

The *alcalde*, a gruff, bad-countenanced man, sent us in a miserable meal of tortillas and weak mutton broth, while the priest of the place, more liberal, sent his servant with a generous bowl of hot coffee for each of us. Our scanty supper over, our thoughts were next turned towards sleep; but the earthen floor of our quarters was without a single blanket to relieve its hardness, and the chilling blast that came down from the adjoining mountains as the shades of evening drew nigh, told us, more plainly than words, that we need expect neither comfort nor sleep that night. We sent word to the *alcalde* of our unfortunate plight: he answered our petition by saying that he could do nothing for us. A kind-hearted woman living close by, however, sent us a buffalo skin and a single blanket, and another blanket I purchased of a man in the crowd, for which I gave him an English sovereign. With these we made up a bed for five persons. I suffered more than any of my companions, the bread I had eaten giving me a severe attack of colic; and I crawled from the ground in the morning weak and unrefreshed.

Thus did we spend our first night in prison.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ordered to march towards Santa Fé.—Departure from San Miguel.—Gloomy Anticipations.—Our Guard increased.—A Present from a Woman.—Meet with a Party of Mexican Troops.—Brutality of their Leader.—Lewis, Van Ness, and Fitzgerald tied with Cords.—Description of Don Jesus.—Large Bodies of Troops passed.—Their miserable Appointments.—Our first Interview with Governor Armijo.—His Reception.—Conduct of Lewis.—We are ordered back to San Miguel.—Armijo's last Command.—Carlos seen.—First Appearance upon a Donkey.—Antics of the Animal.—A heavy night Shower.—Once more at San Miguel.—Barbarous Execution of one of our Comrades.—We are ordered before the Governor.—An exciting Trial.—Howland condemned to Die.—Cruel Mode of Execution.—Noble Conduct of Howland.—Kindness of a young Priest.—Reflections upon our Situation.—Departure of Mexican Troops for Anton Chico.—News of Colonel Cooke and his Men.—Plans of Armijo.—Particulars of the Capture of Howland.—Description of Manuel Pino.—News of the Capture of our Friends at Anton Chico.—Great Rejoicings at San Miguel.

We had no sooner risen than Don Jesus told us that the governor had not yet arrived, and that he should march with us directly towards Santa Fé, distant some sixty miles, in the hope of meeting him upon the road. Before starting, we sent out and purchased an entire sheep, an officious fellow, named Tomas Bustamente, whose countenance appeared to indicate that he had some honesty, acting as our agent in the transaction. A part of this sheep Tomas cooked for our breakfast, the priest again sending us a large pitcher of coffee.

It was nearly nine o'clock before everything was in readiness for our departure. Although we were anxious to see the governor and learn the worst, it may be imagined that our anticipations were not of a very pleasant nature. Had we been prisoners in the hands of any other people under the sun our feelings would have

been far different; but we were now in the power of men who possessed all the vices of savage life without one of the virtues that civilization teaches. We felt that although our lives had been spared the previous day, it was but a reprieve; that we were still in the hands of a semi-civilized enemy—cruel, relentless, and treacherous—who looked upon us as heretics, and the common enemies of their religion and race; and we had fearful reason to believe that the appearance of Armijo would be the signal for our immediate execution. Surely, the emotions of that hour, when the future was looming up so close and dark upon us, are not to be appreciated by the reader.

Our guard, which on the previous day had only consisted of four, was now increased to eight men, four members of the country militia, armed with bows and arrows, and mounted upon asses, being stationed, two on either side, while Don Jesus on his mule hovered around, as if to guard the weaker points in the order of march. This addition to our escort had been provided by the old alcalde of San Miguel, with the view, probably, of rendering our escape a matter of positive impossibility; yet, enfeebled as we were from our many privations, and the long, weary pilgrimage across the prairies, we still felt certain that we could, at any time, capture Don Jesus and all his men with the greatest ease. A determined rush, accompanied by a true Anglo-Saxon shout of defiance, would have brought every one of the cowardly wretches to his knees begging for mercy; yet we should not have been able successfully to run the gauntlet of well-mounted men stationed at all the passes between us and our friends.

After parading us in front of our miserable quarters, and arranging his guard around us with much pomp

and show, Don Jesus ordered us to march. The plaza was again crowded with the women, children, and old men of San Miguel as we hurriedly marched through it, many of the boys following and gazing at us until we reached the extremities of the town. We had not travelled more than a couple of miles before a tolerably well-dressed woman came running towards us from a small house, bringing a bottle of the country whiskey, and saying that it was for our use. This we drank upon the spot, and as we thanked the good-hearted creature for her kindness she appeared to feel deeply for us in our misfortunes. Even after we had been hurried off by our inhuman guard, the woman still remained to gaze upon us, looking her last at the *pobrecitos*, whom she really thought the sun would not set upon alive. The almost universal brutality and cold-heartedness of the men of New Mexico are in strange contrast with the kind dispositions and tender sympathies exhibited by all classes of the women.

A brisk walk of another mile brought us in contact with a party of some two hundred half-dressed and miserably-armed Mexicans, on their march towards San Miguel. Their commander was a brutal, piratical-visaged scoundrel, who, after ordering Don Jesus to halt, cursed us with every opprobrious epithet, said we should have been shot when first taken, and then asked why we were not tied. While Don Jesus was stammering forth some excuse, the fellow ordered his trumpeter to sound an advance, and in three minutes a turn of the road concealed this extremely valiant party and their doughty captain from our sight. Before they departed, however, we learned that they were to act against Colonel Cooke, Captain Sutton, and their men, and we were also informed that Armijo had left Santa Fé in the

morning with several hundred men, and that we should meet *him* before nightfall.

The miscreant who had charge of us now stated that his imperative duty made it necessary to tie us. With a mock sensibility he pretended that it was against his wish to do this, but as a superior officer had ordered him he must comply, simply for form's sake. After a little hesitation on the part of Van Ness and Fitzgerald they consented to be tied, and a *lariat* was accordingly fastened around their wrists, while the other end was held by one of the guard. Lewis was also tied and led along like a dog; but as Major Howard was suffering from an old wound received in an Indian fight, and as I was also lame, and, as Don Jesus well knew, had slept none the night before, he allowed us to continue the march without being confined. He ordered us, however, whenever we met with any of the different parties of troops we were now constantly passing, to fold our hands upon our breasts as a token of submission! Never shall I forget this Don Jesus. He had a coarse, dark, hang-dog face, a black but vicious eye, a head which I am phrenologist enough to know was as destitute of the organs of benevolence and the better attributes of our nature as outer darkness is of light, and if he had a heart at all, it legitimately belonged to a hyena or a prairie wolf.

He pushed, or rather drove us rapidly onward, until past the middle of the afternoon, during which time we must have passed nearly a thousand troops, the larger portion of them armed with bows and arrows or old and worn-out muskets. The sun had hidden himself behind a range of mountains which divides the valley of the Pecos at this point from that of the Rio Grande, and we were approaching an old and ruined mission,

which, in former times, had served the double purpose of a church and fortress, when suddenly the sharp and discordant blast of a trumpet announced the approach of General Manuel Armijo, governor of New Mexico. An abrupt turn in the road had at first concealed his ragged but numerous cavalcade from our sight, but a few steps brought us in full view of all the pomp, circumstance and chivalry, bows and arrows, sycophants and rascals, with which the governor is usually surrounded. When I say that our guard had been entertaining us during the day with stories of Armijo's cruelty and barbarity, and that they freely gave it as their opinion that we should be ordered to execution on sight, I need not add that the present moment was exciting to a painful degree.

The governor himself, a fine, portly man, was mounted on a mule of immense size, and gayly as well as richly caparisoned. Don Jesus had formed us into line by the roadside, there to await the advance of Armijo. The moment the quick eye of the latter caught a glance of us he rode directly up to the spot where we were standing, and, without dismounting, addressed us with no little politeness, shook each of us by the hand with much apparent cordiality, called us *amigos*, or friends, and after saying that he had heard of our capture, asked us who we were. Lewis immediately answered—and here the spirit of the craven caitiff first manifested itself—that we were merchants from the United States. Van Ness interrupted him at once by saying that, with the exception of myself, we were all Texans; but, without heeding him, Armijo grasped Lewis by the collar of his dragoon jacket, dragged him up alongside of his mule, and, pointing to the but-

tons, upon which were a single star and the word "Texas," he sternly said,

"What does this mean? I can read—*Texas!*" at the same time pointing to the latter word and pronouncing it emphatically. Lewis quailed under his iron grasp, but without heeding him the governor continued, "You need not think to deceive *me*: no merchant from the United States ever travels with a Texan military jacket."

After asking several questions, to which Lewis returned stammering answers, Armijo finally spoke of our main party, and inquired its number and the intentions of the commissioners. He was answered by Van Ness and Howard that it was a mercantile expedition from Texas, and that the intentions of the leaders were pacific. Mr. Van Ness then told him that I did not belong to the party any farther than that I accompanied it for the protection it afforded against Indians, and added that I had a passport from the Mexican consul in New-Orleans. This passport, with all my papers, was in the hands of Don Jesus, who immediately gave it to Armijo. After reading it aloud in presence of all of us, he gave it back into the hands of the captain of our guard, at the same time remarking that the passport was a good one, but that, as I was found in company with the enemies of New Mexico, he should detain me until he could learn farther of my intentions. My companions had invariably assured me that I should be released immediately on having an interview with the governor; but by this time I had seen enough of the people of New Mexico, and heard enough of Armijo, to convince me that I need not look for justice at his hands, and was therefore but little disappointed at the disposition he made of my case. After what we had heard of the

fellow, and his cruel barbarities, we felt in a measure satisfied on ascertaining that we were not to be shot upon the spot, and without a hearing.

After disposing of my case and passport thus summarily, Armijo gratuitously informed us that he was an honourable man and not an assassin, and, what was more, that he was a great warrior. Whatever doubts we might have entertained on this point, we did not see fit to express any at the time, and the fellow may have taken our silence for a tacit acknowledgment of our belief in his magnanimity and bravery. He next asked us which of our little party best understood the Spanish language, as he wanted one of us to accompany him as interpreter. At this question Lewis eagerly pressed forward, and after asserting that he could speak the language more fluently than any of his companions, at once proffered his services. He really was more fluent with Spanish than any of us, having resided many years in Chihuahua and other parts of Mexico. Armijo immediately ordered a mule for him to ride, and after his hands were untied he mounted the animal and rode in among his new associates. That up to this time he had acted in perfect good faith towards Colonel Cooke and the expedition, I have not the least doubt; but he now saw that he was completely in the power of men whom he understood thoroughly, and from whom he well knew he could expect neither mercy nor justice; he saw, too, that by betraying his former associates, those who had often befriended him, he might gain life and liberty, and for this he at once sundered all the holy ties of religion, honour, companionship, and patriotism. Not one of us suspected him at the time of other than honourable intentions, but after circumstances rendered his base treachery unquestionable.

Armijo now turned to Don Jesus, and in a pompous and bombastic tone ordered him to guard us safely back to San Miguel that night, as he wished to hold a conversation with us early on the ensuing morning.

"But they have already walked ten leagues to-day, your excellency, and are hardly able to walk all the way back to-night,"* was the answer of the fellow, who was thinking of his own personal convenience and comfort all the while.

"They are able to walk ten leagues more," retorted Armijo, with a stately wave of his hand. "The Texans are active and untiring people—I know them," he continued; "if one of them *pretends* to be sick or tired on the road, *shoot him down and bring me his ears!* Go!"

"Yes, your excellency," was the obsequious answer of the cringing Don Jesus, and with a flourish of trumpets the great General Armijo and his motley army now left us. As they filed by, in helter-skelter order, we noticed our former guide, the runaway Carlos, in the crowd. He was seated upon a mule, his arms and breast bandaged, and we afterward learned that he had been stabbed and severely wounded by a nephew of Armijo, for his supposed connexion with the Texan expedition.

The sun had ceased to tinge the highest tops of the eastern mountains ere the last stragglers and camp-followers of Armijo had trotted past us, and we were extremely tired and faint after our weary march of nearly thirty miles; yet this fellow, who in one breath told us he was "an honourable man," almost in the next ordered us back over the same rough and broken road with-

* The Spanish league lacks but a small fraction of being equal to three English miles.

out food or sleep! The penalty of failure was death, and to be certain that his orders had been strictly fulfilled, or perhaps to gratify his curiosity, he wished to see the *ears* of such of us as might fall by the roadside, unable to endure the excessive fatigue.

As if fearful of not having an opportunity to fulfil Armijo's last command, Don Jesus now rushed us back over the same ground at a more rapid pace than ever. I was not only weary and unwell by this time, but my lame ankle was so swollen and stiff, from the unusual exercise, that I could hardly drag it along; yet, determined that the honourable governor should see something of me in the morning besides my ears, I hired the privilege, at an exorbitant rate, of a seat on the donkey of one of the Mexicans, the owner to ride behind me. The poor, scraggy animal could not be more than eight hands high, and appeared hardly able to bear up under one full-grown man; yet the Mexican told me he was strong enough to carry two, and hurriedly helped me to mount a miserable apology for a saddle strapped loosely to the back of the donkey. Possessing all the perverseness and obstinacy, and up to all the tricks of his race, he still allowed a perfect stranger, not only to him but his kind, to mount in quietness. Not so when his owner undertook the task of bestriding him; for no sooner had he placed his hands on the donkey's hip joints, in the act of springing to his perch behind me, than the animal kicked violently up—landing him several yards in the rear, flat upon his back, while the same movement hoisted me skyward in a line as straight as a rocket. Although extremely poor in flesh, I still had specific gravity enough to bring me down; and while in the act of descending directly upon the haunches of the ass, another kick-up gave me another

hoist in the air. I fortunately made the ground in my second descent, without sustaining the least personal injury. Gloomy as were our prospects, my companions could not resist the temptation to laugh heartily at my ludicrous exhibition of ground and lofty tumbling, and I even took a part myself in the merry outbreak when I ascertained that I was unhurt.

The road between Santa Fé and San Miguel is rough and uneven, running over hills, and crossing deep gullies.* Bad as it was, however, and faint and tired as we were, we reached a small prairie within six miles of the latter place about midnight. The heavens now became suddenly overcast; and a dark thunder cloud soon rendered it impossible for, even our guard to see the way any farther. Just as the shower commenced falling a halt was called, and lying upon the ground without blankets, and in the midst of a tremendous rain, we slept sound till morning.

A walk, or rather a hobble of two hours, for we were so stiff and foot-sore that we could not walk, brought us once more to the plaza or public square of San Miguel. The place was now literally filled with armed men—a few regular troops being stationed immediately about the person of Armijo, while more than nine tenths of the so-called soldiers were miserably deficient in every military appointment. A sergeant's guard of the regular troops was immediately detailed to take charge of our little party, and after bidding adieu to Don Jesus, as we hoped forever, we were marched to a small room adjoining the soldiers' quartel. This room fronted on the plaza, and had a small window looking out in that

* This road, I believe, was made at the expense of the St. Louis traders, and is the only part of the long route between Independence and Santa Fé upon which any work has been done or money expended.

direction; but the only entrance was from a door on the side. Sentinels were immediately placed at the little window and door, leading us to suppose that this was to be our regular prison-house; but we had scarcely been there ten minutes before a young priest entered at the door, and said that one of our party was to be immediately shot! While gazing at each other with looks of eager inquiry, wondering that one was to be shot and not all, and while each one of us was earnestly and painfully speculating on the question which of his fellows Armijo had singled out for a victim, the young priest raised himself on tiptoe, and looking over our heads, pointed through the windows of our close and narrow prison. We hurriedly turned our eyes in that direction, and were shocked at seeing one of our men, his hands tied behind his back, while a bandage covered his eyes, led across the plaza by a small guard of soldiers. Who the man was we could not ascertain at the time, but that he was one of the Texans was evident enough from his dress. The priest said that he had first been taken prisoner, that while attempting to escape he had been retaken, and was now to suffer death. A horrible death it was, too! His cowardly executioners led him to a house near the same corner of the square we were in, not twenty yards from us, and after heartlessly pushing him upon his knees, with his head against the wall, six of the guard stepped back about three paces, and at the order of the corporal *shot the poor fellow in the back!* Even at that distance the executioners but half did their barbarous work; for the man was only wounded, and lay writhing upon the ground in great agony. The corporal stepped up, and with a pistol ended his sufferings by shooting him through the heart. So close was the pistol that the