James A Seddon

Jan 16th 1846

Washington.

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

MEXICO.

BY WADDY THOMPSON, ESQ.,

LATE ENVOY EXTRAORDINARY AND MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY
OF THE UNITED STATES AT MEXICO.

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TO THE HON. W. C. PRESTON.

My dear Preston:

I inscribe this volume to you in testimony of a friendship contracted when we were room-mates in college, and which has continued to increase until the shadows of evening begin to fall upon our path.

Faithfully your friend,

WADDY THOMPSON.

PREFACE.

I HAVE yielded with a good deal of reluctance to the importunities of many of my friends in consenting to devote the little leisure which is left me from professional and other avocations, to writing the following pages. No thought of such a thing ever occurred to me during my residence in Mexico, or I should have supplied myself, as I had abundant means of doing, with the materials for such a work. The book, therefore, will be found to contain just what its title imports—"Recollections and Desultory Dissertations." The reader must not expect the life and freshness of a finished picture, but mere sketches and outlines—nor that minute exactness of detail on many subjects which may be desirable, although I believe that the sketches will be found to be generally accurate; I can say in the words of an affidavit to an answer in chancery, "that the facts stated as of my own knowledge are true, and those stated on the information of others I believe to be true." I am not sure, however, that a description of the customs, scenes, and peculiarities of a country is not generally the better for being written a year or two after the writer has left it. The want of exactness in minute particulars is compensated by the absence of a sometimes wearisome tediousness of detail, and often of circumstances of interest only to the writer. And it is perhaps also true that the general remembrance—a sort of skeleton map which is left on the mind of the writer will give to the reader a more accurate *coup d'œil* of the country and all its peculiarities, physical and social, than a more minute description. Before I went to Mexico I sought in vain for some work which would give me some idea of the society, manners, and customs of that unique, and, in a great degree, primitive people. This want has been since supplied. I could have

dilated these sketches to an almost indefinite extent, but I have endeavored to avoid tediousness and drivelling, and have therefore omited to notice many things which at first struck me as very strange. I have visited no other Catholic country; but to one educated in the unostentatious purity and simplicity of the Protestant religion, there is something very striking in the pomp and pageantry of the Catholic ritual as it exists in Mexico, and I must say something equally revolting in its disgusting mummeries and impostures, which degrade the Christian religion into an absurd, ridiculous, and venal superstition. If such things are not practised in other Catholic countries, why, then the priests of Mexico are alone responsible; but if these things are not confined to Mexico, the sooner and more generally they are exposed the better.

It is equally true of nations as of individuals, that those who are not entirely assured of a well-established and unquestioned position, are peculiarly sensitive to criticism, however kindly meant or respectfully expressed. Of no people in the world is this more true than of the Mexicans. They understand perfectly their true position in the estimation of the world, notwithstanding their characteristic vaunting and gasconade. I think that it is generally true that men are most apt to boast of qualities which they are conscious of not possessing. The Mexican character has much that is good in it, but very much also that is bad. In bearing testimony to the former, I cannot be silent as to the latter—for indiscriminate praise is in its effects censure. My fault has been much more that of extenuation than "setting down aught in malice"—the latter would be impossible, for I was treated with so much kindness by people of all classes, from the lepero in the streets up to the President, that it would be a source of deep pain to me to know that I had wantonly wounded the feelings of any one person in the broad circumference of the Republic. I assure them in all sincerity that I take a deep interest in their continued advances in the great career of civil liberty, and their ultimate success in establishing Republican institutions on a permanent basis. God grant them success, both on their own account as well as for the great cause in which they have so long struggled, and under circumstances so discouraging.

THE AUTHOR.

February 2, 1846.

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RECOLLECTIONS OF MEXICO.

CHAPTER I.

Departure from New Orleans—Peak of Orizaba—St. Juan de Ulloa—City of Vera Cruz—The Vomito—Condition of the Negro Population—Mexican system of Servitude—New Custom House—Mexican and American contrasts.

Not finding, on my arrival at New Orleans, the vessel which had been ordered there to carry me to Vera Cruz, and aware of the deep and general interest which was felt in the fate of the Texan prisoners of the Santa Fé Expedition, I determined to avail myself of the first conveyance which presented itself. The revenue cutter Woodbury was politely offered me by the Collector of the port of New Orleans, which I gladly accepted. The fine sailing qualities of this admirable little vessel, and the kindness of its excellent and most skilful officers, Capt. Nones and Lieutenants Faunce and Wilson, left me no cause to regret this determination. We left New Orleans on the 2d of April, 1842, and on the 9th were in sight of the Peak of Orizaba: but, from adverse winds, and no winds at all, we did not enter the harbor of Vera Cruz until the 10th, when we anchored under the walls of the famous castle of St. Juan de Ulloa. Few sights can be more grand and imposing than the mountain of Orizaba, as seen from the

sea. The elevation of this mountain above the level of the sea is, according to Humboldt, 17,400 feet. All above the height of 15,092 feet is covered with snow—for that is the point at which, in that latitude, the region of perpetual snow begins. Clavijero, who is in general to be relied upon, says that this mountain is without any doubt the highest point of the territory of Mexico; but in this he is mistaken —subsequent more accurate observations and calculations have shown that Popocateptl, in the vicinity of the city of Mexico, has an elevation of 17,900 feet above the level of the sea. Orizaba is a volcanic mountain. In the year 1545 it emitted smoke and ashes; but since that time there has been no eruption of any sort. It is about fifty miles from the coast, and may be seen at the distance of one hundred and fifty miles at sea. The first view which I had of it was literally a glimpse, for it was difficult to distinguish the mountain from the clouds which surrounded it. I can conceive of nothing which conveys more of the sublime and beautiful than this lofty mountain, "with its diadem of snow," seen from on board a ship of war; a union of all the grandeur and sublimity of a lofty mountain with the vastness and power of the ocean, and the symmetry and beauty of one of the noblest structures of man.

The little island of St. Juan de Ulloa, which is entirely covered with the fortress, is some five or six hundred yards from the mole at Vera Cruz, between which points all the commercial shipping anchors. It can scarcely be called a harbor, but an open road, like most of the others on the Gulf of Mexico. It frequently occurs that violent north winds (called "los nortes," or northers) drive the vessels on shore, and seriously injure the mole itself. Vessels of war of other nations anchor about three miles below, near the island of Sacrificios. A very narrow channel affords the

only passage for vessels of war, which must of necessity pass immediately under the guns of the fort. The fortress of St. Juan de Ulloa has always been looked upon as one of the strongest in the world. With a proper armament and competent engineers, I should regard it as almost impregnable, if indeed that term can now be with truth applied to any place after the recent inventions and improvements in this department of military science. When it was blown up in 1839, by the French, the armament was in a most wretched condition, and as to scientific engineers and artillerists, there were none. Even then it would not have been so much of a holiday affair as it was, had it not been for the accidental explosion of the magazine. Any future assailant must not expect so easy a victory if it is tolerably defended. I was very much surprised, however, to learn that, in the beginning of the year 1843, when an attack was anticipated from the English, General Santa Anna ordered the fortress to be dismantled, and the guns removed to Vera Cruz.

But Vera Cruz is much more effectually protected than by all her fortifications, by the northers and vomito (the yellow fever). The former have been the terror of all seamen since the discovery of the country. The latter prevails on all the Atlantic coast of Mexico during the whole year, and with the greatest malignancy for two-thirds of the year; and it so happens, that the few months of comparative exemption from the ravages of the yellow fever are precisely those when the northers prevail with the most destructive violence.

I can see no advantage which could be gained by getting possession of Vera Cruz which would be at all commensurate with the loss of life, from disease alone, in retaining it. It is not the only port which Mexico possesses;

and if it were, there is no country in the world which would be so little injured by cutting off all its foreign commerce, for there is no single want of civilized man which Mexico is not capable of furnishing. The town, it is true, might be destroyed, and heavy losses and much individual suffering be caused, but these are amongst the painful and deplorable consequences, not the legitimate objects of honorable war.

The present city of Vera Cruz is not the same which was built by Cortes, and which was the first European settlement ever made upon this continent, that is to say, in the year 1519. The villa rica de la Vera Cruz, the rich town of the true cross, which was settled by Cortes, is distant about six miles from the present city. Vera Cruz is rather a pretty town, with broad and reasonably clean streets. It would no doubt be as healthy as any other place in the same latitude and climate, if it were not for some large swamps in the rear of the city. The vomito is by no means the only, nor do I think it the most fatal of the diseases which prevail there. The bills of mortality in some years exhibit a great number of deaths from some other diseases, whilst in other years much the greatest number die of vomito. This difference is owing, I think, in a great degree, to the greater or less number of soldiers sent down there in the most sickly months—strangers alone being subject to the disease. There is no instance of a person born in Vera Cruz having been attacked by this disease, although carried away in early infancy, and not returning until fully grown. I have heard statements made upon this subject *much stranger even than this.* It is not regarded there as by any means the most dangerous type of fever. Eminent physicians have even told me that of all the forms of fever, they regarded it as the most

manageable and least dangerous, if medical aid is called for in due time. According to the estimates of those most entitled to confidence, less than five per cent. of those attacked die. This estimate does not include the patients in the hospitals, for the reason that the general terror of being sent to the hospital is so great, that many are deterred from applying for relief until their cases are beyond the reach of remedies. Some facts came under my observation which went very far to shake my confidence—never very great—in medical theories. The universal treatment of yellow fever, by the Vera Cruz physicians, is very simple, and certainly not very unpleasant;—it is nothing more than cold applications to the stomach, and lime juice and sweet oil given internally; and this practice is so generally successful, as to give the result which I have stated—five per cent. of deaths. They say there that calomel is certainly fatal; but hear the other, the calomel side of the question. The prisoners of the Santa Fé expedition were released on the 16th of June, and arrived at Vera Cruz in August, where they remained more than a month; forty-five of them were attacked by the yellow fever, and in its most malignant form, as may be well supposed, from their irregular habits and the total destitution of all the comforts of a sick bed. They were attended by a young physician who belonged to the expedition, and whose practice was to give large doses of calomel—not more than one died. I am not certain that a single one died of the disease.

There are a good many negroes in Vera Cruz; more, probably, than in any other portion of Mexico. I did not see half-a-dozen negroes in the city of Mexico in a residence there of two years, and very few mulattoes. It is a very great mistake to suppose that they enjoy anything like a social equality, even with the Indian population; and, al-

though there are no political distinctions, the aristocracy of color is quite as great in Mexico as it is in this country; and the pure Castillian is quite as proud that he is a man without "a cross," as was old Leather-stocking, even if that cross should have been with the Indian race however remote. The negro, in Mexico, as everywhere else, is looked upon as belonging to a class a little lower than the lowest—the same lazy, filthy, and vicious creatures that they inevitably become where they are not held in bondage. Bondage or barbarism seems to be their destiny—a destiny from which the Ethiopian race has furnished no exception in any country for a period of time long enough to constitute an epoch. The only idea of the free negro of liberty in Mexico, or elsewhere, is exemption from labor, and the privilege to be idle, vicious, and dishonest; as to the mere sentiments of liberty, and the elevating consciousness of equality, they are incapable of the former; and, for the latter, no such equality ever did or ever will exist. There is a line which cannot be passed by any degree of talent, virtue, or accomplishment. The greater the degree of these, which, in rare individual instances, may exist, and the nearer their possessors may approach this impassable barrier, they are only the more miserable. This may be called prejudice, but it is a prejudice which exists wherever the Caucasian race is found; and nowhere is it stronger than in Mexico. The negro is regarded and treated there as belonging to a degraded caste equally as in the United States; much more so than in South Carolina; in quite as great a degree as in Boston or Philadelphia.

Whilst upon this subject, it may not be inappropriate to allude to the system of servitude which prevails in Mexico—a system immeasurably worse for the slave, in every aspect, than the institution of slavery in the United

States. The owners of the estates (haciendas) receive laborers into their service. These laborers are ignorant, destitute, half-naked Indians; certain wages are agreed upon, which the employer pays in food, raiment, and such articles as are absolutely necessary; an account is kept of all these things, and neither the laborer nor his family can ever leave the estate until all arrearages are paid. These of course, he has no means of paying but by the proceeds of his labor, which, being barely sufficient for his subsistence, he never can get free; and he is not only a slave for life, but his children after him, unless the employer chooses to release him from his service, which he often finds it convenient to do when the laborer becomes old or diseased. Whatever may be the theoretical protection from corporal punishment which the law affords him, the Mexican slave is, practically, no better off in this respect than is the African slave in this country. All the laborers in Mexico are Indians; all the large proprietors Spaniards, or of mixed blood. I say all; there may be a few exceptions, but they are very few of either. So of the army; the higher officers are all white men, or of mixed blood, the soldiers all Indians.

The cathedral in Vera Cruz is a very decent Gothic building, with the same profusion of paintings and statuary which is to be found in all Mexican churches: making up in quantity what is wanting in quality. There may be seen there a wax figure of the Saviour laid in the tomb, of the life size, and singularly beautiful. There are three representations of the crucifixion, as large as life, and of different shades of color, each retaining all the features and lineaments to which we are accustomed in the portraits of Christ, somewhat strangely combined with the peculiarities of the physiognomy of two of the three races which con-

stitute the inhabitants of Vera Cruz—a pious fraud, no doubt intended to flatter each of those races for the good of their souls.

A new and very handsome custom house has just been completed on the mole at Vera Cruz. The material of which it is built is brought from Quincy, in Massachusetts, although there is stone equally good within ten miles of Vera Cruz,—a fact strikingly illustrative of the characters of the people of the two countries. Such comparisons, or rather contrasts, are, indeed, constantly presented to the American* travelling in Mexico.

Mexico was colonized just one hundred years before Massachusetts. Her first settlers were the noblest spirits of Spain in her Augustan age, the epoch of Cervantes, Cortes, Pizarro, Columbus, Gonzalvo de Cordova, Cardinal Ximenes, and the great and good Isabella. Massachusetts was settled by the poor pilgrims of Plymouth, who carried with them nothing but their own hardy virtues, and indomitable energy. Mexico, with a rich soil, and a climate adapted to the production of everything which grows out of the earth, and possessing every metal used by man—Massachusetts, with a sterile soil and ungenial climate, and no single article for exportation but ice and rock—How have these blessings, profusely given by Providence, been improved on the one hand, and obstacles overcome on the other? What is now the respective condition of the two countries? In productive industry, wide-spread diffusion of knowledge, public institutions of every kind, general happiness, and continually increasing prosperity; in letters, arts,

* Whenever I use the term American, I mean a citizen of the United States: as when we say Bonaparte, we mean Napoleon; and it is so understood everywhere.

morals, religion ; in everything which makes a people great, there is not in the world, and there never was in the world, such a commonwealth as Massachusetts. "There she is! look at her!"—and Mexico.

CHAPTER II.

Line of Stages between Vera Cruz and Mexico—Noble Disinterestedness of an American Stage Driver—Vera Cruz to Jalapa—Miscellaneous Hints—Property of Santa Anna in Jalapa—Great beauty of its situation—Perote.

There is a very good line of stages, making three trips every week between Vera Cruz and Mexico, which has entirely superseded all other modes of conveyance. Although the fare is enormously high, yet it is much cheaper than the litera, more expeditious and on every account more pleasant—except that the literas are very rarely robbed. This line was established by an American some years since, but is now owned by a rich Mexican—who is daily growing wealthier by it. The horses are all Mexican, generally small, but of great spirit and durability; seven horses are generally driven, two at the wheels, then three abreast and two more in the lead. The stages are built at Troy, New York, and the drivers are all Americans—and a most worthy set of fellows they are.

I cannot forbear to mention here a matter honorable to two of my countrymen. When the prisoners of the Texan Santa Fé expedition were liberated by General Santa Anna, in June, 1842, they were furnished with as much money as was supposed to be necessary to take them home. But being unable to procure a vessel, and consequently detained some time in Vera Cruz, they were without money or credit, and in the midst of disease and death. Mr. L. S. Hargoos, an American merchant, with a liberality and hu-

manityof which few men would have been capable in like circumstances, advanced them between ten and fifteen thousand dollars. Some time afterwards he travelled to Mexico in the stage, and rode outside with the driver Nathan Gilland, a native of New York. Gilland asked him if it was true that he had advanced so large a sum to the Texans as he had heard. Mr. Hargoos told him that it was.

The next morning about the time the stages were starting from Perote, the one returning to Jalapa, the other going to Mexico, Gilland took Mr. Hargoos aside and said to him, "Sir, I do not think it right that you should suffer all the loss by the Texans—you knew none of them and only relieved them because they were Americans; now, I think it nothing but fair that all the Americans in Mexico should share the loss, and here are two hundred dollars which I am willing to give for my part of it." "Very well, Nathan," said Mr. Hargoos, "if I should ever stand in need of two hundred dollars, I will certainly call upon you."

Foreigners ridicule the indiscriminate use which we make of the term gentleman, and its application to stage drivers and persons in similar stations in life. May it never be more abused than by its application to one capable of thus feeling and acting! It would be unjust to the other American drivers on the same line not to say that I do not doubt that every one of them would have done the same thing; I do not believe that any one of them gave less than five hundred dollars and some of them twice that sum to the Texan prisoners during their confinement in Mexico.

The stage leaves Vera Cruz at eleven o'clock at night, and arrives the next evening about three o'clock at Jalapa. For the first few miles from Vera Cruz the road passes along a sandy sea-beach, and then commences the ascent of the mountain which is continued almost without interrup-

tion to Jalapa, and thence to Perote. The distance from Vera Cruz to Jalapa, as the road runs, is about seventy miles. In a direct line, it is probably not much more than one third of that distance. The road, considering the country through which it passes, is a very good one. It was constructed by the vice-royal government. The Puente Nacional (National Bridge), formerly called Puente del Rey (the King's Bridge), is a very handsome structure of stone. It would be so regarded anywhere, but it is all the more striking from the rareness of such works in Mexico, and it is the solitary object which relieves the universal appearance of wildness and desolation on the whole route from Vera Cruz to Jalapa.

The habitations (for houses they are not) which are seen on the road side, at distances of fifteen and twenty miles from each other, resemble rather chicken coops than the abodes of human beings. They are constructed of canes about ten feet long, the large end resting on the ground, standing upright and wickered together in one or two places, and covered with the leaves of the palm tree. In the villages the houses are generally small filthy hovels of ten or twelve feet square, built of unburnt bricks, with a small enclosure, in which the chili (red pepper), and a small patch of Indian corn for tortillas is cultivated. A Mexican village very closely resembles an American Indian village—with the difference that the Mexican hovels are built of brick instead of being log cabins. The same idleness, filth, and squalid poverty are apparent.

The road for its entire extent from Vera Cruz to Jalapa, passes through the lands of General Santa Anna—which extend an immense distance on both sides of it; much of this land is of good quality, and would produce cotton and sugar most profitably. Very little of it is in cultivation, with the

trifling exception of the chili and corn patches. General Santa Anna owns immense herds of cattle, some forty or fifty thousand head, which graze upon it. He also permits others to graze their cattle upon his lands for a rent which they pay him; I believe, forty dollars per annum for a hundred head.

I do not know that I have ever seen a more beautiful spot than the city of Jalapa. When the atmosphere is clear you may see the shipping in the harbor of Vera Cruz with an ordinary spy-glass, and the white caps of the waves with the naked eye. The elevation of Jalapa above the sea is a little more than four thousand feet. It is situated on a shelf of the mountain; the summit of which at Perote, a distance in a direct line of about twenty miles, is still four thousand five hundred feet higher than Jalapa. The whole horizon, except in the direction of Vera Cruz, is bounded by mountains; amongst them Orizaba, which is distant from Jalapa about twenty-five miles. But from the remarkable clearness of the atmosphere, and the sun shining upon the snow with which it is always covered, it does not seem to be five miles. All the tropical fruits grow there, and are cultivated with great care and taste. It is not exaggeration to say that it is impossible for one who has not been on the table-lands of Mexico to conceive of a climate so elysian. There is not a day and scarcely an hour in the year when one could say, I wish it were a little warmer or a little cooler. It is never warm enough to pull off your coat, and rarely cold enough to button it.

No spot of the earth will be more desirable than this for a residence whenever it is in the possession of our race, with the government and laws which they carry with them wherever they go. The march of time is not more certain than that this will be, and probably at no distant day.

Perote, the next town on the road, is thirty-five miles

from Jalapa, and is eight thousand five hundred feet above the level of the sea. This name has been made familiar to American readers as the place of confinement of the Texan prisoners, and more recently of General Santa Anna himself. Its great elevation and the vicinity of the mountain of Orizaba make the climate uncomfortably cold at night ; the only region that I visited in Mexico which I found so. Its very large and strong military fortress is entirely useless now I should think, unless the constant succession of civil wars in that ill-fated countrv is never to end.

CHAPTER III.

Route to Puebla—Cultivation of the Soil—The Maguey—Pulque—Primitive Plough—Indifference to Agricultural Wealth—Robbers on the Road—Execution by the Garote—Gaming an Incentive to Robbery—Singular Story of a Robber.

The stage leaves Perote a little before daylight and arrives at Puebla, a distance of eighty miles, before sundown. The road passes for nearly the whole distance over a broad plain, generally uncultivated, comparatively uninhabited, without a stick of timber and rarely a drop of running water.

As you approach the city of Puebla, there are farms of considerable extent on both sides of the road. The grains chiefly cultivated are wheat, barley, and Indian corn. The wheat is used for bread by the better classes, and I have never seen better bread anywhere. The Indian corn is used chiefly, I believe entirely, by the Mexicans in making tortillas. There is not a corn-mill in Mexico. The tortilla is the bread, and the only bread of the great mass of the people. The grain is softened by soaking it in water, it is then ground on a smooth stone, with a long roller made also of stone; and after mixing the due proportion—which is always a very large proportion of chili and some lime, it is spread out in a thin layer and cooked as we do the hoe cake. Corn is not used at all as food for horses; the only grain used for that purpose is barley, and the only fodder is wheat straw—an article generally regarded by us as of little or no value for food. In this, I am satisfied that we are mistaken. I had a very large pair of American horses, and I was at first

afraid that, however well the barley and wheat straw might agree with the Mexican horses, it was not substantial enough for mine. But I found that they became so fat upon it that I was obliged to curtail their allowance.

Rye and oats are very little cultivated, if at all. I never saw a grain of either in Mexico. Much the most profitable culture in Mexico is that of the plant maguey, or Agave Americana. The small ditches, which are the only fences, are all bordered with it, and fields of large extent are also planted with it. The favorite drink of the Mexicans, pulque, is obtained from this plant. This beverage is, indeed, almost necessary to the existence of a Mexican; and if obliged to part with either, he would give up his meat rather than his pulque. The maguey grows, in good land, to an enormous size, the centre stem very often twenty-five or thirty feet high, and twelve or fifteen inches in diameter at the bottom; the branches a foot and a half wide, and four or five inches thick. When the plant is in its efflorescent state, which varies from seven to fifteen years from the planting, the centre stem is cut off at the bottom, and a bowl made, in which the juice accumulates. This is extracted with a rude suction-pipe, made of a long gourd, which the Indian laborer applies to his mouth; and when the gourd is filled, the contents are emptied into an ox-hide, dressed and made perfectly tight. There the liquor ferments, when it is drawn off into smaller vessels made of the skin of a hog, and in these it is carried to market. The *modern* inventions of hogsheads and barrels have by no means come into common use in Mexico. These skins look for all the world like a hog cleaned and dressed. I saw them every day, hanging in front of the pulque shops as a sign, and I had been some time in Mexico before I discovered that they were really not porkers. One plant

of the maguey often yields one hundred and fifty gallons. Baron Humboldt says that a single plant of the maguey will yield 452 cubic inches of liquor in twenty-four hours, and for four or five months, which would amount to nearly thrice the quantity I have stated. The pulque has very little strength—about as great as that of cider. Its smell is very much that of putrid meat, and is, of course, offensive to every one who drinks it for the first time; but most persons like it after they become accustomed to it.

A short distance from Puebla, on the route to Mexico, the road passes for several miles through a very beautiful plain, and in cultivation as far as the eye can reach on either side of the road. These farms were a great deal the best that I saw, both as to soil and cultivation; and I should think, from the appearance of the wheat which was growing, that it would have yielded twenty bushels to the acre.

The system of agriculture in Mexico is, like everything else, so wretchedly bad, that it is impossible to form any accurate opinion of the productiveness of the soil, the more especially as, on the whole route from Vera Cruz to Mexico, with the exception of a very few places, and for very short distances, there are no trees nor other natural growth but a few scrubby bushes, some palms, and the almost innumerable varieties of the cactus. The whole country is of manifestly volcanic formation, at least the upper strata. I have never been at any place where some species of lava was not presented, and in infinite varieties, some having very much the resemblance of cinders just taken from an iron furnace; others so entirely petrified as to have little of the appearance of lava, except by their porousness. The soil is generally, I think, not very rich. In many places, such as the plain of which I have been speaking, the land is very good; nowhere, however, to be com-

pared with our richest oak and hickory lands. The plough in universal use is that used two thousand years ago—neither more nor less than a wooden wedge, without a particle of iron attached to it. The hoe is a wooden staff, with an iron spike in the end. What is still more remarkable, the only animal used in ploughing is the ox; a planter, with twenty thousand horses and mules (by no means an unusual number), will only use his oxen in the plough. If you ask why this is, the only answer I can give is, that the Spaniard never changes his habits, nor anything else but his government. All the passion for change which exists in other men, with him is concentrated in political changes.

It is this peculiar characteristic which has tended more than any and every other cause to produce the present degraded condition of Spain. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Spain might justly be regarded as the most powerful of the nations of the earth; she had not only expelled the Moors, but had conquered a large portion of Africa; discovered America, and was in possession of its untold and seemingly exhaustless treasures, with a galaxy of great men, which all the rest of the world could scarcely equal. What is she now? a bye-word amongst the nations; whilst other countries have been moving on in a constant career of improvements in every way, she has folded her arms in sullen pride; and, as she has refused to advance, she has of necessity retrograded, for nations cannot long remain stationary.

I believe that it is true, and it is most remarkable if true, that there is not in the world such a thing as a railroad in any country where the Spanish language is spoken, with the exception of a short one in Cuba, which owes its existence to American enterprise. During my residence in

Mexico, constantly as the contrast between everything there and in my own country was presented to me, the feelings which were excited were not so much of pride and exultation in our own happier destiny, and superiority in everything, as the more generous one of a profound sympathy for the wretched condition of a country upon which a bountiful Providence has showered its blessings with a more profuse hand than upon any other upon the face of the earth. Whilst in our cities and towns you hear the busy hum of incessant industry, and the shrill whistle of the steam-engine, there you hear nothing but the drum and fife; whilst we have been making railroads, they have been making revolutions.

A more striking proof of the unconquerable repugnance of the Mexican to labor cannot be given, than the fact that short staple cotton sells there at from forty to forty-five cents per pound, while they have lands and climate as well adapted to its culture as ours, and these lands dirt cheap; yet they never make enough for their own small consumption. The importation of cotton is positively forbidden by law; but this law is often relaxed, by selling the privilege to mercantile companies to import a certain number of bales. If such prices could be obtained at home, our northern people would discover some plan of raising it profitably in hot-houses.

Although the whole road from the city of Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico passes through a country inexpressibly picturesque and beautiful, yet the ignorant, idle, and degraded population, the total absence of cultivation and improvement, and a general appearance of wildness and desolation, produced with me feelings partaking of gloom and melancholy. Neither in going nor returning did I see one human being, man, woman, or child, engaged at work of

any sort. The great mass of the population doze out their lives with no higher thoughts or purposes than the beasts which perish around them.

The reader will, doubtless, be surprised that I have brought him thus far without any mention of robbers. I was neither robbed nor attacked by robbers. For the first two or three stages from Vera Cruz, I took an escort with me, a corporal and four privates ; but happening at one of the places where the horses were changed to examine their arms, I found that only one of the carbines—a musket about two feet long—had a lock in good order, and that one not being loaded, I dismissed the guard and had no escort afterwards except at one or two points on the road. I had with me, however, a much more reliable defence in three young Americans who accompanied me, who, together with myself and servant, were all well armed. So, doubtless, thought the robbers, for on two or three occasions we met with them, but were not attacked. They never attack the stage when two or three of the passengers are foreigners, and are known to be armed. When the stage stops for the night, or to change horses, some one of the robbers examines the baggage, and if it promises a rich booty and the passengers have the appearance of soft customers, they are certain to be attacked before the stage has gone five miles. But if the passengers are armed and there is a prospect of resistance, the robbers wait for an easier prey ; they wisely calculate that some one of them may be killed, and each of them knows that that one may be himself—upon the same principle that one brave man armed often repels a mob.

At one of the little villages where we changed horses, I was very much struck with the dashing and picturesque appearance of a man who rode by, richly and gaudily dress-

ed, on a fine horse gaily caparisoned. I asked the stage driver if he knew him; he said that he did, and that he was the captain of a band of robbers who had plundered the stage several times since he had been driving. I asked him why he had not informed against him and had him punished; he replied, that if he had done so he certainly would have been shot by some others of the band the next time he had passed the road, and I have no doubt that he would have been, for nowhere is the maxim of "honor amongst thieves" more rigidly adhered to than amongst Mexican thieves. There have been frequent instances of robbers, who had been convicted, being offered a pardon upon the condition that they would discover the names of their confederates, which offers they have firmly rejected, and submitted to the certain alternative of the punishment of death. I expected that we should have been attacked, but we were not, the robber-captain rightly judging that the booty to be gained was not worth the danger. The Mexicans, when they travel, never arm themselves, thinking it better to take but little with them, and to surrender that quietly, than to have a scene on the route. The road, a few miles from Perote, ascends a very high mountain, where the passengers generally get out of the stage and walk. Some of my companions had left their weapons in the stage; I directed them to go back and get them. It was very well that they did; for, as we were ascending the mountain, we met three or four ill-looking rascals, who the driver said were robbers; if they had not seen the arms in our hands, we should certainly have been attacked. In less than a month after this, five or six Americans left their arms in the stage at this same place, and they were robbed of everything they had with them. The morning that we left Perote, just about daylight, I was riding outside with the driver, when I saw

a horseman approaching the stage on my right hand; he followed us for a short distance, gradually diminishing the space between us. I knew that he must be one of a robber band, and raised my double-barrelled gun so that he could see it, when he immediately rode away through the pathless plain, and I confess I was rejoiced that he did so; for, although I knew that my party were more than a match for any ordinary band of robbers, which generally consists of five or six—rarely more than ten or twelve—yet I had no ambition for the *eclat* of a successful encounter with robbers, and no wish to have blood upon my hands, even if it should be the blood of a highwayman. I have passed through few scenes more exciting; dashing along at a rapid rate over the elevated plain of Perote, on one side the white peak of Orizaba towering in the clouds above us, on the other a robber chief with his band near at hand, and our Mexican escort a little in the rear on their small, Arab-looking horses, with their not less Arab-looking riders; and never did the Bedouin of the desert hold a firmer or more graceful seat. The scene was altogether picturesque; but picturesque as it was, I had no desire that it should be repeated, and it was not.

At the period of my arrival in Mexico, the stage was robbed almost every trip; but, before I left there, General Santa Anna, with his characteristic energy, had nearly cleared the road of banditti. No efforts were spared to discover them, and he never pardoned one after conviction. I witnessed the execution of one of them by the garote, a description of which may not be uninteresting. The execution took place early in the morning, in the yard of the Acordada prison. There was a very large concourse, and amongst them many persons of great respectability; others beside myself of the diplomatic corps, carried there no

doubt, as I was, by curiosity. The convict, dressed in a white gown, was placed on a wooden bench with a high back, like a barber's chair. Through this back the ends of an iron collar passed, to which a crank was attached; the neck of the convict was placed in this collar, and a single turn of the crank caused instant death. Nothing could be more tender and affectionate than the manner of the priests who were in attendance. Kindness and benevolence, however, in all their forms, are striking traits in the Mexican character, as, I think, they are of the Catholic clergy everywhere.

No other country presents equal temptations and facilities to highwaymen to those which exist in Mexico. The road from Vera Cruz to Mexico is the great highway for travelling and commerce. Nearly all the commerce on the Atlantic side enters the port of Vera Cruz, and not five per cent. of the travellers to the city pass any other route. Much the greater portion of the road passes through an uninhabited desert. In many places the road is cut through the side of the mountain, and bordered on both sides with a dense evergeen shrubbery, furnishing as secure hiding-places as the everglades of Florida.

With the general population of the country lazy, ignorant, and, of course, vicious and dishonest, there is no lack of recruits for the road. Most frequently, however, the chief, and sometimes all of the band, live in the towns and cities. Perhaps the most powerful incentive to robbery is to be found in the insatiable and, as it would seem with the lower classes of Mexicans, constitutional passion for gaming, and the entire absence of all restraint in its indulgence. Men go to the monte tables with thousands, and leave them pennyless. They know that the stage will pass certain points at certain hours; the idea occurs to the unfortunate

gambler to try his hand at another game, where the chances of winning are greater, as are also the consequences of losing much more serious; and the thing is done almost as soon as the thought occurs.

Shortly before I left Mexico, the stage was robbed near Puebla. The robbers all had the dress and bearing of gentlemen. When the operation of rifling the pockets and trunks of the passengers was finished, one of the robbers said to them,—"Gentlemen, we would not have you to suppose that we are robbers by profession; we are gentlemen [somos caballeros], but we have been unfortunate at monte, and that has forced upon us the necessity of thus incommoding you, for which we beg that you will pardon us." Innumerable are the stories of robberies which one hears in Mexico, some of them of thrilling interest and romantic character. The case of Colonel Yanes, who was executed a few years since, is full of incidents of a character deeply dramatic. I will briefly sketch them as they were told to me.

The Swiss consul resided in the street of St. Cosme. About twelve or one o'clock in the daytime, a carriage drove up to his door, and three men got out, one in the dress of a priest; they were admitted by the porter, and the door closed, when they immediately seized and gagged him, went into the house, and robbed and murdered the consul. The only clue for the discovery of the murderers was a metal button with a small piece of blue cloth attached to it, which was found clenched in the fingers of the murdered man, and which he had torn from the coat of one of the robbers. Suspicion at last rested upon a soldier who was seen with more money than he could account for. His quarters were searched, and the coat from which the button had been torn was found there. He was convicted,

but he relied with the utmost confidence upon a pardon, as Colonel Yanes, the favorite aide-de-camp of President Santa Anna, was his accomplice. He was brought out to be executed, and had actually taken his seat on the fatal bench, with the collar placed around his neck, and the crank about to be turned, when he said—"Hold! I will disclose who are my accomplices—Colonel Yanes is the chief!" The execution was suspended, and on searching the house of Yanes, a correspondence in cipher was discovered which fully established his guilt in this and in other robberies. Yanes was the paramour of a woman in Mexico very nearly related to one whose word was law, and whose influence over her relative was known to be very great, and upon that reliance was placed for a pardon, at least; but she was not disposed to trust to that, and let her lover suffer the disgrace of conviction—she went to the judge with whom the cipher had been deposited, which furnished the evidence of the guilt of Yanes, and offered him a large bribe to give it up. He was an honest man and an upright judge; he sternly refused the bribe, and firmly resisted the menaces of this powerful woman. In a day or two he died suddenly, as all supposed, of poison. A successor was appointed of principles less stern, who accepted the bribe, and promised to destroy the paper; but when, in confession to his priest, he disclosed his corrupt conduct, the worthy man prevailed upon him, if he had not destroyed the paper, not to do so, and he did not. Yanes, in the meantime, was informed that this evidence would not be produced against him, and that the prosecution would rest entirely upon the testimony of his accomplice. Upon the trial, with the habitual air of command of an officer, and the habitual fear and submission of the common soldier, Yanes browbeat and confused his accuser

to such a degree, that he felt secure of an acquittal. At this moment the fatal paper was produced, and he was condemned and executed. His not less guilty paramour still resides in the city of Mexico.

CHAPTER IV.

Puebla the Lowell of Mexico—Obstacles to Manufactures—City of Cholula—Incredibility of Cortes' Narrative—First sight of the Valley of Mexico—Description of the Valley—Neglect of resources in the supply of the Capital—Arrieros.

Puebla is a beautiful city, with lofty houses, built in the purest style of architecture, and broad and remarkably clean streets. Its police is greatly superior to that of Mexico. The cathedral of Puebla is a magnificent edifice, which has been said, though hardly with justice, to rival the cathedral in Mexico. Peubla is the Lowell of Mexico. The principal cotton manufactories are located there, and some of them in very successful operation, which can be said of very few others. The English and other foreign merchants had, in 1842, either by the force of argument or some more potential influence, induced the President to consent to the admission, on more favorable terms, of coarse cotton goods; but the united and violent opposition of the manufacturers of Peubla defeated the arrangement. I said that very few of these establishments in Mexico were prosperous, or ever have been, although the price of an article of cotton goods is in Mexico thirty cents a yard, which sells in the United States for six cents. This results from many causes, which appear insuperable. The first of these is the high price of the raw material, which ranges from forty to fifty cents per pound, and in such articles as coarse cottons, the raw material constitutes the chief element of value. The importation of raw cotton is abso-

lutely prohibited, and the tariff policy in Mexico, as in all other countries, rests upon a combination of different interests which are benefited by it; and although neither the manufacturers nor the cotton growers constitute a numerous class in Mexico, yet their combined influence with the aid of the catch-words "National independence, home industry," &c., which have had so much power in a much more enlightened country than Mexico, are all-sufficient to sustain the prohibitory system—by which a Mexican pays for one shirt a sum that would buy him five in any other country. Another immense disadvantage of the Mexican manufacturer is, that all his machinery is imported and transported by land at enormous cost—and when any portion of it gets out of order, the difficulty and delay of repairing it, and the consequent loss, are incalculable. There are many other reasons which will always make the business of manufacturing unprofitable in Mexico. It is needless, however, to prove this by argument when the universal experience and the results of experiments made under the most favorable circumstances, all confirm that opinion. However tempting to such an investment may be the high prices of the manufactured articles, those high prices are equally tempting to smuggling in a country with ten thousand miles of frontier and sea-board. There is, perhaps, no other country where the receipts of the custom-house are so little to be relied on as to the amount of importations, and where smuggling is carried to so great an extent; even where goods are regularly imported, innumerable frauds are practised both by and upon the custom-house officers.

The great city of Cholula, of which both Cortes and Bernal Dias give such glorious descriptions, was situated about six miles from the present city of Puebla. The following

translation of the description which Cortes gives of the city of Cholula in one of his letters may not be uninteresting:—

"The great city of Cholula is situated in a plain and has twenty thousand householders in the body of the city, besides as many more in the suburbs. There is not a palm's breadth of land which is not cultivated, notwithstanding which, there is in many places much suffering for bread. The people of this city dress better than the Tlascalans. The most respectable of the citizens wear something like a Moorish cloak over their other clothes, but somewhat different, as those worn here have pockets; yet in the shape, the cloth and the fringe, there is much resemblance to those worn in Africa."

He adds that he had himself counted the towers of more than four hundred idol temples. The account of Bernal Dias, although more brief, yet represents it as a populous and most extraordinary city, and he adds, that it was famous for the manufacture of the finest crockery-ware, as in Castile were the cities of Talavera and Palencia. The city of Puebla is at this day equally celebrated for the same manufacture.

It was here that the terrible slaughter was committed which has left the deepest stain upon the otherwise glorious and wonderful character of Cortes. The Cholulans had received him with every demonstration of friendship into their city, and had afterwards concerted a plan to destroy all the Spaniards; this plot was discovered through the address and sagacity of that miracle of a woman Dona Marina, the Indian interpreter of Cortes, whose great qualities throw into the shade our own Pocahontas. Much allowance is to be made for the circumstances with which the Spanish hero was surrounded, with only about five hundred men in the midst of a powerful, warlike and hostile

people.* Not a vestige, literally none,—not a brick or a stone standing upon another remains of this immense city, except the great pyramid which still stands in gloomy and solitary grandeur in the vast plain which surrounds it,—" and there it will stand for ever." This pyramid is built of unburnt bricks; its dimensions, as given by Humboldt, are, base 1440 feet, present height 177, area on the summit 45,210 square feet. The base is greatly out of proportion with its height, if compared with the Egyptian or other similar Mexican piles. All other pyramids of which we have any account are carried up to a point, and have not the same large area upon the summit; from which, I think that it may well be supposed that it was once of much greater elevation, or that to render it such was the original design of the builders. A Catholic chapel now crowns the summit of this immense mound, the sides of which are covered with grass and small trees. As seen for miles along the road, an artificial mountain standing in the solitude of a vast plain, it is a most imposing and beautiful object.

A short distance after leaving Puebla the road for several miles passes through the beautiful cultivated plain of which I have heretofore spoken. This vast plain, all of which is in cultivation, extends on each side of the road as far as the eye can reach. The farms, in the quality of the soil, houses, fixtures and cultivation, are greatly superior to any others which I saw in Mexico. To the right lies the territory of the great Republic of Tlascala, which first offered such fierce resistance and afterwards gave such important assistance to Cortes in the conquest of Mexico. It is difficult to reconcile the accounts given by Cortes and Bernal Dias,

* At the end of this volume will be found a translation of Bernal Dias' account of this affair.

of the immense population of the city and country of Tlascala with the very small territory which they occupied. Cortes says, "The territory of Tlascala contains a population of five hundred thousand householders, not including the adjoining province of Guasincango." "This city," says he, "is so large and contains so many wonderful things, that I must leave much untold; the little which I shall relate is almost incredible, because it is a much larger and a much stronger city than Granada, the houses as good and the population much greater than was that of Granada at the period of its conquest, and much better provided with the productions of the earth, such as bread, &c. There is a market where more than thirty thousand people daily assemble and buy and sell, &c., &c. There are houses where they wash and shave the head like barbers; they have baths also. Finally, they have in all respects good order and police, and are altogether a civilized people." In one of Cortes' battles with them they brought into the field one hundred and fifty thousand warriors. It is difficult to conceive how a territory not more than fifty miles long and thirty wide, and with the state of agriculture at that time, could have sustained such an enormous population; but the difficulty is in some degree removed when we reflect that they had no horses nor other domestic animals.

With all my admiration of Cortes, and it is very great, I must confess to some little incredulity when I read such accounts as the following. Speaking of his battles with the Tlascalans, he says:—

"And thus they drew us on, while engaged in fighting, until we found ourselves [*about five hundred Spaniards*] in the midst of more than one hundred thousand warriors, who surrounded us on all sides. The battle lasted the whole day, until an hour before sunset, when they drew off. In this contest, with six pieces of ordnance, five or six hand guns, forty

archers, and thirteen horsemen that remained with me, I did them much injury, *without suffering from them any other inconvenience than the labor and fatigue of fighting and hunger.* And it truly seemed that God fought on our side, since with such a multitude of the enemy opposed to us, who discovered so great courage and skill in the use of arms, of which they had many kinds, we nevertheless came off *unhurt.*

"Afterwards, at daylight, more than one hundred and fifty thousand men, who covered the land, made an attack in so determined a manner upon our camp, that some of them forced an entrance and engaged the Spaniards at the point of the sword, when it pleased our Lord to afford us his aid to such a degree, that in four hours they no longer annoyed us in our camp, although they still continued their attacks; and thus we were engaged until evening, when the enemy at length drew off."

Again not a Spaniard killed or wounded! Nothing that we read in the most extravagant romances equals this; all the fictions of the Orlando Furioso; all the achievements of the "furious Roland," are quite feasible compared with this. These Spaniards must not only have had the charmed armor of some of Ariosto's heroes, but a "charmed life" also.

One cannot pass through this now barren and almost desolate region, and in sight of the mountain of Malinche, where once stood the capital of the renowned Republic of Tlascala, without his thoughts recurring to its former greatness and power, and its heroic and faithful people. The road passes within about twenty miles of the mountain of Pococatapetl, the highest point of the territory of Mexico; but the brightness of the atmosphere, and a tropical sun shining upon the snow with which it is always covered, make the distance seem very much shorter, not indeed more than one or two miles. In descending the mountain at about the distance of twenty-five miles, the first glimpse is caught of the city and valley of Mexico. No description can convey to the reader any adequate idea of the

effect upon one who, for the first time, beholds that magnificent propect. With what feelings must Cortes have regarded it when he first saw it from the top of the mountain between the snow-covered volcanoes of Popocateptl and Iztaccihuatl, a short distance to the left of where the road now runs! The valley was not then, as it is now, for the greater part a barren waste, but was studded all over with the homes of men, containing more than forty cities, besides towns and villages without number. Never has such a vision burst upon the eyes of mortal man since that upon which the seer of old looked down from Pisgah.

The road enters the basin of the lake some sixteen or eighteen miles from Mexico. On the right hand is the salt lake of Tezcuco, on the left the fresh water lake of Chalco. During the rainy season, the road, for the whole extent of the valley, is miry and deep. Seven miles from the city the road passes a small rocky mountain, for which the Spanish word is "Piñol," and that is the name which this bears. From that point to the city, the ground on both sides of the causeway is, at all seasons, covered with water. According to Humboldt, one-tenth of the valley is still covered with the water of the lakes Tezcuco, Chalco, Hochimieco, Zampango, and San Christoval, and a much larger portion during the rainy season. When the water subsides, large deposits of salt are left on the surface, presenting very much the appearance of a reclaimed marsh covered with frost. This is the salt which is generally used by the Mexicans. The city does not stand, as I have seen it represented, in the centre of the valley, but near the north-eastern part of it, not more than three miles from the mountains, in the direction of the village of Guadaloupe. Cortes gives to the valley a circumference of two hundred miles, meaning, no doubt, at the crest of the mountains.

Clavigero, a much later, and, on this subject, more reliable authority, fixes it at one hundred and twenty miles, at the lowest point of elevation. The latitude is 19° 26′, and longitude 276° 34′; and its elevation above the level of the sea 7,470 feet. The appearance of the valley is that of an oval basin, surrounded on all sides with mountains of every degree of elevation, and every variety of appearance, from the Piñolis (little rugged promontories) to Pococatapetl, the highest mountain in Mexico, and, I believe, the highest upon this continent, and covered with perpetual snow, ten thousand four hundred feet higher than the city itself. As you approach the city from the direction of Vera Cruz, there are a few small mountains scattered over the valley, of a conical shape, and manifestly formed by the eruptions of the neighboring volcanoes of Pococatapetl and Iztaccihuatl. In every other direction the valley is a level plain; it might almost be called a barren waste. From the small patches in cultivation, the soil appears rich and productive; I have seen very fine wheat and Indian corn growing, even with Mexican cultivation. The average production is said to be twenty bushels of wheat to the acre; yet of this rich valley, in the midst of which is a city of near two hundred thousand inhabitants, not one acre in a hundred is cultivated; it is used almost exclusively for grazing. Each proprietor has his farm enclosed by a small ditch, upon the banks of which the Agave Americana is planted, with large herds of indifferent cattle grazing upon pastures as indifferent. If this magnificent valley were occupied by a population from this country, there is not a foot of it that would not be cultivated like a garden, and nowhere would the care and industry of the farmer meet a richer reward. The city of Mexico alone would furnish a market for its products of milk, butter, cheese, fruits, vegetables, meats, corn, wheat,

&c. In short, every production of the earth which man uses could be advantageously produced there, and readily sold at high prices.

The city is, however, actually supplied with every article of this kind from a much greater distance; coals, vegetables, poultry, and other articles of no very great weight, are brought in panniers on the backs of half-naked Indians. The heavier articles, and even plank and scantling, are packed on mules or jackasses, and brought from forty to fifty miles. A carpenter lived next door to me, and seeing some jackasses loaded with planks twenty feet long, and very thick, eight of them on each of the very small animals, four on either side, I was induced to inquire what distance they had been brought, and I found that it was nearly sixty miles—the greater part of the way through the mountains. The load of each jackass could not have been worth more than three or four dollars. Wagons are never used by the Mexicans. Some of the English mining companies use them for the transportation of their machinery, and there are a few others in use by foreigners. Nearly all the European goods of every description, which are consumed in the central departments of Mexico, and a large portion of those sold in the remoter districts, are landed in Vera Cruz, and carried on mules and jackasses to the city of Mexico, and thence distributed throughout the Republic.

Travelling from Vera Cruz to Mexico, you are scarcely ever out of sight of caravans of arrieros (muleteers) going and returning. It is the mode of transportation to which they have been accustomed, and nothing can induce them to change it. A Frenchman, some few years since, established a line of wagons on the route, and died whilst I was in Mexico leaving a fortune of some four hundred thousand

dollars—all of which he had made from a very small beginning—yet no one was disposed to continue the business. They are satisfied with what they have been accustomed to in all things ; and perhaps in this particular instance they have reason to be, for these muleteers make a great deal of money. The load of each mule or jackass is four hundred pounds, for the freight of which from Vera Cruz to Mexico they receive five dollars the hundred pounds, and the mules subsist on the coarsest and scantiest food, such as straw and the short grass of those almost barren plains where they turn them out to graze at night. The arrieros are as a class, stout, hardy, and honest men ; they are never robbed, and are always faithful and honest—indeed I think all similar classes in Mexico are quite as honest as they are elsewhere. It has happened to me in more instances than one that on purchasing in a shop some small articles, I have paid what I supposed was the price but which was in fact more, the change has been returned to me ; and, in some instances, the shopkeeper would follow me into the street to give it to me.

CHAPTER V.

The City of Mexico—The Palace—Cathedral—Wealth of the Church—Masses, a Productive System of Revenue—The Streets and Buildings of Mexico—Curious Position of Stables—Inundations of the City.

The city of Mexico is said to be the finest built city on the American Continent. In some respects it certainly is so. In the principal streets the houses are all constructed according to the strictest architectural rules. The foundations of the city were laid, and the first buildings were erected by Cortes, who did everything well which he attempted,—from building a house or writing a couplet to conquering an empire. Many of the finest buildings in Mexico are still owned by his descendants. The public square is said to be unsurpassed by any in the world; it contains some twelve or fifteen acres paved with stone. The cathedral covers one entire side, the palace another; the western side is occupied by a row of very high and substantial houses, the second stories of which project into the street the width of the pavement; the lower stories are occupied by the principal retail merchants of the city. The most of these houses were built by Cortes, who, with his characteristic sagacity and an avarice which equally characterized him in the latter part of his life, selected the best portion of the city for himself.

The President's Palace, formerly the palace of the viceroys, is an immense building of three stories high, about five hundred feet in length, and three hundred and fifty wide; it stands on the site of the palace of Montezuma. It is dif-

ficult to conceive of so much stone and mortar being put together in a less tasteful and imposing shape; it has much more the appearance of a cotton factory or a penitentiary, than what it really is; the windows are small and a parapet wall runs the whole length of the building, with nothing to relieve the monotony of its appearance except some very indifferent ornamental work in the centre; there are no doors in the front either of the second or third stories—nothing but disproportionately small windows, and too many of them; the three doors, and there are only three in the lower story, are destitute of all architectural beauty or ornament. Only a very small part of this palace is appropriated to the residence of the President; all the public offices are here, including those of the heads of the different departments; ministers of war, foreign relations, finance and justice, the public treasury, &c., &c. The halls of the house of deputies and of the senate are also in the same building, and last and least, the botanic garden. After passing through all sorts of filth and dirt on the basement story you come to a dark narrow passage which conducts you to a massive door, which, when you have succeeded in opening, you enter an apartment enclosed with high walls on every side but open at the top, and certainly not exceeding eighty feet square, and this is the botanic garden of the palace of Mexico; a few shrubs and plants and the celebrated manita-tree, are all that it contains. I have rarely in my life seen a more gloomy and desolate looking place. It is much more like a prison than a garden. A decrepit, palsied old man, said to be more than a hundred years old, is the superintendent of the establishment; no one could have been selected more in keeping with the general dilapidation and dreariness of this melancholy affair.

But the cathedral, which occupies the site of the great

idol temple of Montezuma, offers a striking contrast. It is five hundred feet long by four hundred and twenty wide. It would be superfluous to add another to the many descriptions of this famous building which have already been published. Like all the other churches in Mexico, it is built in the Gothic style. The walls, of several feet thickness, are made of unhewn stone and lime. Upon entering it, one is apt to recall the wild fictions of the Arabian Nights; it seems as if the wealth of empires was collected there. The clergy in Mexico do not, for obvious reasons, desire that their wealth should be made known to its full extent; they are, therefore, not disposed to give very full information upon the subject, or to exhibit the gold and silver vessels, vases, precious stones, and other forms of wealth; quite enough is exhibited to strike the beholder with wonder. The first object that presents itself on entering the cathedral is the altar, near the centre of the building; it is made of highly-wrought and highly-polished silver, and covered with a profusion of ornaments of pure gold. On each side of this altar runs a balustrade, enclosing a space about eight feet wide and eighty or a hundred feet long. The balusters are about four feet high, and four inches thick in the largest part; the handrail from six to eight inches wide. Upon the top of this handrail, at the distance of six or eight feet apart, are human images, beautifully wrought, and about two feet high. All of these, the balustrade, handrail, and images, are made of a compound of gold, silver, and copper—more valuable than silver. I was told that an offer had been made to take this balustrade, and replace it with another of exactly the same size and workmanship of pure silver, and to give half a million of dollars besides. There is much more of the same balustrade in other parts of the church; I should think, in all of it, not less than three hundred feet.

As you walk through the building, on either side there are different apartments, all filled, from the floor to the ceiling, with paintings, statues, vases, huge candlesticks, waiters, and a thousand other articles, made of gold or silver. This, too, is only the every day display of articles of least value; the more costly are stored away in chests and closets. What must it be when all these are brought out, with the immense quantities of precious stones which the church is known to possess? And this is only one of the churches of the city of Mexico, where there are between sixty and eighty others, and some of them possessing little less wealth than the cathedral; and it must also be remembered, that all the other large cities, such as Puebla, Guadalajara, Guanajuato, Zacatecas, Durango, San Louis, Potosi, have each a proportionate number of equally gorgeous establishments. It would be the wildest and most random conjecture to attempt an estimate of the amount of the precious metals thus withdrawn from the useful purposes of the currency of the world, and wasted in these barbaric ornaments, as incompatible with good taste as they are with the humility which was the most striking feature in the character of the founder of our religion, whose chosen instruments were the lowly and humble, and who himself regarded as the highest evidence of his divine mission, the fact that "to the poor the gospel was preached." I do not doubt but there is enough of the precious metals in the different churches of Mexico to relieve sensibly the pressure upon the currency of the world, which has resulted from the diminished production of the mines, and the increased quantity which has been appropriated to purposes of luxury, and to pay the cost of much more tasteful decorations in architecture and statuary, made of mahogany and marble.

But the immense wealth which is thus collected in the

churches, is not by any means all, or even the larger portion, of the wealth of the Mexican church and clergy. They own very many of the finest houses in Mexico and other cities (the rents of which must be enormous), besides valuable real estates all over the Republic. Almost every person leaves a bequest in his will for masses for his soul, which constitute an incumbrance upon the estate, and thus nearly all the estates of the small proprietors are mortgaged to the church. The property held by the church in mortmain is estimated at fifty millions.

Mexico is, I believe, the only country where the church property remains in its untouched entirety. Some small amount has been recently realized from the sale of the estates of the banished Jesuits; but, with that exception, no President, however hard pressed (and there is no day in the year that they are not hard pressed), has ever dared to encroach upon that which is regarded consecrated property, with the exception of Gomez Farrias, who, in 1834, proposed to the legislative chambers to confiscate all the church property, and the measure would, no doubt, have been adopted, but for a revolution which overthrew the administration.

But it is impossible that such a state of things can last always. I have heard intelligent men express the opinion, that one-fourth of the property of the country is in the hands of the priesthood; and, instead of diminishing, is continually increasing. As a means of raising money, I would not give the single institution of the Catholic religion of masses and indulgences for the benefit of the souls of the dead, for the power of taxation possessed by any government. No tax-gatherer is required to collect it; its payment is enforced by all the strongest and best feelings of the human heart. All religions and superstitions have their

priesthood and their priestcraft, from the reptile worship of the Nile to our own pure and holy religion; but of all the artifices of cunning and venality to extort money from credulous weakness, there is none so potential as a mass for the benefit of souls in purgatory. Our own more rational faith teaches that when a man dies his account is closed, and his destiny for good or evil is fixed for ever, and that he is to be judged by the deeds done in the body; but another creed inculcates that that destiny may be modified or changed by prayers at once posthumous, vicarious, and venal. It would seem to be in direct contradiction to the Saviour, in the comparison of the camel passing through the eye of a needle. Nothing is easier than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven; he purchases that entrance with money. He who can pay for most masses, shortens in proportion the period of his probation of torment in purgatory. Who is it that will not pay his last farthing to relieve the soul of a departed friend from those torments? I do not know how the fee for these masses is exacted, but I do know that it is regularly paid; and that, without the fee, the mass would be regarded of no value or efficacy. We read in the history of the conquest of Mexico that Cortes paid large sums for masses for the soul of Sandoval, when he died, and provided large sums in his will for masses for his own soul. I remember that my washerwoman once asked me to lend her two dollars. I asked her what she wanted with it. She told me that there was a particular mass to be said on that day, which relieved the souls in purgatory from ten thousand years of torment, and that she wished to secure the benefit of it for her mother. I asked her if she was fool enough to believe it. She answered, "Why, yes, sir; is it not true?" and with a countenance of as much surprise as if I had denied that the sun was shining.

On a day of religious festival (the anniversary of Saint Francisco), I have seen, stuck up on the door of the church of San Francisco, one of the largest and most magnificent in Mexico, a small advertisement, of which the following was the substance :—

"His Holiness the Pope (and certain bishops which were named) have granted thirty-two thousand three hundred years, ten days and six hours of indulgence* for this mass."

I do not remember exactly the number of years, days and hours, but I positively assert that it specified the number of each, and I believe that I have stated them correctly. The manifest object of this minute particularity is to secure the more effectual belief in the imposture. By thus giving to it the air of a business transaction, a sort of contract between the devotee and the Almighty, by his authorized agent and vicegerent on earth, the Pope, is established—a contract the more binding in its character because the receipt of the consideration is acknowledged. I tremble at the apparent blasphemy of even describing such things.

Mr. Brantz Mayer, in his very interesting book, gives a literal copy of an advertisement which was stuck up in the beautiful church of Gaudaloupe on the festival of Nuestra Señora de Gaudaloupe, of which the following is a translation :—

"The faithful are reminded that the most illustrious Bishops of Puebla and Tarazora have granted an indulgence of eighty days for every quarter of an hour which the said images are exposed, and five hundred days for each Ave Maria which is recited before either of them. Lastly, the most excellent Fr. Jose Miria de Jesus Belaumzaron, for himself, and for the most illustrious the present Bishops of Puebla, Michoacan,

* An indulgence is defined: A remission of the punishment due for sins; a plenary indulgence, is a remission of the whole punishment; a particular indulgence, a remission of a part only.

Jolisci, and Durango, has granted an indulgence of two hundred days for every word of the appointed prayers to our most exalted lady, for every step taken in her house, for every reverence performed, and for every word of the mass which may be uttered by the priest or the hearers; as many more days of indulgence are granted for every quarter of an hour in which these images are exposed, in the balconies, windows, or doors, for public adoration."

A distinguished friend of mine, who resided some time in Mexico, has still in his possession some curious specimens of these indulgences, varying, in the number of years of remission of punishment, according to the prices paid: among others, one which grants to a single prayer all the good effects of a hundred. These effects are all graduated according to a regular scale, so many years of remission for each prayer or mass, and so many years of punishment for each sin. I remember, on one occasion, giving some order to a servant on Sunday, when he told me that he must go to mass; that he would suffer seven thousand years in purgatory for every mass which he neglected on Sunday, or any day of religious festival. They have a saint for all occasions. There is no human want that there is not some particular saint to whose particular "line of business" the matter belongs; and by proper devotions to him his powerful aid is secured. They have a saint for horses, and on the festival of that saint, which is his birth-day, horses are carried to the priest, and for a small sum receive the blessing; a perfect security against "all the ills which *horse* flesh is heir to." In what is such a superstition superior to the idol-worship which it superseded? That was at least sincere, both on the part of priest and devotee. Is this?

How enormous must be the revenues derived from this source, amongst a people who believe implicitly in the

efficacy of these masses to purchase, both for the living and the dead, a remission of the punishment and torments of purgatory, and for every crime, too, which man can commit! In the language of Tetzel, the great vender of indulgences in the time of Luther, who asserted that these indulgences which he sold were efficacious for the remission of every sin, even "si quis virginem matrem vitiasset (If one should violate the Virgin Mother, let him pay—let him pay largely, and it shall be forgiven him). Even repentance," said he, "is not necessary, and more than all this, indulgences save not the living alone, they also save the dead. Ye priests, ye nobles, ye tradesmen, ye wives, ye maidens, ye young men, hearken to your departed parents and friends who cry to you from the bottomless abyss, we are enduring horrible torments, a small alms would deliver us; you can give it, but you will not! The very moment," continued Tetzel, "that the money clinks against the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory, and flies to heaven. Bring your money—bring money—bring money!" The people to whom Tetzel sold his indulgences, from which he received so immense an amount, were far less ignorant than the mass of the Mexican population. At no period, and in no country, have the efficacy of these indulgences been more universally believed and relied upon, than they are in Mexico at this day. The reader may imagine, if he can, the treasures with which the coffers of the church are filled from this source alone.

The streets of Mexico are uncommonly wide, much more so than is necessary, considering that they are not obstructed, as in our cities, by drays and wagons. The side-walks are uncommonly narrow. The streets are all paved with round stones; the side-walks with very rough flat ones. The

houses on the principal streets are all two and three stories high. The elevation of the rooms, from the floor to the ceiling, eighteen and twenty feet, gives to a house of two stories a greater height than we are accustomed to see in houses of three. The roofs are all terraced, and have parapet walls of three or four feet high, answering all the purposes of a breast-work, a use too commonly made of them in the frequent revolutions to which that unfortunate country seems to be for ever destined. The walls are built of rough stones of all shapes and sizes, and large quantities of lime mortar. They are very thick, in ordinary buildings from two to three feet, and in the larger edifices of much greater massiveness. The foundations of most of the largest buildings are made with piles. Even these foundations are very insecure, and it is surprising that they are not more so, with such an immense weight of stone upon such an unsteady foundation. The streets cross each other at right angles, dividing the whole city into squares. Each one of these squares is called a street, and has a separate name; a serious inconvenience to a stranger in the city. Instead of designating the street in its whole extent, by one name, and numbering the houses, each side of every square has a different name, and names which sound, to Protestant ears, very much like a violation of the Third Article of the Decalogue; such as the street of Jesus, and the street of the Holy Ghost. A gentleman will tell you that he lives in the Holy Ghost, or that he lives in Jesus; certainly not always true, if taken in the sense in which our preachers use these words. In most of these streets there is a church, which gives name to the street in which it stands. In many instances these churches and convents (that of San Augustine for example) covers the whole square, not with separate buildings, but one single edifice, with the usual patio or court, an open space

in the centre. There is not, I believe, a house in the city without this court, of greater or less dimensions, in proportion to the size of the building. There is only one door on the lower floor, and none at all on the outside of the upper story. This door is very strongly built, and high enough for a coach to pass through; it opens into the patio through which you pass to the steps leading to the upper stories, where alone everybody lives except the lowest classes. In all the establishments of the better classes, the basement story is only occupied by the servants and as lumber-rooms, and what struck me as very strange, as stables. I do not suppose that there is such a separate building in the city as a stable. In visiting Count Certuna, for example, whose whole establishment is altogether princely, and others of equal splendor and luxury, I found this court on the ground floor used as a stable, and passed through rows of horses and carriages to make my way to the most spacious halls, filled with fine paintings of the great masters, and furnished throughout in a style altogether gorgeous. In some of the larger private buildings thirty and forty different families reside; each one having rented one or two rooms: all entering at the only outside door into the court, which is the common property of all—and from which each one has an entrance to his own rooms on the ground floor or the gallery above, which runs all around the building. I do not think that the area covered by the city of Mexico can exceed two miles in length, and a mile and a half in width; a very small space to be occupied by a population of nearly two hundred thousand. But, it is not at all surprising when you see thirty or forty families, enough to make a respectable village, all huddled away in one house, and consider what a large number sleep in the open air in

that delightful climate. How pure must be the atmosphere when the city of Mexico is so remarkably healthy, notwithstanding such a crowded and filthy mode of living, and with a tropical sun shining upon the moist surface of the whole valley! One would think the latter sufficient of itself to produce the most fatal malaria.

It is a little curious that whilst the buildings and population of Mexico are thus crowded into so small a space, and the rents are three times as high as in the city of New York, yet all around the city there is a vacant ground, and as dry as the city itself, which may be had almost for the taking. I was riding out with a friend one evening when he showed me a square containing between five or six acres, just in the rear of the Plaza de Toros on the outskirts of the city, and not more than half or three quarters of a mile from the public square, which he had just purchased for four hundred dollars. Why such lots are not improved and the city extended, I cannot easily comprehend.

At the period of the Conquest, the water of the lakes flowed through all the streets of the city, which were crossed in canoes or on bridges. Inundations of the city to the height of several feet were of frequent occurrence. These inundations were caused by the overflowing of the lakes San Christoval and Zumpango, and the rush of their waters into the bed of the lake of Tezcuco, on an island in which the city of Mexico was, and near the border of which it is now situated. The great square of the city of Mexico is four feet one inch elevated above the mean level of the waters of the lake Tezcuco; San Christoval is twelve feet eight inches, and Zumpango thirty-one feet eleven inches higher than Tezcuco; and Xachimilco and Chalco three feet eleven inches higher than the city of

Mexico. Previous to the arrival of the Spaniards, and for nearly a century afterwards, the only protection against these inundations consisted in dykes between the lakes San Christoval and Tezcuco. In the year 1607, the viceroy determined to construct some more effectual barrier. The plan which was adopted was to drain the lake of Zumpango by a tunnel and canal, which would give a different outlet to its waters. A tunnel was accordingly cut through the mountain, 21,654 feet long; and a canal 28,216 feet long, through which the water flowed into the river Tula, which empties into the river Panuco. This herculean work was finished by fifteen thousand Indians in eleven months; but, from the giving way of the roof of the tunnel, another plan was resolved on, which was, to remove the top of the tunnel, and make it an open canal. This last work was commenced in 1629, and not completed until 1789. The whole length of this canal is 67,537 feet; its greatest depth 197 feet, and its greatest breadth 361 feet. There are other stupendous works connected with this canal: the stone dykes between Zumpango and San Christoval, between the latter and Tezcuco, and the great canal which empties the waters of the Guatillan into the river Tula. The last great inundation of the city occurred in the year 1629, when the water rose to the height of three feet, and remained so for five years. It was at length carried off by the effects of a succession of earthquakes, but the security is still by no means regarded as perfect. There are clouds called *culebras* (snakes), from some supposed resemblance in form, which portend heavy rains, and always cause a general apprehension of an inundation. At such times, all the bells in the city are rung, for the purpose of propitiating the God of the storm, and averting the calamity. The

result has always been favorable—whether from the ringing of the bells and *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, I shall not decide. In this connection, I will mention another equally curious superstition ;—I do not know that it is peculiar to Mexico. At a late hour every evening all the bells of the city are tolled, and the belief is, that whilst the bells are ringing, the souls in purgatory are released from torment.

CHAPTER VI.

Early visit to Mr. Kendall, of the Santa Fé Expedition—Death of the wife of Santa Anna—Presentation to Santa Anna—Historical Sketch—Career of Santa Anna—Victoria.

I ARRIVED in Mexico on Saturday evening, and early on Sunday morning I went to see Mr. Kendall and the Texan prisoners. Although I had not then any personal acquaintance with Mr. Kendall, I felt a deep interest in his sufferings, an interest which was heightened by the terms in which many of my friends in New Orleans had spoken of him to me. I was very sure that no man who did not possess fine qualities could have inspired the feelings which were entertained towards him. I felt it to be my duty that my first visit should be to him. I did not believe that by doing so I should in any way give offence to the Mexican Government, or diminish my ability to procure his release. I have always found the highest policy to consist in pursuing the promptings of just and honorable sentiments. I am satisfied that it was so in this case. Desirous as I was to see Mr. Kendall, my visit to him thus promptly was dictated quite as much by policy as by feeling; I knew that all the movements of the new American minister were closely observed, and that it was generally supposed that I had gone to Mexico specially on account of the American citizens confined there, and with very strong instructions. I have reason to know that my visit to Kendall was immediately reported at the palace, and the effect was what I

anticipated and desired. He was confined in the hospital of San Lazaro—a most appropriate name. I have visited many hospitals in the United States, but never have I seen such an exhibition of loathsome disease. The brother of Mary and Martha would have been a healthy-looking and well-dressed gentleman, compared with any of the inmates of this hospital bearing his name. Mr. Kendall was quietly seated amongst the lepers, looking over some American newspapers which I had sent him the evening before. I took my seat by him, and became so much interested in conversation with him, that I did not think, for some time, of the danger to which I was exposed in breathing the very air of pestilence.

I went from San Lazaro to the convent of St. Jago, where the other prisoners of the Santa Fé expedition were confined. This convent is situated on the great square of Tlatilalco, and I stood on the spot where the Spaniards at last succeeded in capturing "the hero boy" Guatemozin, who made so glorious and heroic a defence of his country against the Spanish invaders. I know of no siege recorded in history which equals that of Mexico, in the indomitable spirit and stern fortitude which were displayed, and the extent of the sufferings endured by the besieged, nor a scene more touching, nor language more truly heroic than that of Guatemozin when brought a prisoner into the presence of Cortes; "I have done all which it was my duty to do in the defence of my country and people until I am reduced to my present condition, now do with me as you please."

At the period of my arrival in Mexico, the wife of General Santa Anna, who is since dead, was dangerously ill. The night after my arrival, the last ceremonies of the Romish Church, and the last consolations of that religion

were administered to her with a magnificent procession of all the dignitaries of the church, headed by the archbishop, and numbering altogether more than twenty thousand persons; amongst whom (I place them in the order which is that of precedence there) were all the highest officers of the church, the army and the government. She was spoken of by every one, even the bitterest enemies of her husband, as a lady of rare virtue, and with the benevolence which belongs to the character of woman everywhere, she had strenuously exerted all her influence with her husband for the release of the Texan prisoners. Under ordinary circumstances, I should have felt restrained by his domestic afflictions from urging the President for my presentation, but the vessel which carried me to Vera Cruz would be detained to take home my predecessor, Mr. Ellis, and the yellow fever was raging there with an almost unprecedented fatality. I felt great solicitude for the health of the officers and crew—and was anxious that their exposure to the pestilence should be as brief as possible; I felt, too, that every moment which Kendall and other Americans were unjustly confined in Mexico, was a reproach upon their government, and although I did not for a moment suppose that I could do anything in their behalf—which, under the circumstances, would not have been done by the worthy and most faithful minister who then represented our country in Mexico—yet, I was apprised that the Mexican cabinet looked with much apprehension upon what they supposed the instructions of the new minister, and the high ground which they anticipated that he would take. I was anxious to avail myself of this state of feeling, and to enter upon my duties at the earliest moment. Notwithstanding the dangerous illness of the Senora Santa Anna, an audience was granted me. I had intended to have delivered my address

upon my presentation in English, but a circumstance occurring which it is not necessary to mention, determined me to risk my Spanish. I, of course, had to allude to the President's wife, and in doing so I spoke of her, as "son estimable esposa," your estimable wife; I sen no English copy of my address to the United States, but it was published in Spanish papers of the city, some of which came to this country, and the bungling translator for some of our papers translated the words "son estimable esposa," your estimable spouse. Now, although the word "spouse" is pure old English, perhaps it is a little too old, and I was a good deal ridiculed for using it, but the ridicule was due to the translator, not to me; I did not choose to correct the mistake, thinking of the story of Alcibiades and his dog—and I think I have cause of congratulation considering that I was only two years in Mexico, and that during that time so many important and difficult questions were thrown upon the mission, if this was the only cause which I gave for censure or ridicule. When I was presented, General Santa Anna and all his cabinet ministers were dressed in rich military uniforms. I was struck with the contrast to the simple unostentatious habits of our own Chief Magistrate; but it was illustrative of the difference between the two governments,—the principal points of resemblance between which are in name. If Mexico ever has been a Republic, it has been a military Republic.

General Santa Anna has for the last quarter of a century played so conspicuous a part in the drama of Mexican politics and civil war, as to have attracted the attention of the world, and to have made his name in some degree historic. No history of his country for that period can be written without the constant mention of his name; indeed, I regard him, as more than any other man, the author and finisher of

the last and successful struggle of Mexico for Independence and a Republican form of government. The first abortive effort which was commenced in 1809, by Hidalgo and Allende, had not for its object the establishment of a Republic, or of free institutions; if, indeed, free institutions can exist under any other form of government. That movement had its origin in feelings of enthusiastic and devoted loyalty, which up to that time was the ruling passion in the heart of every Spaniard. The abdication of the legitimate monarch of Spain, the atrocious perfidy by which it was obtained, and the transference of the sovereignty of the country to the Emperor of France, which country had for centuries been regarded as the hereditary enemy of Spain, were the true causes of the insurrection in Mexico in 1809. It was begun under the auspices of the Spanish viceroy, and had for its object, real as well as professed, the saving of that portion of his dominions for Ferdinand VII. Although that movement was commenced by Hidalgo, a priest, and afterwards prosecuted by Morelos, another priest, yet the great body of the clergy were opposed to it, and it of course failed. I say of course failed, for a residence in a Catholic country has thoroughly satisfied me that no political movement can succeed where that religion prevails, to which the priesthood is opposed. And it will constitute a new epoch in history whenever that priesthood is not opposed to any great movement in favor of human liberty. I know no sympathy which is stronger than that of the Catholic clergy with despotic power—nothing so fatal to these pretensions as the unshackling of the human mind by the spirit and the influence of free institutions. The struggle was continued with ever-changing leaders, and various results, until 1821, when General Iturbide, a Spanish officer in command of a large army intended to crush the small remnant of the pa-

triot forces, and to extinguish the smouldering embers of the revolution, went over to the cause of the patriots, and at once changed the whole face of affairs. In truth, the defection of Iturbide was in itself the revolution. The independence of the country was achieved without a single battle, or a blow being struck by Spain. But the real patriots of the country very soon discovered that it was not the liberty of their country which they had achieved, but only a change of masters. In one year and three months after the adhesion of Iturbide to the cause of independence, he usurped the supreme power, and was declared emperor by the army and a wild mob of ragged leperos. Although there was a large number of republicans, and as enthusiastic and devoted patriots as any country ever produced, the revolution was really no more a movement in favor of liberty than was that of 1809. Its real authors were the priests, and therefore it succeeded. Certain decrees of the Spanish Cortes, confiscating the estates, and otherwise encroaching upon the prerogatives of the church, caused great excitement amongst the Mexican clergy, and they put the ball of revolution in motion, never dreaming that it would roll as far as it did. The basis of the movement was what was called the plan of Iguala, or the Three Guarantees, which was drawn up by Iturbide, and submitted by him to the chiefs of the army on the 24th February, 1821, who were then assembled at Iguala. This paper sets forth the three great objects of the revolution:

1. The preservation of the holy Catholic religion.
2. The intimate union of Creoles and Europeans.
3. The separate independence of Mexico.

The form of the government was to be a limited monarchy, and the crown to be offered to Ferdinand VII. As I before remarked, the defection of Iturbide consummated

the revolution without the shedding of one drop of blood. He who had proven himself false to his king, was not less so to his country and the cause of liberty which he had espoused. He very soon evinced by many arrogant and arbitrary acts what were his real purposes and objects, and on the night of the 18th of May, 1822, he was proclaimed emperor. Having thus, by double treachery to his sovereign and country, acquired the supreme power, his first acts showed that he was ambitious to add to the epithets to which he had entitled himself, that of tyrant also.

No similar body, under like circumstances, has evinced more virtue, firmness, and constancy, than did the Congress of Mexico in resisting the usurpation and tyranny of Iturbide, surrounded as he was by his pretorian band. But all resistance seemed in vain, and the power of the usurper seemed to be firmly established, the republican party utterly crushed, and the spirit of liberty itself extinguished, except in a few heroic bosoms. Bravo had retired to the south, and Victoria was hiding himself in the caverns of the mountains, whilst Iturbide was revelling in imperial splendor, surrounded by an army of fifteen thousand men.

It is not my purpose to write either a history of the Mexican revolution or a biography of General Santa Anna, but this sketch is necessary to enable the reader justly to appreciate the public career and character of the latter.

Such, then, was the state of things in Mexico in January, 1823, when General Santa Anna, then only a Colonel, and in command of a single regiment in Vera Cruz, raised the banner once more of republican liberty, and forthwith commenced his march towards Mexico, unsupported but by his own regiment. Iturbide despatched General Echavari to meet him, and, as he did not doubt, to crush the rebellion at a single blow. After various skirmishes between Jalapa

and Vera Cruz, where they met, Santa Anna managed to bring over General Echavari to the republican cause, with all his force. This at once gave him the command of a respectable army, and well-grounded hopes of success. Santa Anna was then only thirty years of age, and had no extended reputation in the country. He was only known as an intrepid and successful Colonel of a regiment, and he wisely considered that the great interests involved, required that the chief command should be given to some of the old heroes of the Revolution, whose name would be a watch-word for every Mexican patriot; and he at once determined to call Victoria from his hiding-place in the mountains, to give him the chief command, and to serve in a subordinate station himself. The revolution was soon consummated; Iturbide dethroned and banished, and a federal Republic ultimately established. Santa Anna, from the first, declared in favor of this form of government, and zealously aided in its establishment. There was another and a powerful party in favor of a central government. He faithfully sustained the government thus established, until it was fairly tried and generally thought, by the most enlightened men, that the experiment had failed. Any opinion, which my short residence in the country would enable me to form upon this question, would not be entitled to much weight. But I confess that I shall be most agreeably surprised if a Federal Republic shall succeed in Mexico, for many years to come; nor do I see much reason for such a form of government there. The representative principle is the great security of the rights of the citizen, and it is an all-sufficient security where the interests of the constituent and the representative are identical. I do not mean the interest of the individual constituent and representative, but of the constituent and representative bodies. This identity

does not exist in a country embracing various and antagonist interests, and those interests concentrated in different and distinct sections, as in our own country. In such a case the interest of a majority of the representatives may be directly opposed to the interests of the minority, who may thus not only be injured by acts of legislation not only not injurious, but positively beneficial to the majority of the representative body, and their immediate constituency. The only security in such a state of things is the federal principle; and the great difficulty exists in the combination of the federal and representative principles. How far it is practicable to combine these principles, is the great problem in political philosophy which we have undertaken to solve. It is probable that we may be able to do it successfully. But it is scarcely possible for Mexico; nor is there much necessity for such an experiment there. In Mexico there is no such variety of productions and employments, and therefore no such conflict of antagonist interests as to prevent one government from operating equally beneficially on all the different sections of the country; and therefore the less necessity for the partition of the powers of government between one whose objects are purely internal, and another exclusively external and national. It is much to be feared, too, from the great extent of the Territory, and the sparseness and ignorance of the population, that a federal government would, in Mexico, really be no government at all.

That such a form of government is the best for us, is no good reason that it is the best also for Mexico, but rather the contrary. Governments should be cautiously adapted to all the general peculiarities of a people; and every people has these peculiarities. The government which would suit one would, therefore, not be apt to suit another people

equally well. I ride my own gentle and well-trained horse with a light bridle, but it is no reason why my neighbor, whose horse is wild and untractable, should do the same.

This short retrospect of Mexican history will, I think, satisfy the reader that Santa Anna is entitled to all the credit of beginning the last and successful movement for the establishment of a Republican government in Mexico, and under circumstances in which very few men would have had the boldness to have attempted it. When the whole country was trembling under the absolute and despotic power of Iturbide, and the spirit of resistance and the hopes of liberty almost extinguished, unsupported but by his single regiment, he unfurled his banner, and instantly commenced the march towards the capital, where Iturbide was surrounded by 15,000 veteran troops. Where shall we find an instance of greater disinterestedness than that of this young and ambitious officer, surrendering to another the chief command, and the glory of the achievement, if it should be successful, at the same time that his own danger and responsibility were in no degree diminished in the event of a failure?

A passing word as to Gen. Victoria. The annals of the Mexican war of independence furnish many incidents and characters worthy of a place in the pages of Plutarch—luminous traces in the general darkness of faction and anarchy—none of these characters command more of my respect than that of Gaudaloupe Victoria. Through all the changing phases of that struggle he was always constant and faithful. He never despaired of the ultimate success of the cause of republican liberty—faltered in its support, or compromised with its enemies. When the Spanish power had entirely suppressed the insurrection of Hidalgo and Morelos, Victoria fled to the mountains, where

he remained in concealment until deceived by the professions of Iturbide, and believing that the liberty of his country was his real as it was his professed object, he rallied under his standard. When the real designs of Iturbide were developed, and he usurped the supreme power, we do not find Victoria mingling with the throng of his minions, filling the high station which it was in his power to have done, and revelling in the splendors of the Imperial Court. We find him again the occupant of his cavern in the mountains, enduring privations and sufferings which give to his life more the air of a romance than of real history. Santa Anna again unfurls the banner of freedom, and Victoria again emerges from his hiding-place, and rallies under it. Wherever and whenever that banner was raised, without calculating the chances of success or the consequences of failure, this brave and virtuous man, with a romantic devotion to the liberty of his country, never hesitated in his course. The crowning glory of his life is, that he died so poor that he was buried at the public expense, and this after filling the highest offices of his country, where the facilities of peculation are infinite, and the practice of it much too common.*

I shall pass over in this notice of the public career of Santa Anna, all the events of the war, in which he bore a part, between the dethronement of Iturbide and the landing of the Spanish General Barradas at Tampico in the summer of 1829, in command of 4000 Spanish veterans, with the confident hope of crushing for ever the revolutionary movement in Mexico. Active hostilities on the part of the mother country had been so long suspended that Mexico did not anticipate such an invasion, and was wholly unpre-

* A Sketch of Victoria taken from Ward's Mexico will be found in the Appendix.

pared to meet it. Santa Anna, who was in Vera Cruz, was no sooner informed of the landing of the Spaniards than he immediately collected a force of seven hundred men and crossed the gulf in open boats, a distance of sixty miles, and landed at Zuspan, avoiding the Spanish vessels of war which were cruising in the gulf. From Zuspan he transported his troops in canoes and perogues across the Lake Jomiahua, and disembarked within three leagues of Tampico, which town the Spanish army then occupied. Santa Anna was informed when he landed that General Barradas had gone on an expedition into the interior with three thousand men, leaving one thousand to garrison the fortress. He resolved on an immediate attack, which he made at daylight the next morning, 1st of August, 1829, and after a vigorous assault of four hours, the garrison capitulated. The capitulation had scarcely been concluded, when General Barradas made his appearance at the head of three thousand men: Santa Anna was cut off from the possibility of a retreat by the river, which flowed between the fort where he then was, and his quarters. In this critical emergency, nothing could have saved him but one of those stratagems which have so often decided the fate of armies and of empires, and of which the mind of Santa Anna has so often shown itself in an eminent degree fruitful. He managed to impress General Barradas with the conviction that he was at the head of an overwhelming force, which the Spanish General the more readily believed as he could not have imagined that without such a force such an enterprise would have been attempted. He, therefore, instead of an immediate attack, proposed to enter into negotiations, and that whilst those negotiations were going on, Santa Anna should return to his own quarters. To this Santa Anna consented, and with drums beating and

banners waving, crossed the river and returned in safety to his quarters. The mortification of Barradas was extreme when he ascertained that this miserable force of little more than six hundred men had caused him such terror, and had escaped from his clutches; such, however, were the effects produced upon the Spanish General by the extraordinary gallantry of the act that he did not attack the Mexican General even after he was informed of the extreme weakness of his force. Santa Anna was reinforced in a few days by some four or five hundred men. He attacked the Spaniards every night and generally successfully; and on the 11th of September, a vigorous attack was made upon the fort on the Bar, which was garrisoned by a regiment of Spanish troops, when the Spanish General entered into a capitulation, surrendering all his arms and munitions of war. The remnant of the Spanish invading army, amounting to about twenty-two hundred, sailed shortly afterwards for Havana. Santa Anna's force at no time exceeded fifteen hundred men. This was the last attempt which was made by Spain to recover her power in Mexico.

Taking all the circumstances attending the campaign of Tampico, the desperate courage which could alone have suggested it, and the consummate prudence and caution in its execution, one is forcibly reminded of General Jackson's attack of the British, on the 23d of December. I do not mean, by comparing them, to say that they are in any degree equal; nor do I know any campaign in history which can be advantageously compared with that of General Jackson in Louisiana. It was a miracle—I think the greatest miracle in military history, taking into consideration the vast superiority of the enemy, who that enemy was, and the general result in killed and wounded on both sides.

The revolution which Santa Anna set on foot and con-

summated in the fall of 1841, which resulted in the overthrow and banishment of President Bustamente, exhibited the same boldness in the undertaking, and tact and sagacity in its execution. Bustamente was in Mexico, in command of eight thousand troops: he himself an old commander of much experience and reputation, and undoubted courage; Santa Anna was on his estate at Mango de Clavo, near Vera Cruz. He pronounced (that is the Mexican word for commencing a revolution) against Bustamente, and forthwith took up the line of march towards Mexico, at the head of four or five hundred men; not soldiers, but such men as he could pick up about Vera Cruz, and on his estates; and, with no other force but these raggamuffins, he had the audacity to show himself in the immediate vicinity of the city of Mexico. Bustamente did not attack him for a few days, from some cause, probably contempt for the movement; but these few days were fatal to him, and in a few days more he was forced to surrender his power and leave the country.

A provisional government was organized by the chiefs of the army assembled at Tacubaya, a village three miles from Mexico. By the seventh article of this provisional government, "as he understood it," Santa Anna was invested, in effect, with absolute power. This provisional government was to last until a new constitution was formed, and the government organized under it. This was not done until shortly before I left the country, and the only constitution which was in force during my residence there was the plan of Tacubaya; and I must say, that of the hundreds of laws which were dictated by Santa Anna during that time, I think there were very few which were not wise and necessary. And it should redound to his lasting honor, that, surrounded as he was by faction, intrigue, and

enemies, who have since overthrown him, in no single instance was any man punished for a political offence. Very few dictators, in possession of absolute power for the same length of time, and surrounded by the same circumstances, can say as much. The reader will, at least, agree that he is not the sanguinary monster which some have supposed him to be.

CHAPTER VII.

Official and Private Intercourse with Santa Anna—Santa Anna's First Interview with General Jackson—His Explanation of the Massacre of the Alamo—Decimation of the Prisoners of Mier—Anecdotes of Gratitude and Humanity in Santa Anna—Character of Santa Anna.

After this sketch, and it is a very brief one, of some of the leading events in the public career of General Santa Anna, if the reader is sufficiently interested I propose to devote another chapter to an account of some incidents of my official and private intercourse with him, and of many other matters which will perhaps be more illustrative of his character and feelings as a man.

General Santa Anna, is now fifty-four years of age. He is about five feet ten inches high, with a finely proportioned person. His complexion is of an olive cast, but not indicating any mixture of blood, although I believe he is not of pure Castilian lineage. I do not know that I have ever seen a more striking and finely formed head and face; there is scarcely a feature or a point in either that Spurzheim or Lavater would desire to change. I remember to have heard a distinguished American statesman remark when Santa Anna was in Washington, that he had rarely seen a face indicative in a higher degree of talent, firmness, and benevolence; and when I say as I do, that I think that his face is not an inaccurate index to the volume of his character, I beg the reader not to start and lay down the book before he has read a few incidents which I propose to narrate, and for most of which I vouch, as they have passed

under my own observation. I am well aware that I should better satisfy the great mass of readers both in this country and in Mexico, by speaking in a different vein of this now fallen man; but it would be both unjust and ungrateful in me to do so. I trust that I may without impropriety say, that the history of my mission will show that I never stooped to flatter General Santa Anna when at the height of his power, neither can I find it in my heart to traduce him now. He has at different times, at my instance, released from imprisonment more than two hundred Texan prisoners, and has so often afforded me that highest of all happiness, that of making others happy, that I should be gratified to know that in his present fallen state anything which I may write of him has given him one moment's gratification. I shall not, however, be betrayed by this desire into writing one line which my own deliberate judgment does not approve.

Mr. Poinsett had an interview with General Santa Anna in 1822. He saw and judged of him free from the false glare of high position and extended reputation. Santa Anna was then only a colonel of a regiment. Mr. Poinsett was particularly struck with his high bearing and polished manners. Mme. Calderon de la Barca bears the same testimony to the grace, ease, naturalness of his manners, and the thoughtfulness and repose which are so striking in his countenance; and on this subject there is no authority so conclusive as that of a well-bred and accomplished lady. I have seen no countenance except that of General Jackson, whose range of expression was so great, where there was so great a difference between the quiet expression of the face when at rest and in a gentle mood, and its terrible ferocity when highly excited. The mildness of the lamb and the fierceness of the enraged tiger would not much too strongly express this

difference. Such is his character, by nature kind and affectionate, but subject to bursts of passion fiery and fierce. He is a Spaniard ; a race which, with its many noble traits of character, is everywhere regarded as more than ordinarily sanguinary ; perhaps not more so by nature than others. They have been from the earliest period engaged in civil wars, and civil wars are everywhere sanguinary to a proverb. That between the Goths and the Moors lasted for eight hundred years, and there were elements in that protracted contest calculated to increase even the characteristic ferocity of civil wars. It was a religious war, and more even than that, it was a war of races. The civil war between the mother country and Mexico, in which Santa Anna was bred, was not the best possible school for lessons of clemency. No quarter was generally the law of that war, at least on the part of Spain, and almost the only law which Spain respected. It would be strange indeed, if one brought up in such a school should not have committed some acts not strictly conformable to our notions. Yet, I believe, that with the exception of his conduct in Texas, and the order for decimating the Texan prisoners of Mier, his character is free from stain in this particular ; whilst his military career has been illustrated by many acts of noble clemency which would do honor to any commander.

He attempts to justify himself for the shooting of the men of Colonel Fanning's command, and for the massacre at the storming of the Alamo. As I had never before heard any justification whatever of either of these acts, I will state what passed between Santa Anna and myself on this subject in the last interview which I had with him. He was describing to me his first interview with General Jackson, at Washington city, and it was so characteristic of that

gallant old man, that I will endeavor to give it in Santa Anna's own words. When he arrived in Washington, Mr. Forsyth, then Secretary of State, called upon him and requested that he would go with him and see General Jackson, who was confined to his chamber, where he received Santa Anna. After the usual salutations and ceremonies, and some short conversation on other subjects, General Jackson said to him: "Well, General Santa Anna, tell me why you abandoned the republican party in Mexico and went over to the priests?" Santa Anna said to me, laughing heartily, that although he felt that it was rather an awkward affair for the President of one republic to be thus catechized by the President of another, yet that he answered the question to the entire satisfaction of General Jackson, by stating all the circumstances of his position, and the condition of the country. When he had finished his defence on this point, General Jackson said to him: "Well, Sir, now tell me another thing; why did you massacre the Texans of Fanning's command, and at the Alamo?" Santa Anna said that he then justified himself for those acts, or his participation in them, and that General Jackson expressed himself satisfied on that point also. I give you the statement of Santa Anna. I of course do not vouch for it. When he told me this I could not forbear saying to him, "And did General Jackson say that you had satisfied him on that point?" "Yes, he did, Sir," was his reply. I then told him that I had never heard one word in justification of those acts, and begged that he would repeat to me the substance of what he had said to General Jackson. He said that he would do so with great pleasure; that he was not surprised that I had never heard but one side of that matter, or of anything else connected with the war between Texas and Mexico; that he knew, when he travelled through the United States,

shortly after those scenes in Texas, that his name was never mentioned but as a murderer and assassin; "Yes, Sir," said he, "and it is most honorable to your countrymen, that nowhere did I receive the slightest indignity, but was treated everywhere with the most marked respect—even in the steamboats, where, as you know, there is not much ceremony or respect for persons."

As to the affair at the Alamo, he said that it was not expected of any commander to restrain his troops when a place was taken by storm, and still less so when the disproportion of the forces of the besiegers and besieged was so great as to make a successful defence altogether hopeless—that in such a case, to protract the defence was a wanton sacrifice of the lives of the assailants—and unjustifiable; that scenes equally sanguinary were enacted by the troops under the command of the Duke of Wellington at the storming of San Sebastian, Ciudad Riego, and Badajos. The Texans who defended the Alamo did not exceed one hundred and fifty men, without artillery, against between four and five thousand Mexicans, with artillery. He added that he had seven different times summoned them to surrender, and offered them quarter, which he would have taken the risk and responsibility of granting, but that they refused to accept it, and fought to the last and died gloriously.

As to the shooting of Fanning's men, he said that the campaign of Texas had been commenced under a special act of the Mexican Congress, providing that no prisoners should be made; and added, that if the law was a sanguinary one, that the odium should attach to the legislature which passed it, and not to the military commander who obeyed and executed it. I replied, that in that case, no capitulation should have been entered into, but that, after it had been done, it was obligatory, and I saw no justification whatever for violating

it. He replied: "That is true; and when the officer to whom Colonel Fanning had surrendered informed me of it, and of the capitulation, I wrote to him, that although it was a violation of the law, yet as he had entered into the capitulation, it must be scrupulously respected." He said, that shortly after this, the officer in charge of the Texan prisoners wrote to him that he was suffering extremely from want of provisions, and that most of the Texan prisoners had secret arms, which they refused to surrender, and that there were constant indications of a revolt among them. There were only about three hundred Mexican soldiers to guard near five hundred Texans.* He also said, that when

* The massacre of Colonel Fanning's command was regarded in this country with great and general horror, as it deserved to be, but it was not without illustrious examples. The following account of the slaughter of the Turkish prisoners at Jaffa is taken from Scott's Life of Napoleon. They were executed in precisely the same manner as were the unfortunate Texans—fired upon first with musketry, and the horrible butchery finished with the sword and bayonet. Change the names, and Sir Walter Scott's description of the wholesale murder at Jaffa would be an equally exact account of the massacre at Goliad. It does not, therefore, lie in the mouth of any admirer and eulogist of Buonaparte to denounce Santa Anna, even if he is to be held wholly responsible for the act:—

"After the breach had been stormed, a large part of the garrison, estimated by Buonaparte himself at twelve hundred men, which Miot raises to betwixt two and three thousand, and others exaggerate still more, remained on the defensive, and held out in mosques and a sort of citadel to which they had retreated, till, at length, despairing of succor, they surrendered their arms, and were, in appearance, admitted to quarter. Of this body, the Egyptians were carefully separated from the Turks, Maugrabins, and Arnaouts, and while the first were restored to liberty, and sent back to their country, these last were placed under a strong guard. Provisions were distributed to them, and they were permitted to go by detachments in quest of water. According to all appearance, they were considered and treated as prisoners of war. This was on the 18th of March. On the 20th, two days afterwards, this body of prisoners were marched out of Jaffa, in the centre of a large square battalion, commanded

he received this last communication, he sent to the officer in command a copy of the law of the Mexican Congress above referred to, but ordered him expressly to commit no act of unnecessary cruelty; and if any executions were ordered, that it must be done only in cases of clear guilt and from stern necessity, and strictly according to military

by General Bon. Miot assures us that he himself mounted his horse, accompanied the melancholy column, and witnessed the event. The Turks foresaw their fate, but used neither entreaties nor complaints to avert it. They marched on, silent and composed. Some of them, of higher rank, seemed to exhort the others to submit, like servants of the Prophet, to the decree which, according to their belief, was written on their forehead. They were escorted to the sand hills to the south-east of Jaffa, divided into small bodies, and put to death by musketry. The execution lasted a considerable time, and the wounded, as in the fusillades of the Revolution, were despatched with the bayonet. Their bodies were heaped together, and formed a pyramid, which is still visible, consisting now of human bones, as originally of bloody corpses."

Nor would it very well become an Englishman to use any harsh terms of the actors in the massacre of the Texans at Goliad. The atrocities perpetrated after the battles at the river Raisin and Fort Meigs were infinitely more horrible. After a formal capitulation, in which protection was promised, the American prisoners were delivered over to the savage allies of the English, in comparison with whose cruel tortures any ordinary mode of killing was mercy, the British officers standing by and making no effort to prevent it. None but cowards are cruel. In a few months after these butcheries, the same British troops, with their leader, General Proctor, fled at the first charge like frightened wolves from the American army under General Harrison at the battle of the Thames. The battle-cry of Colonel Short, when leading the charge at Fort Sandusky, was, "Give the damned Yankees no quarter." When they were repulsed and beaten, their wounded were treated with the kindness of brothers. What a noble revenge! The murderous forays of the British troops, at Hampton and other places on the Chesapeake, would have disgraced a band of Scottish marauders of the sixteenth century. Most of these buccaneers shortly afterwards went to New Orleans; the bones of many of them are there yet. I have no disposition to perpetuate feelings of hostility against England, but acts of murderous atrocity like those to which I have alluded deserve to be held up to eternal execration.

usage. He said much more upon this point, but the above is the substance. I confess that whilst I thought his defence for the slaughter of the Alamo in some degree an exculpation, that the shooting of Fanning's command, prisoners of war under a formal capitulation, was wholly unjustifiable, and an act of unmitigated murder—a guilt from which Santa Anna is not free, as the officer committing the act was never punished for it.

The decimation of the prisoners of Mier I regard as an act of much greater atrocity than either of the others. Those prisoners were not on parole, and had a perfect right to escape if they could; nothing was more common in the Peninsular war, than for British officers to refuse to be released on their parole, preferring to take the chances of escape, and not to deprive themselves of the right of serving again during the war. When the news of the re-capture of the Mier prisoners was received in Mexico, General Bravo was acting as President *ad interim*,* and issued an

* The long military career of Bravo has been that of a brave, virtuous, and humane man. Some instances are recorded of him, of a generosity which would do honor to any commander during the war of Independence. In Ward's Mexico, we find the following anecdote of his magnanimity: "In the first of these actions Bravo defeated Don Juan Labaqui, the commandant of the regiment of Patriots of Vera Cruz, at the head of a strong detachment. The engagement lasted three days, when the village in which the Spaniards had taken refuge was taken by storm (20th August, 1812). Three hundred prisoners, taken upon this occasion, were placed by Morelos at the disposal of Bravo, who offered them to the Viceroy Vinegas, in exchange for his father Don Leonardo Bravo, who was then under sentence of death in the prison of the capital. The offer was rejected, and the sentence against Don Leonardo ordered to be carried into immediate execution. His son, in lieu of making reprisals by the massacre of his prisoners, instantly set them at liberty, "wishing" (as he said) "to put it out of his own power to avenge on them the death of his parent, lest, in the first moments of grief, the temptation should prove irresistible."

order that they should all be shot. As soon as I heard of this, I called at the office of Mr. Bocanegra, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and in the most respectful manner, expressed the hope that all the privileges of prisoners of war would be extended to the Texans, and that no act of undue severity would be committed. He was very much excited, and it was the only instance, in all my intercourse with him, that his conduct was not dignified and courteous; for he is a very polished and amiable gentleman. He said to me: They are not American citizens, and you have, therefore, no right to interpose in their behalf. I replied: They are human beings and prisoners of war, and it is the right and the duty of all nations to see that Mexico does not violate the principles and the usages of civilized war—more particularly is it the duty of the United States to maintain those laws and usages on this Continent. He replied with much warmth, that Mexico would listen to no suggestion upon the subject, from any quarter. I rose from my seat, and said: Then, Sir, shoot them as soon as you choose, but let me tell you, that if you do you will at once involve in this war a much more powerful enemy than Texas—and took my leave. An express was immediately sent, countermanding the order to shoot them all, and another order given that they should be decimated, which was executed. I afterwards received from some of the Texan prisoners, a heart-sickening account of the execution of those upon whom the lot fell. It was a cold-blooded and atrocious murder, of as gallant men as any country can boast of. A career of public service, now not a short one, has afforded me no happiness at all equal to that which I derive from reflecting upon the part which I bore in this transaction. I may have been the instrument of saving the lives of a hundred and fifty or more of those brave and patriotic, but unfortunate men.

In a military career of thirty years, these are the only instances, so far as I have ever heard, of any acts of cruelty or even severity, perpetrated by Santa Anna. In the various civil wars in which he has borne a conspicuous part, and always been successful, he has not only spared the lives and property of his vanquished enemies, but if, as was generally the case, they were banished, ample provision was made for them, which was punctually paid; a somewhat rare thing in Mexico. There was one single exception to this remark: General Mexia, who was beaten at the battle of Acajeta, at the head of an insurrectionary army, was ordered to be shot in one hour. When the order was communicated to him, he said: "General Santa Anna is very generous; if I had made him prisoner, I should not have given him fifteen minutes." They were playing at a game upon which each had staked his head, and Mexia lost.

There were some occurrences which passed under my own eye, and for the truth of which I vouch, which will better illustrate the character of General Santa Anna than any general dissertation of mine, and which will be entitled to more consideration than my own individual opinion. When Santa Anna was a prisoner in Texas he was put in chains. The proud spirit of a soldier and a Castillian could not bear this indignity, and he attempted to commit suicide by taking laudanum. He was relieved from its effects, and otherwise kindly treated by Doctor Phelps, of Texas. On the arrival of the prisoners taken at Mier, Santa Anna ascertained that there was one whose name was Phelps. He sent for him, and asked him if he was related to Doctor Phelps of Washington, Texas; when the young man replied that he was his son, Santa Anna ordered that he should be released, sent an aide-camp with him into the city, and purchased two or three suits of clothes for him, and gave him

a room in his palace. I was informed of all this, and as there was an American ship of war at Vera Cruz, about to sail to the United States, I wrote a note to Santa Anna, offering young Phelps a passage. He replied, thanking me for the offer, but declined it, saying, that he felt himself fortunate in having it in his power to return, in some degree, the kindness of Doctor Phelps to him, when he was a prisoner in Texas, and that he preferred sending his son home at his own expense; which he did, giving to him also a draft on his factor in Vera Cruz, for whatever sum of money he might *ask for*.

Amongst the prisoners taken at Mier, was a very shrewd and handsome boy, of about fifteen years of age, John Hill. On their arrival in Mexico, this boy was not closely confined as the other prisoners were, and he came to see me, and requested that I would ask the President to release him. I told him to go himself, and I was sure that Santa Anna would be more apt to do it on his own account than on mine.

A few days afterwards the little fellow returned to my house very handsomely dressed, and told me that he had been liberated, and gave me the following account of what had passed between himself and the President. When he requested Santa Anna to release him, the latter replied, "Why if I do you will come back and fight me again. The Santa Fé prisoners were released on their parole of honor not to bear arms again against Mexico, and it was not three months before half of them had invaded the country again; and they tell me that you killed several of my Mexicans at Mier." The little fellow replied, that he did not know how many he had killed, but that he had fired fifteen or twenty times during the battle. "Very well," said Santa Anna, "I will release you, and what is more, I will adopt you as my son, and educate and provide for you as such."

The boy was sent to the house of General Tornel, the Minister of War, and was really, as I know, adopted on a full footing of equality in his family, and treated with the most parental kindness. He was afterwards placed at the principal college in Mexico, where he was pursuing his education when I left the country. General Santa Anna not only paid the charges of his education, but in all respects cared for him as for a son. Some time after his own discharge, little Hill came to me, to request that I would obtain the release of his father; I told him no, that he was a more successful negotiator than I was, to go and try his own hand again. He did so, and obtained at once the release of his father, and afterwards of a brother, who was also among the prisoners.

I might protract this narrative almost indefinitely by describing similar instances, but I will mention only one more, and it impressed me more favorably than any other, because it was a triumph of the better and more generous feelings and impulses of our nature, over the previously formed determination of calculating policy. At the period of my leaving Mexico, there were thirty-six Texans confined at the castle of Perote, who had been made prisoners by General Wool at San Antonio, in Texas, in the fall of 1842. I was very anxious that they should be released, and with that view, stopped some days at Jalapa, as Santa Anna was daily expected at his beautiful country seat, the Encero, five miles distant from that city. When I visited him, he turned the conversation upon the purpose of the government of the United States to annex Texas, and spoke freely but respectfully on the subject. It was not positively known then in Mexico that such a negotiation was on foot; at least I did not know it, perhaps Santa Anna did. I was not disposed to enter into any discussion

with him, but his remarks at length became so strong that I could not be silent, and I replied to him with a good deal of warmth, and at the close of a short and pretty animated discussion, I said to him—"What do you intend to do with the Texan prisoners? do you intend to keep them here always?" "What else can I do, Sir? if I release them on their parole, they will not respect it, and I gain nothing by making them prisoners, for they immediately take up arms again, as did the prisoners of the Santa Fé Expedition, and," he added, "I was informed that you intended to ask the release of these prisoners; but I beg that you will not do it, for great as the pleasure would be to oblige you, my duty forbids it." I told him that he knew that I was not apt to abandon my purposes, and that I would ask it, and what was more, that I knew he would release them. I added that the prisoners taken at San Antonio did not know that it was the Mexican army which was approaching, but supposed it was a band of robbers which was infesting the place; the Texans had all told me so. He replied, "I know they say so, but it is not true; Gen Wall entered San Antonio, with cannon and music, and any one knows that robber bands have neither." "Well," said I, "if they did, they were defending their homes and hearths, and a gallant defence they made, and a generous enemy should respect them the more." "That," said he, "is putting the matter on a different footing. Are there any particular individuals of the San Antonio prisoners whom you wish released?" "Yes, there are." "Then," said he, "send me a list of their names to-morrow." "No, I will give them to you now," I replied. "Very well," said he, "who are they?" I answered, "all of them. How can I distinguish between men, all strangers to me, personally, whose cases are in all respects the same, and why should you?"

"Well," said he, with manifest emotion, "I have been advised not to do it, and had made up my mind that I would not, but you shall take them all with you."

In giving this narrative, I have been forced to speak more frequently of myself than I could wish; I could have simply stated that those men were liberated at my request, but that would most inadequately have conveyed the idea of the true character of the transaction,—the yielding of all considerations of policy, to the promptings of feelings of generosity and kindness. I do not believe, that of the hundreds of Americans in Mexico, there was one who would not promptly have done all that I did. No unworthy motive can be imputed to Santa Anna for this act; my functions as Minister had ceased, and I was then only a private American citizen, who had no power to serve him in any way, and whose name, even, he would in all probability never again hear mentioned.

During the war in Yucatan the government of Mexico was in a great exigency for thirty or forty thousand dollars. Mr. Hargoos, an American merchant of Vera Cruz, advanced the money upon the personal pledge of Santa Anna, that it should be paid at a stipulated time at the custom-house in Vera Cruz. Mr. Hargoos at the time appointed presented his order and was refused payment. A few days afterwards, Santa Anna was in Vera Cruz, and Mr. H. called to see him, and informed him that he had presented the order which he had given him and that payment had been refused, the officer of the custom-house saying that he did so by the orders of Santa Anna—which Mr. Hargoos said he did not believe. Santa Anna said that he had given such orders, that there was no money in the treasury to pay the army, not enough even to purchase their rations, and that he must wait until it was more con-

venient to pay him. Hargoos, very much excited, said, "You know, sir, that I would not have advanced this money, except upon the pledge of your word of honor, which I have not known violated before; I have been your friend, sir, in more trials than one, and have respected and confided in you, henceforth these feelings are changed; good evening, sir." Santa Anna called him back and said to the military friends by whom he was surrounded, "Gentlemen, have you heard the language which this man has used to me?" Hargoos said, "I come from a country where no station protects a man from being told the truth. Is not what I have said true?" "Yes, sir," said Santa Anna, "it is—and I respect you for your firmness in saying what you have; I have flatterers enough about me, but few who will tell me the truth." The money was paid immediately.

The reader will judge whether a man can be wholly bad who is capable of such acts. I am by no means an indiscriminate admirer of General Santa Anna; he is not what Coleridge calls a "model man." He has many great faults and some vices both as a public and private man; but many high and generous qualities also: most of his vices are attributable to his country and education. He commenced life ardently in favor of a Federal Republic, but very soon became convinced that his country was not prepared for such a government—an opinion, in which I think most intelligent foreigners who have visited Mexico agree with him. I believe he is a patriot; his great vice is avarice, and he has at last fallen a victim to it. The total want of all real responsibility of all public officers, not only in Mexico, but in all Spanish countries, offers the most dangerous temptations to peculation and bribery. If I may believe the half of what I have heard, he is not free from these vices. With this exception, and it is a great and

damning one, I think that the general course of his administration was patriotic and wise. I dare to say, that both with reference to its internal concerns, and the maintenance of the public faith, as well as in conducting its foreign relations, that Mexico has never been better governed than during his last presidency, when he was literally the state, and sincerely desiring, as I do, the welfare of that country, I should be glad to see him again at the head of its government,—— an event not impossible.

CHAPTER VIII.

Public Characters of Mexico—M. Bocanegra—Triqueros—Tornel—Paredes—Valencia—Count Cortina—Bustamente—Gomez Farrias—Almonte—Cuevas, the Archbishop of Mexico.

Mr. Bocanegra, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, was a distinguished lawyer, and was also one of the judges of the Supreme Court. He left the Bench in 1841, to enter the Cabinet of General Santa Anna. Everybody in Mexico speaks of him as an eminent and virtuous judge. I presume that there are more questions and involving a greater variety of principles of international law, which are thrown upon the American legation in Mexico, than on any other of our foreign missions. I had, therefore, much to do with Mr. Bocanegra; and besides this, I negotiated with him two important conventions, and I can say in all sincerity, that whilst I found him always faithful to his own country, and tenacious of her interests, that he was uniformly courteous and fair; and never sought any of those small advantages which many erroneously suppose to be the duty of a diplomatist. As a companion, he was eminently joyous and convivial. I entertained for Mr. Bocanegra great respect, and a very sincere regard. That Mexico may find a man who will conduct the business of the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs with more ability and success, is, I think, little to be expected.

Mr. Triqueros, the Minister of Finance, whilst I was in Mexico, is not more, I should think, than forty years of age. He was a successful merchant in Vera Cruz, and I thought

managed the finances of the country with signal ability and success. He found the business of his department in a state of utter confusion, with a large public debt, and a civil list, which it must be impossible for the country to pay for any long period. It seemed a miracle that funds could be found to sustain the government even for a year. It had been the habit of the government to issue a government paper, receivable at the custom-houses, in the payment of duties. The market value of this paper has for a long time never been higher than from thirty to forty cents in the dollar. At this rate the government issued it and redeemed it at par. Besides this enormous loss, it was impossible for the head of the Department to make any calculation upon the accruing and available revenues, as it could not be anticipated how much of the import duties would be paid in this depreciated government paper. Mr. Triqueros at once set to work to remedy the evil, which he did in the only way by which it was practicable—by funding the whole debt, and setting apart a portion of the revenue from duties on imports for the payment of the interest on the debt thus funded. Most of the foreign creditors were dissatisfied with this arrangement, although I foresaw and told them that it would be advantageous to them, as they afterwards found that it was. Their earnest remonstrances on this and other matters connected with the public debt, induced the Diplomatic Representatives of other countries to hold a meeting for the purpose of remonstrating against it. I was invited to the meeting, but I did not attend it, nor any other similar meeting of the Diplomatic corps. It looked rather too much like an alliance, and I found no disinclination on the part of Mexico to accede to all proper demands which I made upon her, and, therefore, did not need any aid in protecting my countrymen, and maintain-

ing their rights. I went farther than this. I told my colleagues of the Diplomatic corps, that they had no right to interfere in the matter, that it was only in cases of torts and not of contract that a nation was bound, or had the right to interfere for the protection of citizens or subjects. That if the citizen or subject of one nation made a contract with the government of another, his only reliance for the performance of that contract was upon the good faith of the government contracted with. No principle of the law of nations is better settled than this, nor upon more substantial reasons.

At this particular juncture, it would not be very graceful, at least, for our government to demand of other governments the punctual performance of contracts made with our citizens.

General Tornel, the Secretary of War, is a remarkably fine looking, and in every respect, a striking man. He would be regarded as an accomplished man in any country. He is a very elegant, sometimes an able writer.* If what I sometimes heard in Mexico is true, there is another and less favorable side of the picture. But of all the cities in the world, Mexico is the most gossipping, and I should be restrained from saying anything disparaging of General Tornel, from the consideration that there was a pretty violent collision between us a few days after my arrival in Mexico, and that our relations were for some time of a very unfriendly character, and never very cordial.

General Paredes, the author of the revolution, which terminated in the overthrow and banishment of Santa Anna,

* He well deserves the title of "The patron of Learning in Mexico," and has entitled himself to the lasting gratitude of his country, for his continued and successful efforts, for the establishment of schools and colleges, and the diffusion of learning among his countrymen.

is a man of talents and acquirements in his profession, and all speak of him as a gentleman and a patriot. But some how or other, no one looks to him for the Presidency. I do not know how this happens, unless it is that he is opposed to the Federal party, and Santa Anna was at the head of the other party. And besides that, Paredes, Valencia, and Tornel, were the three most prominent men in Mexico. But there was a tripartite jealousy and hatred between them which always secured the combination of two of them against the other.

Paredes, Valencia, and Canalizo, were the three Generals in the most important commands under Bustamente. Paredes and Valencia went over to Santa Anna, and thereby consummated the overthrow of Bustamente's government. Canalizo adhered with a noble fidelity to the fortunes of his chief, and after Bustamente was vanquished, Canalizo held out for a long time at the head of only three hundred men, and by his remarkable gallantry obtained the sobriquet of the "Lion of Mexico." As soon as Santa Anna was firmly seated in power, he showered favors of all sorts upon Canalizo; amongst other things, appointing him President ad interim during his own absence from Mexico. He very soon quarrelled with Valencia and Paredes. The former gave up his command, and the latter was arrested and imprisoned in the little town of Tula, thirty miles from Mexico. Paredes resides in the city of Guadalajara, where he is greatly beloved and respected. The department of Guadalajara is in every respect the finest in Mexico, with more intelligence, and of course, virtue, better farms, a better population, and sounder political principles than any other. I knew, when I left Mexico, that Paredes was only waiting for the proper moment to strike, and that his friends in Guadalajara were perfectly organized, held regularly secret

meetings, and were also only waiting for the moment of advantageous opportunity. This, unfortunately for himself, Santa Anna gave them. Reposing in the false security which his flatterers had made him believe that he enjoyed, and no longer apprehending any danger from Paredes, he appointed him governor of Sonora, a department upon the Pacific ocean. On his way to his department, Paredes passed through Guadalajara, and his arrival there was the signal for the pronunciamento which resulted in the defeat and overthrow of Santa Anna.

General Valencia is an officer who has risen from the ranks to his present high position, a fact conclusive of talents and courage, whilst it is at the same time an excuse for his want of education and manners, which very strongly mark the parvenu.

General, Count Cortina, as he is commonly called in Mexico, is a very different sort of person. He is a fine specimen of the Castilian gentleman; brave, accomplished, cordial, generous, and punctiliously honorable. He has filled many high offices in Mexico, and during my residence there commanded a fine regiment of grenadiers.

He possesses a very large fortune, and lives in a style of princely magnificence. I doubt if there is on this continent so fine a collection of paintings and statuary as is to be seen at his house. There are five or six large rooms, the walls of which are covered from the floor to the ceiling with paintings of the old masters: many of them by Murillo.

I did not know General Bustamente personally. He was banished shortly before I went to Mexico, and did not return until after the overthrow of Santa Anna. It was a somewhat singular fact, that three Mexican Presidents were in a state of banishment at the same time—Gomez Farrias,

Bustamente, and Santa Anna. When Santa Anna arrived in Cuba, he met Bustamente there, returning to Mexico. If he had gone to New Orleans he would have met Gomez Farrias. Although Bustamente had been banished but a few months before my arrival in Mexico, I can with truth say that I never once heard his name mentioned but with respect. This is not a little singular, when it is remembered that his successful rival was then in power, and there was no form of adulation which he did not hourly receive. Bustamente's career has been by no means a brief one, beginning, as it did, in the war of independence. Yet that whole career is unstained even with an imputation of a cruel, a dishonorable, or an unpatriotic act. All concede him patriotism, valor, and disinterestedness. At the period of his overthrow, fifty thousand dollars of his salary was found to be due him, which he had not drawn, leaving it to be appropriated to the always pressing exigencies of the government; and he left the country so poor as to be forced to sell everything he possessed, even down to his walking cane, which was offered to me by the person who had purchased it. Among the Romans it was regarded as the highest honor of one who had filled high stations, that he died so poor as to be buried at the public expense. It is much more honorable to one who has been President of Mexico, where the total absence of all responsibility affords so many temptations to peculation.

All the contracts made by the government for clothing, arms and munitions for the army, loans, and in short for everything, are made privately by the executive, and with none of the restraints and securities which exist among us. And this fact alone is sufficient to show the wide door which is opened to every species of fraud and peculation. I remember that in one of my accounts as minister, one

item of three dollars was not fully vouched, and it was disallowed. Instead of being offended, I was really gratified, and the more proud of my government, where so exact a system of responsibility existed, and which was so rigidly enforced.

All that I have said of General Bustamente may with equal truth be said of Gomez Farrias, with the addition that he is a man of a very high order of talents and extensive attainments.

For high endowments, and spotless purity of character, public and private, Gomez Farrias would be a rare man in any country. The only fault ever imputed to him is that he is too much of an "exaltado;" that he carries his ideas of liberty to an extent impracticable in Mexico; or in other words, that he is too great an admirer of our institutions, and endeavors to assimilate those of Mexico too much to them.

General Almonte is known to many in this country, and wherever he is known, it would be superfluous to say that he is in all respects an elegant and accomplished gentleman, virtuous, brave, and honorable. I have heard some of the Texans who were at the battle of San Jacinto say that the Mexicans who were saved on that occasion, owed their lives to General Almonte. The desperate onslaught of the Texians with their wild yells, glittering bowie knives, and clubbed rifles, was a thing to which the Mexicans were so entirely unacustomed, that they were thrown into a state of perfect panic. They would not fight, and the thought never occurred to them to lay down their arms, or otherwise make a formal surrender. The Texans, of course, continued the slaughter; for after the charge of the Texans, it ceased to be a battle. In this state of things, Almonte said to the officers who stood around him—"Gen-

tlemen, you see that our men will not fight, they are panic-stricken; let us get them together and surrender them," which he did, and thus put a stop to the massacre. He it was who saved the life of the woman, the only survivor of the sanguinary scene at the Alamo, and afterwards furnished her with a horse, and the means of going to her friends. He was Secretary of War in the administration of Bustamente, and a very recent experience has shown how large a fortune may be realized by the incumbent of that office. Almonte, however, left the office with a large portion of his salary due him, and was so poor that he supported himself until he was appointed Minister to the United States, by delivering popular lectures.

I trust that I commit no indelicacy in stating a fact universally known in Mexico; if I thought that it would in any manner be so regarded by General Almonte, I would on no account do it. He is the son of General Morelos, the name most honored and enshrined in the heart of every Mexican, as it well deserves to be. Hidalgo and Morelos were the principal authors of the revolutionary movement of 1809; they were both Priests. Morelos in command of the patriot army had a brilliant career of victories, but was at last vanquished by a superior force, and made prisoner and shot. His life was as pure as that of Aristides, and he died with all the dignity of Socrates. Like Socrates, too, the means of escape were offered him, which he rejected. I have seen his portrait in the house of General Almonte, and elsewhere; he is always represented in the uniform of a Mexican General, but with a priest's mitre, instead of the military chapeau on his head.

Mr. Cuevas, the present Minister of Foreign Affairs, I knew slightly; he had much reputation in Mexico for talents, and is a very worthy and most agreeable gentle-

man, with the admirable manners of all Mexican or Spanish gentlemen, a point in which they are unequalled. The striking characteristics of their manners are naturalness, cordiality, frankness; as an American lady in Mexico well expressed it, a "refined frankness," which never transcends the bounds of strict propriety, and a perfect repose equally removed from timidity and too great boldness—what the French so well express by their words "beau tranquille," a quality of which I think they possess very little themselves.

Of General Herrera, I only know that he is an old General of good character and talents, but so far as I am acquainted remarkable for nothing.

Señor Echavari, who is, or very lately was Minister of Finance, is, I believe, only distinguished for great wealth, and a great hatred of all foreigners.

In this sketch of conspicuous men in Mexico, perhaps a good Catholic would complain that I had not noticed any of the dignitaries of the church. I met on two or three occasions at large dinner parties at the President's, the Archbishop of Cesarea. I never could ascertain exactly the office and functions of the latter, but took it for granted that they were very high from the fact that he was the only person of that character except the Archbishop of Mexico, who was an invited guest on these formal and state occasions. The foreign ministers were seated nearest "the salt," and those high functionaries of the church were, *propter dignitatem*, seated in the same neighborhood; we were, therefore, very much thrown together. The Archbishop of Mexico is a stout, healthy looking and very agreeable old gentleman, the personification of a burly and jolly priest. He is a man of learning and well spoken of by every one. I took a great fancy to the Archbishop

of Cesarea and I believe that it was in some degree mutual. I might almost say with the romantic German girl who met another over a stove, at an inn on the road-side, that at the first sight we swore "eternal friendship to each other." When I was about to leave the room he came to me and asked where I lived, and said that he intended to call upon me. I begged that he would not do so, but allow me to make the first visit (for that is the custom in Mexico), the stranger making the first call upon the resident. But the next day, the good old man called at my house, and as I happened not to be at home he would not leave his card, but told my servant that he would call again as he did not wish me to regard his visit as one of mere form. This, of course, brought about a great intimacy between us, and I often visited him at his country house on the borders of the city. I shall never forget the pleasant hours which I have spent there, nor cease to remember the venerable and good old man with gratitude and affection. He is a man of learning, especially on all matters connected with the church and its history. He spoke with great satisfaction of the Puseyite movement, and said that sooner or later we must all come to it, that the Catholic was the only true church, and that the Puseyites were good enough Catholics for him. When I called to take leave of him he was more than ever kind to me; when he parted with me he said to a canonigo who was present, we must constantly offer up prayers for this man, he is too good a man to be a Protestant. I did not say the converse to him, whatever I may have thought, but I trust that I am neither so bigoted nor prejudiced as to believe that there is any Christian Church, whatever may be its forms of faith or worship, which does not number amongst its members men as good and virtuous as those whose religious opinions conform to my own.

CHAPTER IX.

Public Release of Texian Prisoners—General spirit of Kindness to them—Their Work in the Public Streets—Anecdotes of Virtue and Disinterestedness on the part of the Prisoners.

On the 16th of June, 1842, the Texian prisoners of the Santa Fé expedition were released by General Santa Anna, that being his birth-day or rather the anniversary of his saint (Saint Antonio), which is the day kept by all Mexicans instead of their own birth-day. I knew that they were to be released on that day on the parade ground near the city, and fearing that the immense populace which would be assembled might offer them some violence, I went out knowing that my official station would protect me and might enable me to protect them. Never was fear more groundless, nor a surprise more agreeable. Santa Anna reviewed on that occasion a body of more than ten thousand troops, and there were not less than thirty or forty thousand other persons assembled in the field. When the order for their liberation was given it was received with acclamation and shouts by the Mexican troops, which extended through the whole vast concourse. The officers and others threw pieces of money to the Texians, and as they passed through the crowd, instead of jeers and insults every Mexican had a word of kindness for them, running up to them and shaking hands, and exclaiming "amigo, amigo!" my friend, my friend! I saw one poor Lepero pull off his blanket and offer it to a Texian who was rather more ragged than he was himself. As they passed along the streets men and

women would run out from their shops and offer them bread and other articles. Let it be remembered that these men had invaded their country, and that they had been sedulously taught to regard them as their born enemies, los Texanos (the Texians) having all the associations with a Mexican that the words los Moros (the Moors) had with their Gothic ancestors. I could not refrain from asking myself whether if the people of any other country had invaded ours and been made prisoners, they would under like circumstances have passed through such a crowd not only without insult, but with such demonstrations of kindness and sympathy. There were a few instances of atrocious barbarity practised upon these prisoners upon the frontiers of Mexico, when they were first captured. But after they had advanced within 1500 miles of the city the general treatment which they received was kind and respectful; I think there was no single exception to this remark whilst they were confined in the convent of Saint Jago near Mexico. It is true that they were sometimes carried out in chains to work on the streets, but this was by the orders of the government, and the Mexican officers in charge of the prisoners could not disobey the order. But their compliance with it was in mere form, for they generally said to the Texians work just as little or as much as you choose, and precious little was the work they did.

The Mier prisoners, a hundred and sixty, were several months at work on a street in Tacubaya, and all the work which they did, would have been done by two Irishmen in a week. When I say that they were kindly treated, I mean by the officers in charge of them, and would not be understood as justifying or apologising for the government, in ordering them to work on the streets at all, particularly in chains; on the contrary, as soon as I was informed of

the fact, I remonstrated against it, and it was discontinued. This, by the way, was the cause of the sparring between General Tornel and myself, to which I alluded, as having occurred the first week that I entered upon the duties of my office. But any treatment which the Texian prisoners received in Mexico, was kind and humane, in comparison with the treatment of American prisoners, during our late war with England, at Dartmoor and elsewhere. I know that they were much better fed than the Mexican soldiers were. An incident occurred, whilst the prisoners were confined in Tacubaya, which is characteristic, not only of the Mexicans of both sexes, but of woman everywhere. On one occasion, and it was one of the very few exceptions to the remark which I have just made, a subaltern Mexican officer struck a Texian who was at work on the streets; a young lady of one of the most respectable families, and I sincerely regret that I have forgotten her name, who happened to be passing by, called the officer to her, and asked him if he was a Mexican by birth. He replied that he was not. She said, "I am rejoiced to hear it, sir, and I did not suppose that you were, for I did not believe that any Mexican would be guilty of so cowardly an act as to strike a prisoner, who dare not return the blow."

Whilst bearing this testimony to the humanity and generosity of Mexicans, I cannot omit paying a just tribute to the Texian prisoners. I do not believe that the rank and file of any army was ever superior to them in courage, and other high qualities. Their number was so great that my means were altogether inadequate to supply all their wants, but I told them that when any of them were sick, to let me know it, and I would furnish them with such things as their necessities required. It more than once occurred, that when I visited them I found some of them sick, and unable

to eat the coarse food of which their rations consisted. When I asked them why they had not applied to me, their reply was, "Why, sir, you have had to advance so much money on our account, that we were unwilling to tax you any farther." I had very few applications for money, and in every instance, where I regarded the advance as a loan, I have since been paid, with not more than one or two exceptions. There are one or two instances of heroic virture, that I take special pleasure in recording. Amongst the prisoners taken at San Antonio in Texas, by General Wool, in the fall of 1843, was Mr. Samuel A. Maverick, a gentleman of very large fortune, and with a young and interesting family. He was a man of fiery and impatient temper, and chafed, under his confinement, like a chained tiger. A good deal had been said about a reannexation of Texas to Mexico, and negotiations were about being entered into to that end. I knew that Mexico only desired to save, in some degree, the point of honor, and that almost any terms would be conceded; such as that Texas should have her own laws, religion, &c.; that no Mexican troops should be quartered in Texas; the Texians to make their own revenue laws, appoint their own revenue and other officers, pay only a nominal amount to Mexico; in one word, and in the language of a distinguished member of the Mexican Cabinet, in conversing with me on the subject, "actual independence, with a mere nominal recognition of the sovereignty of Mexico." That even such a reunion, in name only, could have lasted long, no one could have believed. I know that the Mexicans themselves had no such idea. Santa Anna had boasted so much of reconquering the country, which he found himself unable even to attempt, that I have strong reasons to believe that he would have allowed the Texians to dictate the terms of even this nomi-

nal reannexation, which must have been of very short duration, and would, in the meantime, have given the Texians the advantage of the market of Mexico for their cotton, the high price of which there would very soon have filled up Texas with a population large enough to have enabled her to have dictated terms to Mexico. This was early in 1843, when annexation to the United States had not been spoken of seriously, nor, so far as I knew, thought practicable by any one. I wrote to Maverick, who was then confined in the castle of Perote, saying to him, that if he was in favor of such a reannexation as that, and which would have been so in name only, and would say so to me, that I had no doubt Santa Anna would release him. I give an extract of his letter in reply.

"You say that you think that Santa Anna will release me if I say that I am in favor of the reannexation of Texas to Mexico. I cannot persuade myself that such an annexation, on any terms, would be advantageous to Texas, and I therefore cannot say so, for I regard a lie as a crime, and one which I cannot commit even to secure my release; I must, therefore, continue to wear my chains, galling as they are."

A man of principles less stern might, with an easy casuistry, have said, "I am dealing with an enemy who has violated the terms of my capitulation, and it is excusable that I should in turn deceive him." How many men are there who would not have thus reasoned? Such an act recorded by Plutarch would have added another page as bright as that which perpetuates the noble constancy and heroic virtue of Regulus.

Maverick was shortly afterwards released, as a personal favor to me, together with Mr. William E. Jones, formerly of Georgia, and Judge Hutchison, formerly of Mississippi, where he was distinguished for great learning, and beloved

by every one for his virtues. I sent them "on their way rejoicing," The residue of the prisoners taken at San Antonio, thirty-six in number, were those of whom I have before spoken as being released by General Santa Anna in so handsome a manner at the time I was leaving Mexico.

Colonel Wm. G. Cooke, of the Santa Fé expedition, was engaged in the battle of San Jacinto. Two or three days after the battle two Texian boys, who were hunting for estray mules and horses, discovered a Mexican in the grass. One of the boys cocked his gun, and was taking aim at him, when the other told him not to shoot, as the man was unarmed. They found that he was a Mexican, but had no idea of the value of their prize. They determined, however, to take him to the Texian camp, some ten miles distant, and made him mount behind one of them, while the other walked. When they approached the Texian camp the Mexican prisoners exclaimed, El Presidente, El General Santa Anna. This was immediately after the massacre of the Alamo and Goliad, and the first impulse of the Texians was to put him to death. Colonel Cooke, however, rallied the guard and saved the life of Santa Anna.

After Colonel Cooke was released from imprisonment in Mexico, with all his companions, he remained a few days at my house, and when, in answer to my inquiries, he narrated these facts, I asked him why he had not communicated this to me before, and stated my belief that Santa Anna would have liberated him instantly. His reply was, that in saving the life of Santa Anna he had done no more than his duty, and that he could not think of asking any reward for it; neither would he have accepted his own discharge without that of all of his men; that he would not under any circumstances have been released and left them in captivity. All of the prisoners were released on the 16th of June, except

Colonel Navarro, to whose niece Colonel Cooke was then engaged, and has since been married. He could not speak of Navarro without great emotion. I asked him if I might inform Santa Anna that he was the officer who had saved his life after the battle of San Jacinto, and that he took a very deep interest in the fate of Navarro. This he could not resist. He was willing to do for a friend what he would not do for himself. I mentioned the facts to an aide-de-camp of Santa Anna, who promised me that he would communicate them to him. But probably he never did so. All my efforts in favor of Navarro were fruitless. He, however, made his escape from the castle of St. Juan de Ulloa, and returned to Texas.

Amongst the prisoners of Mier, there were two of the name of Reese, Charles and William, the latter a boy of about sixteen. On his arrival in Mexico, I applied to Santa Anna and obtained his release. A few days afterwards he called to see me, and said—"My brother Charles is engaged to be married; and, besides this, I know that he would be much more useful to my father and mother than I would, and I should like, sir, to take his place as a prisoner, and let him go home." In this he was not acting a part: he spoke under deep excitement and with a glistening eye, and I do not know that his was the only moist eye in the room. I could protract these pages indefinitely in narrating similar acts. From the time of my arrival in Mexico until I left the country, there was rarely a month that it was not my good fortune to obtain the discharge of some of the prisoners, and I fully realized the truth of the lines of the greatest of poets:—

> "The quality of mercy is not strained,
> It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
> Upon the place beneath; it is twice blest:
> It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

Happy as those poor fellows were, I doubt if they were happier than I was.

It is the fashion of the world to complain of ingratitude; I am sure that I shall never have cause to make that complaint against the Texian prisoners in Mexico. Those last released to me came home with me in the Bainbridge. The yellow fever was prevailing in Vera Cruz, and the surgeon of the Bainbridge thought that there would be great danger in receiving the Texians on board, and the commander of the vessel, Captain Mattison, a most worthy and excellent gentleman, determined not to do so. I had obtained their release, and brought them down to Vera Cruz, and if they had been left there they must have suffered, for they had neither money nor credit, besides the great danger they were in from yellow fever. I could not think of leaving them under such circumstances, and, impatient as I was to return, I at once determined to remain with them. Capt. Mattison, however, at length agreed to receive them on board upon my taking "all the responsibility," which I did; and I was not a little rejoiced that no injury resulted from it. There was not a case of yellow fever on board. The Texian prisoners all called to see and take leave of me in New Orleans, and it occurred, in more than half-a-dozen instances, that after beginning to express their gratitude to me they would burst into tears, and could not finish what they had intended to say. They could have made no speech half so eloquent as those tears. I advanced to the prisoners of the Santa Fé Expedition a sum which I thought was sufficient to have defrayed their expenses home; but they were unavoidably detained five or six weeks longer than I had anticipated, and must have been subjected to extreme suffering if Mr. Hargoos, an American merchant in

Vera Cruz, had not, with a liberality which has few examples, advanced them more than ten thousand dollars.

When the late Mr. Forsyth was American Minister in Spain, he obtained the discharge of some Americans who had been made prisoners in Mexico, during the war of Independence. They were all sent to the United States at the expense of our government, and the charges were paid. I thought this precedent justified me in sending home the Texians, who were natives of this country. I could see no substantial difference in the two cases. Besides this, the English and Prussian ministers in Mexico sent home the Englishmen and Germans who belonged to the expedition, at the charge of their respective governments, and I had been instructed to use all my influence to obtain the discharge of the Texians—not surely to let them starve, which they must otherwise have done. The advances made by me were paid by the government. Those made by Mr. Hargoos have not been paid. I have never been able to see any reason for the discrimination. It is true, that I did not positively pledge myself to Mr. Hargoos that his advances would be paid by the government. If I had done so, I should have felt bound to pay him if the government did not, and had I the means of paying so large an amount. But I sent him the precedent in the case of the prisoners sent home by Mr. Forsyth, and said to him, that I did not doubt that our government would pay him. I still do not doubt that if the claim were presented to Congress that it would be paid.

CHAPTER X.

Catholic Ceremonies—Procession of the Host—Corpus Christi Day—Our Lady of Remedies—Connection of the Image with the early History of Mexico—Present state of its Worship.

The things which most strike an American on his first arrival in Mexico, are the processions, ceremonies, and mummeries of the Catholic worship, of which I would fain hope there are more in Mexico than in any other country. The natural proneness of every ignorant people to regard the external symbols and ceremonies of religion, and an incapacity to appreciate its true spirit and sublime truths, give to the Catholic ritual, with all its pomp and circumstance, its pictures, statues, processions, and imposing ceremonial, peculiar power and influence. Yet through these conditions it may be that in a merely temporal point of view, it is the best for such a people. For the Christian religion, however it may be degraded, is immeasurably superior to all others, and it may be well, therefore, that ignorant people, who are inaccessible by mere rational means, to the great truths which it teaches, and the sublime morality which it inculcates, should have those truths and that morality impressed upon them in the only way in which it is practicable, by external objects, such as images, and the like. And I am satisfied that much good is accomplished in this way. But as to any rational idea of true religion, or any just conception of its divine author, the great mass are little more enlightened than were their ancestors in the time of Monte-

zuma. And their religion is very little less an idolatry than that of the grotesque images of stone and clay, of which it has taken the place. There is scarcely an hour in the day when the little bells are not heard in the street, announcing that some priest is on his way to administer the sacrament to some one sick or dying. The priest is seated in a coach, drawn by two mules, followed by ten or a dozen friars, with lighted wax candles, chanting as they go. The coach is preceded by a man who rings a small bell to announce the approach of the Host; when every one who happens to be in the street is expected to uncover himself and kneel, and the inmates of all the houses on the street do the same thing. Nothing is more common than to hear them exclaim, whenever they hear the bell, "Dios viene, Dios viene,"—God is coming, God is coming; when, whatever they may be doing, they instantly fall on their knees. What I have described is the visit of the Host to some common person. The procession is more or less numerous, and the person in the coach of more or less dignity, from an humble priest to the archbishop of Mexico, according to the dignity and station of the person visited. Sometimes the procession is accompanied by a large band of music. The visit of the Host to the Senora Santa Anna, of which I have heretofore spoken, was attended by a procession of twenty thousand people, headed by the archbishop. Until very recently, every one was required to kneel, and a very few years since an American shoemaker was murdered in his shop for refusing to do it. But now they are satisfied if you pull off your hat and stop until the Host passes.

Shortly after my arrival in Mexico, the day of Corpus Christi was celebrated with unusual pomp. The street for near a mile from the palace, thence down another street

for some distance, and thence back again to the palace, was canopied with canvass, under which a procession of thirty or forty thousand persons marched, followed by probably twice the number, who did not constitute a part of the regular parade. Of this procession some eight or ten thousand were Mexican troops, with their gaudily caparisoned horses, and the officers in their glittering uniforms.

At the head of the procession was a sort of platform or litter, upon which the host was carried by some of the highest dignitaries of the church. At a short distance followed on a similar litter, "Nuestra Senora de las Remedios," Our Lady of Remedies—a little alabaster doll, with the nose broken, and the eye out. It would be an unpardonable omission in any sketches of Mexico, not to notice her ladyship, the Virgin of Remedies, as it is one of the two superstitions peculiar to that country, and of all others, perhaps, the one most important, and the most generally believed. The story is this: After the first entrance of Cortes into the city of Mexico, and he had seized Montezuma in his palace, surrounded by his guards, and carried him through the streets of Mexico, to his own quarters, and by this daring act acquired an absolute power over him, and through him over his countrymen, it seemed that the conquest of the country was complete, and that the Spanish power was firmly established there; so true is it, that often in a crisis of real danger the greatest audacity is the highest wisdom.

Diego Velasquez, the Governor of Cuba, who first projected the expedition to Mexico, and appointed Cortes to the chief command, became jealous of him just as the expedition was about to sail, and revoked his authority. But Cortes was not the man to be thus trifled with and thwarted, and set sail in defiance of the orders of Velasquez, who

hearing of the wonderful success which had crowned the enterprise, fitted out another large expedition of more than thirteen hundred men, the command of which was given to Pamphilo Narvaes, with orders to proceed to Mexico, and supersede Cortes in his government. Narvaes arrived in Vera Cruz about the time that Cortes had, by the most wonderful combination of consummate wisdom and daring courage, established the Spanish power firmly in Mexico.

But a new danger greater than any through which he had passed, great as they certainly were, presented itself, and one which would have been fatal to almost any other than that wonderful man. He had only about four hundred and fifty men in all; but he at once resolved with two hundred and seventy of these to proceed to Vera Cruz and attack Narvaes, and left Pedro Alvarado, his favorite captain, in command of the residue in the city of Mexico.

Cortes marched at once to Vera Cruz, where he met and vanquished Narvaes at the head of his thirteen hundred men. Narvaes himself was made prisoner. On the return of Cortes to Mexico, although his forces were greatly augmented by the defeat of Narvaes, the dangers to which he was exposed had increased in an infinitely greater degree. During his absence Alvarado had attacked and massacred a large number of the Mexicans whilst they were assembled at a festival (it was said for the purpose of getting possession of the jewels which they wore). This excited the Mexicans to fury and madness, and on the return of Cortes to Mexico he found the whole city and country in a state of revolt. He was attacked incessantly day and night, and at last, unable to hold out longer, he determined to abandon the city. Mexico was at that time surrounded on all sides by water, and was only connected with the land by three causeways. Cortes selected for his retreat

that which led to the town of Tacuba. The Mexicans had taken up the bridges, and the slaughter of the Spaniards was to the last degree horrible; of thirteen hundred men a little more than four hundred were all that escaped, and every one of these more or less severely wounded. He made his way, however, to the top of a high hill twelve miles from Mexico, where he halted and fortified himself, and in a day or two proceeded to the country of his faithful friends the Tlascalans. The night on which Cortes retreated from Mexico, is to this day familiar to every Mexican as *noche triste*, the woful or sorrowful night. This hasty sketch of a deeply exciting passage in the history of the Conquest, brings us to "our Lady of Remedies."

During the few days which Cortes remained on the hill which I have mentioned, he found in the knapsack of one of his soldiers, a small alabaster doll, about eight inches high, with the nose broken and one eye out, which the soldier had brought with him from Spain. The poor remnant of his army were of course despondent and broken-spirited, and in that age of fanaticism (and never was an army in Palestine animated with a higher degree of religious enthusiasm than were the conquerors of Mexico), Cortes determined to avail himself of the wooden doll which had providentially, it would seem, been thrown in his way. He exhibited it to his soldiers, and told them that it was an image of the Virgin Mary, which she had sent him from heaven, and that she had promised him that she would intercede for them, cure their wounds, secure them a safe return to their Tlascalan allies, and afterwards the certain conquest of Mexico. Cortes made, or rather cut his way back to Tlascala with the small remnant of his army, and afterwards again invaded and conquered Mexico.

One of the first things which he did after completing the conquest was to build a chapel on the top of the hill to which he retreated on the *noche triste*, which he dedicated to the Virgin Mary of Remedies. In this chapel he placed the miraculous image, where it has been kept for more than three hundred years with wax candles always burning, and maids of honor in constant attendance. I asked a gentleman connected with the church, what was the value of the diamonds worn by the image of our Lady of Remedies when I saw it in the procession. He said he did not know; but that her whole wardrobe and jewels were worth more than a million of dollars. Amongst these are different petticoats of diamonds, pearls, and emeralds. On special occasions, our Lady of Remedies is carried to the city, such as the prevalence of the cholera, or other pestilence. When it is found that the disease is abating in a particular quarter of the city, the image is carried there; if the disease disappears, it is of course the work of "our Lady of Remedies;" if it continues, it is attributed to the sins of the people, which are said to be so great that the powerful intercession of the mother of God cannot avail to have them pardoned. The cures of our Lady of Remedies, like those of humbler physicians, are by no means gratuitous, but her services are a source of large revenue to the church.

The reader will naturally ask, does any one believe such an absurdity? I answer yes! Everybody believes it, and it would be regarded in Mexico little less than blasphemy to doubt it. As a proof of this I will mention one or two facts.

The anniversary of the presentation of this image to Cortes is religiously observed, and of all the religious festivals in Mexico it is the most numerously attended. This anniversary is in August. I had some curiosity to witness

it, and rode out to the chapel, twelve miles from Mexico. I can form no accurate estimate of the immense concourse which was assembled. If I were to say fifty thousand, I might be under the mark; if I were to say a hundred thousand, I might not be over it.

Besides those who had come as a religious duty, thousands had gone there for the amusements, games, and mummeries which are practised on such occasions; and the diseased from all quarters came there to be cured. As I entered the church I saw a poor Indian woman kneeling before a priest, a white man, with a sick child in her arms. She kissed the hand of the priest, and then handed him two or three coppers, which were worth more than every article of clothing which she had on, and perhaps more than everything else which she possessed in the world. When I caught the eye of the priest, I will not say that he winked at me, but there was a certain sinister leer, the meaning of which could not have been mistaken, and which I interpreted as saying to me, "You, and I understand these things." I thought of Dives and Lazarus, and I do not doubt that in another world the resemblance will continue. I thought, too, of the simple, unostentatious, and sincere worship in my own country—a worship of spirit and of truth—and I could not help asking myself, Is it indeed the same God which we worship, the same religion which we profess? I wished to see the doll, and was at first told that it could not be seen, but when Mr. Black, the American consul, who accompanied me, announced that I was the minister of the United States, a servant was sent to show it to me; for the title *el ministro*, the minister, or other high station, is an "open sesame" to everything in Mexico. A deference is paid to station to which we are, and I hope will long remain, unaccustomed. I was carried to a handsome altar,

where the image stands, but found, to my regret, that the original was not there. It had been carried to Mexico when the Senora Santa Anna was sick, and had not been returned. There was, however, a small wax doll in its place, as its deputy, decked off with diamonds and other jewels not of any great value. I went shortly afterwards to the cathedral, in Mexico, to see the original, which was, as I have described it, a small mutilated alabaster doll; and having the weather-beaten appearance which a service in two or three campaigns in the conquest of Mexico had caused. Various are the stories of the attempts to repair the injured nose and supply the lost eye, all of which have ended in the death of the daring sinner who would attempt to improve an image made in heaven.

It was this miserable doll which I saw carried in that magnificent procession of which I have spoken, in which were all the high dignitaries of the government, the church, and the army; and following immediately the Host itself, which Catholics believe to be Christ in the flesh.

I would remark here a fact which surprised me very much. All know that the doctrine of the real presence in the eucharist is a cardinal point in the Catholic creed, the sanguinary conflicts which this dogma has given rise to, and the controversies arising out of two Greek words, the only difference between which is a single letter—yet I never asked the question of a Catholic in Mexico, and I did so of more than fifty of all classes, from foreign ministers to coachmen and servants, who believed it any more than I did. Whenever I asked the question, "Do you really believe that the bread and wine used in the sacrament are the flesh and blood of Christ?" the reply in almost every instance was the same as that made to me by more than one member of the diplomatic corps who were Catholics and

educated gentlemen. "What, Sir, do you think that I am a fool? no, I believe no such thing. I believe it is a type, an emblem, but nothing more." I replied, "Then you are no Catholic; ask your priest, and he will tell you so." They answered, "Very well, we have never before heard of it, but if the priests say so we have no doubt that it is true, for their lives are dedicated to these studies and they know more about it than we do."

Can free institutions exist in a country where such a state of things exist. Are men either capable of breaking the shackles of despotism, or maintaining free institutions, who delegate to others the privilege and authority of thinking for them on matters involving their eternal welfare?

There was an Irish priest who lived many years in Mexico, and now, I believe, lives in Texas—Padre Maldoun. He abandoned the Catholic church, and gave as his reason, that on one occasion a portion of the bread which was used in the sacrament was left, and that the rats ate it, which they would not of course have done if it had really been the flesh of God incarnate.

Many are the stories, however, which the Catholics relate of fowls and hungry dogs refusing to touch bread which had been thus consecrated.

I reserve for another chapter the other great superstition peculiarly Mexican, which is in no degree less absurd and ridiculous than that of our Lady of Remedies.

CHAPTER XI.

Religious Drama—"Mystery" of the Nativity—The Virgin of Guadaloupe—Sincerity of Mexican Churchmen exhibited in a Scene of Penance—Morality of the Clergy.

Amongst the dramatic representations in Mexico, *mysteries* or religious dramas are very common on occasions of certain festivals—some of them of a character not a little shocking to the eyes and ears of a Protestant. Not an unusual piece on Christmas-Eve is the representation of the Nativity. Joseph appears on a mule with Mary behind him, seeking for lodgings all over the city of Bethlehem, and at last they enter the stable—where the accouchement takes place not in the sight but in the hearing of the audience, with all those circumstances equally revolting to decency and a just respect for holy things. I have seen a similar representation of the story of the virgin of Guadaloupe, and have now a copy of the drama; it was at the theatre "de los gallos," "Theatre of the chicken cocks," a very large edifice formerly used as a cock-pit but now converted into a theatre. The story is this:

In the year 1531, the Spaniards thinking that the Indians were not converted fast enough to nuestra santa fé (our holy faith) as they always called it, set on foot the following contrivance:—An Indian Juan Diego (John James) was going to Mexico early in the morning, and as he was passing over the mountain three miles from the city, he saw a female descending from the clouds. He was terribly

frightened of course, but the figure, which turned out to be the Virgin Mother, told him not to be alarmed, that she was the Virgin Mary; that she had determined to become the patron saint of the Mexican Indians, and to take them under her especial protection; and that he must go to the city and tell the bishop that she wished to have a church built at the foot of the mountain, and dedicated to her as the patroness of the Mexicans. The poor Indian flew to the city, and when admitted into the presence of the bishop delivered the message. The bishop was incredulous and drove him off. The next day he met the Virgin by appointment at the same place, and told her that the bishop would not believe him. "Very well," said she, "do you meet me here to-morrow at the same hour, and I will give you a proof which the bishop will not doubt." Punctual to his appointment Juan Diego went the next day and had another interview with the Virgin. She told him to go up to the top of the mountain and he would find the ground covered with roses, to fill his apron with them and carry them to the bishop. The Indian found the roses, and as none had ever grown there, they were, of course, placed there by a miracle; he filled his apron and went again to the bishop, confident in the miraculous evidence of the truth of his statements which he carried with him. When he opened his apron to exhibit the roses he found to his utter consternation that there had been painted upon it by another miracle a portrait of the Virgin, dressed not like the poor carpenter's wife, but in a gorgeous cloak of blue velvet with stars of gold all over it. The bishop could not, of course, resist such evidence as that. The church was ordered to be built, the Indians all contributed whatever they had, and came into the fold by thousands. The Mexicans were not like other people whose patron saints were mere common

mortals; the Mother of God herself was theirs. The original miraculous portrait in a rich frame of gold inlaid with diamonds and pearls, is still to be seen in the church which was built, and almost every Mexican has one of more or less value in his house, and of every variety from cheap engravings to the most costly paintings; below the picture are these characteristic Latin words, "Non fecit taliter omni nationi." When I first went to Mexico, I was looking at one of these paintings, and I asked a friend who was with me what they meant? Why, said he, they mean that she has never made such cursed fools of any other people. There never was a more accurate translation, although not very literal; the Mexicans, doubtless, would say that it was not a very liberal one.

If the reader should again ask, and does anybody believe this? I answer, that on the anniversary of this miracle I went to the church of Guadaloupe where more than fifty thousand people were assembled, amongst them the President Bravo and all his cabinet, the archbishop, and in short everybody in high station in Mexico. An oration in commemoration of the event was delivered by a distinguished member of the Mexican congress. He described all the circumstances of the affair as I have given them, but with all the extravagance of Mexican rhetoric, just as one of our fourth of July orators would narrate the events of the Revolution. The President and others exchanged all the while smiles and glances of pride and exultation.

The church is the most beautiful building of the kind I ever saw; it is not so large and imposing, and there is a less gorgeous display of "barbaric gold" than the cathedral, but upon the whole it appeared much more beautiful. Instead of the balustrade partly of gold of the cathedral it has one of pure silver, and of the same size as that in the

cathedral. Most of the vases, waiters, candlesticks, &c., are of the same metal.

But I do not know why such things as these which I have been describing should excite "our special wonder." Are there not stories equally ridiculous which are believed in other Catholic countries. Saint Nicholas is the patron saint of boys, because, as the tradition goes, a friend had sent his two sons to St. Nicholas to be educated by him; on their journey they were murdered by the innkeeper where they lodged. This being revealed to St. Nicholas in a dream, he repaired to the place, and found the innkeeper boiling the flesh and bones of the boys to make soap of them. St. Nicholas, by a miracle, restored them to life. I have often seen engravings representing the miracle.

There are few edifices in the world held in so devout reverence as the convent of St. Catharine, on Mount Sinai, the history of the building of which on that desert mountain, as I understand it, is this:—St. Catharine died in Alexandria, and long afterwards appeared to a pious monk in a dream, and told him that her bones had been removed, by a miracle, to Mount Sinai, and that she wished the convent to be built on the spot. Upon examination, a human skeleton was found imbedded in the solid rock,—of course the bones of St. Catharine, and carried there by a miracle. The convent and temple were erected, and it is said to be one of the most beautiful structures in the world; none, perhaps, is held in greater reverence. But I feel that I am treading on dangerous ground. The fault is not mine for describing these things as I have seen them. I quarrel with no man for his religious opinions; but I have a right to discuss them, and to describe the rites and ceremonies as I have seen them. No one can doubt the sincerity of the professors of a religion, so many heroic martyrs of which have perished at the stake, and which for so long a time

was the only Christian church; and, even now, can boast of a larger number than all other Christian sects united. I believe that they are at least as sincere in the great cardinal principles of their faith as the Protestants are; that is, the great body of the church, I cannot say as much for the priests; and, I must say, that in that greatest of virtues, charity, in all its forms, they are greatly superior to us. There is scarcely a desert upon the face of the earth which Catholic charity has not penetrated. It was the remark of Cook, the great traveller, that he never, in any country, applied to a woman for relief that he did not receive it, if it was in her power to bestow it. I doubt not that he might have said the same thing of the Catholic priests. Their houses are always the abodes of hospitality and benevolence.

I have seen, in the church of San Augustin, one or two hundred people assembled at night; the chapel was darkened, and they took off their clothes and lacerated themselves severely with pieces of hard, twisted cord, made like a cat-o'-nine-tails. It was not such a flogging as Sancho gave himself to disenchant Dulcinea, but a real *bonâ fide* castigation. Of this I have no doubt, for I picked up one of the disciplinas, the instrument used, and it was wet and soaked with blood. I stood at the door as the penitents came out, and recognized amongst them some of the most respectable people in Mexico. No one in his senses can doubt the sincerity of those who will voluntarily inflict such torture upon themselves.

There was an amusing incident connected with this scene of self-castigation. Some mischievous boys (for boys are pretty much the same in Mexico as everywhere else) had contrived to get into the church, and for fear that the whipping would not be well done, they commenced operations themselves. They were discovered, perhaps, from

the greater severity of their blows than those which the men were inflicting on themselves, and there was a great commotion for a short time. The whipping lasted for ten or fifteen minutes, and the sound was very much like the pattering of hail.

I do not think that the clergy of Mexico, with very few exceptions, are men of as much learning as the Catholic clergy generally are in other countries. The lower orders of the priests and friars are generally entirely uneducated, and, I regret to add, as generally licentious. There is no night in the year that the most revolting spectacles of vice and immorality, on the part of the priests and friars, are not to be seen in the streets of Mexico. I have never seen any class of men who so generally have such a "roué" appearance as the priests and friars whom one constantly meets in the streets. Of the higher orders and more respectable members of the priesthood, I cannot speak with the same confidence; if they are vicious, they are not publicly and indecently so. Very many of them have several nephews and nieces in their houses, or, at least, those who *call them uncle*. The reason given for the injunction of celibacy, that those who are dedicated to the priesthood should not be encumbered with the care of a family, is, I think, in Mexico, much more theoretical than practical.

I cannot close these remarks without saying that there are men who belong to the Priesthood of Mexico, whose pure, virtuous, and self-sacrificing lives would make them ornaments of any Christian sect in any age or country,—the Bishop of California for instance, who, after spending the prime of his life in doing the work of his Divine Master, returned to Mexico utterly destitute, and lived on charity. He had all his life been in the receipt of a large income, all of which he had expended in charities.

CHAPTER XII.

The Museum—Old Indian Weapons at the period of the Conquest—Hieroglyphics—Armor of Cortes—Journal of Bernal Diaz—Pedro de Alvarado—The Stone of Sacrifice.

Of the sights in the city of Mexico, the museum may be considered the first and most important. To an antiquary, it presents many curious things. Catlin would luxuriate in it. But it contains little else than Indian antiquities—the instruments of war used by the Mexicans at the period of the conquest, bows and arrows, lances, swords, cotton armor and their wooden drums, the sound of which is described by Bernal Diaz, "was like a sound from hell." Many of these weapons are precisely the same as those used in former times by our own Indians. The most curious of these is the sword described by Bernal Diaz, as "espada como navajas—*a sword like razors.*" It was a wooden staff, four or five feet long, with four blades, about ten inches in length, and shaped like a razor, inserted on each side at right angles, with the staff. These blades are made of obsidian volcanic glass, in which the country abounds, and which is not distinguishable from the glass of a black bottle, and is quite as brittle. Yet Bernal Diaz says, that he has seen a horse's head cut entirely off with one of these swords. There is also in the museum, a mask made of this very fragile material, and having all the polish of the finest glass.

There are some curious specimens of the paper used by

the ancient Mexicans, made of one of a species of the cactus (of which there are in Mexico nearly two hundred varieties), with their still more curious hieroglyphic writing upon it. It is very much to be regretted that no Rosetta stone has yet been discovered, which furnishes a clew to Mexican Hieroglyphics. If this ever is done, most important information may be obtained, not only as to Mexican history, but of the creation, and the history of the human race. The discoverers not only of Mexico, but of Hispaniola, Peru, and every other country on this continent, found the natives familiar with all the leading events in the history of man, up to the Deluge. Everything afterwards was a perfect blank. With some of them the story of Adam and Eve in the garden was almost identical with the scriptural account of it. There is in the museum in Mexico, an ancient Mexican painting of the Deluge, the conception of which is very striking. Amongst other things, we see the Bird with a branch in its claw. A miniature copy of it may be seen in the Spanish edition of the Abbé Clavigero's history of Mexico.

The armor of Cortes is there also, and I confess that I never contemplated anything of the kind with so great an interest. Whilst looking at it I could well understand the Catholic veneration for relics. This was the armor in which he had fought all the bloody battles in that most romantic achievement in all history—the conquest of Mexico. For I declare that in reading the history of the conquest of Mexico by Bernal, the most enchanting book I ever read in any language, and in which the beauties of Ossian and Froissart are combined, I rose from the perusal more with the feeling that I had been reading an epic poem than a history. I felt as if I knew personally all the heroes of the Spanish army. Christoval, de Olid, Alvarado, Sandoval,

and all, and when one of them was killed, I could almost have wept for him as for a brother. And here before me was the armor which had covered the limbs of that almost unequalled creature, that "miracle of men," Hernando Cortes, statesman, orator, hero, and consummate in all.

Bernal Diaz was one of the officers of Cortes, and kept a regular journal, which he afterwards wrote out more fully. He came from the Department of Old Castile, where every one spoke and wrote with great purity; and his history is the most reliable authority upon the Conquest of Mexico. The letters of Cortes are the reports of the commander of an army, and therefore, in some degree, wanting in details. Gomara obtained his facts from conversations with Cortes and others of the conquerors, and the book of Solis is more a romance than a history. Bernal Diaz describes what he himself saw, scenes in all of which he was an actor, and in the simple style of an old soldier recounting his battles by the fire-side, with occasional passages of great beauty and eloquence. It really seems to me that any other history of the Conquest is like a rhetorical version of Froissart.*

* I regret to see that Mr. Prescott has fallen into some errors as to the "Old Chronicler," and, I think, underrates his work. He expresses surprise that Bernal Diaz should have remembered so minutely the incidents which he relates, after the lapse of fifty years, when his chronicle was written. Our distinguished countryman seems not to have noticed the fact, that Bernal Diaz kept a journal during the whole of the wars of the Conquest, in which he regularly noted the events as they occurred, and afterwards wrote it out, as he says, "en limpio."

I think that Mr. Prescott is also mistaken in supposing that he was entirely uneducated. The many classical and historical allusions with which the work abounds, prove his learning. The licentiates to whom he submitted his history, admitted that it was written in pure Castilian. The style is not rhetorical, it is true, and in my humble judgment it is none the worse for that. I am a lover of nature in all things, and I think

The armor of Pedro Alvarado, the greatest of Cortes' captains, was also in the museum. It was offered for sale together with his commission to Mr. Mayer, the secretary of the American legation, for a hundred dollars; but he very properly declined purchasing them until they had first been offered to the superintendent of the museum, by whom they were secured. I found them both too small for me. Cortes was of very much the same stature as Napoleon, and like him was very thin when a young man, but later in life became corpulent. The armor of Alvarado was even smaller than that of Cortes. I believe that very few of the suits of armor, some of which are to be found in all parts of Europe, are large enough for the men of the present day. In looking at one of these coats of mail the incredulity with which one reads the accounts of the battles of the conquest, when a hundred Spaniards resisted such swarms of Mexi-

that the secret of true beauty, in everything, is simplicity and naturalness. In composition, eloquence and architecture, there is the greater perfection, in proportion to the nearer approach to the works of the great architect. So thought the Greeks, who have left us the finest models. One looks in vain for pretty places in a Grecian column, or in the Oration de Corona; but as a whole each is perfect. Who does not prefer the simple beauty of the scriptures, the natural eloquence of the book of Job, or the noble sublimity of the Psalms of David, to the stately strut of Gibbon? My own opinion of the narrative of Bernal Diaz is, that it is written in a style of great beauty, although simple and unambitious; one which secures the untiring interest of the reader, the deepest sympathy with the actors in the scenes which he describes, and leaves the most lasting impression upon the mind of the reader. He makes you acquainted with all the peculiarities of the person and character of each of his heroes. You sleep with them, watch with them, jest with them, and fight with them. You even know their horses, and a dramatic effect is thus given to the narrative. You charge with that being of romance Sandoval, upon his horse Motilla, and assist Cortes to mount Romo and escape from the Mexican squadrons that surround him; and when the horse falls down the mountain and crushes Alvarado, you almost feel that your own bones are broken.

cans, is very much diminished. It is a perfect covering of polished steel for the whole body, leaving the wearer only vulnerable at the joints; and with such arms as the Mexicans used it must have been an accident, and a very rare one, that it was penetrated. The horse was almost as effectually protected; besides the covering of other parts, all his body from the saddle back was protected with an "anquera" which was made of the thickest bull's hide, and which was attached to the saddle and covered all the rump of the horse down to his hocks. The lower part of this anquera had small pieces of iron attached to it like fringe, which jingled like bells. This last was an invention of Cortes to strike his Indian enemies with the greater terror.

Nothing more illustrates the tenacity with which the Spaniards adhere to all their old customs and habits, and which has made them so striking an exception to the advancement which is observed in every other country, in this age of progress, than the fact that these anqueras are still in general use in Mexico; no horse is fully caparisoned without one. And this is by no means confined to the military, but private gentlemen also use them, many of them costing a sum which would seem incredible—bedizened all over with that profusion of silver and sometimes of gold, and other excessive and gaudy ornaments which characterize everything Mexican. Nothing can be more grotesque than the appearance of the horse; his approach is announced for some time in advance by the jingling of the iron appendages of the auquera.

It was Alvarado, whose extraordinary personal beauty induced them to give him the name of Tonatiuh (the sun). He survived the completion of the conquest, and was appointed Adelantado of Guatemala, and had projected a large expedition of discovery in the Pacific ocean, for

which the ships were all finished and ready to sail, when he went to suppress an insurrectionary movement amongst some of the Indian tribes. As he was ascending a mountain, on the sides of which the Spaniards and Indians were engaged in battle, one of the horses was wounded, and tumbling down the mountain fell upon and crushed Alvarado. Nothing can be more touching than the account by Bernal Diaz, of his death and the grief of his wife. There is a street in Mexico which still bears his name, and commemorates the extraordinary leap which he made across one of the canals from which the bridge had been removed on the *Noche Triste.* It is called "El salto de Alvarado," Alvarado's leap. Bernal Diaz, however, says that Alvarado never made the leap, active as he was. He says, "As there are still certain persons who have never seen the place, and know nothing about it, who will insist that Alvarado did certainly make this leap the night when we went flying from Mexico; I again assert that he could not possibly have done it. And in proof of this, there is the bridge and the water at this day, with the same height of the bridge, and the same depth of water as formerly—and the bridge is so high and the water so deep that it is not possible to have reached the bottom with a lance. There was a soldier in Mexico whose name was Ocampo, who was in the habit of writing pasquinades and infamous libels against many of our captains, in which he would put many ugly things which ought not to be repeated for they were not true, and amongst other things against Alvarado, he said that having left his friend Juan Velasquez de Leon and two hundred of the soldiers, besides the cavalry which belonged to the rear-guard, to perish, he escaped himself by this great leap, as the proverb has it, 'He jumped and saved his life.' Whether he made the

leap or not he was a glorious hero, such an one as the world has not often seen since the discovery of gunpowder, which has had pretty much the same effect upon individual heroism as that of the discovery of the art of printing on eloquence."

A colossal bronze statue of Charles the Fourth of Spain stands in the court-yard of the same building where the museum is kept. It was designed by a Mexican artist, Tolsa, and cast by another Mexican; the latter, I think, an Indian. It is said by competent judges not to be surpassed by more than two similar works in the world.

They have there also the great sacrificial stone upon which human victims were sacrificed. It is a large mass of stone some four feet high, and eight feet in diameter, of circular form, with figures in relief, elaborately cut on the top and sides. I think that it is the best specimen of sculpture which I have seen amongst the antiquities of Mexico. It is a curious problem how they were able to cut stone without other instruments than those made of copper, jade and obsidian.

It was the custom that the captive or other victim to be sacrificed fought seven of their best gladiators; if he was victorious his life was spared, but if vanquished he was placed on this stone and his heart taken out, and whilst yet palpitating it was offered to their God. That this was really the sacrificial stone there can be no doubt, as the Spaniards were themselves made to witness the sacrifice at one time of sixty-two of their companions who fell into the hands of the Mexicans at the battle of the "Narrow Causeway," in Mexico, where Cortes was in such imminent peril. Bernal Diaz thus describes the scene:

"And again the great drum of Huichilobos (the idol) sounded with many smaller drums, and shells, whistles and a kind of small trumpets,

the combined sounds of which were most sad and frightful; and when we looked above to the lofty idol temple whence the sounds came, we saw them pushing and buffeting our companions whom they had made prisoners when they defeated Cortes, as they were carrying them to be sacrificed; and when they had arrived at the top of this temple where their accursed idols were kept, they put plumes on the heads of some of the prisoners, and made them dance before Huicholobos (their idol), and immediately after they had finished dancing, they laid them on their backs on stones, which had been made for such sacrifices, and with knives made of flint they cut open their breasts and took out their hearts, and while they were yet palpitating offered them to their idols. The bodies they threw down the steps to the Indian butchers, who were waiting below to receive them, who cut off the arms and legs, and skinned the faces, which, with the beards on, they dressed as skins are dressed to make gloves. These they exhibited at their feasts, and in this manner they were all sacrificed. They ate the arms and legs, the hearts and blood were offered to their idols, and the other parts of their bodies were thrown to the lions, tigers, and serpents which were kept in the menageries, which I have described in a former chapter. All these cruelties were seen from our tent by Pedro Alvarado, and Sandoval, and all our other captains. The curious readers of this narrative will imagine what our grief must have been, and we said amongst ourselves, oh, thanks to God that they have not also sacrificed me, and let it also be considered that although we were not far off, we could not prevent it, but could only pray to God that he would save us from so cruel a death. At that instant large squadrons of Mexican warriors came charging upon us, and all our efforts to repulse them seemed unavailing. They said to us, 'You all have to die in the same manner, for our gods have often times so promised us.' The threats which they uttered to our Tlascalan friends were so horrid as to terrify them greatly; they would throw to them the legs of Indians, and the arms of our soldiers which they had roasted, saying, eat the flesh of these Teudes,* and of your brothers, for we are satiated, and of those which are left you may fill yourselves."

The author, Bernal Diaz, in a subsequent part of his history, says, that although men are generally frightened by the

* A word meaning gods, which the Mexicans applied to the Spaniards.

first battle in which they are engaged, and rarely afterwards, yet he frankly confesses, that although before he witnessed this sacrifice, he had been in many and perilous battles, and had never been conscious of trembling, yet that he was a coward ever afterwards, and never went into battle without a certain sinking and sickness of the heart. I could fill many pages with descriptions of other things which are to be seen in the museum in Mexico. But as I have very little taste for such affairs, I must refer the reader to the interesting volume of M. Brantz Mayer, whose descriptions are very full and accurate.

CHAPTER XIII.

The New Theatre—Market—Alameda—The Paseo—Aqueducts—Water Carriers—Drones—Great National Pawn Shop—A Necklace of Pearls—Four Diamond Rings—Anecdotes of a Revolutionary country.

The new Theatre in the street Bergard, which was finished in 1843, is said to be the finest in the world, except that of Saint Carlos at Naples. I can conceive of nothing of the kind more elegant in its architecture, or perfect in its arrangements. I have seen in it a concourse estimated at seven or eight thousand, and it was not full. There are eight tiers of seats, with a pit sufficient to accommodate a larger audience than the whole of any ordinary theatre. In the rear of each box there is a room for the accommodation of those who occupy the box. These boxes, in certain tiers, rent for two and three thousand dollars per annum. some of them I believe for even more. The whole theatre is lighted by splendid chandeliers. It was called the theatre of Santa Anna; the name was of course changed after his fall by a people who were capable of disinterring the leg which he lost in a most heroic defence of Vera Cruz at the time when it was attacked by the French, and which had been brought to Mexico a few short months before, been buried with great pomp, and a funeral oration pronounced over it by a distinguished member of the Mexican Congress.

With more truth in Mexico than in any other country may one say of popular applause and favor—

> "Thou many-headed monster thing,
> Oh who would wish to be thy king."

The new Market just finished and also named in honor of Santa Anna, is admirably arranged for its purpose.

Of all the spots in Mexico, the Alameda is the most beautiful. It is a public square on the western border of the city, containing about forty acres, enclosed by a stone wall. It is covered with a thick growth of poplar trees and hence the name; the whole square is intersected with walks paved with flag-stones; all these walks unite in the centre where there is a beautiful jet d'eau, and from this point they diverge in every direction, and again unite in four or five smaller circles. There is a carriage-way inside of the wall entirely surrounding the square.

A short distance from the Alameda is the Paseo—the fashionable ride. It is a broad road just on the outside of the city, of perhaps a mile in length, and terminating at the aqueduct. Here every one in Mexico who has a coach of his own, and every one who has not, who has money to pay the hire of a hackney coach, assemble, besides hundreds and often thousands of horsemen. I would say at a venture that I have frequently seen a thousand carriages and more than five thousand horsemen on the Paseo. If I were now to return to Mexico, and desired to see any of my acquaintance, I would go to the Paseo, with the utmost confidence of meeting them there. It is just as much a habit of their lives to ride on the Paseo in the evening, and to go to the theatre at night, as it is to breakfast or dine. The carriages used by the ladies are always closed, but with pannels instead of curtains; through the windows of their coaches they see and are seen by their lovers, exchange glances, and salute them most gracefully with their fans. In this way and almost in this way only, are the courtships conducted, and often for months and years, without the parties ever having exchanged a word with each other.

So of the theatre; it is not an occasional recreation, as with us, but a part, and by no means an unimportant part of the business of life. You are perfectly certain to meet the same faces every night of the year at the theatre. I once asked a very accomplished and elegant woman, who was the mother of eight or ten children, and whose family circle consisted of as many more persons—"Do you go, Madam, to the theatre every night?" "Oh, yes, Sir," she replied, "how else could I possibly get through the evenings?"

They have no fire-places in Mexico, and I think that this circumstance has a very great influence on their character. It is not easy to estimate the moral influence of these family reunions, to which we are accustomed, around the fireside on long winter evenings, which are passed in reading some excellent book, or in conversation not less instructive.

The two aqueducts by which the city is supplied with water, were constructed by the Vice Royal Government, and have the solid and substantial character of all Spanish architecture. The lower aqueduct is in precisely the same place as that which the Spaniards found there at the Conquest, and by the destruction of which so much suffering was caused to the Mexicans. Its whole length is 133,426 feet, a portion of which, however, is nothing more than a canal walled with stone. The other, the water of which is supplied by the Spring of Chapultepec, is only 10,826 feet in length. The aqueducts rest on stone arches about fifteen feet high, and on these arches is a species of canal made of stone, through which the water flows. One terminates near the Alameda, which is on the outskirts of the city; the other, at a greater distance. The water is carried into the city, and sold at a very small price by poor

Indians (aquadores). They carry one very large stone jug on their back, with a leather band attached to it, which comes over the forehead, and another with a similar band over the back of the head, and the jug suspended in front. If either of these jugs is broken, the Indian of course falls, for the balance is most accurately adjusted. Nothing would be easier than to conduct the water in pipes into every house in the city, and at very small expense; but this I suppose has never occurred to them; and perhaps if it had, it would not have been done, as it would throw the aquadores, a numerous class, out of employment. I do not think that the addition which would thus be made to the immense number of idle leperos about the street would be at all noticed.

In walking the streets of Mexico, it would be very safe to bet that eight out of every ten persons you would meet would be officers, soldiers, priests, friars, or leperos, and it would be difficult to decide which class is the most numerous. All but the last of these classes are not only unproductive, but a charge upon the country. It does not seem to me that the whole productive industry of the country, so far as the Mexicans are concerned, and excluding the profits of the labor and capital of foreigners, would be sufficient to support these drones.

I should not omit to notice the great national pawn-shop of Mexico, Monte Pio, the funds of which are supplied by the Government, an institution under the superintendence of Don Francisco Tagle, a distinguished and virtuous man. Persons who are pressed for money, and have anything whatever to pawn, take it there and have it valued, and receive in money two-thirds of the sum at which it is valued. They are allowed to keep the money for six months, at an interest of six per cent., when, if they are not

able to redeem the article which they have pawned, it is sold, provided the sum advanced with interest is bid for it; if that is not the case, it is not sold. Whatever sum above that amount the article is sold for, is paid over to the owner.

A very large and splendid building, on the public square, which was built by Cortes, and which, I believe, is still owned by his descendants, is appropriated to this institution, very many rooms of which are filled with the infinite varieties of articles which have been pawned; all of which the superintendent very kindly showed me. In one room are hung up old garments of the Indians, the larger portion of which are literally of no earthly value but to a paper manufacturer; in another, the swords, epaulettes, and uniforms of military officers, plate of every description, snuff-boxes set in diamonds, and sets of pearls and brilliants, one of which I saw being valued at ten thousand dollars. The effects of this institution are altogether beneficent, as many necessitous and ignorant people are saved by it from those harpies, pawnbrokers and usurers.

The habit of accumulating jewels is always most common in revolutionary times and countries, as wealth is more portable, and, what is more important, more easily concealed in that than in any other form. I was very much struck with one instance of this, which came under my observation. There was an old Indian woman, who sold vegetables at the house at which I stayed when I first went to Mexico; she never wore stockings, nor any other articles of clothing but a chemise and petticoat, and reboza (a long shawl). I noticed on her neck one day a strand of beads which looked like pearls, but it is very difficult for one not accustomed to them to distinguish the genuine pearls from the cheap imitations. I said to my hostess,

"Of course those are not real pearls which that old woman wears." "Indeed," said she, "they are." I asked what was their value, and was told fifteen hundred or two thousand dollars. All the balance of her worldly gear was, doubtless, not worth ten dollars. I entered into conversation with the old Indian woman, asked her why she had not laid out her money in something more useful, a house, for example. "Yes," said she, "and have it destroyed in some revolution, or have high taxes to pay for it! No," she continued, "I am now secure against ever suffering; when I am sick or very old, I can pawn this at Monte Pio, or sell them one at a time, as I have bought them."

I will mention another instance of a similar character. A very worthy man, a native of the United States, had married a Mexican woman, from whom he had separated, not without cause. She was about to commence legal proceedings against him, and, as he was a foreigner and she a Mexican, he saw the danger to which he was exposed. They both called upon me, and asked my interposition to procure an amicable arrangement between them. With not a little difficulty I at length brought them to terms—he allowed her a hundred dollars a month. A few months afterwards she came to see me, and complained that the allowance was not a sufficient one. I told her that I was afraid that she had been a little extravagant, and my eyes, at the same time, rested on four new diamond rings which she had on her fingers. She became very angry, and, amongst other things, said: "You are unjust, sir, to say so; look here, sir," holding out her hand, "do you call a woman extravagant who, out of so small an allowance, has saved enough money in a few months to purchase four such rings as these?" "Well, really, madam," said I, "it is rather an odd proof of your frugality, that you have purchased four

costly rings." "Yes, sir," said she, "you say so because you know nothing of the habits of our country. I have bought these rings that hereafter, if I should be reduced to want, I may sell them, or pawn them at Monte Pio."

The old vegetable woman, I have no doubt, stated what was the true motive for her purchase of the pearls; I had some doubt in the other case.

CHAPTER XIV.

Gambling Festival of St. Augustin—Cock-fighting—Anecdotes of Mexican Honesty—Visit to the city of Tezcuco—Mexican Horses—Pyramids—Ruins—An Indian Inn—Extraordinary Ruin.

Shortly after my arrival in Mexico, the great gambling feast of St. Augustin took place. I am not sufficiently learned upon the subject of Catholic saints to know why St. Augustin is the patron of gamblers, and his anniversary is celebrated by all sorts of games. The village of San Augustin is about twelve miles from Mexico, and there this festival is celebrated. Every human creature in Mexico, high and low, old and young, who can get there, is certain to go. Rooms are engaged, and preparations made for weeks beforehand. Doubloons, which are generally worth only fifteen dollars and a quarter, as the festival approaches rise in value to sixteen and seventeen dollars. It is not genteel to bet anything but gold. The scene opens with cock-fighting, about twelve o'clock. It is attended by everybody. When I entered the cock-pit, Santa Anna and General Bravo, with a large number of the most distinguished men in Mexico, and quite a large number of ladies of the highest circles, were already there. The master of ceremonies on the occasion walked into the pit, and exclaimed two or three times, "Ave Maria purissima los gallos vienen"—"Hail, most pure Mary, the chicken-cocks are coming." Whereupon a cock is brought in covered, and a challenge is proclaimed, *à l'outrance*, to all comers, which is very soon accepted. The fowls are then unco-

vered, and allowed to walk about the pit, that the spectators may see them, and select the one on which they choose to risk their money. Those in the seats call some of the numerous brokers who are always in attendance, and give them whatever sum of money they desire to bet, and designate their favorite cock. Before the fight commences, the broker returns and informs the person whose money he has received whether his bet has been taken. If he loses, he sees no more of the broker; but if he wins, he is perfectly sure to get his money. A small gratification is expected by the broker, but never asked for, if it is not voluntarily given. I have been surprised to see these fellows, who are often entrusted with the money of a dozen different persons, never make a mistake as to the person for whom the bet was made, nor the amount of it. And it is another evidence of what I have before remarked as to the honesty of that class of Mexicans, that they never attempt to go off with the money, which they could so easily do, for it would be as impossible for a stranger to identify one of these Indians, as it would be to select a particular crow out of a flock of a hundred.

I saw, on these occasions, a sign which I thought ominous—there was always the most vociferous shouting whenever Santa Anna's fowl lost his fight.

As soon as the cock-fighting is over, the gambling at monte commences. There are a great many public tables, and some private ones. It is at the latter only that Santa Anna plays. There are many tables where nothing but gold is bet, others where nothing but silver, and other tables again for copper. The game is a perfectly fair one, and one at which cheating is, I should think, impossible.

There is some very small advantage in the game in favor of the bank. I think it is only this: if the bet is decided in

favor of the better on the first turn, there is a very small deduction from the amount paid, an eighth, or perhaps a fourth. But there is another, and a much more important advantage to the bank, in this, as in all of these public games; men always double and bet high when they have won, and, generally speaking, if the bank wins one bet in three, the better has lost in the end. I had not seen one of these public games played for very many years until I went to Mexico, and only saw it twice there; but my own observation has fully satisfied me of the truth of what I have said, and I should be rejoiced to know that this suggestion had prevented any one person from indulging in those *most* pernicious of games, pernicious as all games of chance are. I was very much struck with one thing which I noticed. I have seen, I am sure, fifty thousand dollars on the tables at once, probably in fifty different piles, and belonging to as many different betters, and yet I never witnessed a dispute of any sort as to the ownership of any one of these piles. I have seen a sum which the person who bet had omitted to take up when he had won; no one claimed it until it had increased to quite a large sum by winning double every time; and when, even, it would be asked whose bet it was, and thus announced that it was forgotten, no one would claim it.

The gravity and propriety of Spanish manners are never wanting, even at the gaming-table. I have seen men in the humbler walks of life lose several thousand dollars, and perhaps the last which they possessed, without a frown, or the slightest sign of emotion of any sort. Greatly pernicious as is the practice of gaming everywhere, and in all its forms, I do not think that it is anywhere so much so as in Mexico. The people of all mining countries are characteristically thriftless and improvident, but, I believe, nowhere

more than in Mexico. There are very few instances in Mexico of men who have any idea of that certain competency which is the reward of industry in any employment, and the savings of even small earnings, whereby the small gains of one year swell those of the next, which is so well expressed in the maxim of Dr. Franklin, "that the second hundred dollars is much easier made than the first, the first assisting to make the second." Whilst they habitually postpone everything, *hasta manana*, until to-morrow, they never think of making any provision for that to-morrow. If they ever do lay up money, it is for the purpose of attending the feast of San Augustin, and with the hope of winning a fortune with it. They hear of some one, perhaps, who has done so, but they do not think of the thousands who have lost.

There is a dance on the green in the evening, and another ball in the cock-pit at night, to which every one is admitted who is decently dressed and can pay for a ticket. The first people in the city, of both sexes, are seen dancing with the most dissolute and depraved, not only in the same dance, but as partners. This feast lasts three or four days, and, from all that I saw, I should say that it is almost the only occasion when persons of respectability in the city of Mexico gamble at all. Sometimes an evening is passed in playing at monte for fourpences, when not more than three or four dollars are lost by any one. I can only say that, with the exception of the annual feast of San Augustin, I never saw a pack of cards during my residence in Mexico, except on two occasions, when a game of whist was played at the houses of private gentlemen. I am quite sure that it is only on such occasions that General Santa Anna plays at all. I have heard much said of the gambling of priests and ladies in Mexico—I never saw nor heard there of either doing it; nor do I believe that there is any foundation for

the charge,—for I should regard it as a charge, and a very discreditable one.

I have already expressed the opinion that the calls upon the Minister from the United States in Mexico, for his official interposition, and cases involving an infinite variety of questions of international law, are more numerous than in any other of our foreign missions. They make the office of such minister by no means a sinecure—I certainly did not find it one. This reason alone would have prevented me from making frequent excursions into the country; I had on several occasions made all my arrangements for such an excursion, when some difficulty arose with the government which prevented my leaving the city. In addition to this, there is not a road in Mexico two miles from the city which is not infested with robbers, and the precautions which are necessary on this account are not a little inconvenient. I was anxious, however, to visit the ancient city of Tezcuco, which at the period of the conquest was second only to the city of Mexico; it is also a place famous in history as the spot where Cortes launched his thirteen brigantines, which were used with so much effect in his second and successful attack upon the city of Mexico. They were built in Tlascala, sixty miles distant, and were carried to Tezcuco by the Tlascalans, and put together and launched there. The city of Tezcuco was at that time on the eastern shore of the lake, but the waters have receded and left it three miles distant; the site of Mexico is the same now as then, but it was then surrounded by water and connected with the mainland by three causeways—the same receding of the waters of the lake at Tezcuco leaves the city of Mexico the same distance from the western shore. The lake is daily crossed by Indians from the neighborhood of Tezcuco, carrying vegetables, coal and other

articles to Mexico for sale. I was anxious to have crossed the lake in one of their boats, but could not procure one at the only time when it was convenient for me to leave Mexico. I therefore hired a hackney coach drawn by four spirited little white horses and driven by an American, and took the land route, which doubled the distance. For some twelve or fifteen miles our journey was by the road to Vera Cruz, through the valley—and thence leaving one of those small mountains of which I have spoken on our left, in a north-eastern direction, I arrived in Tezcuco with a very agreeable party of gentlemen, most of them American, about sundown. We were told in reply to our inquiries as to the best inn, that the only one in the place was a small hovel, which was pointed out. When we applied there, however, we found to our astonishment that beds and lodging were not at all understood in the city of Tezcuco (as it is still called, and it has a population of seven or eight thousand souls) as constituting any part of the accommodation of an inn. All that our utmost endeavors could accomplish for the accommodation of a party of ten or twelve was to obtain one room in a dilapidated old house of one story, the only door of which opened into the stable yard, through which we had to pass to get into the apartment; there was not an article of furniture in the room of any sort, chair, table, or even a bench. Our next difficulty was to obtain straw to sleep on; a very insufficient supply of this article was at last with great difficulty procured. Some of the young gentlemen of the party very kindly went into the city to ascertain if either for love or money they could procure a bed of any sort for me; they returned with a cot with a mattrass attached to it. I was really grateful, but I very soon found that my gratitude was due only to the kind feelings which had induced them to take

so much trouble on my account and not for any comfort which the cot would afford me, for it was swarming with bugs. I made as comfortable a bed as I could of some of the straw and covered myself with my cloak; following the example of the soldiers of the conquest who always slept with their armor on, I did not pull off my clothes, but passed the night in them as a protection. We arose very early the next morning and, mounted on very indifferent looking little Mexican horses, took the road for St. Juan de Teatihuacan, in the neighborhood of which stand the two remarkable pyramids of the Sun and Moon, as they are called, upon no sufficient authority. I said that our horses were indifferent looking ; I am quite sure that in no part of the United States would any one of them have sold for thirty-five dollars, yet more active, durable and fine going animals I have nowhere seen. The distance from Tezcuco to the pyramids was more than eighteen miles, nearly every foot of which was passed in a rapid gallop ; we returned to Tezcuco the same evening, after having examined everything in the neighborhood.

The Mexican horses are not handsome (I never saw a handsome one) ; they are generally about fourteen hands and from that to fifteen hands high, but they have nothing of the peculiar formation of ponies. They are raised on grass altogether: the experience in this country is that horses raised on grass are not generally good. It is said that there is no instance of a horse being distinguished on the turf, which even when a colt was fed chiefly on grass. But it is otherwise in Mexico. I have never seen any horses which were capable of enduring so much fatigue on the road, and of maintaining a rapid gait for so long a time.

For several miles before we arrived at the pyramids we

had a full view of them; and when I first saw them I supposed that they were mountains. I have not access to a copy of Humboldt's Researches, but I find in a very brief synopsis of the work, which has been published as one of the volumes of the Family Library, that he states the height of the largest of these pyramids at a hundred and fifty, and the smaller one at a hundred and forty-four feet. I am confident that they are of greater elevation, and still more confident that there is a much greater difference than six feet between them. Mr. Mayer says that the highest of these pyramids is 171 feet. Mr. Glennie says 221, which I have no doubt is nearer the true height. The base is 684 feet.

They are perfectly square at the base, and run up to a sharp point, a fact which I think furnishes a strong reason to believe that the pyramid of Cholula either has once had a much greater elevation than it now has, or that such was the original design. Why else the large area on the top, when all other similar structures in Mexico are carried up to a very narrow apex? These pyramids are built of unhewn stone of all shapes and sizes. That of Cholula is built of unburnt bricks. They are now covered with earth, and overgrown with grass and small bushes. There is an entrance to the smaller of these pyramids, through which a man may pass on his hands and knees. This aperture is on the southern side, and about half-way up the pyramid, and terminates on the inside on a flight of stone steps which extend to the bottom, in the centre of which is a well. The whole face of these artificial mountains is covered with fragments of figures and images of clay of ten thousand different kinds, and with broken instruments of obsidian; in short, with fragments of almost all the Indian antiquities which one is accustomed to see in Mexican collections. I

mean literally what I say, that the whole pyramid is thus covered. One may shut his eyes and drop a dollar from his hand, and the chances are at least equal that it will fall upon something of the kind. The bases of the two pyramids are some two or three hundred yards from each other.

A few hundred yards from the pyramids, in a secluded spot, shut closely in by two small hillocks, is a very remarkable stone—no doubt a sacrificial stone. I think it is about ten feet long, five or six feet broad, and as many feet in height. It is very handsomely hewn, with a well cut cornice, but has none of the human or other figures in relief, which are so well cut on the sacrificial stones in Mexico. The whole weight of this huge mass of porphyritic stone cannot be less than twenty-five tons. There is no stone of the same kind, or any other in as large masses, within several miles of the spot where this now stands. How did it get there? The ancient Mexicans had no beasts of burden of any sort, and so far as we know, no other means by which such large masses could have been moved.

From the pyramid which I have been describing a broad street leads off in a southern direction for six or eight hundred yards, and terminates in the ruins of a large city. These ruins cover an area very nearly as large as that of the present city of Mexico, and the streets are as distinctly marked by the ruins of the houses. There is one large public square of twenty acres, with the ruin of a stone building in the centre of it; with many more smaller squares in different places, and each of them having the same ruin in the centre, but about as much smaller than the ruin in the large square as the proportionate difference in the size of the squares themselves. If it was desired to build a new city on the same spot, one could not be laid out in any respect better than by adopt-

ing the plan of this one which is in ruins. The streets and public squares are designated by the large piles of rock in close juxtaposition on the sides of each, but each pile separate, and having exactly the appearance, only larger, of a long row of potato hills. These stones have manifestly not been placed one upon another, but have exactly the appearance of a brick or stone house which has tumbled down. Those who have seen individual ruins of that sort, know that the bricks or stones will fall and ultimately form an almost perfect cone, and would not hesitate a moment in saying that these cones which I have described were formed in that way. It has been suggested that each of these is a separate pyramid, and that they were all places of sepulture. Nothing, I think, can be more absurd. It is perfectly apparent that no more art has been used in making the pile, than is practised by a farmer in throwing together the stones which he finds in his fields. And if it was a place of burial, why was it laid out in streets and squares? Why have no human bones been found there? and more than all these, if it is indeed a vast burial plain, where did the people come from who are buried there? It could only have been for a limited extent of the adjacent country that it was so used, and the whole population of Mexico, since the flood, might be expected to be found there, if it was in truth a place of sepulture. I have thought it proper to say thus much, as some recent American travellers in Mexico have adopted the very absurd idea which I have been combating.

On the western side of this ruined city is a ravine of some forty feet wide, the sides of which are for the greater portion of its extent of a soft rock. On each bank of this ravine there are niches of eighteen inches or two feet in diameter and of a circular form; these are said by the natives of the country to have been places of sepulture, which I think

more probable. From the earliest times of which we have any record or tradition this portion of the country has never been uninhabited, and as every people, savage or civilized, regard with peculiar sacredness the places where the dead are deposited, it is not probable that such a tradition should exist if it had not been founded in truth; whilst it is altogether improbable that if these ruins are the tombs of generations, however long past, no tradition of it should exist now and did not at the period of the conquest. Our own Indians never lived in large cities, but always in small and detached villages. Not so in Mexico, as all know. It is a little remarkable, however, that in the ruins of so large a city as this must have been, that not a single piece of hewn stone should be found, except the large sacrificial stone which I have described, and which is as well cut as it could be done at the present day, which makes it still more curious, that they should have had the art but did not practise it. Whilst looking at these ruins and often on other occasions, I deeply regretted that Mr. Stephens, our distinguished traveller and altogether unequalled writer of books of travels, had not accompanied me to Mexico, which he at one time had an idea of doing. Mexico is even yet very much a terra incognita. I know no wider field for such researches, nor one from which more valuable information may be collected, and no one more capable of making those researches and reporting their results, than that distinguished gentleman. We returned the same evening to our lodgings in Tezcuco, which I really did not find uncomfortable after the fatigues of such a day. I must by no means omit to notice the inn of Tezcuco, as it is there called, and which was meant by the person of whom we made inquiries on our arrival in the city; although it was, strictly speaking, only an eating-

house or restaurant. The inn consisted of one low dirty room, about fifteen feet square, which served for parlor, dining-room and kitchen. The only furniture was some wooden forks stuck in the ground, upon which two or three undressed planks were placed for a table—a rough bench on each side, and some earthen pans in which our meal was cooked, and others of the same kind out of which we ate it. As to knives and forks, they were a modern luxury of which I do not suppose that our old Indian hostess had ever even heard. The supper consisted of a single dish, which would be strictly true, if the term dish is applied to the rude article in which the multifarious hotchpotch was served up, for it consisted of about as many different things as were contained in the sheet which St. Peter, with less reason than we had, thought unclean. Pork, beef, mutton, turkey, fowl, cabbage, Irish potatoes, carrots, squashes, beans, onions, tomatoes, and red peppers were all boiled together. So that the beef tasted like mutton and the mutton like beef—the cabbages were carrots and the carrots cabbages—and it therefore made very little difference which was selected, for they all tasted alike. This mode of cooking was by no means peculiar to "mine hostess" of Tezcuco; so far as I know it is universal in all Mexican houses. The next morning I visited a much more remarkable ruin, and one which I regarded as in all respects one of the most extraordinary which has yet been discovered in this continent. Extraordinary in itself from the immense labor which its construction must have cost, and its Cyclopean character, but still more so from the difficulty of saying with any reasonable certainty what was the object in constructing it.

There is a small mountain about three miles east of Tezcuco. On the almost perfectly precipitous side of this

mountain, at an elevation of eighty to a hundred feet, there is a circular basin of five or six feet in diameter, cut in a solid rock. There is another mountain very near this; the summits of these by an air line are not more than three quarters of a mile apart; this last mountain is some twelve or fifteen miles distant from the main ledge of mountains which bound the eastern portion of the valley of Mexico. From this circular basin in the rock, the side of the mountain is cut down and levelled exactly as if it had been done in grading for a railroad for about half a mile, where an embankment some sixty feet high connects the two adjacent mountains. From the point where this embankment strikes the second mountain, the side of that is cut down and made perfectly level, for a distance of a mile and a half, and with a width of about thirty feet. The grading of this mountain commences at a point about north-west, and terminates at another point a little north of east; thus extending nearly two thirds of the circumference of the mountain, where another embankment like the first in elevation and construction, begins and extends through the plain to the distant mountains, which, as I was informed, are some twelve or fifteen miles off. I walked on it for more than a mile, and judging as I did only from the eye, I thought that the distance was quite as great as my guide said it was. There is an aqueduct placed upon the level thus made by the embankments, and cutting down the mountains the whole distance from the basin in the rock to the distant mountains, whence the water was brought. This aqueduct is formed of a very hard plaster, made of lime and small portions of a soft red stone. It is about two feet wide, and has a trough in the centre about ten inches wide. This trough is covered with a convex piece of the same plaster, which being placed upon it when the plaster

was soft, seems to be all one piece, making together a tube of ten inches in diameter, through which the water flowed from the distant mountains to the basin which it enters through a round hole about the size of one made with a two-inch auger. No plasterer of the present day can construct a more beautiful piece of work; it is in its whole extent as smooth as the plastering on a well-finished wall, and is as hard as stone. I have a piece of it now in my house which I took from the aqueduct. Very often for the distance of many yards these pipes are perfect, and would hold water as well as they did the day that they were constructed. No one can say for how many hundreds of years they have been exposed to the weather; from all appearances, these pipes made of lime will endure as long as the native rocks of the mountains upon which they are placed. Near the basin are the walls of a small house, rudely constructed of unhewn stone, and steps to ascend the mountain. With that exception, there is no vestige of human habitation or workmanship near it. For what use was this cyclopean work intended? It could not have been to water the city of Tezcuco, for that stands in the plain below; and its site is not so elevated as the base of the mountain, and all the labor of cutting down the two mountains, and throwing up the embankments for so many miles, was wholly useless. But what is still more conclusive, the work terminates at the basin; it is not continued a foot farther. It is called Montezuma's bath, as nine-tenths of the antiquities of the country bear his name—but Montezuma had about as much to do with it as I had; it would be a gigantic work if designed to water any city in the United States or in Europe. It is a work very nearly or quite equal in the labor required for its construction to the

Croton Aqueduct. Could it have been a bath, and for the use of an individual? Hardly, I think. The only conjecture left us is, that it was in some way connected with the religious rites of those who constructed it, as I have little doubt the pyramids were also.

Extraordinary as this work certainly is in itself, and the reflections to which it gives rise, it is unaccountable that it should have escaped the notice of all who have given us accounts of the other antiquities of Mexico. I find not a word about it in Humboldt, and what is still more remarkable, Clavigero, himself a Mexican, and a man of learning and great research, has not noticed in, neither Cortes, nor Bernal Diaz, nor any other of the conquerors; and there it is, not in a remote department, but within twenty miles of the city of Mexico.

CHAPTER XV.

Scientific Institutions—Mineria—Academy of Fine Arts—Absence of Benevolent Institutions—Health of the Climate—Freedom from Intemperance—Fruits—Education of the Common People.

Humboldt, who visited Mexico in 1804, says that the scientific institutions of the city of Mexico were at that time equal if not superior to those of the United States. I am disposed to think that La Guera Rodriguez, the beautiful lady who enchanted him so much, was not the only thing in Mexico which he saw *couleur du rose.* The only institution of any character in the city is the Mineria—the College of Mines, as its name implies. The building itself is altogether magnificent. It is very spacious, and built of hewn stone in the most perfect architecture. When that is said nearly all is said which can be said with truth. The professorships are very few, chiefly those connected with physical science, and the chairs filled by persons of extremely moderate attainments. The philosophical apparatus is altogether contemptible; and what is still more remarkable, the mineralogical collection is very small, and contains nothing at all remarkable. General Tornel, the President, is, as I have always said, an accomplished man and an elegant writer. But his whole life has been spent in the excitement and bustle of politics, and of Mexican politics, and it is altogether impossible that his scientific attainments can be even respectable with reference to the position which he occupies.

The University, which was founded in 1531, is in a declining condition, if indeed it is not already extinct. There are some other colleges as they are called, but they are scarcely respectable primary schools.

The Academy of Fine Arts is, I think, very much below the college of the Mineria. There are some very good casts in plaster of the most celebrated works in statuary, and a great many very inferior paintings. There is not in all Mexico even a tolerable portrait painter.

One would suppose that in the dogged resolution which they seem to have formed, not to advance in anything with the age in which they live, that an exception would have been found in the matter of coinage of the precious metals in which their country abounds, and with which they contribute so much to the currency of the world—but it is not so. The process is, in almost every particular, the same that it was at the period of the conquest. They have not even a steam-engine in the mint in the city of Mexico, which has doubtless coined far more of the precious metals than any other in the world.

There are scarcely any of those charitable institutions to which we are accustomed in all our principal cities. There are more of these, I have no doubt, in either of the cities of Boston or Philadelphia than in Mexico.

There was something like an asylum for the insane—but during my residence in Mexico, General Valencia, under some claim which he set up to the ground and building, turned all the lunatics into the streets, as I was informed.

There is a very large and well-arranged Hospital, which was founded by Cortes out of his own private funds—the Hospital of Jesus. Until a very few years past his bones were deposited there, as he directed in his will; but they have been carried to Naples by the Duke of Monteleone,

the only branch of the family of the Conqueror of Mexico which is not now extinct. I was told in Mexico that he purchased these remains for twenty-five thousand dollars —if as an act of filial piety, it was a most mistaken one. I have also heard that in the frequent *émeutes* of the Mexican populace, and their rage against the gachupines (European Spaniards), that the tomb of Cortes was in danger of being desecrated, and that it was on that account that his bones have been removed.

There is, however, scarcely any other city where charitable institutions are so little needed. I have never seen a population where congenital deformities are so rare as in Mexico, and I am sure I saw nearly all which existed. Mendicity is not forbidden, and any serious deformity is, as far as a security for subsistence is concerned, a rare good fortune, and they are sure to make the most of it.

Blindness is not uncommon, resulting, I suppose, from the extreme rarity of the air in that elevated region. I was surprised to hear, mild and equable as the climate is, that from the same reason which I have just mentioned, it is fatal in all pulmonary affections. Although there is not perhaps in the world a healthier region than the table-lands of Mexico, their bills of mortality (if they had any such thing, which they have not, or statistics of any kind) would exhibit very few cases of remarkable longevity. On the contrary, I think that the Mexicans are a remarkably short-lived race. This must result from climate alone. They indulge less in excesses of any kind than almost any other people. If I may judge from what I myself saw I should say that in the use of spirits no people are more temperate. The Spaniards are characteristically so everywhere, and they constitute almost exclusively the better classes. The lower classes are restrained by the laws; drunkenness

being there, as it should be everywhere, punishable as a misdemeanor. I am sure that during my residence in Mexico I did not see a dozen men drunk, and I have seen assemblies of fifty and a hundred thousand people without one case of drunkenness. As to intemperance amongst respectable people, it is almost unknown. There is, it is true, a single exception, and that of a very distinguished man, and that may be the reason, amongst others, that he has not attained the highest distinction in his country. It is very rarely that you will see a Mexican gentleman drink anything stronger than claret wine, an immense quantity of which is sold there. They are equally temperate in eating; the lower classes because they cannot get the means of indulgence. Although the grass is green the year round, and from the sparseness of the population, one would suppose every man would be able to own his small farm and stock of cattle—yet it is not so. The lands of the country belong to a few large proprietors, some of whom own tracts of eighty and one hundred leagues square, with herds of sixty and eighty thousand head of cattle grazing upon them, whilst the Indian laborers upon these farms rarely have meat enough.

I question very much if there is any population in Europe, not even the Irish or the French, who eat less meat than the Mexicans; but there is certainly no country where extreme poverty brings with it so few sufferings. The climate is so mild, that clothing of any sort is only required for decency, not for comfort. The constant succession of fruits of every variety is, in itself, a resource which few other countries offer. It is not uncommon that one of those large estates, of which I have spoken, furnishes a climate in which every vegetable production will not only grow, but which is perfectly congenial to its growth, the lowlands

producing all the fruits and vegetables of the tropics, and the elevation gradually increasing to a region of perpetual snow. And then there is the banana, so easily cultivated; and Humboldt says, that the same spot of ground, planted in wheat, which will support one man, if planted in the banana, will support twenty-five. Besides the aversion of the Indian race to labor of any sort, may not this be the great reason for the universal indolence of the Mexican people? It is necessity alone which, generally speaking, forces men to toil; and that which is true of individuals is true of nations, which are but the aggregations of individuals. The great mass of the population of Mexico have no inducement to labor as we do, for all they desire is a mere subsistence, and the bounties of Nature supply them with that; and as to any of those honorable aspirations to better their condition and advance themselves in life, they are as ignorant as the cattle which graze their wide plains and *die*.

The apples and peaches of Mexico are not good, the latter decidedly inferior. The pears are very fine. They have one species of this fruit which is decidedly the best that I have ever seen; it is nearly the size of a goose-egg, and its flavor as delicious as that of the famous Philadelphia pear. All the fruits of the tropics—the orange, pine-apple, banana, mango, cherimoya, and last and least in size, but most exquisite in flavor, the tuna—are produced in Mexico in great perfection. I have nowhere eaten a fruit more refreshing and delicious than the tuna. It is the produce of one of the infinite varieties of the cactus, of which I have seen twenty different varieties growing on an acre of land. One of these varieties runs up to the height of thirty or forty feet, in the form of a beautifully-fluted column, and is used to enclose gardens, by planting close together. That

which produces the tuna grows to the height of thirty feet, and covers an area of twenty feet in circumference, with the leaves (if leaves they may be called) dropping over each other like the shingles of a house. These leaves are exactly like those of the prickly pear on our mountains, only larger, generally of twelve or eighteen inches in breadth. The fruit is about the size, and very much the shape, of a duck's egg. The combined flavors of a water-melon, a cucumber, and a lump of sugar candy, will give some idea of this delicious and refreshing fruit, as it melts in the mouth. The cherimoya is a large fruit, and is altogether delicious. The idea which occurs to every one on eating it for the first time is, that it is a vegetable custard. I scarcely ever offered it to an American who did not make that comparison, thinking that he had said an original and smart thing; but I had heard it before at least a hundred times. They have a fruit very much like what we call the "May-apple," which abounds, I believe, in every part of the United States. It is of the same size, and the flower has all the peculiarities of the passion-flower. The fruit itself is precisely the same, except that it has a yellow rind, not unlike that of a lemon. It does not grow on a vine running on the ground, like our May-apple, or May-cock, as it is sometimes called, but upon one more like a grape-vine.

I will close this somewhat heterogeneous melange of Mexican scientific and literary institutions, fruits, idle and ignorant leperos, &c., with a notice of a thing which struck me very forcibly. I had not a servant during my residence in Mexico who did not read and write—neither very well, it is true, but quite as well, or better, than the same class in this country. I often observed the most ragged leperos, as they walked down the streets, reading the signs

over the store doors. How this happens, I know not, unless it be the effect of Lancasterian schools, which are established all over the country, chiefly, I think, through the instrumentality and exertions of General Tornel—a noble charity, which should of itself cover a multitude of sins much greater than those which even his enemies impute to him.

CHAPTER XVI.

Diplomatic Position upon entering Mexico—Fellow Travellers—Friendship with Englishmen—Aversion of Englishmen to General Jackson.

When I first arrived in Mexico, it was very manifest that I was regarded with distrust and dislike. This was in some degree owing to the impression which existed not only with the government but the people generally, that my mission had a special reference to the American citizens who accompanied the Santa Fé expedition, and who were then confined in Mexico; but still more to the active part which I had taken as a member of Congress on the question of the recognition by our government of the independence of Texas. In a speech upon that question I made a good many disparaging allusions to Mexico, all of which were known there. I had also moved the resolutions two or three days before the adjournment of Congress on the 4th of March, 1837, which secured that recognition, at a most critical period of the affairs of Texas, as an amendment to the appropriation bill. I was of course regarded in Mexico as the enemy of the country, and the general

opinion was that I had been sent there for the purpose of causing a rupture between the two governments, to give us the right to enter into and terminate the war between Texas and Mexico. The next day after my arrival, a gentleman connected with the government inquired (evidently for a purpose) of an American in Mexico whether I had brought my family, and when told that I had not, he again asked when they were to come. I am satisfied that if my family had accompanied me, it would have indicated a purpose, and a confidence of remaining there for some time, which would have had an injurious effect. My predecessor had demanded the release of Mr. Kendall and three other Americans, who had accompanied the Sante Fé expedition about the middle of February, 1842, and had received a peremptory refusal; and thus matters stood until my arrival in Mexico. I landed at Vera Cruz on the 10th of April, and arrived in Mexico on the 16th. On the 14th of April, Mr. Ellis received a promise from the minister for foreign affairs, of the release of these prisoners. Although I had not at that time arrived in Mexico, I have no doubt that my arrival at Vera Cruz was known to the government. Couriers between the two places are constantly employed by the government, and so important an event as the arrival of a new minister from the United States, in the then existing state of our relations, would, as a matter of course, be reported at the earliest moment. And whilst I say in all candor, and it is no more than justice to say, that Mr. Ellis had done everything which in his situation I could have done; yet I have no doubt that Mr. Kendall and his companions owed their release neither to the efforts of Mr. Ellis nor myself, but to a certain prestige which I carried with me from the circumstances to which I have adverted. Indeed I was informed by a distinguished

member of the diplomatic corps that he knew that the Mexican cabinet were very apprehensive about the matter, and anxious for some honorable escape from the false position in which they had placed themselves. Mr. Kendall and three others were released to Mr. Ellis upon his application on his audience of leave. There were three others whose cases I thought were in all material respects the same, but Mr. Ellis thought differently—and could not conscientiously, and therefore did not, demand their release. Immediately, however, after my presentation, I brought the matter to the notice of the minister of foreign affairs, and he sent me an order for their release, without any discussion whatever of the merits of their cases. I have rarely seen three so happy men. The release of their companions and refusal to discharge them had, as may be supposed, deprived them of all hope, and their delight on being so unexpectedly relieved from such a state of despair cannot well be imagined.

I would mention here a circumstance which annoyed me not a little. A few days before my arrival at Puebla, two of the Texians who had been confined there made their escape, Major Howard and another whose name I have forgotten. They were secreted by an Englishwoman at great peril to herself; when one of her friends asked her why she had done so imprudent a thing, and added, they are not Englishmen, she replied, that she knew they were not, but that they had white skins and spoke the English language. The Mexican officers of all grades were everywhere on the lookout for the refugees. They very wisely determined not to take the route to Vera Cruz where they would be expected, but to go to Mexico, for nowhere is concealment so easy as in a large city. I had heard of the escape of two of the prisoners, and as soon as it was

daylight I at once recognized them as my fellow-passengers in the stage, and a Mexican captain was another. One of the Texians, a fine looking and striking young man, whose person and bearing at once bespoke his race and country, was less cautious than Major Howard, an old Indian warrior. He talked a great deal, and all about Texas. I found myself in the same stage with these Texians, in the worst possible odor with the Mexicans on account of my well-known feelings towards Mexico, and about to make my entry into Mexico under such circumstances. If they had been discovered, it would have been in vain to have denied my knowledge of them or participation in their plan of escape. They were not, however, suspected, and got out of the stage before it arrived in Mexico, and never, I am sure, was I so much rejoiced to be rid of two as agreeable companions.

The generous and honorable sentiment so well expressed by the Englishwoman of Puebla leads me to remark that my residence in Mexico furnished me more evidences than one, of the powerful sympathy of race. Even the revengeful character of the Spaniard yields to it. Notwithstanding the recent termination of the fierce and sanguinary civil war which has raged between Mexico and the mother country, no other people are so favorably regarded by the Mexicans as the Spaniards. And I can say with truth, that I never met an Englishman there that I did not feel the full force of "the white skin and the English language"—and I had no cause to believe that the same feeling was not entertained towards me by the English gentlemen in Mexico; and why, in God's name, should it be otherwise? I would not sell "for the seas' worth," my share of the glory of my English ancestry, Milton, Shakspeare and John Hampden, and those noble old barons who met King John

at Runnymede; and on the other hand, Englishmen should have a just pride in the prosperity and greatness of our country. In the beautiful language of a highly gifted and liberal minded Englishman, Mr. Charles Augustus Murray, "whether we view the commercial enterprise of America or her language, her love of freedom, parochial, legal or civil institutions, she bears indelible marks of her origin; she is and must continue the mighty daughter of a mighty parent, and although emancipated from maternal control, the affinities of race remain unaltered. Her disgrace must dishonor their common ancestry, and her greatness and renown should gratify the parental pride of Britain." Accursed be the vile demagogue who would wantonly excite another and fratricidal war between the two greatest and only free countries of the earth!

I should not satisfy my own feelings if I were not to notice here the circle of English merchants, who reside in Mexico. I have nowhere met a worthier set of gentlemen —enlightened, hospitable and generous. I can with great truth say, that the most pleasant hours which I passed in Mexico were in their society, and I shall never cease to remember them with kindness and respect. I now and then met with a little of the John Bull jealousy of this country, but I playfully told them that I could pardon that,—that it was altogether natural, for that the English flag had waved on every sea and continent on the face of the globe, and that for the last thousand years it had rarely, if ever, been lowered to an equal force, except in conflicts with us, where its fate had always been to come down. I believe that I may say that their greatest objection to me was, that I was rather too fond of talking of General Jackson and New Orleans. There is no single name which an Englishman so little likes to hear as that of General Jackson, and

none so grateful to the ears of an American in a foreign land, only excepting that of Washington. I do not doubt that it will be known and remembered long after that of every other American who has gone before him, except Washington and Franklin, is swallowed up in the vortex of oblivion. I have been the political opponent of General Jackson, and should be so now upon the same questions. I believe that he committed some very great errors, but that he did all in honor and patriotism. I have at the same time always had a just admiration for his many great qualities and glorious achievements, and I should pity the American who could hear his name mentioned in a foreign land without feeling his pulse beat *higher*.

CHAPTER XVII.

Kindness and Courtesy—Society of Dinner Parties and Entertainments—Mexican Ladies wanting in Beauty—Do not dance well—Charity—Routine of daily Life—Costliness of Dress—In the Streets—Women generally Smoke—A day in the Country.

NOTWITHSTANDING the general prejudice which existed in Mexico against me when I first went there, I was treated, although somewhat coldly, always and by all classes with the most perfect respect. In this particular the higher classes of all countries are very much alike, but I doubt whether there is any other country where the middling and lower classes are so generally courteous and polite. There is no country where kindness and courtesy are more certain to meet with a proper return. It may be that three hundred years of vassalage to their Spanish masters may have given the Indian population an habitual deference and respect for a race which they have always regarded as a superior one. No people are by nature more social, none less so in their habits. It is not the fashion to give entertainments of any sort. And what I regarded as a little remarkable, the members of the Mexican cabinet, most of whom were men of fortune and had ample means at hand, not only never gave entertainments, even dinner parties to the members of the diplomatic corps, but never even invited them to their houses,—when invited to such parties however by any of the foreign ministers, they never failed to accept the invitation. With any other people there

would be a seeming meanness in this. But such was not the case. No people are more liberal in the expenditure of money. General Santa Anna had two very large dinner parties whilst I was in Mexico, and two or three balls; but I heard of nothing else of the kind, except at the houses of the foreign ministers. Santa Anna's dinners were altogether elegant, and he presided at them with great dignity and propriety. On such occasions he was joyous and hilarious. The company, without an exception, had the appearance and manners of gentlemen; I sat next to him on these occasions, and his aides-de-camp, who were not seated at the table, would occasionally come to his seat and say some playful thing to him. I was much struck with the style of the intercourse between them; marked by an affectionate kindness on his part, and the utmost respect, but at the same time freedom from restraint, upon theirs.

His balls were very numerously attended. The company was by no means select. In fact I saw there very few of the ladies belonging to the aristocracy; but very many others who had no business there. This, however, is unavoidable in a revolutionary country like Mexico. Every President holds his power by no other tenure than the caprice of the army, and he is forced, therefore, to conciliate it. If a corporal, who has married the daughter of the washerwoman of the regiment, has risen to the highest station in the army, his wife cannot be slighted with safety—and such cases have occurred.

I wish that I could in sincerity say that the ladies of Mexico are handsome. They are not, nor yet are they ugly. Their manners, however, are perfect; and in the great attributes of the heart, affection, kindness, and benevolence in all their forms, they have no superiors. They are eminently graceful in everything but dancing. That does

not "come by nature," as we have the authority of Dogberry that reading and writing do; and they are rarely taught to dance, and still more rarely practise it.

I think that in another, and the most important point in the character of woman, they are very much slandered. I am quite sure that there is no city in Europe of the same size where there is less immorality. Indeed, I cannot see how such a thing is possible. Every house in Mexico has but one outside door, and a porter always at that. The old system of the duenna, and a constant espionage, are observed by every one, and to an extent that would scarcely be believed. I have no doubt, however, that whatever other effects these restraints may have, their moral influence is not a good one. The virtue which they secure is of the sickly nature of hot-house plants, which wither and perish when exposed to the weather. Women, instead of being taught to regard certain acts as impossible to be committed, and therefore not apprehended or guarded against, are brought up with an idea that the temptation of opportunity is one which is never resisted.

I do not think that the ladies of Mexico are generally very well educated. There are, however, some shining exceptions. Mrs. Almonte, the wife of General Almonte, would be regarded as an accomplished lady in any country. The Mexicans, of either sex, are not a reading people. The ladies read very little.

The general routine of female life is to rise late, and spend the larger portion of the day standing in their open windows, which extend to the floor. It would be a safe bet at any hour of the day between ten and five o'clock, that you would in walking the streets see one or more females standing thus at the windows of more than half the houses. At five they ride on the Paseo, and then go to the theatre,

where they remain until twelve o'clock, and the next day, and every day in the year, repeat the same routine. In this dolce far niente their whole lives pass away. But I repeat that in many of the qualities of the heart which make women lovely and loved, they have no superiors.

The war of independence was illustrated with many instances of female virtue of a romantic character, one of which I will mention. And I again regret that I have forgotten the name of the noble woman whose virtue and love of country were so severely tested. The lady to whom I refer had two sons, each of whom was in command of a detachment of the patriot army. One of them was made prisoner, and the Spanish General into whose hands he had fallen, sent for his mother and said to her, "If you will induce your other son to surrender his army to me, I will spare the life of the one who is my prisoner." Her instant reply was, "No! I will not purchase the life of one son with the dishonor of another and the ruin of my country." This fact is historic, and is more true than history generally is.

The ladies of Mexico dress with great extravagance, and I suppose a greater profusion of "pearl and gold"—I will not say more barbaric—than in any other country. I remember that at a ball at the President's, Mr. Bocanegra asked me what I thought of the Mexican ladies; were they as handsome as my own countrywomen? I of course avoided answering the question; I told him, however, that they were very graceful, and dressed much finer than our ladies. He said he supposed so, and then asked me what I thought the material of the dresses of two ladies which he pointed out had cost; and then told me that he had happened to hear his wife and daughters speaking of them, and that the material of the dresses, blonde, I think, had cost one thousand dollars each. I asked on the same occasion,

a friend of mine who was a merchant, what he supposed was the cost of an ornament for the head thickly set with diamonds of the Señora A. G. He told me that he knew very well for he had imported it for her, and that the price was twenty-five thousand dollars; she wore other diamonds and pearls no doubt of equal value.

I have said that there are very rarely if ever anything like evening parties, or tertullias; social meetings, or calls to spend an evening are quite as unusual, except among very near relations, and even then the restraint and espionage are not at all relaxed. Persons who have seen each other, and been attached for years, often meet at the altar without ever having spent half an hour in each other's company. Ladies of the better classes never walk the streets except on one day in the year, the day before Good Friday, I believe it is. But they make the most of this their saturnalia; on that day all the fashionable streets are crowded with them, in their best "bibs and tuckers," and glittering in diamonds.

The streets are always, however, swarming with women of the middling and lower classes. The only articles of dress worn by these are a chemise and petticoat, satin slippers, but no stockings, and a rebozo, a long shawl improperly called by our ladies, a mantilla. This they wear over the head and wrapped close around the chin, and thrown over the left shoulder. Whatever they may be in private, no people can be more observant of propriety in public; one may walk the streets of Mexico for a year, and he will not see a wanton gesture or look on the part of a female of any description, with the single exception, that if you meet a woman with a fine bust, which they are very apt to have, she finds some occasion to adjust her rebozo, and

throws it open for a second. This reboza answers all the purposes of shawl, bonnet, and frock-body.

The women of Mexico, I think, generally smoke; it is getting to be regarded as not exactly *comme il faut*, and therefore they do it privately. As the men generally smoke, they have the advantage which Dean Swift recommends to all who eat onions, to make their sweethearts do so too.

One of the favorite and most pleasant recreations of the Mexicans is what they call *un dia de campo*, a day in the country. A party is made up to spend the day at Tacubaya, or some other of the neighboring villages, or at some house in the suburbs of the city, where a dinner is prepared, and a band of music sent out; and the day and a large portion of the night spent in dancing. Never have I seen a more joyous and hilarious people than they are on these occasions.

I shall never forget one of these parties which was given to General Almonte, just before he left Mexico on his mission to this country. It was a genuine, roistering, country frolic. We got into boats, and with the music playing, were rowed for some distance by moonlight, in the canal which terminates in the Lake of Chalco, and then amongst the Chinampas or floating gardens, which are now nothing more than shaking bogs. The very thin stratum of soil which had formed on the water of the Lake is made more unsteady, when a small space of an acre or two is surrounded by a canal. There are now none of the floating gardens described by the conquerors, which were formed by artificial means, and moved about from one part of the lake to another.

The men who are met in the street, are almost exclusively officers and soldiers of the army, priests

and leperos, the latter quite as useful, and much the least burdensome and pernicious of the three classes. The Mexicans of the better classes generally wear cloth cloaks at all seasons of the year, and the Indians blankets; for ornament, I suppose, for the weather is never cold enough to make either necessary. One thing, however, I could never account for, I did not feel uncomfortably cold in a linen coat, nor uncomfortably warm with my cloak on. All the physical peculiarities of the Indians of Mexico are precisely the same as those of our own Indians; they are, however, much smaller. Their appearance is very much the same in all respects as those of the straggling Indians who are seen about our cities; nothing of the elastic step and proud bearing of our natives of the forest. Such a noble looking fellow as the Seminole Chief, Wild Cat, would create a sensation there; he might possibly get up a *pronunciamento*—I have no doubt he would attempt it. In a word, I am by no means sure that in exchanging the peculiar civilisation which existed in the time of Montezuma for that which the Spaniards gave them, that they have improved the condition of the masses; they have lost little of the former but its virtues, and acquired little of the latter but its vices. I have already remarked that, although there are no political distinctions amongst the various castes of the population of Mexico, that the social distinctions are very marked. At one of those large assemblies at the President's palace, it is very rare to see a lady whose color indicates any impurity of blood. The same remark is, to a great extent, true of the gentlemen, but there are a good many exceptions.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Congress of Deputies—Patriotism—The Army—Undisciplined Troops—The Lasso, an Instrument of Warfare—Mexican and American Cavalry—Mode of Recruiting the Army—Texian conflicts with the Mexicans.

The Congress of Deputies is a highly respectable looking body. I have seen no similar body anywhere superior in this respect, or which is more dignified and orderly. Spanish decorum and gravity, which I have before remarked are never forgotten, even in the excitement of the gaming-table, are proof against what our own experience would lead us to believe is a much severer trial, the excitement and irritation of political strife. Two members of the Mexican Congress who would fight on the floor of Congress would be in danger of the garote. The manner of some of the speakers is decidedly oratorical. As to the matter I cannot speak, as the gallery where seats are provided for the diplomatic corps is so high that it is impossible to hear. Their style, however, like that of all Mexicans, is excessively grandiloquent, always in "Ercles vein." But what is much more to their honor is, that in the ever-shifting scenes in the drama of Mexican revolutions and civil wars, there has not been a single instance of a Mexican Congress proving false to the trust confided to it. It is true that there have been subservient Congresses, but they were not composed of the members originally elected. The strong measure of all usurpers, from the time of Cromwell, was resorted to of dissolving the original Congress, and assembling another selected by the President

from his own subservient tools, and who were no more, of course, than the passive instruments of his will, and the registers of his edicts. The resistance made by the Congress of Mexico to the usurpation and arbitrary acts of Iturbide may be advantageously compared with that of the English Parliament to Cromwell, and more closely with the conduct of the French Chambers towards Buonaparte. The course of Pedraza, as a member of the Mexican Congress during the last administration of Santa Anna, when his power was absolute, and he seemed to be altogether impregnable, was worthy of all admiration. It was firm, cool, resolute, and patriotic.

The better classes of the Mexicans are generally educated to some extent, and, I think, as generally patriotic. They have the sentiment of liberty, but it is vague and undefined, and a devoted attachment to the word "Republic," but, I greatly fear, are not altogether capable of laying wisely the broad and deep foundations of such a government which would be suited to their peculiar circumstances. God grant that they may! for they deserve success; and I can say, in all truth, that there is no other country, except my own, in whose advances in the great career of civil liberty I feel so strong an interest.

The first spark struck out from our own great movement was kindled in Mexico. The nation has passed through the severest trials, and, in many instances, developed characters of the most disinterested patriotism and exalted virtue.

That which is in all respects the greatest nuisance, and the most insuperable barrier to the prosperity and progress of Mexico, is the army. They will tell you there that it amounts to forty thousand men; but they have never had half that number. I have no doubt that the accounts at the

Department of War exhibit nearly the number stated, but a large proportion of them are men of straw—fictitious names fraudulently inserted for the benefit of the officers who pay them. They are paid every day, or, rather, that is the law; but the pay is just as fictitious as the muster rolls.

They have more than two hundred generals, most of them without commands. Every officer who commands a regiment has the title of general, and is distinguished from generals who have no commands by the addition of "General effectivo." The rate of pay is not very different from that of our own army. Each officer and soldier, however, is his own commissary, no rations being issued; and they are well satisfied if they receive enough of their pay to procure their scanty rations, which was very rarely the case, except with Santa Anna's favorite troops, whom he always kept about his person, and this made it their interest to sustain him. In one of the last conversations which I had with him, I told him that the army would remain faithful to him just so long as he could pay them, and no longer, and that I did not see how it was possible for him to pay them much longer.

The result proved the truth of both predictions, and that, I have no doubt, was the cause of the revolution which overthrew him. It is not alone with the French *sans-culottes* that "la liberté et la peine" is a cry of fearful potency. Shortly before I left Mexico, an officer in the army came to the city and settled his accounts with the War Department, and received a certificate that twenty-five hundred dollars were due him; after hawking it about amongst the brokers, he sold the claim for a hundred and twenty-five dollars, which was five cents on the dollar.

They say that they are obliged to have a standing army,

and that they can only enforce their laws "by the grace of God and gunpowder." This may be true, but I doubt it. But if it be, is there any military man who will deny that five thousand soldiers well-paid, fed and disciplined, would be more efficient than fifty thousand such troops as they have? It has been the policy of all great commanders not to take doubtful and undisciplined troops into a great battle. I do not hesitate to say that if I was in command of an army of ten thousand disciplined troops, and was going into battle, and was offered ten thousand more Mexican troops, that I would not take them. Napier, in his history of the Peninsular War, describing some battle uses this expression: "The British army was strengthened or rather *weakened* by twenty thousand undisciplined Spanish troops." The inequality between disciplined and undisciplined troops is estimated by military men as one to five. This inequality is much greater with large masses, and I do not think that any commander could perform a tactical evolution with five thousand Mexican troops. I do not believe that such an one—a manœuvre in the face of an enemy—ever was attempted in any Mexican battle; they have all been mere melées or mob fights, and generally terminated by a charge of cavalry, which is, therefore, the favorite corps with all Mexican officers. I should regard it, from the diminutive size of their horses and the equally diminutive stature and feebleness of their riders, as utterly inefficient against any common infantry. I said so in conversation with Colonel B——n, an officer who had seen some service, and had some reputation. I was not a little amused at his reply. He admitted that squares of infantry were generally impregnable to cavalry, but said it was not so with the Mexican cavalry, that they had one resource by which they never had any difficulty in breaking the square. I

was curious to know what this new and important discovery in the art of war was, and waited impatiently the "push of his one thing," when to my infinite amusement he replied —the Lasso; that the cavalry *armed* with lassos rode up and threw them over the men forming the squares, and pulled them out, and thus made the breach. I remembered that my old nurse had often got me to sleep when a child, by promising to catch me some birds the next day, by putting salt on their tails, which I thought was about as easy an operation as this new discovery of the Mexican colonel. I had read of "kneeling ranks and charging squadrons," but this idea of lassoing squadrons was altogether new to me. Buonaparte fought and gained the battle of the Pyramids against the best cavalry in the world, the Mamelukes, entirely in squares. He lost the battle of Waterloo because the British squares were impenetrable to the next best—the French cavalry—during all of that long and awful conflict. The idea, however, of the lasso did not occur to the Mamelukes in Egypt, nor to Buonaparte at Waterloo. I was reminded of the equally novel attack of the Chinese upon the English, when they were all formed in battle array and the Chinese threw somersets at them instead of cannon balls and shells.

The Mexican army, and more particularly their cavalry, may do very well to fight each other, but in any conflict with our own or European troops, it would not be a battle but a massacre. Frederick the Great, who was the author, in a great degree, of the modern system of tactics, had three maxims as to cavalry. First, that a cavalry corps should never be charged but should always make the charge. Second, that, in a charge of cavalry, they were not going fast enough unless when halted the froth from the mouth of the horse struck the rider in the face; and

third, which was rather the summing up of the first two, that the spur was more important than the sword. In other words, that the impulse and momentum of the horse was of more consequence than the arms and blows of the rider. What then must be the murderous inequality between a corps of American cavalry and an equal number of Mexicans? The American corps, from the superior size of their horses, would cover twice as much ground, and the obstruction offered by the Mexicans on their small and scrawny ponies would scarcely cause their horses to stumble in riding over them; to say nothing of the greater inequality of the men themselves, five to one at least in individual combats, and more than twice that in a battle. The infantry would be found even more impotent.

I do not think that the Mexican men have much more physical strength than our women. They are generally of diminutive stature, wholly unaccustomed to labor or exercise of any sort, and as a conclusive proof of their inferiority to our own Indians, I will mention the fact that frequent incursions are made far into the interior of Mexico by marauding bands of Comanches, who levy black mail to an enormous extent upon the northern provinces of Mexico. It is not unusual for bands of a hundred Comanches thus to penetrate several hundred miles into Mexico and carry off as many horses, cattle and captives as they choose; there are not less than five thousand Mexicans at this moment slaves of the Comanches—and of all our western tribes the Comanches are the most cowardly,—the Delawares frequently whip them five to one.

The soldiers of the Mexican army are generally collected by sending out *recruiting* detachments into the mountains, where they hunt the Indians in their dens and caverns, and bring them in chains to Mexico; there is scarcely a day

that droves of these miserable and more than half naked wretches are not seen thus chained together and marching through the streets to the barracks, where they are scoured and then dressed in a uniform made of linen cloth or of serge, and are occasionally drilled—which drilling consists mainly in teaching them to march in column through the streets. Their military bands are good, and the men learn to march indifferently well—but only indifferently well—they put their feet down as if they were feeling for the place, and do not step with that jaunty, erect and graceful air which is so beautiful in well drilled troops. As to the wheelings of well-trained troops, like the opening and shutting of a gate, or the prompt and exact execution of other evolutions, they know nothing about them. There is not one in ten of these soldiers who has ever seen a gun, nor one in a hundred who has ever fired one before he was brought into the barracks. It is in this way that the ranks of the army are generally filled up—in particular emergencies the prisons are thrown open, which always contain more prisoners than the army numbers, and these felons become soldiers and some of them officers. Their arms, too, are generally worthless English muskets which have been condemned and thrown aside, and are purchased for almost nothing and sold to the Mexican government. Their powder, too, is equally bad; in the last battle between Santa Anna and Bustamente, which lasted the whole day, not one cannon ball in a thousand reached the enemy—they generally fell about half-way between the opposing armies. What would they think of such fights as we had on the northern lines, when Miller stormed the English battery, or when, in the language of General Brown, "General Jessup showed himself to his friends in a sheet of fire." I do not think that the Mexicans are defi-

cient in courage; or it might be more properly said that they are indifferent to danger or the preservation of a life which is really so worthless to the most of them. But with the disadvantages to which I have adverted, the reader will not be surprised that in all the conflicts with our people, in which they have been more or less engaged for the last thirty years, they have always been defeated.

The following brief sketch of some of these battles I have taken from the report of Mr. Moffit, who was sent as Commissioner to Texas, in 1837, by General Jackson, to collect such information as would enable him to act understandingly upon the question of the recognition of the Independence of Texas:—

"In order that you may determine whether her history thus far may be considered as experience that will teach successfully by example, I submit the following summary:

"In the year 1827, when the Texians, near Nacogdoches, had been aggrieved by the military at that post, and had ineffectually endeavored to procure their removal, they took up arms for the purpose, and with 250 undisciplined men defeated 375 regulars, under General Las Piedros.

"In 1832, under the administration of Bustamente, and after the violation of the federal constitution, a detachment of 132 Texian settlers, under Captain John Austin, besieged and reduced the fort at Velasco, garrisoned by 173 Mexicans, under Colonel Ugarticha, with great loss to the besieged.

"In 1835, the Mexican garrison at Anahuoca, under Captain Tenoria, surrendered to Colonel Travis, commanding a smaller force. In October of the same year, the Mexican cavalry from the fortress at Bexar were completely routed at Gonzales.

"A few weeks after, 92 Texians, under Colonels Bowie and Fanning, fought the battle of Conception, and defeated 450 Mexicans. In November, Lepartittlan, on the Nueces, was captured by Adjutant Westover. The battle near Bexar was fought in the same month, and 400 Mexicans were obliged to retire under cover of the artillery of the town, before 200 Texians. And in December, the city of San Antonio and the Alamo,

defended by 1,300 Mexicans, under General Cos, surrendered to 400 Texians, commanded by Colonel Milam. This terminated the first campaign in the cause of civil liberty in Texas.

"The second commenced with a small expedition against Metamoras, which failed, and was succeeded in March, 1836, by the assault of Santa Anna upon the Alamo, its surrender, and the massacre of the Texians.

"Then followed the defeat of the Mexicans at the Mision del Refugio, by Captain King, and the destruction of Gonzales on the retreat of General Houston.

"The second fight at Refugio terminated favorably to the Texians, under Colonel Ward—but Colonel Fanning, a few days after, submitted to General Urrea, and 400 men were shot.

"On the 21st of April, 1836, the decisive battle of San Jacinto was fought, in which General Santa Anna, with 1,300 men, was defeated by General Houston, commanding 783 ; and on the 24th of the same month all the Mexican forces retreated beyond the frontiers of Texas. This concluded the second campaign, and thence, it is said, a new epoch in her history was dated.

"If we recur to the military incidents of Mexico, in which persons from the United States took part, even while that country was under the dominion of Spain, it will be seen that nearly all the conflicts were disastrous to her subjects ; and there seems to be a fatality against her that is likely to keep pace with all her pretensions on this side of her natural boundary, the Rio Grande. As early as 1810, the military post at Baton Rouge, whose commandant had committed many wrongs against Colonel Kemper, was attacked by 40 Americans, under General Thomas, and the garrison, with Colonel Lassus and 120 men, subdued. The Mexicans about that time had commenced a revolution against Spain, and Colonel Ross, with 500 men, proceeded into Texas to aid the patriots : he attacked and took the strong town of Goliad without any loss, and soon after defeated and captured 1,500 Mexicans. This army determined upon the conquest of Mexico, and routed and cut to pieces 3,000 men near San Antonio.

"A reinforcement of 4,000 Mexicans assaulted Bexar in the absence of the American generals, but the trooops resolved to act themselves, and defeated the assailants with the loss of only three men.

"In 1812, General Toledo, who had revolted from the Spanish government, took command of San Antonio, and, with Ross's force of 400, and

300 Indians, routed another Mexican army of 4,000 men. These events led to the general revolution which separated Mexico from Spain; and ever since then, whenever the Texians have been engaged, either with the Mexicans to establish a republic, or against them to defend it, they have almost invariably prevailed."

In the account which Mr. Moffit gives of the battle at Bexar where General Cos surrendered to Colonel Milam, he has overstated the Texian force. There were only two hundred and nineteen Texians engaged in that battle, and they had no artillery but one six pounder. The Mexican force was fourteen hundred men, with twenty-two pieces of artillery. The Mexicans were in a stone building with walls three or four feet thick, and were protected besides by an outside stone-wall two feet high and six feet thick. The attack was made about midnight, the Texians clambering over the walls as best they could. At daylight, General Cos surrendered and gave up his twenty-two pieces of artillery, only stipulating for the return of his men to Mexico, and some of his small arms.

The battle of Mier was fought under precisely equal circumstances, so far as defences were concerned—the troops on both sides firing from the flat roofs of the houses. There were two hundred and seventy Texians engaged against twenty-six hundred Mexicans. The battle lasted eighteen hours, and the result was less than thirty Texians killed and wounded, and from five to seven hundred Mexicans. From information, upon which I have entire reliance, the Mexicans were about to retire and had their horses saddled for that purpose, when the Texians were most unfortunately induced to surrender,—their ammunition being nearly exhausted, and hearing that a large reinforcement of the Mexican army was near at hand. When the prisoners who were taken at Mier, rose upon

their guard on the march to Mexico, there were less than two hundred Texians, and the Mexican guard consisted of two hundred infantry and one hundred cavalry. The Texians had of course no arms of any sort, and the Mexicans anticipated the attack. Yet in fifteen minutes the Mexicans were defeated. Shall we go to war with such a people? Shall we send Scott and Worth to glean a field which has been thus reaped?

If the main body of the Texians had not returned to Texas and had penetrated further into Mexico, no one can fix a limit to their triumphs. I have no doubt that they would have been extensive and important. I regret that I have not yet been able to procure a copy of General Green's account of that short but most remarkable campaign, and the consequences which followed it.

CHAPTER XIX.

Review of Mexican History since the Revolution—Provisions of the Constitution of Tacubaya—Departments of Government—Powers and Duties of the various Officers—Free Institutions without the Spirit of Freedom.

Anything like an outline of the history of Mexico since the revolution which separated that country from Spain, would extend these pages very much beyond the limits which I have prescribed to myself, and would require more time than I have at my disposal. The following hasty glance must therefore suffice. The overthrow of Iturbide in 1823 was followed by the adoption in 1824 of a federal constitution, of which that of the United States was the model. Experience proved that this was much too closely followed. The constitution lasted, however, for a period much longer than any other is likely to do in Mexico. In 1828, Santa Anna made a successful movement against the government of Pedraza, overthrew it, and shortly afterwards in the same way again put down Guerrero, who was subsequently treacherously and foully murdered. In 1832, Santa Anna again pronounced against Bustamente, and placed Pedraza in power. In 1833, he was elected President himself, and in 1835 he established the federal system, and aided by the priests founded a central government which was the cause and the just cause of the revolution in Texas. Never could any people say, with more truth, *non in hæc federa veni.*

In 1836, Santa Anna invaded Texas with a large army,

was defeated at San Jacinto, and made prisoner. After this he remained on his estate at Manga de Clavo, until 1839, when, in a gallant attack upon the French who had landed at Vera Cruz, he lost his leg and recovered his reputation. In the fall of 1842, he again pronounced against Bustamente, overthrew and banished him. The chiefs of the army assembled at Tucubaya, a village three miles from Mexico, established a provisional government until a new constitution could be formed. By the seventh Article of the plan of this provincial government, it is provided that the President shall have all powers necessary to organize the nation and all the branches of the government. Santa Anna construed this grant as in fact conferring upon him absolute powers. He is not without high authority, however, in construing the words, "necessary powers," which there, as elsewhere, were only intended to convey auxiliary powers, into a grant not only of substantive, but of all possible powers. Members were elected to form a new constitution, and assembled about the time of my arrival in Mexico. Their discussions were clever enough, but they talked too much about Greece and Rome. Perhaps the examples of these countries were more to their purpose and tastes than others more modern and more free; their labors were about being closed, and it was known that the result would be the adoption of a constitution federal in its form. Santa Anna retired to his estate at Manga de Clavo, leaving old Bravo, President *ad interim.* Pronunciamentos were gotten up all over the country by the different military garrisons, in which the work of the Convention was denounced and the President requested to close its sessions, which he did. The event was celebrated by a grand military procession through the streets of Mexico. I have seen nothing so revolting as it was, nor

anything which made me so despondent as to the future destinies of Mexico. It marched by my door, and I cannot express my feelings when I saw the ignorant and debased soldiery headed by their officers, who, as to the true principles of a government calculated to secure the liberties of the people, were little better informed, thus celebrating the triumph of brute force over the will of the people fairly expressed.

I would here remark, that although I have a well settled opinion that a federal government is not suited to the circumstances aud condition of Mexico, yet I am well satisfied that the federal party numbers in its ranks much the larger portion of the true patriots of the country. It was said, with how much truth I cannot decide, that Santa Anna absented himself from Mexico at this important juncture to avoid the responsibility of the act of closing the sessions of the Convention, and to throw that responsibility upon General Bravo. A new Convention soon after assembled, which was composed chiefly of members nominated by the President. This Convention adopted a constitution which went into operation in the beginning of the year 1844. Although I cannot go the whole length of the opinion expressed by Pope, that the government "which is best administered is best," yet I am satisfied that the present constitution of Mexico is better than another of those changes so disastrous to the country, and which have made Mexico the object of ridicule everywhere.

Some of the leading provisions of this constitution are the following :—

Slavery is for ever prohibited.

The liberty of the Press is guaranteed ; *a guarantee, however, purely theoretical; it is no more free than in France, nor as free.*

Equally theoretical is the provision that no one shall be arrested but by the authority of law.

No taxes to be imposed but by the legislative authority.

Private property not to be taken for public uses but with just compensation.

Mexicans to be preferred for public offices to strangers, if their qualifications are equal—*a qualification, by the way, of this provision which neutralizes it.*

Persons who have attained the age of eighteen years are entitled to the rights of citizens, if married; if unmarried, twenty-one years; and who have an annual income of two hundred dollars, either from labor or the profits of capital.

After the year 1850, those only are to exercise the privileges of a citizen who can read and write.

By becoming a domestic servant, the privileges of a citizen are suspended; so, also, pending a criminal prosecution—being a habitual drunkard or gambler, a vagrant or keeping a gaming-house.

The rights of citizenship are lost by conviction of an infamous crime, or for fraudulent bankruptcy, or by malversation in any public office.

The legislative power is composed of a house of deputies and a senate, one deputy for every seventy thousand inhabitants; a supernumerary deputy shall be elected in all cases to serve in the absence of the regular deputy.

The age prescribed for members of Congress is thirty years. They must have an annual income of twelve hundred dollars. One half of the members to be re-elected every two years.

The Senate is composed of sixty-three members, two-thirds of whom are to be elected by the departmental assemblies, the other third by the House of Deputies, the President of the Republic, and the Supreme Court; each

department to vote for forty-three persons, and those having the highest number of votes of the aggregate of all the departmental assemblies are elected senators. The judges of the Supreme Court and the President shall vote in like manner for the remaining third; and out of the names thus voted for by each of those departments of the government, the House of Deputies selects the proper number (twenty-one). The first selection of this third of the Senators to be made by the President (Santa Anna) alone.

The President of the Republic and Judges of the Supreme Court are required to vote only for such persons as have *distinguished* themselves by important public services, civil, military, or ecclesiastical. Amongst others disqualified from being elected members of the House of Deputies are the Archbishops, Bishops, and other high Ecclesiastical officers.

The Senators elected by the Departments are required to be five agriculturists, and the same number of each of the following occupations—miners, merchants, and manufacturers; the remainder to be elected from persons who have filled the office of President, Minister of State, Foreign Minister, Governor of a Department, Senator, Deputy, Bishop, or General of Division. The age of a Senator is thirty-five years, and an annual income of two thousand dollars, is required.

One-third of the Senate to be renewed every three years.

All laws must originate in the House of Deputies.

All treaties must be approved by both Houses of Congress. Congress has a veto upon all the decrees of the Departmental Assemblies which are opposed to the Constitution or the laws of Congress.

Congress are forbidden to alter the laws laying duties on

imports which are intended for the protection of domestic industry.

No retrospective law or laws impairing the obligation of contracts to be passed.

The Senate to approve the President's nomination of foreign ministers, consuls, and of officers in the army above the rank of Colonel.

Members of Congress not to receive executive appointments except with certain limitations, amongst which is the consent of the body to which they belong.

The other powers of Congress are pretty much the same as in our own or other popular Constitutions. The President must be a native of the country, and a layman, and holds his office for the term of five years. It is made his duty to supervise the courts of justice, and he may prescribe the order in which cases shall be tried He may impose fines not exceeding five hundred dollars upon those who disobey his lawful commands. Certain large powers are conferred upon him in relation to Concordats, Bulls, Decrees, and other ecclesiastical matters. He possesses a very qualified veto upon the acts of Congress. He may call an extra session of Congress, and prescribe the only subjects to be considered. The President not to exercise any military command without the consent of Congress. Not to leave the Republic during his term of office, nor for one year after its expiration, but with the consent of Congress, nor to go more than six leagues from the Capital, without the like permission. He shall in no case alienate, exchange or mortgage any portion of the territory of the Republic. All his acts must be approved by the Secretary of the Department to which it properly belongs. He cannot be prosecuted criminally except for Treason against the national independence or the form of government es-

tablished by the Constitution during his term of office, nor for one year afterwards.

During the temporary absence of the President, his functions devolve upon the President of the Senate; if his absence continues longer than fifteen days, a President ad interim shall be elected by the Senate. The other grants of power to the Executive seem to be pretty much copied from our own Constitution.

The different Secretaries may attend the sessions of either branch of Congress, whenever required by them, or so ordered by the President, to give any explanations which may be desired. The Secretaries are responsible for all acts of the President in violation of the Constitution and laws which they may have approved.

The Council of the President consists of seventeen members selected by himself. These Councillors must be thirty-five years old, and have served at least ten years without intermission in some public station.

The Judges of the Supreme Court must be forty years old.

The government may be impleaded in this Court by any individual (I think a wise and just provision); as may also the Archbishops and Bishops in particular cases.

A permanent court martial is also organized, composed of Generals and lawyers, appointed by the President.

Each Department has an assembly of not more than eleven, nor less than seven members. Their powers are to impose taxes for the use of the Department; establish schools and charitable institutions; make roads and keep them in order; arrange the mode of raising troops which may be required of the Department; establish corporations; superintend the police, and encourage agriculture; propose laws to the Congress, and fit persons to the President for

the office of Governor of the Department (from the persons thus recommended, the President, except in extraordinary cases, must make the selection), establish judicial tribunals for their Departments, with many other powers of a similar character, and constituting the assembly a sort of state legislature, with jurisdiction of matters appertaining strictly to the Department.

The whole Republic is divided into sections of five hundred inhabitants. Each of these sections selects by ballot one elector. These electors in turn elect others in the ratio of one for every twenty of the electors thus primarily elected. These last constitute the electoral college of the Department, which again elect the deputies of the general Congress, and the members of the Departmental assembly. All persons who have attained the age of twenty-five years are eligible as primary electors. The secondary electors must also have an income of five hundred dollars a year. On the first of November preceding the expiration of the term of office of the President, each of the Departmental assemblies is required to meet and cast their votes for his successor. A majority of the votes of this assembly decides the vote of the Department. On the second day of January both houses of Congress assemble together and declare the election. If no one has received the votes of a majority of the Departments, the two houses of Congress make the election from the two who have received the greatest number of votes. If more than two have an equal number of votes, the election is made from those who have received such equal number. If one has received a higher number, and two others have received a less and equal number of votes, Congress selects by ballot one of these last to compete with him who has received a higher number. This election is required to be finished in a single session.

In cases of a tie a second time in these elections, the choice is to be made by lot.

Punishments shall in no case extend to confiscation of property, or to attainder.

No cruel punishment shall be inflicted in capital cases, only such as are necessary to take life.

The judges are responsible for any irregularities or mistakes in their official proceedings. They hold their offices for life.

Amendments of the Constitution to be made by a vote of two-thirds of both branches of Congress.

The Catholic religion is established to the exclusion of all others. Most of the other provisions of the constitution seem to be almost exactly copied from that of the United States.

I think that this constitution is calculated to elevate the character of those who framed it very much beyond the general estimate of the intelligence of the Mexicans; and that it is still more creditable in the general spirit of liberty which runs through all its provisions. I do not see that any of the guarantees are wanting for the security of the rights of the citizen or the public liberty. But of what avail are free institutions without the spirit of liberty amongst the people; or what avail are both without general intelligence and virtue? "Quid valeant leges sine moribus?" The history of other countries answers the question, but none so conclusively as the present almost hopeless condition of Mexico—with a constitution quite liberal enough for any country. It is the profound remark of an eminent writer "that to endeavor to make a people free who are servile in their nature, is as hopeless as to attempt to reduce to slavery a nation imbued with the spirit of freedom." I would very much prefer the spirit of liberty with despotic institutions, to free institutions without the spirit of liberty.

CHAPTER XX.

Want of Statistics—Census—Amount of Exports—Specie Exported—Excessive Taxation—Taxes on Internal Commerce—Tobacco Monopoly—Peculation—Table of Revenues—Dilapidation of the large Estates.

There is no such thing in Mexico as a statistical collection of any sort. It is a characteristic fact that the only attempts which have been made to make such a collection have been by foreigners—by Baron Humboldt, in 1804, and Mr. Brantz Mayer, recently the Secretary of the American Legation in Mexico. Mr. Mayer had access to the best sources of information, of which he has with praiseworthy diligence availed himself. No census has ever been taken since the revolution, not even in arranging the ratio of representation in Congress. With such a population there would be great difficulty in making out a census with any tolerable accuracy. The whole population of the Republic is estimated or rather guessed at as amounting to seven millions. Of these it is supposed that between four and four and a half millions are pure-blooded Indians, about one million of white Europeans or their descendants, and the remainder Mulattoes, Mestizoes and Zambos. My own observation would lead me to believe that the number of mulattoes is very small. I am sure that I never saw half a dozen in the city of Mexico, and the African blood is, I think, easily detected. The appearance of the mulattoes is almost as distinct from the Indian as it is from the white man; there is a manifest difference even in color. Of the

number of Mestizoes, descendants of the Indian and white races, it is impossible to form even a conjecture with any approach to accuracy. As the cross partakes more or less of either of the races, it is difficult to say whether the individual is of pure or mixed blood. When the Indian cross is remote it is difficult to distinguish the person from a swarthy Spaniard, and so vice versâ. Neither do I think that there are many Zambos, for the African blood shows itself as distinctly in the cross with the Indian as with the white man. I have never looked upon any color so horribly revolting as that of the Zambo. Many of the inhabitants of the Pacific coast are very dark, as dark as brown negroes, and darker than mulattoes, but have none of the physical or physiognomical peculiarities of the negro. They are tall, well-formed, fine-looking men, with limbs and faces much more Grecian than African. If I were to form an opinion from what I saw, I should say that the estimate of white persons is a large one. They are very much confined to the cities, and a few wealthy proprietors, who reside upon their estates. I am quite sure that nine of every ten persons whom one meets in the streets of Mexico are Indians or Mestizoes, and it is in that city that the white population is greater in proportion than anywhere else; in travelling in the country it would be safe to wager that forty-nine of every fifty persons you might meet would be Indians. I have heretofore spoken of the sympathy of race, but it is not half so strong as the antipathy of race. The feelings of the Indians of Mexico towards the Spaniards is very much the same now that it was at the period of the Conquest. Although everything admonishes them that the European is the superior race, they are generally averse to alliances with them, and whenever such are formed, they are prompted more by interest than inclination. How can

it be otherwise? The original wrongs of the invasion of their country, and the horrible massacres which followed it, have been aggravated by three centuries of grinding oppression, without one effort to educate them or to promote their advances in civilized life. The single exception which can be made to this remark is in the efforts to convert them to "nuestra santa fé." And as to the masses, I have before remarked that these efforts have done little more than to substitute one worship of images for another.

In the neighborhood of the cities the natives professed the Christian religion; many of them from fear, others from interest, and others again in sincerity, captivated by the thousand objects which address their senses and excite their feelings. In the more remote and secluded portions of the country they worship in secret the same grotesque figures which were the objects of the devout adoration of their early ancestors. A very intelligent Indian promised to procure for me some of these idols, which, failing to do, he told me in great confidence, knowing that I was no Catholic, that the Indians who had them would not sell them at any price. "What," said I, "do they still worship them?" "Yes, Sir," said he, "with as much devotion as they ever did, but always in secret." The principal difference that I could see in the two superstitions was, that the Christian images were the handsomest. But I am not sure that in this they are any the better suited to the notions of an ignorant and uncivilized people, whose only idea of a God is that he is powerful and revengeful; and hence the universality of the practice of all savage people, of offering sacrifices to propitiate his wrath. With such an idea of God, I can conceive of nothing better than an ancient Mexican idol.

From the best attainable data, the annual exports of Mexico amount to about twenty millions—less than two millions of

which consist of all other articles than the precious metals. I have no doubt that the amount of specie exported is very much larger than is indicated by the books of the custom houses. A duty of six per cent. is levied upon all that is exported, and no one acquainted with the character and practices of Mexican custom houses, and I may add, of their officers, can believe that the whole amount is returned. The duty upon all that is not returned goes into the pockets of the officers of the customs, and I have no doubt that it amounts to a very large sum. Gold is an article so easily smuggled that enormous sums are sent off in almost every vessel which sails for Europe. The amount of duties on imports varies, of course, with their ever-changing tariff. Those who had the best means of forming an accurate estimate during my residence in Mexico, told me that it amounted to from four to six millions per annum. This, also, would be a most fallacious standard by which to estimate the amount of importations, for the same reason. Eminent writers upon political economy say that any duty above twenty-five per cent. offers temptations to smuggling too strong to be resisted. With all the efforts of Buonaparte to carry out his continental system, he was unable to prevent smuggling upon the very limited coast of France—and the insurance in England upon a cargo of goods intended to be smuggled into France was little more than on the same cargo to be regularly imported. How extensive must the practice be in a country of more than ten thousand miles of seaboard and frontier, and with so sparse a population! The amount of revenue from imports would indicate an importation of not more than fifteen millions of dollars. What goes with the other five millions of exports, to say nothing of the large amounts of specie clandestinely exported?

In addition to the revenue derived from imports, the direct taxes are exceedingly onerous. Everything is taxed, from the splendid palaces, coaches, and plate of the wealthy, to the dozen eggs which the poor Indian brings to market. I do not suppose there is any city in the world where houses are taxed so high, and hence the enormous rents. But after paying the taxes very little is left to the proprietor. A decent house cannot be had for less than twenty-five hundred dollars, and from that price to four and five thousand dollars per annum.

The government seems to have been engaged in the experiment of how much taxation the people can bear, and they have really achieved a miracle almost as great as that of extracting blood from a turnip. There is no country in the world, which, from its unsurpassed climate, variety of productions and lands, to be had almost for the taking, which, in proportion to its population, is capable of producing so much,—certainly none which does produce so little. The population of Massachusetts is about one-tenth as great as that of Mexico, and its productions very nearly in an inverse ratio with the number of the respective populations—excluding the produce of the mines very much more than in that inversed ratio. Where they find the subjects of taxation was a riddle which I was unable to solve.

Besides the sources of revenue which I have mentioned, there is another and a very large one from imposts on internal commerce, that is between one department and another. Every article of commerce thus passing from one department to another, provided it has been opened and the bulk broken, is thus taxed. The principal revenue from the alcaba, internal duties, thus derived is from the duty on specie. The revenue from duties on internal commerce in 1840, amounted to four millions and a half.

Another fruitful source of revenue is the percentage of the produce of the mines, seignorage, coining, &c. The charges upon money taken from the mines amount to about five per cent, all of which is paid to the departmental government. The General Government receives in addition to this about three per cent, which goes to support the College of the Mineria in the city of Mexico.

The tobacco monopoly has heretofore been a source of very large revenues to the government. The culture of tobacco is prohibited except to a very limited extent in the districts of Orizaba and Cordova. Each farmer is restricted to a limited number of acres. The tobacco produced is sold to the government at a stated price, which was very much below its real value, by whose agents it was made into cigars and snuff, and sold at very large profits. I say made into cigars and snuff, for those are the only forms in which it is used; I do not suppose that there is one native Mexican who uses tobacco for chewing. Within the last three years this monopoly was sold by the government to a private company. This company agreed to pay $50,000 per month for this monopoly, which in the time of the Vice Regal government yielded the enormous sum of five millions per annum. This contract has since been rescinded, and the government still possesses the monopoly, which would if properly managed, and if smuggling could be prevented, produce very nearly as much at this time. But the latter is impossible, and the receipts from this source very little more than cover the expenses of the establishment. At all events the net proceeds do not exceed the sum stipulated to be paid by the company to which it was transferred, that is to say $600,000 per annum.

A similar sale took place just before I left Mexico of the interest of one third which the government owned in the

Fresnillo mine, which is at this time the most profitable of all the mines in Mexico. The government derived a revenue of upwards of five hundred thousand dollars per annum from this mine, which it nevertheless sold in fee simple for about four hundred thousand dollars. That is to say, that sum was all which went into the public exchequer—how much more in gratifications I know not; but a very large sum of course. Is it any wonder that officers in the army are forced to sell a certificate of pay due them amounting to twenty-five hundred dollars, for one hundred and twenty-five?

Before the revolution the King of Spain received among other Ecclesiastical revenues, the ninth part of the tithes, which was granted him by the Pope. After the revolution compulsory process for the collection of tithes was abolished, and since that time the government has received nothing from this source, nor am I aware of any other revenues which are derived from the church.

There are revenues derived from the cock-pits, the sale of pulque, the monopoly of playing cards, and the ice which the Indians bring on their backs in panniers, from the mountain of Popocatepelt, a distance of forty miles, which last has amounted to as much as fifty thousand dollars a year.

Another source of revenue is the manufacture of gunpowder, of which an immense quantity is used, not only in their civil wars, but in the mines, firing cannon on days of religious festivals, and fireworks, for which the Mexicans have a great passion. The powder manufactured in Mexico is of the most inferior quality; good powder such as is used by sportsmen sells as high as four dollars the pound. The chief, if not the only benefit which the gov-

ernment now derives from this source, is the powder which is used in the public service.

The revenue from the post-office amounts to little more than what is required to pay the expenses of the establishment. It would be very much larger if it were not for the numerous government expresses which are charged upon the post-office establishment.

Some small amount is realized from the sale of lottery tickets, which would be larger but for special grants to the convents and other religious establishments, to raise funds by lotteries.

Heretofore something was derived from the manufactories of salt, of which a very large quantity is used. In addition to the consumption in the ordinary modes, large quantities are used in the process of amalgamation in the mints. It is obtained from Yucatan and some establishments in the northern departments, and the Lake of Tezcuco, on the borders of the city of Mexico. When the rainy season ceases and the waters subside, a large portion of the bed of the lake is covered with a deposit of salt which is that chiefly used in the neighborhood of the city of Mexico.

The revenue from the different mints is considerable, but there are no data from which it can be accurately stated. Heretofore the only mint was that in the city of Mexico, but others have been established in Guadalajara, Guanajuato, Chihuahua, Durango, Zacatecas, San Louis, Potosi and Guadaloupe de Calvos. The profits of the mint in the city of Mexico were at one time very great, but the number of officers, clerks and laborers is as great now as it was when there was no other in Mexico, and of consequence these profits are very much diminished. Most of these mints are leased by contract to private companies for a stipulated sum. From half a million to a million of dollars

are, probably, derived from this source. The per centage upon the metals taken from the mines, which is 25 cents upon every mark of silver, or about 3 per cent. will give say another million of dollars, and there are other duties amounting to about five per cent. These last are appropriated to the payment of the expenses of the governments of the departments, but as the government is now organized these expenses are charged to the central government. The three per cent. above mentioned is dedicated to the support of the Mineria (the College of Mines).

Under the government of the federalists, each department or state was required to pay a sum which was assessed for the support of the Federal government, as was the case under our own government of the confederation—and, as with us, this contingent was not always paid.

Another item in the reports of the Mexican Secretaries of the Treasury is the Discuatos de los Invalidos de Monte Reo—which was a certain per centage of the officers and soldiers which was retained for the purpose of raising a pension fund, exactly upon the plan of our own Naval Pension Fund ; but as the army are never paid their full wages, this fund is little more than a fiction.

The maritime custom-houses, in 1832, yielded to the government the sum of twelve millions, that is to say that sum was acknowledged to have been received by the respective custom-house officers ; how much more the actual receipts were can only be conjectured. It would, however, be very safe to say at least one third.

The receipts at the Maritime Custom Houses do not now amount to more than six or seven millions. As nothing is more capricious than Mexican legislation on the subject of imports on foreign commerce, it is very difficult to form an estimate approximating accuracy upon this point.

Their tariff has recently been reduced, and an increase of revenue will certainly be the consequence. Besides the revenue from imports as shown by the books of the custom-house, a very considerable amount is derived from special licenses given to private companies to import certain articles, such as cotton, the importation of which is prohibited, upon the payment of a stipulated sum to the government. The receipts of the interior custom-houses cannot be much less than those in the seaports. The duty on money, for example, sent from Mexico to Vera Cruz to be exported, besides the duty of six per cent., is five per cent. All goods sent from one department to another are also subject to a duty if the bulk has been broken.

The direct taxes, such as those on houses, lands, carriages, and horses, transfers of all property, capitation taxes cartos de seguridad (letters of security), which all foreigners are required to have, taxes on pulque, ice, in short everything, amount to some three or four millions.

The following, although not pretending to minute accuracy, may be regarded as in some degree an approximation to a correct estimate of the revenues of the government, and the sources from which they are derived:—

From the Maritime Custom-Houses,	$6,500,000
Interior Commerce, ...	4,500,000
Direct Taxes, ...	3,000,000
Per centage on Produce of Mines,	1,000,000
Profits of Mints, ...	500,000
Tobacco Monopoly, ...	500,000
Post-office, Lotteries, Manufactures of Powder and Salt, ...	500,000
Tolls and all other sources, . .	500,000
	$16,000,000

It is proper to add to this amount the taxes levied by the different departments which may be stated at four millions more, making an aggregate of twenty-one millions, to which an addition should be made of five or ten millions more which is paid, but embezzled, and, therefore, does not find its way into the public treasury.

With a government wisely and honestly administered, this sum is more than is necessary. But how that of Mexico is supported with it, and whence it is derived, are both, as I have said, inexplicable to me. Besides their army, of thirty to forty thousand, for that is the number on the pay list, and an immense disproportion of this army officers, not less than from two to three hundred generals, an otherwise enormous civil list, and the interest on a debt very little short of a hundred millions of dollars, there are a great variety of other and extraordinary charges upon a government so unstable and revolutionary.* With a productive industry at least fifty times as great as that of Mexico, very little more than the sum above stated is levied upon our people, doubtless not so much if we take into the estimate the greater expense there of collection, which is estimated at thirty per cent. Taking peculations into the calculation, I have no doubt it is much more. And all of these taxes are of course, like all taxes, ultimately paid by the people. The annual expenditure of the Vice regal government was never more than eight millions of dollars. Can it be true that it costs more to execute laws made by the people themselves than the edicts of a despot ?

* The Report of the Secretary of the Treasury in 1832, contains an estimate of the whole expenses of the government for the next year, amounting to $22,392,508. Of this sum the estimate for the army is stated at $16,466,121.

To all these heavy items must be added the taxes which are levied by the different departments for domestic purposes, the heavy exactions of tithes and other compulsory contributions to the church. These last have been estimated at two millions, but they must greatly exceed that amount. There are in the city of Mexico alone, seven or eight hundred secular and near two thousand regular clergy. The salaries of some of them are enormous. Under the Vice regal government the various perquisites and salary of the archbishop amounted to $130,000, and those of several of the bishops to $100,000, but they are all much less now. Exclusively of donations and birth-day presents, which are often very large, the archbishop does not receive more than thirty or forty thousand dollars, and the incomes of the bishops are proportionately reduced.

Some idea may be formed of the amount of these birth-day presents, from the fact that General Santa Anna, on the anniversary of his birth, has been known to receive presents to the amount of $20,000.

All these enormous charges are to be paid out of the productions of a country where less is produced than in any other, except from the mines. Perhaps the universal dilapidation of all the old and large estates may indicate the quarter from which much of the revenue has hitherto been derived.

The large estates and possessions of the banished Jesuits have supplied the government with very large sums. But these, with the mine of Fresnillo, have all been sold and the money wasted. These spendthrift expedients of selling estates to pay current expenses must soon have, if they have not already, an end; and I do not see how even an economical and frugal administration will, in future, be able to find the means of defraying even the necessary expenses of the

government, and this is perhaps the greatest of all the many difficulties which are to be overcome.

There are not many wealthy men in the city of Mexico, fewer I think than in any city in the United States of treble the same size. The larger number of these are persons who have made their fortunes by government contracts and speculations in government stocks. Most of the large estates at the commencement of the revolution have become dilapidated. These large estates were chiefly, if not entirely, owned by Spaniards who were generally the adherents of the cause of the mother country, for the maxim of Juvenal, "Quantum quisquis habet in urbe tantum habet et fidei," is as true now as it was when the line was written. An incident occurred which afforded me a distressing proof of the ruin which the revolution had caused to the loyalists of Mexico, and at the same time a gratifying evidence of the estimate, which was general there, of the influence of my government.

A poor fellow in rags called to see me, and asked my aid in procuring indemnity for an estate of his father, amounting to five or six millions, which had been appropriated by one of the patriotic Generals to the use of his army, during the war of Independence. I told him that as he was not an American citizen, I could not assist him in my official capacity, and that it was not proper that I should do so in any other way. He then asked me whether if he were to come to the United States and become a citizen, I could not then interpose in his behalf. I told him that I could not. I had, however, some curiosity to look into his papers, which furnished the most conclusive evidence of the justice of his claim. Such cases were not at all uncommon.

I have rarely met with a more accomplished and elegant

lady than the venerable old Countess who is so gratefully and affectionately mentioned by Mr. Brantz Mayer. She was reduced from great opulence to extreme poverty, but with the great penury which her household exhibited, she showed in her manners, conversation and sentiments, all of the high bred Castilian lady.

Machiavel says that in a new government everything should be new. "Whoever makes himself head of a state (especially if he suspects his ability to keep it) must, as the best course, make everything as new as himself,—alter the magistracy, create new titles, confer new authorities, uncharter corporations, *advance the poor, impoverish the rich;* and what is said of David may be said of him—'he filled the hungry with good things and the *rich he sent empty away.*'" The Mexican revolutionists at least resembled David in one half of what is said of him—but only in that half.

CHAPTER XXI.

Prohibition of Raw Cotton—Attempts to procure a Modification of this Policy—Public Debt of Mexico—Mines of the Precious Metals—Present Productiveness—Undeveloped Resources—Capacities of Mexico if inhabited by the people of the United States.

The article of raw cotton is one of the articles which are prohibited. The home supply is never equal to the very small demand of their own manufacturers, and the law is, therefore, relaxed very frequently.

The privilege of importing a certain number of bales is granted to some commercial company for a stipulated sum, paid to the government, and, as it was said, a douceur not less in amount to the officers of the government.

I made very great exertions to procure a modification of this prohibitory policy, more particularly as to raw cotton and coarse cotton goods, but in vain. I found Santa Anna thoroughly armed with all the arguments in favor of the protective policy, and I confess that I think that if there is a country in the world where that policy is wise, that Mexico is that country. Every Mexican who can be tempted to labor is just that much gained to the productiveness as well as to the morals of the country; and, if they could be generally so tempted, too high a price could not well be paid for such a boon.

The public debt of Mexico may be, I think, safely stated to be little, if anything, less than a hundred millions of dollars. Of this amount, something more than sixty millions are due to foreigners, including a debt of thirty-six millions

of the Vice-royal Government, which was assumed by Mexico after her independence, and twenty-five millions more to Mexican citizens. A large portion of this debt was originally in the form of Treasury notes, receivable at the Custom House. This was the estimate when I left Mexico, near two years ago. Since that time there have been two revolutions—and revolutions are nowhere unexpensive—so that, including these and all other floating and unliquidated demands, such as the claims of our own citizens for indemnity, I am very confident that the whole public debt does not fall short of the amount which I have stated.

According to Humboldt, there were three thousand mines of the precious metals in Mexico in 1804. Since that time many more have, no doubt, been discovered. Any one who discovers a new mine receives a grant from the government for a certain portion of land, including the mine. Not one-fiftieth of these mines are worked, which is attributed, in a great degree, to the high price of quicksilver. This is caused by the monopoly, by the Rothschilds, of the quicksilver mines of Spain, from which the article is chiefly supplied.

There are no veins of gold ore which have yet been discovered in Mexico, with the exception of a few in the neighborhood of Oaxaca. A very small amount of gold is obtained from working the earth of deposit mines. The principal portion of the gold is found in combination with silver ores. The ores of Guanahuato afford the largest proportion of gold, which is about three pennyweights of gold to one mark of silver. Where the proportion of gold thus combined with silver is small, they are never separated, the amount of gold not being an adequate compensation for the very expensive process of separation. These ores are principally found in veins of various width, and generally

with a dip of about forty-five degrees, and always in beds of primitive rock, most commonly porphyry. In this, I think, they differ from the mines yet discovered in this country; I know of none which have been found in that species of rock.

The produce of the mines of Mexico is quite as large, or larger, now than at any other period, taking an average of ten years, but nothing so profitable to the proprietors, owing to the immense investments in machinery, and the greater labor of raising the ores now compared with the rude and unexpensive machinery heretofore used, and the comparatively small labor of taking out the ores. The company which now owns the great mine of Real del Monte have, in the last few years, expended, in machinery and other ways, several millions of dollars. The shaft of that mine is nearly a thousand yards deep. Baron Humboldt gives the gross produce of the mines of Mexico, from 1690 to 1803, both years inclusive, as amounting to $1,358,452,020, about twelve millions of dollars per annum. The highest amount, which was in the year 1796, was $25,644,566. The produce of the year 1804 he states at $24,000,000. Mr. Ward estimates the annual produce, for a few years prior to 1810, at $24,000,000. After that period, from the revolutionary condition of the country, it dwindled almost to nothing—in one year to three and a half millions of dollars. The official returns for the year 1842 exhibit an exportation of gold and silver, as registered at the Custom Houses, amounting to $18,500,000. The facility with which large values in gold may be concealed, and thus clandestinely exported, and the temptation to do so from the high duty of six per cent. on exportation, caused a very large amount to be smuggled. That this was extensively practised was known to every one in Mexico. To form any accurate estimate of the amount of

the exports of specie, a very large addition must be made on this account. Three or four millions would scarcely cover it. Add to these the amount retained in the country, and it will be very safe to assume the present produce of the mines at from twenty-two to twenty-four millions of dollars per annum. The whole amount coined at the mint in the city of Mexico since the Conquest is $443,000,000; since 1690, $295,968,750. Mining in Mexico, as everywhere else, is a game of chance; and, like all games of chance, there are many more losers than winners amongst those who play at it.

It is risking very little to say that if Mexico was inhabited by our race, that the produce of the mines would be at least five times as great as it now is. There is not a mine which would not be worked, and as many more new ones discovered. In five years, with such a population, and only of an equal number with that which Mexico now has, I do not hesitate to assert that the mineral and agricultural exports alone would nearly equal all the exports of any other country of the world. The last time I examined the tables upon that subject, the whole exports of the produce of British labor was about two hundred and sixty millions of dollars per annum. Mexico in the possession of another race would approach that amount in ten years. Recent manifestations of a rabid, I will not say a rapacious, spirit of acquisition of more territory on the part of our countrymen may well cause a race so inferior in all the elements of power and greatness to tremble for the tenure by which they hold this El Dorado. 'Tis not often, with nations at least, that such temptations are resisted, or that "danger winks on opportunity." I trust, however, that our maxim will ever be—"Noble ends by worthy means attained," and that we may remember that wealth improperly acquired never ultimately benefited an individual or a nation.

CHAPTER XXII.

Want of Navigable Streams in Mexico—Railroad from Vera Cruz to Mexico—Valley of the Mississippi—Mineral and Vegetable Productions—Cotton—Rice—Wax—Silk—Manufactures of Cotton—Mechanic Arts.

It would seem that the only valuable gift which a bountiful Providence has withheld from Mexico is that of navigable streams. There is no such thing as a steamboat running a single mile in any river in the whole Republic. Perhaps there are not five hundred miles of all their rivers which are navigable for boats of the smallest size. It may be that the progressive improvements in the science of railroads may furnish the means of supplying this defect. I do not doubt that a railroad from Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico. constructed at almost any cost, would be extremely profitable to the stockholders. A very large proportion of all the European manufactures and merchandise which are consumed in all Mexico are landed at Vera Cruz, and carried to the city of Mexico on mules, at a very high rate of freight, and thence distributed all over the Republic. The distance from the city of Mexico to Acapulco is not more than one hundred and seventy miles, and by extending the railroad to that point the great desideratum of a connection between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans would be accomplished. The elevation to be overcome is about eight thousand five hundred feet. I am not sufficiently versed in such matters to say whether the thing is practical, but if it is, I should have no hesitation in saying that the investment

would pay a good interest even if the road should cost two hundred thousand dollars a mile. The commerce of Mexico alone would insure this; and if to that can be added the immense trade of India and China, it would be difficult even to conjecture the future profits. I have not much faith in the Indian race ever being induced to labor—but if anything could accomplish this, it would be such a measure as I have indicated. Industry languishes without adequate reward; and there is nothing which so stimulates production as the facility of transportation. I believe that next to the influence of our free institutions, there is no other element of the future greatness and power of this country in any degree equal in importance to the Mississippi river. I remember to have read in some of the memoirs of Buonaparte, I think in the volume written by the Abbé Marbeuf, an account of the discussion between Talleyrand and Buonaparte when the latter was about to cede Louisiana to the United States, very much in opposition to the advice of Talleyrand; but Buonaparte, who was very much the more far-seeing man, knew that England would have seized upon it, and therefore wisely determined to put it out of harm's way. Talleyrand said to him in this discussion, "You have been anxious to build up a navy. No nation ever had a powerful military marine without first having a large commercial one; this you cannot have without commerce. This country of Louisiana is capable of supplying every want which France itself does not produce, and in the interchange of these you may build up an extensive and prosperous commerce." All of this is true.

Most of the other large rivers of the world run through very much the same lines of latitude; not so with the Mississippi, which flows through regions affording almost every climate inhabited by civilized man, and supplies the

productions, mineral and agricultural, of every part of the globe—the peltries of the frozen forests of the Rocky Mountains, the grains of the north-western States, the cotton, sugar, and rice of the south-western, and lower down, the fruits of the tropic. We may get into a steamboat at the Balize, and ascend the river two thousand miles to the Falls of St. Anthony, without any perceptible difference in the width or breadth of the stream, bordered for the whole length with the broadest and most fertile lands in the world. Then, there are the Red River, Arkansas and Missouri, navigable for two or three thousand miles, and terminating in as yet a *terra incognita*,—to say nothing of the Ohio, Cumberland, Tennessee and many others, any of which would be regarded as great rivers anywhere else. Malthus would never have felt any fears, if he had ascended the Mississippi, of population overrunning subsistence. No one who has never ascended that river, can have any adequate conception of the population, wealth, and power, to which the country which it washes is certainly destined.

Perhaps, in one point of view, the Mexicans are fortunate in having no such river, for if they had it is not possible that they would be permitted to retain the possession of the country—nor unless they improve the advantages so profusely showered upon a land so favored would it be right that they should.

There are not only no navigable streams in Mexico, but very few of any sort in the portions of the country which I visited ; I do not think that the road from Vera Cruz to the city of Puebla crosses running water a dozen times in a distance of two hundred miles. There is scarcely any timber of any description on the table lands of Mexico. The loftier mountains which rise above these table lands

are very well timbered. This deficiency causes the less inconvenience as the Maguey affords not only a cheap and secure fence, but when it matures it is a source of large profit, and as for fire, they need none except for cooking. The fuel used for that purpose is charcoal, brought by the Indians from the mountains in panniers and sold very cheap.

From the data heretofore given, the reader will perceive that the productive labor of Mexico, beyond the supply of the means of subsistence, means almost exclusively that which is employed in mining operations, and that those operations are very much confined to the precious metals. No country more abounds in large masses of iron ore, and it so happens that the regions where it is found are well timbered and are capable of supplying at little cost the fuel for its manufacture, yet very little iron is made there; there may be one or two iron furnaces, possibly more, but the greater portion of what is used is imported. The quantity used, however, is probably less than in any other of the same population. Horses, for instance, are never shod, and it is curious to see them galloping unshod over the streets paved with stones.

Tin, lead, and the finest copper are also found there in large bodies, but very little of either is taken from the mines.

Cochineal, cocoa, vanilla, jalap and hides are the principal, I may say, the only articles of export, except the precious metals. These vary in amount from one to two millions a year.

Two crops may be raised in the year in much the larger portion of Mexico. This, however, is rarely done, for the people are too indolent to cultivate even one. I believe that this is in a great degree attributable to the want of

transportation and a convenient market. The farmers make enough to supply the domestic demand, and if they made twice as much they would probably receive a smaller gross sum for it.

The immense estates of which I have spoken of eighty and 100 leagues square, with eighty or a hundred thousand cattle, and fifteen or twenty thousand mules and horses, yield very little profit. Perhaps not one acre out of ten thousand on these estates is cultivated. The grass is green all the year round, and their horses and cattle receive and seem to require no other food; they multiply as the birds do, and with little more profit to the proprietors of the estates. Now and then, the government purchases five hundred or a thousand horses for the army, but, with this exception, there are very few occasions when they can be sold. The average price for droves of unbroken horses is eight or ten dollars a head, and mules the same. The mules are generally small, but by no means too small for any service, nor smaller than those frequently used in this country. I have seen mules, however, in Mexico, as large as any I have ever seen elsewhere. The most of these are brought from California, and other departments north of Mexico; a pair of these large mules will sell for a thousand dollars, and that sum has frequently been paid for one fine saddle mule.

I have before remarked that enough cotton is not raised to supply the very limited demand of the Mexican manufacturers. The most of this is produced in the districts which lie upon the Pacific Ocean, but the climate of nearly all Mexico is suited to the growth of cotton. I can see no reason why it is not produced in much larger quantities, bearing, as it does, so enormous a price, except the characteristic indolence of the people. If the country was occu-

pied by a population from this country equal to that of Mexico, the amount of cotton produced in the world would be doubled.

A sufficient quantity of rice is produced to supply the domestic demand. It is very generally used.

An immense quantity of beeswax is consumed, as may well be supposed from the number of churches, in all of which wax candles are always kept burning, as well as in their religious processions—from the visit of a poor priest to a dying lepero to a procession of thirty or forty thousand on the festival of Corpus Christi. But they will not make a sufficient supply even of this article. Large quantities are annually imported.

Very little silk is made in Mexico. A company, however, has lately been organized for the purpose of introducing the culture extensively, and has sent an agent to France as preliminary to that object. I should think that no country in the world offered more, if as many, advantages for the raising the silk-worm and making silk.

Last, and by no means least, is the cultivation of the maguey, or American aloe, the juice of which, after fermentation, is the great Mexican drink—pulque. No other culture in Mexico is half so profitable. It is perhaps inaccurate to say culture, for no labor whatever is bestowed upon the plant after it is first put in the ground.

I have no data from which to form even a conjecture of the number of yards of coarse cottons which are annually manufactured in Mexico. It is estimated that eight millions of dollars are invested in these manufactories. From that fact those skilled in such matters may be able to form some estimate of the quantity manufactured. It would be well, however, in making such an estimate to consider that the same machinery could be put up in this country at

one-third of what it has cost in Mexico, and that an establishment in which the managers and operatives were Americans would probably make at least five yards for one. With the exception of a few of the manufactories in Puebla the business of manufacturing cotton has not been profitable in Mexico. One or two Americans have gone there and attempted it, but their experiments have ended in bankruptcy.

The mechanical arts are in a low condition. Most of the articles of every description which are used there are brought from other countries, with the exception of plate, saddles and a few others. Large quantities of plate are manufactured both for churches and individuals. I never saw a handsome piece, however, which was made there. They say that the saddlers of no other country can make a Mexican saddle. I do not think any decent saddler would if he could. There are two articles, however, which I believe have never been manufactured in any other country —the rebozo (a long shawl worn by the women), and the sarape, which is used all the year round by the men. The rebozo is made either of cotton or silk, and sometimes one-half of each. Those made of cotton are most esteemed, and sell for the highest price. They sell for from twenty to fifty and a hundred dollars. If they could be made as other similar fabrics are, by European skill and machinery, they would not cost ten dollars. The sarape is nothing more than a blanket, the warp of cotton and the filling of wool, with all the fantastical figures woven upon it which characterize the Indian taste for wampum and beads. They sell at from three dollars to three hundred. In summer or winter nearly every Indian you meet has one thrown over his shoulders, and in the rainy season no man rides five miles without one.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A Miscellany Chapter—Three Lions of Mexico—Calendar Stone—Burial Ground of Santa Maria—The Paseo—Santa Anna's Coach driven by an American—Reflections—Mexican Carriages—Costly Equipage—Mexican Women on Horseback—The Theatre—The Bull Fight—Mean Temperature—Character of the Mexicans, by Clavigero.

There are so many things in Mexico of a character so unique, and to an American so new and striking, that there is great danger of falling into a wearisome tediousness and drivelling on the one hand, or omitting many objects of interest on the other. And as most readers will more readily pardon the latter fault, I will hasten to a conclusion, that I may turn to other more pleasant and profitable occupations. The reader will find this chapter a sort of melange of such disjointed recollections as my memory may serve me with—and of course without any harmony or coincidence—as a frugal housewife makes a carpet or a bed-quilt of all the scraps which she may happen to have on hand.

As to the physical circumstances of the country, or more exact information as to the mines or other matters of that character, the reader is referred to the work of Baron Humboldt. As to the early history of Mexico nothing can be added to the comprehensive and elaborate work of the Abbé Clavigero; and a very full account of the antiquities of the country will be found in Mr. Brantz Mayer's book.

I have mentioned two of the three things in Mexico

which are first shown to every foreigner, the Colossal Equestrian Statue in bronze of Charles IV. of Spain, and the great Sacrificial Stone. I must not slight the third and much the most important of the three—Montezuma's Dial as it is called, which has been worked into the corner of the cathedral.

It is a large mass of porphyritic stone of ten feet diameter, and circular shape. In the centre is a human head with the tongue hanging out, cut in relief; around this head are five circles of hieroglyphic figures, intended for the computation of the different divisions of time in the Calendar of the ancient Mexicans. Their civil year was divided into eighteen months of twenty days each. The five intercalary days were added to the last month, and the fractions of hours were computed at the end of a cycle of fifty-two years. Thirteen years constituted a tlalpilli,—four of these a cycle of fifty-two years, which were represented by bundles of reeds bound together with a string,—two of these cycles of fifty-two years constituted another division of a hundred and four years, which was called an old age. I do not remember the Mexican term. I copy the following extract of a very interesting letter upon the subject from the Abbé Hervas to Clavigero :—

"The Mexican year began on the 26th of February—a day celebrated in the era of Nabonassar, which was fixed by the Egyptians 747 years before the Christian era—for the beginning of their month Toth, corresponding with the meridian of the same day. If these priests fixed upon this day as an epoch because it was celebrated in Egypt, we have there the Mexican calendar agreeing with the Egyptian. But independent of this, it is certain that the Mexican calendar corresponded greatly with the Egyptian. On the 26th day of February of the above mentioned year, according to the meridian of Alexandria, which was built three centuries after, the year properly began.

"The year and century have, from time immemorial, been regulated by the Mexicans with a degree of intelligence which does not at all correspond with their arts and sciences. In them they were certainly very inferior to the Greeks and Romans, but the discernment which appears in their calendar equals them to the most enlightened nations. Hence we may imagine that this calendar has not been the discovery of the Mexicans, but that they have received it from some more enlightened people, and as the last are not to be found in America, we must seek for them elsewhere, in Asia or in Egypt. This circumstance is confirmed by your affirmation that the Mexicans had their calendar from the Taltecas (originating from Asia), whose year according to Boturini was exactly adjusted by the course of the sun—more than a hundred years before the Christian era;—and also from observing that other nations, namely, the Chiapanese, made use of the same calendar with the Mexicans, without any difference but that of their symbols."

How greatly it is to be desired that some clue may yet be found to the Mexican hieroglyphics—how much light would thereby be shed not only upon the question whence came the settlers of this continent, but also upon the history of our race! The reckless fanaticism of the conquerors left no monument of Mexican superstition or history, which it was possible for them to destroy,—there is not a vestige in the city of Mexico of the architecture of its ancient inhabitants. The reader is aware that so obstinate was the resistance of the Mexicans in the last and successful siege, that Cortes was forced to tear down every house, and that, literally, he won not the great city of the Aztecs, but one vast heap of ruins.

The burial-ground of Santa Maria in Mexico is the most beautiful of the kind I have ever seen—and it is really not a misapplication of the term beautiful, to apply it to a graveyard such as this. It is a space of ground of some eight or ten acres, enclosed with a stone wall about fifteen feet high and ten thick. This wall serves the double pur-

pose of enclosing the ground and as a place to deposit the dead. Little niches are made in it large enough to receive a coffin, like the pigeon-holes in a desk.

The whole area is laid off in gravel walks and bordered with flowers and shrubbery, and beautiful marble tombs all over it. Lamps are always kept burning at night, and altogether I have never seen any other last resting-place which had so little of gloom about it.

The lower classes are buried in other places and without coffins; they are carried to the grave on rude litters, but the children and women generally on beds made of roses and other flowers.

The wife of General Canalizo died whilst he was President *ad interim*, during the absence of Santa Anna. She was embalmed and had a pair of glass eyes inserted, and lay in state for several days, gorgeously dressed and glittering in jewels; every one was admitted to the great chamber of the palace where the body was exposed. It was a most revolting spectacle, and all the more so to those who knew the modest, gentle and unostentatious character of that very uncommon woman. She seemed to be unconscious of the great dignity of the station to which her husband had been elevated, and spent her whole life in acts of charity and benevolence, and was singularly averse to all sorts of ostentation and parade.

None but Catholics are allowed to be buried in the regular burial-grounds, and if buried anywhere else, there is no security that the sacredness of the grave of one regarded as an infidel will not be molested. To the disgrace of Mexico, the rites of sepulture have to be secured to foreigners, not Catholics, by treaty. Two of the Texians died at Puebla Nacional; one of them, to protect his corpse from violation, professed the Catholic faith; the other, a very gal-

lant and fine young man, Lieut. Sevey, refused to do so. It was with great difficulty that his friends could obtain the privilege of burial for him, which was at last accomplished by a bribe of a hundred and fifty dollars to the priest.

Let us now turn from burials and burying-grounds to a very different place—the Paseo, with its glittering throng. Until very recently European or American coaches were not used. There are a good many there now owned by wealthy persons. The duty upon their importation is very high, and they sell for twice as much as in the United States, and hence are not generally used. The President has a very splendid barouche drawn by four American horses, and I am ashamed to say driven by an American. I can never become reconciled to seeing a native American performing the offices of a menial servant—but I felt this the more on seeing a foreigner and in a foreign land thus waited on by one of my countrymen. I was more than ever thankful that I lived in that portion of our country where no man is theoretically called a freeman who is not so in fact, in feelings and in sentiments; no decent Southern American could be induced to drive anybody's coach or clean his shoes. I have no doubt that if the liberties of this country are ever destroyed that they will perish at the ballot-box; men whose menial occupations degrade them in their own self-esteem, and deprive them of the proud consciousness of equality, have no right to vote.

The President of Mexico never leaves his palace but with a large escort of cavalry, the King of Prussia walks the streets of Berlin unattended; the one is a despotism, the other a republic. But there are few such despotisms as the Prussian, and few such republics as the Mexican.

The Mexican carriages are altogether unique and grotesque. The distance between the two axletrees is gene-

rally twelve feet; they have high cross-bars both behind and before, to which are attached the leathern traces upon which the carriage swings. The enormous size of these carriages is made the more striking from the fact that they are drawn by two small mules, with a postillion mounted on one of them. One part of the harness was new to me, which was a leathern bag for the mule's tail. This bag is also used when they ride on horseback.

The dress of the gentlemen when they ride on the Paseo is gaudy in the extreme; nothing is regarded more vulgar than to be seen on horseback in a dress coat or any other than a roundabout. These are richly embroidered with silk or with gold and silver lace, and covered all over with buttons. Their cherivalles are equally fine, and generally open from the knee down. The dress of the horse is even more dashing and infinitely more costly. One thousand dollars is by no means an unusual price for a saddle. I have seen in a saddler's shop at one time half a dozen saddles at prices ranging from five hundred to a thousand dollars. One gentleman in the city has a saddle the cost of which exceeded five thousand dollars. The scene exhibited every evening on the Paseo is altogether picturesque. Three or four thousand persons with gay equipages and rich dresses pass and salute each other on the broad road, bordered with handsome trees, two beautiful *jets d'eau*, with Chapultepec on one side and the snow-covered mountains of Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl on the other; while on all sides far around extend the wide plains of the valley.

The Mexican women generally ride with their feet on the right side of the horse, exactly the opposite side from that to which we are accustomed. Very frequently they ride with a foot on each side—not on the Paseo however.

Let us now go, as every one does in Mexico, from the Paseo to the theatre.

No people have so great a passion for the stage as the Spanish. Much the larger portion of Spanish literature is dramatic. There are several theatres in Mexico besides the new and magnificent one which I have already described. The "Teatro Principal" was, before the erection of the new one, the largest and most fashionably attended. The actors were all natives of Mexico, if indeed it is not an abuse of the term actors to apply it to such mere reciters, and by no means good reciters, as they were.

A company of actors came to Mexico in 1843, and were engaged at a small theatre on the outskirts of the city; but their superiority was so very decided to anything of the kind to which the Mexicans had been accustomed, that they very soon had the theatre crowded. I believe they are now playing at the new theatre. They would all have been considered good, none of them first-rate performers in this country, with one remarkable exception—the Senora Coñette. I have rarely seen her equal in the wide range of comic characters which she played. I frequently attended the theatre to witness her performances, but I always left before the afterpiece if she did not play in it, and this was not without some risk, as I often walked home a distance of half a mile through the unfrequented streets of a badly-lighted city—a thing I could not easily have been induced to do when I first went to Mexico.

The bull-fight is the *passion* the lower classes of Mexicans, and very much a passion with all. I have seen ten thousand persons assembled on such an occasion. I shall not detain the reader with a description. They are in nothing different from bull-fights elsewhere, except that the horns are sawed off and the bulls are generally tame

and spiritless. I do not know whether it resulted from the inequality of the contest, the poor beast being thus deprived of his only power of defence or attack, but I declare that my sympathies were generally with the bull.

The Hill of Chapultepec and Montezuma's cypress at its base, and the fortress on the summit, the evangelistas or professional letter-writers, &c., &c., have all been described by others.

The mean temperature of the city is about 58, and the range above or below that point but very small. I have been in no other country in which the temperature becomes so much cooler after sunset, and what is inexplicable to me I frequently walked half a mile at mid-day in that tropical sun without the slightest perspiration. This, I think, is no recommendation but an objection to the climate of Mexico, and is, I have no doubt, the cause of much disease. The rainy season generally commences in the last days of May and continues to the first of October, sometimes a little later; during that period there is rain every day. Not what one would call a rainy spell, but the sun shines brightly in the morning and generally until noon or a little later, and then pleasant showers, sometimes very heavy rains, but never accompanied with violent winds. After the rain ceases in October, not another drop falls until the last of May. This is the case in the table lands. In the region lying between the degrees 25 and 35, on the Pacific ocean, this is reversed, and the rainy season occurs there in the winter months; occasionally in January and February there is a cool night and sometimes they say there is a little frost—I never saw any. The difference, however, between the summer and the winter months is scarcely felt; indeed, in the day time, it is a little cooler in the summer from the constant rains, but the climate is altogether delicious. In

one word, I do not believe that there is a country in the world for which God has done so much, very few for which man has done so little.

The reader who has followed me through these desultory recollections, is, doubtless, able to form a pretty accurate opinion of the country, its character, resources, customs, and population, without any dissertation of mine. Clavigero, a man of learning and ability, and himself a Mexican, has drawn the character of his countrymen, I think impartially, and in the main justly; I subjoin a translation of it, putting in *italics* those portions in which I do not concur.

"*The Mexicans are of good stature, generally exceeding instead of falling short of the middle size,* and well proportioned in all their limbs. They have good complexions,—narrow foreheads,—black eyes,—clean, firm, regular, white teeth,—thick, black, coarse, glossy hair,—thin beards,—and generally no hair upon their legs or thighs; their skin is of an olive color; there is scarcely a nation upon earth where there are fewer deformed persons—and it would be more difficult to find a single hump-backed, lame or squint-eyed man amongst a thousand Mexicans than among a hundred of any other nation. The unpleasantness of their color, the smallness of their forehead, the thinness of their beard, are so far compensated by the regularity and fine proportion of their limbs, that they can neither be called very beautiful nor the contrary, but seem to hold a middle place between the extremes. Their appearance neither engages nor disgusts, but among the young women of Mexico there are *many very beautiful and fair*, whose beauty is at the same time rendered more winning by the sweetness of their manner of speaking, and by the pleasantness and natural modesty of their whole behavior.

"They are very moderate in eating, but *their passion for liquors is carried to the greatest excess.*

"Their minds are, at bottom, in every respect, like those of the other children of Adam, and endowed with the same powers, nor did the Europeans ever do less credit to their own reason than when they doubted that of the Americans. The state of civilisation among the Americans when they were first known to the Spaniards, which was much superior to that of the Spaniards themselves when they were first known to the Phœnicians,

that of the Gauls when they were first known to the Greeks, or that of the Germans and Britons when first known to the Romans, should have been sufficient to check such an error of man's mind, if it had not been the interest of the inhuman avarice of some ruffians to encourage it. Their understandings are fitted for every kind of science, as experience has shown. Of the Mexicans who have had opportunities of engaging in the pursuit of learning, which is but a small number, as the greater part of the people are always engaged in the public or private works, we have known some good mathematicians, excellent architects and learned divines. Many persons allow the Mexicans to possess a great talent for imitation, but deny them the praise of invention, a vulgar error which is contradicted by the ancient history of that people.

"Their minds are affected by the same variety of passions as the people of other nations, but not in an equal degree. Mexicans seldom exhibit those transports of anger or phrenzies of love which are so common in other countries; they are slow in their motions, *and show a wonderful tenacity and steadiness in those works which require time and long continued attention.*

"They are most patient of injury and hardship, and where they suspect no evil intention, are most grateful for any kindness. But some Spaniards who cannot distinguish patience from insensibility, nor distrust from ingratitude, say proverbially that the Indians are alike insensible to injuries and to benefits. The habitual distrust which they entertain of all who are not of their own nation prompts them often to lie and betray, so that good faith has certainly not been so much respected amongst them as it deserves to be.

"They are by nature taciturn, serious, and austere, and show more anxiety to punish crimes than to reward virtues. Generosity and *perfect disinterestedness* are the principal features of their character. Gold, with the Mexicans, has not the value which it seems to enjoy elsewhere. They give without reluctance what has cost them the utmost labor to acquire. The respect paid by children to parents and by the young to the old, seem to be feelings born with them. Parents are very fond of their children also; but the affection which husbands bear to their wives is certainly much less than that borne by wives to their husbands, and it is very common for the men to love their neighbors' wives better than their own.

"Courage and cowardice seem alternately so to affect their minds that

it is often difficult to determine which predominates. They meet dangers with intrepidity when they proceed from natural causes, but they are terrified by the stern look of a Spaniard. That stupid indifference about death and eternity, which many authors have thought inherent in the character of every American, is peculiar only to those who are yet so rude and uninformed as to have no idea of a future state. Their singular attachment to the external ceremonies of religion is very apt to degenerate into superstition, as happens with the ignorant of all nations of the world; but their proneness to idolatry is nothing more than a chimera formed in the brains of ignorant persons. The instances of a few mountaineers are not sufficient to justify an aspersion upon a whole people. To conclude: the character of the Mexicans, like that of every other nation, is a mixture of good and bad, but the bad may be easily corrected by a proper education, as has frequently been demonstrated by experience. It would be difficult to find anywhere youth or a body of people more willing to receive the light of the Gospel than were their ancestors."

I will add that the modern Mexicans are not in all respects like the ancient; as the Greeks of these days have little resemblance to those who lived in the days of Pericles. The ancient Mexicans showed more fire and were more sensible to impressions of honor. They were more intrepid, more active, more industrious, but they were at the same time more superstitious and cruel.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Adjustment of American Claims—Order for the Expulsion of Americans from California Rescinded—Various Negotiations—Anecdote of Santa Anna's love of Cock-fighting.

Of matters connected with the Legation it is not fit that I should speak, except of those which have been made public by the government. The commission for the adjudication of the claims of American citizens against the government of Mexico adjourned in February or March, 1842. The awards which that commission made in favor of American citizens amounted to about two millions of dollars. The Mexican government had, by the terms of the convention which established that commission, the alternative of paying the awards either in coin or their own treasury notes at their option. The market was already flooded with this depreciated government paper, and new emissions were daily made. The market value of these treasury notes was about thirty cents on the dollar, and if this additional two millions had been thown on the market, they would have depreciated still more; the owners of these claims knew this, and were anxious to make some other arrangement. The awards were not sent to me until October. I demanded the money; but it was a mere form, for every one knew that the government neither had the money nor the means of raising it, and coercion was out of the question as they would have availed themselves of the alternative of the treaty and given the treasury notes, which would

only have been changing the evidence of the debt, and to a less advantageous form. In a week, however, I made a new convention with the government, by which the claimants have received fifteen per cent of the principal of their debt, and about nineteen per cent of interest—which is twice as much as the market value of the whole of the claims when I went to Mexico—which was less than twenty cents on the dollar. If I have not been misinformed, one of these claims, and a large one, was sold for six cents on the dollar, and many others at the same rate. I wrote to some of the claimants in all our large cities, advising them not to sacrifice their claims, and I also said the same thing to the Secretary of State, and requested him to make it public, which I believe he did.

By the new convention which I negotiated, there was saved to the persons interested, from eighteen to twenty per cent—the export and transportation duties, eleven per cent freight and insurance to Vera Cruz, at least five per cent, in that country of highway robbers and revolutions, and two and a half per cent for the commissions of the agent who received the money. All of these things were altogether just, but they had not been provided for in the former convention—and that which I negotiated was wholly on my own responsibility. I thought that it was no more than fair that the government of Mexico should pay the commissions of the agent, because if the whole amount of two millions had been paid at once, any one would have received and remitted it for one third of the commissions which would have been charged when there were twenty different instalments running through a period of five years. If the money had all been paid at one time, a government vessel would have been ordered to take it to the United States without charge.

All the instalments which fell due whilst I remained in Mexico were paid. A small portion of the two last was not paid until perhaps a month after it was due, and the money was immediately sent to Vera Cruz, and shipped from there as soon as it could be counted.*

There were eighteen claims submitted to the commission at Washington, and which were not finally decided; the American commissioners adjudging in all of them about a million of dollars to the claimants, and the Mexicans allowing nothing. These cases, for want of time, were not decided by the umpire, Baron Roene. There were seven other cases which were not considered by the commissioners for want of time, and because in one of them the Mexican Government did not furnish all the documentary evidence which was required.

I was anxious to have made provision for the settlement of these cases at the time that I negotiated the Convention of January, 1843, but my government thought otherwise. In November, however, of that year, I received instructions to negotiate another Convention for the settlement of these claims. I would gladly have avoided the responsibility of this second convention if I had looked only to personal considerations, but the Mexican government was at that time under serious apprehension of a collision with England, and I knew that so advantageous an opportunity would not again occur. I succeeded, but with difficulty, in obtaining every concession which I had been instructed to ask, and on some points more, with the single exception

* The persons interested in these claims are more indebted for the payment to Mr. Emilius Voss than any other person. As imputations have been made against this gentleman, it is but just to say of him, not only that he is an accomplished merchant and an upright man, but that in all high and honorable qualities he has no superior in Mexico or anywhere else.

of the place of meeting of the new Commission, which I agreed should be Mexico instead of Washington. The former commission had met at Washington, and it seemed to me nothing but fair that this one should meet at Mexico. I know of no rule that such commissions shall assemble in the country of the claimant; the legal rule in controversies between individuals is the reverse. The forum is in the country of the defendant. But this new commission was not alone for the settlement of the claims of American citizens or the government of Mexico, but also the claims of Mexican citizens upon the government of the United States, so that the equities were at least equal; but the Mexican plenipotentiaries offered that if I would concede to them the point of the commission meeting at Mexico that I might name the umpire, to which I at once acceded. I could not see any great importance as to the place where the commission met, the more especially as nearly all of the seven claims which alone were to be submitted to this commission depended upon documentary evidence entirely, and all these documents were in the public archives of Mexico. And, as it was certain that the Mexican and American commissioners would disagree upon all of these claims, I did regard it of primary importance who should be the umpire. If that umpire had been, as he would have been (if Mexico had selected him), some one of the presidents of the South American Republics, there never would have been any controversy as to what vessel should bring the money home. I knew of the sympathies as well as the antipathies of race, but the Senate of the United States thought otherwise, and disapproved of that clause of the convention. I think that all the parties interested will have occasion to regret that decision; I am sure that all those will, who are interested in the eighteen cases submitted to and not

decided by the umpire under the former commission—for those cases were not to be submitted to the new commission but were to be referred at once to the umpire under the new convention, and would long since have been settled.

Near the end of December, 1843, I received information that the government of Mexico had issued an order in July previous expelling all natives of the United States from the department of California and the three adjoining departments. No attempt however had been made up to that time to execute this order. A similar order had been issued a few years before, including not only citizens of the United States but British subjects also, and this order had actually been executed to the great damage, and in some instances, ruin, of the persons removed. All the efforts of the English and American ministers to procure a rescision of this order were ineffectual for six months. I had the good fortune, however, after a somewhat angry correspondence, to have the order rescinded, not, however, until I resorted to the "ultima ratio" of diplomacy, and demanded my passports—a measure which a Minister is rarely justifiable in resorting to without the orders of his government. I confess I was very much afraid that the passports would have been sent to me, but I thought that the step, extreme as it was, was justified by the circumstances, and that it would cut short a very long discussion. The result showed that in this calculation I was right. The order was rescinded, and expresses forthwith sent to all of the four departments, the distance of some of which was two thousand miles.

With all their boasting the Mexicans are more afraid of us than of all other powers. They do not care about a maritime war, for they have scarcely any ships, either of

war or commercial vessels, and as to a blockade, they will thank any foreign power for one. But they know we can approach them by land, and the Texians have given them "a taste of our quality."

I was anxious before I left the legation that the "docket should be cleared," and as there were five cases remaining, some of them of long standing, I asked an interview with the Minister of Foreign Affairs to discuss and settle them. I would advise all our future Ministers in that country to adopt that course, and never write when they can obtain a personal interview. Written discussions with them are as endless as the web of Penelope. The habitual procrastination and the vanity of writing make it so, and if the Minister of Foreign Affairs happens to be a lawyer, as was Mr. Bocanegra, the pleadings never stop short of the sur-rebutter. All the members of the cabinet met me to discuss the cases, and the result was, that all I asked was conceded to me in all of them. I will repeat here what I said in the last note which I addressed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs: "that during the whole time of my mission I had made but one single demand upon the government which had not been conceded;" and I will venture to say that these demands were much more numerous, and involving a greater variety of nice questions of international law than has occurred with any other of our missions for the same period. I claim no credit for this beyond that of a rigid adherence to the great principle which governs our intercourse with other nations—"to ask nothing but what is right, and to submit to nothing that is wrong"—a maxim the first part of which should be even more strictly observed in our intercourse with weak powers, and still more with the weaker powers of this continent. I am not aware that any complaint has ever been made that I had refused my

interposition when asked. There were a few matters in which I felt much interest, and which I knew could only be arranged with President Santa Anna himself, I therefore waited a few days at Jalapa in the neighborhood of which place is his beautiful country-seat, "Encerro." The first of these objects was the release of the Texians made prisoners at San Antonio, which he granted me, as I have before stated.

An order had been issued for closing the custom house at Santa Fé and stopping the inland trade, in which our countrymen were very much interested. This order had not originated in any hostile feelings towards the United States, but was issued because General Armigo, the governor of that department, kept all the revenues himself and paid nothing to the government. Santa Anna promised me that the order should be rescinded, and it was done immediately afterwards. Another order had been issued a few months before, requiring all goods of a certain description which had been imported into Mexico, and which were not sold by a stipulated time, to be reshipped, or that they should be forfeited to the government. This order he also consented should be rescinded or satisfactorily modified—which was done.

Another, and a very important one to many Americans in Mexico, was that which prohibited the privilege of the retail trade to all foreigners,—all my efforts to procure a rescision of this order were ineffectual, and this is the one exception to which I have alluded. One of the members of the diplomatic corps, the French Minister, had felt it his duty to write a note on the subject, which Santa Anna regarded as very harsh in its terms and spirit. After I had discussed the matter with him for some time he said, "I know nothing about these questions of international law, I am

only a soldier, and have spent my life in the camp—but eminent Mexican lawyers tell me that we have the right to enforce such an order, and if we have I know that it will be beneficial to Mexico. These foreigners come here and make fortunes and go away; let them marry here, or become Mexican citizens, and they may enjoy this and all other privileges." He added that if all the other ministers had taken the same course that I had, that he might have consented to rescind the order, but that whilst he was the President he would cut his throat (suiting the action to the word with great vehemence) before he would yield anything to insult or menaces—alluding to the note of the French Minister. He became very much excited, and with his fine eye flashing fire, went on in a strain of real eloquence. "What," said he, "has Mexico gained by her revolution, if she is thus to be dictated to by every despot in Europe; before, we had but one master—but if this is permitted we shall have twenty. We cannot fight on the water; but let them land, and I will drive them to their boats a little faster than I did in 1839"—and then casting his eye to his mutilated leg, with that tiger expression which Mrs. Calderon noticed—he said, "they have taken one of my legs, they shall have the other, and every limb of my body before I will submit to their bullying and menaces. Let them come, let them come as soon as they please, and in every defile of these mountains they will find a Thermopylæ."

These were his very words. If he did not feel what he said, I have never seen the hero and patriot better acted. Again I thought of General Jackson. The reader may be assured that whatever may be the faults of Santa Anna, he has many points which mark him "as not in the roll of common men."

When I first visited him at Encerro, he was examining his chicken cocks, having a large main then depending—he went round the coops and examined every fowl, and gave directions as to his feed; some to have a little more, others to be stinted. There was one of very great beauty, of the color of the partridge, only with the feathers tipped with black, instead of yellow or white; and the male in all respects like the female, except in size. He asked me if we had any such in this country, and when I told him that we had not, he said that if that one gained his fight he would send him to me,—he was the only one of fifteen which did not lose his fight; and shortly after my return, when I visited New York, I found the fowl there. I had thought no more about it, and had no idea that he would.

After examining his chicken cocks we returned to the house, and then he was all the President—and to have listened to the eloquent conversation which I have sketched, one would not have supposed that he had ever witnessed a cock-fight.

The taste for this amusement, which amongst us is regarded as barbarous and vulgar, is in Mexico by no means peculiar to Santa Anna. It is universal, and stands scarcely second to the bull-fight.

CHAPTER XXV.

The California Question—Captain Suter's Settlement—Value of the Country—Importance to the United States—English Influence in Mexico—Annexation of Mexican Provinces to the United States—Present Relations.

I CONFESS that in taking the high ground which I did upon the order expelling our people from California, that I felt some compunctious visitings, for I had been informed that a plot had been arranged and was about being developed by the Americans and other foreigners in that department to re-enact the scenes of Texas. I had been consulted whether in the event of a revolution in California, and its successful result in a separation from Mexico, our government would consent to surrender their claims to Oregon, and that Oregon and California should constitute an independent republic. I of course had no authority to answer the question, and I would not have done so if I could.

The inhabitants of California are for the most part Indians, a large proportion naked savages, who not only have no sympathies with Mexico but the most decided antipathy.

Mexico has no troops there, and the distance of the department prevents any being sent.

Captain Suter, who was one of Buonaparte's officers, and, I believe, is a Swiss, has for many years had an establishment there, and is the real sovereign of the country if any one is, certainly so *de facto* if not *de jure*. The govern-

ment of Mexico has done none of these things, such as settlement, extending her laws, and affording protection, which alone give to a civilized people a right to the country of a savage one. As to all these, the natives of California are as much indebted to any other nation as to Mexico; they only know the government of Mexico by the exactions and tribute which are levied upon them—it is literally a waif, and belongs to the first occupant. Captain Suter has two forts in California, and about two thousand persons, natives and Europeans, in his employment, all of them armed and regularly drilled. I have no doubt that his force would be more than a match for any Mexican force which will ever be sent against him. He has once or twice been ordered to deliver up his forts, and his laconic reply has been, "Come and take them."

From all the information which I have received, and I have been inquisitive upon the subject, I am well satisfied that there is not on this Continent any country of the same extent as little desirable as Oregon, nor any in the world which combines as many advantages as California. With the exception of the valley of the Wallamette, there is scarcely any portion of Oregon which is inhabitable except for that most worthless of all—a hunting population—and the valley of the Wallamette is of very small extent. In the south the only port is at the Columbia river, and that is no port at all, as the loss of the Peacock, and others of our vessels, has proven. To say nothing of other harbors in California, that of San Francisco is capacious enough for the navies of the world, and its shores are covered with enough timber (a species of the live oak) to build those navies. If man were to ask of God a climate, he would ask just such an one as that of California, if he had ever been there. There is no portion of our western coun-

try which produces all the grains as well; I have been told by more than one person on whom I entirely relied, that they had known whole fields to produce—a quantity so incredible that I will not state it. The whole face of the country is covered with the finest oats growing wild; sugar, rice, and cotton find there their own congenial climate. Besides all these, the richest mines of gold and silver have been discovered there, and the pearl fisheries have always been sources of the largest profits; and more than these, there are the markets of India and China with nothing intervening but the calm and stormless Pacific ocean.

The distance from the head of navigation on the Arkansas and Red rivers to a navigable point of the waters of the Gulf of California is not more than five or six hundred miles; let that distance be overcome by a railroad, and what a vista is opened to the prosperity and power of our country. I have no doubt that the time will come when New Orleans will be the greatest city in the world. That period would be incalculably hastened by the measures which I have indicated, which would throw into her lap the vast commerce of China and of India. Great Britain, with that wise and far-seeing policy for which she is more remarkable than any other government, has already the practical possession of most of the ports of the Pacific Ocean—New Zealand and the Sandwich Islands, and very soon the Society Islands also. We have a commerce in that ocean of more than fifty millions of dollars, and not a single place of refuge for our ships.

I will not say what is our policy in regard to California. Perhaps it is that it remain in the hands of a weak power like Mexico, and that all the maritime powers may have the advantage of its ports. But one thing I will say, that

it will be worth a war of twenty years to prevent England acquiring it, which I have the best reasons for believing she desires to do, and just as good reasons for believing that she will not do if it costs a war with this country. It is, perhaps, too remote from us to become a member of the Union. It is yet doubtful whether the increase of our territory will have a federal or a centralizing tendency. If the latter, we have too much territory; and I am by no means sure that another sister Republic there, with the same language, liberty and laws, will not, upon the whole, be the best for us. If united in one government, the extremities may be so remote as not to receive a proper heat from the centre—so, at least, thought Mr. Jefferson, who was inspired on political questions if mortal man ever was. I am not one of those who have a rabid craving for more territory; on the contrary, I believe that we have enough. I know of no great people who have not been crowded into a small space—the Egyptians, the Romans, the Greeks, and another people who have exercised a greater influence upon man and his destiny than all others, the Jews; and, in our own time, the English. I want no more territory, for we have already too much. If I were to make an exception to this remark, it would be to acquire California. But I should grieve to see that country pass into the hands of England, or any other of the great powers.

Whenever the foreigners in California make the movement of separation, it must succeed. The department of Sonora, not half the distance from Mexico, has been in a state of revolt for the last four years, and the government has been unable to suppress it. The civil war there has been marked by acts of horrible atrocity, which are almost without precedent in any country. It is true that they do not eat the flesh of their enemies, but they leave

them hanging on the trees to feast the birds of prey. There is scarcely a road in the whole department where such spectacles are not daily exhibited.

There is a great mistake, I think, in the opinion which is general in this country of the great ascendency of English influence in Mexico. It is true that Mr. Pakenham had much influence there, which his great worth and frank and honorable character will give him anywhere; but my opinion is, that the general feeling of the Mexicans towards the English is unfriendly. They have a well-grounded jealousy of the great and increasing power which their large capital gives them; and, if the feelings of the Mexican people were consulted, or the opinions of their most enlightened men, England is the very last power to which the Mexicans would transfer California, or any other portion of their territory. I am quite sure that they would prefer that it should be an independent power, than to have any connection or dependence of any sort upon England. The most valuable of the Mexican mines are owned and worked by English companies, and at least two-thirds of the specie which is exported goes into the hands of the English. The British Government keeps two officers, or agents, in Mexico, with high salaries, to attend to this interest alone. It is with the money thus derived that the English establishments on this continent and in the West Indies are supported.

The amount of the specie annually obtained from Mexico is more than half as great as that which is kept at one time in the Bank of England. The stoppage of this supply would very much derange the whole monetary system of England; on this account, it is to be apprehended that in the event of a war between the United States and Mexico, that England would very soon be involved in it.

If the coast of Mexico should be blockaded, England will demand that the line of steam-packets to Vera Cruz should be exempted from its operations. These packets, although commercial vessels, possess a sort of quasi-government character. This, of course, our government could not concede; and the interruption of the regular supply of the precious metals from Mexico would be most disastrously felt in England. Knowing all this, I was well satisfied that all that we have heard about England stimulating Mexico to declare war against this country was ridiculously absurd. Such a war would injure England more than either of the belligerents. All her interests are opposed to it, unless, indeed, she intended to participate in that war. I have the best reasons for saying, that there is no other power in the world with which England would not prefer to engage in a war; not that she fears us, for England fears no nation, nor combination of nations, as all her history proves; but such a war would be, more than any other, disastrous to her commercial, manufacturing, and all other industrial pursuits.

England has no single motive for a war with us. It is not of this country that she is jealous, but of the northern despotism of Europe, and mainly of Russia, and has been so since the seizure of the fortress of Aczaco, in 1788. And well may England and all Europe tremble under the shadow of that terrible military despotism now holding one-eighth of the territory of the globe, and continually extending its limits and its power. All the wars of the present century which have weakened other European powers have resulted in the aggrandizement of Russia. The government is not only a despotism, but essentially a military despotism. The studies in which her people are educated are principally those of war and diplomacy. Russia and the United States are antipodes and antagonists. The wise and far-

seeing statesmen of England see this and calculate, as well they may, upon our sympathy, in a conflict with Russia. I repeat, England wants no war with us, although we may force her into one. "That old and haughty nation proud in arms" will never submit to injustice or insult.* But to return from this perhaps uncalled-for digression to the jealousy of England which is felt in Mexico.

A leading member of the Mexican cabinet once said to me that he believed that the tendency of things was towards the annexation of Texas to the United States, and that he greatly preferred that result either to the separate independence of Texas or any connection or dependence of Texas upon England; that if Texas was an independent power, other departments of Mexico would unite with it either voluntarily or by conquest, and that if there was any connection between Texas and England, that English manufactures and merchandise would be smuggled into Mexico through Texas to the utter ruin of the Mexican manufactures and revenue.

In one of my last interviews with Santa Anna I mentioned this conversation. He said with great vehemence, that he "would war for ever for the reconquest of Texas, and that if he died in his senses his last words should be an exhortation to his countrymen never to abandon the effort to reconquer the country;" and added, "You, Sir, know very well that to sign a treaty for the alienation of Texas would be the same thing as signing the death-warrant of

* Our worst enemy among the sovereigns of Europe is Louis Philippe, the catspaw-king. Every people struggling to be free look to the United States for light and aid, and it should be a source of pride to us that every despot regards us with fear and hatred. Well may the treacherous citizen-king exclaim with reference to America, with the fallen archangel to the sun—

"How! oh sun, I hate thy beams."

Mexico," and went on to say that "by the same process we would take one after the other of the Mexican provinces until we had them all." I could not, in sincerity, say that I thought otherwise; but I do not know that the annexation of Texas will hasten that event. That our language and laws are destined to pervade this continent, I regard as more certain than any other event which is in the future. Our race has never yet put its foot upon a soil which it has not only not kept but has advanced. I mean not our English ancestors only, but that great Teuton race from which we have both descended.

There seems to be a wonderful adaptation of the English people to the purpose of colonization. The English colony of convicts at New South Wales is a more prosperous community than any colony of any other country. That the Indian race of Mexico must recede before us, is quite as certain as that that is the destiny of our own Indians, who in a military point of view, if in no other, are superior to them. I do not know what feelings towards us in Mexico may have been produced by recent events, but whatever they may be, they will not last long; and I believe that the time is not at all distant, when all the northern departments of Mexico, within a hundred miles of the city, will gladly take refuge under our more stable institutions from the constant succession of civil wars to which that country seems to be destined. The feeling is becoming a pretty general one amongst the enlightened and patriotic, that they are not prepared for free institutions, and are incapable themselves of maintaining them. There is very great danger that the drama may close there, as it has so often done in other countries, with anarchy ending in despotism,—such is the natural swing of the pendulum. The feeling of all Mexicans towards us,

until the revolution in Texas, was one of unmixed admiration; and it is our high position amongst the nations, and makes our mission all the more responsible, that every people, struggling to be free, regard us with the same feelings—we are indeed the "looking-glass in which they dress themselves." As a philanthropist, I have deeply deplored the effects of the annexation of Texas upon the feelings of the people of all classes in Mexico, towards this country, as diminishing their devotion to republican institutions; this should not be so, but it will be. Ours is regarded as the great exemplar Republic in Mexico, as everywhere else, and the act which they regard as such an outrage, must have the prejudicial effect which I have indicated—still more will that effect be to be deprecated, if it should throw Mexico into the arms of any great European power.

The northern departments of Mexico contain all the mines, and more of the wealth of the country than any others; and they all hang very loosely to the confederacy; —they receive no earthly benefit from the central government, which in truth they only know in its exactions. All the money collected from them is expended in the city and elsewhere, and they have not even the satisfaction of knowing that it is beneficially or even honestly used. The security which would be given to property, as well as its great enhancement in value, would be powerful inducements with all the owners of large estates which are now comparatively valueless. The only obstacle that I know of to such a consummation, infinitely desirable in my judgment, to the people of those departments, less so to us, would be in the influence of the priesthood. They are well aware that such a measure might very soon be fatal, not only to their own supremacy, but that of the Catholic

religion also,—but they would have on the other hand a powerful motive in the security which it would give them to their large church property—no motive but interest would have any influence with the people of Mexico, for they certainly do not like us. Their feelings towards us may be summed up in two words, jealousy and admiration, —they are not going to declare war against us, I have never doubted for a moment about that. Public opinion in Mexico, to all practical purposes, means the opinion of the army, and the very last thing in the world which the army desires, is such a war,—nor do I believe that one Mexican in a thousand does, however they may vaunt and bluster—just as a frightened school-boy whistles as he passes a graveyard in the night. I have just as little idea that they will negotiate now, or until matters are adjusted between England and this country. I doubt whether they will do so even then, for the government of Mexico owes our citizens as much money as they could expect to get from us for their quit-claim to Texas, and Mexico, therefore, will have no motive to negotiate as long as she is not pressed for these claims; and the restoration of official intercourse is not of the slightest consequence to her. The few Mexicans who would come here, would be in no danger of being oppressed, and nothing would be more convenient to Mexico than that we should have no minister there to trouble the government with complaints.

CONCLUSION.

Whilst I was engaged in writing the last chapter, I received through the newspapers the intelligence of another revolution in Mexico. Machiavelli remarks of the Republic of Florence at one period of its history, that a revolution every five years was a necessary part of the system. Without a radical reform, revolutions in Mexico must unavoidably occur at much shorter periods.

Another profound remark of the same great man, whose character presented the strange paradox of the apologist and the instructor of tyrants, whilst his life was a martyrdom to liberty, is "that every revolution contains the seeds of another and scatters them behind it." In Mexico, these seeds have been sown broadcast over the land, and sprout spontaneously. Whoever may be at the head of the government, and however wisely and honestly it is administered, there can be no well grounded hope that revolutions will not be constantly repeated without many and radical reforms. Such administrations there have been in Mexico, but I have great fears that they are not likely to occur again: whatever may be the checks and guarantees provided in the constitution, those in power are practically under no restraint,—and how pure soever the feelings and purposes with which they enter into office, the temptations

are too many and too powerful to be easily resisted; but, as things now are, there are difficulties which no degree of virtue or talents can surmount. It is not possible to raise a sufficient revenue to support such an army, church establishment, and civil list, with a population so poor, so indolent and unproductive. The experiment of establishing free institutions upon a permanent basis in Mexico, is full of difficulties,—they may yet be overcome, but the task is a herculean one. The population consists of ignorant Indians, debased by three centuries of worse than colonial vassalage, and the Spanish oppressors of these Indians; and it is hard to say which condition—that of the oppressors or the oppressed—most disqualifies for a just appreciation of the great principles of civil liberty, and a firm and resolute purpose to establish free institutions. No people has ever established or long maintained a free government without an enthusiasm, a romantic and self-sacrificing enthusiasm in the cause of liberty, that Greek feeling by which men were taught that they were born for their country. There is more of this feeling in Mexico than is generally supposed, and more than might be expected considering the demoralizing influences to which the country has so long been subjected, the greatest of which has been the constant succession of revolutions; but I greatly fear that this feeling is not often to be found in high places.

General Paredes is now at the head of the government. That he is brave and patriotic I have never heard denied; but his whole life has been spent in the camp, and he must be deficient in many of the qualities which are demanded by his present responsible position. He must want the necessary reading and information to lay the foundations of a government wisely adapted to the peculiar circumstances and condition of Mexico, and, besides this, he has

always been suspected of a strong leaning towards monarchy as the form of government best suited to his countrymen. He has, however, passed a portion of his life in this country, where he must have learned something both of the theory and practical workings of free institutions; may he profit by the information thus acquired, and use it for the good of his country,—his mission is a high one, and I hope that he may execute it worthily. It was beyond doubt in the power of Iturbide to have established a republican government in Mexico, which would have been permanent. Deep and lasting is the execration which he deserves for not having done it; let General Paredes profit by his example. If he would hearken to the counsel of one who sincerely desires the welfare of Mexico, and who entertains for him individually feelings of kindness and respect, I would advise him to call around him men of known and unquestionable probity and patriotism, qualities much more important than high talents. Such men there are in Mexico. Gomez Farrias, Pedraza, Bustamente, Almonte, if called to the administration, would give assurance to every one that its purposes were pure and patriotic. Let him not inquire into past political opinions or party divisions, the present crisis is one of too portentous importance to think of such things for a single moment; let the army be immediately reduced to not more than five thousand men,—the privates would rejoice to be released from a service into which they were carried by force, and let the officers be disbanded and made to go to work of some sort, and for the first insurrectionary word or act let them be *garroted*, not shot, that would be too good for them. The army of the Vice-Regal government did not exceed ten thousand men; can it be that a despotism is less a government of force than a Republic? If the army was thus reduced and

other reforms made, the burden would not be so heavy as to require that the laws should be enforced by the bayonet, or else the experiment of a republic might as well be abandoned at once.

If there is anything true in the science of political economy—if any proposition not mathematical is susceptible of demonstration, it is that the productive labor and resources of Mexico are inadequate to the maintenance of such an army, civil list, and church establishment. And with the Mexican people the only panacea for evils of all sorts is a new revolution. Without this and other reforms, nothing is more certain than another revolution before two years, probably before one, and those now in power will be hurled from their places. All the civil wars of the Roman empire after the time of Julius Cæsar, originated with the generals of the army. This must be so in Mexico, and even in a greater degree from the inherent and constitutional tendency of the Spanish race to civil wars. But for those wars Spain would have been at this day the most extensive and powerful empire in the world. The army of Mexico has never done anything else than to make revolutions. There is no single good which it has accomplished. What use has Mexico for a standing army? No foreign power will ever invade her. There is no motive, not even that of plunder, to do so, for they are so impoverished that they have nothing but the wealth of their churches, and surely no civilized enemy would take that. They have fears that we will assail them. I believe that those fears are groundless, but if they are not, what earthly resistance could Mexico offer? A feeble woman and a strong man armed would inadequately express the inequality of such a contest. Her impotency and helplessness are her best protection. They talk as they have done for years of invading Texas. No

such thing was attempted before the annexation of Texas to this country; and an invasion now only excites a smile whenever it is spoken of. Not one man of sense in Mexico either desires or anticipates such a thing. The real cause of the last revolution was not, as was professed, because the government of Herrera was opposed to invading Texas, but because Paredes very much preferred to such an invasion to return to Mexico and achieve a much easier and more bloodless triumph over his own government. So it will always be—an army may commence the march, but long before it arrives on the frontier of Texas there will be a new pronunciamento, and it will return and overthrow the government; for three months is quite long enough to make any administration unpopular. We shall then have another series of patriotic proclamations and high-sounding promises to reconquer the revolted province, as it is still called. General Paredes has just returned from the Texas frontier, and no one knows better than he does that it would be impossible to induce a Mexican army of fifty thousand men to cross the line, and if they did and there were ten thousand Americans there to meet them, not a Mexican would escape except as a deserter.

There is another and equally indispensable reform which I have little hope will be made—the curtailment of the revenues and the power of the priesthood, and the free toleration of all religions. Without this I have no hope whatever for the country. When Charles I. of England visited Spain he said that he had never liked the Catholic religion, but that he had never detested it until he had visited a Catholic country. I do not choose to say that, but I will say that the prevalence of that religion to the *exclusion* of all others, and the power of the priesthood as it exists in Mexico, are, in my judgment, incompatible with

a Republican form of government. Wherever such a state of things exists, there is a power behind the throne greater than the throne. The more ignorant the people, the greater is this power, and hence the opposition of the Catholic priesthood in other countries than Mexico to the diffusion of knowledge. I have not visited any other Catholic country, but in Mexico the subjection of fortune, mind and body to an ignorant and licentious priesthood, is a crying and a burning shame. But to say nothing of anything else, the impositions levied by the church, in one form or other, are more than the country can bear. It may be that no administration will be strong enough to cope with the power of the priesthood. It is said that Santa Anna tried it and was forced to yield. If this be so, they might as well abandon at once all hope of free institutions. The two things cannot exist together; they never have, and they never will.

The impression is a very general one, and is daily growing more so, that the Mexican people are not prepared for a republican form of government. It will be seen, however, that by their very complex plan of elections, the right of suffrage is very much restricted, giving to the government a somewhat aristocratic character,—this in a great measure removes the objection. The better classes of Mexicans are generally intelligent, and I think as patriotic as the people of most other countries. Their revolutionary history abounds with characters and incidents of disinterestedness and virtue altogether romantic. They possess many of the elements of a great people, and it is our peculiar and high duty to assist in their development—a duty enforced alike by philanthropy and by policy. But it must be confessed that the mass of the population are very much unenlightened.

Nowhere is there greater enthusiasm for the mere words "liberty and republic," of the true meaning of which they have very little conception. In the language of Milton's withering denunciation of his own countrymen—

> "They bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,
> And still revolt when truth would set them free—
> Licence they mean when they cry liberty,
> For who loves that must first be wise and good—
> But from that mark how far they rove we see,
> For all this waste of wealth and loss of blood."

But it has been the apology of tyrants and usurpers in all times, that the people were not capable of governing themselves—indeed, it is said that no people are. If the people of Mexico are not now prepared for a republican government, when will they be? If a European Prince should be in mercy sent them, or some military chieftain of their own should again usurp supreme power, will they then be taught the great principles of civil liberty and the rights of man, so that at some future day they will be prepared to receive free institutions? I borrow from an elegant writer* the best reply to all such arguments.

"Till men have been for some time free, they know not how to use their freedom. The natives of wine countries are always sober. In climates where wine is a rarity, intemperance abounds. A newly liberated people may be compared to a northern army encamped on the Rhine or the Xeres. It is said, that when soldiers, in such a situation, first find themselves able to indulge without restraint in such a rare and expensive luxury, nothing is to be seen but intoxication. Soon, however, plenty teaches discretion; and after wine has been for a few months their daily fare, they become more temperate than they had ever been in their own country. In the same manner the final and permanent fruits of liberty are wisdom, moderation, and mercy. Its immediate

* Macaulay.

effects are often atrocious crime, conflicting errors, scepticism on points the most clear, dogmatism on points the most mysterious. It is just at this crisis that its enemies love to exhibit it—they pull down the scaffolding from the half finished edifice; they point to the flying dust, the falling bricks, the comfortless rooms, the frightful irregularity of the whole appearance; and then ask in scorn, where the promised splendor and comfort are to be found? If such miserable sophisms were to prevail, there would never be a good house or government in the world.

"Ariosto tells a pretty story of a fairy, who, by some mysterious law of her nature, was condemned to appear at certain seasons in the form of a foul and poisonous snake,—those who injured her during the period of her disguise were for ever excluded from participation in the blessings which she bestowed. But to those who, in spite of her loathsome aspect, pitied and protected her, she afterwards revealed herself in the beautiful celestial form which was natural to her, accompanied their steps, granted all their wishes, filled their houses with wealth, made them happy in love, and victorious in war,—such a spirit is liberty. At times she takes the form of a hateful reptile—she grovels, she hisses, she stings,—but wo to those who in disgust shall venture to crush her! And happy are those who, having dared to receive her in her degraded, frightful shape, shall at length be rewarded by her in the time of her beauty and her glory.

"There is only one cure for the evils which newly acquired freedom produces—and that cure is *freedom!* When a prisoner leaves his cell, he cannot bear the light of day—he is unable to discriminate colors, or recognize faces,—but the remedy is not to remand him into his dungeon, but to accustom him to the rays of the sun. The blaze of truth and liberty may at first dazzle and bewilder nations which have become half blind in the house of bondage—but let them gaze on, and they will soon be able to bear it. In a few years men learn to reason—the extreme violence of opinion subsides; hostile theories correct each other; the scattered elements of truth cease to conflict, and begin to coalesce;—at length a system of justice and order is educed out of the chaos.

"Many politicians of our time are in the habit of laying it down as a self-evident proposition, that no people ought to be free till they are fit to use their freedom. The maxim is worthy of the fool in the old story, who resolved not to go into the water till he had learnt to swim! If

men are to wait for liberty, till they become wise and good in slavery, they may indeed wait for ever."

It is entirely true that it is not by keeping men in dark rooms that they are taught to discriminate colors, and it is equally true that to expose suddenly to a bright light those who have long been kept in darkness, is apt to destroy the vision for ever; so those who have long been kept in the darkness of despotism should receive the light of freedom cautiously and gradually. I have already expressed the opinion that Mexico is not now prepared for institutions as free as ours, but it by no means follows that she must be consigned to hopeless despotism. It has been suggested, and is even talked of in Mexico, that the only salvation for the country is that a monarchy should be established there, and some European prince placed upon the throne. Better that the seven phials of the Apocalypse should be poured out upon that devoted country. Such a measure would involve the extermination of the Mexican people, more particularly, if, as has been suggested, that prince should be one of the sons of Louis Philippe. No united people can be conquered, and upon such an issue as that, there would be little division of opinion, and never has there existed a race of more unyielding obstinacy and indomitable fortitude than either the Spanish or the Mexican. The three sieges in history which have grown into proverbs for the heroic fortitude with which they were characterized, Numantia, Saguntum, and Saragossa, were all in Spain,—and the siege of Mexico, more remarkable than either, attests the constancy and fortitude of the Mexicans. A much more probable result is the successful usurpation of some military chieftain of their own, but he must be a man of high qualities. It may be that the different

departments may slough off, and each form for a time a separate government, a sort of San Marino, but not like San Marino secure in its virtues from the contempt or aggression of more powerful neighbors. The destiny of Mexico is in her own hands; the present state of things cannot last much longer, no people can long endure such misrule, tumult, and anarchy. There must be a change; the present forms may continue for a time, but it will only be a lingering agony. The path of liberty is thorny and steep, not without much toil and many trials, has any people obtained the summit to which it leads; that Mexico may do so, I sincerely hope, although it would almost seem to be hoping against hope. I can only say, and I do so in all sincerity and truth;—may God send her a safe deliverance!

APPENDIX.

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE CONQUEST OF NEW SPAIN BY BERNAL DIAZ.

What the Marquis del Valle did after his return to Castile.

As his Majesty had now returned to Castile, from an expedition to chastise the city of Ghent, he raised a large army to attack Algiers, and the Marquis del Valle went to serve in it, and took with him his son and heir, and also his son Don Martin Cortes by Donna Marina, and a large retinue of esquires, servants, and horses. He embarked in a handsome galley with Don Henrique Henriques: but it pleased God to raise so violent a storm that nearly the whole royal armada was lost. The galley in which Cortes sailed was also sunk. But he escaped with his children and the gentlemen who accompanied him, but not without great risk of their lives—although at such moments there is no time for reflection, when death was staring them in the face, many of the servants of Cortes said that they saw him bind around his arm some small bundles containing very precious stones which, being a great lord, he had carried with him—and not because he had any use for them. When he reached the shore in safety, he found that he had lost all these valuable jewels, which were worth many dollars in gold.

All of the Captains and Masters of the Camp who constituted the royal council advised his Majesty to abandon the siege of Algiers, and sail for Bexia—since they saw that our Lord had been pleased to raise such a storm that they could do no more than they had done. Cortes was not summoned to this council, nor was his opinion asked. But when he was informed of it, he said that if his Majesty were pleased to entrust the matter to him, that—with the aid of God—the good fortune of our Cæsar,

and the soldiers which they then had—he would take Algiers. He then uttered many praises of his captains and soldiers who had been with him in the conquest of Mexico—" that we were the men to endure hunger and fatigues ; and, although wounded and toil-worn, to march wherever we were ordered, perform heroic achievements, and storm every city and fortress, although at the imminent peril of our lives." When many of the gentlemen of the expedition heard this, they said to his Majesty that it would have been better to have invited Cortes to the council, and that it was a great mistake not to have done so—others said that the reason that the Marquis was not invited to the council was, that they knew that his opinion would be opposed to raising the siege ; and that, at such a moment of imminent peril, there was no time for councils, except as to the means of placing in safety his Majesty and the gentlemen of his retinue, who were in the greatest danger ; and that they might afterwards return and renew the siege of Algiers :—and so they departed for Buxia.

Let us now leave this subject, and speak of the return to Castile from this toilsome expedition.

The Marquis was weary of remaining in Castile and attending upon the court : and on his return from Buxia being very much broken down by the toils of the expedition—was greatly desirous of returning to New Spain, if he could obtain permission to do so. He had sent to Mexico for his oldest daughter, Donna Maria Cortes, whom he had contracted in marriage to Don Alvaro Perez Osorio, the heir of the marquis of Astorga, and had promised her as a marriage portion more than a hundred thousand ducats in gold, besides a large amount in jewels and other articles ; and he went to Seville to receive her.

The marriage was broken off, as many gentlemen said, from the fault of Don Alvaro Perez Osorio—which so much enraged the Marquis as to bring on a fever, accompanied with dysentery—-and, as he daily grew worse, he determined to leave Seville, to relieve himself from the importunities of those who had business with him, and he retired to the town of Castilleja de la Cuesta, for the purpose of attending to his soul, and making his will : which, when he had done, and received the holy sacrament, our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to remove him from this troublesome world. He died on the 2d of December, in the year 1547. His body was carried with great pomp and a large procession of the clergy, and gentlemen in mourning, and buried in the chapel of the Dukes of Medina Sidonia. His bones were afterwards carried to New Spain, and were, according to the directions of his will, deposited in a sepulchre in Cuyoacan or Tezcuco, I am not certain which. I will now state what I think his age was, from facts which I will state. The year in which we sailed from Cuba

for New Spain was that of 1519. He then frequently said in conversation with us, his companions of the expedition, that he was thirty-four years old; to which add twenty-eight more, until he died, and it makes sixty-two.

The legitimate children which he left were—Don Martin Cortes, the present Marquis; Donna Maria Cortes, who, I have before said, was contracted in marriage to Don Alvaro Perez Osorio, the heir of the Marquisate of Astorga, and who afterwards married the Count Luna de Leon; Donna Juanna, who married Don Hernando Henriques, the heir of the Marquisate of Tariffa; Donna Catalina Arillano, who died in Seville. These all came to Castile with their mother, the Marchioness Donna Joana Zuniga, accompanied by her brother, the friar Don Antonio de Zuniga.

There was another daughter, who was in Mexico—Donna Leonor Cortes, —who married one Juanes de Tolosa, a Biscaiynian, who was worth more than a hundred thousand dollars, besides rich silver mines. The young marquis was much enraged at this marriage when he arrived in New Spain. He had also two illegitimate sons. Don Martin Cortes, whose mother was Donna Marina, and who was a knight of the Order of Santiago, and Luis Cortes, also a knight of Santiago, and whose mother was Dona Hermosilla. He left also three illegitimate daughters; one by an Indian woman of Cuba, and the others by Mexican women. He gave to these illegitimate daughters handsome dowries; for in their infancy he gave them some valuable Indian villages called Chinanta.

As to the provisions of his will I cannot speak positively, but I am sure that they were wise and proper, for he had ample time for that purpose, and as he was then an old man I do not doubt that it was done wisely. To relieve his conscience he ordered a hospital to be built in Mexico, and a monastery in his Town of Cuyoacan, which is two leagues from Mexico, and that his bones should be carried to New Spain. He left ample funds to carry into execution all the provisions of his will which were many and good, and such as became a good Christian, all of which I do not enumerate, both to avoid prolixity and because I do not remember them all. The motto and blazon on his arms were those of a very valiant gentleman and expressive of his heroic actions, but as they were in Latin, and I do not understand the Latin language, I shall not attempt to give them. The heads of seven captive kings were engraved on his escutcheon, and as I understand it, these seven captive Kings were Montezuma the great lord of Mexico, Cacamatqui, the nephew of Montezuma, and the great lord of Tezcuco, Coadlavaca the lord of Iztapalapa and other villages, the lord of Tacuba, the lord of Cuyoacan, and another great Cacique of two provinces called Tulapa which were adjoining Matalcuigo. This last, it was said, was the

son of a sister of Montezuma, and a very near heir to the throne of Mexico. The last of these kings was Guatemuz, who defended his provinces and city when we conquered them. These were the seven Caciques which were engraved upon his arms and escutcheon, for I do not remember any other kings who were at any time prisoners, as I have stated in former chapters. I will now pass on and describe the person and disposition of Cortes. He was of good person and stature, well proportioned and muscular; the color of his face was somewhat of an ashy paleness, and not very pleasant to look upon. If his face had been somewhat longer it would have been better; the expression of his eyes was at times amorous, at other times grave; his beard thin, brown and stiff; his hair the same; his breast full, and his shoulders well formed; he was thin and had a small stomach; a little bow-legged, with well shaped legs and thighs. He was a fine horseman, and was dexterous in the use of all kinds of arms, both on foot and on horseback, but above all he had the heart and spirit which is of most importance. I have heard it said, that when a young man in the island of Hispaniola, he was somewhat irregular in his amours, and that he was sometimes engaged in duels with dexterous swordsmen, in all of which he was victorious; he had the scar of a swordcut on his under lip, which he had received in some of these rencontres, which upon close examination could be seen, but he kept it covered with his beard. In his presence, movements, conversation, eating, dress, in everything he showed the great lord.

His clothes were of the fashion of the time, he cared nothing for silks nor damasks nor satins, but always dressed neatly and plainly; neither did he wear large chains of gold, but a small one of gold of the finest workmanship with a small medallion attached to it, on one side of which was an image of our lady the holy Virgin Mary with her precious Son in her arms, and an inscription in Latin,—on the other side an image of Saint John the Baptist, with another Latin inscription under it; he also wore on his finger a costly diamond ring. On his cap, which according to the fashion of the time was of velvet, he wore another medallion, I do not remember what face was engraved upon it, nor the inscription. Later in life he wore a plain cap without the medallion.

The furniture of his house, his retinue and servants, were those of a great lord; with major-domos, pages, &c., and many large vessels of silver and of gold. He ate heartily at the middle of the day, and drank a half-pint glass of wine and water; the only other meal which he took was supper. He cared nothing for delicate or costly dishes, except on occasions when such things were necessary, and then he did not regard the cost of them. He was always very affable with all the captains and soldiers, especially

with those of us who first sailed with him from Cuba. He was a good Latin scholar, and I have heard it said that he was a Bachelor of Laws, and whenever he conversed with learned men and Latin scholars the conversation was always in Latln. He was something of a poet, and sometimes wrote couplets; his conversation was agreeable and very polished; he prayed every morning and heard mass with devotion, he had for his advocate and intercessor our lady the Virgin Mary, as every good Christian should have; he also had for his saints, St. Peter, St. James, and St. John the Baptist. He was very charitable; whenever he swore he would say, "on my conscience;" when he was angry with any of our soldiers he would say, "oh! may you repent of this;" when very much excited, the veins of his neck and forehead would swell, and he would, sometimes, when greatly enraged, throw off his mantle, but he was never known to utter an injurious or offensive word to any captain or soldier. He was extremely patient and forbearing, which he had great occasion to be, for the soldiers would often say inconsiderately most offensive things, but he never replied with harshness or unkindness; the most that he would say, was, "Be silent, or go in God's name, but for the future have a care what you say or it will cost you dear, for I will punish you."

He was very obstinate, especially in all military matters; for he persisted in all the ill-advised combats into which he led us, when we made the excursion in the lake to reconnoitre Mexico; and in the battles of Pinoles, which are to this day called the pinoles of the Marquis, notwithstanding all the counsel and advice which we gave him to the contrary. We all advised him against attempting to ascend to the fortress on the top of those Pinoles (craggy mountains), but that we should surround them, and not expose us to the large rocks which they would hurl over the sides of the mountain upon us, and against which we could not defend ourselves, and that to attempt it would expose us all to almost certain destruction; but he persisted in his own course against the opinions of us all. We had to commence the ascent, and great was the danger to which we were exposed. Ten or twelve of our soldiers were killed, and all of us more or less bruised and wounded, without accomplishing anything until other counsels were adopted. And then again: in the expedition to Honduras, when Christoval de Ali revolted with the armada under his command, I more than once advised that we should take the route through the mountains, but he persisted in taking that along the coast. In this he was again mistaken; for that which I recommended passed the whole way through an inhabited country. This will be understood by every one who has passed through that country. From Guagacualco the road is plain and direct to Chiapas, thence to Guatemala, and from Guatemala to Naco,

where Christoval de Ali then was. But I will say no more on that subject. When we first arrived at Villa Rica, and commenced building the fortress, the first man who struck a spade in the ground to lay the foundation was Cortes, and in all our battles he was in the midst of us. The first which I will here mention were the battles in Tabasco, where he commanded the cavalry and fought bravely. I have already stated how he labored in constructing the fortress in Villa Rica. And then his sinking the thirteen vessels—which was done by the advice of our valiant captains and brave soldiers, and not as Gomara relates it. In the three battles with the Tlascalans he showed himself an able and valiant captain. And again: our entry into the city of Mexico with only four hundred soldiers, is worthy of admiration; and the audacity of seizing Montezuma in his palace, surrounded as he was by so many of his guards, which was also done by the advice of all our captains and soldiers. Another thing which should not be forgotten was the burning before the palace of Montezuma some of his captains who were concerned in the killing of our captain, Juan Escalande, and seven soldiers. I do not remember the names of these Mexican captains, but it is a matter of no consequence. And what an act of daring courage was it to march against Pamphilo Narvaez, the captain sent by Diego Velasquez, with thirteen hundred men, ninety of them cavalry, and as many more armed with muskets, when we had only two hundred and sixty-six men without horses, muskets, or cross-bows, and no other weapons than pikes, swords, and daggers, and by all the arts and stratagems of war we defeated Narvaez and made him prisoner. I will pass on to our second entry into the city of Mexico, when we went to the relief of Pedro Alvarado, when we ascended into the lofty temple of their idol, Huichilobos. There again Cortes showed himself a most valiant man; but neither his prowess nor our own availed us anything. Then again: in the very celebrated battle of Atumba, where all the flower of the bravest Mexican warriors were awaiting us with the hope of destroying us all, when Cortes attacked the standard-bearer of Guatemuz and forced him to lower his banner, and thereby struck down the spirit of the Mexican squadrons which had been fighting most valiantly. In this, next to God, he received the most important aid from our brave captains Pedro Alvarado, Gonzalas de Sandoval, Christoval de Ali, Diego de Ardas, and Andres de Tapia. There were other brave soldiers, but as they had no horses, I do not name them. Some of the soldiers of Narvaez also did us good service. He who killed the Mexican standard-bearer was Juan de Salamanca, a native of Ontiveros, and he took from him a rich plume, which he gave to Cortes. I will pass on to the battle of Iztapalapa, in which Cortes was engaged with us, and where also he bore himself like an able captain. And then again at

Suchimelico, where the Mexican squadrons pulled him from his horse, and he was rescued by some of our Tlascalan friends, but more than all by our brave soldier, Christoval de Olea, a native of old Castile. Let the reader take notice there was one named Christoval de Ali, but this was Christoval de Olea. I mention this that it may not be said by any one that I have made a mistake. Cortes also showed himself a very brave man in our second siege of Mexico when the Mexicans defeated him on the narrow causeway, and carried off and sacrificed sixty-two of our soldiers, and had wounded Cortes in the leg, and had him in their clutches, and were carrying him also to the sacrifice, when it pleased God that by his own strength and good fighting, and the timely aid of this same Christoval de Olea, who had before rescued him at Suchimelico, Cortes was enabled to mount his horse, and his life was again saved.* But the brave Olea was himself left dead on the causeway; and even now while I am writing, my heart melts at the remembrance of him, and it seems to me that I see him with his noble presence and great soul, just as when he so often aided us in battle, and it makes me sad, for he was a native of my own country, and the kinsman of my kinsmen.

I shall mention no more of the heroic actions of our Marquis Del Valle, for they were so numerous that I should not soon come to an end in relating them. I will now speak of his temper and disposition. He was very fond of games at cards and dice, and when he was engaged in such games he was very affable and pleasant, and would indulge in jests and pleasantries, as is usual with those who game. He was extremely vigilant in all our campaigns during the conquest, and would often go the rounds at night and challenge the sentinels, and would go into the quarters of the soldiers, and if he found any of them sleeping with their armor or sandals off, he would reprimand them, saying "that it was a mean sheep that felt the weight of its own wool."

When we went to Honduras I observed one thing which I had never noticed before, which was, that after he had eaten, if he did not sleep a short time he became sick at the stomach. To avoid this we placed an awning under a tree or some other shade, and however hot the sun might be shining, or hard it might be raining, he would take a short sleep and then resume the march. During the wars of the conquest he was very thin and had a small stomach, but after his return from Honduras he became quite fat. I noticed also that his beard was again brown, although before it had been somewhat grey. I would notice also that he was extremely

* The only liberty which I have taken with the original, is to transfer to this paragraph one line which occurs a few pages afterwards. In all other respects the translation is literal and exact.

liberal in the expenditure of money until his second return from Castile, in the year 1540, but that after that he was considered parsimonious. He had a law-suit with one of his servants whose name was Ulloa, because he refused to pay him his wages. And we may observe that after he had completed the conquest of New Spain he had many troubles and difficulties, and expended much money in the expeditions which he undertook He did not succeed either in his expedition to California, nor in that to Hiqueras, nor in anything else after he finished the conquest of the country, perhaps because his rewards were reserved for him in heaven, and such I believe was the case, for he was a worthy gentleman, and very much devoted to the Virgin and to St. Peter and all the other saints. May God pardon him his sins and me mine, and grant me a happy end, which is of more importance than all our conquests and victories over the Indians.

How they had concerted a plan in this city of Cholula to destroy us all by the orders of Montezuma; and what was done in the matter.

Although we had been received with all the solemnity and good-will which I have described, it afterwards appeared that Montezuma had sent orders to his ambassadors who were there with us, to make arrangements with the Cholulans, that in conjunction with a squadron of twenty thousand men which he had sent, that they should make war upon us, and that they should attack us by day and by night, and that they should send as many of us as they could tied to Mexico. He also sent them many presents of clothes and jewels, and a drum of gold. He also promised the Papas (priests) of that city, that they should have twenty of us to sacrifice to their idols. Everything was thus arranged, and the warriors whom Montezuma sent had arrived, and were quartered in some small houses about half a league from the city of Cholula; others were concealed in the houses in the city, all prepared with arms in their hands. They had also erected breastworks on the azoteas (roofs of the houses), and had dug ditches across the streets to obstruct the passage of our horses. Some of the houses were even filled with large rods, to scourge us with, and collars and cords made of dressed skins with which to tie us, and take us to Mexico; but our Lord God was pleased to order things better, and all their calculations were reversed.

We were all in our quarters, as I have before stated; and, although they furnished us with abundance of excellent provisions, and seemed to be altogether friendly, we did not omit any of those precautions which it had always been our good custom to observe. The third day they brought us nothing to eat, nor did any of the caciques or papas make their appearance; and if any of the Indians came to see us, they kept at a distance, and would not approach near to us, and were laughing as at some jest. When

our captain saw this, he directed our interpreters, Donna Marina and Aguilar, to tell the ambassadors of Montezuma to order the caciques to bring us something to eat. All that they brought us was wood and water, and the old men who brought them said that they had no maize. They also stated that other ambassadors from Montezuma had that day arrived, and joined those who were already there; and they said, without any concealment or respect for us whatever, that Montezuma had ordered that we should not go to his city, for he had nothing for us to eat, and that they desired to return immediately to Mexico with our answer.

Although this conversation was not agreeable to Cortes, he replied in bland words to the ambassadors, and said, that he wondered greatly that so great a lord as Montezuma should adopt so many different resolutions, and begged that they would not return until the next day, for that he then intended to go and see him, and would do whatever he ordered. And it seems to me that he also gave them some strands of beads. The ambassadors said that they would wait. Our captain then ordered us to assemble, and said to us—"These people seem to be very much excited, and it behooves us to be very much on the alert, or some evil will befall us." He then sent for the principal cacique, whose name I do not remember, or that he should send him some of the head men of the city. He replied, that he was sick, and could not come, and that he would not send the others. Our captain seeing this, ordered that we should induce, by kind words, two of the papas to come to him, many of whom were then assembled in an idol temple near to our quarters; we brought two of them without offering them any disrespect whatever. Cortes ordered that a chalchihui stone, very much like emeralds, and held in great estimation amongst them, should be given to each of them, and asked them, in the kindest manner—"Why it was that the caciques and papas were frightened at his sending for them, and had refused to come to him." As it appeared, one of these papas was a very distinguished person amongst them, and had power and authority in nearly all the idol temples of that city—something like a bishop amongst them—and was held in great reverence by them. He replied that the papas had no fears of us, and that he would go and see the caciques and head men, and that, after he had talked to them, he did not doubt that they would come. Cortes told him to go at once, and that his companion should remain until he returned. The papa went and summoned the cacique and head men, and they immediately came with him to the quarters of Cortes.

He then asked them, through our interpreters, Donna Marina and Aguilar, what had caused their fears, and why they had not brought us the usual supplies of provisions; and told them that if they were

displeased with our remaining in their city, that we would depart the next morning for Mexico, to see and converse with their Lord Montezuma, and that they must have temames (porters) ready to carry our baggage and cannon, but that they must immediately bring us something to eat. The cacique was so confused that he did not know what to say. He said, that as to food, they would seek for it, but that their Lord Montezuma had ordered them not to supply us with any, nor to allow us to advance any farther. Whilst engaged in this conversation, three friendly Indians of Cempoal said privately to Cortes, that they had discovered near our quarters some ditches cut across the street, and so covered over with wood and earth, that they could not be seen but upon close examination; that they had removed the earth from the top of one of these ditches, and found it full of stakes with very sharp points, for the purpose of killing our horses as they attempted to cross them; and that on the azoteas they had constructed a kind of breastwork of clay, and had large supplies of stones also. All of which was certainly well arranged.

At this moment eight of our Tlascalan friends, who had not been allowed to enter the city of Cholula, came to Cortes and said, "Look you, Malinche, there is something wrong going on in this city, for we know that they have this night sacrificed, to the God of war, seven persons, five of them children, that he may give them the victory over you,—we have also noticed that they have removed all their property, and their women and children out of the city." As soon as Cortes heard this, he ordered them to go forthwith to their Tlascalan captains and tell them to be prepared and ready at a moment's warning, whenever he should send for them. He then turned to the Caciques and Papas and told them to have no fears, nor be in any degree disturbed; that they should obey and not break their faith with him, and that if they did he would chastise them; that he had already told them that we desired to depart in the morning, and that he required that they should supply him with two thousand warriors as the Tlascalans had done. They replied that they would supply him both with the warriors which he required, and the Tamemes to carry his baggage and cannon; and asked permission to go and make the necessary preparations; and were very happy when they left us, for they calculated that with the warriors whom they were to supply us, and the squadrons which Montezuma had sent, and which were then waiting outside of the city, that not one of us could escape alive, by reason of the ditches across the streets over which the horses could not pass, and the breastworks and other defences which they had erected. They directed their Mexican allies to be well prepared, for that we were to depart the next day with two thousand warriors which they were to

supply us, and that as we carelessly pursued our march that they could seize upon their prey and tie us; that of this they were certain, for that they had sacrificed to their idols who had promised them the victory over us.

Let us leave them in this security and return to our Captain, who was anxious to ascertain all the particulars of the plot and what was going on. He told Donna Marina to take two more Chalchihuis to the two Papas with whom he had before conversed, and in kind words to say to them that Malinche desired to converse with them again, and that she should bring them with her. Donna Marina went and spoke to them in that manner which she so well knew how to do, and gave them the presents; they returned with her immediately. Cortes told them to tell him truly everything that they knew, that they were priests of idols and chiefs in the city, and that it did not become them to lie, and that whatever they might communicate to him, should on no account be disclosed, that we should leave their city the next day,—he also promised to give them a large quantity of clothes. They then told Cortes that the truth was, that their Lord Montezuma knew that we were going to his city; that he every day formed different resolutions, and that his mind was still in doubt what to do; that sometimes he would order them, that if we came there to receive and treat us with great honor, and that we should proceed to his city. At other times he would send to say to them that it was not his will that we should go to his city, and that now the last advice which he had received from his idols, Tezcatepuca and Huichilobos, which he regards with great devotion, was to kill us all there in Cholula, or carry us tied to Mexico; that he had the day before sent twenty thousand warriors, one half of whom were already in the city, and the other half near there stationed in some ravines; that they were already advised of our departure the next day, and the defences which had been constructed in the city, and the two thousand Cholulan warriors that were to accompany us, and of the agreement which had been entered into; that twenty of us were to be left to be sacrificed to the idols of Cholula. Upon hearing all this, Cortes gave them mantas finely worked, and besought them to speak of what had passed to no one, and that if they did, on our return from Mexico we would kill them; that he desired to leave Cholula very early in the morning, and requested that they would bring all the chiefs to talk with him.

That night Cortes called a council to determine on the course to be pursued, for he had many wise men and prudent councillors; and, as in like cases it often happens, some advised that we should change our route and go by Guaxacingo; others said that we should endeavor to preserve peace

by all possible means, and that we should return to Tlascala; others of us gave as our opinions that if we allowed such treacheries as this to pass without punishment, that wherever we went we might expect the same, or even worse; and that as we were then quartered in that large city with an abundant supply of provisions, that we should make the war there, as they would feel it more severely in their houses than in the country adjoining, and that we should immediately summon the Tlascalans to enter the city. All at length came into this last opinion, and it was arranged in this manner: Cortes had already told them that we were to depart the next morning, and we pretended to be packing up our baggage, which was little enough, and that we should fall upon the Indian warriors in some large patios (court-yards) surrounded by high walls which were in our quarters, which they well deserved, and that we should dissemble with the ambassadors of Montezuma and tell them that those wicked Cholulans had endeavored to make us believe that the treachery which they were about to practise upon us was by the orders of Montezuma and themselves, his ambassadors, which we did not believe, and we besought them to remain in the quarters of our Captain, and that they should hold no farther conversation with the people of that city, and thus give us no reason to suspect that they were acting in concert with the Cholulans in their treacherous scheme, and that they might go with us as guides.

They said that neither they nor their Lord Montezuma knew anything of the matters which we had stated; and, although they objected to it, we placed guards over them, so that they should not go out without permission. We did not desire that Montezuma should know that we were aware that he had himself ordered these things. That night we were all armed and prepared at all points—the horses saddled and bridled, with large guards posted, and the officers frequently going the rounds. This was always our custom, but we felt certain that that night the Cholulans, as well as the Mexican squadrons, would be upon us. An old Indian woman, who was the wife of a cacique, and who was informed of the plot which had been laid for our destruction, came privately to Donna Marina, and seeing that she was young, handsome, and rich, she advised her to go with her to her house, if she would escape with her life, for that most certainly we would all be killed that night, or the next day, for so it had been ordered and arranged by the great Montezuma; that the Mexicans and the people of that city had united for that purpose, and all of us who were not killed were to be tied and taken to Mexico; and that, knowing this, and from the commiseration which she felt for Donna Marina, she had come to give her the information, and that she must get whatever she had and go with her to her house, and that she would then marry her to her son, the brother of an-

other boy which the old woman brought with her. Donna Marina, who was wary and sagacious in everything, said to her—"Oh, my mother! how much I thank you for what you have told me. I would go this moment, but I have no one whom I can trust to carry my mantas and jewels of gold, which are of great value. Wait a short time, you and your son, and this very night we will go; for you see that these Teules are now watching us."

The old woman believed what she said, and remained conversing with her. Donna Marina asked in what manner we were all to be killed, and how and when the plot was formed. The old woman told her, and it was neither more nor less than what the two Papas had said before. Donna Marina asked the old woman how it was that she had obtained her information, as the plot had been so secretly arranged. The old woman said that her husband, who was one of the captains in the city, had told her, and that he was now engaged in rallying his men to join the Mexicans in the ravines outside the city; and that she believed that they were then assembled, awaiting our approach. She said that she had been informed of the plot three days before, when they had sent to her husband a gilded drum, and to the commanders of three other companies rich mantas and jewels of gold, to induce them to deliver us all to their lord, the great Montezuma.

When Donna Marina heard all this, she dissembled with the old woman and said, "Oh, how I am rejoiced to hear that your son, to whom I am to be married, is one of the head men of the city. We have been talking together a long time and I do not wish that they should suspect us, and therefore, mother, wait here a little while and I will begin to bring my baggage, for I cannot bring it all at once, and you and your son and my brother can guard it, and then we will go." The old woman believed all this, and she and her son seated themselves quietly. Donna Marina went in all haste to Cortes, and told him all that had passed between herself and the old Indian woman. Cortes immediately ordered that she should be brought to him, and interrogated her as to all the particulars of the plot, when she told him the same story, neither more nor less than what the Papas had told him. He ordered a guard to be placed over her. When morning came it was a sight worth seeing, the haste and bustle of the Caciques and Papas in collecting their warriors, their smiles and happiness, as if they already had us in the net and snare, which they had prepared for us. They brought more Indian warriors than we had asked for, so many that the large patios in our quarters could not contain them all, very large as they were; and they have been preserved to this day in

memory of the past. Although it was very early in the morning when these Cholulan warriors arrived at our quarters, we were prepared at all points for the work we had to do. The soldiers who were armed with sword and shield, were placed at the entrance of the patio, so that not a single Indian, who was armed, should be allowed to escape. Our Captain was mounted on his horse, as were several of our soldiers who acted as his guard. When he saw that the Caciques and Papas had come so early in the morning with their warriors, he said, "how impatient these traitors are to see us in the ravines and to feed upon our flesh, but our Lord will order things better!" He then inquired for the two Papas who had disclosed the plot, and they told him they were at the door of the patio with some other Caciques, who desired to enter. He then ordered Aguilar, our interpreter, to tell them to return to their houses as he had no use for them at that time. This he did because they had done a good work for us, and he did not desire that they should suffer for it, but that their lives might be saved. Cortes was mounted on his horse and Donna Marina by his side. He then addressed the Caciques and Papas, asked them why it was that having given them no offence, they had meditated to have killed us all the night before? What had we done or said to them to induce them to commit this treachery? We had only admonished them as we had done the people of all the towns through which we had passed, not to be wicked, nor sacrifice men, nor adore idols, nor eat human flesh, nor commit unnatural crimes, but to live virtuously, and had explained to them the things touching our holy faith; and all this without, in anything, having oppressed them. He asked them why they had prepared so many scourges and collars and cords, which were deposited in a house near one of their idol temples; and why, within the last three days, they had constructed so many defences upon their azoteas, and dug so many pits and ditches in the streets; and why they had sent their women and children and property, out of the city; what good had they promised themselves from this treachery, all of which they had not been able to conceal from him. That they had not even supplied him with provisions, but had brought him water and wood in mockery, saying that they had no maize; that he very well knew that they had their warriors concealed in some ravines near by, expecting that we would pass that way on our route to Mexico, and that they were there awaiting us to execute the treachery which they had planned; that in recompense for our having come amongst them as brothers, and told them what our Lord God and our king had commanded us, that they desired to kill us and eat our flesh, and had already prepared their pots and salt, pepper and tomatoes; that if they had desired this, that it would have been better to have made war upon us like good and brave

warriors in the field, as their neighbors the Tlascalans had done; that he knew very well all that had been done in their city, and that they had even promised to their idol, the God of war, that twenty of us should be sacrificed to him; and that three nights before that time they had sacrificed seven Indians to this idol, that he might give them the victory over us; that he was a wicked and false idol, and had no power against us; and that all their wickedness and treacheries would in the end fall upon their own heads. All this he said to Donna Marina, who made them understand it perfectly. When they heard all this the Caciques and Papas and captains said, that it was all true, but that the fault was not theirs, for they had been ordered to do what they had done by the ambassadors of Montezuma, who had been so commanded by their master. Cortes told them the royal laws required that such treasons should be punished, and that for this, their crime, they had to die, and he immediately ordered a musket to be fired, which was the signal which we had agreed upon for that purpose, and we gave them a lesson which they will remember for ever, for we killed many of them, others were burnt alive, to show them that their false idols could do nothing for them.

It was not two hours before our Tlascalan friends arrived whom we had left in the fields outside of the city; they fought very bravely in the streets where others of the Cholulans attempted to prevent their entrance, whom they very soon defeated, and went through the city robbing and making prisoners of all whom they met. The next day other companies of the Tlascalans arrived, and did them much injury, for they were very hostile to the Cholulans. When Cortes and the rest of the captains and soldiers saw this, out of commiseration for them he restrained the Tlascalans from committing any other outrages upon them; Cortes ordered Pedro Alvarado and Christoval de Oli to bring all the Tlascalans to him—and they made no delay in coming—when he ordered the captains to get all their men together and to return to their quarters outside of the city and to remain there, which they did, leaving none with us but our friends of Cempoal. At this moment there came to us certain Caciques and Papas of Cholula, who belonged to different departments of the city, and who said that they had not been concerned in the plot—and it may have been so, as it was a very large city—and they besought Cortes that he would pardon them as the traitors had paid for their crime with their lives; then came the two Papas our friends, who had discovered the secret to us, and the old woman the wife of the captain, and who desired to be the step-mother of Donna Marina (which I have before related), and besought Cortes that he would pardon them. Cortes seemed very much enraged, and ordered that the ambassadors of Montezuma should be sent for, he who had been detained

in our quarters, and said that although the whole city deserved to be destroyed, and that all of them should forfeit their lives, yet out of respect for their lord, Montezuma, whose vassals they were, he pardoned them, but that for the future their conduct must be good, and that if another thing like the past happened they should all die for it. He then sent for the Tlascalans, and ordered them to release all their prisoners, for that the Cholulans had already been sufficiently punished. The Tlascalans were very unwilling to do so, for they said that the Cholulans deserved much more at their hands for the many injuries and treacheries which they had committed against them, but they obeyed the order. The Tlascalans were now rich in the booty which they had acquired in gold and mantas, cotton, salt, and slaves.

Besides this, Cortes brought about a peace and friendship between the Tlascalans and Cholulans, which, as I have heard, has never since been broken. He also commanded the Caciques and Papas that their people should return to their city, and again open their shops and markets, and that they need have no fears, as he then had no resentments against them. They replied, that in five days their people should return to their houses. They were at that time in great terror, and said that they were afraid that Cortes would nominate another Cacique, as he who had formerly been Cacique was engaged in the treacherous plot, and was killed in the patio. He asked them to whom the office descended, and they answered, to one of the brothers of the former Cacique; and he immediately appointed him until he should order otherwise.

Besides this, after they had returned to the city and felt secure, he summoned the Caciques, Papas, captains, and head men, and explained to them the things touching our holy faith, and told them that they must cease to worship idols; that they must no more sacrifice human beings, nor eat their flesh, nor rob one another, nor commit any other of the wickednesses which they were accustomed to do; and that they should consider that their idols had deceived them; that they were wicked and false, and did not speak the truth; and to remember the lies which they had told them only five days before, when they had sacrificed to them five human victims, and they had promised them the victory over us; and that everything which they said, either to their Papas or to themselves, was wicked and false; and he besought them to pull them down and break them to pieces, and that if they did not wish to do it, that we would; and that they must make something like an altar, and we would place a cross upon it. They made the place for the cross, and said that they would remove their idols, but delayed doing it, although frequently ordered to do so. The Father Olmedo, of the Order of Mercy, said that it was of little consequence to pull down their idols

until they were better instructed, and until we saw what would be the result of our entry into Mexico, and that time would tell us what we ought to do; but that for the present, the admonitions which he had given them, and putting up the cross, were sufficient.

I will now state that this city is situated in a plain, and is surrounded by other large populations—Tepeaca, Tlascala, Chalco, Tecamachalco, and Guaxacingo, and so many other large villages that I shall not attempt to name them here.

The country produces maize, red pepper, and very many other things. There are a great many fields of corn; it is this of which they make their wine. They also make there very handsome crockery ware, red, brown and white, and variously painted. They supply Mexico with it, as well as all the neighboring provinces, like the cities of Talavera and Palencia in Castile. They have in that city more than a hundred towers, which are cues or idol temples,—the largest of these is higher than that in Mexico; although that in Mexico is very lofty and sumptuous. Each of these idol temples has a spacious court. We were informed that they have a very large idol there, the name of which I do not now remember, but it is held by them in great reverence, and they come from many and distant places to sacrifice to it and give to it a portion of what they possess. I remember that when we first entered that city and saw these lofty white towers it looked like Valladolid itself.

Let us say no more of this city nor what happened in it, and we will speak of the squadrons which the great Montezuma had sent, and which were stationed in the ravines near the city of Cholula, where they had made their breastworks and dug ditches to prevent the passage of our horses, as I have before stated. When they learned what had happened they returned to Mexico with all speed, and gave Montezuma an account of everything that had taken place. But rapidly as they went, two of the ambassadors who had been with us, arrived in Mexico before them. We were informed that when Montezuma received the information he felt very great rage and grief, and immediately sacrificed certain Indians to his idol Huichilobos, which was his God of war, to the end that he would inform him what was to be the result of our going to Mexico, and whether he should allow us to enter into his city. We learned also that he was shut up in his devotions and sacrifices for two whole days, together with ten of the principal Papas, and that the advice which he received from his idols was, to send messengers to us to exculpate himself for the affair at Cholula, and that with all the signs of peace he should allow us to enter into the city of Mexico, and that whilst there by withholding food or water, or raising any of the bridges, he might destroy us; and that in a single day if

he attacked us, not one of us would be left alive, and that he might then offer his sacrifices not only to Huichilobos, who gave this answer, but also to Tezcatepuca, the God of hell, and fill themselves with our legs, thighs and arms, and give the other parts of our bodies to the snakes and tigers which were kept in wooden cages, which I will hereafter relate in the proper time and place.

We will say no more now of Montezuma, and the mortification which he felt. This castigation of Cholula was soon known in all the provinces of New Spain, and if before we had gained the reputation of being powerful and brave in the wars of Potonchan, Tobasco, Cinga pacinga, and Tlascala, and they had called us Teules, which is the name by which they call their gods or evil beings, from this time forward they regarded us as prophets. They said that no evil design could in any way be concealed from us, and for this reason they all exhibited friendship towards us.

I suppose that the curious reader is already weary of this narrative of Cholula and wishes that I had finished it, but I cannot omit to notice here the wooden cages we found there, which were full of Indian men and boys which they were fattening to sacrifice to their idols, and to eat their flesh. We broke the cages and Cortes ordered the Indians who were imprisoned in them to return to the countries of which they were natives, and ordered the captains and Papas that no such thing should be repeated, and that they must not again eat human flesh, and they promised that they would not; but what availed these promises when they were not complied with?

I will now pass on, and remark that these are the cruelties which the Bishop of Chiapa, Don Bartolemi de Las Casas, describes at so much length, and affirms that without any cause whatever, but only for our pastime and because we had a fancy to it, we inflicted this punishment; and I would remark that some good religious Franciscans who were the first friars his majesty sent to New Spain after the conquest, went to Cholula to examine and inquire how and in what manner the thing took place, and the cause of the punishment inflicted. Their inquiries were made of the Papas themselves and the old men of the city, and after the fullest examination they found the facts to be neither more nor less than those stated in this my relation of them; and if this chastisement had not been inflicted our lives would have been in the greatest danger from the numerous squadrons of Mexican and Cholulan warriors which were there assembled, and if it had been our misfortune to have been killed there, this New Spain would not have been so soon conquered,—and even if another expedition had been ventured upon, it would have been encountered with great toils and difficulties, for the Mexicans would have defended all the

entrances into their country and they might have been left for ever in their idolatries. I have heard a Franciscan friar of most virtuous life say, that if this chastisement could have been avoided, and cause had not been given for it, it would have been better; but, that it was well that it was done, that the Indians in all the provinces of New Spain might see and know that these idols and all others are wicked and lying things, and that seeing that everything which they promised had turned out the reverse they lost the devotion with which they had before regarded them, and from that time forward they never again offered sacrifices to them or came on pilgrimages to them from other parts as they had been accustomed to do, cared nothing for them, took them down from the high temple where they were kept, and concealed or broke them to pieces and they were never seen afterwards.

I have translated these chapters, partly for the purpose of giving the reader "a taste of the quality" of the veracious old chronicler, and of the epic character of his whole narrative,—but still more to vindicate my favorite hero Cortes against the imputation of unnecessary cruelty; I know no hero, ancient or modern, for whom I have more admiration than for Cortes,—and with some knowledge of the stirring scenes in which he was the principal actor, which an acquaintance with the language in which an account of them was originally written has enabled me to appreciate more justly, I am free to say that considering all the circumstances with which he was surrounded, that the charge of cruelty so generally made against him is in my judgment without just foundation. I have no hesitation in saying that the punishment which he inflicted upon the Cholulans, more than anything else, insured his success; he was about to enter the city of Mexico with less than five hundred men, where Montezuma was surrounded by countless warriors,—"When," as one of the Mexicans afterwards said, "that they had made the calculation, and that they could lose twenty thousand of their men for every Spaniard that was killed, and in the end be victorious." The slaughter of the Cholulans struck terror not only into the heart of Montezuma, but of all his vassals. They had before regarded the Spaniards as invincible in battle; the discovery of this plot by Cortes, notwithstanding the secresy with which it had been kept, added to this feeling a superstitious awe of the Spaniards, to whom they attributed something of omniscience also. It was absolutely necessary, too, that Cortes should guard against the repetition of such treachery, to which his situation exposed him; it

may well be doubted whether he did not owe the final success which crowned his enterprise to this wise and just act of apparent severity. If the Spaniards had not succeeded, more human victims would have been sacrificed to the Mexican idols in one year than perished at Cholula.

The only other act of cruelty which has been charged upon him was the torture and subsequent execution of Guatemozin; Cortes remonstrated against and resisted the former until there was danger of a revolt and mutiny in the Spanish army, the consequences of which would have been most disastrous,—he was at last forced to yield to the clamors of his soldiers, but very soon interposed at great peril to himself, and rescued Guatemozin. He was executed on the march to Honduras when Cortes went there to suppress the revolt of Christoval de Olid; Cortes was afraid to leave Guatemozin in Mexico, and took him and many others of the most refractory amongst the Mexicans along with him.

Cortes had satisfactory evidence, that on the march, Guatemozin had formed a plan which was ripe for execution, for the Mexicans to rise upon and massacre the Spaniards; he owed it then to his own as well as the safety of his companions, that the leading conspirators should be punished. It is absurd to impute to Cortes any other motive for the act; it could not have been to extort confessions as to concealed treasure, for he was then in a wilderness several hundred miles from Mexico, and if such had been the motive it would have been perpetrated in Mexico. It could not have been from any resentment which he had felt for the heroic defence which Guatemozin had made of his country and people; Cortes was at all points a hero himself, and could have no other feeling on this occasion than that of sympathy and admiration, which he not only expressed but proved that he entertained by his generous kindness to the Mexican prince, and anxious solicitude to spare his life and those of his people during the last days of that memorable siege; there can be no doubt, therefore, that the execution was ordered from a deep conviction that the safety of the Spaniards demanded it. It is possible that in this opinion he may have been mistaken, but if he really thought so, the act was justifiable, and at this distance of time it is assuming a great deal to say that Cortes did not judge rightly with no other lights than we have, and the distorted facts which were collected by his enemies, and the honorable sympathies which all must feel for that greatest of all Indian heroes, a being of romance rather than history, Gua-

temozin. And, besides, Cortes, in addition to all his other great qualities, was a Christian, and a most sincere and devout one. One cannot read the history of the conquest, without being impressed with the conviction that, if not the primary object, his predominant idea was that he was spreading "nuestra santa fé"—our holy faith. In this particular he stands at an immeasurable height above all other conquerors; he would have suffered death before he would have said as did Bonaparte in Egypt, "There is no God but God, and Mahomet is his prophet." On the contrary, wherever he passed he erected a cross, and tore down the Mexican idols, often at imminent peril to himself and his army.

If the reader has been sufficiently interested in the character of Donna Marina to desire to know more of her history, he will find it in the following short chapter from the history of the conquest of New Spain, by Bernal Diaz:—

How Donna Marina was a Caciquess, and the daughter of a great lord, and was a Princess of many villages and vassals.

Before I say anything more of the great Montezuma and his city of Mexico and the Mexicans, I desire to say that Donna Marina, in her childhood, was a princess of many villages and vassals. It was in this way:—Her father and mother were the Cacique and Cacica of a village called Painala, and had other villages subject to them about eight leagues from the town of Guaxacualco. Her father died when she was an infant, and her mother married another young cacique, by whom she had one son. And as they loved this son very much, they determined that he should inherit their title and estate; and that there might be no difficulty in the way, they delivered the child, Donna Marina, in the night time, to some Indians of Xicalango, and spread the report that she had died. It happened at the same time that the child of one of their Indian slaves died, and they gave out that it was the heiress Donna Marina. The Indians of Xecalango gave her to the Tobascans, and the Tobascans gave her to Cortes. I knew her mother and her half brother after he was grown, when they jointly had command of their village, the last husband of the old woman then being dead. After they became Christians they were baptized, the mother by the name of Martha, and the son by that of Lazarus.

All this I know perfectly well, for in the year fifteen hundred and twenty-three, after the conquest of Mexico and the other provinces, when Christoval de Olid revolted, with the army under his command, in Higueras, and Cortes went there, we passed by Guaxacualco. Nearly all the inhabit-

ants of that town went with us, as I will relate in the proper time and place.

As Donna Marina, in all the wars of New Spain, Tlascala, and Mexico, had shown herself so excellent a woman and so good an interpreter, Cortes always took her with him. It was on that expedition that he married her to a Hidalgo, whose name was Juan Xamarillo, in the village of Orizaba, before certain witnesses, one of whom was Aranda, an inhabitant of Tobasco; and he told me about the marriage, which was not all as Gomara relates it. Donna Marina had great influence and authority with all the Indians of New Spain. Whilst Cortes was at Guaxacualco he sent to summon all the caciques of that province, to speak to them, and explain our holy doctrines, and to urge them to conduct themselves properly; and the mother of Donna Marina, and her half brother Lazarus, came with the other caciques. Donna Marina had long before this told me that she was a native of that province, and was a princess of many vassals—and Cortes and Aguilar, the interpreter, also knew it very well. The mother and daughter thus met, and knew each other; and they knew very well that she was her daughter, for she resembled her very much.

The mother and son were greatly alarmed, supposing that Cortes had sent for them to kill them, and they wept. When Donna Marina saw them weeping, she consoled them, and told them to have no fear, for that when they had delivered her to the Indians of Xicalango they knew no better, and that she pardoned them. She gave them some clothes, and many jewels of gold, and told them to return to their village. She said that God had shown her great mercy in making her a Christian, and no longer a worshipper of idols, and in giving her a son by her lord and master, Cortes, and marrying her to such a gentleman as Juan Xamarillo; and that if they would make her princess of all the provinces in New Spain, she would not accept it; and that she took more pleasure in serving Cortes and her husband than in everything in the world besides.

All this I heard myself, and moreover, I swear to it. It seems to me that it very much resembles the case of the brothers of Joseph, when they went into Egypt for corn. But now let us return to our subject. Donna Marina understood the language of Tobasco and of Guaxacualco, which is also the language of Mexico; and Geronimo de Aguilar understood the language of Tobasco and Yucatan, which is the same; and Aguilar so understanding, Donna Marina would explain it to Cortes in the Castilian, and this was a great beginning in the conquest. And thus things went on most prosperously, praised be God.—Without Donna Marina we could not have understood the language of Mexico.

II.

PASSAGE RELATING TO GENERAL VICTORIA.

(From Ward's Mexico.)

"Two thousand European troops landed with Myares, and two thousand more with Apodoaca, in 1816; and notwithstanding the desperate efforts of Victoria's men, their courage was of no avail against the superior discipline and arms of their adversaries. In the course of the year 1816, most of his old soldiers fell; those by whom he replaced them had neither the enthusiasm nor the same attachment to his person. The zeal with which the inhabitants had engaged in the cause of the revolution was worn out, with each reverse their discouragement increased, and as the disastrous accounts from the interior left them but little hope of bringing the contest to a favorable issue,—the villages refused to furnish any further supplies. The last remnant of Victoria's followers deserted him, and he was left absolutely alone,—still his courage was unsubdued, and his determination not to yield to the Spaniards under any circumstances, was unshaken. He refused the rank and rewards which Apodoaca offered him as the price of his submission, and determined to seek an asylum in the solitude of the forests, rather than accept the pardon on the faith of which so many of the insurgents yielded up their arms. This extraordinary project was carried into execution with a decision characteristic of the man.

Unaccompanied by a single attendant, and provided only with a little linen and a sword, Victoria threw himself into the mountainous district which occupies so large a portion of the province of Vera Cruz, and disappeared from the eyes of his countrymen. His after history is so extremely wild that I should hardly venture to relate it here, did not the unanimous evidence of his countrymen confirm the story of his sufferings as I have often heard it from his own mouth.

During the first few weeks, Victoria was supplied with provisions by the Indians, who all knew and respected his name. But Apodoaca was so apprehensive that he would again emerge from his retreat, that a thousand men were ordered out in small detachments, literally to hunt him down. Wherever it was discovered that a village had either received him or relieved his wants, it was burnt without mercy; and this rigor struck the Indians with such terror that they either fled at the sight of Victoria, or were the first to announce the approach of a man whose presence might prove so fatal to them. For upwards of six months he was followed like a wild beast by his pursuers, who were often so near him that he could

hear their imprecations against himself and Apodoaca too, for having condemned them to so fruitless a search. On one occasion he escaped a detachment, which he fell in with unexpectedly, by swimming a river which they were unable to cross. And on several others he concealed himself, when in the immediate vicinity of the royal troops, beneath the thick shrubs and creepers with which the woods of Vera Cruz abound.

At last a story was made up to satisfy the Viceroy of a body having been found which was recognized as that of Victoria, a minute description was given of his person, which was published officially in the Gazette of Mexico, and the troops were recalled to more pressing labors in the interior. But Victoria's trials did not cease with the pursuit; harassed and worn out with the fatigues which he had undergone, his clothes torn to pieces and his body lacerated by the thorny underwood of the tropic, he was indeed allowed a little tranquillity, but his sufferings were still almost incredible. During the summer he managed to subsist on the fruits of which nature is so lavish in those climates, but in winter he was attenuated by hunger, and I have heard him repeatedly affirm that no repast had furnished him so much pleasure since as he experienced after being long deprived of food, in gnawing the bones of horses or other animals which he found dead in the woods. By degrees he accustomed himself to such abstinence that he could remain four and even five days without taking anything but water without experiencing any serious inconvenience, but whenever he was deprived of sustenance for a longer period, his sufferings were very acute.* For thirty months he never tasted bread, nor saw a human being, nor thought at times ever to see one again; his clothes were reduced to a single wrapper of cotton which he found one day when driven by hunger he approached nearer than usual to some Indian huts, and this he regarded as an inestimable treasure. The mode in which Victoria, cut off as he was from the world, received intelligence of the revolution of 1821, is hardly less extraordinary than the fact of his having been able to support existence amidst so many hardships during the intervening period.

When, in 1818, he was abandoned by all the rest of his men, he was asked by two Indians who lingered with him to the last, and on whose fidelity he knew that he could rely, if any change took place, where he wished them to look for him, he pointed in reply to a mountain at some

* When first I knew General Victoria in Vera Cruz, in 1823, he was unable to eat above once in twenty-four hours, or even in thirty-six hours; and now, though he conforms with the usual hours of his countrymen with regard to meals, he is one of the most abstemious of men.

distance, and told them that on that mountain perhaps they might find his bones. His only reason for selecting it was its being particularly rugged and inaccessible, and surrounded by forests of vast extent; the Indians treasured up this hint, and as soon as the first news of Iturbide's declaration reached them they set out in quest of Victoria. They separated on arriving at the foot of the mountain, and spent six whole weeks in examining the woods with which it was covered. During this time they lived principally by the chase, but finding their stock of maize exhausted and all their efforts unavailing, they were about to give up the attempt when one of them discovered, in crossing a ravine which Victoria occasionally frequented, the print of a foot which he immediately recognized to be that of a European; by European, I mean of European descent, and, consequently accustomed to wear shoes, which always gives a different shape to the foot very perceptible to the eye of a native. The Indian waited two days upon the spot, but seeing nothing of Victoria and finding his supply of provisions quite at an end, he suspended upon a tree near the place four tortillas (little maize cakes) which were all he had left, and set out for his village in order to replenish his wallets, hoping that if Victoria should pass in the meantime the tortillas would attract his attention, and convince him that some friend was in search of him.

His little plan succeeded completely; Victoria, on crossing the ravine two days afterwards, perceived the maize cakes, which the birds had fortunately not devoured; he had then been four whole days without eating, and upwards of two years without eating bread,—and he says himself that he devoured the tortillas before the cravings of his appetite would allow him to reflect upon the singularity of finding them on this solitary spot, where he had never before seen any trace of a human being. He was at a loss to determine whether they had been left there by friend or foe, but feeling sure that whoever had left them intended to return, he concealed himself near the place in order to observe his motions and to take his own measures accordingly.

Within a short time, the Indian returned, and Victoria, who recognized him, started abruptly from his concealment to welcome his trusty follower; but the man, terrified at seeing a phantom covered with hair, emaciated, and clothed only with an old cotton wrapper, advancing upon him with a sword in his hand from amidst the bushes, took to flight, and it was only on hearing himself called repeatedly by his name that he recovered his composure sufficiently to recognize his old general. He was affected beyond measure at the state in which he found him, and conducted him instantly to his village, where Victoria was received with the greatest enthusiasm.

The report of his re-appearance spread like lightning through the province, where it was not credited at first, so firmly was every one convinced of his death; but as soon as it was known that Gaudaloupe Victoria was indeed alive, all the old insurgents rallied round him. In an incredibly short time, he induced the whole province, with the exception of the fortified towns, to declare for independence, and then set out to join Iturbide who was at the time preparing for the siege of Mexico. He was received with great apparent cordiality, but his independent spirit was too little in unison with Iturbide's projects for his good understanding to continue long. Victoria had fought for a liberal form of government, and not merely for a change of masters, and Iturbide, unable to gain him over, drove him again into the woods during his short-lived reign, from whence he only returned to give the signal for a general rising against the ambitious emperor.

III.

THE EXECUTION OF MORELOS.

[The following account of the closing scene of the life of Morelos is taken from Ward's Mexico.]

Here the congress was very nearly surprised by Iturbide (in 1815), who, by a rapid and masterly march across the mountains of Michoacan, came upon the deputies almost before they were apprised of his approach. It was in consequence of this attempt, and with the view of placing the congress in safety, that Morelos determined to undertake his expedition to Tehúacan, in the province of La Puebla, where Teran had already assembled a considerable force. With only five hundred men he attempted a march of sixty leagues, across a part of the country occupied by several divisions of the royalists. He hoped, indeed, to be joined by Teran and Guerero, but his couriers were intercepted, and neither of these generals was aware of his situation.

The Spaniards, conceiving the forces of Morelos to be much greater than they really were, did not venture to attack him until he had penetrated as far as Tesmaluca, where the Indians, though they received him with great apparent hospitality, conveyed intelligence both of the real number of his followers and of their wretched state to Don Manuel Concha, the nearest Spanish commandant, who determined to attack the convoy the next day. Morelos, fancying himself in security, as he was now beyond the enemy's

line, was surprised on the following morning (5th Nov., 1815), by two parties of royalists, who came upon him unperceived in a mountainous part of the road. He immediately ordered Don Nicholas Bravo to continue his march with the main body, as an escort to the congress, while he himself, with a few men, endeavored to check the advance of the Spaniards.

"My life," he said, "is of little consequence, provided the congress be saved. My race was run from the moment I saw an independent government established." His orders were obeyed, and Morelos remained with about fifty men, most of whom abandoned him when the firing became hot. He succeeded, however, in gaining time, which was his great object. Nor did the royalists venture to advance upon him until only one man was left by his side. He was then taken prisoner, for he had sought death in vain during the action. There can be little doubt that his late reverses had inspired him with a disgust for life, and that he wished to end his days by a proof of devotion to his country worthy of the most brilliant part of his former career.

Morelos was treated with the greatest brutality by the Spanish soldiers into whose hands he first fell. They stripped him, and conducted him, loaded with chains, to Tēsmălucă. But Concha (to his honor be it said), on his prisoner being presented to him, received him with the respect due to a fallen enemy, and treated him with unwonted humanity and attention. He was transferred with as little delay as possible to the capital, and the whole population of Mexico flocked out to San Augustin de las Cuevas to see (and some to insult) the man whose name had so long been their terror. But Morelos, both on his way to prison and while in confinement, is said to have shown a coolness which he preserved to the last. Indeed, the only thing which seemed to affect him at all was his degradation; a ceremony humiliating in itself, but rendered doubly so in his case, by the publicity which was given to it. His examination was conducted by the Oidor Bataller (whose insolent assertions of the natural superiority of the Spaniards to the Creoles, is said first to have roused Morelos into action), and was not of long duration. On the 22d of December, 1815, Concha was charged to remove him from the prison of the inquisition to the hospital of San Christoval, behind which the sentence pronounced against him was to be carried into execution. On arriving there he dined in company with Concha, whom he afterwards embraced and thanked for his kindness. He then confessed himself, and walked with the most perfect serenity to the place of execution. The short prayer which he pronounced there deserves to be recorded for its affecting simplicity: "Lord, if I have done well thou knowest it; if ill, to thine infinite mercy I commend my soul."

After this appeal to the Supreme Judge, he fastened, with his own hands,

a handkerchief above his eyes, gave the signal to the soldiers to fire, and met death with as much composure as he had ever shown when facing it on the field of battle.

IV.

LETTER OF GENERAL JACKSON IN REFERENCE TO A TEXIAN PRISONER.

Amongst the prisoners taken at San Antonio by General Wall, in the fall of 1842, was Mr. John Bradly. I had made very great efforts to obtain his release, but all in vain, until I received a letter from General Jackson in his behalf, which I sent to General Santa Anna, and immediately received an order for the release of Mr. Bradly. This I communicated to General Jackson in a letter, which he published very unexpectedly to me, as he was pleased afterward to say, in writing to me, because "it was a transaction so honorable to me." With much greater reason, I take the liberty of publishing his letter to me in behalf of Mr. Bradly. The copy is verbatim, literatim et punctuatim, exact. The original is written in a bold and vigorous hand, without any of that tremulousness which is common in the writing of old men.

If I am not mistaken, a gentleman, who was once the secretary of General Jackson, has published a statement that the original papers from his pen, were marked by some amusing mistakes of grammar, style and orthography—all of which he corrected. It is a little curious, if this be true, that this gentleman has never written anything before or since half as well. I am very much disposed to regard one who would make such a statement, even if true, as self-discredited,—there can be no confidence between men if such things are tolerated.

Having long been the political opponent of General Jackson, it is due to myself to say, that I was the first man in South Carolina who advocated his pretensions to the Presidency in 1823, when a distinguished citizen of our own was one of the candidates; and that I commenced my opposition to him whilst he was President, and at the period of his greatest popularity, when he had it in his power to have benefited me,—and that he had the disposition to have done so, I have the evidence.

My opinions remain unchanged on all the questions of public policy, upon which I differed with him. But I have at all times entertained a

proper respect for his many high qualities, and a grateful admiration for the blaze of glory in which he closed our last war.

"HERMITAGE, July 12th, 1843.

"*The Honorable W. Thomson, Minister at Mexico:*

"SIR—I beg leave to call your attention to the enclosed letters in behalf of Mr. John Bradly, who is a prisoner in the castle of Perote within the jurisdiction of Mexico, having been captured whilst in the service of Texas, and held since as a prisoner.

"You will perceive from the letters of ex-governor David Campbell, of Va., and the Honorable Mr. Hopkins, member of Congress, that Mr. Bradly was one of our most respectable citizens, and makes an appeal to our sympathies, on account of his dependent family, almost irresistible. I would write directly to President Santa Anna on the subject, but having done so on two occasions before, am apprehensive that my application on personal grounds might be deemed indelicate. President Santa Anna has informed me that my interposition has already effected the discharge of other citizens emigrating to Texas from the United States, and that in some instances, those discharged have again taken up arms against Mexico. I think it therefore, prudent to abstain from any further personal appeal, lest the kind feelings heretofore manifested by president Santa Anna might be changed, and given a direction which would prejudice the efforts of Mr. Bradly, and others situated like him, to obtain their freedom.

"Should you, however, be of the opinion that the case of Mr. Bradly might be brought to the notice of president Santa Anna, as one in which I feel a deep interest, on account of his worthy and venerable father, without subjecting me to the imputation of presuming too far on the personal relations subsisting between myself and the President, I leave it to your discretion to make the communication to him.

"I avail myself of this occasion to thank you for your kindness in vindicating my character, when my views and conduct respecting the separation of Texas from Mexico, were misrepresented and unjustly assailed.* On

* Alluding to what had occurred between General Tornel, the Secretary of War, and myself, upon the occasion of my remonstrating against the Texian prisoners being made to work on the streets, and other improper treatment which they received. General Tornel spoke in offensive terms of the conduct of my government in connection with the revolution in Texas. I repelled his charges with a good deal of warmth. He then said that he liked Mr. Tyler and Mr. Webster, and the whig party, but that it was to General Jackson and the democratic party that he had alluded, and that General Jackson was the originator of the revolution in Texas. He no doubt knew that I was a

the receipt of your letter, being confined with sickness, I was unable to respond to it and tender you my thanks for the justice you rendered me on that occasion, and I am now laboring under great debility, and write with great difficulty. Permit me to assure you that I subscribe myself with great cordiality and respect, your well wisher and obedient servant,

"ANDREW JACKSON."

This allusion to General Jackson recalls to my memory one of the most agreeable acquaintances which I formed whilst I was in Mexico, and one of the most striking men whom I have known anywhere—General Miller, the present British Consul General at the Sandwich Islands. He served in the British army as a subaltern officer in our late war with England, and was at the battles of Baltimore, Bladensburg, and the eighth of January. At the close of the war he went to South America and entered the Patriot army. He was a long time aide-de-camp to Bolivar, and afterwards a major-general in the army. He commanded a division of the Patriot army at the great and decisive battle of Ayacucho, and bore a conspicuous part in all the wars of South America, as must be known to every one at all familiar with the history of those wars. He is in all respects an accomplished officer, and most fascinating gentleman.

I was first introduced to him at a dinner party at the house of the Prussian minister, Mr. Von Gerolt; the conversation turned upon the subject of military peace establishments. General Miller said to me that he was surprised that any standing army should be kept up in the United States; that certainly no nation would ever be so infatuated as to think of invading our country; and that even if such a thing should occur, that our militia constituted an all-sufficient defence. I told him that I thought so, and that it was somewhat remarkable that the most creditable achievements of American arms had been in battles where the larger proportion of the troops engaged were militia. He asked me which of our victories I regarded as the most remarkable? I was disinclined to enter upon that subject, as the only wars in which we had been engaged had been with his own country, and so said to him. He pressed the subject, however, but in the most kind and gentlemanlike manner; I had

Whig. But he was greatly mistaken, as he soon discovered, if he supposed that any disparagement of the political party to which I was opposed, would be agreeable to me. I have no words to express the scorn which I feel for one who in a foreign country, or in his intercourse with one, could for a moment remember our own party divisions.

occasionally had discussions of the most good-humored character with some of the English gentlemen in Mexico upon the subject of the different battles between the troops of our respective countries,—this had been communicated to General Miller, and I saw that he was disposed to draw me into a discussion. He asked me if I regarded the battle of New Orleans as one of our greatest victories? I replied that I certainly considered the battle of the 8th of January as somewhat of a victory. He admitted that it was, but said, that the American troops were protected by a breastwork. I replied, that they had no breastworks on the night of the 23d of December, that this battle was fought in a clear field, and that the number of the British forces was twice that of the American. He said that I was mistaken, that he was there himself, and that the American army numbered nearly two thousand men, and that not more than fifteen hundred of the British army had then landed or took any part in the engagement; he admitted, however, that he was not one of those who had landed, and that he could not speak as of his own personal knowledge. He added, that there was nothing more natural than that the victorious party should exaggerate the number of the enemy; I thought, and so said to him that there was at least one thing more natural which was that the vanquished army should state their numbers at less than they really were. I remembered that a few days after this battle, General Jackson had issued a general order in which he stated the force of the enemy as more than double his own; I happened to have in the legation a copy of Niles' Register which contained this general order.—General Miller called the next day to read it, and in the end admitted that he might have been mistaken. He frequently visited me, and I parted with him with sincere regret, and shall always remember him with a respect not unmixed with admiration; he was kind enough to give me an extract of a letter which he had written to Colonel O'Leary, who also had been one of the aides-de-camp of Bolivar. The reader will be, in some degree, able from this extract to judge whether I have overrated the character of General Miller.

Extract from a letter written by General Miller, dated 18th March, 1833, to Colonel O'Leary, respecting a parallel by the latter, between Washington and Bolivar, published in a Chilian newspaper.

"Do not, my dear O'Leary, run away like our fiery friend, with the wrong notion, that I am inimical to the Liberator, because I happen to differ widely from you in the general view I take of that celebrated man.

Let us rather discuss the matter fairly and coolly, for by so doing we may be of mutual assistance to each other. My prejudices, if prejudices they be, may be made to vanish, and your excessive enthusiasm on some points, by being moderated, may be displayed with better effect.

"In this spirit I will frankly confess that I do not think the parallel you have so eloquently drawn between Washington and Bolivar, quite accurate, much less that it would be advisable to give a similar one to the public; at all events, there would be no harm in your consulting persons capable of judging of the merits of the case, who, unentangled with South American affairs, may lay claim to impartiality.

"Washington's pure patriotism, his steadiness of purpose, his admirable consistency of character and conduct, his stern undeviating principles, his aversion to everything flimsy and bombastic, in short, his elevated, noble ambition of meriting the approbation of a good, as well as a great, man, place him higher in the admiration and respect of the moral world, than any other hero, ancient or modern; at least so I have always understood it to be. It is true that Washington had not large patrimonial domains to offer in support of the cause he espoused, but he was frugal, and did not squander any public money on himself or others; and his being born in the middle class of life, and in 'humble circumstances, whilst Bolivar was by birth the noblest of his native country,' was an accident that a republican would hardly advance to prove superiority in any way.

"There is, indeed, little similarity of character between Washington and Bolivar. The first stands so high amongst all civilized people, that it is necessary to guard against saying anything bordering on disparagement of him, in order, by comparison, to raise the fame of another, whose character and reputation have not yet been so satisfactorily established. Washington not only aspired at achieving the independence of his country, but he labored incessantly, and he was gifted with the right sort of sterling genius to establish the finest frame-work of a government that ever existed; at all events, one generally acknowledged to be the best adapted to a people, capable of being, and deserving to be free. He was not a violent republican one day, a Vitalicio the next, and alternately both, as suited his caprice or his opinion of circumstances. His merit did not consist in high-flown, flowery writings, but in productions abounding in plain good sense, and of practical utility. He never broke a solemn pledge; had he done so, whatever and how sincere soever might have been his motives, he never would have obtained the high character awarded him. Washington, rather than break his word, would have lost his life. Neither Napoleon nor Bolivar seemed to have understood—certainly did not always act upon—this grand moral principle, without which society must be very imperfect.

"Warriors and heroes, I believe, are going out of fashion, and I am glad of it. Franklin, Bentham, and great men of their stamp will, as the march of intellect advances, possess more the admiration of future generations. This, however, is getting out of my depth; I will, therefore, drop a subject I feel incapable of handling—and recollect, what I have said is merely as a hint in the rough, for your perusal."

V.

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENCE.

SHORTLY after my arrival in Mexico, Mr. Bocanegra, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, addressed a circular to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps, in relation to the conduct of our government in the war between Mexico and Texas. An object very near my heart was the release of the Texian prisoners, and as that matter was in a favorable train I was unwilling if I could have avoided it to have done anything to defeat it, but the circular to the diplomatic corps was of a character so offensive that I felt it to be my duty to reply to it. My reply bears date the 6th June, 1842, and Mr. Webster's reply to the same in a despatch to me is dated on the 8th July, 1842.

At the time that the reply of Mr. Webster was written, he had not received mine, but he received it five days afterwards, when his second communication to me bears date. My reply to Mr. Bocanegra has not been published in the newspapers of this country; I hope, therefore, that I may be pardoned for inserting it in this volume. It will be seen that Mr. Webster pursues the same train of argument which I had before done, and instructs me to say almost exactly what I had already said in reply to Mr. Bocanegra, but of which it seems Mr. Webster was ignorant at the time; my arguments are all found in Mr. Webster's reply, with an additional argument on the right of expatriation, a right which Mexico has never denied, and a review of the Texian revolution. The reply of Mr. Webster, is doubtless better written, for the reason that he wrote the one and I the other. But the coincidence is certainly a striking one.

"[*Translation.*]

"NATIONAL PALACE, MEXICO,
"*May* 12, 1842.

"The undersigned, Secretary of State and Foreign Relations, enjoys the satisfaction of addressing the honorable Secretary of State of the United States of America, in the name and by the express order of his excellency the President of the Mexican Republic. The relations of amity and good harmony which have happily subsisted between this and your great nation might have been disturbed, in a lamentable manner, since the year 1835, when the revolution of Texas broke out, if the Mexican government had not given so many evidences of its forbearance, and had not made so many and so great sacrifices for the sake of peace, in order that the world might not, with pain and amazement, see the two nations which appear to be destined to establish the policy and the interests of the American continent divided and ravaged by the evils of war.

"But, from that truly unfortunate period, the Mexican Republic has received nothing but severe injuries and inflictions from the citizens of the United States. The Mexican government speaks only of the citizens of the United States, as it still flatters itself with the belief that it is not the government of that country which has promoted the insurrection in Texas, which has favored the usurpation of its territory, and has supplied the rebels with ammunition, arms, vessels, money and recruits—but that these aggressions have proceeded from private individuals, who have not respected the solemn engagements which bind together the two nations, nor the treaties concluded between them, nor the conduct, ostensibly frank, of the Cabinet of Washington.

"It is, however, notorious, that the insurgent colonists of that integral part of the territory of the Mexican Republic would have been unable to maintain their prolonged rebellion, without the aid and efficient sympathies of citizens of the United States, who have publicly raised forces in their cities and towns; have fitted out vessels in their ports, and laden them with munitions of war; and have marched to commit hostilities against a friendly nation, under the eyes and with the knowledge of the authorities to whom are intrusted the fulfilment of the law.

"The Mexican government entertains so high an opinion of the force of the government of the United States, and of its power to restrain those its subjects from violating the religious faith of treaties, solemnly concluded between it and other nations, and from committing hostilities against such nations in time of peace, that it cannot easily comprehend how those persons have been able to evade the punishment decreed against them by the

laws of the United States themselves, and to obtain that quiet impunity which incessantly encourages them to continue their attacks. It is well worthy of remark, that, no sooner does the Mexican government, in the exercise of its rights, which it cannot and does not desire to renounce, prepare means to recover a possession usurped from it, than the whole population of the United States, especially in the southern States, is in commotion; and, in the most public manner, a large portion of them is turned upon Texas, in order to prevent the rebels from being subjected by the Mexican arms, and brought back to proper obedience.

"Could proceedings more hostile, on the part of the United States, have taken place, had that country been at war with the Mexican Republic? Could the insurgents of Texas have obtained a co-operation more effective or more favorable to their interests? Certainly not. The civilized world looks on with amazement, and the Mexican government is filled with unspeakable regret, as it did hope, and had a right to hope, that, living in peace with the United States, your government would preserve our territory from the invasions of your own subjects. The vicinity of a friend is an advantage rather than an inconvenience; but if one neighbor oversteps the sacred limits imposed by treaties, and disturbs and harasses another, it cannot be maintained that the friendship of the former is real, and that much confidence should be placed in it

"The government of the Mexican Republic, therefore, which regards the faithful fulfilment of treaties as its highest obligation, which anxiously desires to preserve and increase its friendly relations with the people and the government of the United States, finds itself under the necessity of protesting solemnly against the aggressions which the citizens of those States are constantly repeating upon the Mexican territory, and of declaring, in a positive manner, that it considers as a violation of the treaty of amity the toleration of a course of conduct which produces an incomprehensible state of things—a state neither of peace nor war—but inflicting upon the Mexican Republic the same injuries and inconveniences as if war had been declared between the two nations, which are called by Providence to form with each other relations and bonds of extreme and cordial friendship.

And the undersigned, in complying with this order from the most excellent Provisional President of the Republic of Mexico, assures you, sir, of the high consideration with which he remains your obedient servant,

"J. M. De Bocanegra.

"Hon. Daniel Webster,

"*Secretary of State*

"*of the United States of America.*"

"[*Translation.*]

"*Circular to the Diplomatic Corps residing in Mexico.*

"NATIONAL PALACE, MEXICO,
"*May* 31, 1842.

"The undersigned, Minister of Foreign Relations and Government, has the honor to address ——, in order to inform him of the situation in which the affairs of Texas stand between Mexico and the United States of America, making known to him the honesty and good faith with which the government of the Mexican Republic has acted in this important matter, and thus to avoid any interpretation [misinterpretation?] of its conduct.

"As soon as his excellency, the Provisional President, had taken charge of the government, he endeavored to settle all the difficulties which had previously existed against the reconquest of Texas, being, as he still is, persuaded that every sacrifice ought to be made on that point, with the utmost pleasure, in order to vindicate satisfactorily, and firmly to sustain, the dignity and the honor of the nation. The first measures taken with this object awakened the ambition of some persons in the United States of North America, and their citizens hastened to assist the adventurers of Texas in an explicit and ample manner, forgetting their duties towards Mexico, arising from the relations between this republic and that of the United States of America. In presence of their authorities, meetings have been formed with that express object. Volunteers have been enlisted and armed, who marched to that usurped territory, and with them have been sent munitions of war, provisions, and everything else necessary for hostilities against the Mexicans; no other cry being heard than that of war against Mexico, and assistance to Texas. The supreme government has remonstrated against such conduct frankly, being persuaded that the government of the United States would cause its citizens to return to their duty; but it sees, with regret, that, far from giving this evidence on its own part, and on the part of its subaltern and local authorities, the aggressions made upon the territory of this republic are tolerated, notwithstanding the Mexican government has protested, formally and repeatedly, against them, making known to the United States the violation committed and the wrong done by thus acting in opposition to the most sacred principles of national law, and the treaties of amity by which both nations are strongly bound.

"His excellency, the Provisional President, desires, in consequence of what has been here set forth, and with regard to the future, that the nations with which the Mexican Republic happily maintains the strongest friendship should be made well aware of these facts, and should know that

Mexico, though not wishing to disturb the relations which she still preserves with the said United States, will assert and maintain the justice of her cause, which she considers to be based on the law of nations, by doing all that is imperiously required for her honor and dignity.

"The undersigned, who well knows the uprightness and the sound judgment of his excellency ——, doubts not that he will submit all that is here set forth to his enlightened government; and, while requesting that gentleman to do so, by express order of his excellency the Provisional President, he repeats the assurances of his most distinguished consideration.

"J. M. De Bocanegra."

"(A true copy.)

"*Mexico, June* 1, 1842.

"*Mr. Thompson to the Diplomatic Corps in Mexico.*

"Legation of the United States of America,
"*Mexico, June* 6, 1842.

"Sir: I have received from the Minister of Foreign Relations and Government a copy of the circular which he has been pleased to address to yourself and to each of the diplomatic representatives of other countries resident here, and also a copy of a communication addressed to Mr. Webster, the Secretary of State of the United States. At first I thought that I would reply to neither, but leave them to be answered by Mr. Webster, well satisfied that the reply of that distinguished citizen would carry with it much higher authority, both from his official position and the greater ability with which the topics involved would be treated by him; but, upon further reflection, I have felt it to be my duty to address you upon the subject.

"I cannot express to you my astonishment and regret at this procedure on the part of the Mexican Government. The appeal is in itself an extraordinary proceeding, and still more extraordinary in the positions which are assumed, and in the tone of menace and ill feeling which pervade both documents. Whilst I am very sure that the Government of the United States recognizes no tribunal to which it holds itself responsible but the enlightened public opinion of its own people, yet a just regard for the opinions of the world may require a reply to, and refutation of, the very harsh charges, which are equally harshly made by the Mexican Government. I deny, then, broadly, that the Government of the United States has in any one of the cases stated, or in any other particular, openly or secretly 'violated the most sacred of the principles and the rights of na-

tions' towards the Government of Mexico; on the contrary, I affirm, that to no Government in Christendom has the conduct of the United States been so uniformly kind and forbearing. So remarkably has this been the case, that, since the existence of Mexico as a republic, I am not aware that there has been a single complaint, or cause of complaint, against the Government of the United States, with the exception of the difficulties growing out of the Texian war; and I trust that I shall be able fully and entirely to vindicate the conduct of my Government in relation to that. Not only have we never done an act of an unfriendly character towards Mexico, but, I confidently assert, that from the very first moment of the existence of the republic, we have allowed to pass unimproved no opportunity of doing Mexico an act of kindness. I will not now enumerate the acts of that character both to the Government of Mexico and its citizens, public and private. If this Government chooses to forget them, I will not recall them. Whilst such has been our course to Mexico, it is with pain that I am forced to say that the open violation of the rights of American citizens, by the authorities of Mexico, has been greater, for the last fifteen years, than those of all the Governments of Christendom united; and yet we have left the redress of all these multiplied and accumulated wrongs to friendly negotiation, without having even intimated a disposition to resort to force.

"I have deemed it necessary to make these preliminary remarks before proceeding to consider the charges, as I now do, so solemnly preferred against my Government, in the circular addressed to you. These charges, as I understand them, are the following:

"1st. Public meetings in the United States in favor of Texas.

"2. The aid furnished the Texians by volunteers from the United States.

"3. The sending of arms and munitions of war to the Texians.

"As to the matter of public meetings of the people, I have yet to learn that such meetings have ever been considered, by any writer on public law, as a violation of neutrality, or that, up to this time, any complaint has been made on that point. The right of our people thus to assemble, for any purpose, is not only secured by an express provision of our Constitution, but has a much older and equally honorable origin; it was one of the great securities of English liberty, extorted from an unwilling and arbitrary sovereign; it is, perhaps, the very last which our people will ever permit to be violated or curtailed.

"The Government is not obliged to act upon the remonstrances and petitions of these meetings, and it is the action of the Government alone which is to be complained of. Such meetings, upon all subjects, are of daily oc-

currence. In the very same week, for example, in which the meeting in New Orleans in favor of Texas was held, there was another meeting in favor of the repeal of the Irish union, and with the view to contribute funds and other aid to that end. During the late Canadian insurrection, such meetings of our citizens were of frequent occurrence on the Canadian frontier, yet it never has occurred to the British Cabinet to make any complaint on the subject. Again: Public meetings are constantly held in England, for the purpose of aiding in the abolition of a great and vital institution of the United States, and agents are sent to our country to disseminate their dangerous principles. Nay, more; they come to our country, and address public assemblies, denouncing a large portion of our people and our institutions, in language, in comparison with which that used in the public meetings towards Mexico is the language of compliment. Such meetings are daily held, in which, in the violence of party excitement, language the most harsh and unmeasured is applied to the policy of our Government and the conduct of its officers. I should, therefore, regret to believe that the peace of the United States and Mexico depends upon the former being required to interfere, in any way, to prevent these public meetings, well knowing that this is impossible. I come now to the second ground—the aid furnished by volunteers from the United States.

"It is not to be wondered at that this has caused some ill feelings on the part of the Mexicans towards us. But I had hoped that the intelligent men who are at the head of the Mexican Government would have been satisfied that my Government had used all the means in its power to prevent this; and I think I may say, with confidence, that it has done all that was required by the obligations of the laws of nations, and of that good faith which should be observed between friendly Governments. Our own laws upon this subject, which embody to the fullest extent the principles of the law of nations, only authorize the prevention of armed and organized expeditions. It is not permitted, nor is it to be expected, that we should forbid emigration; nor is it a violation of the obligations of neutrality that the country to which our people choose to emigrate happens to be at war with another with which we are friendly. The citizens and subjects of all countries have gone to Texas and joined its armies The only difference is, that a larger number of the people of the United States has gone to that country. Does the number alter the principle? If one may go, may not ten? If ten, why not a hundred, or a thousand? The principle is the same. An American citizen, for example, is about to embark from New Orleans, and he has his rifle, Bowie knife, and pistols. Have our authorities any power to stop him? If there are ten, or a hundred, the case is the same. I go further; If they admit they are going to Texas,

and intend to become citizens, and to join the armies of that country, it cannot be prevented. All that could be said to them would be, 'If you go to Texas and become citizens, you have a right to do so—to change your allegiance, and to discharge all the new duties which such a change of allegiance may exact; but you are no longer a citizen of the United States.'

"If a regular military expedition is fitted out, then it is not only our right, but our high duty, to prevent it. In all the revolutionary movements of the South American Republics, including Mexico, large numbers of our people joined the insurgents. It has always been so, and always will be. Such is the innate and enthusiastic love of liberty of our people, that, wherever on this continent the banner may float with that sacred word inscribed upon it, our ardent, impetuous, and often inconsiderate young men will be found rallying to it, doubtless without properly judging of the principles involved, or of the benefits to the great cause of human rights from the result. Such was eminently the case when Mexico revolted from Spain, but with this remarkable difference—that the American citizens taken prisoners by Spain whilst fighting for Mexico, were promptly released, upon the application of our Government.

The third and last ground is, the furnishing the Texians with arms and munitions of war, not by our Government, but by private individuals, on their own account, and at their own risk. I confess that I was surprised to see this made a matter of complaint by so eminent a jurist as Mr. De Bocanegra. I assert that such trade is no violation of neutrality; that it has never been so regarded by any respectable writer on public law; and that it is a well-settled principle, that, to send articles contraband of war to a belligerent is no violation of neutrality, the only penalty being the forfeiture of the articles themselves.

"The old rule, indeed, was, that the articles, if seized by the belligerent, should be paid for; but the very farthest that the principle upon this subject has been carried is, that the articles should be forfeited. Vattel says. 'Recourse is had to the expedient of confiscating all contraband goods that we can seize on, in order that the fear of loss may operate as a check on the avidity of gain, and deter the merchants of neutral countries from supplying the enemy with such commodities.

"'In order, therefore, to avoid perpetual subjects of complaint and rupture, it has, in perfect conformity to sound principles, been agreed that the belligerent powers may seize and confiscate all contraband goods which neutral persons attempt to carry to their enemy, without any complaint of the sovereign of those merchants; as, *on the other hand, the Power at war does not impute to the neutral sovereigns those practices of their subjects.*

Care is taken to settle every particular of this kind in treaties of commerce and navigation.'—(Book iii., chap. 7, § 112).

I will not extend this article further, by quoting more from authors on public law to prove the position which I have above asserted. You will perhaps be surprised to learn that this principle of the law of nations is embodied in and made a separate and express article of the treaty between Mexico and the United States (viz., Article 20).

'The articles of contraband before enumerated and classified, which may be found in a vessel bound for the enemy's port, shall be subject to detention and confiscation, *leaving free the rest of the cargo and vessel, that the owners may dispose of them as they see proper.* No vessel of either of the two nations shall be detained on the high seas, on account of having on board articles of contraband, whenever the master, captain, or supercargo of said vessel will deliver up the articles of contraband to the captor, unless the quantity of such article be so great, and of so large a bulk, that they cannot be received on board the capturing vessel without great inconvenience; but in this, and all other cases of just detention, the vessel detained shall be sent to the nearest convenient and safe port, for trial and judgment according to law.'

Here you will see that the sole penalty, and so expressly stated, is the forfeiture of the articles of contraband; and, as if to put it in the strongest possible light that this is to be the sole penalty, it is stipulated that, if the vessel is found carrying contraband of war, the articles of contraband shall be taken out, and the vessel allowed to proceed.

If anything more could be required on this subject, it is found in the fact that munitions of war are now constantly shipped from New Orleans to Mexico, with the knowledge of our authorities, and without any right or disposition to prevent it. Within the last six months, two armed schooners, built in the United States, and known to be intended expressly for the Texian war, were permitted to leave our ports, not to cruise against Texas, but as the property of the builders, to be transferred to Mexico when they should be beyond the jurisdiction of the United States—these contractors taking the risk, that, being contraband of war, they might be seized by the Texians, and would be liable to forfeiture. Nay, more: when one of these vessels was wrecked, a Government vessel of the United States was sent expressly to rescue the passengers and as much of the wreck as was valuable.

After all these things, sir, am I not justified in expressing the astonishment which I have felt in reading the communication addressed to you in which, among other things, is charged, and in terms not the most courteous, as one of our offences against the law of nations, this very act of

sending munitions of war, the right to do which is expressly secured by our treaty with Mexico, and of the practice of which Mexico has largely availed herself.

I hope that the Mexican Government will review its opinions upon these subjects, and I am not restrained from the expression of this hope by the language of apparent menace which has been used in the communications to which I have alluded. I am very sure that no one who is familiar with the past history of my country will attribute these feelings to fear on her part. They proceed from a very different source. Whilst we are, at all times, prepared to meet, as becomes us, collisions with other countries, we do not deem it discreditable to say, that we hold war, in all its forms, as one of the greatest of human calamities, and a causeless war as the very greatest of public crimes.

I have the honor to be, with the greatest respect, your obedient servant,

"WADDY THOMPSON."

"*Mr. Webster to Mr. Thompson.*—(COPY.)

"DEPARTMENT OF STATE,

"*Washington, July* 8, 1842.

"SIR: On the 29th of last month, a communication was received at this Department, from Mr. de Bocanegra, Secretary of State and Foreign Relations of the Government of Mexico, having been forwarded through the agency of Mr. Velazquez de Leon, at New York, who informed the Department, by a letter accompanying that of Mr. de Bocanegra, that he had been appointed Chargé d'Affaires of the Mexican Republic to this Government, although he had not yet presented his credentials. Mr. de Bocanegra's letter is addressed to the Secretary of State of the United States, and bears date the 12th of May. A copy, together with copy of the communication from Mr. Velazquez de Leon, transmitting it, and of the answer to Mr. Velazquez de Leon, from this Department, you will receive herewith. Upon the receipt of this despatch, you will immediately address a note to Mr. de Bocanegra, in which you will say, that—

"The Secretary of State of the United States has received a letter addressed to him by Mr. de Bocanegra, under date of the 12th of May, and transmitted to the Department of State at Washington, through the agency of Mr. Velazquez de Leon, at New York, who informs the Government of the United States that he has been appointed Chargé d'Affaires of the Mexican Republic, although he has not presented his letter of credence.

"The Government of the United States sees with regret the adoption, on this occasion, of a form of communication quite unusual in diplomatic in-

tercourse, and for which no necessity is known. An envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the United States, fully accredited to the Government of Mexico, was at that moment in its capital, in the actual discharge of his functions, and ready to receive, on behalf of his Government, any communication which it might be the pleasure of the President of the Mexican Republic to make to it. And it is not improper to here add, that it has been matter of regret with the Government of the United States, that while, being animated with a sincere desire at all times to cultivate the most amicable relations with Mexico, it has not failed to maintain, near that Government, a mission of the highest rank known to its usages, Mexico, for a long time, has had no representative near the Government of the United States.

"But the manner of the communication from Mr. de Bocanegra, however novel and extraordinary, is less important than its contents and character, which surprises the Government of the United States, by a loud complaint of the violation of its neutral duties. Mr. de Bocanegra, speaking, as he says, by the express order of the President of the Mexican Republic, declares that the amicable relations between the two countries might have been lamentably disturbed, since the year 1835, when the revolution of Texas broke out, had not Mexico given so many evidences of its forbearance, and made so many and so great sacrifices for the sake of peace, in order that the world might not see, with pain and amazement, two nations which appear destined to establish the policy and interests of the American continent divided and ravaged by the evils of war.

"This language implies, that such has been the conduct of the United States towards Mexico, that war must have ensued before the present time, had not Mexico made great sacrifices to avoid such a result—a charge which the Government of the United States utterly denies and repels. It is wholly ignorant of any sacrifices made by Mexico, in order to preserve peace, or of any occasion calling on its Government to manifest uncommon forbearance. On the contrary, the Government of the United States cannot but be of opinion that, if the history of the occurrences between the two Governments, the state of things at this moment existing between them, be regarded, both the one and the other will demonstrate that it is the conduct of the Government of the United States which has been marked, in an especial manner, by moderation and forbearance. Injuries and wrongs have been sustained by citizens of the United States, not inflicted by individual Mexicans, but by the authorities of the Government; for which injuries and wrongs, numerous as they are, and outrageous as is the character of some of them, and acknowledged as they are by Mexico herself, redress has been sought only by mild and peaceable

means, and no indemnity asked but such as the strictest justice imperatively demanded. A desire not to disturb the peace and harmony of the two countries has led the Government of the United States to be content with the lowest measure of remuneration. Mexico herself must admit that, in all these transactions, the conduct of the United States towards her has been signalized, not by the infliction of injuries, but by the manifestation of a friendly feeling and a conciliatory spirit.

"The Government of the United States will not be unjust in its sentiments towards Mexico; it will not impute to its Government any desire to disturb the peace; it acquits it of any design to spread the ravages and horrors of war over the two countries; and it leaves it to Mexico herself to avow her own motives for her pacific policy, if she have any other motive than those of expediency and justlce; provided, however, that such avowal of her motives carry with it no imputation or reflection upon the good faith and honor of the United States.

"The revolution in Texas, and the events connected with it and springing out of it, are Mr. de Bocanegra's principal topic; and it is in relation to these that his complaint is founded. His Government, he says, flatters itself that the Government of the United States has not promoted the insurrection in Texas, favored the usurpation of its territory, or supplied the rebels with vessels, ammunition, and money. If Mr. de Bocanegra intends this as a frank admission of the honest and cautious neutrality of the Government of the United States in the contest between Mexico and Texas, he does that Government justice, and no more than justice; but if the language be intended to intimate an opposite and a reproachful meaning, that meaning is only the more offensive for being insinuated rather than distinctly avowed. Mr. de Bocanegra would seem to represent that, from 1835 to the present time, citizens of the United States, if not their Government, have been aiding rebels in Texas in arms against the lawful authority of Mexico. This is not a little extraordinary. Mexico may have chosen to consider, and may still choose to consider, Texas as having been at all times, since 1835, and as still continuing, a rebellious province; but the world has been obliged to take a very different view of the matter. From the time of the battle of San Jacinto, in April, 1836, to the present moment, Texas has exhibited the same external signs of national independence as Mexico herself, and with quite as much stability of Government. Practically free and independent, acknowledged as a political sovereignty by the principal Powers of the world, no hostile foot finding rest within her territory for six or seven years, and Mexico herself refraining for all that period from any further attempt to re-establish her own authority over that territory, it cannot but be surprising to find Mr. de Bocanegra com-

plaining that, for that whole period, citizens of the United States, or its Government, have been favoring the rebels of Texas, and supplying them with vessels, ammunition, and money, as if the war for the reduction of the province of Texas had been constantly prosecuted by Mexico, and her success prevented by these influences from abroad !

"The general facts appertaining to the settlement of Texas, and the revolution in its Government, cannot but be well known to Mr. de Bocanegra. By the treaty of the 22d of February, 1819, between the United States and Spain, the Sabine was adopted as the line of boundary between the two Powers. Up to that period, no considerable colonization had been effected in Texas ; but the territory between the Sabine and the Rio Grande being confirmed to Spain by the treaty, applications were made to that Power for grants of land ; and such grants, or permissions of settlement were, in fact, made by the Spanish authorities, in favor of citizens of the United States, proposing to emigrate to Texas, in numerous families, before the declaration of independence by Mexico. And these early grants were confirmed, as is well known, by successive acts of the Mexican Government, after its separation from Spain. In January, 1823, a national colonization law was passed, holding out strong inducements to all persons who should incline to undertake the settlement of uncultivated lands; and although the Mexican law prohibited for a time citizens of foreign countries from settling, as colonists, in territories immediately adjoining such foreign countries, yet even this restriction was afterwards repealed or suspended ; so that, in fact, Mexico, from the commencement of her political existence, held out the most liberal inducements to emigrants into her territories, with full knowledge that these inducements were likely to act, and expecting they would act, with the greatest effect upon citizens of the United States, especially of the Southern States, whose agricultural pursuits naturally rendered the rich lands of Texas, so well suited to their accustomed occupation, objects of desire to them. The early colonists of the United States, introduced by Moses and Stephen Austin under these inducements and invitations, were persons of most respectable character, and their undertaking was attended with very severe hardships, occasioned in no small degree by the successive changes in the Government of Mexico. They nevertheless persevered, and accomplished a settlement. And, under the encouragements and allurements thus held out by Mexico, other emigrants followed, and many thousand colonists from the United States and elsewhere had settled in Texas within ten years from the date of Mexican independence. Having some reason to complain, as they thought, of the Government over them, and especially of the aggressions of the Mexican military stationed in Texas, they sought relief by applying to the

Supreme Government for the separation of Texas from Coahuila, and for a local Government for Texas itself. Not having succeeded in this object, in the process of time, in the progress of events, they saw fit to attempt an entire separation from Mexico, to set up a Government of their own, and to establish a political sovereignty. War ensued; and the battle of San Jacinto, fought on the 21st of April, 1836, achieved their independence The war was from that time at an end, and in March following the independence of Texas was formally acknowledged by the Government of the United States.

"In the events leading to the actual result of these hostilities, the United States had no agency, and took no part. Its Government had, from the first, abstained from giving aid or succor to either party. It knew its neutral obligations, and fairly endeavored to fulfil them all. It acknowledged the independence of Texas only when that independence was an apparent and an ascertained fact; and its example in this particular has been followed by several of the most considerable Powers of Europe.

"It has been sometimes stated, as if for the purpose of giving more reason to the complaints of Mexico, that, of the military force which acted against Mexico with efficiency and success in 1836, a large portion consisted of volunteers then fresh from the United States. But this is a great error. It is well ascertained, that of those who bore arms in the Texian ranks in the battle of San Jacinto, three-fourths at least were colonists, invited into Texas by the grants and the colonization laws of Mexico, and called to the field by the exigencies of the times in 1836, from their farms and other objects of private pursuit.

"Mr. de Bocanegra's complaint is two-fold: first, that citizens of the United States have supplied the rebels in Texas with ammunition, arms, vessels, money and recruits; have publicly raised forces in their cities and fitted out vessels in their ports, loaded them with munitions of war, and marched to commit hostilities against a friendly nation, under the eye and with the knowledge of the public authorities. In all this, Mr. de Bocanegra appears to forget that, while the United States are at peace with Mexico, they are also at peace with Texas; that both stand on the same footing of friendly nations; that, since 1837, the United States have regarded Texas as an independent sovereignty, as much as Mexico; and that trade and commerce with citizens of a Government at war with Mexico cannot, on that account, be regarded as an intercourse by which assistance and succor are given to Mexican rebels. The whole current of Mr. de Bocanegra's remarks runs in the same direction, as if the independence of Texas had not been acknowledged. It has been acknowledged—it was acknowledged in 1837, against the remonstrance and protest of Mexico; and most of the

acts of any importance, of which Mr. de Bocanegra complains, flow necessarily from that recognition. He speaks of Texas as still being 'an integral part of the territory of the Mexican Republic;' but he cannot but understand that the United States do not so regard it. The real complaint of Mexico, therefore, is, in substance, neither more nor less than a complaint against the recognition of Texan independence. It may be thought rather late to repeat that complaint, and not quite just to confine it to the United States, to the exemption of England, France, and Belgium, unless the United States, having been the first to acknowledge the independence of Mexico herself, are to be blamed for setting an example for the recognition of that of Texas. But it is still true that Mr. de Bocanegra's specification of his grounds of complaint and remonstrance is mainly confined to such transactions and occurrences as are the natural consequence of the political relations existing between Texas and the United States. Acknowledging Texas to be an independent nation, the Government of the United States, of course, allows and encourages lawful trade and commerce between the two countries. If articles contraband of war be found mingled with this commerce, while Mexico and Texas are belligerent States, Mexico has the right to intercept the transit of such articles to her enemy. This is the common right of all belligerents, and belongs to Mexico in the same extent as to other nations. But Mr. de Bocanegra is quite well aware that it is not the practice of nations to undertake to prohibit their own subjects, by previous laws, from trafficking in articles contraband of war. Such trade is carried on at the risk of those engaged in it, under the liabilities and penalties prescribed by the law of nations or by particular treaties. If it be true, therefore, that citizens of the United States have been engaged in a commerce by which Texas, an enemy of Mexico, has been supplied with arms and munitions of war, the Government of the United States nevertheless was not bound to prevent it, could not have prevented it without a manifest departure from the principles of neutrality, and is in no way answerable for the consequences. The treaty of the 5th of April, 1831, between the United States and Mexico itself, shows most clearly how little foundation there is for the complaint of trading with Texas, if Texas is to be regarded as a public enemy of Mexico. The 16th article declares, 'It shall likewise be lawful for the aforesaid citizens, respectively, to sail with their vessels and merchandise before mentioned, and to trade, with the same liberty and security, from the places, ports, and havens of those who are enemies of both or either party, without any opposition or disturbance whatsoever, not only directly from the places of the enemy before mentioned to neutral places, but also from one place belonging to an enemy to

another place belonging to an enemy, whether they be under the jurisdiction of the same Government, or under several.'

"The 18th article enumerates those commodities which shall be regarded as contraband of war; but neither that article, nor any other, imposes on either nation any duty of preventing, by previous regulation, commerce in such articles. Such commerce is left to its ordinary fate, according to the law of nations. It is only, therefore, by insisting, as Mr. de Bocanegra does insist, that Texas is still a part of Mexico, that he can maintain any complaint. Let it be repeated, therefore, that if the things against which he remonstrates be wrong, they have their source in the original wrong of the acknowledgment of Texian independence. But that acknowledgment is not likely to be retracted.

"There can be no doubt at all that, for the last six years, the trade in articles contraband of war between the United States and Mexico has been greater than between the United States and Texas. It is probably greater at the present moment. Why has not Texas a right to complain of this? For no reason, certainly, but because the permission to trade, or the actual trading, by the citizens of a Government, in articles contraband of war, is not a breach of neutrality.

"Mr. de Bocanegra professes himself unable to comprehend how those persons of whom he complains have been able to evade the punishment decreed against them by the laws of the United States; but he does not appear to have a clear idea of the principles or provisions of those laws. The duties of neutral nations in time of war are prescribed by the law of nations, which is imperative and binding upon all Governments; and nations not unfrequently establish municipal regulations for the better government of the conduct of their subjects or citizens.

"This has been done by the United States, in order to maintain, with greater certainty, a strict and impartial neutrality, pending war between other countries. And wherever a violation of neutral duties, as they exist by the law of nations, or any breach of its own laws, has been brought to the notice of the Government, attention has always been paid to it.

"At an early period of the Texian revolution, strict orders were given by the President of the United States, to all officers on the South and South-western frontier, to take care that those laws should be observed; and the attention of the Government of the United States has not been called to any specific violation of them, since the manifestation on the part of Mexico of an intention to renew hostilities with Texas; and all officers of the Government remain charged with the strict and faithful execution of these laws. On a recent occasion, complaint was made, by the represen-

tatives of Texas, that an armament was fitted out in the United States for the service of Mexico against Texas.

"Two vessels of war, it was alleged, built or purchased in the United States, for the use of the Government of Mexico, and well understood as intended to be employed against Texas, were equipped and ready to sail from the waters of New York. The case was carefully inquired into, official examination was made, and legal counsel invoked. It appeared to be a case of great doubt; but Mexico was allowed the benefit of that doubt, and the vessels left the United States, with the whole or a part of their armament actually on board. The same administration of even-handed justice, the same impartial execution of the laws, towards all parties, will continue to be observed.

"If forces have been raised in the United States, or vessels fitted out in their ports for Texian service, contrary to law, no instance of which has as yet come to the knowledge of the Government, prompt attention will be paid to the first case, and to all cases which may be made known to it. As to advances, loans, or donations of money or goods, made by individuals to the Government of Texas or its citizens, Mr. de Bocanegra hardly needs to be informed that there is nothing unlawful in this, so long as Texas is at peace with the United States, and that these are things which no Government undertakes to restrain. Other citizens are equally at liberty, should they be so inclined, to show their good will towards Mexico by the same means. Still less can the Government of the United States be called upon to interfere with opinions uttered in the public assemblages of a free people, accustomed to the independent expression of their sentiments, resulting in no violation of the laws of their country, or of its duties as a neutral State. Towards the United States, Mexico and Texas stand in the same relation—as independent States at war. Of the character of that war mankind will form their own opinions: and in the United States, at least, the utterance of those opinions cannot be suppressed.

"The second part of Mr. de Bocanegra's complaint is thus stated: 'No sooner does the Mexican Government, in the exercise of its rights, which it cannot and does not desire to renounce, prepare means to recover a possession usurped from it, than the whole population of the United States, especially in the Southern States, is in commotion; and in the most public manner, a large portion of them is directed upon Texas.'

"And how does Mr. de Bocanegra suppose that the Government of the United States can prevent, or is bound to undertake to prevent, the people from thus going to Texas? This is emigration—the same emigration, though not under the same circumstances, which Mexico invited to Texas before the revolution. These persons, so far as is known to the Govern-

ment of the United States, repair to Texas, not as citizens of the United States, but as ceasing to be such citizens, and as changing at the same time their allegiance and their domicil. Should they return, after having entered into the service of a foreign State, still claiming to be citizens of the United States, it will be for the authorities of the United States Government to determine how far they have violated the municipal laws of the country, and what penalties they have incurred. The Government of the United States does not maintain, and never has maintained, the doctrine of the perpetuity of natural allegiance. And surely Mexico maintains no such doctrine; because her actually existing Government, like that of the United States, is founded in the principle that men may throw off the obligation of that allegiance to which they are born. The Government of the United States, from its origin, has maintained legal provisions for the naturalization of such subjects of foreign States as may choose to come hither, make their home in the country, and renouncing their former allegiance, and complying with certain stated requisitions, to take upon themselves the character of citizens of this Government. Mexico herself has laws granting equal facilities to the naturalization of foreigners. On the other hand, the United States have not passed any law restraining their own citizens, native or naturalized, from leaving the country and forming political relations elsewhere. Nor do other Governments, in modern times, attempt any such thing. It is true that there are Governments which assert the principle of perpetual allegiance; yet, even in cases where this is not rather a matter of theory than practice, the duties of this supposed continuing allegiance are left to be demanded of the subject himself, when within the reach of the power of his former Government, and as exigencies may arise, and are not attempted to be enforced by the imposition of previous restraint, preventing men from leaving their country.

"Upon this subject of the emigration of individuals from neutral to belligerent States, in regard to which Mr. de Bocanegra appears so indignant, we must be allowed to bring Mexico into her own presence, to compare her with herself, and respectfully invite her to judge the matter by her own principles and her own conduct. In her great struggle against Spain, for her own independence, did she not open her arms wide to receive all who would come to her from any part of the world? And did not multitudes flock to her new-raised standard of liberty, from the United States, from England, Ireland, France, and Italy, many of whom distinguished themselves in her service, both by sea and land? She does not appear to have supposed that the Governments of these persons, thus coming to unite their fate with hers, were, by allowing the emigration, even pending a civil war, furnishing just cause of offence to Spain. Even in her military

operations against Texas, Mexico employed many foreign emigrants; and it may be thought remarkable that, in those very operations, not long before the battle of San Jacinto, a native citizen of the United States held high command in her service, and performed feats of no mean significance in Texas. Of that toleration, therefore, as she calls it, and which she now so warmly denounces, Mexico in that hour of her emergency embraced the benefits, eagerly, and to the full extent of her power. May we not ask, then, how she can reconcile her present complaints with her own practice, as well as how she accounts for so long and unbroken a silence upon a subject on which her remonstrance is now so loud?

"Spain chose to regard Mexico only in the light of a rebellious province for near twenty years after she had asserted her own independence. Does Mexico now admit that, for all that period, notwithstanding her practical emancipation from Spanish power, it was unlawful for the subjects and citizens of other Governments to carry on with her the ordinary business of commerce, or to accept her tempting offers to emigrants?

"Certainly such is not her opinion.

"Might it not be asked, then, even if the United States had not already and long ago acknowledged the independence of Texas, how long they should be expected to wait for the accomplishment of the object now, existing only in purpose and intention, of the resubjugation of that territory by Mexico?

"How long, let it be asked, in the judgment of Mexico herself, is the fact of actual independence to be held of no avail against an avowed purpose of future reconquest?

"Mr. de Bocanegra is pleased to say that, if war actually existed between the two countries, proceedings more hostile, on the part of the United States, could not have taken place than have taken place, nor the insurgents of Texas obtained more effectual co-operation than they have obtained.

"This opinion, however hazardous to the discernment and just estimate of things of those who avow it, is yet abstract and theoretical, and, so far, harmless.

"The efficiency of American hostility to Mexico has never been tried; the Government has no desire to try it. It would not disturb the peace for the sake of showing how erroneously Mr. de Bocanegra has reasoned, while, on the other hand, it trusts that a just hope may be entertained that Mexico will not inconsiderately and needlessly hasten into an experiment by which the truth or fallacy of his sentiments may be brought to an actual ascertainment.

"Mr. de Bocanegra declares, in conclusion, that his Government finds itself under the necessity of protesting solemnly against the aggressions

which the citizens of the United States are reiterating upon the Mexican territory, and of declaring, in a positive manner, that it will consider as a violation of the treaty of amity the toleration of that course of conduct which he alleges inflicts on the Mexican Republic the injuries and inconveniences of war. The President exceedingly regrets both the sentiment and the manner of this declaration. But it can admit but of one answer. The Mexican Government appears to require that which could not be granted, in whatever language or whatever tone requested. The Government of the United States is a government of law. The Chief Executive Magistrate, as well as functionaries in every other Department, is restrained and guided by the Constitution and the laws of the land. Neither the Constitution, nor the law of the land, nor principles known to the usages of modern States, authorizes him to interdict lawful trade between the United States and Texas, or to prevent, or attempt to prevent, individuals from leaving the United States for Texas or any other foreign country.

"If such individuals enter into the service of Texas, or any other foreign State, the Government of the United States no longer holds over them the shield of its protection. They must stand or fall in their newly assumed character, and according to the fortunes which may betide it. But the Government of the United States cannot be called upon to prevent their emigration; and it must be added, that the Constitution, public treaties, and the laws, oblige the President to regard Texas as an independent State, and its territory as no part of the territory of Mexico. Every provision of law, every principle of neutral obligation, will be sedulously enforced in relation to Mexico, as in relation to other Powers, and to the same extent, and with the same integrity of purpose. All this belongs to the constitutional power and duty of the Government, and it will all be fulfilled. But the continuance of amity with Mexico cannot be purchased at any higher rate. If the peace of the two countries is to be disturbed, the responsibility will devolve on Mexico. She must be answerable for consequences. The United States, let it be again repeated, desire peace. It would be with infinite pain that they should find themselves in hostile relations with any of the new Governments on this continent. But their Government is regulated, limited, full of the spirit of liberty, but surrounded, nevertheless, with just restraints; and greatly and fervently as it desires peace with all States, and especially with its more immediate neighbors, yet no fear of a different state of things can be allowed to interrupt its course of equal and exact justice to all nations, nor to jostle it out of the constitutional orbit in which it revolves.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"WADDY THOMPSON, JR., Esq., &c. "DANIEL WEBSTER.

[" *Mr. Webster to Mr. Thompson.*]

" DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
" *Washington, July* 13, 1842.

" SIR: After writing to you on the 8th instant, I received, through the same channel as the former, Mr. de Bocanegra's second letter, and at the same time your despatch of the 6th of June, and your private letter of the 21st. This last letter of Mr. de Bocanegra was written, as you will see, before it was possible for him to expect an answer to his first, which answer is now forwarded, and shows the groundless nature of the complaints of Mexico. The letter itself is highly exceptionable and offensive. It imputes violations of honor and good faith to the Government of the United States, not only in the most unjust but in the most indecorous manner. You have not spoken of it in terms too strong in your circular to the members of the diplomatic corps.

" On the receipt of this, you will write a note to Mr. de Bocanegra, in which you will say that the Secretary of State of the United States, on the 9th of July, received his letter of the 31st of May. That the President of the United States considers the language and tone of that letter derogatory to the character of the United States, and highly offensive, as it imputes to their Government a direct breach of faith; and that he directs that no other answer be given to it, than the declaration that the conduct of the Government of the United States, in regard to the war between Mexico and Texas, having been always hitherto governed by a strict and impartial regard to its neutral obligations, will not be changed or altered in any respect or in any degree. If for this the Government of Mexico shall see fit to change the relations at present existing between the two countries, the responsibility remains with herself.

" I am, sir, your obedient servant,
" DANIEL WEBSTER.

" WADDY THOMPSON, ESQ., *Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States, Mexico.*"

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