

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,

and the former enjoyed in every way the confidence of Colonel Cooke, who had often befriended him. In addition to verbal instructions, the young men were intrusted with letters to the *alcalde*, or principal officer of San Miguel, and both the instructions and letters set forth that a large trading party of Texans was now approaching, that their intentions were in every way pacific, and that the leaders of the advance party were anxious to purchase a large quantity of provisions to be sent back to the main command. Several of General Lamar's proclamations were also given to Mr. Van Ness, to be distributed among the principal citizens, the purport of which was that the expedition was sent for the purpose of trading, and that if the inhabitants of New Mexico were not disposed to join, peacefully, the Texan standard, the expedition was to retire immediately. These proclamations were printed in both Spanish and English, and not a doubt existed that the liberal terms offered would be at once acceded to by a population living within the limits of Texas, and who had long been groaning under a misrule the most tyrannical.

At the request of Colonel Cooke and Dr. Brenham, two of the principal merchants, Major Howard, and Mr. Fitzgerald, accompanied Lewis and Van Ness, and as I was in great haste to prosecute my journey through Mexico, I gathered all my effects, packed them in leather panniers made for the purpose, placed them upon my mule, and set off in company. This was on the 14th of September, and when I parted with my friends I certainly did not expect to see them for the first time in the April following, at the city of Mexico and in chains.

The shepherds from whom we had purchased our provisions had informed us that the country was in

arms against us, that Howland and his party were prisoners at Santa Fé, and that an American named Rowland, a merchant at San Miguel, had also been imprisoned and his goods confiscated by order of the governor, Armijo. Yet they told these stories in so many different ways, and contradicted themselves so often in the telling, that but little confidence could be placed in them.

After having obtained directions as to our course towards the *camino real*, or principal road, for our camp on the Rio Gallinas was some distance from it, we proceeded on our way, a Mexican servant we had hired at San Antonio, named Manuel,\* accompanying us. After reaching the main road, we journeyed briskly forward until nearly two o'clock. An abrupt turn now brought us suddenly upon two Mexican muleteers, enjoying a quiet siesta, while their mules were feeding close by them. Our appearance frightened them exceedingly, and as they quickly caught their mules and commenced putting on their packs, their extreme nervousness was plainly visible. The colour entirely left the swarthy face of one of these fellows, who, for once, certainly had the appearance of a white man; and as his trembling hands were flying about from one part of his mule to another, fastening the packs, the movements could not have been more rapid had he been executing the Battle of Prague or one of Strauss's quickest and most difficult waltzes on a piano. At first he could not answer a question coherently; but as he gradually found that our intentions were not to eat him up alive, the col-

\* Manuel was shot, a short time afterward, in mere wantonness, by a drummer in Armijo's redoubtable army. His leading characteristics were great good-nature, extreme idleness, and a proneness to telling the most outrageous falsehoods—the two latter very common failings with his countrymen.

our returned to his cheeks, his tongue became loosened, and he was able to give us satisfactory answers.

The fellow said that our approach was well known to the inhabitants, and that the greatest stir and excitement existed in consequence of Armijo's informing them that our intentions were to burn, slay, and destroy as we went. He corroborated the report that Rowland\* had been arrested for his supposed connexion with the expedition, as well as the story that Howland, Baker, and Rosenbury were prisoners at Santa Fé, although he asserted that they had the liberty of the town. After telling us that the village of Anton Chico was some two or three miles to our left, and a little off the main road to San Miguel, the muleteer departed, apparently well satisfied that we had let him off without taking his scalp.

It was now deemed advisable to send word back to our friends on the Gallinas of what we had heard, and Manuel was accordingly despatched with a note detailing everything. Mr. Van Ness also sent back a number of letters of introduction to different individuals, with which he had been furnished, and other papers, fearing that he might be arrested, and that blame might fall upon innocent persons if he should be searched and the letters found upon his person. After this we turned off in the direction of Anton Chico.

A ride of half an hour brought us to a small and miserable hovel upon the banks of the Rio Pecos. This is a beautiful, swift-running stream of fresh water, rising in the mountains in the vicinity of Santa Fé, and after

\* Thomas Rowland, a brother of John Rowland. The name of the latter had appeared in some of the Texan papers as a commissioner in connexion with Dryden, both of whom were residents of New Mexico. The publication of their names, as commissioners friendly to the interests of the Texans, was made without their knowledge or consent.

fertilizing a succession of narrow but rich valleys, is supposed finally to empty into the Puercos, a tributary of the Rio Grande. We rode up to the low and narrow door of the hovel, at which stood an old, gray-haired man and two or three women, who were all evidently intimidated at the sight of strangers. As this secluded spot is entirely off the trail of the St. Louis traders, these half-civilized people had probably never before seen other than their own mixed race: as for ourselves, it was the first human habitation having any pretensions to civilization we had seen for months, and was certainly a welcome object to all. We did not dismount; but, while inquiring for the most direct route to Anton Chico, one of the women brought us some warm *tortillas* from the interior of the hovel, a little wooden bowl of *miel*—a species of molasses made from the stalk of the common Indian corn—and three or four large slices of goats' milk cheese. These, to us delicacies, they brought without money and without price—an earnest of the universal kindness and hospitality of the *women* of New Mexico. We threw some silver into their hands, wheeled our horses amid a shower of *muchas gracias* and *adios, caballeros*,\* and left them.

A ride of another half hour brought us in sight of Anton Chico, a village seated upon a little hill overlooking the Pecos, and probably containing some two or three hundred inhabitants. As we caught a first glimpse of the village, a suspicious, piratical-seeming Mexican, armed with a double-barrelled gun, broadsword, and lance, and splendidly mounted upon a dashing black horse, passed within ten yards of us. Although he did not even nod at our approach, he still eyed us closely. Had he not been confident that his

\* Many thanks; farewell, gentlemen; God be with you.

horse could easily outrun our jaded animals, I doubt whether he would have come within gunshot of us. At a distance, on the rising slope of a hill, another man, similarly armed and mounted, was seen; and he, too, was evidently watching our movements.

As we approached the little village, all was excitement and commotion. Women and children were seen running in every direction, climbing the low houses and hiding behind the mud fences and walls. A large horse-mill, at which the inhabitants were grinding corn-stalks for the manufacture of *miel*, was deserted instantly, and everything plainly denoted that our sudden appearance had created the greatest consternation. We rode steadily up to the first door, as though not noticing that we had caused the least alarm, and asked a man of more hardihood than the rest, who had the courage to show his face, although not enough to conceal his trepidation, whether we could purchase some fodder for our animals and bread for ourselves. This question, being in Spanish, was understood by several of the frightened inhabitants, who were peering at us through the chinks of the surrounding doors, and who, finding that we did not ask them to surrender their lives and property at discretion, gradually gained colour and confidence, and began slowly to issue from their hiding-places. In three minutes we were surrounded by half a hundred men, women, and children, some inviting us this way, others that, and all apparently anxious to serve us, either from love of money or love of life, for many, no doubt, were impressed with the idea that we had come on purpose to do murder. The women and girls were very slightly clad, and many of the children were naked, while the men were so concealed in their coarse blankets that we really could not tell what their dress

might be underneath, or whether they had any. On the faces of many of the women and grown-up girls we noticed large, deep-red spots, apparently marks from their childhood, and disfiguring them greatly. I afterward ascertained that these marks were not natural, as my readers will learn in the progress of the narrative.

The little village of Anton Chico is built on a square, the houses fronting on the inner side, although there are entrances, protected by strong doors, on the outer. The houses are of one story only, built of *adobes*, a species of large, sun-dried bricks, while the tops are flat. They have neither windows nor floors, and in point of comfort and convenience are only one degree removed from the rudest wigwam of the Indian. In case of attack from the savages, continually hovering and committing depredations upon the frontiers of New Mexico, these little hamlets serve as forts, the Indians rarely pursuing the inhabitants farther than their outer walls, as they carry on their warfare entirely on horseback. This description of Anton Chico will answer for a majority of the *ranchos* and smaller towns of New Mexico—their buildings being all constructed of the same materials and in the same manner.

We entered the largest house in the place. It had but two rooms, the earthen floor and scanty furniture of which gave them a prison-like and desolate appearance. Not a chair or table, knife or fork, did the occupants possess, and we were given to understand that we were in the house of the "first family" of Anton Chico. We called for something to eat, suggesting a somewhat varied "bill of fare" to be spread before us, for which we manifested our readiness to pay the highest prices: our dinner consisted—substantials and

extras all enumerated—of tortillas, boiled eggs, and miel, the latter somewhat resembling molasses and water, the water predominating. In the mean while, our animals outside were faring infinitely better than ourselves, for they had an ample supply of corn and fodder—good, legitimate food for them, to which they did most ample justice.

The sun was about setting by the time we had finished our meal; yet we determined upon travelling some eight or ten miles farther towards San Miguel that evening. After paying the master of the house the most exorbitant prices for every article we had procured, and after his daughters had presented each of us with a bundle of *cigarritos*\* of their own manufacture, we saddled and mounted our horses, and again proceeded for San Miguel.

Immediately on leaving Anton Chico we were compelled to climb a high, steep, and rocky hill or mountain, and on reaching its summit, by which time darkness had overtaken us, we found ourselves without a road, and completely lost in a grove of stunted pines and cedars. To advance was impossible, and we accordingly retraced our steps to the village we had left but a short time previous. Once more we secured our animals to a hedge-fence, near the house where we had procured our homely dinner, and after carrying our saddles, bridles, and other equipments to a corner of the room which had been appropriated to our use by the master, we rolled ourselves up in our blankets with the vain hope, as it was the first night we had passed under cover for months, of enjoying a refreshing sleep. But no such good luck was in store for us: there was a close-

\* Small cigars, in New Mexico made of *punche*, a species of tobacco, covered with corn-husks or shucks.

ness in the atmosphere to which we had long been strangers, the room was occupied by some thirty men, women, and children, exclusive of our own party, and when all were provided with sleeping room there was scarcely space enough on the hard earthen floor for a hat. The beds of our neighbours were nothing but sheepskins thrown upon the floor—their clothing a blanket, which they spread over themselves after lying down.

Every member of the family, which consisted of a grandfather and grandmother with their children and their children's children, seemed to be badly affected by a cold, or worse—for the younger branches were all evidently afflicted with the worst form of the whooping-cough. The grown people appeared to have the most distressing coughs to match their colds, while the children seemed at times to be in perfect convulsions. Occasionally the distressing sounds would all die away; anon, one of the children would begin coughing frightfully, another would join in the discordant din, and immediately the whole family were in full chorus—and thus they barked away the hours.

Notwithstanding the horrible uproar, however, I finally fell into a half sleep. About one o'clock in the morning I was awakened by some disturbance among our animals, and in going out to ascertain the cause, I was asked by a Mexican if I was the captain of the party. As this was about all I could at that time understand, I called Lewis, in the belief that the fellow had something important to communicate, and in this I was not deceived. He said that we were all to be taken prisoners on the next day by a party who were then mustering in the valley, near Cuesta. He farther stated that the inhabitants of Anton Chico would fall upon us were they

not fearful of our arms. To wind up, he informed us that we should most certainly be shot, and for this peculiarly pleasant news he asked us one dollar! Had his information extended no farther than that we were to be arrested, and had this statement been gratuitous, we might have paid some heed to his story; as it was, it sounded very much as though he had made up what he considered a dollar's worth of bad tidings, and thought us simple enough to pay him for his trouble. Entertaining this belief, of course we returned to our blankets without giving the fellow even so much as the sixteenth of what he charged; yet I could not but think that there might be some truth in his story.

We were up at an early hour in the morning, and after swallowing a bowl of atole, sweetened with a little miel, once more took the road for San Miguel. Although the male part of the inhabitants of the village we had just left had every outward appearance of friendship, there was still a something suspicious in their movements which convinced us that they would have acted otherwise had they not been restrained by fear. To show that they were not all honest, some one of them stole a saddle-blanket from me. It was of little value, however, and I made no mention of the circumstance to the man in whose house we had passed the night.

We must have been blind, indeed, to the evidences around us, not to see that the country was in a state of excitement occasioned by the approach of the Texans—the suspicious men who had crossed our route the evening before, the earnestness with which they eyed our movements, and then the arrest of Howland and his companions, all tended to impress us with the belief that we should at least be questioned closely as to our

business, and the objects which had induced us to enter the country, if not detained, in case Armijo should oppose the advance of the Texans. But we never thought of being disarmed or imprisoned. I had no inconsiderable sum of money in gold, confined about my body in a linen belt: this I thought it more prudent to conceal under the buttons which graced the sides of my riding pantaloons. There was not room for all the money under the buttons—what was left I still retained in the belt, which I now placed in one of my pockets. A valuable breastpin I concealed under one of my waistband buttons, two or three articles of jewelry less costly I hid under the folds of my shirt bosom, and a gold watch and chain I secreted as safely as was possible. In a country filled, as I knew this to be, with thieves and cut-throats of the worst description, I was anxious to conceal the fact entirely that I had valuable property of any kind with me.

On reaching the summit of the steep hill overlooking Anton Chico, and emerging from the cedars in which we were lost the evening before, we found a level table-land spread out before us, of rare beauty. In the distance, to the north, that spur of the Rocky Mountains at the foot of which lies the mud-built city of Santa Fé, was now plainly visible.

We had travelled but two or three miles, after reaching the table-land, before a Mexican, who had seen us approaching from a small house some little distance from the roadside, came out to meet us. He gratuitously informed us, without our asking the question, that the nearest route to San Miguel would take us directly through the little village of Cuesta, and took no inconsiderable pains to give such directions as would preclude the possibility of our missing the road. At the

time, we considered this an act of kindness on his part; but after circumstances made it quite certain that he had been employed to draw us into a snare already set for our apprehension.

After thanking the Mexican for his information, we once more proceeded towards San Miguel. About noon we arrived at the brow of a high, steep, and rocky hill, overlooking a narrow and fertile valley through which the Pecos was flowing. Immediately below us was a small collection of houses; and some distance up the stream, but in plain sight, was the little village of Cuesta. The road leading into the valley ran directly down the rocky sides of the hill, and was so rough and broken that we were compelled to dismount, and lead or drive our animals. As we slowly descended, we could plainly see that our approach had been discovered, for there was commotion in all parts of the beautiful valley. Several horsemen were seen emerging from Cuesta, and dashing, at full speed, towards the spot where we must first strike the level land. A point of the hill now concealed them from our sight, and when we finally reached the bottom not a single human being was visible in any direction.

Van Ness, Lewis, and myself arrived in the valley some ten minutes before Howard and Fitzgerald. While our eyes were turned towards the hillside, waiting their approach, we were suddenly surrounded by more than a hundred roughly-dressed but well-mounted soldiers, armed with lances, swords, bows and arrows, and miserable *escopetas*, or old-fashioned carbines. The leader of this band, whom I will at once introduce as the notorious Dimasio Salezar, instantly rode up, and addressed us as *amigos*, or friends, with the greatest apparent cordiality. He asked us who we were, and

whether we were not from Texas. Lewis at once informed him that we were, and that we had been detached from the main body, then some thirty miles distant on the Gallinas, for the purpose of consulting with the authorities, either at San Miguel or Santa Fé, and that he was anxious to see the governor. To this Salezar bowed, as much as to say that all was right, and we fairly congratulated ourselves upon our reception. There was a frankness, a plausibility about the miscreant that completely concealed his real intentions.

On the arrival of Howard and Fitzgerald we remounted our horses, and, in company with our new acquaintances, rode to the first house that presented itself. Here Salezar called a halt, and after his men had completely surrounded us on every side, as if to hear any conversation that might ensue, but with no other intentions, their leader remarked, with the utmost blandness, that we must be aware we could not enter their territory with arms in our hands—that it was contrary to the laws and usages of civilized nations—and that he hoped we would have no objections to placing our rifles and pistols in his keeping, each labelled so that its owner might know it again, until the business we had with the authorities should be arranged. He appeared deeply to regret that his duty compelled him to make this request of persons evidently gentlemen, and whose objects, he doubted not, were of the most friendly nature; he had been ordered by his superiors, he said, to request us to deliver up our arms, and sincerely hoped we would excuse him.

Finding themselves surrounded by a force at least twenty times their number, without the remotest chance to escape by flight even if they felt disposed, and completely imposed upon by the apparent fairness and open-

ness of Salezar's conduct, my companions gave up their arms. It was now necessary for me to inform Salezar as to my position and intentions. Through Van Ness I told him that I was a citizen of the United States, that I was merely a traveller, on a journey through the interior of Mexico, and that I had a passport from the Mexican consul at New-Orleans, which I took from my pocket and handed him. Not a word could the fellow read, but, placing the document in the hands of his second in command, Don Jesus,\* who only wanted natural talents to make him even a greater villain than his master, Salezar told him to examine it. After reading the passport from first to last, the worthy lieutenant and secretary returned it to his captain, who remarked that he presumed all was right, but he was reluctantly compelled to demand my arms and retain them until I had seen the governor. With even more reluctance I gave my rifle and pistols into the possession of the miscreant, although my companions openly expressed their confidence that they would be returned in good faith. Now that he had our weapons in his power, I thought I could discover a gleam of satisfaction lighting up Salezar's countenance, yet his feelings did not openly betray him. It was afterward evident enough that he had used dissimulation, and adopted a courteous tone foreign to his nature—even with his myrmidons around him, the cowardly man did not dare peremptorily to demand our rifles and pistols.

\* I have given this name the Spanish spelling, although it is pronounced *Hesosos*. Among the women of both Mexico and Spain *Jesusa* is a very common, and considered a very pretty name. By the same rule of pronunciation it is called *Hesoosa*. As is remarked above, I have given these names, singular and irreverent as they may appear to an American, their Spanish orthography. Were a Mexican to see *Hesosos* in print he would not know it, even were it his own name.

Having distributed all our weapons among his principal men, Salezar next drew his officers into the little house in front of which the scene had taken place. In the mean time we were left outside, under no apparent restraint. I led my horse, the faithful old "Jim the Butcher," as he was called, to an irrigating canal close by, and after allowing him to drink his fill of the cool and excellent water, walked back with him to my pack-mule, opened one of the leathern panniers, and commenced feeding him on bread which I had purchased that morning at Anton Chico. While at that village, so great was my craving for bread after being without it for months, I had purchased all that was offered for sale, really thinking that I should eat it all, although I had at least a month's supply. A moment's reflection now taught me that I was in a country where I could have it fresh every day, and as my appetite by this time was somewhat appeased, I began to feed my horse upon the stores I had provided for my own use. A crowd of men and half-naked women and girls pressed around me, apparently astonished that I should give my horse what was really one of their greatest luxuries, and it was while I was thus engaged that Salezar and his officers stepped from the house and a second time approached us.

His first request was that we should form in a line. He then said he was obliged to take from us any papers or articles we might have about our persons—such were his orders from the governor. There was even an approach to delicacy in this command, for the scoundrel had not as yet shown his real colours; and as we were weaponless, and completely in his power, we submitted to the degrading operation of having our pockets turned inside out and our persons searched by a com-