

were devoured with an avidity that told our suffering. It was on this day that our runaway guide, Carlos, was seen by two of our men, who were out some distance from the main body in search of plums. He was still in company with the Italian, Brignoli, and both said that they had been lost, and half starved from the hour when they left us, at the same time begging earnestly for provisions. Their worn and haggard aspect told more forcibly than words that they had endured suffering the most intense. As they promised to come into our camp at night, our men left them without asking many questions, but they never came. Carlos probably feared that we might shoot him, and for that reason kept out of our way. Had any of our horses been in condition, the fugitives would probably have been pursued, and brought in—as it was, we saw no more of them until after we were taken prisoners.

From after circumstances I have little doubt that Carlos now knew where he was, but he was undoubtedly ignorant on that point and lost at the time when he left us. The fellow had trapped up and down the innumerable watercourses of the lower prairies without knowing the name of one of them, else how could he direct our men to plum-patches and springs a long distance in advance, and invariably with accuracy? On arriving at the stream of fresh water which he called the Utau, he doubtless saw signs and landmarks closely resembling the features of a stream called by that name which really exists but a few days' ride from Santa Fé. As he guided us onward, in the course of some three or four days he found that he had not only deceived himself, but the command, and his fear of punishment induced him to leave us at the earliest opportunity that offered.

On the 10th of September, the day following that on

which our whilom guide had been seen, we found what appeared to be an old cart road, and also a deserted Mexican camp. The road we followed until it was lost upon a sandy prairie destitute of vegetation. This day, three mountains were discovered in a southwest direction, and some fifteen miles distant, which bore the strongest resemblance to the description Carlos had often given us of *The Crows*. It seemed, too, as though we could discover a passage through the chain of smaller hills north of them—an opening resembling the *Angosturas* I have often before mentioned—but we had been so often deceived that few of us could now anticipate any such good fortune.

In the mean time, our men were driven nearly to desperation by hunger. Little or no order could be preserved by the officers, the volunteers scattering about in every direction, hunting for plums, grapes, and such game as might fall in their way. Few deer or antelope were seen, and they were so shy that it was impossible to shoot them; but in place of them every tortoise and snake, every living and creeping thing was seized upon and swallowed by our famishing men with a rapacity that nothing but the direst hunger could induce. Occasionally a skunk or polecat would reward some one more fortunate than the rest; but seven out of every ten of us were compelled to journey on without a morsel of anything to appease our sufferings.

One amusing little anecdote I will here relate, to show, in the first place, the direful straits to which our men were driven, and in the second to give my readers an insight into the trickery of old campaigners. We had reached a camping-ground late one evening, where a sufficiency of wood was found to kindle good, substantial fires. While a knot of us were reclining around

one of the fires, speculating as to our prospects, a youngster brought in a spotted-backed land tortoise, alive and kicking, which he had been fortunate enough to find upon the prairie. Throwing it upon the ground, and placing the end of his rifle upon the back of the animal to prevent its crawling off, he next asked an old hunter how to cook his prize. The answer was, that he must open the coals and throw the tortoise in, cover it over, and allow it to remain for at least half an hour in the fire—a longer time would only serve to make the repast more savoury.

No sooner said than done; for in less than a minute the unfortunate tortoise was roasting alive beneath a bushel of coals. The countenance of the young man was lit with joy in anticipation of a meal, which, although at any other time it would have been revolting, he now coveted with that longing which starvation only can create. But it was a meal he was not destined to enjoy. The old campaigner, after telling him three or four times that his supper was not cooked, finally found means to withdraw the youngster's attention from the coals, and then to whip the animal out with his iron ramrod was but the work of a moment. Another moment, and the well-roasted terrapin was safe behind the back of the more elderly ranger, and where the youngster could not see it.

"Don't you think he's nearly done?" inquired the latter, now turning his head and looking wistfully at the fast-expiring bed of coals.

"Pretty well cooked by this time—you can take him out," retorted the old borderer, while he quietly watched the first speaker as he eagerly raked open the embers.

The movements of the youngster, as he first com-

menced opening the coals, were slow and decided: by-and-by, as he neared the bottom of the mouldering heap, his action grew excited and hurried. The expression of his countenance may be easier imagined than described, as, after having dug to the hard ground itself, he turned to the author of his misfortune, and, in utter ignorance of the trick, exclaimed, "*He's gone!*"

"Gone!" slowly repeated the veteran borderer: "was he alive when you threw him in the fire?"

"Certainly—why?"

"Why!"

"Yes, *why?*"

"Because," continued the ranger, "you must have thought the terrapin mightily troubled with the simples if you supposed he would stay in the fire and be roasted alive, when he could easily crawl out and make tracks off!"

Gloomily the youngster dragged himself to his blanket supperless, while the old trickster quietly wended his way to a neighbouring fire to pick the scanty meat from his ill-got prize, and chuckle at his success in "doing" the green-horn out of his supper. To return to my narrative.

The road we had found and followed some distance in the morning we hunted for in vain in the afternoon: all the old wheel-marks had lost themselves in a barren, gravelly prairie. That we must find a passage through or over the mountains before us was considered certain, but where that passage was, no one could imagine. We were far from being aware of it at the time, but they proved to be outer and eastern spurs of the Rocky Mountains. As the sun gradually sank behind their lofty and ragged summits, a raw, chill breeze sprang up from their neighbourhood. It was the first cold weath-

er we had experienced, and in our weak and exhausted condition the biting wind seemed to pierce directly through us.

We continued our march until we reached the dry bed of a mountain stream, upon the banks of which we encamped for the night. A flock of wild turkeys had taken shelter under the banks, running off as we approached their roost. Although contrary to strict orders, nothing could restrain our men from banging and blazing away at the turkeys as they sped across the prairie—fifty rifles and muskets being discharged at them before they were out of sight. Two or three only were killed by the volley and running fire which ensued, and they were but half grown, and so extremely poor that they did not furnish a meal for half a dozen men. To go farther without *something* to eat was now deemed impossible—the wild and haggard expression, the sunken eyes, and sallow, fleshless faces of the men too plainly showed that some means of sustenance must be speedily provided. A horse formerly belonging to Howland, which in the early part of the campaign had been one of the best animals in the command, was now found to be so poor and badly broken down that it was resolved to shoot him and divide his flesh among the different messes. As they led the once proud and gallant animal to execution, the words of an old nursery song came fresh to my mind—one that I had neither heard nor thought of for many, many years. The burden of the ballad was,

“Poor old horse! he must die!”

and I have only mentioned the circumstance to illustrate the well-known eccentricities of memory. A man is often placed in situations and becomes a witness of

scenes which suddenly awaken and bring back the long-forgotten associations of his childhood.

But to return to the actual. The horse was killed, and in less time than it takes me to tell it his hide was off and his flesh distributed. I have before said that the flesh of a young mustang is excellent—but that of an old, broken-down horse is quite another affair. It was tough as India-rubber, and the more a piece of it was masticated the larger it became in the mouth. Poor as it was, however, and hard to swallow, I am confident that many a man in the party ate four or five pounds of it, half cooked and without salt—I know that I devoured my share. That I lost some of the good opinion I entertained of myself while eating this food I will not pretend to deny, and even a buzzard, that sat perched upon a dry limb of a cotton-wood overhead, appeared to look down upon us reproachfully as he saw us appropriating food that legitimately belonged to him. There was something, too, like honest indignation expressed in the countenance of a wolf, which sat quietly watching our operations from the adjoining prairie; but at the time we were hungry enough to make a meal even of him had he fallen into our hands. A man never knows what he will eat until driven by a week's starvation.

Our tough and most unsavoury meal over, we spread our blankets in the ravine, where we could be partially protected from the biting northeast wind; but the cutting blasts found their way through our scanty covering, chilling our weakened frames to such a degree as almost entirely to prevent sleep. With the ordinary stock of flesh and blood we should have been far better able to withstand the bitter wind; as it was, we could only shrug and shake, and pass a sleepless night.

Weak and unrefreshed, we arose in the morning—breakfastless and desponding, we mounted our horses, and once more resumed our gloomy march. Our course was southwest, and in the direction of what appeared to be a passage through the mountains; but after travelling some six or eight miles we found our farther progress cut off by high and precipitous ascents. To return was our only alternative, and at noon we again found ourselves near the point whence we had started in the morning.

A consultation was now held as to our future course. Running directly north was a high chain of mountains, extending as far as the eye could reach, and many contended that our best course would be to travel along the base of this chain until we either found a passage through or met with the trail of the St. Louis traders. Others, again, thought our wisest and safest plan would be to attempt crossing directly over the mountains where we then were, laborious as was the prospect. The latter party prevailed, and the attempt to cross was immediately made.

After incredible fatigue to both horses and men, for we were obliged to dismount and carry our arms and baggage in our hands, the ascent was finally achieved. Arrived at the summit, a beautiful prospect was before us. Below, a peaceful and lovely valley was spread out, through the centre of which the large stream we had left the previous day wound along. Innumerable brooks, taking their rise in the mountains around, meandered through this valley, and finally found their way to the larger stream. Their immediate borders were fringed with small trees and bushes of the deepest green, while the banks of the river were skirted with a narrow belt of timber of larger and more luxuriant growth.

The valley was hemmed in on all sides by mountains, whose frowning and precipitous fronts appeared to offer impassable barriers against all approach to the tranquil and beautiful scene lying far below us. At another time these ragged and dangerous steeps might have stayed our farther advance; but now, after allowing our poor and foot-sore animals a short rest, we drove them down, and in less than an hour found ourselves safe in the valley. It was now discovered that two of our men were missing, unable, probably, from their own weakness and the jaded condition of their horses, to keep up with the main body. We could only hope that they might be able to follow our trail and overtake us at our encampment—it was impossible, so weak and lame were all our horses, to go back in search of them.

On reaching the timber of the river banks we immediately encamped, and turned our animals loose to graze and rest themselves after their fatiguing mountain march. The river was found to abound with catfish, and as we had several hooks and lines with us, a sufficient number were caught to give us all a meal. I should perhaps call it a feast; for even without salt or seasoning of any kind, many of our men ate pound after pound of the coarse fish with a relish which a gouty alderman might covet, but could never enjoy over the best bowl of turtle soup the ingenuity of man ever compounded.

Sunset in this secluded valley presented a scene of almost unrivalled magnificence, as well as of mild and heavenly beauty. The tops of the surrounding mountains, upon which the blue vault of heaven seemed to rest, were gilded by the sun's last and most brilliant rays, while the deep-black shadows, as some beam of sunlight would dance around and kiss for the last time a more towering summit, would course hurriedly down

the frowning mountain sides, as if to find their homes in the depths below ere darkness assumed her sway. A soothing, an ethereal quiet reigned throughout the valley, broken only by the evening hymn of some turtle-dove, vowing anew her constancy to her mate, or by the last bark of the squirrel, as, with light and buoyant leaps, he wended his way from the river to his nest among the mountain cliffs. By-and-by a brood of wild turkeys, which had been hunting for their supper at the base of the rocky steeps, flew over our heads and sought their roost in a large cotton-wood which overhung the river. The sharp crack of a rifle soon announced the doom of one of the flock, while the report, taken up by a thousand echoes, reverberated from grot and glen, from steep hillside and quiet dell, until lost to the ear in distance. Night had thrown her sable mantle, alike over the valley and the recently-gilded mountain-tops, before I could turn from the contemplation of the lovely scene.

Early the next morning, Mr. Hunt, our guide, set off, in company with Captain Sutton, in search of a passage through the mountains, which would lead us along the river banks. They returned in two or three hours with the joyful intelligence that they had discovered an excellent route in a western direction, one which would extricate us from our present dilemma without much labour. To saddle and mount our horses was a work of but few moments, and then, with hearts much lightened, we resumed the journey.

After crossing the river, and emerging from the timber which lined its banks, we entered a narrow but open valley that had been concealed from view by a projecting point of one of the mountains. Two hours' ride brought us into a road which had evidently been used for carts, as we found yoke-keys, standards, and

other trappings belonging to a Mexican vehicle, scattered along its sides. On either hand, the frowning and rocky sides of mountains rose high above us, and we now knew and felt that we were in the *Angosturas*, or Narrows of the river so often spoken of by Carlos, where the stream has forced its passage through the eastern spur of the Rocky Mountains. Well do these mountains deserve their name, for they are nothing but immense heaps of stones, irregularly piled up, while but little vegetation is to be found upon their sides save a few stunted pines and cedars.

For three or four miles, after first entering the *Angosturas*, our road was along a solid ledge of rocks, the river on our right, and running nearly east and west. The greatest width of the pass through which the stream runs, until the traveller leaves the rocky road, cannot be more than half a mile, while the towering fronts of the mountains on either side are so steep that even a goat would find much difficulty in climbing them. On leaving the ledge of rocks the pass grows gradually wider, and the road becomes sandy. We had no sooner struck the latter than the tracks of mules and asses were plainly visible. A little farther on, the foot-prints of men were also seen, and from every appearance they had been made but a few hours. Not a sign of a human habitation had we discovered, either in the beautiful valley where we had spent the previous night or along the road we were now travelling, but that we had at length reached an open highway and were close upon a party of Mexicans was evident enough.

With feelings the most joyful we now spurred our animals briskly forward. The sagacious brutes themselves seemed to know that they were near the end of their long and tiresome journey, for they pricked up

their ears and willingly responded to our call upon them for a faster pace. Gradually the Narrows became wider, the road grew smoother, and just as the sun was losing itself behind the western mountains we came up with the Mexicans, encamped at the mouth of the gorge at which the river enters the Angosturas. As Carlos had always told us, the river at this point turns immediately north, watering a narrow and fertile valley.

Those of my readers who have ever made a long sea voyage may remember how eagerly, at the approach of its termination, when the pilot first placed his foot upon deck, they crowded around and pressed him with idle questions innumerable: so with us, in coming up with these strangers. Every one among us, who could speak a word of Spanish, earnestly showered upon the ragged, swarthy, and half-frightened Mexicans volumes of interrogations, without giving them time to answer one of them, even had they been able or willing. The fellows were just returning, with a small drove of broken-down mules and donkeys, from a trading trip of some two months' duration among the Caygüas and Camanches. They frankly told us, as soon as we gave them time to breathe and collect the little scattering sense they had, that they had seen us early in the morning, and that such of their companions as were better mounted had instantly fled, in fear that we might rob them.

In answer to the question as to the state of feeling in New Mexico regarding our approach, they could give us no information—upon this point they knew nothing. They had been absent months from the settlements, and were trading with the Caygüas when the unfortunate Hull and his party were killed, although they had

no part or lot in that massacre. They also told us that they were in the main camp of the Indians when the murdering party returned, bringing the dead bodies of eleven of their warriors, among whom was a principal chief. The ceremonies and performances on the occasion—the wild dances of the warriors around the scalps of their victims, with the painful penance of the women in token of their grief for the loss of the warriors of the tribe—were described by our new acquaintances with graphic effect. The women smote and cut their breasts, and ran naked through thorns and prickly pear-bushes, to show the intensity of their affection.

We next asked the Mexicans the distance to the Palo Duro, or rather to the spot where our main body with the wagons were encamped. They said that a good mule could travel the distance easily in four days. Upon our telling them the route we had taken, and that we had been thirteen days on the road, they expressed the greatest astonishment—said it was wonderful that we had been able to cross the immense chasms and mountains at all. They said that if we had taken a course directly west, on starting, we should have avoided the deep cañons altogether, and had a good, smooth road the whole distance. In addition, they informed us that Carlos and his companion had passed them in the morning, completely worn down by hunger and fatigue. By this it would seem that the runaway guide had taken a course too much to the north, and fallen into the same errors which had caused us so much trouble.

As regards provisions, the Mexicans were almost as badly off as ourselves, their stock being nearly exhausted. They gave the mess to which I was attached,

however, a small quantity of barley meal; just enough for a taste, and that was all. They said that San Miguel was still some seventy or eighty miles distant, but before reaching it we should fall in with large herds of sheep, and also the little village of Anton Chico. At the latter place we could procure *tortillas* and *atole*; the former a species of thin cake in universal use throughout Mexico, and the latter a thin mush, made of meal and water or cow's or goat's milk, and also a standing dish of the country. Anything, but more especially any preparation of meal or flour, would have been as welcome to us as manna was to the suffering Israelites in the wilderness.

The next morning, three of the Mexicans were hired to go back to our companions, one of our Mexican servants, Matias, disguised completely, so that he might not be suspected by any Indians they should meet on the route, accompanying them. They were provided with the best and least jaded mules we had, and took with them a package of letters to General McLeod. The purport of those letters was, that we had arrived within two or three days' ride of the settlements, and that the best course the command could pursue would be to march immediately, under direction of the guides, towards San Miguel. The Mexicans, after receiving full instructions from Colonel Cooke and Doctor Braham, set out on their journey across the immense prairie, and, as we afterward learned, were less than four days in going a distance which had occupied us thirteen!

Shortly after Matias and his three companions had left us we resumed our march towards San Miguel. Not a morsel of food did we have during the day, and at night we encamped, supperless, on the banks of a

small creek emptying into the Rio Mora. On this stream the Mexicans, who had thus far accompanied us, had their places of residence. After giving us instructions for our route towards San Miguel, they left us on the ensuing morning for their homes in the mountains.

Before we set out, our commander despatched four of our best-mounted men in advance to make arrangements for provisions, while the rest of us followed as fast as our weary animals could travel. As we neared the point where we knew that food could be procured in abundance, not only our hunger, but our impatience increased. During the day, I was fortunate enough, in company with the madcap Fitzgerald, to find half a hatful of wild parsley, and this we swallowed raw with the greatest avidity.

About the middle of the afternoon, one of the four who had been sent forward returned with the joyful intelligence that they had fallen in with a herd of no less than seventeen thousand sheep, and had succeeded in purchasing a sufficiency for the whole command. Again we put spurs to our horses, and a ride of half an hour brought us up with the shepherds and their charge, and to a fine camping-ground on the Rio Galinas.

Here a scene of feasting ensued which beggars description. We had been thirteen days upon the road, with really not provisions enough for three, and now that there was an abundance our starving men at once abandoned themselves to eating—perhaps I should rather call it gormandizing or stuffing. No less than twenty large, fat sheep had been purchased and dressed, and every ramrod, as well as every stick that could be found, was soon graced with smoking ribs and shoul-

ders, livers and hearts. Many made themselves sick by overeating; but an attempt to restrain the appetites of half-starved men, except by main force, would be the very extreme of folly. Had the food been anything but mutton, and had we not procured an ample supply of salt from the Mexicans to season it, our men might have died of the surfeit.

I have never yet seen a treatise or dissertation upon starving to death—I can speak *feelingly* of nearly every stage except the last. For the first two days through which a strong and healthy man is doomed to exist upon nothing, his sufferings are, perhaps, more acute than in the remaining stages—he feels an inordinate, unappeasable craving at the stomach, night and day. The mind runs upon beef, bread, and other substantials; but still, in a great measure, the body retains its strength. On the third and fourth days, but especially on the fourth, this incessant craving gives place to a sinking and weakness of the stomach, accompanied by nausea. The unfortunate sufferer still desires food, but with loss of strength he loses that eager craving which is felt in the earlier stages. Should he chance to obtain a morsel or two of food, as was occasionally the case with us, he swallows it with a wolfish avidity; but five minutes afterward his sufferings are more intense than ever. He feels as if he had swallowed a living lobster, which is clawing and feeding upon the very foundation of his existence. On the fifth day his cheeks suddenly appear hollow and sunken, his body attenuated, his colour an ashy pale, and his eye wild, glassy, cannibalish. The different parts of the system now war with each other. The stomach calls upon the legs to go with it in quest of food; the legs, from very weakness, refuse. The sixth day brings with it increased suffer-

ing, although the pangs of hunger are lost in an overpowering languor and sickness. The head becomes giddy—the ghosts of well-remembered dinners pass in hideous procession through the mind. The seventh day comes, bringing increased lassitude and farther prostration of strength. The arms hang listlessly, the legs drag heavily. The desire for food is still left, to a degree, but it must be brought, not sought. The miserable remnant of life which still hangs to the sufferer is a burden almost too grievous to be borne; yet his inherent love of existence induces a desire still to preserve it, if it can be saved without a tax upon bodily exertion. The mind wanders. At one moment he thinks his weary limbs cannot sustain him a mile—the next, he is endowed with unnatural strength, and if there be a certainty of relief before him, dashes bravely and strongly onward, wondering whence proceeds this new and sudden impulse.

Farther than this my experience runneth not. The reader may think I have drawn a fancy sketch—that I have coloured the picture too highly: now, while I sincerely trust he may never be in a situation to test its truth from actual experience, I would in all sober seriousness say to him, that many of the sensations I have just described I have myself experienced, and so did the ninety-and-eight persons who were with me from the time when we first entered the grand prairie until we reached the flock of sheep, to which more pleasing subject I will now return.

There were very few men with the immense herd, but in their stead were a large number of noble dogs, which appeared to be peculiarly gifted with the faculty of keeping them together. There was no running about, no barking or biting in their system of tactics; on the

contrary, they were continually walking up and down, like faithful sentinels, on the outer side of the flock, and should any sheep chance to stray from his fellows, the dog on duty at that particular post would walk gently up, take him carefully by the ear, and lead him back to the fold. Not the least fear did the sheep manifest at the approach of these dogs; and there was no occasion for it. They appeared to me to be of mongrel breed, somewhat resembling, perhaps, a cross of the Newfoundland or St. Bernard species with the larger mastiff. They possessed mild, frank, and open countenances, were indefatigable in protecting their charge from wolves, and from what I could learn were extremely sagacious.

The shepherds had crooks in their hands, instruments I had often read of in poets' lays. The uses to which they were put took away much of the romance I had associated with crooks and gentle shepherds. One of the latter, whenever a sheep has been pointed out in the flock, either to be killed or for sale, thrusts the long, hooked stick immediately under the throat of the victim, and holds it fast until its fellows have been driven past on either side. The sheep is then secured by grappling its wool with the hand—an operation, from first to last, partaking more of the practical than of the poetic.

Now that we had found provisions in plenty, we considered the dangers, the fatigues, the delays, and the vexations of the march as over, and bright were the anticipations of the future. Every face was animated with joy, every heart was filled with gladness. How different would have been our feelings had we known the sufferings and privations, the indignities, and the cruel maltreatment we were yet to endure—the terrible fate that was awaiting us!

CHAPTER XIII.

Farther Feasting.—Party sent to the Settlements.—Author accompanies it.—Objects of sending the Party ahead.—News respecting Howland and his Companions.—Encounter with Mexican Muleteers.—Their Fright at our Approach.—Farther Information in relation to Howland.—Manuel sent back.—Suspicious Horsemen seen.—Arrival at Anton Chico.—Consternation of the Inhabitants.—Scanty Raiment of the Women.—Confidence restored.—Description of Anton Chico.—Scantiness of the Furniture.—A Dinner under Cover.—Start for San Miguel.—Compelled to return.—A Night at Anton Chico.—Bad Colds, with worse Coughs to match.—A suspicious Visitor.—Report that we were to be arrested.—Start again from Anton Chico.—Valuables concealed.—Arrival at Cuesta.—Commotion in the Village.—Our Party surrounded by Mexican Troops.—Apparent Frankness of their Leader, Dimasio Salezar.—Our Arms taken from us.—Consultation of Salezar and his Officers.—We are formed in Line and searched.—Mexican Duplicity.—A trying Scene.—Prompt Interference of Behil in saving our Lives.—We are marched towards San Miguel.—Kindness of the Women.—Don Jesus, and his Attempt to tie us.—Description of our Guard.—Puertecito.—More of the Women.—Arrival at San Miguel.—Meanness of the Alcalde and Kindness of the Priest.—Our first Night in Prison.

THE morning after our feast we made another hearty meal of broiled mutton, with *atole con leche*, a mush compounded of flour and goats' milk. The Mexican shepherds, finding the Texans excellent customers, and disposed to pay the highest prices for anything in the shape of bread, had sent to their *ranchos*, or farm, during the night, a distance of some twelve miles, and supplied themselves abundantly with flour.

It was now determined, by our principal officers, to send two men forward to the frontier town of San Miguel, for the purpose of conferring with the authorities. W. P. Lewis, captain of the artillery company, and George Van Ness, secretary of the commissioners, were detailed for this service. Both could speak Spanish,