whole forests of pine trees lower down, in which you might lose yourself for days together. Popocatepetl* is a volcano with sharply defined summit, like his rival the peak of Orizaba,

* In the native language literally "Smoke-mountain."

and bears his topmost snow-flakes nearly eighteen thousand feet above the sea. Iztacihuatl* is of lower stature and less fiery temper, and was thus named by the Indians from the shape of its crest, which resembles a recumbent figure.

The open country at the foot of the mountain chain was rich and well cultivated. There were banks and ditches by the wayside, with young corn sprouting in many of the fields, and frequent signs of artificial irrigation. We passed through comfortable-looking villages, and saw more than one snug *hacienda* which an English squire would not have disdained to occupy. There were occasional *parages*, as there had been all across the plain—spacious enclosures, with high walls and gateways, to shelter convoys of merchandize. But except these Mexican caravansaries, we saw little to suggest the thought of troublous times. In fact the country just here looked more like portions of Western Europe than anything that we had seen since leaving Vera Cruz. Few, if any, mementos appeared of the insecurity of human life. The mounted escort which accompanied us for a stage or so out of Puebla had returned to its regular beat; the air was delightfully fresh and bracing, so that a stray mouthful of dust seemed a trifle not worth growling over. We might have thought ourselves in England at the beginning of May but for those hard-named mountains which would insist that

* Meaning "The White Woman."

they were Mexican and those swarthy farm labourers of Aztec descent.

Now came a tug for our nine mules and for the mules of the coaches which followed us. They had added a third vehicle to the procession at Puebla and had crammed all three with their full complement of passengers. Now came cracking of whips and jumping down of assistant coachmen as we wound through a mountain pass with sand and pine-trees taking the place of the cultivated fields below. Iztacihuatl was left to the southward, and the great volcano lay also in that direction, but still further away. This much we learnt from those accustomed to the journey, and they spoke feelingly of its danger in former days, which danger they opined to be scarcely yet at an end. Well was it that we mustered so strong a party and had moreover two soldiers on the outside of the foremost coach. Better still that we met detachments of cavalry patrolling the road, for here again there were many wooden crosses to right and left. We overtook waggons toiling up the hill and met others rumbling down it. We saw woodcutters at work and yokes of oxen hauling pine-timber. There were sandy hollows and sandy mounds, with picturesque glimpses among the tree-tops of other mounds and hollows at a greater distance. But no general view could be obtained; nothing could be seen of the giants who were keeping guard on the valley.

Still we mounted higher, in an atmosphere which had grown perceptibly thin, until there appeared before us a sandy opening of some extent among the trees and hillocks, through which flowed a small stream called the Rio Frio. Beside this stream was a posting-house of the same name, with a group of wooden huts to keep it company. The coaches for Puebla had already arrived, so there was confusion of waiters and crowding at the breakfast-table, whilst the landlord seemed to speak as many languages as he pocketed dollars. Our height above the sea-level did not obviate the necessity for paying, though it sharpened the appetite, and if we left anything eatable behind, it was because we could not catch sight of it. Rio Frio, being the turning point of the journey, deserves especial mention if I could think of anything more to say about it, but that not being the case, we will set off for our down-hill stage to the Valley.

Sand and pine trees, pine trees and sand, with detachments of soldiers keeping guard and woodcutters chopping busily. Such was the beginning. Then there opened upon us a magnificent prospect; pity that our driver gave us so short a time to admire it. We had crossed the mountain chain; we had outflanked the giants, who it must be confessed were stolid sentries and did not seem to care one jot. We stood on the edge of the Valley of Mexico with lakes and fields and hills and towns spread out at our feet,

with an opposite mountain-chain dim and far off, with a sky as blue as painters have ever given to southern Italy, and a breeze as fresh as you might breathe among the wolds of Northumberland. On we drove to the level of the plain below; on, across the plain, by farms and villages, by the whitened shore of a lake where Indians were collecting salt, by gardens that had strange-looking hedges of cactus, and fields where long-horned cattle were browsing. Horses drew the coach instead of mules, there were signs of denser population than we had yet discovered—more waggons, more beasts of burden. When it grew dark we were near the city. We could see the lights of Chapultepec shining before us, the lights of an emperor's palace, and could hear a shrill whistle from the railway which runs thence to his capital. We had found more at Orizaba than at Vera Cruz; more on the plain of Puebla than in the Tierra Caliente; and, "Hullo! here's an empire!" was to be the latest discovery along our route—the latest of the things upon a large scale, though we had yet to learn how slowly our driver could creep through the environs of the city, as though all his horses were lame, and how he could dash forward and rattle over the stones when putting on his final spurt for the honour of the Diligence Company.

CHAPTER XXXII.

PARIS IN ANOTHER LATITUDE.

What the mountains have seen — A classical performance.

HAPPEN what may before ten years are out, I shall remember that Mexico was a gay capital during the period of French occupation. Could any reasonable traveller desire to see brighter uniforms than were exhibited in the streets, or people more picturesque than those who brought fruit and flowers to the market? Could anybody, however unreasonable by nature, wish for a clearer sky, for greater freedom from smoke—observe I do not say from smoking, as a cigarette is in every mouth—and for a climate more delicious, than this favoured city can boast? Its elevation of between seven and eight thousand feet above the sea gives Mexico cool refreshing nights, whilst the power of a tropical sun makes its noontide warm enough to please a salamander. The mornings and evenings are happily tempered to a moderate degree of heat, and what we should call spring cloth-

ing may be worn all the year round. Foreign residents possess overcoats for more than the name of the thing, and native Mexicans have their comfortable *zarapes* or coloured blankets, which they wear either flung round them like principal conspirators, or, if of scantier measure, fixed by a slit in the middle for the owner's head to come through.

Mosquitos have failed to colonize The Valley, and this fact is surely sufficient compensation to such as dislike the shortness of breath caused by living in a thin atmosphere. Though horse-racing be limited to spins of a few hundred yards, because no living steed could remain long at full swing with nothing particular to breathe, and though going upstairs two steps at a time be a serious penance, yet the absence of mosquitos, the absence of yellow fever, and the presence of stupendous mountains, will bring thousands of visitors to Mexico when the railway shall have been completed and the country tranquillized. I speak of the Greek Kalends? Surely not, so far as the railway is concerned, for modern engineers are unstoppable, and, as to tranquillizing, that may some day be effected. Things are at the worst, say those who know, which is proverbially a good sign. When that immigration above foreshadowed shall take place, let *amateur* artists bring their sketching blocks and colour-boxes, let pre-Raphaelites of every sort attend. How much more novel would be the study of a barefooted Indian water-carrier, whose pitchers

are so well balanced that while one pulls his head back another tugs it forward ; how much fresher, I say, would be such a study, than the hurdy-gurdy boy on his native heather.

To-day visitors have three distinct attractions. They may speculate upon that military garb, faultlessly neat and well designed, which reproduces Paris in another latitude ; they may enjoy the novel appearance of the country folk, who go barefooted with a fortune in silver thread twisted round their hats ; or they may wonder at the grandeur of the scenery surrounding this gay little capital. But, although it should become still gayer in course of years, its attractions will scarcely remain the same as at present. Those bright uniforms must return to Europe ; those peasants must go ahead, until, taking to soap and shoe-leather, they lose much of their picturesqueness ; and the mountains will be left to watch over some new development of human ingenuity.

They have seen curious things already, those mountains ; a nation flourishing without iron or horses ; its conquest by a handful of strangers ; and the political torpor of Spanish rule. They have seen the nation without horses become one of daring horsemen, possessing iron enough to maintain bloody insurrection against Spain. Then is the country distracted and the proud bad edifice of power shaken to its foundation. There is shedding of patriot

blood, as when Morelos died ; usurpation by a successful general ; and that general's speedy overthrow. The handsome Iturbide, more popular in Mexico than any man before or since his time, places himself on an imperial throne, loses his friends and his popularity, and is miserably slain. After this failure of imperialism come some twenty years of republican government, very far from tranquil or peaceful, during which the shadow of her northern neighbour grows deeper over Mexico and President Santa Anna reigns as an untitled despot.

Then the mountains witness another conquest by a handful of strangers. General Scott's is a much larger handful than was that of Cortes, and his wild rollicking soldiers are not altogether unpopular, for, though they kick all natives of dark complexion off the pavement, yet they throw their money about freely. Perhaps those experienced old mountains smile at the claims of blond *versus* brunet, and bethink them of kings and statesmen with swarthy cheeks whom they saw in Mexico when the ancestors of certain blonds were churls of low degree.

The rollicking strangers take their departure, with plenty of home-fighting before them as afterwards appeared. Mexico is left to undergo a few more revolutions, while Liberals struggle with Reactionists. At last the Liberals are triumphant, and are setting matters to rights as best they can, when more strangers arrive in sight of the sea-shore mountains.

Men of three different flags have claims which may not be postponed, and they come to enforce their claims. Presently the English and Spanish flags are withdrawn, the sea-shore mountains watch them as they sail away, and the giants that guard the Valley behold a French army advancing. "There is more than a handful of strangers this time, and when they have passed those spell-bound giants and taken Mexico under their care, they seem inclined to stay as Cortes stayed, rather than to kick people off the pavement, and swear great oaths, and return with empty pockets whence they came. Here are polite strangers, who kick nobody, and touch their hats when asking questions of natives; but it must be confessed that they acquire a deadly habit of fusilading Liberals for *ladrones*, and that they are little loved by Mexicans high or low. Do the mountains think of Iturbide when a second emperor is established at their very feet? and do they foresee how long he is destined to reign? Perhaps they can no more penetrate the future than can other hoary heads with great knowledge of the past. But there, for certain, is a second empire in Mexico, supported by a second empire in France, whilst the beautiful valley is full of foreign soldiers, its clear cool atmosphere trembles to the roll of foreign drums, and its inhabitants, whether loyal or discontented, are worth coming many leagues to sketch.

The pavements of the capital are crowded; the

shops are full of goods. Native gentlemen in their handsome riding costume—*sombrero*, jacket, and gaiters, with silver stirrups, silver thread on the hat, and silver buttons on the gaiters—troop every morning to the Paseo. All the world drives thither in the afternoon, and comes back to dinner, with a string of gleaming carriage lamps, along the street of San Francisco. There are signs of building in some localities, with a small imitation of Parisian boulevard making through one quarter more favoured than the rest; but Mexico has not been tortured with innovations. Its steam railways and its horse railway have come quietly in without knocking down a single residence, its scraps of cloistered side-walk have been left undisturbed, and few attempts have been made to raise additional stories above the solid flat-topped houses of the city. It is a substantial place of anything but lath and plaster. Its streets moderately wide, and running at right angles to each other; its architecture plain, save where a mass of quaint carving may be seen over the doorway of some old church or convent. The Liberals suppressed many religious communities in 1861, which the French did not restore when they came into power. Convents have been used as cavalry stables, and conventual churches filled with army stores. No wonder that the *parti prêtre* is dissatisfied. Juarists could do no more against it.

You wish for spots to moralize on. An intelligent

stranger should always seek such spots, and be sure to place himself right before beginning. Go to the cathedral, which occupies the site of the pyramid of heathen worship; or to the palace hard by, where stood an older palace in which Cortes was lodged, and where, after hostilities broke out, he sustained a discharge of stones hurled from the top of the pyramid. Cross the great square, and go down the Calle San Francisco, until you come to a block of houses on your left hand amongst which is the Hotel Iturbide. You have now reached the site of that famed Zoological Garden, established by the Aztec Princes. As one sits in the second story of a bustling hotel, it is difficult to fancy a garden having ever existed below stairs, though not so hard to fancy Aztecs, for they can be seen every moment. They come round the gallery with messages and chat with the French soldiers in the courtyard and wait to receive the diligence which presently rattles up dusty with travel. They are part and parcel of the Mexican population, as they have a good right to be, and, though in the city all of them can speak Spanish, you will occasionally hear a few sentences of that tongue which has left its strange hard names to lakes and mountains.

I have not described the capital systematically, but have rather strayed into it, and brought you with me as chance directed, so we ought, for obtaining a proper sense of things around us, to return to

the cathedral in the great square. Leave, therefore, this Hotel Iturbide, where you have been supposed to moralize, and where the Emperor Augustin I. once dwelt; let us have a *déjeuner à la fourchette* at the restaurant of the *Hotel Nacional*, or an ice at the *Café de la Concordia* on our way, and then, with renewed vigour, advance along the cool pavement on the shady side of the street until we have to cross the broiling sunshine of the square. It is a square so large as to make the two-storied houses which surround it on three sides look insignificant. The palace has no claim to grandeur of appearance, being very like a barrack, and is easily dwarfed along with private dwellings to south and west. But the cathedral, standing alone on the northern side, is decidedly imposing. Its main entrance is on the square beneath a clock-turret at the pitch of the roof, and between two massive belfry-towers. There are well-preserved sculptures about this main entrance, and, to the right, an elaborately carved doorway of the Lady Chapel. Visitors who do not mind a dirty staircase can ascend one of the towers to a much thumbed wicket, can open the wicket with a silver key, and scramble at pleasure up some flights of wooden steps until they find themselves amongst the bells. Then, if afraid of being deafened by metallic vibrations, they should mount a little higher to a platform whence Mexico may be leisurely surveyed. Here no guide explains objects of interest in broken

English, but shall Smith and Jones bear the whole opprobrium of name-writing, whilst these belfry walls display snobbish records in very choice Castilian?

Now for a good long look all round the compass—a stranger's look on a fair landscape that is to be with him for a moment and become only a dream in the recollections of his after life. You have, perhaps, ascended the spire of Strasburg Cathedral and thought that nothing could be finer than the view which you thence obtained. Come hither and change your mind. Observe the faint blue haze upon that circle of mountains. Sniff the fresh breeze from yonder shining lake of Texcoco. How the lake does shine, and how bright everything is! A valley as much enclosed as the kingdom of Rasselas, with a salt sea and a broad extent of cultivated fields surrounding its great city. Look nearer, where flat house-tops are relieved by the domes and towers of churches. Did any other place ever possess such a proportion of ecclesiastical buildings? True that there are two hundred thousand inhabitants and that many of the buildings are closed. Yet still they give a character to Mexico. The Spaniards were grateful for their conquest and were resolved that Christian temples should abound where heathendom had lately reigned. Christian temples without much of charity to the conquered. But that is all past and gone. Look down on the great square in which tiny figures with straw hats

are working at an ornamental reserve in its centre for a fountain or a pagoda or most likely for a monument. Listen to the music from that French regiment marching past; and, on a sudden, stop your ears as the bells chime forth with a rush of sound which seems to shake the tower. You may pause for yet a moment now when the bells have ceased and glance towards the vaulted roof and dome of the cathedral and the smaller dome of the Lady Chapel. As we descend there are fresh young voices singing lustily close by: A group of children belonging, I suppose, to the custodian use the roof as their play-ground. They have not caught up solemn chants but give an operatic scene with much spirit to entertain a brown baby that lies grinning on its side. Our presence disturbs them, so we will dive yet deeper into the gloom of the tower and seek the wicket at the top of the dirty staircase.

Shall I tell somewhat of the foreign pic-nic in the capital? How a large room in a Frenchman's house was devoted to French Protestant worship, and how no English chapel had yet been established? There was an American newspaper edited by an ex-Confederate, which came out every Saturday; and a German paper also published once a week. The French had two daily journals, *L'Ere Nouvelle* and *L'Estafette*; this last being highly esteemed by all the foreign community. *L'Estafette* was severe upon Mexican officials, rebuked the city authorities where

they showed want of vigour, spoke boldly of politics in France, and put the best possible face on Maximilian's situation. Of Spanish papers, there were several, but they must be noticed further on, as only a couple of flunkeys among them were attached to the pic-nic party.

It was a changeful party. Foreigners came, and foreigners went. They grumbled at the Mexicans loudly or grumbled at the Government in accents more subdued. I was often reminded of the free-lance in Bulwer's 'Rienzi,' who slashed the old lady across her face for not being sixteen. Foreigners abused Mexico because it was not an earthly paradise; blamed its people in one breath for want of spirit, in the next for protracting a hopeless resistance; hinted that Maximilian's condescension amounted to weakness, and presently censured him for failing to conciliate his subjects. And, meanwhile, grumble as they might, these same foreigners enjoyed themselves to the utmost of their power—kept up the pic-nic merrily with riding and driving, with excursions as far out of town as it was safe to go, and visits to the Opera House to hear Peralta sing.

Mexican society was so mixed up with the pic-nic party, had been so completely taken by storm, that many foreigners doubted its separate existence. Marshal Bazaine had married a Mexican, and others of lower rank than the Marshal, both French and

German, had allied their fortunes with those of fair daughters of the country, or, if report spoke truth, had acquired, without fortunes, the fair daughters who were better provided. His Majesty had revived certain titles of nobility in favour of families which had borne them under Spanish rule; and the upper classes in general were supposed to be won over to the Empire. Whether they really were or were not is a question to be answered by time.

But the educated sense of the country was far from being secured. Stray scraps of opinion slipped out when least expected, and the native press, though muzzled by strict censorship, would have its say, which was not always a prudent say and was often very amusing. Of course 'La Sociedad,' as a leading journal occupied with business and politics, was compelled to tread carefully. On the other hand 'La Sombra,' the Mexican 'Punch'—a periodical "Jocoserio, Ultra-Liberal, y Reformista," as it styled itself—slashed right and left, brought out a history of the country replete with covert sarcasm, fell without mercy upon its sycophant rivals, spoke of Mexico as an American Italy, and always had something racy in its poetical effusions. Nor was 'La Sombra' alone in this style of writing. It had companions with which it moved forward amid warnings and suspensions. The people read eagerly and greatly relished what they read. Mexicans have a keen appreciation of fun, of the slightest turn in a sentence, or the

smallest indication of a good thing. If they could understand English they might enjoy one of our London farces, which is saying a great deal.

Theatricals in Maximilian's capital were well supported. The principal houses given up to Spanish plays had, as you will believe, more native than foreign patronage. Everybody went to the Opera, and nobody, figuratively speaking, visited the obscure little *Teatro de Nuevo Mexico*. Thither then you shall accompany me—a whim which I must beg you to excuse for the sake of your transpontine reminiscences, this diminutive theatre ranking as a place of entertainment somewhere between the Surrey and Victoria. Need I add that it receives much favour from the people, and is underrated by would-be fashionables?

There was a crowd round the door at half-past eight in the evening, with Indians selling fruit, and two gentlemen ready to dispose of tickets at an outside window near the door. You must not fancy portico or passage, a name flaring forth overhead in gas jets or a box-office of imposing aspect; but merely two openings, the door and window above-mentioned, in a blank wall on a blank ill-lighted street. The window was partially barred, which gave those two gentlemen with tickets for sale a caged look that their mild demeanour seemed little to warrant. I had come in very good time and could have my choice of places. There was a small ground

plan of the house before them with squills of paper stuck into holes representing seats. They handed me one of these squills together with my ticket, and observed that if I should wish to change my seat I had only to apply at the window. There, gentlemen, who sit at home in English box-offices, there was politeness for you, and but a quarter dollar to pay!

The material house was dark and the figurative house was scanty up to fifteen minutes before nine o'clock. A weird box-keeper, who might have been a guerilla off duty so far as looks went, ushered in several men with immense hats and tried to read the numbers on their squills of paper. But it was too dark, so he gave up the attempt, and they seated themselves vaguely in what might be other people's places. The weird box-keeper now returned ceremoniously conducting three Indian women, one of whom carried a baby slung in her scarf, whilst another led a small boy by the hand. The men with the immense hats went out to obtain refreshments, and I began to fancy that there would be no performance. Ten minutes passed! A quarter of an hour! Had my money been paid for this? If so, no wonder that the management would allow a change of seat. There was hope in yon box-keeper's reappearance with more women and children, hope in the advent of a youth who brought lamps which he hung round the house. I recovered my confi-

dence and waited patiently. Now the men in immense hats came quickly back, as though something might soon happen. Other men in hats equally large and other women with children equally small pressed through the doorway. Had every one of common sense remained outside for a "second price at nine o'clock," leaving bloated aristocrats to give full price and see nothing extra? There was no time to follow up this question. Events succeeded each other rapidly: a gendarme took post in the pit; a vendor of sweetmeats traversed the galleries; an audience of all possible shades between Creole and Indian, with a few who were purely of the former race, and many who were purely of the latter, prepared to listen; an orchestra weak in number though by no means unskilful prepared to play. There was smoking of cigarettes in the wooden stalls and on the rush-bottomed chairs of the gallery; flirtation between gendarme and Indian girl; energetic place-hunting of the weird box-keeper; busy trade for the vendor of sweetmeats. These things occurred while guitars were being tuned; and now the figurative house grew impatient. It had borne a delay of an hour beyond the half-past eight *en punto* of the hand-bills. But from the topmost gallery there at last proceeded cries of encouragement to those who tuned guitars; then there was tapping of feet on the floor of the pit; then the overture began.

I have never seen an audience more thoroughly

enjoying music or greater order maintained amongst labouring men. Well might the gendarme flirt with the Indian girl, for he had nothing else to do. There were no quarrels about places, no hustling away intruders, or cries from aloft of "Throw him over!" When one ragged gentleman thought that another whose wardrobe was likewise defective occupied a seat to which he had a better claim, this first ragged gentleman—I give the grand old name advisedly—raising his wide *sombrero* and bowing with a tinge of stiffness, as a leader of the opposition might bow to a prime minister, thus spoke:—

"Excuse me, sir, but I believe that you occupy a seat which holds the number of my ticket."

To which the other gentleman of defective wardrobe replies, as he rises and lifts his *sombrero*, "At your disposition."

Go on whispering over the back of the seat, gendarme, for these men will not resort to fisticuffs; they know how to conduct themselves in public. So do the babies, the brown babies who are unnaturally wakeful, yet obey a cry of *Silencio*, when the curtain whisks up and hats are taken off and the stage is revealed to our gaze.

We are beholding a pastoral in four acts, such as would be thought slow by London playgoers, albeit there is something sensational in the position of the hero as first discovered. There he lies on an uneasy couch in what I conclude to be the infernal regions.

Flashes of fire dart from the floor, from the walls, from the ceiling, and a strong smell of squibs pervades the house. Singing is heard from a chorus at the side of the stage, and we wonder how long the poor fellow will sleep. Now he awakes and comes forward to the foot-lights. His costume is classical, his utterance effective. Pity that so fine a man should have come to such a bad end. Pity too that the prompter tries to make a feature of his part. Nevertheless we are delighted. We applaud from pit to topmost gallery, and when the weird box-keeper, springing enthusiastically on to the stage, places a wreath over the hero's brow, our applause redoubles.

There are more fiery discharges and a longer speech than it has often been my fortune to hear. Confound that prompter! He spoils the novelty of what our hero says. Ah! now for a diversion. One classical personage has come on from the side, another has risen through the floor, and they immediately tackle the hero with sentiments as lengthy as his own. Are these new comers furies? Or noble Romans? Or what? They are evidently fire proof, which leads us to think them furies; so we applaud the hero at each reply to their insinuations, and half forgive the prompter for his zeal in a good cause. Fiercer still is the rain of fire which descends upon that dauntless three, whilst the chorus ever and anon sings very sweetly. Then there is a whisk of the curtain and end of Act I.

During the interval which followed, everybody of

spirit sallied forth to refresh himself on bread and fruit, with perhaps a drop of *pulque*.* Hats were put on, sweetmeats were handed round, and a ragged boy carrying a water pitcher made his appearance in rear of the sweetmeat man. After a long delay the stalls were once more filled, the good-natured audience gave signs that they thought it time to proceed, and we had a second instrumental performance which did the orchestra credit. Then up went the curtain suddenly, disclosing a woodland scene with our friend the hero erect between two prostrate forms that might be either dead or asleep. Loud applause at appearance of hero. Race between him and the prompter through a speech of about a thousand lines. Uneasy movement of the prostrate forms: one scratches his leg, the other shifts his position so as to lie more comfortably. Can they be the furies alluded to in the handbill and already, as we imagine, introduced to our notice? No! for here come those classical creatures, ready to maintain a wordy war with their old antagonist. He is evidently shy of them or doubts their good faith in regard to pyrotechnics; so an indecisive skirmish is followed by the retirement of all three, which leaves the coast clear for our comic friends—they are comic, beyond a doubt, though prostrate and uneasy—to effect a diversion in their own favour. One starts up and attacks the other. They fight, are separated by a shepherd who seems

* A drink made from the aloe—Mexican beer.

to have no authority whatever in the matter, become reconciled, and drink freely from small black bottles. How marvellously like one another are these comic characters. They must be twins who employ the same tailor. How superior are they to that milk-and-water shepherd! They do nothing in the way of physical force. It is not even certain that they could either of them turn a somersault. But they are as droll as any professional clowns. Their black bottles, their night-caps, their constant bickerings, are enough to make them popular. We have now a lively performance in which shepherds and shepherdesses dance and make love, whilst an old pantaloon of a father warns his girls solemnly against matrimony, and songs are sung, and cries of *Otra** rise from the house. Mexicans are no better than English in being content with one hearing of a favourite melody.

There was much irreverence manifested towards the hero of the first act by the comic characters when he subsequently made his appearance; and those worn-out furies came on twice at least without alarming or so much as interesting the shepherds. There was a reading of the play-bill for next day's performance, at a convenient opportunity between two acts, and a startling revival of the shepherdesses' pantaloon father, who danced down the middle and up again when his children thought him quite exhausted. I had my quarter dollar's worth and more to boot, not only in

* Encore.

what was shown upon the stage but in a pleasant study of the figurative house. It was something to see an assemblage of poorly-clad workmen so quiet and courteous ; but more to observe that they had their families with them ; that the women, however shabby in appearance and given to the national habit of cigarettes, were well conducted, and that all seemed anxious to let the children have a good view.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE RIGHT SPORT AND THE WRONG.

Well hit, sir, well run! — Bravo, Toro! Bravisimo!

If you had been invited to spend a day with the City of Mexico Cricket Club, and had found, when you set forth to keep this pleasant appointment, that it was going to be as glorious a morning as man could desire, should you not have felt inclined to sing or whistle or give some other sign of contentment, along the way from your hotel to the railroad station? If on arriving at the particular street corner whence a train might be expected presently to start, on which account I have dignified it by the name of station, you had met half a dozen gentlemen of British aspect, should you not have felt certain that a game was before you, were it only single wicket, tip, and run? Let me instantly say that it would not be only single wicket, and then proceed with our journey to the field of action. A train of American railroad cars,

each drawn by four mules with jingling bells, had arrived at the street corner and discharged one set of passengers and taken on board another. We were off at a brisk trot for the outskirts of the city, where a locomotive awaited us—off by a track laid in Yankee style down the middle of the street, past houses built round quiet courtyards, and Indians with their *zarapes* hanging about them, and a military post at which a French sentry kept guard. We crossed the *Paseo*, deserted at this early hour, reached a station where mule power was changed for steam, and rattled away towards the Emperor's Palace at Chapultepec. We passed an aqueduct, built years ago by the Spaniards to bring water which the Aztecs had brought by pipes—one point for these last, as Londoners will admit. After stopping at Chapultepec station and admiring the Palace on a commanding hill-top close above us, we continued our journey a little further to the village of Tacubaya. Here all the passengers alighted, for this was the terminus of the line. It has places of refreshment to nourish those who throng thither on fête days, a melancholy-looking public garden with a fountain in its midst, and a memorial obelisk to some Mexican officers who fell fighting against the Americans in September, 1847.

A short walk brought us from the train to the headquarters of the Club. There was no encouragement to lovers of green sward in those dry, parched-up, fields,

though a stranger's eye might find novelty in the spiky aloes upon the banks between them ; no freshness or softness in the well-kept cricket ground, despite constant watering. It was not so hard as other places ; that was all that could be said. I had expected to find a tent on the ground as confidently as to find a roller ; but I had not expected to find a one-storied house, with comfortable dressing-rooms in either wing, with a well-ordered garden behind, and with the name of the Club inscribed upon its front. We needed only some heavy rain to soften the earth, and, as that would not come, we enjoyed ourselves thoroughly without it. What a splendid view there was of the mountains ! Can any other cricket ground boast such lookers-on as Popocatepetl and Iztacihuatl ? On the opposite side is rocky Ajuzco, said still to be haunted by guerillas ; and near Ajuzco, upon the mountain-ridge, where is an old volcanic crater that looks like a giant redoubt, passes the high road to Guernavaca, to the fertile western slopes and to the *Tierra Caliente* of the Pacific shore. North-eastward we can see the towers of the Cathedral of Mexico, and northward is Chapultepec, the hill of the grasshoppers, where Aztec princes had their pleasure grounds, and where an imperial standard now flutters in bright sunlight. During the Empire the Club has established its cricket ground further out of town than was formerly thought prudent. We wonder whether Maximilian,

as report says that he sometimes does, is watching our play from a distance.

I will now tell you something of the match. A thin atmosphere is not good for running, and those gentlemen who made large scores were exhausted by their very success. It was easy to lie under the shade of the tent and cry "Run it out," but difficult for the panting hero of a "fourer" to do himself justice. We had very good bowling on both sides; swift round-hand from a young Mexican who had been educated in England, and steady under-hand of the old-fashioned sort from two English gentlemen who had spent most of their lives in Mexico. The vigour with which these elderly players contended amongst men far their juniors, and the hearty good-nature with which they entered into the game, were perhaps its most interesting feature. Here was encouragement to European immigration—for The Valley at least! What matters shortness of breath in running at thirty, if you be still capable of "running it out" when close upon threescore? "Shall I not speak of Miguel, the Indian lad, who played to make up our number—of his wide flapping straw hat, his bare feet, and stolid countenance? How neatly he fielded! How he came to the wicket without a thought of glove or of pad, and stood to swift bowling like some buff-jerkined vassal exposed to knightly lance-thrusts! We had a long score made by the English Consul's son, who carried out his bat,

and we had an excellent breakfast given by the Club to itself and friends. Then came the second innings, with groaning at the heat of the sun, with handkerchiefs tied over the backs of men's heads, and general reluctance to leave the tent. This being February, I could quite imagine why the Mexican cricketing season does not last through the summer.

There was a dusty return to the railway, with talk of the uses of the aloe plant (*magu'éy*), seen on every side. They make hedgerows of a grim spiky description, and their fibres are twisted into rope, and their juice is drawn off to become *pulque*—the national drink capable both of cheering and inebriating, though considered very wholesome by those who prefer it to table-beer. *Pulque* is white, and I thought on first seeing it that the people were indulging in rather poor milk, but a sip was enough to dissipate this illusion. Disgusting stuff! is a stranger's probable verdict after his initial sip. Then he will very likely ask for another taste, and be inclined to doubt whether the stuff deserve such an epithet. He will not know what to make of it. At this point my own experience ceases, though I am acquainted with an Englishman in Mexico who always has a jug of *pulque* at his side when he sits down to dinner. Many acres in the valley are planted with the *magu'éy*, offering no easy resting-place to unlucky aeronauts. Each plant, on reaching a proper growth, *i. e.*, just before it flowers, is made to yield supplies of

pulque. A cavity is scooped in its core, which constantly fills with juice, and is emptied at regular intervals. The peasants fix a white mark to one of the spikes of a plant that has been tapped, so as to know, in passing through a field, where juice will be found.

It was not in the Roman amphitheatre sixteen centuries ago, but in its far-off descendant, the *Plaza de Toros* of to-day, that we sat; there was to be a grand bull-fight to amuse Maximilian's subjects. Before us was a circular enclosure covered with sand and surrounded by strong wooden barriers as high as a man's head. There were rows of benches after the fashion of a race-stand, and a tier of private boxes, the one above the other. Spectators of every class, save the more refined ladies, crowded round the sandy ring. There were children not four years old and grey-beards close upon fourscore; Indians in fête-day costume, with embroidered sombreros, and silver buttons down the sides of their trowsers; foreigners in black coats and respectable chimney-pots; French officers and Austrian officers; señoras with bonnets; señoras with mantillas: as motley an assemblage as you could wish to see, was gathered on the sloping frontage of the amphitheatre, whilst all eyes were turned towards the empty space in the middle, and murmurs swept across the impatient throng. We were not about to witness a combat of Christians with wild

beasts, or of gladiators with Dacian captives, but it was of these scenes that I thought rather than of the ornamental butcher's work presently to begin.

Listen to that bugle-note; it has signalled the performers to appear. A gateway opens, and they come forward in bright-coloured procession, advancing towards the opposite side of the ring from that on which they entered, with a graceful salute to the distinguished company before them. There are the *banderilleros*, gaily costumed, as though for serving in a corps de ballet; the *picadores*, all hat and leggings, upon lean bony nags, which turn out better than they look; a couple of well mounted adepts with the lazo, and a team of mules for dragging away carcasses. The performers scatter right and left as their chief directs, the mules are unceremoniously hustled off. There is a pause. Look at that door in the wooden barrier at which every one is staring; see how suddenly it flies back, and hear how the crowd yells with excitement! A bull of fierce, though puzzled, aspect dashes headlong into the middle of the ring. Surely he will toss yon banderillero who wears a dress of green and gold! Toss him? No, indeed! The banderillero springs aside so lightly, and waves his scarf over the enemy's head with such careless ease, that a bull as an object of terror has sunk fifty per cent. in my estimation. Now for the nearest picador. A rush is made which seems irresistible. The horse must be gored, despite his leather trap-

pings, and the rider crushed to death! Yet this picador of hat and leggings does not lose confidence. He catches the bull with his lance upon the shoulder, manages his frightened steed with wonderful skill, and is shoved back for several paces before he can swerve aside to get out of danger. So goes the fight during ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. Four times has the bull sprung clear over those strong barriers, fallen into a narrow passage between them and the breastwork which shelters the public, and been driven out again to meet his tormentors. He has vainly charged the picadores, until his shoulders are red with spear marks, and driven the banderilleros again and again to vault the barrier, when his horns were close behind them. There have been shouts of "Bravo, Toro!" as he tossed a venturesome banderillero high in air, and another time as he twisted a lance from a picador and pursued this latter round the arena. But no one has been seriously hurt save the bull, whose tongue now hangs out, and whose knees begin to fail him. See they have stuck tiny bannerols into his neck, which gives the mockery of a festal appearance to that poor, panting, desperate, animal. "Bravo, Toro!" say I, along with the surging crowd of the amphitheatre, as he gathers himself up for a last charge at the *matador* who approaches him sword in hand. Ah, Señor Matador! you are a fine, well-made, fellow, with your white stockings and knee-breeches, your scarf and em-

broidered jacket. You have, moreover, plenty of nerve and quickness. But let us see you kill one bull when the chances are equal. Take him when he first bounds into the ring, not after he is thoroughly tired. The last charge has been easily avoided. The matador has scarce troubled himself to spring aside, only to turn for a moment on his heel and thrust at his assailant's neck. Now the bull staggers forward a few steps, then stands with drooping front. He is mortally wounded, and a grim personage, clad in white, who has hitherto been idly regarding the scene, proceeds to despatch him—mere butcher's work, lasting but half a minute. You have turned away in disgust, and when you look once more, the team of mules, already introduced to your notice, is dragging out a lifeless carcase. Connoisseurs discuss the merits of the performance, sweetmeats are sold to ladies and children, fresh cigars are lighted by the men, and the band plays a lively air.

Other bulls were sacrificed, with much the same formalities of dodging by the footmen and spearing by the horsemen, with bannerols stuck in their necks and the matador to give them a death-blow. But it happened that some animals were difficult to dispose of at the end, when the men with *lazos*, whose *rôle* had at first been one of evasion, were allowed to fling their nooses over the victim, fix the line to their saddle bows, and gallop away, dragging him helplessly on his side. Then the grim personage in white

stepped forward and the team of mules was summoned. Though decidedly taking a mean advantage of the bull and often warned to desist by cries from appreciative souls on the cheaper benches, these lazomen displayed terrible accuracy of aim and were useful in cutting short the more barbarous part of the sport.

A comic troop presented us with a bull fight pantomime. They came in dressed as country folks, seated themselves in a circle, with their baskets, sugar-canes, and pack-horses, and were surprised by the sudden advent of a bull. He charged, they screamed, the public roared with laughter. One sham woman was knocked down and rolled away, another stuck her basket on the enemy's horns, the unlucky pack-horse was twice upset, and a nondescript erection, covered with fireworks, was trampled under foot. Now the comic people danced wildly in the middle of the arena. Now they belaboured their enemy's flanks or hung on to his tail, until it was time that he should be made away with.

We afterwards had a *coleadero*, or tail-catching game, with some very hard riding by four capitably mounted *coleadores*. They would pursue an ox round the ring in a reckless, helter-skelter, fashion, until one of them succeeded in catching the frightened creature's tail. Then the *coleador*, clapping the tail under his knee, dashed ahead at lightning speed, and jerked the ox on to its side, as though it had been a

helpless calf. With all respect to London waiters, who think that any one can understand ox tail, I may mention that the *coleadero* is a dangerous game; for if the horse's feet are tripped by those of the falling ox, a broken neck will result to the rider. Few *coleaderos* thus overturned have showed further sign of life; but the horses are admirably trained and sheer away at the critical moment.

A large ox who disapproved of being hunted showed fight, amid vociferous encouragement, but down came the ready lazo over his head and he was dragged out of sight in a trice. Mexicans firmly believe in the lazo, as the most formidable weapon for single combat on horseback short of a seven-shooter. The skilful *ranchero*,* lazo in hand, riding a horse accustomed to the work, and with a pommel to his saddle, high and wide-topped, round which a hawser might be made fast, has little to fear from sword or lance. He can drop his noose over an assailant in any way that he pleases, secure his line to the saddle-bow, and by a sudden turn bring the whole weight of his horse to bear in tightening the noose. Care must, however, be taken that the forefinger and thumb be not caught against the pommel: these, on veteran *rancheros*, have often lost their top joints.

I was speculating what Sir Kenneth would have

* A farmer, or, generally speaking, one employed upon a *ranch* or farm.

done with his charger's off hind leg caught by a lazo, and whether he would have found the wide hatted ranchero worse than the turbaned Saracen, when my next neighbour brought me back to modern times.

"Yes, *sir*," said he, "them chaps are monkeys on a horse. Reckon they can't ride like our boys in Arkansas, though."

"Your boys ride well?"

"They do so, by ——. Why, some in Arkansas and down in Texas will go after a wild *Injine*, catch him, and kill him with his own spear."

I expressed my admiration for so daring a feat, and the American, pointing to a French officer whose breast was covered with medals, and whose cavalry uniform set off a trim, graceful, figure, exclaimed—
"Wal, now, that fellow ain't fond of cold steel, I reckon."

Deluded reckoner! Your tactics in using dragoons as mounted riflemen might puzzle him, but at cold steel he would be likely to puzzle you. Stick to narrations of *Injine* catching, for no spectral Comanche will appear to tell whether gunpowder or horsemanship effected his death; but let that *beau sabreur* smoke unaspersed his harmless cigarette.

The coleadero was succeeded by two more bull-fights; and, when the second of these had been concluded, a rush of men and boys filled the ring, as an English race-course is filled after the horses have

passed. Then a bull, with padded horns was let loose among the rabble. There was shouting and running, tumbling down and being trampled upon, vaulting over the bull, and clinging to his tail—a rougher game than football at —, yet played with delight by those who are called in Europe effeminate and degenerate. Heaven knows that I would give them no credit for keeping up so barbarous a sport as bull-fighting, which the Spanish conquerors left, along with priest-craft, for an evil bequest to their subjects and descendants. But when effeminacy is spoken of as a Mexican characteristic, I say, What women? Where are the females so active and hardy as to bear comparison with the men of Mexico? At this question, dear reader, you are provoked into displaying your controversial power. You fling at my head a volume of ‘Punch,’ in which our pretty countrywomen may be seen clearing five-barred gates, and you send round your boy to Mudie’s for Captain Burton’s book about Dahomey. “There are the extremes, sir,” I hear you cry; “place your model Mexican between this lovely creature and that degraded Amazon. He cannot escape the charge of effeminacy.” Perhaps not; so it will be better to pass to the next point. Did I hear you call them degenerate? You admit that such has been your opinion? Then, answer me. Degenerate from what? From the Spaniard? No more than a Yankee is from an Englishman; if we take cog-

nizance of the million or so, in Mexico of purely white race. From the Indian? Are President Juarez, General Mejia, and many more who could be named, less able than were their Aztec forefathers, with whom Cortes dealt? Your mind is troubled by half-castes, and there, I leave you, as we might argue until breweries cease among us, without settling the precise effect of a mixture of races. The Mexican half-castes, it is said, form a useful link in uniting white men and red men under a common nationality.

And there was that crowd of men and boys shouting round the bull with padded horns, while the darkening amphitheatre was gradually emptied of less venturesome spectators. It was the reverse of Captain Roland's difficulty—a people indifferent to bulls, yet reputed to have no taste for meeting a lunge in carte. Had they been fairly judged? Are not all sweeping assertions that this race or another is incapable of self-defence apt to be falsified by subsequent events? The ancestors of those, red-trowsered soldiers who lord it in Mexico were not very successful at Agincourt. The Anglo-Saxon, who never knows when he is beaten, submitted to conquest after Hastings. So perhaps my Mexican friends may come in fulness of time to fight well and to have a Government worth fighting for. I hope that they will, though the American gentleman who sat near me has gloomily prophesied their being "improved off creation."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A MEXICAN CARNIVAL.

Not so good as in former years.

MILITARY mass in the cathedral at eight o'clock on Sunday morning was an established custom. It was not part of the Carnival, but it gave a fine opportunity of seeing the foreign allies, or invaders, as you may please to call them, in all their pomp and power. They were good catholics, a fact which did not prevent many devout persons from devoutly wishing them elsewhere, and they dressed with scrupulous neatness. Why it would be a lesson to Uncle Sam in the art of costuming his nephews to capture these Frenchmen's kits, if indeed his long-legged nephews could ever rival in *tenuë* these compact little figures with white sunshades on their caps and white gaiters on their feet. How industriously they wake the echoes with drum and bugle. What a number of different corps they belong to. I half suspect

that many detachments must have been sent over here merely to show their uniforms.

And, as good catholics, by general order they attended High Mass in the cathedral. Lines of soldiers stretched down the side aisles, where women knelt on the wooden floor, and swarthy-cheeked men kept their fête-day *sombreros* from being crushed. Four pioneers stood upon the steps of the altar, axe in hand, and a group of superior officers sat beneath the painted dome. There was a crash of military music, supported by the deeper tones of the organ. Gleams of light shot down between mighty stone columns upon the bayonets of the French, or lighted up the gorgeous decorations of the altar. There was disciplined movement among those armed men drawn up so firmly to right and left. At every point in the service when ordinary worshippers would have changed their position a word of command rang out clear and shrill. Now the bayonets rose simultaneously as arms were carried, and the axes of the pioneers on the altar steps were swung to the shoulder. Now the bayonets fell, as rifle butts sharply touched the ground, and the axes of the pioneers dropped by their sides. Then all knelt at the elevation of the Host, while a triumphant strain swelled to the vaulted roof. Another word of command and the soldiers sprang to their feet. It was something to be good catholics; but those swarthy faces behind wore a blank, unfriendly look. The

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service came to an end: drums rolled out, as if on parade; bugles sounded loudly; and the glittering bayonets trooped forth into the sunshine.

The Carnival began on Sunday morning, and was kept up with spirit until late on Sunday night. This was its opening skirmish. People prepared themselves for fun when they awoke, looked to their masks or fancy dresses, and assumed an air of unusual jollity. There was a grand bull-fight in the afternoon, and a "grand Paseo,"* with masquerades and other diversions in the evening. Then followed an interval of repose, a quiet though expectant Monday, with nothing going forward save the ordinary business of life—how quiet that seems when fêtes come close together—and then we were launched into that glorious, conclusive, dissipated Tuesday.

'La Sombra' published an excellent carnival song which contained biting allusions to its literary contemporaries, suggesting how they should be attired as maskers, and spoke thus of the pic-nic party. "Four thousand Russians and Swedes," said the song, "who cannot even speak Spanish, but who are 'Hail, fellows, well met!' with the lowest 'roughs,' wish to dress suitably in this carnival time. Now the best costume for them is the plume of the savage, which they suppose to be national." I cannot say whether anybody took this advice. There

* Promenade in carriages and on horseback.

were fantastic dresses, to be sure, both on the Paseo and at the masquerades ; yet, among such costumes as I happened to see, the wild Indian was unrepresented. Maskers rather formed themselves on punchinello and harlequin, when they did more than wear a mask. Most men did less. New sombreros were displayed with pride, and no wish was felt by their possessors to pass unknown. Mad would that hatter be who should seek to reduce the extent of brim or the amount of silver thread upon a festive sombrero. He might go whistle for custom.

Mexico was all astir. Its carnival dissipation chiefly consisted in being all astir. Thousands of the Mexican unkempt strolled towards the Paseo from noontide until dusk, and strolled back again at dusk into the city. His Majesty's native troops, looking hungry and discontented, watched over public security, and His Majesty's foreign allies watched over them. There was a stream of carriages which took the same direction as the holiday folks on foot, and a large muster of equestrians with ornamented saddles and silver spurs. A few maskers walked along the Paseo, and a very few might be seen driving. There were some discharges of boubons, and plenty of jokes flying about at the maskers' expense, though the real joke to produce roars of laughter was anything with a sly political turn.

What a business the bread shops which stood in favourable positions must have done. I observed

that they were crowded to excess and that every child of the people was provided with a small loaf to satisfy its carnival appetite. Mexico has matchless bread, and more shops for sale thereof than for sale of hats and tobacco. I was not so much struck by the transition from greenbacks to a silver currency and by having to borrow a sack to carry home my change from the bank as by Mexican bread after the hot cakes which Americans fondly suppose to be better eating. Let them think so—for who can decide questions of taste?—and let them accept a humble tribute to the convenience of paper money. But I cannot withhold my unqualified praise of that Mexican bread. Every child of the people was lucky to have a parental *tlaco* invested on his or her account in such an article of food.

The vehicles which drove slowly along the Paseo were of many sizes, as also of many nationalities. Old chariots, dating back to colonial days, with old hidalgos in them who must have remembered Augustin Iturbide; handsome carriages recently from Europe, with señoritas in Parisian bonnets, and servants in new livery; shabby carriages of uncertain origin, which contained all manner of persons native and foreign; these followed each other round and round. I was clearly present at a ceremonial beyond the railings of Hyde Park, yet they moved with familiar solemnity, and then there were such numerous spectators on foot. But could any park grievance have

brought yonder crowd from the East End? Could London coachmen, slim and moustached, be driving mules in silver-plated harness? Or could London equestrians have adopted the sombrero? It might be all a delusion, the effect of thin atmosphere, and a mind enlarged by our Exhibition of 1862. I must collect myself and reconsider the question. I was clearly beyond Hyde Park. The soldiers were French, the gentlemen with light brown hair and spectacles were German, the crowd with black hair and dark brown cheeks was Mexican. Ah! that steadied me. Another step forward and I returned to my starting point. It was a grand Paseo on Shrove Tuesday, in the reign of Maximilian I.

And now it was after dusk. Every one had returned to town. Carriage people had driven home, shoe-leather people had sauntered home, fashionable Mexico had dined. There was an illumination in the Calle de Veracruz, where flaring braziers lit up the stock in trade of fruit-sellers and dealers in syrup drinks. The Opera House, standing upon this Calle de Veracruz, showed coloured lamps in honour of a masquerade presently to begin. So did the Teatro de Iturbide in honour of a rival masquerade. "Buy my oranges!" cries one fruit-seller. "Tlacos! tlacos! Quartillas! quartillas!" cries another. "Here are fine platanos, two for a quartilla!" They point to orderly little heaps of winter fruit from the Tierra Caliente, ranged on mats before them. They stir

their braziers and shout, "Tlacos! Quartillas!" which may be liberally interpreted, "Here you are! All a penny! Prime quality! Twopence each!"

No need is of ordinary lamps in this busy street. There are braziers enough to show every costume which passes, to make the syrup drinks look of a sickening pink, and the Imperialist dragoons at the corner, keeping guard over public security, look more discontented than ever. They are not so gloomy as a gang of Liberal captives whom I lately saw brought in under strong escort, but they have to play a jackal part to the French. It is whispered that they hate their regenerators. Possibly they do, for to wear faded uniforms on one's own soil, and receive irregular pay, whilst foreign allies are rich and resplendent, is not agreeable. Yet there the Imperialists sit, and may be counted, in the historian's phrase, of so many "sabres"—loyal sabres, if you will. Public security seems to be in little danger, at any rate. Here are fruit-sellers squatting along the curbstone, and a quiet, well-behaved, throng of all classes elbowing their way to and fro. Tlacos and quartillas are shouted in place of Liberty—a practical substitution possessing great merit—fruit is sold, and syrup drinks are sold.

The Carnival draws to its end. Maskers appear more frequently at the doors of the Opera House and of the Teatro de Iturbide, a patrol of French infantry has cleared the street of soldiers out on

leave, and a diminution of the fruit trade may be noticed. It is time that we should enter the Opera House and wind up our dissipated Tuesday. We pass between a double row of sight-seers, eager for costumes, who seem to feel our every-day dress to be an ungenial swindle. We enter the ball-room and are deafened by a din of voices. It is a fine house, worthy of Peralta or any other prima donna, but we have not come for music nor yet, strictly speaking, for dancing. We have come to promenade the floor, until there are so many persons present that we are blockaded where we stand. It is our pleasure to survey the five per cent. of maskers, to be jostled by this five per cent. when they attempt to dance. We have noise and lights, a mixed assemblage as you would expect, and a sense that we have done our duty by the Carnival.

CHAPTER XXXV.

PUNTING ON LAKE TEXCOCO.

Monsieur le Sergent — A. No. 2 — The question of the waters.

A FRIEND who wrote to me from England, enquired whether I thought of going “up to the front” and expressed a hope that I should not expose myself uselessly to danger by so doing. Now, the difficulty in Mexico was to get anywhere that was not the front of some roving band, while distances, instead of being viewed at the rate of a hundred miles for ten, which you might do in the United States compared to England, were regarded as ten miles to a hundred of our English scale. I planned a ramble to the foot of the mountains, and was advised not to go with less than ten companions and to be sure that we had a brace of revolvers each. I desired to visit some place three-score leagues away, and found that such a journey would occupy four days at least, going and coming, with a possibility of being detained by want of room in the diligence and a probability of being robbed.

Certes, the period of Popocatepetl clubs and explorations by unprotected British females had not come, but the City of Mexico was gay and pleasant for strangers, so that they had no occasion to roam far afield.

Short excursions might be made with perfect safety, as when my cricketing friends went by train to play near Tacubaya, or when travellers, with a wholesome instinct for sight-seeing, alighted before they reached Tacubaya to visit His Majesty's suburban residence. Well was it for such travellers if their wholesome instinct warned them to obtain leave from the Mexican Lord Chamberlain, as the Palace of Chapultepec was jealously guarded by Turcos who would have stopped even the boy Jones ere he could effect an entrance and have been very likely to cut short his career. I visited Chapultepec with no instinctive warning and had a pleasant trip, albeit remaining an outsider.

First, I rode to Tacubaya by the opposition horse-cars, with a route less interesting than by steam railway, and with a terminus at some distance from the palace. However, anything for a change is good; and my walk along a dusty road to that conspicuous Hill of the Grasshoppers was not dull through lack of company. There came a detachment of Mexican lancers (Imperialist), mounted on small strong horses, and with the usual display of little tri-coloured flags beneath their bright lance-points. Then followed a

drove of pack-mules in charge of laughing Indian boys, and an old man with a basket of crockery on his shoulders. Now, there was shouting and galloping behind me. I turned and saw what was coming in time to step aside. Four jovial *rancheros* rode at full speed towards Mexico. Three of them were on horseback, the fourth bestrode a sleek and nimble donkey. This man was a common object of attack, and the others tried hard to overthrow him by a dexterous *coleada*. But his donkey's tail was not to be easily caught, while his tactics were so masterly that, although with threefold odds against him, it was not until several minutes after they had passed me that he was forced to spring off, and let the trusty Dapple suffer disastrous capsizes. They laughed aloud at the result of their game, picked up the prostrate Sancho, and rode away as good friends as ever.

Chapultepec, I said, was guarded by Turcos, no exclusive belief in blonds hampering the routine of the service. A turbaned sentinel paced before the outer gateway, and several of his comrades lounged by the roadside in more harmless mood than could have been believed of such fierce-looking warriors. There was fascination about them for little Indian boys, who sat watching the Moors as if this were a special treat provided for them by His Majesty. Hassan and Mustapha recked not who chose to watch their movements. They spoke slowly in guttural tones, then were silent and looked ferocious. A very small boy

while staring at broad-shouldered Mustapha was nearly run over by a waggon. Did the sable misbeliever smile to see a Christian sent to Gehenna? Or did he step quickly forward and lift that small boy out of danger? Mustapha, your face belied you. You were not an automaton cut-throat, and the medals on your breast were those of a brave soldier, I warrant me.

Monsieur le Sergent, though marvellously sunburnt, spoke better French than was compatible with Algerine descent.

Was he an Arab? Not he, indeed! Yet he could speak Arabic, which, from what he understood, bore a strong affinity to German. Both were harsh; both were difficult!

I asked how he liked the service in Mexico. He shrugged his shoulders as you never could, Mustapha, if you practised all your life. There was a perfectly Algerine war—a war for the cavalry and the chasseurs. The climate? Not so bad, when one left the sea-coast. What did he think of the people? He demanded pardon if I were a native, but he thought them poor soldiers, though they had good qualities at home. “On my faith, sir, I assure you that, if properly organized, they ought to destroy us in detail. But what will you? We have such prestige. Those poor devils can do nothing, and one of our principles is to injure them as little as possible.”

And Monsieur le Sergent, brimming with such principles, explained to me how deadly a wound he could give with his sword-bayonet, and how he was sure of his man at three hundred paces in skirmishing.

It was provoking not to have brought a permit to enter the palace grounds, but I could admire from without those stately cypress trees which had seen fifty generations of men pass away, and I could hear the hammering of carpenters at the top of the hill. Alterations were going forward—a case of sour grapes; I voted the palace not worth seeing. There was comfort in the discovery of a swimming-bath supplied from a tepid spring with water which was so clear that one might see the bottom of the bath though it lay several fathoms down. If thousands of tiny fish were pleased to hover round a swimmer and dart against him, they were quite welcome and no disparagement to Chapultepec bathing.

A voyage across Lake Texcoco was more amusing than short excursions by railway or horse-car. The lake has its fleet of punts, both large and small, from the capacious craft in which a load of hay is brought to town to the tiny shallop in which a man must have practised to stand upright. Oars and paddles, steam and sails, are unknown to Texcoco navigation. Everything is accomplished by punting. Cargoes have been thus propelled for centuries, so have passengers, and local Captain Kidds have punted forth

to attack these last. True that Cortes made use of sailing-vessels when he captured Mexico, and long afterwards a resident Briton put ship-shape boats upon the lake. But punting was not to be superseded in a hurry, nor has it been to this day. A wide extent of shallow water is very tempting in favour of the push direct, and I doubt whether any change will occur until steamers shall make their appearance.

At eight o'clock A.M. punctually—no mistake about it—no allowance for persons whose watches were slow—we left the city end of a very objectionable canal, left behind us the deserted convent near which French soldiers were practising their bugles, and set forward on our voyage. We mustered some thirty passengers, with a captain and nine men. The vessel that bore us away was bound from Mexico to Texcoco town, across the lake of that ilk. You shall hear what she looked like before going any further; and remember that I did not stop to explain in the objectionable part of the canal, stagnant and dead-doggish. We have left it behind, and are punting slowly between bare hedge-rows and flooded meadows, with a small volcanic hill, called the *Peñon de los Baños*, as a landmark, right ahead.

She would have been nothing to admire without her top-heavy cabin, and without her flat-bottomed hull would have resembled three unpainted bathing-machines joined together endways. But in her combination of hull and cabin she was admirably suited

for doing the greatest possible amount of work with the least imaginable amount of expense and show. Her owners, either from a conscientious regard to their standing at Lloyd's, or from other cause unknown, had written "A. No. 2," on the forward bulk-head. No deception here; no false pretension to sea-worthiness!

We thirty passengers sat fifteen on a side, sheltered from sun-stroke by the rough planking of the cabin roof, with a glimpse, towards the bow, of half-made Indians bending over their work as they shoved us steadily forward, and a peep, towards the stern, of our pilot, but little embarrassed by clothing, who wielded a stout pole to guide the vessel on her course. Our captain was posted on the roof, where also was a heap of passengers' baggage or valuable freight, I could not tell which. "Slow but sure," was our motto for the hour—"slow" under all circumstances, "sure" whilst the weather continued fine. How those Indians would manage to punt us against a breeze of wind might be matter of serious cogitation. A boat had been lost not long ago, and we were leaving the land far astern. But our pilot's face showed no anxiety. He often smiled when passengers addressed him—there was no regulation against speaking to the man with the pole—and as to his manner of fixing his eyes on our captain's heels, dangling in the forward doorway, it was infinitely re-assuring. "While that man sits there," said the pilot, as plainly

as looks could speak, "you may hope for a calm sea." My fellow-voyagers accepted this confident glance in proof that all was right. Some of them had crossed Texcoco a hundred times, had been blown hither and thither, forced to put back, or kept out all night. They were amused at my coming on the lake for pleasure. To their minds, it was a very prosaic means of obtaining water-carriage.

"Had I heard that Maximilian had been on the lake?" enquired one who sat opposite to me.

"I had not. Was he pleased with what he saw?"

"Who knows? It was bad weather. The Emperor was unable to get back before three in the morning; when he did return the Empress scolded him soundly, and the Marshal said he should resign his command if such risks were to be run for nothing."

"Yes, truly," remarked a jolly-looking old peasant, who had been offering us refreshment from his private stores, and whose good wife was a picture of cheerful content; "yes, truly, an emperor that is married can escape scolding as little as the poorest of us. That's the way with the women. They're all the same."

"But," cries a third speaker, "we have no marshals to trouble us. We are independent in a small way."

"One marshal's enough, and too much, for all the country," growls a voice from the corner.

Loud laughter rewards these last sallies, and in the laughter, the subject, which has taken a ticklish turn, is allowed to evaporate. We talked of other things, and a priest, who had spotted me as heretical, presently explained earnestly to the jolly old peasant how all *impíos* must be either converted from their wicked ways or withered up by Divine wrath. The old peasant was staggered for a while at so terrible a picture, but, recovering himself, he drew forth a bottle of pulque—

“Take some of this, father,” said he, in tones which asserted to all present, “I, at least, am orthodox.”

“Half way over” has a pleasant sound, whether one hears it from the smart captain of an ocean steamer, or from the bare-legged pilot of a Texcoco passenger punt. We were glad to be near the wooden cross rising above the surface of the lake which told us that half our voyage was completed; and glad to see, as we passed the cross, that we were making a steady three miles an hour. Our crew chanted loudly their prayer for a safe arrival, and redoubled their exertions to urge the crazy vessel forward.

They may not be able to row or to paddle, but let them have the familiar push direct with a long pole on a muddy bottom and they will match the stoutest oarsmen in endurance. It is curious to see such skilful handling of the poles within narrow limits,

such well-disciplined efforts on the part of beings who look so wild. They set off from the extreme bow, with heads bent down, that their whole weight may assist the push. They move sternwards a few paces, recover themselves when they reach the cabin, throw up their poles to let the men who follow pass under, and run back to the bow in quick succession, turn and turn, one of the port watch, the next of the starboard. There are thus three streams of men in motion at the same time; down slowly by the sides, back fast by the middle. Eight fellow creatures, with scanty apparel, with limbs as hard as iron, and great lumps formed on their chests by constant pushing, multiply themselves into a number which may be eighty for aught we can tell. They have adopted a system invaluable to stage managers with small armies; that movement in the centre by alternate detachments from either flank would confuse the most ingenious of modern tacticians, for it is executed on a space no larger than a dining-room table. Bravo, you Indian with shaggy head and glistening teeth! Well pushed! Well recovered! Why, here you are again! No you are not; it's another! Which is which? Well pushed both! And here's a third, just like the other two! He smiles as they smiled, utters a gasping entreaty that the "pot may be kept boiling," or words to that effect, and runs briskly forward to renew his push. It is a chance of identification. This third man will

shout again, and so betray himself to be the original third. No! it is the first who now shouts encouragement, unless I am mistaking him for the second. And presently they all shout, as we near a couple of punts bound to Mexico.

The punts bound to Mexico come on, like lobsters of enormous size and very high action. Their poles are worked with an energy rivalling our own, while their busy crews cannot well be counted. We pass them in friendly fashion, exchanging scraps of intelligence, and hinting that they are not quite half-way. Then the strangers become as specks over our stern, where a smooth sheet of water has borne the reflection of the Cathedral towers until those towers have faded out of sight. Now there is a gentle breeze rippling Texcoco, and it helps us on our voyage and brings a freshness with it as of the open sea. Texcoco has a strong saline flavour and is brown with the brownness of King's Road or Liverpool Bar. I taste experimentally from a dipped finger, and enquire if any one bathes in the lake. They are puzzled. Bathe in the lake! That jolly old peasant sees what I mean;—I am thinking of the Peñon de los Baños, the hill which we passed on coming out of the canal.

“Those baths are filled by mineral springs; they are good for rheumatism. But the lake! ha! ha! Holy Saints preserve us! Bathe in the lake, Señor! no, indeed!”

As our voyage of seventeen miles drew to an end, we could distinguish the churches of Texcoco town standing among trees and low flat-roofed buildings at some little distance from the shore. You must fancy an outer circle of mountains, which was but slightly affected in appearance by our change of position, and an inner circle of hills and fields which gave full force to the idea that we were daring navigators. The Peñon de los Baños seemed to be a mere stump far away behind us, whilst a tract of cultivated land, between the lake and the eastern boundary of the valley, assumed every moment an aspect of greater importance. Who could grudge our captain his one shilling sterling a head, as passage money, or who could think it unreasonable that the bare-legged pilot should suggest, for himself and comrades, drinking our health in pulque? They had brought "A. No. 2" safely to the mouth of a canal which forms the harbour of Texcoco town, their hymn of thanksgiving had been sung, with a strong resemblance to a cheer, and they had towed us up the canal to where an expectant public was assembled, an expectant public numbering twenty or thirty. But that was nothing. What think you of an omnibus ready to take travellers to any part of the town?

I found captain and crew in famous condition next day. Their large receipts had not demoralized them. The captain sat as auspiciously on his cabin roof, and

the crew multiplied themselves as diligently as they had when we first became acquainted.

Near Texcoco town is an ancient grove of cypress trees, like those that adorn Chapultepec, and in the town is a church which owes its origin to Hernando Cortes. There are not many traces remaining above ground of the heathen Texcocans, if we except their Christian descendants, who are visible at every turn. But specimens of stone carving and pike-heads of the same material often come to light when labourers dig deeper than usual. There are traces of the Spanish conquerors left here, as elsewhere, in ecclesiastical buildings, also in the conquerors' descendants, who, by the way, are not equally zealous catholics.

Texcoco is a quiet, sleepy, place, with everything about it subdued to a tone of repose. A small garrison of native Imperialists reclined in the shade of the church; a dozen fruit-sellers were seated at intervals round the principal square, with a look as though business were dull and quotations merely nominal; whilst at the glass works and the salt works it happened that nothing was doing. You will perceive by this concluding instance of dulness, that the town has works which prove its industrial resources to be far from extinct. Foreigners of a most useful kind, to wit, practical foreigners, have come hither. Frenchmen blow the glass, this being our gallant neighbour's speciality, and an Englishman

conducts the making of salt, which word, like "tar," has a wholesome English smack about it. But, though its industrial resources are not extinct, Texcoco has wofully declined since Spanish power was firmly established in its rival, Mexico.

The cypress trees were already very old when the quiet, sleepy, town of to-day was a populous heathen city, and many more rings had not been added to the bark of those ancient trees when heathendom was well-nigh forgotten. Its best forms shared the fate of its worst. The absence of human sacrifice and the altar to an Unknown God did not save Texcoco from the Spaniards. Here were stern missionaries, who succeeded in choking their convert into the torpor which they admired, and now behold his grandchildren praying devoutly before a Christian shrine. Their simple faith has often embarrassed the grandchildren of the missionaries, during modern struggles between "progress" and "reaction," whilst they have caught so much of Spanish feeling with the Spanish tongue, as to look askance on foreign pic-nic parties. This of the people; albeit the Empress Charlotte has among her maids of honour a descendant of the last prince of Texcoco.

My host showed me several Indian curiosities, which had been presented to His Majesty, and were waiting until a museum in the capital should be ready to receive them. I particularly admired some stone treasure boxes, cut with great exactness.

the lids fitting to perfection, and a groove passing over them for the copper wire with which they had been bound. There were also a stone chair or throne, tolerably finished, and a dozen idols with rather obtuse features. Of stone pike-heads there were enough to arm half a battalion or to get a Tipperary farmer into trouble if dug up on his land. My host had no thought of using these bygone weapons for aggressive purposes, yet he was not unprepared for the dangers of a troubled country. His square one-storied dwelling was flanked by loop-hole turrets. Two small pieces of ordnance were planted on the roof, and the out-buildings were enclosed by a high wall. Who kept guard at night, and how we should work our guns in case of need, I did not stay awake to consider. It is my belief that no one kept guard save the watch-dogs, and that ammunition would not have been forthcoming, but our honest growling sentries were sure to fight to the death for their master.

Will the City of Mexico be at the bottom of a lake this day next year? is anxiously asked among the householders of that city. Maximilian, Juarez, Anarchy, each alone, two at a time, and all three together, may occupy the political world, but this question among the householders of Mexico refers to a physical peril, and to a slow though certain movement of nature, which brings the peril nearer every

season. Lake Texcoco is too full. Its waters are even now flooding a wide extent of country, its surface is on a level with the streets of the capital, and if there should be another fall of rain in 1865, why then canoes are likely to become a better investment than wheeled carriages.

The Aztecs used canoes in their time when Mexico was traversed by navigable canals. The Spanish conquerors objected to canoes, filled up the canals, and built the foundations of their houses with a cement that would resist salt water. Overflowings were frequent during early Spanish rule, insomuch that the conquerors, accustomed to grapple boldly with difficulties, resolved upon a bold measure of relief. They began cutting a passage out of this rock-bound valley, and spent six million dollars at Huehuetoca before they desisted from the work. Twelve million dollars would probably have settled the "question of the waters" once for all; but Spain was now declining in power, she urgently needed her ready money elsewhere, and that "question of the waters" has descended to imperial Mexico.* Newspaper articles descant upon it, croakers croak over it, and householders feel uncomfortable. The old-fashioned cement has been disused of late years, so if a flood should presently occur, such as happened

* Many schemes had been presented to the Mexican Republic for draining Lake Texcoco at pleasure, but circumstances did not favour their adoption.

under Aztec and under Spanish rule, there would be a crumbling away of more than one goodly mansion.

I have been told that the bed of the lake is gradually rising, on account of deposits washed from the mountain side. Then again I have heard that there has latterly been less evaporation from Texcoco itself than of yore. Certain it is that large tracts of cultivated land are overflowed, whilst Texcoco has appeared with a calm shining surface at the very gates of Mexico. It ought to be a league distant.

So there is need of engineering skill. Some clamour for pumps of enormous power, others suggest a drainage-canal along the valley, and a deepening of the outlet at Huehuetoca. Lake Texcoco might then rush forth to the Mexican Gulf, but would this be altogether an advantage? Those who know best are reluctant to part with old Texcoco so easily. It is a mine of soda: — million tons, at — dollars profit per ton, will produce results which I am afraid to set down, lest you should accuse my innocent printer of carelessness. Enough! The valley may be freed from trouble, but must not be deprived of its floating capital, which would pour away at the rate of three Rothschild fortunes a month, unless somebody, crying “Stop that lake!” sent sluice-gates to Huehuetoca.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

AMONG THE SILVER MINES.

Pelting a Maximiliano — *Pulque* for ever! — All is not gold that glitters.

THERE are few companies in Mexico, few I might say in the world, with a better repute for making money than that which works the silver mines of Pachuca and Real del Monte. Perchance my reader has burnt his fingers with mining shares, for I have been told that an Englishman once lost money in such speculation. Should this be so, he is warned to skip what presently comes, and to avoid harrowing his feelings by hearing of other people's success.

How did I reach Pachuca? In a diligence. When did I go to it? Take February, 1866, for answer. Where did I find it? Study your map. Look along the Valley of Mexico, north-eastward of the capital, until, at about fifty miles distant, you discover a range of mountains with Pachuca marked at their base.

Must I give another warning to those whose feelings may be harrowed, and bid surviving coach proprietors look away for a moment? That Mexican Diligence Company, elsewhere anathematized on account of its early hours, does a first-rate business. The Company raises its own stock (of cattle), maintains its own hotels at the principal stations, and monopolizes passenger traffic on many important routes. One coach after another sets out in the early morning from the central office; to this place at four o'clock, to that at six, always with a strict limit as to passengers' luggage and with a coachman whose hairy leggings are his pride.

For Pachuca at 6 A.M. we were off with eight horses vigorously pulling, and the coachman with hairy leggings skilfully driving. There was an assistant apprentice on the box, who carried a private whip for the benefit of the near-wheeler; and of passengers there were enough to make them groan that they had not more room. We drove to Guadalupe by a road on which crowds of pack-mules, of carts, and donkeys, were advancing toward the city. These carts brought supplies of *pulque*, these beasts of burden carried *pulque*, and nothing else, so far as I could see. Pig-skins full of it were slung to mule or donkey, looking like a number of fat but unfortunate porkers with very short legs and no heads. Here was a large part of the liquor on which two hundred thousand *pulque*-drinkers would satisfy their thirst

during the next eight-and-forty hours. And it was a liquor which could not be kept for more than that time, so we knew that other loads of it must soon follow, and others again, until the Mexicans should abjure pulque, or Lake Texcoco should drown them out. To our left hand was the old causeway used by pilgrims visiting Guadalupe, with shrines along it at regular intervals where they were wont to stop and pray. Pilgrims might use the causeway still, if content to be drawn behind a locomotive and hurried past the shrines at twenty miles an hour; for this is now the track of the railroad to Vera Cruz, only opened as yet as far as Guadalupe, two leagues from Mexico, though destined to pass round the northern end of Lake Texcoco, and leave the valley by a more northerly course than the present coach-road. Guadalupe, with its well of mineral waters, bubbling up under a consecrated roof, with its chapel on the hill and its one-storied Indian houses of unbaked bricks, was left behind us, and we skirted the foot of other hills that had no chapels upon them, and passed a group of labourers who were working at the railway. A line first made had been abandoned owing to the inundation of Texcoco, and could be seen to our right hand partially submerged, whilst the new line was so far completed as to have an engine and trucks upon it at some distance beyond Guadalupe.

Civilization translated even into pulque, thought I, when we drove by the *Pulqueria del Ferro Carril*.*

* Railway Pulque-shop.

Then came something equally suggestive, in shape of a new fort and French soldiers working thereon. We drove across a sandy tract near the verge of the inundation, through villages built of unburnt bricks and fields of magu y, and came to the embankment which holds in Lake San Christobal. There was the house where Morelos was shot fifty years ago, with an excellent piece of road immediately before it, and a monument near the road with inscription too small for reading from the coach box. Now we passed along the top of the embankment, and noticed that it was sorely in need of repair. What, if San Christobal should overleap this rickety barrier and flow into the already brimming Texcoco? Eight feet difference of level might not sound much to foreign geographers, but it would hopelessly swamp the capital.

Our coachman grumbled at the badness of the road, which had water trickling through and oozing over it. He was stiffly polite to me, that wearer of hairy leggings, and his apprentice would scarce speak at all. Had I not on my head a Maximiliano white chimney-pot? Did not my feet enjoy cool white boots resembling the gaiters of the French army? I was clearly a Frenchman, or, at best, a Franco-German, and stiff politeness was the proper demeanour to such a person. This outside view of myself dawned upon me, when on asking the name of some tree that we passed, I received an answer which ended in the question—

“How do you call it in French, sir?”

I did not know. They were surprised.

“Had we no such trees in France?”

I thought not, but England was my country!

Their faces brightened; “Ah, the Señor is English! Many Englishmen travel with us to Pachuca.”

It was evident that those white shoes and the Maximiliano had disguised me. I was now a neutral, and found no difficulty in making them talk freely. The coachman produced a bottle of pulque from under his cushion, the sardonic apprentice exemplified what he said by cuts at the near-wheeler, we drank and sang in a mild noon-day carouse, on the dust-encircled coach box.

Old churches were left behind and fields tilled by barefooted Indians with a yoke of oxen to each plough. We halted to change horses at a village embowered amongst prickly-pear trees, with hedges of the tall slim cacti, here called *organos* from their resemblance to the pipes of an organ; and, in front of the village church, I recognized a familiar friend. A derrick! Could my eyes deceive me? They could, no doubt, but they did not in this case. A derrick it was, used by five Indians to bore an artesian well with hand-power. Four worked the beam, whilst the fifth guided the drill. Here is a sensation for a couple of Americans amongst our passengers. I see a great boot shoved out of the coach before it has stopped, and a brawny individual in a wide-awake

follows the boot ; a second great boot and a second brawny individual tumbles out upon the road. They run to the derrick, they sniff round the drill for traces of oil, take up a handful of sand, taste it, and laugh loudly over their picture of what "them Injines would do if they should strike a running well." One of them "reckons that the church and adjoining lot might be had cheap." The other is disposed to stop there and "look round a bit." But they resume their places along with the rest before we start ; for, after all, there is no symptom of oil.

The leaders' heads were cast loose by a stable-boy with immense straw hat, who ran with us for several paces without quitting his hold. The team was at a gallop, and the coach rocking from side to side. My neighbour in hairy gaiters grasped the reins with a practised hand. Round a corner we sprang, shot across the front of a drove of mules, almost brushing their noses with our wheels, and just avoided collision with a cart that had broken down in the middle of the highway. It was splendid driving, a lesson for the apprentice, who did his duty meanwhile on our near-wheeler, and was ready, when some part of the harness went wrong, to scramble down, set it right, and scramble up again, as though wheels in motion afforded a secure footing. The ministry of public works had been active in this direction. There were good pieces of road nearly finished, and pieces very bad because something better was in prospect. Young

trees had been planted to shade future travellers and ditches cut against another rainy season. We critics of the box seat declared ourselves satisfied, save that the apprentice, of whom I instantly formed a high opinion as utilitarian, objected to there being over many monuments commemorating what had been done.

The village called Piedrasyniños was presently reached. Piedrasyniños, home of rampant childom and place of refreshment for passengers at five reals a head. I strolled into the churchyard, where urchins fresh from school surrounded me. Alas for white shoes and Maximiliano! Vain were my good wishes towards them, my smiles at the little victims as they ran. Somebody cried out, "He's a Frenchman!" "Stones to the Frenchman!" and I retreated amid a royal salute from small double-shotted fists. There was pleasure in seeing such early signs of patriotism, however mistaken. That pedagogue, looking mildly at me from his school-room door, had no resemblance to Eugene Aram, but he might be a village Hampden wrapped up in himself with the Hampden part innermost.

So thinking, and smarting from sundry raps about the heels, I remounted our coach box. Click, clack! Let go their heads. Humour them for a few moments with a canter. Gather your team together at a rough piece of road, and let the apprentice hold the reins when all is plain sailing before us. We travelled

on between dusty fields where peasants and oxen were ploughing, or where lines of maguáy, planted at regular intervals, were surrounded by the stubble of Indian corn. More songs are sung, and the pulque bottle, replenished at Piedrasyniños, is brought out again. Our coachman wonders whether the United States can really produce a million of soldiers. The apprentice thinks a million too high a figure, though perhaps they have as many as France. What a war it would be between two such powers! Does the Señor think it will come?

Who knows?

They glanced at me enquiringly, as though to say: "Any rumour thankfully received." Would I not take some more pulque? The bottle was at my disposition. Well! as I chose. But Englishmen soon came to drink it as much as Mexicans.

There flew across our track a large bird with a snake in its mouth. Now for the Tenochtitlan, the national emblem of Mexico. If that bird only alighted upon a prickly-pear tree, growing on a rock, he would become positively heraldic. And the bird was obstinate enough to soar away until we lost sight of him. Never mind, I might see the Tenochtitlan on every dollar.

So our conversation was continued, and the blunders of a stranger's speech were heard without a smile. A messenger from the hacienda of Señor — appeared at the roadside waiting for letters. He received

a packet, handed up a bottle of pulque in graceful acknowledgment, and sped away with a cloud of dust following him through the maguéis. Then we passed some cattle, which would not allow themselves to be driven as a boy on horseback desired to drive them. One sturdy ox set off in a wrong direction, leading others to follow his example. The boy no sooner perceived that mutiny was intended, than he produced his lazo. In an instant the noose had descended over the horns of the ringleader, that wiry, undersized, horse had thrown forward what weight he possessed to tighten the cord, and Sir Mutineer was dragged ignominiously to a proper line of march.

“Not badly done for a boy,” said our apprentice, in pleased tones; “but he will lose his hand some time if he is not more careful in making fast.”

We came to immense plantations of maguéy, which supply the miners with their favourite drink, and before us were the white houses of Pachuca. The town lies close under the mountain range, and reminded me of Malvern as we approached it. A French fort on an elevated spot above Pachuca might stand for St. Ann's Well, and the principal mountain, which is immediately in rear of the town, represents the Worcestershire Beacon. Donkeys are not here chartered by invalids to carry them up winding paths, nor do mule-chaises toil along the hill-sides. But there are plenty of pack-mules to be seen, laden with silver ore, and there are paths which would surprise a Malvern don-

key with their wild impassable look. There are desolate ravines, rich in silver, and barren slopes where stunted maguésy bristle round a few strangely-shaped prickly-pears. There are mining works in unexpected places, steam-engines planted where, until you saw them, you would think yourself rather a clever fellow for climbing. Horizontal shafts are driven inwards to get at silver, vertical shafts are driven downwards for the same purpose. There are rights of ownership jostling each other for patches of rock not large enough to support a water-cure establishment, and there are twenty-fourth part shares in mines, subdivided for convenience of purchasers. Pachuca is no valley of diamonds, in which merchants fish for treasure with raw beefsteak. Here they have thrown in other treasure to begin with and have found some trouble in getting it back. Silver is everywhere, around and below, but the problem is how to obtain a pound's worth of silver for nineteen shillings of outlay. Those merchants who fished for diamonds were not so hampered.

If a mine should yield ore containing seven *marcos* of silver (a marco is 8 oz.) to the *monton* or load of three thousand pounds, then that mine may be profitably worked. I have heard of the successful reduction of ore which had in it but five marcos to the *monton*, though this was sailing very near the wind. Take it at seven marcos, it might as well be seventeen to an unpractised eye, and you have a heap of

broken quartz resembling a road-mender's heap, where roads are macadamized, in which your few ounces of silver lie hidden. No labour must be spared, no waste of time or material allowed, if you would extract a pound's worth of the precious metal for nineteen shillings. Many have thought that they knew how this might be done, and have wasted their lives in trying. Others, with better luck, have extracted a pound's worth for fifteen shillings or less, and have made their fortunes. A very rich vein will help anybody through, however unskilful; but the silver is capricious, so that when you have learnt to know it well and love it, at forty-five, sixty, a hundred marcos to the monton, it presently fades away from where you expected to find it and slants off somewhere else, putting you to great expense. On the whole there is nothing so sure as a good system of reduction, that will deal effectively with a low average of ore and make profit with from ten to seven marcos the monton. Such a system has been organized by the Mining Company of Real del Monte and Pachuca, which works other people's mines on shares, works all that it can get, does things wholesale, and makes both ends meet.

You should see the Company's house in Pachuca. It is half palace, half fort, with massive gates and loop-holed walls, with handsomely-furnished apartments and every comfort for the Directors during their periodical visits. The Company is Mexican,

but its affairs are chiefly managed by Englishmen, and about three hundred British subjects are in its employ. Among them is a surgeon, whom I found to be so pleasant a fellow that my ambition ever since has been to do the honours of a mine to him. Perhaps I shall live to see my ambition gratified, though, as yet, I am not very distinct as to time or locality. And, meanwhile, you will like to be told something more of the Company's castle, unless I mistake your baronial nature. Time has been when gates were barred and loop-holes were manned to protect a convoy of treasure from probable pillage, when eight Englishmen and twenty of the Company's Mexican retainers defied hundreds of outside Liberals or Reactionists, I forget which. On another occasion a revolutionary leader, who has since been received with open arms by Maximilian's Government, captured the Managing Director of the Company and extorted a ransom of one hundred thousand dollars. You will perceive that massive gates and loop-holes are not hereabout unmeaning precautions. I wish that I could give you a draw-bridge to feast upon in fancy; but the castle opens on a narrow paved street of a common-place, bustling, little, town, where everything is provided to tempt money from miners' pockets, where there is a small playhouse called the *Teatro de Progreso*, and a large amount of republican feeling. Pachuca had recently "pronounced" against the Empire, had been put down with prompt

titude, seen its leader of an hour shot by the French, and was, when I beheld it, politically prostrate. The miners were toiling, as usual, far underground, the shops were busy, and a hungry, ill-clad, rural, guard maintained public order, until the Government should remember to forward its pay or some bold traitor should tempt it with a good dinner to rebel.

The Mining Company had guards of its own. Two hundred of those native retainers before mentioned, who wanted neither food nor clothing, watched over the Company's property and the Company's friends. Each retainer received twenty-five shillings sterling a week, for himself and horse, as regular pay, with handsome presents in case he rendered any special service. The men were armed with sabre, carbine, and lazo. They wore leathern jackets and hats of uniform shape, so as to present a semi-military appearance. Their horses were lean and tough, very poor to look at but very good to go, content, as are other Mexican horses, with a single daily feed, able to scale the mountains like cats, and to travel un-rested for many hours, if not pushed beyond a certain pace. The Company may be proud of its light cavalry, Government may take the hint that an empty stomach is the most disloyal thing in existence, and the Company's friends may hope for the honour of an escort if they visit its mines. I, as a humble individual accustomed to take care of myself, felt flattered by an escort of one; but it will not do to start on my up-

ward ride to Real del Monte until I have further described matters connected with Pachuca.

“There’s no help for it, sir; you’d better do as other gentlemen have done, or your clothes will get quite spoilt in the mine.”

So said a good-natured Briton, long from home, as he superintended my toilet in a counting-house near the entrance of the great Roserio. His word was law. Off came those garments which had clothed the interval between the Maximiliano and the white boots. On went a nondescript costume, savouring strongly of the respectable cadger out of work as a mason; rough shoes were hastily stepped into, a flannel scull-cap and a sort of petrified Jim-Crow were placed upon the head. I stood prepared.

“That’s about it,” remarked my countryman, complacently regarding me. “You’ll find a tub of warm water ready to wash in when you come back.” Reader, he kept his promise.

And was this then the descent to a beautiful silver mine?—this gallery, ankle-deep in mud, this place of steam-engines lying like monsters in side nooks, this creaking pump-gear, these flaring candles which showed only damp dull walls of rock. My guide told me to stand aside for the trucks full of ore were coming along the tramway. They passed with a show of squeezing us against the wall, with more flaring of candles, and with the shouting of the Indian boy who accompanied us to other Indian boys.

No metallic glitter was seen where piles of silver waited to be removed; no shovelling silver into the trucks which ran along the gallery. Quartz came up plentifully, was shovelled in, and dragged away. It contained so many marcos to the monton; that much we knew, and that was all the silvery romance that could be made of the mine. Nuggets of silver had been picked up in Mexico, but nuggets would not let themselves be found so far down as the bottom of the Great Roserio. As far as appearances went, the Company might have engaged to macadamize a road regardless of cost, and might now be searching for choice material. Their search was diligent on such a supposition, and the road must have been extraordinarily valuable. Yet I preferred this wild hypothesis to thinking of marcos and montones, as we descended ladder after ladder beside a huge pump-rod that worked up and down with incessant effort to drain some subterranean lake. Ladder after ladder, resting-place after resting-place, hot, damp, muddy, and always close beside the huge pump-rod—such was our descent. We stuck candles on our hats with lumps of moist clay, and climbed with both hands like men who are doing it in earnest. I experienced a climbing “sensation,” a going down as if bound for the antipodes, and a coming up as if some captain whose main-top was a mile above his deck, had ordered me to be mastheaded.

There is a gallery full of miners—one gang work-

ing by night, another by day—at the bottom of the Great Roserio. There are more flaring candles, and boys who carry heavy loads of ore, and water which has to be pumped away. The earthmen of this locality are not given to toiling for the purpose of bringing treasure into one spot where it may lie hidden during countless centuries. Their object is pay; and pulque is to them as beer to English miners. They work hard, earn good wages, and spend what they earn in prodigal style; therein resembling a like class of persons known in the British Isles. Physically they are small, muscular Indians, whose legs, bare to the knee, show nothing but bone and sinew, whose swarthy faces and straight black hair have a weird elfin look. I must say again that they do not toil as real romantic earthmen should, but have an eye to pecuniary inducement of from twenty to thirty shillings sterling a week, and upwards, according to strength and perseverance. The Britons, of whom so many are employed at Pachuca and Real del Monte, receive high salaries to induce them to remain thus far out of the world. Their duties lie chiefly among steam-machinery and office work. They have no place in the bottom of the mine, so, if you please, we will be mastheaded by that captain with his truck a mile from his deck and return to daylight.

The Great Roserio yields to its possessors two million dollars per annum. The fact throws interest

about the muddy gallery and makes neighbouring landowners sigh for an equally valuable descent towards the antipodes. I had been to Pithole, and could bear Roserio lightly in my mind after witnessing such a gush of wealth as poured from "well No. 54." What was two million dollars obtained by constant labour, to three million bubbling up of their own accord? As between oil and metal, oil had the best of it; but the metal might not be despised. "Two million of dollars," has almost the rolling sound of "two hundred thousand pounds," besides being just twice as much. You shall now hear how the dollars part company from the quartz, and shall grapple with marcos and montones, while remembering that a pound's worth of silver is to be produced for nineteen shillings.

If coal pits lay conveniently near the silver mines, or forests were at hand to supply unlimited fuel, the ore would be smelted without further trouble, and a poorer quality of rock than is at present worked could be made to yield a handsome profit. There is coal in Mexico, there are also luxuriant forests, and some day, when railroads intersect the country, silver ore will undergo no other process than smelting, whilst heaps of refuse quartz will be treated as respectable ore. How those heaps would be pounced upon if they lay in South Wales or Staffordshire! But cost of carriage must always prevent their transference to Europe, even though the Mexican law forbidding their export

should be repealed. Cost of carriage now makes smelting so dear that it is not resorted to with any but the richest ore. Other qualities are reduced in a more cumbersome though more economical manner.

We start with a pile of stones brought from remote caves by those supposititious road makers, for macadamizing their favourite highway. A number of Indians, in the road-making connection, sit among the stones, hammering at them thoughtfully. Some stones are thrown aside, which the quick eyes of the Indians have detected to contain little or no silver. The rest are broken into small pieces and placed in bags, ready for transportation by the pack-mules. We pass through a crowd of mules and drivers, waiting to take their turn, and follow a convoy already under way towards the stamping mill. It is not necessary that we should long delay our ramble for this part of the process. The Company begins to assume its true character and to drop that road-making fiction. Bags full of stones, broken small as we imagined for its favourite highway, are now ruthlessly stamped into powder; then the powder either finds its way into large cylinders, to be twirled round and round in what is called the barrel process, that its silvery particles may be separated from its stony particles; or it is reduced by the amalgamation process. We watch the movements of men and horses about an enclosure filled with mud, and are

bewildered at the apparent folly of their wallowing when no one throws them half-pence. Amalgamation requires sulphate of copper and mercury in the Company's mud, so it is not wholesome mud, but stains the legs of the Company's horses green and oftentimes injures the feet of the Company's men. Here our friend who was stamped to powder is mixed up into paste. What Afric's crystal fountains do for gold, the Company, through its amalgamation process, does for silver. The unwholesome mud, having been wallowed in by men and horses during thirty days, is drained off over a surface prepared to catch the silver dust. The dust, being caught, is squeezed into cakes; the cakes are subjected to heat; the mercury is got rid of, as a low but clinging intruder; and the silver departs on its mission of good and evil, locked in a strong waggon, with an escort of the Company's retainers.

With an escort! That brings me to my upward ride from Pachuca, brings me to the fine piece of road which leads thence to Real del Monte, and to the leathern-jacketed dragoon who cantered serenely a few paces in my rear, his sabre looking very useless and his lazo very formidable. That road had been made by the Company, which is something of a macadamizer after all; that leathern-jacketed dragoon had been equipped by the Company; those droves of pack-mules, which often blocked our way, were carrying silver ore for the Company. I only

regretted that I myself did not belong to this wealthy concern in some quiet unassuming capacity, say, as principal shareholder; but even then, I could have enjoyed no more delightful ride than my ascent to Real del Monte with an escort of one. No brighter afternoon could have brought the thin cool air against the cheek of a principal shareholder, no fairer landscape could have opened before him when he had passed the mountain summit.

There is a slight descent to the silver works, which lie in a valley amongst rocky peaks, and further down can be seen miles of varied country, with other high ground almost as lofty as that on which we stand, shutting out our view towards the Gulf. Comparatively near at hand is the Great Barranca, a chasm two thousand feet deep, wherein sugar-cane will grow. It is odd to look at sugar-cane from a region of stunted magués, fir trees, and fire-places. Not that we can see the cane, but we can conscientiously look; and here are fire-places, beyond a doubt. Pointed roofs and chimneys to several of the houses, a couple of English girls walking along the road, the sound of hammers and the sight of steam-engines, suggest that this is the head quarters of the Company's British Colony. My escort desires me to notice a small burial-ground on yonder hill-side.

"It is, Señor, the Campo Santo of the English; there are many of your people here." I nod approv-

ingly, and he continues: "Señor, the English nation pleases me more than the French."

Leathern-jacketed dragoon, you are "intensely human." This sentiment of yours demands pulque and cannot pass unnoticed. †

I was shown extensive workshops at Real del Monte, was called on to admire a pumping-engine of great power from the copper-house foundry near Hayle, which had worked smoothly for twenty years, and was much amused by an impish young Indian, who, after setting some machinery in motion for my benefit, executed a dance before it expressing unbounded triumph. The Queen's money did not pass current, but the Queen's English did, with many whom I met.

"How liked they their quarters, so high up above most men's church-steeple?"

"Pretty well," was the answer; "we find it too cold at times and there's always a want of air for comfortable breathing; but it's not altogether a bad climate."

On my asking about length of life in the thin air, I heard that it was "middling;" which gave a dismal impression of death at thirty-five.

"Did any of them wish to settle permanently in Mexico?"

"Perhaps some did, but very few." Yet it must be owned that the Company treated them "first-rate."

Nothing but good to be heard of our wealthy

Mexican friend. He has treated Britons with liberality. I warm towards him, and grow familiar. Why should he not, as the nabob is dead, be dubbed forthwith John Company?

My escort could appreciate a lovely sunset, while his horse's faculty for cantering down hill allowed of inattention amounting to recklessness. He looked over the Valley of Mexico as we returned to Pachuca, and presently exclaimed in eager tones, "It is a magnificent view, Señor. You can have nothing like it in England." Right, leathern-jacketed dragoon, we have not; nor shall your draught of pulque be less for speaking up. It was a magnificent view. The western sky glowed like a furnace, and mountaintops were standing out in bold relief against it. There was haze to the southward, above which could be observed the snowy peak of Popocatepetl, only known to my escort as the volcano of Puebla. We could clearly see the hills behind Guadalupe, and it was difficult to believe that a journey of fifty miles divided Pachuca from the capital.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LA PUEBLA.

Basque peasants — The cathedral chimes — A jeweller dismissed.

OVERWORKED in trying to set straight Mexican finance, which was by all accounts a labour of Hercules, M. Langlais, the distinguished French Minister, died suddenly while his task was yet incomplete. He had done much towards curtailing expenses and opening sources of revenue for the new Government; but there remained much to be done, and his death was regarded as a severe blow by the well-wishers of Maximilian.

Leaves were sprouting on the trees in the Great Square, so that the pavement before the Cathedral was flecked with shade, and slow solemn music rose above a procession which advanced through the blaze of morning sunshine. There were thousands assembled to witness the funeral pomp, natives and foreigners, soldiers and work-people, that odd medley which forms society in Mexico. Bronzed Frenchmen, seeming blond beside the dark-cheeked Indian, and

fair-haired Germans, looking as though they had been whitewashed. Here was a tall stranger with beard and wide-awake, who "guessed them fellows wearin' crosses warn't no great shakes;" further on, a priest with shovel hat, large in proportion to the national *sombrero*. A double line of infantry kept open the approach to the main door of the Cathedral, and a group of officers awaited the arrival of the procession. You might see in that group many crosses such as had failed to impress my tall neighbour, and many different uniforms with all the colours of a flower garden. Algerine lieutenants of Turcos, Hassan and Mustapha promoted, in white turbans and loose blue garments. French lieutenants of Turcos in civilized coats and roseate pantaloons. But every one has been to France, and has studied the *types militaires* in the shop-windows if he did not study them in the street. It will be imagined that they looked bright and real when they were real and had such a sky overhead.

These officers who waited for the coming of the sad procession, whose spurs jingled and whose scabbards clanked against the pavement, stood round a central figure on whom all eyes were fixed. A man of middle height, with a bluff, hearty, manner and florid complexion; a man who had put to death prisoners reprieved by the Emperor, and from whose sentence there was no appeal save to his absolute master far away. Marshal Bazaine was the ruler of Mexico, and the crowd knew it. What was an Emperor, what was civil authority, in comparison with

the sword which had done all, and was still doing all? Now the Marshal passed between his double line of soldiers and entered the Cathedral. Some bystanders doffed their hats, some who were out of sight growled curses upon all invaders. There was a streaming of bright uniforms behind the Marshal, whilst solemn music drew nearer, and a hearse, covered with a tricolour flag, drew up at the end of the line of soldiers. Then came mourners robed in black, and members of the Imperial household to represent His Majesty. More than one Imperial carriage followed the hearse. Their panels bore the Mexican device surmounted by a crown, with the inscription "*Equidad en la justicia.*" The crowd knew also what this motto meant, and believed that Maximilian desired to make it his guiding principle, and sighed for something which they had not.

I left the Empire of the Valley, its threatening lakes and surrounding mountains; left it with a last impression of pomp and circumstance and bright uniforms. A pilot had been taken from the helm of financial affairs, but what signified five million of dollars, more or less, to a people rich in gold and silver mines? If politics would go smoothly, finance might take care of itself. Was there not an Imperial Government recognized by many foreign Powers, which would put its stamp and inscription on the produce of the mines? Was there not a Marshal of France to guarantee that armed Liberals should only roam in the distant provinces of the north-east, north,

and north-west, of the west, south-west, and south, with an occasional incursion to the eastward?

There was nothing of moment in my diligence experiences between Mexico and Puebla. You have read enough about that kind of travelling in these pages, if nowhere else, to picture our early start, the mounted patrols along the road, the cold twilight succeeded by a glow of sunshine, the jolting, and the dust. It is probable that you can scarce picture how wondrously fair was the last glimpse of the Valley, obtained through the pine-woods of the Rio Frio, or realize the motley assemblage gathered together at this elevated spot—a military convoy encamped in the middle of the highway, a score of muleteers halting to rest their cattle, with fruit-sellers and woodcutters, passengers by diligence, and hungry-looking mendicants. On the cultivated uplands through which we descended to the great plain were to be seen crops of wheat in a forward state, and when once we were on the plain, with Puebla close before us, those twin giants, Popocatepetl and Iztacihuatl, resumed their old and solemn aspect of watching over everything which went and came.

Blooming amongst the coachful of my fellow passengers, with bright eyes and ruddy cheeks, were a couple of Basque peasant women. They had come out to Mexico not very long since, had lived with their aunt in some quiet sisterhood devoted to works of mercy, and were now homeward bound in the best

possible health and spirits. Why they had been allowed to remain unmarried and to start on their return voyage without a *pronunciamento* in favour of immediate matrimony, I could not divine. Frenchmen and Mexicans had allowed them to slip away. It was too late for repentance, and there they sat in a beauty which the dust must have fallen very thick to hide. How fearful were the bumps received by those Pyrenean maidens, who had not learnt the subtle gymnastic arts which mitigate one's sufferings from an ill-repaired road. How strong was their Spanish accent in French, their French accent in Spanish. No matter what shocks our diligence sustained, what agonizing jolts were inflicted on the sturdy Basque frames, the faces showed as fresh a colour, the eyes sparkled as brightly as ever. A little discomfort was not to upset such constitutions. My next neighbour entered into conversation with the prettier of the sisters—the prettier, if it be fair to make any comparison. Could she speak her native language? Of course she could, and the fine eyes wore a confident expression. Would she give us a specimen of Basque as a favour? There ensued a hesitating pause, as when Manxman or Gael is asked to exercise his Celtic speech for Saxon ears. Then something was said very quickly, which we could none of us afterwards remember, and we thanked our prettier *vis à vis*—that odious distinction will creep in—and felt that we had had a lesson in Basque. Whilst touching on lingual differences, it may be thought a noteworthy fact

that the prevailing language of the diligence to-day was Spanish. Strangers were for once in a minority.

Puebla is a thoroughly Mexican city. It has less foreign innovation about it than the capital; no railroad, no horse-cars, no newspapers published in English or French, and very few chimney-pot hats or ladies' bonnets to be seen in the streets. At the time of my visit Puebla was occupied by a small force of Austrians and some native Imperialists. The Austrians marched hither and thither in detachments, as garrisons are wont, and might often be seen refreshing themselves with pulque or bargaining for fruit. The native troops, whose appearance was unusually good and who seemed to have been lately fitted out with new uniforms, likewise drank pulque and cheapened bananas. But neither class of Imperialists formed an important feature of city life, which appeared to move on in its accustomed manner. There were plenty of sombreros on people's heads, and plenty in the shops devoted to that branch of business; harness makers drove a thriving trade, so did the dealers in pack-rope and wooden stirrups; whilst enough of rainbow-coloured zarape were offered for sale to clothe all the country round. There were bread shops and water-carriers, cripples on the pavement asking alms, and droves of donkeys laden with firewood or with hay. Imagine it very cool in the shade and very hot in the sunshine; positively cold at night, with danger of sunstroke at noontide; remember that a bushel of March dust is

worth a king's ransom, and think of the incalculable wealth that must have been blown through Puebla, when dust-clouds rose thickly upon the afternoon breeze. "English proverbs are not suitable to Mexico," exclaims one who lies at the catch. Well, perhaps so, I may have overrated the value of March dust in this vicinity, for surely the inhabitants turn their backs on their good fortune.

I must add that there are many fine shops in the city, lest Poblanos should accuse me of underrating their progress; and, as regards the foreign element in Puebla, I must vouch for the existence of an artistic French hairdresser, and of a smart little café kept by a Frenchman, also of a patent sewing-machine store belonging to an American citizen. Would it be raising the veil from before back-parlours too much, if I further mention that the French *restaurateur* has a pretty German wife, and that the American citizen is married to an Englishwoman—a varied foreign element, you will admit, and appropriate to the Indo-Latin-Anglo-Teutonic picnic in Mexico.

Puebla has a great public square, with a fountain in the middle and a cloistered pavement running round three sides. On the fourth side is the Cathedral, with lofty towers at its main entrance and a dome less elevated rising above its wide extent of vaulted roof. I pass the cab-stand, where a line of tidy-looking vehicles is drawn up, as if being hired were quite out of the question, lulling one into com-

fortable confidence that they can be had whenever wanted. They cannot, but are all engaged, when the time for driving on the *Paseo* arrives. I pass this deceptive cab-stand and the fountain where countless pitchers are waiting to be filled without anybody in particular taking care of them, and my steps approach the shadow of the Cathedral towers. Stop; it is something o'clock. There is agitation of small bells high in the air, and a pealing stroke from the large bell. What a pretty custom is honoured in this simple observance of taking off the hat. Many Poblanos kneel and pray, whilst all the people within sight remain bareheaded for a few moments as the hour is tolled forth. It would need a powerful chime to arrest our busy life even for a second. Pod-snap might look at his watch, but he would not be likely to do anything with his hat but jam it on the tighter. (Appropriate reflection;—these Poblanos are superstitious; liable to priestly influence; education backward.) They have gone about their work, and I enter the Cathedral with a mind prepared to find it full of worshippers. It is full. One of the Lent services has attracted a crowd of the faithful. There are gorgeous vestments to be seen before the altar, tapers are burning, and incense is scattered. Albeit no tinted light is shed through stained glass, for, as in Mexico, the Cathedral windows are uncoloured, there is an imposing effect of massive columns and arches, a complete shutting out of the tropical brightness of the open square, with gloom enough to

soften the gaudy painting of the dome and the rich gilding of the choir.

Now for an upward climb from an outside doorway close to the main entrance, by a flight of steps cleaner than similar steps in Mexico, with a toll of half a real instead of a real, payable to a family party which resides in a sort of ecclesiastical *entre-sol*. I am warned not to put my head near the bells when they are about to ring, and thus warned, I mount above them until there are no more steps to ascend. The city is very flat when regarded in a bird's-eye view; low houses, flat-topped houses on which their owners can walk if they please, straight streets crossing each other at right angles, and that public square appearing, as is natural, flattest of all. Such is my first impression on glancing down. But, after growing accustomed to the height and the glare, I can detect a difference of level in one quarter, can see that the houses gradually rise towards a couple of small hills on the outskirts of Puebla, and that these hills bear traces of fortification. They are named respectively Loreto and Guadalupe. They were the strongholds of the Mexican garrison during the siege by Marshal Forey, and have, in consequence, a local fame which might surprise you. The siege itself was insignificant in quantity of powder burned, compared with Vicksburg or Charleston; but it was the great event of the Franco-Mexican war. The French were repulsed on May 5th, 1862, and a popular song commemorates this stray gleam of success on the Mexican arms.

There were lengthy operations which accustomed the Republican troops to face their formidable opponents. There was a battle outside when Comonfort manœuvred to relieve the garrison; and when Ortega surrendered for want of food, the French were chivalrous enough to compliment his forces on their long resistance. So it happens that the whole interest of the struggle centres in Puebla, and that yonder hillocks, at the outskirts of the flat-roofed houses, are famous. I suppose that there may be other famous spots somewhat more hallowed by time, which have no better claim to their distinction than Loreto and Guadalupe. Popular ballads are apt to be strong every 5th of May, and not to notice subsequent surrenders. You are wearied by modern cramming, and exclaim, "Enough history!" Well, there is something in that too, and I will look away towards the giants that guard the Valley, or to Malinche, close beside Puebla, or to Citlaltepētēl, who keeps watch upon the ocean. It is a fine prospect, though history should be doubly in excess. Yet if you chance to be weary of mountains, however grand, and to feel yourself giddy on cathedral towers, I will betake me to a lower stand-point and convey you out of danger of another description of scenery. But one thing I must say that concerns a mountain, and so do justice to a piece of charming rashness on the part of my young French companion in the trip from Havana to Matanzas. He arrived in Mexico soon after me, came to Puebla

without accident, and, accompanied by two other persons less liable than himself to the vengeance of guerillas, ascended Popocatepetl. Of course he just failed to obtain a view of Mexico, such is mountaineering luck; but he also failed to have his throat cut, and one failure quite balanced the other. To point this adventure, you should know that a few days after Monsieur —— had taken his sunny climb, a diligence was attacked near Rio Frio and some of its passengers, members of the Belgian Embassy, were killed and wounded: this to substantiate guerillas in full justice to the rashness of my young friend, for rashness is a fault admired by many.

There was no political life in the city, no wordy war between the Liberal and Imperialist press of Puebla, for the Liberal journal had been suspended and the Imperialist print languished through want of something to contradict. But Peralta singing at the Opera House raised that house from the normal torpor of provincial stages, and gave the whole place a stimulus to gaiety. March dust might whirl about unvalued, but Poblanos were delighted with their countrywoman's talent. They could appreciate music—what Mexicans cannot?—and they relished the thought of a native being able to do something excellently well. The nightmare of that foreign picnic was upon them. At the café they might see Austrian officers ride their horses among chairs and tables and people's toes, and drink cognac without dismounting. It was military conciliation

of civilians, you will observe, by showing such creatures how to ride; and the creatures live in the saddle; except when politeness requires that they should seek refreshment on foot. Peralta was a relief from the nightmare. She drew large audiences, which could applaud a Mexican all the more on account of her nationality nor yet be accused of treason.

Marshal Forey won his baton by the siege already mentioned, so he was wise to spin it out and advance cautiously, making sure of complete success. Besides, whatever we think of allowing an enemy to fortify himself before our eyes, as an abstract question, this course has decided merits, when the enemy is thereafter entrapped, blockaded, and forced to yield at discretion. I have heard widely different accounts of the siege of Puebla from persons who were present on the same side during its progress, *i. e.* on the French side. One would maintain that a serious resistance had been overcome and a great victory achieved; another would laugh at the thought that Forey was in earnest, and explain how, by skilful handling, a small affair had been nursed into a good sized triumph. They pointed to the escape of the city without damage by bombardment, as a proof of French moderation in carrying out a farce, and declared Forey to be a commander who knew better than to spoil his prospects by overhaste. So far as I could judge, the former class of critics were right in their opinion. Serious resistance had been overcome, or, more strictly speaking, circumvented, which is

just as creditable to a general, and great efforts had been made by France at the critical moment of her intervention; much greater, as numbers went, than Jonathan put forth in 1847. But then Jonathan was only a common invader, with claims to be satisfied, whilst Napoleon meditated the conquest and transformation of the whole country. For this end it was better that Ortega should be surrounded and scientifically lazoed, which was accordingly done, and when Puebla had fallen Mexico was left defenceless.

A medal was issued to the French troops in Mexico, and perhaps you have seen it on some returned to France. Light-coloured ribbon, laid in a peculiar shape and displaying the Mexican emblem, supports the medal. At first those only were decorated who had served before Puebla, but as time has brought fresh regiments to perform the bayonet trick under Maximilian's throne, more medals are bestowed to encourage the soldiers who may distinguish themselves in a struggle diplomatically supposed to have long since terminated. His Imperial Majesty of Mexico likewise issued a medal, and it might be seen not unfrequently on the breasts of Austrians and Belgians. Its red ribbon was, however, an obstacle with the French. The red ribbon belonged to the Legion of Honour and was not to be worn by favour of a foreign monarch. I came away before Maximilian had made a change that would enable him to reward his allies. The Court jeweller was instantly dismissed for suggesting in despair a bright Magenta ribbon.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IMPERIALISM ON A LEE-SHORE.

Serve them right, for steering off their course!

CROMWELL was willing to govern with one man in ten on his side, provided that he could put a sword into the tenth man's hand. Allow that Mexico has eight million inhabitants, and reckon one million and a half to be the number of fighting-men within her borders. You come to the point of Cromwell's calculation, to the point which is vital as regards Maximilian I. Can one hundred and fifty thousand Mexicans be found who are prepared to support the Empire? If they can be found, there is hope that Imperialism may keep clear of the rocks towards which it is drifting, but I doubt whether even fifteen thousand fighting men of native descent will fight for Maximilian when the French army shall have returned to France.

I found among Mexicans of every class much less confidence in the future of the Empire than I had been led to expect. No one seemed to think it possible that

Maximilian could remain in Mexico without foreign support ; and many persons averred, that, unless large reinforcements should be sent to Marshal Bazaine, a guerilla contest might continue for years to come. Escobedo was gaining strength on the Rio Grande ; Juarez was free to roam as he pleased through Sonora and Chihuahua ; nay, more than this, Porfirio Diaz was comparatively near at hand. He occupied mountain fastnesses which were within a few days' journey of the capital, and whence Marshal Bazaine had not attempted to drive him. It was absurd to justify the decree of October 3rd, 1865,* by saying that war was at an end and that further resistance was brigandage.

So said the Mexicans with whom I conversed. They usually took things calmly, and would often declare Maximilian to be a kind-hearted man, a well-wisher to the people ; "but," they would add, "we do not want him here." Foolish Mexicans not to want to be regenerated as a Latin race by having a Teuton placed upon your throne, ex-Confederates invited to settle on your land, and Chinamen brought from beyond sea to make confusion worse confounded !

In March, 1866, there were present about forty thousand foreign troops, to hold the skeleton of an empire for Maximilian. This inadequate force garrisoned Vera Cruz, Tampico, and Matamoros on the

* By which prisoners were to be executed within twenty-four hours after their capture.

Gulf, Acapulco and Mazatlan on the Pacific. It occupied the Valley of Mexico, kept open regular communication thence to Vera Cruz, and maintained a secure footing northward as far as San Louis Potosi. But there was nothing like complete conquest, such, for instance, as President Lincoln achieved over President Davis; no successful effort towards Imperial "reconstruction;" no suppression of bushwhacking. Everything was doubtful and unsettled; the French Marshal knew that he must retire to Orizaba should Jonathan intervene; the French soldiers expected to be ordered home; the foreign residents were some of them taking flight for fear of coming trouble, whilst others, whose nationality chanced to be less obnoxious in Mexico, or who possessed stronger nerves, took their part in that motley pic-nic to which I have made frequent allusion.

Thirty thousand French, eight thousand Austrians, and two thousand Belgians, exhibited to the world what has been styled in Paris an unexampled *tour de force*. They held an empire, a skeleton empire, I protest, but still an empire, for Maximilian. They secured the loyalty of fifteen or twenty thousand Mexican Imperialists, and kept at bay twice as many Mexican Liberals.* How long would it last? That was the important question.

* I use the past tense advisedly (although there is reason to believe that affairs have not yet changed) because I can only answer for what I saw, and a crash may come at any moment.

Napoleon had been misled. Juarez had been misrepresented. There was plenty of material for fierce historic debate. It might be urged that Mexico, having suffered so much from civil war, was the fittest possible object to suffer yet further from foreign conquest. She was anarchical, and deserved to be taken in hand without further parley; she was in debt, and the Imperial bailiffs were down upon her. Here was one side.

It might be stated in reply, that other countries as well as Mexico had known revolutions. She won her independence before the Mexican people had been educated for freedom. She struggled with a bigoted priesthood, fell under military dictatorship, received rude buffets from Jonathan, and became a prey to factious strife. From all this accumulation of difficulty emerged the Liberal party of 1861. Juarez, Comonfort, and Ortega were more respectable than any politicians yet seen in Mexico. They only asked for time to organize their Government, to bring mutinous generals to reason, and to arrange a financial system which should meet the just debts of the country. Time was refused them. They had opened schools, confiscated church property, behaved in fact like the enlightened Catholic powers of Europe. There had been encouragement of railway and telegraphic enterprise, with a prospect of substantial progress for Mexico. At this moment came allied intervention; England, France, and Spain occupied Vera Cruz by way of material

guarantee, claiming that what was owing should be promptly paid. Thus far intervention did no harm, indeed the three nations might have seized upon every Mexican seaport for a time with advantage to all concerned, had they sustained a Liberal Government in Mexico. But France shook off her allies, pushed forward alone, bore down all opposition, and undertook to civilize the Aztecs. Her chosen instrument was the good-natured, much-deluded, Maximilian; her success was very moderate. Here was the other side.

In March, 1866, few people cared to debate matters of history.

How long would it last? was the question which everybody asked, and all eyes were fixed upon Jonathan as a neighbour whose destiny was manifest; all eyes were fixed upon Jonathan, whilst he, with conscious strength of sinew, could afford to be patient, and squinted back across the Rio Grande whistling "Hail Columbia." He may have thought that France was in "a fix," and his daily press took care to tell the world that Napoleon must soon "back down;" yet war did not break forth between the countries of Lafayette and of Washington. There was enough for Jonathan to do at home, severe neutrality suited his game in Mexico better than active aggression. Why should he imitate Napoleon's mistake, to find himself saddled with a *protégé* who would not stand alone?

After reading my views upon Canadian defences,

as you must have done if you have come straight through to this page, you will readily believe that I account it impossible to maintain Maximilian's authority over one square mile of his Mexican Empire should Jonathan choose to invade the same; impossible, though all the power of France were called into play and all the troops which Belgium can spare were shipped for Vera Cruz. Americans could not hold Spain against the French, and Frenchmen could not hold Mexico against the Americans. We have come to a turning point in the career of the two hemispheres. Henceforward it will be necessary that a compact alliance of European States should be formed to confront the federation of American States, or that Europe should cease to interfere in America. One nation alone will have no chance against Jonathan on his own continent.

And France is going out of Mexico, beyond a doubt. She has "got to go," as Yankees say, for, even if Western Europe were willing to enter upon a crusade for Maximilian, there is sufficient hot water nearer home to distract our attention during the next half century.

But what of Mexico when France shall have retired from the scene? I fancy that Juarez, or some other Republican chief, will speedily take possession, that Jonathan will maintain his neutrality, and that the Mexicans, who have been shaken together by recent events, will form at last a stable national Government. Then commerce will extend,

and immigrants will arrive in swarms. Jonathan will still be neutral, though he may send out many of his sons to Americanize their Mexican neighbours. Perhaps these sons will adopt the nationality of their new home, learn Spanish, and take to cigarettes. Perhaps they will persuade their new countrymen to solicit annexation. Who can tell? I am inclined to think that an independent capital will exist for many years beside the salt waves of Texcoco. There is a charm about those snow-capped mountains which makes me hope that they will retain their ancient names, and I shall look back to the Empire of Maximilian I., whether it be drifting shoreward or stranded high and dry, as a region of bright sky and strange-looking plants, where dwelt a most courteous people.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

BACK TO THE UNITED STATES.

Prester John — Yarn spinning — Change of climate.

HAVING been on the spot, when that spot was Mexico, might well serve to dispel a hundred fantastic delusions passing current with those who only regarded the new Empire from a distance. But was there any advantage in letting go such delusions? They were comfortable, nay, almost romantic. A foreigner of dignified mien appeared amongst an ignorant people, as the Inca was fabled to have appeared in Peru. This foreigner, accustomed to govern, became the ruler of the ignorant people, established a balance of power with certain northern barbarians, and delighted his subjects by offering to their rude gaze the novel pageant of a court. What more could be desired? It was certainly a much brighter picture than that which I brought away with me, for though I still thought that the foreigner who had landed was full of good intentions, I knew

that he had not been wanted, and was not wanted, and would not be wanted, by that same ignorant people.

So, fresh from the spot, I came forth to a conjectural flourish in the outer (American) world, to stories more unlikely and delusions more fantastic than ever. New York would seemingly believe anything or believe nothing when Mexico was printed at the top of the news; and these two conditions are not very dissimilar. The vessel in which I sailed must have been laden with *canards*. They fluttered ashore ere yet a plank was pushed upon the landing-stage, they waddled into print or were served up at private tables dressed according to fancy. Here had I embarked with the latest rumours and the latest opinions gathered in conversation. Nobody on board, that is, no tangible responsible person, could pretend to anything later; for had we not started at the same time? Had not our vessel, in shipping phrase, reported herself? But, lo and behold, those irrepressible *canards* were ready next morning to make me doubt whether we could be speaking of the same country by use of the letters M, e, x, i, c, o. Surely there must be two empires, like the two Sicilies, or more than two, like all the Russias, and each empire must have its particular history, and I must have seen one and those feathered perplexities have come from another. Not that they are favourable as a whole to Maximilian, whose name can be clearly traced through every narrative, but that

they refer, beyond doubt, to a region which neither I nor my tangible fellow passengers had been able to penetrate. Mankind still has need of its Prester John; and why should not his throne be fixed south of the Rio Grande? Welcome then, feathered perplexities! I shall soon enjoy you, as I did your relatives last autumn.

The Empire that we tangibles had visited left a strong impression on my mind of something real, a pleasant impression of courtesy from the natives, of kind friends, both native and foreign, of splendid scenery, and a delicious climate. Down from the great plain to the rich valleys of Orizaba and Cordova, from thence to the tangled, dried-up, jungle of the *Tierra Caliente*, and on to the broad blue sea basking in sunshine. We met railway iron in carts, railway iron in waggons; we passed it drawn up that the teams might rest, and overtook long trains of empty vehicles returning coastward to fetch more iron. An extensive contract is that of the gentleman who for five million dollars has undertaken to bring two hundred thousand rails to their appointed places. Vast must his influence be among teamsters and mule owners. Fancy him in a wild moment tempted to "pronounce." Why, he might carry the whole road along with him. I noticed a woman and children in well-nigh every waggon, jolting contentedly along with the paternal teamster. These ill-looking fellows, from a soap-and-water point of view, had then given pledges to fortune. Their fierce aspect

did not prevent their working hard to earn a livelihood and playing tenderly with their little ones at the halting places. Your common Mexican, Aztec, half-caste, or white man, whichever he may be, labours under the disadvantage of looking too picturesque in foreign eyes for foreigners to believe him respectable. What should you think, reader, with every wish to be just, of a man dark-faced and bearded whose tangled locks hung over the collar of a leathern jacket, whose hat and *zarape*, carelessly worn, smacked of the stage brigand, whose trowsers were open at the side from the knee downwards, and whose horny feet were innocent of covering? You would vote him a villain, and yet he might be the quietest and most harmless of farming men, whose only wish was to increase his store by honest means, and whose weakness might be for a drop too much now and then, or for a new sombrero worked on the brim with silver thread. It is not true that Mexicans are pre-eminently idle. I must have seen tens of thousands of them during my stay, and, save a small proportion of "loafers," they were always busy with work of some kind, digging and ploughing, carrying burdens on their own backs, or driving laden beasts in the country and engaged at all manner of trades in the towns. They might be observed at open doors and windows stitching or hammering, with the wife helping if she could and perhaps an elder boy ready to bear a hand when required. Nor would it be fair to condemn them as frivolous because at

nightfall they might be heard singing to our musical, though hackneyed, friend, the light guitar.

I was begged of many times in Mexico, though never by other than old and lame mendicants and by tiny ragged children, who ran beside the coach bawling for *tlacos*. There appeared to be much poverty in the higher country, where alone is a copper coinage circulated and wages are low. But in the districts near the sea everybody has a chance of being well paid, and beggars vanish along with copper coins. The silver half-real, value three-pence sterling, is the smallest change known to Vera Cruz; and, despite the gipsy style of living practised in the neighbourhood of that city, its outlying peasants are reputed well to do. What they need, in common with their compatriots up country, to make them pass muster before strangers, is soap, broad cloth, and Madame Rachel. Soap to conciliate Englishmen; cloth to soothe the excitable nerves of our continental neighbours, who associate leathern jackets with brigandage; and milk-white complexions to disarm American criticism. Such conditions may be complied with in the empire from which the *canards* came, and I rather wish that I had been able to find such an empire.

Down went I through the rich valleys, through fields of coffee and banana, and thickets gay with wild flowers, down to the dried-up jungle, and the blue basking sea beyond. I have visited a quiet little house on my way, with frescoed walls and barred windows

opening to the ground, and have given tidings of Diego Narvez to his family. I have travelled with foreigners long settled in northern Mexico but now leaving because of the troublous times which have come upon them. They speak of the Empire as Narvez himself might speak, albeit their's is Maximilian's fatherland. From these dissentient theorists I pass on to believers in solid fact and in the ever blessed Prophet. How spotlessly white are their clothes! How stern and black their faces! Nubians guard the stations; Nubians ride on the train. Grand is Ali's politeness to the lady whom he will not incommode by sharing her seat; solemnly oriental is Ali's comrade, of unknown name, in reading a letter from right to left across the page with exclamations sounding like Mashallah. They both understand a few words of Spanish, and when a young soldier in the uniform of a native Imperialist takes his seat near them, Ali commences a friendly conversation. It is interesting to watch the manner of Christian and Mussulman thus brought together, to see the bold good-humoured glance of the adventurer from the Nile condescending to notice a youth who is his master's ally, and the look of deep repugnance on the handsome irresolute countenance of the other. Ali does not here achieve social success, nor even draw a smile from the Mexican, but, nothing moved at his failure, relapses into Arabic with his comrade, who has finished reading the letter. There arises no occasion

to use those neat little swivels, mounted on a special carriage in rear of our train; no occasion for Ali to descend and do battle with guerillas. We reach Vera Cruz in safety, throw aside all thought of being robbed, and cash the Diligence Company's notes which we have carried deep down in our highly polished boots or hidden among our ambrosial curls.

Vera Cruz is not a bad place in which to spend three or four days, waiting for a steamer, if you take care never to walk out in the sun nor to eat fruit towards evening nor to let the insects known as jiggers form colonies in the soles of your feet, and if you have a friend with a cool upper room overlooking the roadstead, with hospitable mind and easy cane-backed chairs. The Prince de Joinville once bombarded that island fort of San Juan, opposite the Custom House, and old President Santa Anna lost his leg by a French grape-shot as he stood at a street corner directing the defence of the city. Then General Scott, with twelve thousand Americans, came to Vera Cruz, and, more recently, Benito Juarez took refuge there in his struggle with Miramon. This led to a bombardment of fourteen days by Reactionists, to their complete failure, and in a wonderfully short time afterwards to the triumph of the Liberal cause throughout Mexico—a short-lived triumph, for, as I looked from the window of my hospitable friend, I could see Ali and his comrade stroll past, among a group of sable champions of the Indo-Latin race.

Trip the anchor, send those stevedores ashore. They had done their work in shipping our cargo, had been regaled on the forecastle with quantity rather than quality of food, and now tumbled merrily into a launch that waited for them alongside. The pilot smoked a cigarette preparatory to departure, the crew made everything snug for the voyage. She slowly moved ahead. Hurrah! we were off, bound to an American port, sailing under the American flag. That is all that I shall tell you from our log either now or further on, except that we duly fetched our port; which you may have guessed on reading the first part of this chapter. Is it necessary to add that multitudinous *canards* from the other Mexico had hidden themselves somewhere on board, and that numerous tangible passengers were anxiously considering whether any of their baggage had been left behind.

When did men ever go to sea and not spin yarns? That goodly company, from the tops of pedigrees, which was landed with William the Norman in Pevensey Bay, must have unbent so far as to exchange ideas in a rambling autobiographical manner during their voyage; and many persons, less distinguished, have done the same. We, who travelled together out of one Mexico, and knew nothing as yet of feathered perplexities from another, exchanged our ideas freely, though often at a considerable discount.

THE GAUNT AMERICAN'S STORY.

“Yes, sir, I’ve bin knockin’ about considerable, and seen most parts hereabouts. Why it ain’t no distance to speak of across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. I’ve been there, sir, and I tell you the mountains are grand. But when you come north, and get into Sonora, there’s land enough to support millions of people and mines that are not half worked and only a few ranches scattered over the country. Fine place, sir, is Mexico nat’rally, what I object to is the inhabitants. They ain’t American, look at ’em as you will, and they’re too much coloured for my taste. Why, it’s a fact that President Juarez is nothing more than an Injine. However, they do say he’s a smart man.

“Now hold on a minute. I don’t deny what you’ve seen, Mister, as to their being polite in Mexico. By —— they are so, more than most others. But I do deny that the country is a country for white men to settle in, if that’s what you mean. It’s the miserablest location on the face of God’s earth for those who are accustomed to American ways. It warn’t no great shakes before Johnny Crapaud came, and if he’s improved what he found, he’s bin doin’ good by stealth.

“Think the Empire will succeed? No, *sir!* It will fizzle out right away when the French go. I’ve seen it, sir. I’ve bin through on foot, slept in the open air, lived with the Injines. You may call *them*

friendly, Mister, and tell no lie. I'd rather be alone among Injines than among Spaniards* or Americans that have taken to the Mexican life. They are worst of all, d——d if they ain't. I ought to know something about them, for I met a party up that way" (pointing northward), "and they took all the money I had. A Spaniard gave me twenty dollars to go on with. He was a stranger too, but said he'd bin obligated by some of my countrymen and was a friend to the Americans. Look here, Mister, this Empire's got to fizzle out, and I'll bet ten dollars it don't last a month after the French have gone.

"Curious journey my last was; just tramping through the interior. I'd an Injine with me, and a donkey to bring along my baggage. We made five or six leagues most days, halting for a day or two now and then if we found pleasant quarters, and sometimes turning aside to keep clear of fighting. That wasn't my object, I'd had plenty of it up there" (pointing north-eastward); "but I always carried a navy six-shooter in case of accident. Wal, sir, we had got to" (name unintelligibly pronounced) "not far from San Luis Potosi, when the Liberals came along in force and took us prisoners. It was a command of over two hundred men. Some had revolvers, others old Mississippi rifles, and there was a few officers among them in uniform, though the most were dressed anyhow. Wal, sir, they kept us guarded for a while, until first the Injine was let go, and after-

* By Spaniards he is supposed to mean white Mexicans.

wards I was told, being an American, that to-morrow I might do as I liked; all they wanted was my pistol, and I'd two pair of boots, and they took one pair, but not a cent in money, no, by ——, sir, not a cent!

“Next morning early, I found the village quite excited, for the other side—that's Maximilian's side you know—were reported coming up pretty strong. There was a heavy skirmish, with a deal of running and whooping; the Liberals got whipped, and a number of them were druv' close up to where I was. No use crying for quarter. They war' shot down, I tell you. It's a wonder I escaped, only having bin a prisoner with the others proved useful with Maximilian's side, though one of them did snap his carbine at me, just in the hurry you may say. Wal, they set me free, and took my other pair of boots and my money. That's my view of Mexican politics.”

THE OLD FRENCHWOMAN'S STORY.

“Ah, truly, Monsieur is very good, very amiable, but he must not allow me to trouble him. I can lie anywhere on the deck, and I find myself much better of yesterday's sickness. If you knew what hardships we have suffered on our journey from the interior, you would think nothing of these discomforts. They are good girls both of them, and conduct themselves with great discretion, but Monsieur must see that it

is a serious charge. How I shall rejoice to be again in France.

“The eldest girl is my daughter, though she can speak Spanish better than French; the little one is a Mexican. A relative of mine? Not at all. She lives with us, as she has no other friends. I shall put her with a dressmaker when we arrive at home, that she may learn to support herself when I have gone. As to my own girl, there will be enough for her. Auguste is so good, such a good son and such a good brother, that he will take care of her. She must go to school in France to complete her education, and this is one motive of our journey. There exist other motives without doubt. I am weary of alarms from day to day, and Mexico is not now what it formerly was to us.

“For many years we lived happy and contented in that country. Auguste worked at the mines of —, he was well paid and we wanted nothing. Our Mexican neighbours were very kind. They respected the French character, and Auguste, with his laughing face, won all hearts. But when France came to play her new rôle in Mexico we found every one against us. They thought that we were their enemies, on account of that Austrian, and Auguste has considered it better to return to France than to remain among constant dangers. He is now disposing of his small property and may perhaps be delayed for two or three months, but he would not that we should pass through Vera Cruz during the

bad season. Monsieur will understand with what anxiety, with what sad forebodings, I regard the stay of my son in Mexico. Truly he is a good son, and this ring that I always wear, Auguste gave it me on my fête day."

THE GERMAN SETTLER'S STORY.

"It ees not surprising zat I should speak Spanish fluently, vvhile I, zese never-to-be-forgotten and much-loved twenty years in Mexico have leaved. My vvhife ees a Mexican, so are most of my friends, and I have an affection for zees contry as varm as my affection for ze Faterland. Zey are good folks in Mexico, zough many say of zem vat 'ees not true.

"Engleesh! ah, yes, zat I speak; I have so many times had business viz Americans, zat I guess I have learnt eet pretty well. I used to go mooch in Texas before the var, and zere have always been plenty of Americans on hand in Monterey. Zat's a fine city, sir. Eet had trade zat vas growing beegger every day, I can tell you. But now zees var has spoiled ze contry dradeful,"—and so on. "We never had such bad times with Liberals and Reactionists, as we've had since the French came. If they march into a city, every one must receive them quite friendly, for, when he will not, he is ruined as an enemy to Max. If the French march out and leave the city, then the

Liberals soon come and punish all who have behaved like traitors to their Republic. So it is hard lines for a man that wishes to be quiet. I have lost much, and am going away to save what is left me; but we shall come back some day, for she, my wife, will not always be content in Germany. It is a different life there to what we have enjoyed with her people.

“A long journey down, sir? Yes, indeed, that’s right enough! We had more diligence-travelling than you could wish, I’ll bet a dollar. First, there was three days to San Luis Potosi, and then, three days more to Mexico—not that we kept time exactly, for we were delayed north of San Luis by some of Escobedo’s men. They came upon us, about six hundred strong, as near as I could see, with a good many revolvers, and all of them carrying guns or rifles. It was no use fighting, even if we’d had a mind to, so I made ready to give up everything. My pistol was hidden under the seat, which turned out good for me afterwards, as you shall hear in a minute. The Chinacos* wanted arms and took a pistol from another German that was there, and they looked about for mine but didn’t find it, because they had no time to spare. There was a Frenchman with us; he was taken out and hung to a tree, but no one else was hurt and our things were not robbed. After a while an officer rode up to the coach window, and said that now we might go on; they were sorry to have de-

* A name of the Liberal partisans.

tained us, as there was a lady in the party, and they hoped we should have a pleasant journey to San Luis.

“When we left that place I agreed with a fellow-passenger from the States to fight any small band of *ladrones* if they meddled with us, and before we had gone three leagues, while it was still dark—the diligences they start very early—a dozen fellows stopped us by throwing a shower of stones at the coach. We out with our pistols and told them they’d best mind what they did; so, after a bit, they concluded to let us pass. They were very poor, with only one old carbine, I think, and two or three swords among the lot, and our revolvers scared them. Never did I wake with such a start as when those stones hit the coach. I had dropped asleep, and it all seemed like a dream until we were trotting on in broad daylight, with those rascals left behind.”

My share of yarn-spinning was made easy and at the same time nautical by recollections of Captain Samson of the clipper *Fearless*. It was something to have voyaged during one’s life with such a commander, and very much to the point on board ship to remember Captain Samson’s discipline.

“Why, sir,” said he, “steerage passengers have appetites which you can’t imagine. Even when they are sick they’ll draw their share of provisions. No such thing with them as living three weeks on a pumpkin pie and fixings, which the New England gentleman did when he was training himself for

Barnum's. No, sir, you can't imagine their appetite ; and then they dearly love to try the medicine-chest, which ain't to be accounted nohow, except as a dispensation of Providence.

"One time we came out of Liverpool with a double-reefed topsa'l breeze from the west-sou'-west. There was some sea on, but it ain't the sea that I mean to speak of, for my story is with the passengers, at least one of them, and a queer devil he was as ever trod the deck of a ship. I had my eye on him, though, and, thinks I, 'if Sam Samson can't heave that beggar to, there's no such thing as American Institutions. Look here! sir, that man shammed sick the third day out; it's a trick those Irish have. He told the surgeon that his inside felt very bad. 'Bring him aft,' said I. So up he came, looking for all the world like a nigger-driver who'd just resigned his post from ill health. 'Now, my man,' said I, 'no nonsense with me; if you don't get better right away we'll begin at the top left-hand corner of the medicine-chest, and work you steadily through it.' Wal, this was more than he wanted, I can tell you, and he began to hollo out, 'Oh, captain, you won't be for doing it, shure.' 'Jee-rusalem, I will,' said I; 'you'll be put right through, from Pilgrim Fathers to Abraham Lincoln, as one may say.'

"He was, sir, though the surgeon talked bunkum about professional feeling and Modus Operandi. 'That won't do,' said I; 'my professional feeling is to have my own way, while as to Modus Operandi, he may

have been a good sailor in his time or a d—d loafer, it's all the same to us.' You would have been surprised at the way the sick man took them medicines, and how nothing seemed to shake him through the first three rows of bottles, but at last he caved in, and declared that he felt quite well. It's a fact, sir, dealing with sick emigrants requires firmness."

Our vessel was managed on principles more lax than those of Captain Samson; but her voyage came to an end with reasonable punctuality. We sailed out of the sunshine—out of the breezes that were pleasantly cool, yet never cold, and the masses of sea-weed drifting with the Gulf Stream—and steered over a grey expanse of wintry-looking sea, where the atmosphere was bitterly keen and snow-flakes were falling.

Snow lay in the streets of New York, coachmen were wrapped to the eyes with great-coats and furs, whilst houses were warmed by stoves and hot-water pipes. It was not weather to stand and apostrophize the green flag hoisted over the Fenian head quarters in Union Square, though that flag might claim attention as being large enough for a line-of-battle ship. If you wished to know what Young Ireland was doing in the West, you had only to read the New York Herald. Fenianism was its favourite topic. It had a stern frown for England as a bloated aristocrat whose time was well-nigh come; and a contemptuous smile for Canada as a miserable being scared by the broth of a boy that didn't mean to hurt him.

But, though sheltering Young Ireland as long as that indignant patriot could pay his own house-rent, and letting him drink as many bumpers to England's downfall as he chose at his own proper cost and charge, New York did not now present a warlike appearance. Business rushed on more furiously than ever; business men and sharp-faced business boys streamed down town in the morning, sat in counting-houses through the day, and streamed up town in the evening to the bosoms of their families. Greenbacks wrestled with Gold until he stood panting at the ropes, and for a moment his friends were reduced into crying "124 $\frac{1}{8}$." Rents were rising; labourers indulging in the costly luxury of strikes; hotels, driven by competition, announced their adhesion to the European plan *versus* the American boarding system; and horse-cars were overcrowded as usual whenever the public chose to overcrowd them. New York was quite its business self of Wall Street, its gay fashionable self of the Fifth Avenue, its filthy squalid self of the waterside. And that blue-trowsered, blue-coated, phase of well-worn uniforms and boys coming home to be mustered out was over. In the three days following my arrival I did not see three soldiers on Broadway.

CHAPTER XL.

THE IRISH REPUBLIC OF NORTH AMERICA.

Supported by voluntary contributions.

MR. BULL is disposed to underrate the strength of Patrick O'Jonathan. Knowing that Ireland can be held against any hostile combination which is likely yet awhile to threaten British power, Mr. Bull regards O'Jonathan with contempt. Is this quite wise on the part of our worthy old sire? I would not suggest a recognition of President Stephens, nor even so mild a measure as the granting of belligerent rights to General Sweeney. I would merely observe that, though we may laugh at Fenianism when it prepares for an immediate attack upon us, we must remember that Uncle Sam has our bitterest enemy always at his elbow. The Fenian Brotherhood will not melt away any more than it will occupy Dublin Castle this summer. Money will be collected, speeches will be made, champagne will be consumed by the Fenian Senate,* and, so long as England remains at peace

* Rumour gives three bottles a day to each honourable senator.

with Uncle Sam, nothing very serious will be done towards placing the green above the red. But let war once begin between the two countries, and there will appear unwonted sympathy amongst Yankees for Celtic nationality. Let war continue to rage during six or seven months, and you may see O'Jonathan hanging about the White House with, perhaps, a green uniform to his back. It is this possibility which makes me think of Fénianism as a danger not to be despised. Abolitionists became formidable when their definite purpose guided the blows of Uncle Sam, and I am convinced by what I saw in America that Fenians would be more popular throughout both North and South than were negroes three years ago in Massachusetts.

If we desire to remove the fulcrum of the lever wherewith President Stephens intends some day to overthrow us, our first thought should be to pacify Ireland; our second, to keep on good terms with Uncle Sam until such pacification shall have been effected. Her Majesty might visit every Irish town of importance to make the loyal more loyal; absentees might return to conciliate their wavering tenants; fifty things might be done to root out treason, in addition to a display of regular constabulary. Why should not every young Irishman who will own himself a Fenian be given ten pounds reward payable on landing at Melbourne, as also a free passage to that thriving city? We might thus reduce the number of malcontents at home without

sending recruits to General Sweeney, which is now our constant practice.

There are Fenian Sisterhoods in America to help the wide-spread Brotherhood. It is wonderful with what eagerness the Irish servant girls, whose wages—albeit high for servants' wages—do not amount to wealth, will subscribe five, ten, and even twenty dollars at a time for what they consider to be a noble cause. It is pitiful to reflect how foolishly this money has been sunk in an abortive plot, or worse handled, as some people believe, by the administrators of Fenian finance. Hackmen and hotel-waiters, stevedores and railway navvies, give as much as they can spare for the support of that unnecessary Brotherhood and glory in so doing. I met Fenians everywhere; met them beside the oil tanks of Pennsylvania, on the Mississippi steamboats, and among the pine trees of South Carolina. Now it was hearty abuse of England; then some enlightened citizen, with a strong brogue, would ask me if any news had come of Head-Centre Stephens. The President Head-Centre was a staple topic of conversation as we sat together in Western railway cars, or chatted for a moment on the levee at New Orleans.

Taking for granted that no serious danger need be feared whilst England and Uncle Sam remain at peace, I made note of these Fenian expressions and of what I heard from those who were familiar with O'Jonathan, as shewing that the Brotherhood will not melt away in a hurry. Stephens has arrived in

New York. He is viewed as a patriot hero by two million exiles of Erin—the most noisy and pugnacious circle in America.* He is certain to be fêted over the whole Union, and to be restrained by General Meade, or other Federal officer, should he violate American neutrality. But Fenianism can wait. Champagne for its senators, mass meetings for its rank and file, green ribbons for its servant girls; these will soothe the perturbed spirit of O'Jonathan.

There is now a strong Republican feeling dominant at Washington, which inclines towards peace abroad, whilst increasing Federal power and settling the negro question at home. How much longer this state of things will last no one can say. President Johnson (though a staunch Unionist) is considered to have Democratic proclivities; the South, it is said, will soon be represented in Congress—and the South is Democratic almost to a man. Then there is a great Northern Democracy, impatient for its turn of office, and the next elections may bring Democrats into power. Free trade with a bold† foreign policy is their watchword. They patronize the Irishman, as Republicans patronize the negro, and under their rule President Stephens may have a chance of distinction. I do not imagine that he will for a long time to come; but Fenians think otherwise, and in case of accident Mr. Bull should remove the fulcrum already mentioned.

* Or, at least, he is so viewed by a semi-circle. † Aggressive.

CHAPTER XLI.

MAGNIFICENT DISTANCES.

Washington City — The Capitol — Sambo declared a citizen.

As my searching gaze quitted the bill of fare, I observed that several advertisements were printed on the opposite page of the thin but elegant volume before me. Among these advertisements was one which might well attract a stranger's attention. It referred to the "American Arm and Leg Company," of No. 28, Four-and-a-half Street, Washington.

This title contrasted grimly with names of dishes and served as a reminder of what had happened, not so very long ago, to thousands of poor fellows in America. The "Arm and Leg Company" was a useful reminder, for I could now have called at "No. 28" and met scarce a soldier on my way thither. Things looked as peaceable as in President Buchanan's time. There were the same magnificent distances between the public buildings, the same wide streets, and confused array of tenements scattered along them. Washington was its old self in outward

appearance, though dignified by a stately dome which had been raised above the Capitol. Go where you would for a stand-point, that dome was the chief feature of your view.

I had occasion to enquire at the Post Office Department about a letter. English letters are returned to England unopened, if not claimed within five weeks of their arrival. This was my difficulty; and it may have interest for you should your brother Sam be worth writing to. This was my difficulty, but it is so no longer. The Department was courteous and efficient, giving proofs of worthy cousinship to St. M—rt—ns-l—Gr—nd. What more can I say in its praise?

Near at hand is an imposing structure, with grand façade and flight of stone steps. It is the Patent Office, where are preserved models of all American inventions. You must not fail to visit it should you ever find yourself in Washington. Not only are there to be seen at this office models of innumerable machines, but many curious national relics. In one case is a rich gift from some eastern prince to the President of the United States. In another case is the uniform which was worn by the great Virginian when he surrendered his commission to Congress, in 1783. Here you will notice his plain hilted sword, without a guard, carried on active service; there his simple camp furniture. I like to see such things, they make history more real to my mind. That blue coat with yellow facings, though faded

and out of fashion, shows me what a tall broad-chested man George Washington must have been. The camp furniture shows in what a plain way he must have lived while campaigning. But why be ruthlessly inelegant through ignorance or modesty? Why label the buff breeches of the hero "pants"? He dressed with scrupulous care, wore silk stockings and shoe buckles, was a fine gentleman of the old school. Make it "breeches" on that label, Mr. Superintendent, for, indeed, the continuation is not a pair of pantaloons.

There is danger of crushing your mental faculties by trying to understand the models at the Patent Office; so I advise you to be content with historical relics. When these shall have been thoroughly examined, you can stroll down Pennsylvania Avenue and enjoy a view of the Capitol at a magnificent distance straight before you. The dome has been already mentioned as a stately and conspicuous erection; the building which supports it, though perhaps a trifle overweighted by the dome, is worthy to receive senators and representatives from the boundless West; I follow American custom in preferring the "boundless West" to all other sections when something grand is wanted. Senators and representatives may come hither until fifty stars are seen upon the national banner, and they will find comfortable quarters wherein to deliberate—quarters provided with a heating-apparatus in a lower department, favourable to the Guy Fawks idea, with post-office,

telegraph office, and other mechanical comforts, not to speak of refreshment stalls—quarters which overlook, on one side, a well-ordered pleasure-ground sloping down to Pennsylvania Avenue, and on the other a sandy tract, supposed to be 'intended for carriages in waiting. There is one wing for the Senate, another for the House of Representatives, with a great central lobby beneath the dome to divide their respective domains. Every part of the Capitol where the public has any business is open to the public. Strangers may rove at will among passages and staircases, may descend to the heating-apparatus or mount to the summit of the dome, they may occupy seats in the gallery of either chamber so long as they behave themselves well, and may purchase food at the refreshment stalls if provided with available currency.

The Capitol is watched over by officials in plain clothes, with metal badges to attest their authority. I found these officials very courteous and willing to give all possible information. How easy a life is theirs! The Houses seldom sit in evening session but adjourn at 4 P.M., that members may comfortably dine. I should remark that the time of grace allowed them at the best hotels for this meal is until 6 o'clock. A deep gallery unscreened by lattice-work surrounds each branch of the Legislature. Honourable senators and representatives are not protected against fascination in the midst of their labours, for nearly half the gallery is devoted to the fair sex,

nor against coloured equality of listening, since the blackest negro is free to take a front place if he will but come early enough. Sambo may sit on the gentlemen's side, and Dinah on the ladies', or she may exercise the privilege of her Caucasian sisters and bring Sambo as her escort, promoting him to that section towards which honourable senators and representatives most often direct their glances. I observed that many coloured folk availed themselves of the liberal rules established by the Houses, although these coloured folk were usually far better dressed than the class for which Sambo and Dinah stand as appropriate names. There was good reason why all Americans of African descent should wish to hear what was discussed about this time within the walls of the Capitol. A mighty revolution was being consummated. Some prophesied solemnly that this last measure, brought forward by Senator Trumbull, would make North America like San Domingo. Others laughed at such prophetic foreboding and called for a final attack on the old castle of prejudice. It was the time of the Civil Rights Bill.

Who more fitly entitled than a Trumbull to champion civil rights? Brother Jonathan* himself, when Governor of Connecticut, had sufficient work in maintaining the rights of white men. But now Senator Trumbull of Illinois was prepared to go a step

* Jonathan Trumbull, Governor of Connecticut, 1775, a friend of General Washington, and called by him "Brother Jonathan." The phrase has become a national *sobriquet*.

further, and to assert by law that black men have rights. Prophecies had been made and been laughed at, orators had lashed their flanks with the "Constitution of the United States," as a lion is said to raise his fury to fighting-point with blows from his own tail. The bill had passed both Houses, and the President had pronounced his veto upon it. Here was a dilemma. Mr. Johnson, who spoke such strong words of encouragement to the coloured soldiers of the District of Columbia in October last, saying, "This is as much your country as anybody else's country," had gibbed when a measure was presented to him which would practically enforce his October declaration. He thought the Civil Rights Bill unconstitutional, and he was irritated against the Houses for thwarting his reconstruction policy. Bets were made among lovers of sport that President Johnson would be sustained in his veto, that two-thirds of both Houses could not be brought to vote him down, for that in the Senate at least there were Democrats enough to baffle Mr. Trumbull's friends.

Eccentric wagers were entered into which had blacking of boots in public and wheeling in wheelbarrows through crowded streets for their object and which all depended upon that matter of a two-thirds majority. The New York Herald found space beside its loving chronicle of Fenian proceedings for divers pithy morsels directed against the negro. If this bill should pass, the Herald could clearly perceive that three million of coloured men

would come to rule over forty million of whites. I was startled at so frank an admission of negro superiority. I examined the new bill with care ; found that it did not even secure negro suffrage apart from State control ; and was doubly convinced that either the New York Herald was talking arrant nonsense for a political purpose, or that its editor cherished a profound respect for Sambo's intellectual resources.

Thus, in the first week of April '66, stood senators and representatives ready to storm the castle of prejudice. They stood ready, so far as their moral attitude was concerned, but they sat upon comfortable chairs, as observed, in a material point of view. Here was a semi-circle of these comfortable chairs, with desks before them, facing the American wool-sack, and senators were in their places, and an honourable gentleman from Kentucky was speaking against time. He grew fierce as he denounced the bill, raised his voice almost to a scream, and hurled anecdotes of Lynch law at the passive wool-sack, which is, after all, more like a judge's bench than the seat of the Lord High Chancellor. We were told by the honourable gentleman from Kentucky that equal laws for black and white would never succeed, because, with unequal laws, a negro had recently been lynched. If our stubborn minds could resist this argument, we might quail before a yet darker picture—the honourable gentleman who addressed us would become eternally hostile to the Government of his

country should negroes obtain civil rights. And he was listened to with patience until he had said his say; then there was a pause, a crowding round the doors of the gallery, and a breath of sensation stirring all present. There were certain formalities quietly gone through, with a dry calling over of names, and a response of "aye" or "no" from the different senators. Mr. Morgan, of New York, whose vote was thought decisive, supported the bill. There was a stronger breath of sensation—a more eager look on the faces in the crowded gallery. Thirty-three votes for civil rights, to fifteen for the President's veto! Sambo, long called "irrepressible," broke forth into cheers and laughter, his blond protectors uttered triumphant shouts, handkerchiefs were waved, hands were shaken. The castle of prejudice seemed likely to fall unless it should be succoured immediately.

No doubt was there about the Lower House; no further question of civil rights as, for good or evil, an "almighty fact;" but we must take care to be present when the last blow is struck and the beleaguered stronghold goes to ruin. Saturday and Sunday will intervene, and on April 9th, the anniversary of Lee's surrender, we are promised a sight of what will not soon be forgotten even in America, where they forget their politics at high-pressure speed.

Meanwhile there is leisure for a graceful act of equitation—leisure to mount a steed of practical friendship and splash through suburban mire, with

friendship still at hand as guide. Washington city is well fortified against hostile approaches from the southward. It may once have lain defenceless, and may have had a narrow escape after the battle of Manassas, but I could scarcely realize such escape, as we rode amongst the formidable batteries on the Virginian side of the Potomac. Every pathway is overlooked by frowning earthworks; every field exposed to the play of artillery. Trees have been felled, huts and palisades erected, the only thing which speaks of peace restored is the disarming of many batteries and the silence of the deserted cantonments. We visited General Lee's former residence on Arlington Heights. The mansion is standing as of yore, and there is a fine view from its portico over the river and the city. -But the grounds are occupied by grim tenants who must not be disturbed. Arlington has become a cemetery for Federal soldiers, its confiscated acres are dotted with white boards bearing names and dates, while fresh mounds are constantly thrown up as bodies arrive from distant places to be buried at head quarters. We were sorry that so distinguished a commander as Robert Lee should have lost his family seat, and lost it for ever, since those grim tenants must not be disturbed; yet there is no denying that Arlington offers a fine position for a national burial-ground.

I re-enter the Capitol, though at the opposite end of that spacious building. There is less anxiety than there was three days ago, and people are more

excited with the thought of how important is the measure about to be passed, than they are troubled by anticipations of the result. Thaddeus Stevens will carry the House with him, a two-thirds majority is certain, and honourable members who object to civil rights may spare their breath. We refuse to believe that the President will display Cromwellian vigour, with "remove that bauble" from General Grant, and an indignant protest from Speaker Colfax. Our private opinion is that all will go off smoothly, despite the tone of certain Democratic journals; and in this opinion we are confirmed as we gaze on the placid faces of honourable members. They are seen in a semi-circle, which is wider and deeper than that of the Senate House, and where comfortable chairs confront the Speaker's bench, and boyish messengers flit to and fro, summoned by clap of hands sounding like a series of attempts to lead public applause.

Honourable members are bareheaded, for it is not here allowed to conceal a smile or a frown beneath your hat brim. We can see that the minority are placidly sour and the majority placidly sleek. "Remove that bauble" will not be heard; events will take their course unchecked by outside influence. There is an end of the business which has filled up the morning hour, and Speaker Colfax takes into consideration a message from the Senate. The Senate has resolved that an Act do pass, intituled, "An Act to protect all persons in the United States

in their civil rights, and to furnish means for their vindication." The Lower House has now to reconsider its former voté, and to say whether it will likewise resolve. We have a formal reading of President Johnson's veto message, a formal reading of the Civil Rights Bill, and a brisk parliamentary skirmish in the style called by Americans "filibustering." Then there is the first breath of sensation, as the House divides upon the main question at issue, namely, whether this bill do pass; there is a call of "yeas" and "nays," with increasing sensation in the crowded gallery; names of honourable members are read out in a loud voice, and they respond, as each one hears himself called, with a weighty monosyllable, by which they either reject or support the bill. We are not wearied upon this occasion by a system which, for trivial matters must be wearisome. We can watch the subdued excitement upon the floor of the house and the increasing stir of the galleries. Sambo grins from ear to ear. Sambo's backers beam with satisfaction. The "ayes" so clearly predominate that we feel the old castle of prejudice to be crumbling apace.

Speaker Colfax rises when the call is over, and is listened to with profound attention:—

"On the question," he says, "shall this bill pass notwithstanding the objections of the President, the ayes are one hundred and twenty-two, the noes are forty-one!"

His voice sounds hard and dry, as though re-

strained from gliding into an accent of triumph. He tells us that two-thirds of the House and a similar majority of the Senate having agreed, upon reconsideration, to the passage of this bill, it has become a law. His announcement is received with hearty applause. Cheer after cheer bursts from the galleries. Republican members shake each other by the hand. Democrats look as if they wish that custom permitted them to pull their hats over their eyes. The castle has been stormed.

We join a throng of American citizens which is streaming homeward along Pennsylvania Avenue. Everybody is a citizen now who has been born in the United States, save untaxed red men of the forest and prairie. Sambo is a citizen and can demand a passport from Mr. Seward to travel abroad in that capacity. If I catch Sambo alone and rob him, he may bear testimony against me. If I employ his labour and refuse to pay him, he may sue me for wages. If he can earn sufficient money, he may purchase fields and houses. In most States of the Union he may not vote, for this new measure confers civil but not political rights upon him. State legislation will do the rest some day. We are content to have seen a gulf opened between the past and the present, to know that, whatever the troubles in store for Uncle Sam, our worthy cousin will not be again disturbed by slavery; and we proceed forthwith to invest a few superfluous thousands in United States Government Securities.

CHAPTER XLII.

ON TO RICHMOND.

Familiar topography — Personal encounters — Reconstruction.

THE battle cry of former years has been caught up by rival railway companies. There is the "short route" for an impatient public, and the "only direct route" for those who may think that "short" sounds dangerous.

On we take way to Richmond, with a sharp frosty air fanning our cheeks (biting our noses) and a yellow mist hiding the sun. It was very early morning, so the date might be April 10th, and yonder hills which came in sight as we crossed the Potomac might yet be Virginia. We had a glimpse of the dome over the Capitol, which appeared dimly through masses of vapour and presently afterwards vanished, as St. Paul's is apt to vanish. This was not encouraging, but by degrees the weather cleared until there was a reasonably good view all around.

My neighbours talked with great bitterness of what had happened yesterday, and "wished that

Andy Johnson would put down the Radicals." They, my neighbours, were ready to aid in this useful work, though doubting whether some means might not be found of "flanking" the Civil Rights Bill by appeal to the Supreme Court. Our conversation then turned on tobacco, which was here a congenial subject, and I heard that efforts were being made to raise a pretty heavy crop in 1866. The farmers had been able to do nothing, or next to nothing, last year; but now things looked better. Negroes were at work for twelve dollars a month in summer and seven a month in winter. They were supplied with food and lodging, though buying their own clothes.

We discussed tobacco in all its qualities. "Long" was spoken of with respect, "short" with toleration, and there was even a word for "luggs." I held cotton up to my neighbours as something which beat their staple commodity hollow. They clung to the noxious weed. True that each negro could raise only one hogshead of tobacco, worth about seven hundred dollars. True that the same hand might make ten bales of cotton, worth, together, seventeen hundred dollars. This was a strong case, but not the whole case; for in Virginia the hands found time to raise plenty of wheat and other things besides tobacco. Virginian flour had long been an article of export.

My nearest neighbour explained how slavery was less severe in Virginia than "at the South," because it was the interest of a master to keep his people

healthy, "that he might profit by their natural increase."

"Then many were sold away?" said I.

"Yes, sir," he replied, "many were sold, and that was about the hardest part of it to them. They love the place where they've been accustomed to live beyond everything."

My neighbour presently added, "You Englishmen were always set against our institution." I bowed an acknowledgment. "Yes," said he, "you were. Why, even Mr. Russell, who wrote for the London 'Times' about the fight we had along this way—'gad, how I've laughed over the letter and enjoyed it—even he published something against slavery in his book. You were all prejudiced, and now you've got nothing to say, for every d——d nigger can sit right alongside of me in the car if he wants to, I reckon."

Somewhat too much I had of my neighbour, who proceeded to wish Massachusetts in a warm climate, whither he also consigned several Northern politicians by name.

We had passed through Alexandria, and left the Potomac behind us; had left the guard of coloured troops, and the military huts which bore token of recent events. We now entered upon a dreary tract of undulating country. The trees were leafless, and there was nothing but coarse brown grass upon the ground. There appeared an occasional block-house or stockade, all of them deserted; and at the railway

stations there were brand new wooden sheds, with groups of five or six darkeys to represent inhabitants. Bull Run is not a very formidable stream, although its banks have the steepness of a Mexican *barranca*. But the plain of Manassas presents every facility for manœuvring large bodies of men. To polite imaginations, it is a "field" of battle; a wide, bare, desolate, expanse, with a distant prospect of hills (yclept the Bull Run Mountains), and a nearer view over the surrounding woodland. There are lines of entrenchment at Manassas, and relics yet remain scattered about the field which would amply repay a Waterloo guide for coming out to search. Think, wretched creature—I here address the guide—think of a harvest such as your father reaped! No importations from Birmingham required to keep you supplied. Think of our seeing some loaded shells, covered with rust, and a fragment of a broken firelock lying beside the road! You might return to Belgium with relics that would last your family for many years.

When I speak of our progress southward and mention that we passed Warrenton Junction, crossed the Rappahannock, stopped for a few minutes at Culpeper, my readers will fancy themselves in presence of an old telegraphic despatch. They will perhaps expect to hear, further on, of some general having been "whipped along his whole line and driven ten miles," or of another "feeling badly since his great stampede." But these familiar names were

now beneath telegraphic notice. Utter desolation was to be seen on either side for some way beyond Manassas. Everything had been destroyed. Fences used as fuel, trees cut down, and dwellings blotted from existence.

After a while matters began to improve. More people appeared at the stations, more labourers in the fields. There were darkeys ploughing and restoring fences, with a full muster of loungers to receive our train. Here was a new house, there an old house and new outbuildings. One fence would show signs of entire newness, another would seem about half and half—the weather-beaten rails strongly contrasting with the freshly-cut; and we came to more than one enclosure where all the rails had escaped impressment. We sighted the Blue Ridge, and changed cars at Gordonsville Junction. There our course lay through a district but little injured by the war, where the farms that we passed seemed well cultivated and miles of pine woods skirted the railway line. Leaving the Blue Ridge behind us we advanced eastward upon Richmond.

My next neighbour was willing to converse. "Sir," said he, "we should have whipped the Yankees if we had let slavery go and put the niggers in our army."

He was confident that General Lee had taken this view of the question. "He was a man, sir, who could see what was coming; but it wasn't to be, I reckon," adds my neighbour, with a sigh, alluding

to the Southern Confederacy. "We were broke by hunger, our soldiers had very little food, and there were families in this section of the country that didn't taste meat for twelve months at a time."

I gathered by further conversation that a turkey had cost three hundred dollars, and a pound of beef fifteen dollars in Richmond market. Confederate money became so much depreciated, that Government clerks with five thousand a year salary could only just manage to live.

My neighbour was convinced of Northern strength and purpose. He thought that another secession would be hopeless, and yet he looked forward to a clearing out of Yankees and nigger teachers from the South. In this he was foolish so far as Yankees went, by every test of common sense, for commercial reconstruction was going forward in Virginia with help of Yankee capital.

Richmond is a fine city, though it does not strike a new comer with admiration until he has visited its official quarter. Here, upon a hill overlooking the James River, is a public square, in which may be seen a statue of George Washington. The General has his gaze fixed on the State Capitol, while pointing to the State Penitentiary. Thus was his attitude explained by Patrick Henry, and thus he might really have gazed and pointed had he been present as a living man when the Confederate Congress was in session at Richmond. Yet, who can say how much of Union feeling would have

influenced Washington in circumstances so different to those amongst which he moved? It is a favourite theory of the Southerners that their hero finds an exact representative in Robert Lee. The Northern party delights to couple Washington with Lincoln as saviour of his country, and certain is it that both were staunch Unionists.

But let us return to April 10th of the current year. I need not tell you minutely of our arrival at a railway terminus, where clamorous hackmen, omnibus drivers, and hotel runners besought our patronage. I may skip the drive to the hotel, and suppose that you have accompanied me to that public square hard by, as also a few steps beyond it to the sometime house of President Davis, now occupied by General Terry, who commands in Virginia. We have seen the church from which Mr. Davis was summoned on a memorable afternoon of last April,* we have gazed over acres of ruin between Main Street and the river side, caused by the great conflagration, and it is pleasant to see the tyrant doing duty as a slave, in shape of a brisk little fire which makes the hotel parlour bearable on this chilly evening.

April 11th.—Acres of ruin to be seen there certainly are, yet not without hope of being restored. New shops already appear along the burnt portion of Main Street; new warehouses are soon to face the river. I stumble over mortar heaps, and turn aside to avoid

* Summoned by tidings that all was lost.

piles of brick; I become conscious of coloured citizens with masonic instincts, who run against me in their eagerness to bring together bricks and mortar; there is a hoisting up of carved stone to its place in the front of buildings, a fixing of iron shutters, and other signs of progress. Richmond has been taken in tow by Jonathan. It may not as yet be truly said to flourish, but it is going ahead and old bitterness against Yankees will be built over or traded away before long.

I perceive that at present there is need of caution among Northern men who would settle in Richmond. There are too many grey waistcoats in private life which have brass buttons covered with bombazine, to make it safe to utter Union sentiment at all times. The fiery spirit of Virginia will brook no restraint, and when I entered the Hustings Court* I found that a case had just been called on in which a Richmond editor had attempted to cowhide a New York contemporary, and had struggled with him until their heads went through a glass screen in the office of the principal hotel. This I learnt from eye-witnesses, though the prosecutor did not appear.

Lively, amusing, place! My return should have been hastened by a sense of what was in store for me. I reached the hotel. A crowd had collected; a single combat was going forward. No charge for admittance; no hat sent round to receive our contributions.

* You are wrong, Jones, it does not deal with election cases.

“What’s the matter?” said I, addressing an intelligent darkey.

“Wal, sar,” said he, “it’s a difficulty between two gentlemen.”

They wrestled up, they wrestled down, rapid pommelling was followed by a determined clinch, and the hotel clerk was base enough to call a policeman. When I enquired at my leisure as to how this difficulty had begun, I was informed that a citizen with a grey waistcoat had accused another citizen of being a Yankee spy, which accusation led to open hostility.

And, later on, we had some sport between fresh disputants. A quiet young man from the North startled me at dinner-time by exhibiting his loaded six-shooter. He was quiet but satirical, that young man from the North, and he had written to a Northern journal a letter which had awakened the deepest disgust of a citizen of Richmond. It was understood that there must be a “difficulty” when they met. Here was the first gentleman, ready armed as we could see; and, by Saint George! here came the second.

There was a moment of uncertainty, a moment in which it seemed probable that the parties would adjust their difference in our very midst. Then more moderate counsels prevailed, he who had last appeared withdrew from sight, and our meal was peacefully concluded.

Richmond had its fling under military rule; its

meeting of private enemies in a public street, where they exchanged several pistol shots, and its prompt suppression of coloured folks who might claim overmuch equality. I repeat that there was need of caution for Northerners who chose to settle in this city, although Yankee capital was rebuilding it, and Jonathan had taken it in tow. Those frequent grey waistcoats must be allowed time to wear out, and the irritation of defeat to a proud race must be allowed to subside before it will be just or politic to leave Sambo at the mercy of the "mean whites," with his former master estranged from him.

Sambo wears faded blue pantaloons, and has, perhaps, a battered soldier's cap upon his head. He is working for wages in Richmond, or signing contracts to work in the country. There has lately been high festival among Sambo's friends in honour of the Federal victory a year ago; and, thanks to the vigilance of the Richmond police, there has not been any rioting or bloodshed.

Of course I find a branch of the Freedmen's Bureau holding an even balance in its sway over blacks and whites. Since President Johnson's Peace Proclamation the days of the Bureau may be numbered by reckoning how long it is before April 2nd, 1867, and then we must look for a legal enforcement of civil rights according to the provisions of the Act. But the Bureau has still plenty to do; it will superintend many contracts, and smooth down many troubles, ere it shall expire of old age.

When I found it at work in Richmond, the Bureau was not much occupied with criminal cases, which went before the ordinary courts. Its jurisdiction was limited to suits among people of colour or those in which people of colour were concerned, and its three judges had been appointed as follows:—one was a Federal officer, locally ranking as chief justice, one had been elected by the white citizens, and another by the darkeys. They were all three most friendly and courteous to a stranger, giving him without reserve such information as he craved. I heard that the negroes showed every disposition to contract for their labour, and that no fears need be entertained of general idleness and pauperism. Planters were anxious to have more hands for the coming season. Swedes, Germans, and Irishmen had been imported; but the Swedes refused to eat corn-bread, the Germans sloped away north-westward, in the hope of obtaining homesteads, and the Irishmen preferred a city career. It seems that Virginia will have need of Sambo yet awhile, until, perchance, he shall return whence his fathers came and swell the Liberian census.

CHAPTER " XLIII.

FURTHER SOUTH.

A deserted stage — A Lord Mayor's procession — A profane colporteur.

APRIL 12th.—I left Richmond in a four-horse omnibus, and drove to the temporary depôt of the Petersburg line, on the southern side of the river. There was a charge of fifty cents a head for this drive, payable in advance. Now we had been brought to the hotel without mention of paltry cash, and even so moderate a demand as fifty cents a head on our leaving the same hotel distressed us greatly. Our landlord was not then the generous, nay, almost extravagant, dog we pictured him. Alas! he was but a landlord after all. Yet I will own that, as such, he displayed some good qualities.

We crossed the river by a wooden bridge, and could see another wooden structure not far away which was soon to be ready for bearing the Petersburg trains straight into Richmond. Future travellers were not to have a drive by four-horse

omnibus, or, if they did, it would be for a very short distance. So, with some comfort in our advantage over future travellers, we reached the temporary depôt, and were presently moving off at sixteen miles an hour. Southern railways would not stand a high rate of speed.

The gentleman on the opposite seat had seen Richmond in flames.

“It was fearful sight, sir. From the hill behind I looked down on to a mass of burning houses, and I saw the bridge, the railroad bridge they’re putting new, fall, section after section. There was constant noise of explosions in the arsenal which seemed to paralyze our citizens, and nothing was done to stop the fire until the Yankees marched in at one o’clock.

“How about your building Richmond up again?” say I.

“Why its mostly Northern capital that’s found its way down here.”

The gentleman on the opposite seat had lost much in defence of State rights. His old country place had been laid waste by crowds of soldiery, and his wine, imported in colonial days, poured out by himself that the Yankees might not get it. He was still a Confederate at heart, though he thought any further resistance impossible.

“We are beaten, and we must submit to them, whatever they do,” said he, with a sigh, when I mentioned the Civil Rights Bill.

Southward lay the road through pine woods and small clearings and more pine woods. The country grew much wilder than I had expected to find it between cities so near together as Richmond and Petersburg. There was a sudden check. Breaks down! Stop her! Cattle on the track! We halted to allow the intruders time to retire. Our engine whistled, but in vain. There were the cattle quietly strolling along just in front of us. It became necessary to detach a force of one stoker, one breaksman, and a coloured passenger, which force, after several unsuccessful attempts, dislodged the enemy and drove him into a thicket.

As we approached Petersburg, my companion of the opposite seat pointed out a line of earthworks which had formed part of General Grant's position. It was here, about two miles from the city, that trains had been obliged to stop on account of the Federal batteries, and only a few C. S. Government cars had passed in or out by night. Now we could do as we pleased, for aught that those deserted parapets and silent embrasures would have to say.

Mounds of earth, masses of earth, dug out, piled up, occupying every vantage point, thrown into every shape which engineers approve, were around this city of Petersburg. The theatre of war had been left with no one to play and no one to applaud. But its aspect was so complete, its appointments were so new, that other actors might have appeared upon

the stage at five minutes' notice. Choose sides gentlemen, march your battalions into line, man your batteries, and give us "The Siege of Petersburg"—by special desire. But mind you, it must be "positively for the last time." There has been too much blood spilt on yonder stage, too many aching hearts made by the play already. Better leave the theatre empty, let those earthworks confront each other until they become as grassy as the Roman camps in England, and until historians make General Grant address speeches to his army or assert that General Lee was a man of colour! 'Tis a pity that your theatre is a fixture, as you might dispose of it with profit to the persons in Germany who are arranging to reproduce their great national tragedy "The Thirty Years' War."

I saw my companion of the opposite seat—but, come, you know him by this time—I saw that companion welcomed by a former slave. Sambo ran up eagerly to "old master," his face beaming with joy, shook hands and asked after the family. This was pleasant to see. The master had been kind when he held such power as in God's providence he is never to hold again over his fellow creatures. I was also welcomed with joy by a darkey, though one of tender years, who caught at my travelling bag, swung it on to his head, and guided me briskly to "de bes hotel." We traversed crowded streets, with smells which left Cologne nowhere and shop windows full of goods. We mounted from the level of the river Appotomax

to a more cleanly part of the city, and arrived at Jarret's Hotel. Try Jarret's if you ever take this route, but do not be sanguine of luxurious fare.

Daylight enough remained on the evening of my arrival for me to see something of the Confederate works, and there was an interest about that deserted stage which kept me near it until long after dark. Then I leisurely circled Jarretwards by a stranger's short cut, circled it mattered not whither. From the windows of more than one snug dwelling came sounds of music, while cigars were seen like glow-worms in many a verandah. Attracted to an open doorway by lights and voices, I entered. Sambo was there.

"A feast, sar, that's what it am," explained the aged door-keeper.

"Our church feast. You might have seen de church, sar, jist round dat corner."

They were thoroughly enjoying themselves, and no mistake. In the room stood a number of tables with fruit and flowers, presided over by coloured women as though it had been a fancy fair. Everybody wore smiles, nor smiles alone, for the company was neatly dressed, and everybody was full of fun. Happy mortals, with the *ennui* of freedom as yet unknown to them, they could relish a *conversazione*.

April 13th.—My ticket was for the oldest railway south of Mason and Dixon's line, *i. e.*, the Petersburg and Weldon. Off we went, the speed moderate as usual and the danger quite sufficient then by all

accounts. We moved across a level country where breastworks and batteries seemed to be more plentiful than any other crop; though, as in northern Virginia, there were signs of returning prosperity—new fences, new log cabins, and negroes following the plough or wielding the axe.

But I will hasten southward in such fashion that you shall not weary of the journey, which, truth be said, was somewhat monotonous. What more dignified arrangement can we adopt than the order of a Lord Mayor's Show? Here then is our procession:—

Pine woods to right and left;
 Small clearings;
 Pine woods to left and right;
 Redoubts at unexpected places;
 Large clearings;
 Dismal brick chimney-stacks which belonged to
 wooden houses that had been destroyed;
 Negroes at work;
 Heaps of firewood piled near the track;
 White men at work;
 Coloured children staring at the train;
 New station-houses in proper order;
 White children staring at the train;
 Pine woods closing the *vista* to our rear.

We passed the State boundary and found ourselves soon afterwards at Weldon, North Carolina. A strong line of earthworks commanded the approach

to this place, but war was now put out of people's minds by business, and a fine new bridge had been thrown across the Roanoke river.

Weldon seemed to flourish under "reconstruction." Cotton-bales were lying on the goods platform or were heaped on railway trucks. Accommodation was provided for hungry travellers in a new hotel, and the inhabitants displayed exuberant jollity. I suppose that they are capable of shedding tears and that some contradictory person will go there when they chance to be sad. But all alike, bleached and unbleached, were merry when I saw them. Roars of laughter greeted us as we arrived. Some one had said something funny, and he must have said it again at regular intervals, for the laughter continued. It is my belief that coloured navvies are merrier than coloured deck-hands, but of this I am less certain than I am that Weldon, N. C., was full of jollity.

The new bridge proved to be worth a visit. It is a practical go-ahead structure, such as may often be seen in America — no floor, no parapet, nothing but timber trestle-work of sufficient strength to sustain an engine and cars at a foot-pace. But this bridge deserved attention from its size.

"The third of a mile long, sir, and finished on Holiday Monday," said a rugged gentleman who presided over certain railway points. "Yes, sir," he added, "that's about *the* finest bridge in America, reckon, and thar's the finest fortifications ever made."

Was not the rugged gentleman intended by nature for local self-government ?

From Weldon to Wilmington may be considered a choice piece of travel. The railway company has increased its rolling stock with an eye to taste and comfort. There are now splendid sleeping-cars on the line, which do credit to Philadelphian work-shops, and there are powerful engines lately imported from the North. So, as far as such things can compensate for flat country and ever present pine trees, it is beyond doubt a choice piece of travel.

We still rush through pine woods, through small clearings and large clearings, past children white and black, who stare at the train. It is our Lord Mayor's procession continued in a warmer atmosphere. There are orchards covered with apple-blossom and butterflies spreading their gay wings for flight among the pine trees. All sign of war has ceased. We pass railway stations several years old, weather-beaten fences, and farm buildings which have seen at least a generation of farmers.

I am amused by the look of some little settlements containing one white man's house and one black man's house. The two men, whatever their relative position, must always have been thrown much together. They are now fellow-citizens, and why should they not work shoulder to shoulder? In this field, so carefully ploughed, are Whitechap and Sambo engaged upon repairs to the roof of a shed. Young Whitechap hands materials to his father, young

Sambo to his. Before we are out of sight a burst of merriment convulses these last, and Whitechap himself smiles grimly. I fancy that the Civil Rights Bill cannot cause any very serious trouble to a settlement thus established on the basis of equal work.

At the next station I alight to have a chat with a wounded Confederate. He is dressed in threadbare grey, and his cheeks are hollow as if from meagre diet. Do I know whether Government is going to issue artificial legs to all wounded men? His first question gives the clue to his utmost ambition—a grand artificial leg, such as he hears they make “up North.” I tell him that some inquiry has been ordered by Congress about this subject, though I am not able to say whether Southern soldiers will be provided for. He is interested at even so much news, and pleased to have his belief in the existence of the Arm and Leg Company confirmed.

“Has it healed?” I ask, glancing down at the loose part of his trowser.

“Why,” says he, “it’s as hard as a pine-knot,” tapping the stump with pride.

And, when we rumble away, he watches our departure in a wistful manner, as if he thought that we had brought a grand new leg from Washington and carried it on with us by mistake.

Southward we journeyed, through Goldsboro’, where rival hotels clamorously besought our patronage during the half-hour of tea-time. “Here you are, gentlemen! Hot supper ready! Hot fish

ready to come on!" "Step out dis side, gentlemen, don't go wid dem!"

Southward we journeyed still, after leaving Goldsboro', with a good dollar's worth of rest in that new Philadelphian sleeping-car. Let the train proceed on its journey, whilst I relate what a citizen of African descent then present had to say about emigration to Africa.

"No, sar, 'spects we'd rather stop here. You see dis State is our home I may say, and we'd feel bad in dat place you talk of. Thar's many persons would have to clear out, if every one was back to de section of de world his grandfather 'riginally come from."

My coloured friend could not be brought to look on Liberia with favour. He had been raised in North Carolina, and his first act when he was freed had been to return from a Mississippi plantation to his native State. He spoke very quietly of by-gone hardships; they were over now and he was cheerful as to the future. Farm-labourers (freedmen) in this neighbourhood received ten dollars a month with their board. Navvies on the railway fifteen dollars a month and board likewise. All hands were, he thought, at work. "Thar won't be no trouble about dat, sar," said he; "we know we'se got to be doing something."

April 14th.—Wilmington was shrouded in darkness when we arrived—time, 1.45 A.M. Of its condition with regard to trade, I can only tell you that a merchant who joined us on the ferry boat declared the market to be overstocked with foreign goods. Their

people, he said, were in need of almost everything; but money was scarce and they could not afford to buy. An average crop this year might put matters straight.

We were ferried across a river well-known to blockade-runners, landed on its southern shore, and ushered into a train of dimly-lighted cars. We sat wondering how long it would be before she started, or tried to doze in recumbent attitude upon the seats just long enough for two persons. Dulness had marked us for its own, when to our relief there occurred a "personal difficulty."

Has a passenger the right to secure his intended seat by laying thereon his coat and tobacco-pouch? You see that it was no trivial quarrel, but a great question which may yet convulse the travelling public. Has a passenger that right, above-named, or has he not?

The gentleman in the chimney-pot head-piece maintained that laying coats on seats was nonsense. He used a strong adjective. The gentleman in the wide-awake swore that he would recover his seat at any cost. Thrice did they dispute and thrice did the car ring with ferocious menace. Now there was a last appeal. We looked on breathlessly.

"If you don't come out of my seat, sir, I'll make you."

"*You* make me, sir, it's not in your power."

The gentleman in the wide-awake grasps his enemy's sleeve, and gives a vigorous tug. Up

springs he of the chimney-pot, seizing his man by the throat. They struggle for a moment and fall over on to a family party with a baby. Intense excitement is stirred; passengers prepare for the worst. My nearest neighbour draws a pistol, which he cocks and holds between his knees. "They might come to shooting, you know," says he. Happily they do not get quite so far. The gentleman in the wide-awake is understood to mean mischief, but is dragged off by our stalwart conductor, who now appears with a porter or two at his heels. The case is brought on before the conductor and decided in favour of first comers. Yet we have a strong feeling that no decision can be final while railway-carriage seats remain unnumbered.

South Carolina was very like North Carolina as seen in that hurried procession of objects by the way-side. But there was more swampy ground and more variety of timber. We passed clearings both large and small, new huts, new fences, and mile after mile of familiar pine wood. We passed turpentine distilleries, which all seemed to be fresh erections; saw-mills, and heaps of fuel lying ready for removal. It was vain to expect the palmetto hereabout, as that emblematic plant only grows on the sea-coast islands. There were, however, plenty of oaks and willows, of gum-trees and dog-wood, at many points. We came to swamps in which could be seen masses of foliage green with early spring; where the blossom of the dog-wood stood in charming contrast to its

verdant background, or the branches of forest giants were hung with mossy festoons, such as I had observed on the Lower Mississippi. Then again there were pine woods, clearings, new huts, new fences, and perchance a newly-made railway-bridge across some brown-coloured sluggish stream.

An agent for the sale of Pollard's History of the War travelled along with us. He asserted that every Southern man should possess this work—complete in three volumes. He would take orders to any extent. Did I, for instance, want a copy? I did not at the present time? Well, if so, he must try the next gentleman, but really every Southerner ought to possess the book. Here was a better prospect. The agent grew doubly persuasive. It was a wonderful history, and such a bargain!

"Thank you, sir; you shall have your copy in a week at farthest." The agent had done business.

"But," remarked the wife of the would-be purchaser, in a loud aside to her lord, "but you have never read a three-volume book in your life."

"No," he replied, "that's so."*

"Then how do you mean to do it?"

Husband, with cheerful resolution, "I'll go right through, like reading three other books, I reckon."

Now the agency system applied to a single work is an American "institution." These *colporteurs* of profane literature are invited to seek such a career by most tempting advertisements. They are told

* What a world lies before him!

that "One hundred dollars a month may be easily earned as agent for the sale of 'Bayonets and Brakebone Fever,' a thrilling war narrative." Or that "Five hundred active young men are wanted in a profitable business," which turns out to be "the sale of 'De Boots,' an exquisite romance."

Why should I not place wealth within the reach of some of my struggling compatriots? Why not, indeed? All doubt is over, the generous thing is done. I hereby authorize five hundred active young Englishmen to constitute themselves my agents for the sale of this present work. They may apply to any respectable bookseller in town or country, and should be mindful to dispose of their little store at more than cost price. Please observe that only those agents are genuine who bear nature's stamp of youth and activity.

Our train was not only punctual in its arrival at Florence, S. C., but punctual in its departure from that railway junction among the pine trees. So we had not much time for lionizing. I noticed some field-pieces, which stood neglected in the street, and a Federal officer on horseback—the first blue uniform that I had seen since leaving Richmond. There was also an assortment of invalid locomotives.

From Florence to Charleston occupied seven hours (distance 102 miles), the journey having no point of especial interest about it. Dry ground with pine trees, swampy ground with variety of timber, a few

cotton presses on the larger clearings, and turpentine distilleries on the smaller—such was what we saw. I heard that plenty of cotton was being planted; “more than at any previous time,” said one passenger. Wages for freedmen averaged ten dollars a month and board. Almost every one was working, but there was not enough labour to be had; and, as to the land, it was rather poor, exhausted by improvident farming. If three acres produced a bale that was all you could expect. There was little of the Mississippi style here, with a bale to an acre.

This day was a double anniversary, never to be forgotten by Americans—April 14th, one year ago, when President Lincoln received his death wound; April 14th, five years ago, when Major Anderson surrendered Fort Sumter. *Felix vitâ felix opportunitate mortis* might be truly said of the great President. But Anderson’s surrender was a beginning of ruin and humiliation to that proud city in which we arrived on the anniversary of its short-lived triumph.

CHAPTER XLIV.

FORT SUMTER.

A reviving cripple — Pompey and Cæsar — The battered rampart.

GRASS had been growing in the streets of Charleston, and houses standing empty for months together. Even now there were dismal traces of fire and bombardment. An accidental spark had reduced half the city to ashes before the first Yankee shell came whistling from Morris Island. Then long-range guns had played their part unsparingly, and, last of all, there had been a second conflagration. What wonder that I found business dull and money very scarce.

But things were improving. The marvellous elasticity of American commerce was not to be subdued by ruins or rubbish heaps. Charleston was going ahead with steady steps, despite its crippled condition. Many houses were under repair, a few were being rebuilt, railways had been re-opened, steamboat lines re-established, and the city was to have a German newspaper in addition to its Anglo-Saxon prints.

Northerners had settled here, bringing capital and enterprise that would help Charleston forward. Southerners were working hard in some cases to retrieve their shattered fortunes. A young acquaintance of mine, accustomed, until recent events, to easy affluence, had let his plantation to his former slaves—terms, half the crop—and was now employed behind the counter of a wholesale store. •

Charleston is like New York in one respect, if in no other: there is a river on each side, and the city comes to a point at the junction of these rivers. There is also an extensive bay, though nothing to compare to New York Bay for beauty of scenery; nor would it be reasonable to mention Fort Sumter as the counterpart of Staten Island. We must fall back upon our first position, that the cities are alike in one respect. Negroes here constitute a majority of the population. There are freedmen, and those who have been always free, coloured troops on duty, coloured troops off duty, town labourers and country labourers; all of them with the healthy, shining, look which they bear in a warm climate, with jovial smiles and glittering rows of teeth.

I wish to visit a "coloured church," and the first person to whom I address myself is a respectable old negro, with black coat and chinney-pot hat, encountered by chance upon the side walk. Can he tell me of a good coloured church? He reckons that he can. It is Sunday morning, and he is "gwine thar"

at this very time. If I walk with him he'll show me the way. We pass down one of the Charleston streets, wherein grass no longer grows but where "shade trees" are planted on either side. We turn into another street, catching a glimpse of the *Place d'Armes* before the citadel, where is to be seen a body of Federal troops on parade, and we presently come to a newly-erected church. My conductor pauses, that I may examine its outside. He is proud of the building, as a work carried out by a zealous few. There are richer congregations in Charleston among the coloured folk, but this church "can't be beat nohow" when we consider the resources with which it has "been fixed up."

My guide is a freedman; he was owned by Mr. —, whilst his wife and children belonged to some one else. It was hard parting from them when they were taken out into the country during the bombardment, though he was glad that they should be away from danger. Many persons were killed by Yankee shells, as he knew for a fact, because he had helped to bury them, but the truth was concealed for fear of "scarin' citizens wuss."

"How does my guide earn his living?"

He works "for master now at so much a week. Freedom ain't a bad thing, he reckons."

"Then you won't go back to the old state if you can help it?"

"No, sar; I'se got to die fust."

Sambo thus speaks with a manner that is perfectly

good-humoured, although he throws decision into his voice as he makes the conclusive declaration.

I am ushered into a plain wooden building, which is full to overflowing of Charleston darkeys. There is every class, from Uncle Ned who has spent his strength in the rice-swamp, and Aunt Chloe with the bandana handkerchief twisted about her head, to a group of handsome girls in fashionable dresses who might any of them stand for Mrs. Dion Boucicault playing *The Octoroon*. I am not alone in my character of pale-faced brother. Beside me sits a grave young Scotchman, who comes hither every Sunday, because, forsooth, he likes the preacher. His want of proper pride, in thinking less of a commonwealth which is intensely of this world than of a kingdom which is not, must excite contempt amongst his Southern friends. The Anthropological Society should send a mission to convert him; and, meanwhile, he enjoys the sermons of his coloured preacher. What more need I say, except that I have seldom heard a better discourse than was delivered on this particular Sunday. Let me protest against the caricatures of negro worship which thoughtless or wicked men have published to throw ridicule upon Sambo. When a devout but illiterate people offers up its prayers, there will be grammatical shortcomings, errors against cultivated taste, perhaps even so sad a sight as too much exhibition of feeling. Are we therefore to scoff at Sambo on his knees? No, Heaven forbid! Heathens have set us a better example. The Helot

was held up to derision over the wine-cup, but not before the altar.

This congregation, in the newly-built church at Charleston, neither shed tears nor groaned while listening to the more impressive passages of the sermon. It was as quiet a congregation as you could wish to see, should you object to religious excitement. Yet, when there came a request for support on behalf of a coloured college, I observed that five-dollar notes were plentifully handed in, and that everybody present gave something. The people are keen for education, which they see to be necessary to their children in a future of equal rights. The children themselves are anxious to learn, and from my visit to the coloured schools in Charleston I formed a high opinion of young Sambo's ability. He has not here been so long at work as have his kindred in New Orleans, but, despite such drawback, his progress is most encouraging. I saw several tiny urchins, of pure African descent, who could read fluently and write a legible round hand. Nor were they slow at arithmetic, as they ought to have been to justify sundry abstruse theories about them.

Why speculate on what may happen when young Sambo has grown up a "scholar," and stands at the junction of the brook "Caroliny" with the river Liberia, murmuring "Eastward ho!"? At present there is nothing to equal young Sambo's father, as he waits behind our chairs. Quick and dexterous, ready and obliging, the coloured servant is a treasure to those

who would feed with comfort. He brushes away the flies, changes our plates in a twinkling, and maintains as much gravity as is compatible with his jocund nature. I have compared him some way back to Jeames of Belgravia, and would do so again, but that young Sambo's father has not at all times so solemn a countenance as Mr. Jeames. Those large eyes will roll and those sable cheeks will pucker into smiles, if jokes be made which our attendants can understand. In political matters it is clear that they take no interest. Cæsar has presented me with a dish of sweet potatoes, whilst the old gentleman to my left declares "the nigger, sir, to be only fit for slavery," and Cæsar's glance rests vacantly on empty space. Now Pompey sweeps away an assemblage of flies during a most bitter attack on Abolitionists by that old lady opposite me, and Pompey's glance is as vacant as was Cæsar's. The old gentleman comes to time in a few minutes with a statement that "niggers have no souls." I express my wish to hear more, and I notice that Pompey casts an inexpressible look at Cæsar, who, on retiring with a couple of empty dishes, is convulsed in the remote background.

Change we our point of view. Leave the parlour company to dilate on "nigger helplessness," and let us betake ourselves to a large bare-boarded room, in which hundreds of freedmen have gathered together that they may express their gratitude to the framers of the Civil Rights Bill. Hundreds of freedmen have gathered together without any white patron to

take care of them. They elect a grey-headed darkey to occupy the chair and a committee to draw up a series of resolutions. They listen to the speeches that are made, sometimes with laughter, sometimes with murmurs of hearty approval. Pompey may be seen in high glee at the liberal sentiments which he hears uttered. "That's so!" he cries. "Bravo!" "Go on, good nigger!" Caesar is called upon to speak. He has recovered from that look across the dinner-table which erst convulsed him, and he says a few words on civil rights—strong, sensible, words they are too, though roughly strung together. It is Caesar's opinion that things will all come straight if the coloured men move forward quietly and give as little offence as possible to the white folk. He sees the ballot box right ahead, and not very far off. There are more eloquent speeches than Caesar's, especially one by an educated negro from the North, which is a fine display of sarcasm. But remembering my chat with the old gentleman at dinner I am chiefly interested in hearing Caesar speak.

Rain and wind kept the weather delightfully cool, though the trees were covered with bright green foliage and the gardens were blooming with flowers. I could have spared some of the wind, as also a little of the rain, for it was vexatious to undergo blockade when war was over and to postpone from day to day my intended trip to Fort Sumter. There was the fort, like an irregular mound, at the harbour's

mouth, with Atlantic breakers rolling on the outer bar which would have made communication impossible had they come a few miles nearer, and crisp waves dashing to our very feet, which, even as it was, made communication sufficiently difficult. Yes, there was the fort, surely enough, and here was I, and the storm did not abate, so patience became a useful companion.

Captain Smalls had declared that he would sail on the morrow at any rate, for he must positively take supplies to Fort Sumter; and on the morrow he sailed, with every prospect of a pleasant voyage. Rain had ceased, waves had diminished to ripples, and the steamboat went as steadily as though she had been crossing a pond. You must remember to ask Captain Smalls to tell you his story should you avail yourself of Cook's Grand Excursion this summer. He—not Cook, but the coloured captain—was a slave on board the same vessel which he now commands. One day it occurred to him that freedom might be worth trying; so when the Confederate officers had gone ashore, Robert Smalls, with seventeen other contrabands, ran their ship past Fort Sumter, by means of private signals, and joined Uncle Sam's flotilla in the offing. It happened that a pilot was afterwards wanted. Who so much at home in Charleston Harbour as Robert Smalls? Or who so fit to guide the Yankee vessels over the bar? Then it was fair and natural that he should take charge of the craft wherewith he had escaped, and

this afforded (Carolina) mankind the astounding spectacle of a coloured captain.

I enquired how long he meant to stay down South after the Federals should have withdrawn? Not very long, he reckoned, unless things were more settled. A year or two might make a great difference though. He thought that there was already beginning to be a better feeling between blacks and whites, they were more accustomed to the new condition of affairs. As to coloured troops making a disturbance in Charleston, it was only that some of them had had a bit of a fight with a Yankee regiment which undertook to whip them. Apart from this, he had not heard any complaint of disorderly conduct by coloured troops. When they were mustered out they clubbed together, and invested their pay in a sea-going steam ship for the Florida trade, in a grocery store, and, another time, in a lot of building land. The steam ship was managed upon Northern principles, that is to say, darkeys who chose to buy first-class tickets were allowed to travel first-class. By most lines they could only travel steerage, whatever they paid, and well-to-do coloured folks found this rule very hard.

We were landed at Fort Sumter in excellent style, our vessel gliding between a rickety pier and a sunken wreck, as though Captain Smalls were about to make her speak. Five minutes later we had scrambled up a flight of wooden steps, had found ourselves on a battered rampart where Sambo in

uniform paced to and fro, had looked round upon a dozen points of historical interest, and could appreciate the most famous spot in all America. That battered rampart, which on one side sloped to the water's edge, with a surface of iron fragments that had hurtled against it, and on the other was supported by a huge pile of sand and gabions, those casemates to left and rear, whence cannon looked grimly forth, and yonder open space in the centre, receptacle of many a bursting shell, constituted the slavholder's Thermopylæ. In vain had Northern engineers pointed their largest guns against the devoted fort. In vain had monitors attempted to silence it and boat expeditions to take it by escalade. Flags were shot away only to be rehoisted, walls were brought crumbling down that their very ruin might make them stronger than before. Major Anderson had been roasted out by his own flaming barracks, but the Confederates had nothing in Fort Sumter that would burn. It was an enclosure of brick and sand and iron fragments.

We need not have fancied ourselves standing here very long ago to have had a stirring scene before us. There lay the open ocean, and there was the harbour bar, white with breakers. A fleet of Federal war ships was safely anchored inside the bar, a Federal army occupied Morris Island to the right of the harbour's mouth, a Confederate force held Sullivan's Island to the left of the harbour's mouth, and Fort Sumter stood nearly midway between them. Mighty

were the Federal cannon; they could throw shell and shot to the western part of Charleston, a distance of five miles, but they could not take Fort Sumter, though it lay within point-blank range. If Federal war vessels would have approached the city, they must have passed round this unconquerable fort on its least exposed face, where alone there was a deep channel, and, in so passing, they would have received a heavy fire from its casemates to left and rear. What mattered wholesale destruction on the right front, so long as shelter could be found for a scanty garrison in bomb-proofs, beneath piles of sand and rubbish? What, so long as the batteries to left and rear remained efficient?

Through many weary months Fort Sumter was supplied with provisions and ammunition at night; wounded men were carried away, and reinforcements were sent to supply their place under cover of darkness. Though the siege languished it was still necessary to be vigilant and well-prepared, as Uncle Sam's web-foot never quitted Morris Island. At length the end drew near. Sherman captured Savannah and his movements presently compelled the evacuation of Charleston. Thus it was that Fort Sumter fell without blame to its brave defenders.

CONCLUSION.

ON my return journey from Charleston I made the acquaintance of two Southern gentlemen, whose very different states of mind may serve to throw light upon public opinion in the Land of Dixie.

One of them was angry with President Johnson and still more angry with Charles Sumner, breathing vengeance against Union men, niggers, and Northerners, to be wreaked whenever a good time should come. This gentleman was a "whipped but unconquered Reb." He refused to believe that slavery was dead, and told me between his clenched teeth that he would shoot down the first darkey who might chance to give evidence against him on any matter whatsoever. Civil rights for freedmen he regarded as degradation to the dominant race; and Brazil was the bourne to which he thought of be-taking himself.

The other Confederate used much milder language. There was no talk of shooting anybody down from this "Johnsonian reconstructed Reb," but, on the contrary, a straightforward acceptance of what had been done for Sambo and an earnest resolution to

make both ends meet, in spite of freedom and civil rights. He thought that secession was "quite played out, old hunkerism gone to the d——l," and slavery "a thing of the past." His views had been "secesh;" he made no pretence of liking Yankees, though they were now thoroughly changed. Events had been too strong for him. Uncle Sam was "bound to be the biggest thing in creation," whilst as to Sambo, it might prove cheaper to pay wages and get clear of supporting the old coloured folks. My new acquaintance admitted that there had been drawbacks to slave institutions; yet for his own part he had liked them much, and he should account a nigger inferior to a white man, "whatever those d——l Abolitionists might say." I asked whether the darkeys would work as well for wages as they had worked under the former system. "No, sir," said my new acquaintance, "they won't. But we shall get a cotton crop for all that," added he; "and round there where I live they are not working badly, I tell you." This reconstructed Reb appeared to be a good-humoured fellow, without any personal prejudice against Sambo beyond thinking him inferior, and with a fund of plantation anecdotes which exhibited coloured people as faithful retainers. If learning was to come South along with other civil rights, the ex-slaveowner considered that he had better meet it half-way, choose a teacher whom he could trust, and set up a school upon his own estate. Even now he was travelling northward in search of

such a teacher; and I made up my mind that "reconstruction" had taken fast hold of him.

For the blacks and whites of Dixie everything depends upon which of these Southern gentlemen represented the future feeling of his section. Of the present feeling I doubt not that he who threatened "shooting down" would be in a majority, or would at least obtain an equal vote. But with each succeeding month the influence of Northern capitalists is extended over Southern commerce, immigrants arrive who are anxious for peace and prosperity, and white men grow accustomed to paying Sambo wages. The gentleman in search of a school teacher will have three votes to one on his side before the year 1880, unless some unfortunate accident should previously lead to an armed conflict of race against race, or a too hasty withdrawal of Uncle Sam's blue uniform should induce hot-headed Southerners to rebel a second time. Well will it be for Sambo if he never comes in conflict with his old master, as the odds are heavy that Whitechap would pulverize him. Well will it be for hot-headed Southerners if they let Uncle Sam alone, as he might be severe with them should they cause more trouble and expense. I fancy that the success of the reconstructed Reb will prove as great a blessing to Dixie's Land as will the gradual disappearance of the shooting-down gentleman. He is a relic of days gone by; civilization does not want him; justice regards him as a cut-throat; and why should such a

creature continue to exist? Bowie knives, revolvers, loaded canes and sword sticks have been carried as a defence against slave insurrection, or for the chastisement of meddlesome Northerners; but the other reconstructed Reb is aiming at a better state of things. He knows how easily Sambo can be managed with a little kindness, and, though he may object to salt cod and pumpkin pies as being Yankee dishes, he does not intend to quarrel with his bread and butter by clearing Yankee enterprise out of the South.

So stands the question for blacks and whites between two classes of planters in Dixie. We need not press it any further, as a short time will suffice to show distinctly on which side the balance inclines. A more interesting problem for us at this moment is whether cotton can be raised by aid of *freedmen* and whether the American negro is capable of intellectual progress.

First, as to free coloured labour. It is certain that Sambo will work under contract, because he has worked and is working. Dinah, too, is working, so is young Sambo, and they are content with lower wages than white folks of similar capacity would require. The darkeys have come forward more willingly than was expected, have shown more patience and industry.* They have not sought to pay

* "They were well broken in," said one, sometime an overseer, with a grim smile. "We made them do thirteen months' work in the year, and no wonder they could do eleven months' without any one after them."

off old scores by insurrection and murder; nor have they preferred starvation to honest work. You may easily find exceptions, but this is the rule, and I claim for Sambo the character of a free labouring man—a labouring man whose unrequited toil has heretofore built up colossal fortunes for planters, merchants, and manufacturers, and who, even now, when the rod of oppression lies broken underfoot, is cheerfully preparing to build up other colossal fortunes and to pocket ten dollars a month for himself. If, instead of being “free from the d——d nigger,” Jonathan had six million, not three million, darkeys, on the cotton fields this season, he would make a good thing of it.

Secondly, as to negro intellect. I wish that Professor Huxley and the like men of science who have done poor Sambo all the harm in their power, by founding ingenious theories upon the weight of his brain, would descend to common life and visit Cincinnati or Philadelphia in search of educated negroes. It might chance that the scientific visitor would find citizens of ebony complexion and pure African blood who would be able to shake his favourite brain theory in half an hour's chat. There are many of these educated blacks throughout the North, and many more who, though ignorant of Latin and mathematics, are quite fit to conduct ordinary business. Whatever may be the case with coloured people in Borneo, Australia, and portions of Africa, I can affirm, from personal knowledge, that the American

darkey is almost as 'cute as the American whitey, quite 'cute enough at any rate to take care of his own affairs. This he is with proper instruction; for the slaves to whom learning was forbidden had not an equal chance.

The change of climate may have affected Sambo, or an association of many years with go-ahead neighbours may have brightened him up. In Kentucky, for example, where Anglo-Saxons attain gigantic stature, young Sambo lengthens out until, on reaching manhood, he is often a six-foot nigger. Throughout Dixie's Land the chilly winters which are experienced even at New Orleans fortify him against any latent tendency to lie on his back and suck sugar-cane. Prices are high, sugar-cane is expensive, and *there are more whites than blacks in the late Confederate States.** Thus is Sambo of the South drawn forward on Jonathan's line of march, and has every prospect of being thoroughly civilized despite the contumely to which he is still exposed.

You have been informed that Sambo of the North is a half-caste, mulatto, quadroon, octoroon, whatever his degree of colouring be called, and you may think that scientific men would refuse to admit him as a genuine specimen. But although there are certainly more half-castes in Yankee-land than full-blooded Africans, yet there are enough of these last to overturn brain theorists by the dozen. It is not difficult to distinguish a full-blooded African from a half-

* See the Appendix.

caste, the drop of white blood showing beyond a doubt to those familiar with darkeys; and when our brain theorists shall make their tour of candid investigation, they will find no trouble in securing subjects to begin upon. I have observed that the head of an educated negro is usually better developed than are the heads of Southern freedmen, as these again are better than what we often see portrayed in books of African travel. Perhaps the air of America gives Sambo more brain, or it may be that he is descended from a tribe of superior endowments.*

Fighting an up-hill battle under greater disabilities than have ever been imposed upon catholic or heretic by the wisdom of our forefathers, dragged forward on Jonathan's line of march, that he may produce cotton and sugar, taught to read by "reconstructed Rebs" that he may learn his proper place, the coloured citizen of the United States has a doubtful prospect before him. True it is that freedom has been conquered and will never again be yielded; true also that prejudice rapidly gives way to Christian feeling and that its legal stronghold was stormed on the passage of the Civil Rights Bill; yet there is a century of progress between Sambo and social equality. Sambo, half-caste and full-blooded, ignorant and learned, is still collectively a

* While many of the blacks whom I saw in Cuba had good heads, there were others with a low type of face, much lower than that of the average Southern freedman.

“d——d nigger” in American phrase. He speaks the same language as his white neighbour; professes the same religion, and pays the same taxes—he has even been permitted to die for his country; but from five Democrats out of six, and two Republicans out of five, you will hear that Sambo is a “d——d nigger.” The very men who voted for his civil rights would not allow him to remain, save as a waiter, in any hotel which they might occupy; and of those Americans who voted against civil rights the majority appear to think that negro killing is no murder.

Here is matter enough for serious consideration to the intelligent coloured citizen of the United States. From our point of view all may be well, slavery abolished, peace and plenty returning to the land, millions of cotton-bales looming in the immediate future. We can philosophically look forward to a century of progress, talk of predestined extinction, pat Sambo on the back and tell him to rejoice that he is not a slave. But is there no hope of anything more—no promised land for “d——d niggers” behind those inevitable cotton-bales? I think that there is hope, and that Sambo will some day return home to civilize and christianize Africa.

It would seem as though a mighty purpose had been served in the shipment of negroes to the Western World, in their generations of servitude and their sudden liberation. I often wondered what would be the end while slavery reared its ugly

front. When slavery fell, the end became clearly visible. Sambo will acquire a feeling of independence; he will learn that black men are generals and presidents in countries over the sea—that coloured prejudice is the handmaid of slavery rather than a natural instinct. Sambo will hear of proud aristocrats who, while they think it no shame to receive a black ambassador on equal terms, would refuse to hold any intercourse with an ill-behaved planter. The geographical knowledge of freedmen will extend until they appreciate that Liberia is to them a land of promise. Enterprising citizens of colour have led the way to Liberia, as enterprising white men led the way to the American colonies, but the rank and file will follow suit just as they did to America.* The clinging to familiar localities which is a negro foible will be loosened in course of time. Competition with newly arrived immigrants who can shoulder him aside because he is black will drive Sambo out of the border Slave States, or will, to say the least, keep down his wages at a minimum. Competition with other newly arrived immigrants will exclude Sambo from the far West and perhaps threaten his position even in the cotton-growing South. Liberia will, I repeat, be his land of promise, and he will go thither by tens of thousands, whenever there shall be trade enough to supply means of transport. To favour this result, there is an increasing trade which bids fair to assume vast proportions before the American freed-

* See the Appendix.

man shall have been fitted for *his* manifest destiny. You will agree with me that to send hap-hazard three million ignorant people who were slaves but yesterday to a country of barbarous heathens, would be a diabolical act. Our cousin Jonathan must make amends for his past misdeeds by training Sambo, however roughly, in the art of self-government.

Liberia at the present time is only the germ of an empire.* It has made more rapid progress than did any of the Anglo-Saxon colonies in North America during the first fifty years of their existence; and it has proved that negroes can trade, and teach, and legislate as well as anybody else, when they have "a white man's chance." †

Granted that the capital city, Monrovia, has less than four thousand inhabitants, and that the whole Christian population does not number one hundred thousand, still there are churches and schools, workshops and sugar-mills, for Liberia, though small, is progressive. Give it time, and the infant will grow. As I write, there lie before me a report of the Liberian College and a recent copy of the Liberian Herald. Fancy a college in which young darkeys receive a classical education from darkeys of maturer growth, ‡ imagine a newspaper whose printing-devils

It possesses five hundred miles of sea coast north-west of Cape Palmas, but no great depth of inland territory.

† There is bitter significance in this American expression as applied to American institutions.

‡ One of the professors, a full-blooded African, is a ripe classical scholar and a University man.

are really black, and modify your brain theory accordingly.

All honour to the good men and true of heart who founded the American Colonization Society fifty years ago. They occupied a narrow "platform" between slavery and freedom, disliking the one, yet afraid to encourage the other, but their views were pure and disinterested. They foresaw that Sambo would return to Africa and they sought to prepare a way for his return. Some of the greatest names in America are connected with the establishment of Liberia by means of the Colonization Society. Jefferson, Monroe, and Henry Clay, were amongst its foremost patrons. There was a ship Mayflower represented in the ship Elizabeth, a landing on the desert shore, and a battle with hostile natives. Then the colony, having triumphed over its undisciplined foes, spread slowly from point to point, until its coast-line was measured by hundreds of miles, and until it had penetrated a couple of days' journey into the interior. Native chiefs were conciliated, native children were taught to speak English, whilst idolatry gave way before Christian worship. I will not attempt to trace each forward step which Liberia has taken. The last white governor of the colony was succeeded in 1841 by a coloured man, named Roberts, formerly a Virginian slave. Roberts held the office of governor during six years, and then finding that he occupied an equivocal position with regard to foreign powers (the United States did not

recognize their black colony), he declared Liberia to be an independent republic. Foreign powers became friendly; English and French ships of war saluted the Liberian flag; and the Colonization Society maintained the most intimate relations with its independent *protégé*. You have doubtless heard of President Roberts, how he ruled for eight years over his grateful countrymen, and retired from office when the constitutional period for retirement had come. President Benson was the next ruler of Liberia, and President Warner the next after him; both of them sad stumbling-blocks to brain theorists.

Liberian independence is altogether a stumbling-block to those who deny that Sambo can take care of himself. Sixteen thousand civilized blacks from the United States* exercise upon the coast of Africa every right which freemen prize. They elect a president, a senate, and a house of representatives; they have trials in open court, and a code of laws modelled after the common law of England. Religion is free amongst them; education is supported as a matter of public necessity. Though the Americo-Liberians are few in number, they have eighty or ninety thousand native dependents who are citizens of the republic, and they influence the councils of half a million uncivilized natives, many of whose chiefs send their sons to Liberian schools.

* There are also a few black colonists from Barbadoes.

Here is a land of promise—even for “d—d niggers”—behind the inevitable cotton-bales. Here is something better than toleration amongst white men, under a ban of social inferiority. President Warner, in his last address to the Liberian Senate, declared that more hands were wanted to develop the resources of the country.* There is room for Sambo, young and old, on the West Coast of Africa, room for him to found a powerful nation, which will for ever put an end to the slave-trade.

You would like a concluding word about United States 5-20 bonds and Illinois Central Railway stock? I am sorry to disappoint you, but I can only prophecy vaguely that American securities will be “buoyant” for some time to come. Jonathan is not going to repudiate, nor will his much boasted Union be suffered to fall to pieces while the boys who were mustered out of service in 1865 are able to carry arms. We may differ from our cousin on certain matters of government; we may be a little jealous of his ship-building and a little afraid of his ambition; yet it is of no use to deny that he is a very strong, rich, formidable, cousin. What will he be in 1900? What in 1966? Is it possible that he will have the good taste to spare our grand-children’s feelings by breaking himself up upon a Mormon bigamy question? Our grandchildren did I say? Why, Mormonism is “to be wiped out, right straight

* See the Appendix.

off," so soon as the Union Pacific Railway shall have been completed. We ourselves may live to enjoy that Mormon bigamy question, and to see Jonathan stalk forward thereafter as though nothing at all had happened.

THE APPENDIX.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State of the United States.

To all whom these presents may come, greeting :

Know ye, that whereas the Congress of the United States on the 1st of February last passed a resolution which is in the words following, namely :

“A resolution submitting to the Legislatures of the several States a proposition to amend the Constitution of the United States.

“*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled (two-thirds of both Houses concurring.)* That the following article be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States, as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which, when ratified by three-fourths of said Legislatures, shall be valid, to all intents and purposes, as a part of the said Constitution, namely :

“ARTICLE XIII.—Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

“Section 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.”

And whereas, it appears from official documents on file in this Department, that the amendment to the Constitution of the United States proposed, as aforesaid, has been ratified by the Legislatures of the States of Illinois, Rhode Island, Michigan, Maryland, New York, West Virginia, Maine, Kansas, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Missouri, Nevada, Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Vermont, Tennessee, Arkansas, Connecticut, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Alabama, North Carolina, and Georgia—in all, twenty-seven States :

And whereas, the whole number of States in the United States is thirty-six; and whereas, the before specially-named States, whose Legislatures have ratified the said proposed amendment, constitute three-fourths of the whole number of States in the United States;

Now, therefore, Be it known that I, William H. Seward; Secretary of State of the United States, by virtue and in pursuance of the second section of the Act of Congress, approved the twentieth of April, eighteen hundred and eighteen, entitled, "An Act to provide for the publication of the Laws of the United States and for other purposes," do hereby certify that the amendment aforesaid has become valid, to all intents and purposes, as a part of the Constitution of the United States.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Department of State to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this eighteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the ninetieth.

WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State.

PROPORTION OF WHITE AND COLOURED PEOPLE IN DIXIE'S LAND
BY THE CENSUS OF 1860.

States.	White Population.	Coloured Population, Slave and Free, including Indians.
Alabama	526,271	436,930
Arkansas	324,243	111,307
Florida	77,747	62,677
Georgia.....	591,550	465,736
Louisiana	357,456	350,546
Mississippi	353,901	437,404
North Carolina.....	629,942	362,680
South Carolina	291,300	412,408
Tennessee	826,722	283,079
Texas	420,891	183,324
Virginia	1,047,299	549,019
	5,447,222	3,666,110

It is almost certain that at the present time there are fewer blacks than whites in Mississippi and South Carolina, as well as in the other States.

LIBERIA AND ITS ADVANTAGES.

H. W. Johnson, Esq., a highly intelligent coloured lawyer, formerly of Canandaigua, New York, went with his family to Liberia, where he arrived early in July last. He thus wrote to a friend in the States shortly after his arrival.

“We had ten acres of land given us, and can buy all we wish from the Government for from fifty cents to one dollar per acre. Every farmer here tells me that one acre of land will yield as much as from six to ten acres will in any part of the United States. This looks like a big story; but if you could only visit Africa, you would soon become convinced that it is true. Crops, vegetables, and fruits are constantly growing here the whole year. Cotton is found everywhere. It grows upon trees of immense size, and is as soft as silk. The pine-apple, orange, lemon, lime, citron, and many other kinds of choice and delicious fruits bloom, blossom, and bear, the whole year. Ray, Africa is a glorious country! All that is required to make it the garden of the world is population, capital, industry, and enterprise.

“If the coloured people of the United States would come here and settle, it would soon be the garden of the world—a perfect paradise on earth! There is a great plenty of poultry here, such as chickens, geese, turkeys, ducks, etc. There is also plenty of goats, sheep, swine, and cattle. It is nothing to keep these things here. The country is so rich and luxuriant that they find their own living, and keep fat all the time. You have been told that the people here live in bamboo houses and log huts. I wish you would only visit Liberia, and judge for yourself. Most of the houses here are of brick, stone, or wood, and many of them are elegantly furnished. Every industrious person blessed with ordinary health makes money. It must be a very shiftless and worthless fellow who cannot live well here, with ordinary health. That you may judge for yourself, I will state that this season is winter here, yet the grass is green, the flowers are in bloom, we

have green corn, sweet potatoes, beans, cabbages, and vegetables, and fruits I never heard of before I came here. Cocoa-nuts, oranges, limes, and pine-apples are found everywhere."

THE PRESIDENT OF LIBERIA'S MESSAGE TO THE
LIBERIAN LEGISLATURE, DELIVERED AT MON-
ROVIA, DEC. 11th, 1865.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES :

A retrospect of the events in our history during the twelve-month that has elapsed since I last met you, furnishes abundant matter for sincere and humble thanksgiving to the Great Ruler of nations, who has so kindly watched over us and so mercifully directed our affairs.

Nothing has occurred to interrupt the harmony and friendship subsisting between us and foreign nations; on the contrary, our foreign relations have been gratifyingly extended.

An interesting correspondence between the Department of State and M. Drouyn de Lhuys, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, gives assurance of the re-establishment of the amicable international relations, which, prior to the year 1858, so happily subsisted between this Republic and the Emperor of the French, and which were unfortunately interrupted by the matter of the "*Regina Coeli*."

Nothing of importance has been heard from H. B. Majesty's Government on the subject of our North West boundary since I last communicated with you.

In the month of March last, I had the gratification to receive Beverly Page Yates, Esq., as Consul General of the Republic of Haiti.

The ratifications of the Treaty between Liberia and Haiti and that between Liberia and Denmark have been duly exchanged. A treaty between Liberia and His Majesty the King of Portugal has been recently negotiated. It will be submitted for the consideration of the Senate.

I should not fail to inform you that the most remarkable and pleasing feature of this treaty is the article assimilating the Slave Trade to piracy.

This formal and emphatic protest against the horrible traffic by the Government of Portugal is full of encouragement. It is an indication that we are approaching towards the suppression of a trade of unparalleled atrocities, which has left an almost irrecoverable blight upon many a fair portion of this land, and consigned millions of human beings to a watery grave or to brutalities to which such a grave is far preferable.

It affords me inexpressible pleasure to refer to the cessation of the unhappy contest in the United States; and especially as it has terminated in the permanent extinction, I trust, of human bondage throughout that great country.

An unbounded prosperity doubtless lies before that nation, rid, as it is, of the incubus which, from its foundation, has preyed upon its vitals. But in the month of July, in the midst of our rejoicings at the triumphs of the banner of freedom, a feeling of unutterable horror and indignation was sent throughout this land, pervading every household, and saddening every heart, by the intelligence that the President of the United States, the illustrious Abraham Lincoln, had fallen by the hand of an assassin. Liberia, perhaps more than any other independent community, and for peculiar reasons, felt the shock of the melancholy death, and bewailed the loss of Abraham Lincoln.

How prophetic was the remark which nearly two years since he is said to have uttered, that, "When this war is done, I shall be done too"!

On the 10th of May last we had an accession of 346 immigrants by the brig 'Cora,' from the Island of Barbadoes.

They were sent out under the auspices of the American Colonization Society, but owing to the people being from a country not included in the constitutional provisions of the Society, but more particularly on account of the high prices of provisions, the usual six months supplies could not be furnished them.

This threw them, after being two months in the country, upon the support of the Government, until such time as they should be able to support themselves. For this emergency the Government treasury was both unprovided and unprepared, and it became, therefore, a subject of serious consideration and much embarrassment. To relieve the people, however, everything was done that the state of the finances would permit.

Just here I take great pleasure in stating, in justice to the citizens generally, and to the Ladies' Benevolent and Union Sisters of Charity Societies in particular, that from these respective sources the newly arrived and necessitous immigrants received very considerable assistance and unremitting attention during their illness. Much gratitude is also due, and I most cheerfully record the expression of the same, to the American Colonization Society for its very liberal donation of ten thousand dollars expended in transporting the West Indians to these shores, and supporting them here two months.

If any benefit is to be derived from the enterprise, it will be exclusively ours.

Those of the immigrants who removed from Monrovia, are located some at Careysburg and others on the road leading thither. Some of them have not done so well. Some have died, mostly from disappointment after the first emotions of joy. These appear to have been carried away by romantic notions of the country to which they were coming. They entirely overlooked, or did not sufficiently appreciate, the costs and sacrifices of leaving scenes and associations with which, from their birth, they had been connected. They did not take into account the ocean to be crossed, the difficulties of a new country—an acclimation more or less severe to be passed through. They saw nothing but the "land of promise," and the gift of twenty-five acres of land—when unexpected trials came upon them, therefore, they sank under their weight. I am happy to say, however, that the great majority of the immigrants are doing well, and promise to be a valuable acquisition to our little commonwealth.

On the subject of immigration we cannot but feel a deep interest. Our population is still exceedingly scanty. Our need of population is immediate and urgent. Our immense resources cannot be developed—the fruits of the earth, spontaneously produced, cannot be gathered—the fat of the land cannot be made available, simply for the want of minds and hands to engage in the necessary operations. Surely with the vast latent capabilities of this country, we have the ability to become a power by no means to be despised in the agricultural and commercial world.

We have again and again invited our brethren in the United

States to come over and help us fill up the vast solitudes which for centuries have remained uninhabited ; while they, in exile in the western hemisphere, are jostled and elbowed and trampled upon by an oppressive race. But my hopes are as strong as ever, and my confidence remains unshaken in the destiny of Liberia. She is yet to be the asyllum for the oppressed American negro, and a beacon for the guidance of the benighted tribes of this continent. I may not be able to predict the methods by which Africa's exiled sons are to be restored to her bosom ; but I feel certain that such an occurrence will in some way or other take place.

It is the most likely solution of the vexed negro question in the United States, and the only one that has yet suggested itself to the most distinguished statesmen and philanthropists of that country. And it is gratifying to notice that this view of probable events is beginning to be entertained by some of the leading black men also. Things are evidently tending to that condition when the most indifferent of our oppressed brethren in the United States will be compelled to give the question of emigration a serious, studious, and systematic consideration—a question upon which their physical and political well-being greatly depends.

Africa is to be opened. The eyes of the enterprising in Europe are intent upon the discovery of the secrets of science and of wealth, hidden in the unexplored regions of this continent.

The necessities of commerce and the desire of mankind will compel this land to contribute to the comfort and luxury of other quarters of the globe. We in Liberia have been permitted to make a very promising opening ; and applications are being made to us by capitalists in foreign lands, or their agents, to be allowed to take part with us in the work of subjugating this continent.

• While the country should guard strictly against the insinuations of undue foreign influence, yet no unnecessary obstruction by legal enactments should be put in the way of foreign enterprise.

Our legislative enactments should be such as not to repel the friendly approaches of foreigners towards us, but such, on the contrary, as to invite their friendship, their genius and their enterprise. They should be as liberal and accommodating

to commerce and the social intercourse of foreigners with ourselves as our peculiar institutions will allow. I would, therefore, earnestly recommend that you carefully consider any plan that may be laid before you, that has reference to the opening up of Africa to civilization and Christianity, and that will not interfere with our solemn compact respecting lands with the American Colonization Society, or that will not in any way compromise our independence.

In order that foreign traders having establishments along the coast before and up to the time the Port of Entry law went into operation should sustain no loss of what goods they had failed to remove from said establishments, during the two years they were allowed to do so, I have from time to time, as they requested it, given them permission to visit the coast to recover what property they claimed to have at the various points; and, in instances where the native chiefs have interfered, preventing the removal of the effects of foreigners from their respective towns, they have been induced by Commissioners from the Government to withdraw their aggressive interpositions. I was under the painful necessity last year of informing you that for the most part much of the obstinacy and disloyal conduct manifested by the natives, the hostile attitude they had assumed towards the Government since the enactment of the Port of Entry law, was caused by mischievous interference on the part of foreigners with the native chiefs.

The most obstinate and unyielding of the chiefs was Prince Boyer, of Trade Town.

To him Commissioners were sent during your last session. At the request of Government, the Commissioners were kindly conveyed to Trade Town, on board of His Swedish Majesty's corvette, 'Gefle,' Commander Alexis Petterson.

This worthy and accomplished officer treated with marked respect and kindness the Commissioners, and afforded them every facility for speedily and effectually prosecuting their mission. Boyer, however, persisted in his obstinacy.

From that time he has been pertinaciously threatening hostilities, unless the Port of Entry law be repealed; and he has been during the whole year steadily, though unsuccessfully, endeavouring to secure the co-operation of neighbouring tribes against the Government. His threats of hostilities being made more particularly against the county of Grand Bassa—being the

settlement nearest to Trade Town, and presenting points favourable to an attack—I was under the necessity, in the early part of last month, of sending to that county munitions of war and a Commissioner to ascertain definitely the state of its defences, and, if the emergency required it, to have them strengthened and others made.

To defray the expenses and to carry out the object of the Commission, I authorized the expenditure of such an amount of public money, as in the judgment of the Commissioner and of the Superintendent of the County, should be deemed advisable—proceedings which I hope you will approve.

He, however, a few weeks ago, delivered all the goods which he held in his possession belonging to European houses, and sent Commissioners to assure the Government that his intentions are pacific. I am happy to be able to add that, all the native Chiefs, at the trading points, not Ports of Entry, have delivered to foreigners their goods, thus ridding Government of the unpleasant necessity of resorting to compulsory measures. I must particularly commend the chiefs of Nanna Kroo, Settra Kroo, and Niffoo; also Prince Wee, and New Joe West of New Cess, for their loyal conduct and cheerful submission to the authority of the Republic.

In connection with this, I may inform you, that Bishop Payne, of the Episcopal Mission at Cape Palmas, has made application to the Government to be allowed to purchase, for Missionary purposes, the buildings formerly occupied by the factories of the German house at Nanna Kroo, and relinquished by that firm since the Port of Entry law—the Government guaranteeing to the Mission the use of such an amount of land with said buildings, as may be sufficient to carry on Missionary operations in that interesting and populous section of the Republic: I commend this subject to your favourable consideration.

Although the revenue for the year just closed exceeds that for the corresponding period in 1864, still the Secretary of the Treasury has found it far from adequate to the expenses incurred by the Government during the fiscal year.

This suggests the great importance of adopting such economical measures in the prosecution of government operations as will relieve us from such paralyzing embarrassment in the future. At present we have pressing upon us two or more foreign debts, which should be liquidated at once.

I would recommend that the law passed at your last session, imposing a duty of seventy-five cents a ton on vessels indiscriminately, be so modified as to lessen that tax, and to require the payment of it by foreign trading vessels only when such vessels actually transact trading business.

To encourage and foster trade will be of infinitively more benefit to the country than to burden it with heavy taxes. Our true policy is, or should be, to *remove* as much as possible, instead of *imposing*, restrictions on commercial intercourse. I would also invite your attention to the second and last Revenue law, and suggest that you make such amendments thereto as will render its provisions more definite. For the want of such definitiveness great inconvenience is experienced by the Collectors of Customs.

I would further recommend that, instead of the new currency notes, authorized to be issued by the Secretary of the Treasury, a copper currency be substituted.

The non-reissuing of the former treasury "demand notes," taken into the treasury during the year, has brought said notes nearly at par; and if such an amount of them only as will equal the revenue of the country from all sources, be allowed to issue and circulate, they will with slight variation remain at their true value and worth.

In consequence of the non-reissuing of said notes after they had been paid into the treasury, the Secretary of the Treasury, in order to defray some of the more urgent expenses of the Government, was obliged to negotiate loans of money from the citizens. This he could do only by pledging the faith and credit of the Government for their refundment, in kind, as soon after the meeting of the Legislature as they should be pleased to authorize it, which I hope will be done at an early day in your session. I will transmit to you, as soon as possible, the Report of the Committee appointed, agreeably to your resolution of January last, to examine and adjust the public (back) accounts.

It will be necessary to devise means for the regular conveyance of the mails hence to Cape Palmas. This department of Government for the want of facilities—vessels—which Government has not—has not given that satisfaction to the Republic it should have done.

I take pleasure in stating that the operations of Liberia College

continue to be progressive. The students have made very satisfactory advancements in the various branches of the studies pursued, since December last. On the 30th of last month, they competed for prizes, which will be awarded to the successful competitors during this month. Much credit is due to the President and Professors of the College for their indefatigable attention to the moral, religious, and general training of the youth committed to their charge.

A glorious prosperity and unbounded usefulness are within our grasp; but this prosperity and usefulness can be achieved only by a devotion to the various interests of the whole country, unaffected by party or sectional prejudices. The people as a whole must cultivate the most thorough patriotism; and the representatives of the people, as a class, invested with legislative power, should, in accordance with the solemn oath under which they have bound themselves, give the most careful, assiduous, and candid attention to their particular work, remembering that the interests, and well-being of the nation are, in large measure, entrusted to them.

The melancholy duty devolves upon me to communicate to you the death of Ex-President Benson, who departed this life on the 24th January last, in the vigour of life, and maturity of his powers.

Lest I should anticipate any formal expression or tribute to the intellectual ability and energy of character you may desire to accord to him, I will only add that Mr. Benson was regarded as one of the ablest men that have appeared among the negro race. But he is gone! gone from the interesting scenes of his childhood, and the labours of his maturer years, leaving the people of this Republic to lament their loss.

In conclusion, I beg to assure you of my readiness to co-operate with you in every measure that pertains to the public welfare. May a kind and merciful Providence superintend your deliberations.

D. B. WARNER.

Monrovia, December 11, 1855.

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