

a good run of luck at dealing *monte*, he amassed no inconsiderable fortune, and as his ambition now led him to learn to read and write, the foundation of his future influence and greatness among his timid and ignorant countrymen was substantially laid.

As it would fill a volume to trace all Armijo's steps, I will at once jump from the sheep-folds of Chavez and the monte table, and take him up again after he had been appointed *Administrador de Rentas*, or principal custom-house officer at Santa Fé, in the year 1837. It is proper to mention that, during this hiatus, somewhere between the years 1825 and 1830, he had been, by a federal appointment under the old territorial laws, clothed with the executive authority in New Mexico, and that his short administration was signalized by acts of cruelty and reckless injustice. In consequence of some misdemeanor, he was soon deposed from his place at the head of the customs by the then governor, Don Albino Perez, and another person was appointed in his stead.

The effects of the central form of government were now just beginning to be felt in this isolated department of Mexico, and the people were beginning to manifest no inconsiderable discontent at the new order of things. Armijo, perceiving that there was now a chance, not only to signalize himself, but to reap a rich harvest of revenge against his enemies then in power, took advantage of this feeling by secretly fomenting a conspiracy. An insurrection was soon in agitation, and early in August, 1837, a heterogeneous force, numbering more than one thousand men, among whom were a large number of *pueblos*, or town Indians, assembled at La Cañada, a village about twenty-five miles north of the capital. Governor Perez conducted a small force against the in-

surgers; but a majority of his men went over at the outset, leaving him with only twenty-five personal friends to contend with odds the most fearful. A slight skirmish told the story: one of his men was killed, two were wounded, while the rest fled precipitately towards Santa Fé. The insurgents pursued them to the city, from which they were obliged to flee; but they were captured the next day, and fourteen of them, including all the officers of state, were most inhumanly put to death. Among the slain were three brothers named Abreu: Governor Perez was also butchered in the suburbs of Santa Fé, his head cut off, and kicked about the streets by the populace. His body remained where it had fallen, a prey to the vultures and wolves, no friend daring to offer it sepulture!

Shrewdly conjecturing, now that he had raised a whirlwind, that he might easily direct the storm to his own personal advancement, Armijo, after the manner of his great prototype, Santa Anna, suddenly left his hacienda and made his appearance at Santa Fé. There he found everything in a state of frightful anarchy—the place in the hands of an ignorant mob, and the American and other foreign merchants in hourly expectation that their houses and stores would be sacked, and even their lives taken. The rabble dispersed, however, committing no other outrage than electing one of their own leaders, an ignorant and unlettered fellow named José Gonzalez, governor of New Mexico. They paid no attention to the claim set up by Armijo, the fomenter, as he had exposed himself in no way to the anticipated hard blows and knocks which had given them the ascendancy.

Foiled in his ambition, Armijo once more retired to his hacienda, a fine estate he had purchased at Albu-

querque with the proceeds of his cheating, stealing, and gambling transactions. But an active and ambitious mind like his could not long remain inert. Through secret intrigues, he managed, after the lapse of three or four months, to organize a counter-revolution, and collecting a numerous force, he declared in favour of Federalism, and marched towards Santa Fé. He took quiet possession of this place, as Governor Gonzalez, finding himself without an army, had fled to the north. The latter was soon enabled, however, to rally around him no inconsiderable mob; but Armijo, in the mean time, had received heavy re-enforcements from the south, and succeeded in routing Gonzalez without loss, taking him and many of his principal men prisoners. The unfortunate governor was immediately shot, and four of his chief officers met with the same fate by order of Armijo. The latter were put out of the way more, it is said, to prevent disclosures than for any crime they had committed; for they had been Armijo's confidential emissaries in the formation of his original plot.

The ambitious tyrant, now that his enemies were either murdered or dispersed, reigned supreme in New Mexico. One of his first steps was to bribe the army to proclaim him governor and commander-in-chief; his next, to send off a highly-coloured account of his own exploits in favour of Federalism to the city of Mexico, and no officer can more adroitly adopt the high-sounding fanfaronade style in wording a despatch or an address than Manuel Armijo. Such disinterested patriotism, such love of the confederacy, and such daring bravery as he had manifested could not go unrewarded, and a return of post from Mexico brought documents confirming him in his station of governor, with

the additional title of colonel of cavalry. The sheep-thief is now rising in the world!

The year 1838 passed off without any event of great importance—Armijo still governor, and ruling his vassals with a rod of iron. In the early part of 1839, without a shadow of law or authority, he deposed all the custom-house officers and appointed his own brother and his other creatures in their stead, in order that he might have the exclusive control and management of the customs in his own hands. He next, without regard to the federal tariff, established an arbitrary duty upon all merchandise entering from the United States—\$500 upon each wagon-load, without reference to the quality of the goods it might contain, or their value. To some of the traders, whose wagons happen to be heavily laden with the finer kinds of merchandise, this singular imposition is exceedingly favourable; while to others, with light or not valuable loading, it is equally oppressive.

From the material which I have at hand, I could give a connected detail of weekly acts of cruel injustice and most glaring partiality. Fénelon's graphic picture of a bad ruler has a living and faithful counterpart in the present governor of New Mexico. Foreigners are the especial objects of his hatred; and acts and decisions affecting the well-being of his whole province are as often founded upon a feeling of hatred towards a small class, or, perhaps, some luckless individual who has excited his jealousy or fallen under the ban of his most unaccountable caprice, as upon a sentiment of justice and necessity. Still oftener do his acts of public administration have their source in some private advantage to which he has a single eye—it may be in the furthering of some libertine and lustful scheme that

would disgrace the veriest roué in Christendom. Still, there is not that overt demonstration of malice towards foreigners that he daily makes towards his own cringing and servile countrymen. He is afraid of Anglo-Saxon blood, and he seeks to spill it by protecting the knife of the secret assassin, or by influencing, to most outrageous decisions, his farcical courts of law. Not unfrequently do his own lusty sinews find congenial employment, in the open streets of Santa Fé, in wielding the cane and cudgel about the ears of his native subjects, and never yet has one been found bold enough to strike back. He raps them over the sconce with more impunity, because with vastly less sentiment, than did Hamlet the grinning scull of "poor Yorick."

Out of a multiplicity I will record two anecdotes, in order to illustrate his system of righting wrongs. The first came near resulting in a serious quarrel between the American residents and the governor, and the difficulty was only avoided by the latter abandoning his objectionable ground. An American named Daley was wantonly murdered at the gold mines near Santa Fé, by two ruffians engaged in robbing a store which he was keeping at that place. The murderers, through the energy of foreigners, were soon apprehended, and fully convicted of the crime; but as they were Mexicans, and had only shed the blood of a heretic, were permitted to go unwhipped of justice. In July, 1839, these murderers were again arrested through the interposition of the Americans, and a second time brought to Santa Fé for trial. The friends of the murdered man now drew up a petition to the governor, in the most decorous language, praying him to mete out full justice to the assassins. Armijo, although he knew full well the justice of their prayer, affected to believe it a

threat against his authority and government—a conspiracy! Upon this pretence he immediately collected all the militia he could raise, and made preparations for one of his bravado demonstrations. The Americans, convinced that no justice could be expected from a tyrant so unprincipled, and fully understanding the "bluffing game" he had resorted to, at once, with characteristic spirit, prepared to defend themselves. Their firmness and cool determination frightened the cowardly governor and induced him to send them an apologetical communication, in which he protested that he had entirely misconstrued the petition, and that their just request should have due attention.

In the year 1840, I think on the first day of January, two most respectable foreigners had the misfortune to kill a Mexican lad by the accidental discharge of one of their guns. They were returning to Santa Fé from the gold mines when the unfortunate accident occurred, and brought the body of the boy into town and at once reported the circumstance to the authorities. The principal alcalde consulted with Armijo as to the steps he should take, and the decision was, without form of trial, that the unfortunate foreigners should be put in prison and held responsible for murder, unless they could *prove themselves innocent!* This is a very common instance of the manner in which the potentate administers justice. But there was something in this case so palpably unjust, in the eyes of those who knew the men and the facts, as once more to call out such manifestations of public disapprobation as induced him to retract so outrageous a sentence.

In the early part of February, 1840, a concurrence of two or three acts of most wanton injustice, conceived in cupidity and lust, came near resulting in revolution.

Armijo is an extensive merchant, and it becomes a part of his policy to pay off the public dues in his own merchandise at most enormous profits. When it is remembered that he is at once governor, commander-in-chief, legislator, custom-house officer, auditor, treasurer, and judge, the practicability of this policy becomes apparent. Public creditors can get no money from the treasury because it is always bankrupt, or at least so represented, notwithstanding the custom-house receipts on importations are more than enough to pay the army, to which purpose they are especially set apart. On the occasion alluded to, some twenty regular soldiers, stationed at Santa Fé, were thrown into prison and loaded with irons as malecontents for refusing to receive their wages in corn from Armijo's granary at four dollars a *fanega*—a measure containing about two bushels—when they could purchase in market for cash at one third of the price. This outrageous act of tyranny created an unwonted excitement against its author, so much so, that he found it necessary to resort to a specious kind of trickery, a display of disinterestedness, to allay the popular clamour. He advertised a contract to the lowest bidder, to furnish the soldiers with corn. But this Mexican display of honesty neither deceived nor satisfied even his stupid countrymen; for they at once declared that no one but Armijo could take the contract at any price, as the insolvent government never paid any creditor but him. Thus the matter remained just as it had begun, and just as this most patriotic governor intended it should, with this exception—the manifestations of discontent became more open and threatening. Two young officers of the army, in particular, had fallen under the ban of the governor's displeasure before, and were now suspected of having used their influence in

fomenting the disaffection that seemed universal among the soldiers. His hatred of these young and meritorious officers had its origin in an *affaire d'amour*, which, as it exhibits a new phase in the multiplex character of Armijo—multiplex in all that is corrupt and debasing—I will here relate.

Don Santiago Abreu,* a minister in the administration of Governor Perez, and massacred in the former revolution, left a handsome, and, in such advantages as her country afforded, an accomplished daughter, Doña Soledad Abreu; a maiden whom fifteen summers had ripened into early womanhood. After Armijo's elevation, he insidiously beset the fair doncella with libertine intentions; but she proudly and scornfully resisted all his advances, fortified not more, perhaps, by a sentiment of intrinsic virtue than by the inveterate hatred she entertained for the governor. She knew that he had been the mortal enemy of her father—the undoubted instigator of his assassination—such a miscreant could find little favour with the pretty Soledad. But this great man was not to be so easily foiled, and attempted by intrigue what he had failed to accomplish in a direct way. He influenced a match between Doña Soledad and Esquipulas Caballero, one of his ensigns, and in the plenitude of his good-nature honoured their nuptials by officiating as sponsor at the ceremony.

He now renewed his vile importunities, and, as he supposed, with better prospect of success. He held, in a manner, the destiny of the young officer in his hands; but in every attempt to accomplish his unholy object he was most signally baffled. The maiden and the wife proved alike invulnerable to his solicitations and his

* I believe that this man was governor of New Mexico about the year 1832.

threats. At last, convinced of the impregnable virtue of Soledad, he gave up the pursuit, and began making good the deep oaths of vengeance he had often sworn. Her he could not reach directly, but he found means to degrade her unoffending husband and her favourite uncle, who was also a young ensign in his army, named Ramon Baca. Ordering a grand review of the troops, with no other intention than to humble these young cadets, he publicly promoted to a rank above them several officers of inferior grade—a most galling slight in the eyes of a young military aspirant, and a kind of vengeance worthy only of the great Armijo. He even promoted, from the rank of common soldier to a grade above them, a fellow who had been an agent and pander in many of his licentious transactions. The young officers, who were the most deserving and meritorious in the whole corps, now finding themselves at the tail of the army, presented a respectful petition to his excellency, praying to be reinstated. This so irritated the tyrant, that he threatened them with instant death if they ever ventured to molest him again with similar importunities, and Caballero, the husband of the pretty Soledad, upon affected suspicion of favouring the disaffected soldiers, was cast into prison with them and heavily ironed!

Baca, upon some frivolous charge, was ordered out of the country. The 9th of February was the day fixed by the governor for his banishment; but when the time came the young man declared to his friends that he would not depart, but would raise an insurrection and sacrifice his and their oppressor, or perish in the attempt. With a sword at his side he promenaded the streets of Santa Fé during the forenoon, with great boldness walked directly under Armijo's windows and

held conferences with the soldiers. Without a friend to inform him of the young officer's intention, Armijo remained in utter ignorance of the plot; yet the inhabitants were all aware of the intended revolution, and anxiously awaited an outbreak they deemed inevitable. But the good fortune of the despot did not desert him in this extremity. Had a single blow been struck, his power and his oppressions would have ended; for, whenever the star of his destiny tends downward, it will gravitate with a velocity vastly accelerated by the universal hatred in which he is held by his subjects; but when called upon by the heroic Baca the soldiers at first hesitated, and then declared that they would render him no assistance. They had promised to aid, to join him; but either from lack of confidence in him as a leader, or from craven fear of Armijo, they were deterred from an open demonstration. Thus was this embryo revolution, which gave such excellent promise, crushed through the timidity of a handful of soldiers.

In the afternoon, young Baca mounted his horse, and riding to the barracks, made a short speech to his brethren in arms. It was a farewell address, couched in decorous terms, and at its conclusion the really gallant officer departed on his exile. But by this time Armijo had obtained information of the contemplated revolt, and immediately sent off a detachment of dragoons with orders to bring back the young officer, dead or alive. He was overtaken, and thinking himself betrayed by the soldiery, quietly gave up his arms, was guarded back to Santa Fé, and thrust into the same dungeon with his friend Caballero. At first it was thought that Armijo would order them to immediate execution; but fearing the populace, among whom they had so many friends, he finally sent them off to the city

of Mexico to be tried for treason, himself to furnish all the proof. The father of young Caballero, a brave and meritorious officer, but broken down by age and dissipation, was carried to the door of Armijo to intercede for his son; but the tyrant denied him an audience. The shock was too much for the old man: he was borne to his home only to be carried thence to his grave, and his loss was much lamented by both foreigners and natives.

The young officers were released on reaching Chihuahua, and afterward visited the city of Mexico with the hope of obtaining redress. They were unable to effect anything, however, for by the time they were allowed a hearing the Texan expedition to New Mexico began to be agitated, and the aspect of affairs at Santa Fé was now too critical for the General Government to think of tampering with her tyrannical governor.

In his rude *palacio* at Santa Fé he is more the despot than anywhere else, maintaining himself proudly, and enforcing all the regal homage and courtly ceremonial exacted by the veriest tyrant. A guard, musket on shoulder, marches before the entrance to his door, denying entrance to all unless they have first obtained the royal permission. Should his excellency feel in the humour of walking out, the cry from the *centinela* is, "The governor and commander-in-chief appears!" and this is echoed and re-echoed from every guard in and about the barracks. When his majesty is in the street, each dutiful subject takes off whatever apology for a hat he may have on his head. Should the governor's wife, a gross, brazen-faced woman, issue from the building, the form is even more ridiculous, for then the cry of "*La gobernadora!*" or "*La comandante general!*" resounds on every side. This woman

is contaminated with every depraved habit known to human nature; and as her husband is a debauchee by "special prerogative," she does not scruple to act as his *alcahueta* in all his amours. In the mean time she is not without her own lovers—a worthy couple, truly!

It is strange how this man has been able to maintain his despotic and arbitrary sway among a people acknowledging no law but that of force. The inhabitants are far more dissatisfied with his administration than they were with that of Perez and his cabinet of Abreus; yet so far they have dared to do no more than plot revolutions against their oppressor. He continues to hold sway in a country where he has not a real friend upon whom he can depend; even his sycophantic favourites would prove his bitterest enemies were he once in adversity. Could the Texans have entered New Mexico in a body, with plenty of provisions, Armijo would have fled with his ill-gotten wealth, and the new-comers would have been hailed by all parties as deliverers.

I might diversify this hasty biography of Don Manuel Armijo, from the abundant material which I have yet by me unused, with stories of his atrocious acts that would bring a blush upon the brow of tyranny. I might detail many horrible murders which he has committed. I could relate many a thrilling story of his abuse of the rights of women, that would make Saxon hearts burn with indignant fire; for Saxon hearts enshrine the mothers of men as objects sacred and apart. I might speak of his conniving with the Apache Indians, in their robberies of his neighbours of the State of Chihuahua, by furnishing this hardy mountain tribe with powder and balls and guns, knowing that with them they would fall, like the eagle, from their fastnesses, upon his own countrymen. I could give a catalogue of men's

names whom he has banished from their own families and homes, for no reason but because they were in his way. Assassinations, robberies, violent debauchery, extortions, and innumerable acts of broken faith are themes upon which I am armed with abundant and most veritable detail; but my readers would sicken, and my narrative leads me another way. A few remarks and I have done with him.

The mien and deportment of Armijo are not ill calculated to strike a timorous people with awe; for, as I have before remarked, he is a large, portly man, of stern countenance and blustering manner. Not one jot or tittle of personal bravery does he possess, but is known to be a most arrant coward. In all the revolutions that have taken place since he first courted power, his own person has never been exposed, if we except one instance. In a skirmish with some Indians he received a wound in the leg, from which he still limps; but the action was not of his own seeking, and his conduct on this occasion was that of a man engaged in a business anything but to his liking. He has made great capital, however, of his crippled leg, and, like his great exemplar, Santa Anna, is determined that his subjects shall never forget that he received it while encountering their enemy. But the master-stroke of this great man was the capturing the Texan Santa Fé Expedition. These small squads of tattered soldiers, taken piecemeal, in his grandiloquent bulletin he multiplied into a legion of Buckramites—for which act of most heroic daring he was, all in good time, knighted by Santa Anna. He knows his people thoroughly, having studied their character with a most acute discernment. A common remark of his is, "*Vale mas estar tomado por valiente que serlo*"—it is better to be thought brave

than really to be so—and thus, by blustering and swaggering, he keeps the timid natives in subjection.

It may be thought singular that no attention is paid to Armijo's tyranny by the general government; but his policy is only part of that which has obtained in many of the departments. In our own confederacy, we regard intelligence as the great bond of union; the reverse is the case in Mexico—a sufficient test to prove that the so-called Republic is no Republic at all. To General Manuel Armijo I will now bid adieu; but I cannot do it without again saying, that, however much he may be astonished at seeing his portrait thus taken, he cannot urge a single syllable against its fidelity.

CHAPTER XVII.

Unrealized Hopes.—A Brood of unhatched Chickens.—We are quartered with our Companions.—Arrival of "Old Paint."—Joy at seeing the Veteran.—Another Meeting with Friends.—Stories of Suffering.—Liberated Prisoners again confined.—Armijo and Lewis.—Departure for the City of Mexico.—A long and gloomy March before us.—The Brute Salezar in Command.—Bustamente and the Women of San Miguel.—Causes of the Failure of the Santa Fé Expedition.—Arrival at a deserted Mission.—Sufferings of the Prisoners from Cold.—More of Salezar's Brutalities.—The dreary March continued.—Arrival at Pino's Rancho.—Farther Sufferings.—A cold Camping-ground.—Hard Fare.—Frostbitten Feet.—Horrible Threat of Salezar.—San Domingo.—Kindness of the Women.—San Felipe.—First Sight of the Rio Grande.—Algodones.—A Second "Black Hole of Calcutta."—Arrival at the Indian Village of Sandia.—A singular Rite.—Description of the Inhabitants.—Alameda.—Scene in an Oven.—Misery makes us acquainted with strange Bedfellows.—Sufferings on the Increase.—Bottoms of the Rio Grande; their Fertility.—Albuquerque in Sight.—Heron and Wild Geese.—A dashing Mexican Horseman.—Lieutenant Hornsby abducted.—Arrival at Albuquerque.—The Family of Armijo.—Farther Kindness of the Women.—General Pike's Journal.—The Pretty Girl of Albuquerque.

I AWOKE on the morning of the 17th of October with full confidence that I had passed my last night in prison.