

*Texans!*" were heard on every side, and these were followed by discharges of musketry, ringing of bells, blowing of trumpets, and such music as may be produced by cracked mandolins and rickety fiddles when execrably played upon. A *Te Deum* was in the mean while sung in the church, a short distance from the plaza, and the guardian saint of the place, San Miguel, with all his finery, feathers, and wings, was dragged from his resting-place to take part in the show. Fandangoes were got up in the different houses on the plaza, a drunken poet was staggering about singing his own hastily-made-up verses in praise of Armijo, taking his pay, probably, in liquor—all went perfectly mad, and spent the night in revel, riot, and rejoicing. A grim, swarthy sentinel, with a face hideously ugly, was stationed directly in front of the little porch where we had cast our weary limbs. As if to add to the general din, he howled forth the dismal "*Centinela alerta!*"\* every ten minutes during the night, and his cry appeared to be the signal for some six or eight others, stationed in different parts of the plaza, to join in the doleful chorus. This startling watchword I thought the most discordant, grating, and hideous sound that had ever greeted my ears. Drawled out to a distressing length by a voice hoarse, cracked, and scarcely human, and then caught up in different parts of the square by men who appeared emulous of making a still more doleful and wo-begone noise, and I, all the while, ignorant of its import—what with all these hellish orgies and cabalistic sounds in our ears, and with all the startling and horrible incidents of the day in our minds, it may be imagined that we slept but little that night.

The shouting, firing, ringing, dancing and carousing

\* Sentinel, be on the look-out, or alert.

were kept up until morning; and why? Because some fifteen hundred or two thousand cowardly wretches had succeeded in capturing ninety-four half-starved Texans—not by the intervention of battle or military strategy, but by the blackest piece of treachery to be found on record.

## CHAPTER XV.

*New Quarters.*—Our Party taken before Armijo.—Reception by that Functionary.—His bombastic Account of the Soldiers of New Mexico.—Again taken to Prison.—Appearance of Armijo.—Description of our Prison.—Overrun with Chinchies.—The Family next Door.—The Zapatero's Wife.—A singular Custom.—The Señora Francisca abandons her Paint.—Dress of the Females of New Mexico.—Its Scantiness.—Freaks of Fashion.—Description of the Reboso and Mantilla.—Beauties of the Women of Mexico.—Kindness of the Girls of San Miguel.—Colonel Cooke's Men marched through San Miguel.—Lieutenant Lubbock's Account of the Surrender.—Agency of Lewis in the Affair.—Change of Quarters.—Prison Occupations.—Manner of passing our Time.—Chances of an Escape canvassed.—Arrival of Caravans from the United States.—We are not permitted Conversation with our Countrymen.—A seasonable Supply of Luxuries.—The Author assured of his personal Release.—A Mexican Loafer.—Tomas Bustamente—Employ him as our principal Agent.—Thomas Rowland—His Release from Arrest.—Bustamente sent on a Mission to Lewis—Its unsuccessful Result.—Thoughts upon Pipes.—Bustamente's Trickery found out.—Confidence lost in the Man.—Come to the Conclusion that the Mexicans will bear watching.

On the morning which followed the night described in the last chapter, we were taken to new quarters in another part of the town, where a small room was provided for our prison. We had barely time to examine our new quarters before the governor sent a guard to escort us to his lodgings at the priest's house. On being brought before him we found the great man surrounded by his principal officers, both military and

civil, and from their obsequious manner it was evident enough that Armijo's power was supreme.

The governor did not rise as we entered his room, but still waved his hand with great natural dignity and politeness, and bade us good-morning with a frankness and cordiality which he well knew how to assume. Remarking that he was aware, from our appearance and Howland's declarations, of our being *caballeros*, or gentlemen, in our own country, he ordered his officers to make room for us on the different boxes and trunks scattered about the room. He then asked several questions in relation to General McLeod and his party, said that he was going immediately with all his force to meet him, and that if the Texans resisted every one of them would be killed. He next spoke of the strength of New Mexico, its great resources, the prowess and daring bravery of himself and the resistless soldiers under his command, and drew such a ludicrous picture, and relieved it with such a tissue of bombastic fanfaronade, that we could hardly maintain our gravity. If we had not met and seen the brave soldiers of whom he spoke, his words might have gone for something; but the whole of them had passed in review before us, and

"Such a tattered host of mounted scarecrows,  
So bare, so withered, famished in the march,  
That their executors, the greedy crows,  
Flew hovering o'er their heads, impatient for  
Their lean inheritance!"

In short, such a motley, half-naked, ill-appointed set of ragamuffins constituted his army, that we could with difficulty believe that the great Armijo was not quizzing us in his grandiloquent description.

After a little commonplace conversation, Armijo next gave special directions to the old *alcalde* of San

Miguel that we should be well treated, that all our wants should be provided for, and that no one could insult or impose upon us without incurring his most fierce and vindictive wrath. He then dismissed us, remarking, as we were leaving the room, that if one of us attempted to escape during his absence life should be the forfeit.

We were then marched back to our new quarters, and a very small guard placed over us—a guard we could at any time have seized upon, tied neck and heels, and locked in our own prison. Scarcely had we returned to our *carcel* before a blast from one of Armijo's trumpets announced his immediate departure; and ere the sounds had died away, the great man and his followers dashed past us, evidently going some hundred yards out of his way for no other purpose than to give us one more opportunity of seeing him. His appearance was certainly imposing, even unto magnificence. On this occasion he was mounted on a richly-caparisoned mule, of immense size and of a beautiful dun colour. In stature Armijo is over six feet, stout and well built, and with an air decidedly military. Over his uniform he now wore a *poncho* of the finest blue broadcloth, wrought with various devices in gold and silver, and through the hole in the centre peered the head to which the inhabitants of New Mexico are compelled to bow in fear and much trembling. Armijo is certainly one of the best-appearing men I met in the country, and were he not such a cowardly braggart, and so utterly destitute of all moral principle, is not wanting in the other qualities of a good governor.

On his departure, San Miguel, which ordinarily contained some two or three hundred able-bodied men, was left with scarcely a dozen, he having dragged

away with him every one old and active enough to carry a lance or bow and arrow, in the direction of the great prairie, to meet the force under General McLeod.

The room assigned us as a prison was immediately adjoining the little *adobe* church of San Miguel, with its small belfry and clear-sounding bell, and its rude turret surmounted by a large wooden cross. Had this room not been completely overrun with *chinchés*, which, when night came, issued from every crack and crevice in the walls in myriads, it would have been very comfortable. Our guard was soon on the most sociable terms with us, allowing us to sit in front of our door, and kindly doing any little errand which might add to our limited stock of comforts. In the room adjoining ours, the two doors not being four yards apart, lived a Mexican family, the head of which was a *zapatero*, or shoemaker. His wife was a young, chatty, well-formed woman, and had not one side of her face been marked by a large, ugly red spot, would have been exceedingly comely. Two thirds, at least, of the women we had seen were more or less disfigured by these deep-red marks; and we could not but think that nature, in this mountain climate, had dealt unkindly with them. Not for one moment did it occur to us that these red blotches, which frequently gave the countenance an expression absolutely hideous, had been placed there by other than the partial fingers of nature. I knew that fancy frequently led the votaries of fashion to strange and most unseemly lengths, but I could not believe that in her wildest caprice she had instituted such revolting adornments for "the human face divine."

On the following morning, it appeared to us that the mark on the face of our female neighbour had changed

its position. Not a little did we marvel at this; for all were sure the spot had been on the opposite cheek the day before, and still we could not believe that it was other than a mark she had carried from her birth. Early on the third morning she appeared before us with a face not only fair, but very pretty—not a spot or blemish to be discovered. At first we did not recognise her, but on inquiring, we found that all the spots which had so much disfigured her had been placed there by herself, the juice of some red berry being used for the purpose. We told the Señora Francisca that she looked much better *plain*, and without those extraneous ornaments, and after this she *beautified* herself no more. The custom is universal among the females of New Mexico, and when there is no weed or berry that furnishes a deep-red tint, they use vermilion, or even a reddish clay. How they can imagine that these vile marks improve their appearance it is difficult to conceive, and the fact can only be accounted for upon the principle that there is no accounting for taste. The belles of New Mexico appear to be ignorant of the aphorism that "beauty when unadorned is adorned the most."

The dress worn by the females of Northern Mexico, in fact all over the country, is a cotton or linen chemise and a blue or red short woollen petticoat—frequently, among the more wealthy, the latter is made of a gaudy, figured merino, imported expressly for the purpose. These simple articles of raiment are usually made with no little degree of neatness, the chemise, in particular, being in many cases elaborately worked with flowers and different conceits, while the edges are tastefully decorated with ruffles or laces, if it lies within the power of the wearer to procure them. On first entering

the country, the Anglo-Saxon traveller, who has been used to see the gentler sex of his native land in more full, and perhaps I should say more becoming costume, feels not a little astonished at the Eve-like and scanty garments of the females he meets; he thinks that they are but half dressed, and wonders how they can have the indelicacy, or, as he would deem it at home, brazen impudence, to appear before him in dishabille so immodest. But he soon learns that it is the custom and fashion of the country—that, to use a common Yankee expression, the women “don’t know any better.” He soon looks, with an eye of some leniency, at such little deficiencies of dress as the absence of a gown, and is not long in coming to the honest conclusion, as the eye becomes more weaned from the fastidiousness of early habit and association, that a pretty girl is quite as pretty without as with that garment. By-and-by, he is even led to think that the dress of the women, among whom fate, business, or a desire to see the world may have thrown him, is really graceful, easy—ay, becoming: he next wonders how the females of his native land can press and confine, can twist and contort themselves out of all proportion, causing the most gracefully-curving lines of beauty to become straight and rigid, the exquisite undulations of the natural form to become flat or angular, or conical, or jutting, and all in homage to a fickle and capricious goddess—a heathen goddess, whose worshippers are Christians! He looks around him, he compares, he deliberates—the result is altogether in favour of his new-found friends.

Among the Mexican women, young and old, corsets are unknown, and, by a majority of them, probably unheard of. I travelled nearly seven hundred miles through the country, without seeing a single gown—all

the females were dressed in the same style, with the same *abandon*. The consequence any one may readily imagine: the forms of the gentler sex obtain a roundness, a fulness, which the divinity of tight lacing never allows her votaries. The Mexican belles certainly have studied, too, their personal comfort in the costume they have adopted, and it is impossible to see the prettier of the dark-eyed *señoras* of the northern departments without acknowledging that their personal appearance and attractions are materially enhanced by the *negligé* style. Moore’s beautiful lines to Nora Creina appear to apply especially to the Mexican girls, for their dress certainly leaves

“— every beauty free  
To sink or swell as Heaven pleases.”

But by all this the reader must not understand that the traveller sees no full-dressed ladies in Mexico. In the great city of the Montezumas, in fact in all the larger towns where foreigners and French milliners have settled, he sees them habited after the fashion of his own land, although he cannot but notice that a large portion of those so attired feel constrained and ill at ease under the infliction. I have seen, in one of the larger cities, a lady with the body and sleeves of a fashionable frock hanging dangling at her back, without even attempting to conceal what many would call a gross departure from all rules and reasons.\*

\* Since my return to the United States I have been informed, by traders who have visited Santa Fé, that many of the women of that place have adopted the *tunica*, or gown. The fashion was first introduced, as is almost invariably the case, by a French woman. Her name was Madame Tule, or Toulouse, or something of the kind. How she happened to stray so far from comfort and civilization as Santa Fé, or by what road she reached it, is a matter of which I am ignorant; I only know that she visited the place, opened a monte, or gambling-house, and set the fashion of dress to the belles. The traders, as a matter of policy, favoured the introduction, as it afforded them a more ready market for the sale of silks, satins, and calicoes. By nearly the same means the fashion has spread as far as Chihuahua.

Bonnets are never worn, either by rich or poor, high or low; but in their stead the *mantilla* and *reboso*, more especially the latter, are in general use among all classes. The latter is a species of long, narrow scarf, made of cotton, and in a majority of cases figured with two colours only, blue and white. These indispensable articles in the toilet of the Mexican female serve not only the uses of parasol and bonnet, but also of shawl, veil, and workbag. The manner of wearing them is extremely graceful—sometimes upon the head, at others over the shoulders, and again round the waist, with the ends hanging across the arms; in the streets they are worn almost invariably over the head, and so archly and coquettishly does the fair Mexican draw the *reboso* around her face, that the inquisitive beholder is frequently repaid with no other than the sight of a dark and lustrous eye peering out from amid its folds.

The ends of the *reboso* are frequently used as an apron, to carry any little articles that cannot be held in the hands, and seldom is a female seen without one of them, from the extreme north of Mexico to its southernmost boundaries. From childhood it is worn, and long habit has so accustomed them to its use that it is not laid aside when engaged in common household labour.

It is really surprising with what facility the Mexican females perform their household duties encumbered by this garment. An American lady would as easily manage her affairs with her hands tied behind her back as with the *reboso* about her, yet it is never in the way of the Mexican. The *mantilla* resembles it in many respects, but is made of finer material, rather wider, and worn more among the fashionables in the larger cities. An extremely beautiful ornament it is, too, when worn with that peculiar grace which no other than the lady of Spanish origin can affect.

The more striking beauties of the women of Northern Mexico are their small feet, finely-turned ankles, well-developed busts, small and classically formed hands, dark and lustrous eyes, teeth of beautiful shape and dazzling whiteness, and hair of that rich and jetty blackness peculiar to the Creole girls of Louisiana, and some of the West India islands. Generally their complexions are far from good, the mixture of Spanish and Indian blood giving a sallow, clayish hue to their skin; neither are their features comely, although frequently a face may be met with which might serve as a perfect model of beauty. But then they are joyous, sociable, kind-hearted creatures almost universally, liberal to a fault, easy and naturally graceful in their manners, and really appear to have more understanding than the men. Had we fallen into the hands of the women instead of the men, our treatment would have been far different while in New Mexico.

During our tedious and annoying confinement at San Miguel, we were visited by every girl in the town, and from the *ranchos* in the vicinity. Each time they brought us some little delicacy to eat; and if ever men came near being killed with kindness, we were the victims. One party would arrive with a dish of *chile guisado*, an olla podrida, or hash of stewed mutton, strongly seasoned with red pepper, and really excellent when well made. Scarcely would this party leave us before another would come in, bringing *atole* and *miel*; others milk, eggs, tortillas, or bread. Of all these different dishes we were obliged to partake, or wound the feelings of our kind-hearted friends; and the consequence was, that we were frequently compelled to swallow a dozen meals a day for the first week or two of our imprisonment. That we did fair justice to