

oners, by long starvation and great bodily suffering; and now, as the savage who had charge of them tossed the miserable pittance in the air, it was a study to watch their eager faces as it descended, to see with what wolf-like ferocity they would rush to secure the prize, and the terrible struggle which was sure to ensue ere some one, stronger than his fellows, could secure it. Salezar was accompanied by our old acquaintance, Don Jesus, in this distribution; and the satisfaction with which they watched the fierce conflicts marked a new leaf in the dreadful chapter of human depravity.

This revolting scene was scarcely over before we were ordered to commence the day's march. Sore and stiff in every bone and joint, we started, many of the men being hardly able to hobble and halt along over the rough and rocky hills which now intervened between Pecos and the valley of the Rio Grande; but as the sun gradually dispersed the morning mists, and exercise warmed our limbs and reduced the stiffness in our joints, we were enabled to move with less pain. Our course was now nearly south. The road forks near Pecos, the right-hand branch leading directly towards Santa Fé, while the left, which we were now to take, is the regular thoroughfare towards Albuquerque and the other towns on the Rio Grande.

After a march of some thirty miles, during which the men suffered incredibly from hunger, thirst, and extreme lameness, night overtook us at the small rancho of a man named Pino, a brother of the brute of that name mentioned in a former chapter. Before reaching it, my feet were so badly swollen and blistered that I was obliged to draw off my boots, and finish the march with no other protection against the short and prickly grass than my stockings; yet many of my fellow-prisoners

were unfortunately worse off than myself, their feet bleeding at every step.

We were driven, one by one, into a cow-pen or yard, and there encamped for the night, Salezar distributing a pint cup of meal to each man after having satisfied himself that none of us were missing. Even in his mode of counting us he exhibited his characteristic brutality; for just as they drive sheep or cattle into pens in New Mexico, with the intention of enumerating them, so had he driven us!

A fence, which enclosed our pen, here partially protected us from the biting north wind, and in the early part of the night we were enabled to catch a little sleep. Towards morning, however, the weather changed to such a degree of coldness that farther repose was impossible—it was so cold that the frost was plainly visible on our thin blankets. So stiff and benumbed were the men by this time, from cold, want of sleep, and the excessive fatigue they had undergone, that even an order to rise at daybreak and continue the march was received with joy by all—it would at least enable us to obtain warmth, and lessen the acute pains we felt in every bone.

From Pino we learned that General McLeod, Mr. Navarro, Dr. Whittaker, Captains Houghton and Hudson, with two or three other officers, had passed the previous night at his rancho, and were provided with comfortable quarters. They had been sent forward one day in advance of the main body, on horseback, and as they were fortunate enough to fall into the hands of an officer of humane feeling, were well treated. The name of this officer, if I remember aright, was Quintana, and our friends who were under his charge always spoke of him as a kind-hearted, gentlemanly man.

A walk of two or three hours, after leaving the rancho, relieved our limbs of the torturing pains felt during the latter part of the night, but our frostbitten feet now began swelling and paining us severely. The road of the two previous days had led over mountains and rugged hills; we now struck upon the valley of a small stream running into the Rio Grande a short distance to our right. After a long and toilsome march, our men suffering at every step, we encamped upon the borders of the little stream for the night. Here we experienced great relief from bathing our inflamed and swollen feet in its cold waters.

After issuing to each man a miserable pittance of barley-bread, so hard that it was impossible to eat it without much boiling, Salezar told us that his orders from Armijo were to tie us every night; but, as we were very tired, his *humanity* prevented him from carrying out the orders! He placed a strong guard around us, however, and coolly remarked that if a single man was missing in the morning the *whole party* would be instantly shot! The heartless wretch took especial good care that none should make an attempt of this kind, by working the men so hard during the day that they willingly sank upon the ground at night with hardly the power of moving.

A biting, chilly evening was followed by a heavy frost towards morning. Sleep was out of the question—we could only curl up, and by nestling close to each other upon the cold ground, keep from freezing. At daylight we were ordered to be ready to march, and before sunrise were again upon the road, with nothing to eat. To let my readers know the horrible condition of our feet, I will here state, that, for the next ten days after this, I was unable to pull off my stockings without

bringing the skin with them. The large blisters would break during the day, and the exudation, as it dried, adhere firmly to my stockings, so that I was obliged to keep them on although full of gravel, and torturing me at every step. Many of my companions suffered much more from frostbitten feet than myself, their toe-nails coming off, in consequence, before we got through our journey.

At a brisk pace we were hurried forward, reaching the little village of Santo Domingo before it was yet noon, a distance of eighteen miles from our camping-ground of the previous night. At this village our men first had cause to thank the women for their kindness. The latter came running out of the mud houses in every direction, bringing tortillas, baked pumpkins, and dry ears of corn, and fairly shedding tears at our forlorn and miserable appearance. The corn was our principal food, and was swallowed after simply roasting the ears a short time before the fire, although many of the more hungry among our men ate it raw.

A little farther on, we entered the village of San Felipe, the banks of the Rio Grande now seen to the right. Our course was nearly south, occasionally approaching the banks of the river, and then leaving it as the turns threw us off. The women of San Felipe were in every way as charitable as those of Santo Domingo. Many of them openly reproached Armijo as a brute unfit to live, and even the men took every opportunity to manifest their sorrow that we had fallen into his hands.

Towards night we reached Algodnes, a small village near the Rio Grande, and here we encamped. That the night would be unusually cold we were well aware, and Mr. Van Ness was requested by the men

to ask Salezar if he could possibly procure shelter. Two small rooms, with a door leading from one to the other, and together hardly large enough for twenty men, were provided, and into these over one hundred and eighty of us were driven like so many sheep, and the heavy wooden door locked upon us. To lie down, or even sit down, was out of the question, and a scene of misery and desperation soon ensued which beggars description.

In the rear room there was no window, or other opening for a circulation of the air, except the door which opened into the front room, and this was blocked up by the mass who had crowded towards it. In the front room was a single open window, two feet in height, perhaps, by eighteen inches in width, and through this small aperture came all the fresh air that was to be inhaled by nearly two hundred persons! In this room, and within three yards of the window, I stood firmly wedged and jammed by human flesh, unable to move either forward or backward, to the right or to the left; yet even at this short distance from the window I soon felt sensations of suffocation—what, then, must have been the feelings of those in the farther room?

Soon outcries arose from those in the rear. Half stifled, they shouted aloud to those in front to break open or tear down the door, and madly pressed forward as if to assist in accomplishing the object of their wishes. In the mean time, those nearest the window, who could speak Spanish, begged the guard to open the door and allow at least a part to leave the house; but the latter either could not hear their entreaties above the din, or heeded them not. Half suffocated, and with sensations of sickness and giddiness, thoughts

of the Black Hole of Calcutta, with its attendant train of horrors, now came over us; and I am confident that an order for instant execution would have been preferred, by many, to passing the night in that dismal, dark, and horrible place. An attempt to open the door inwardly was now made, but so great was the press in that direction that it was found impossible to effect this desirable object; a battering-ram of human flesh was next brought to bear upon it, and with all the energy which desperation lends did our men endeavour to burst lock or hinges—but it gave not away. In the midst of cries, imprecations, and half-smothered anathemas, we now heard a key turning in the clumsy and ponderous lock—Salezar had consented to pass fifty of us out, but no more.

Being near the door, as the guard without opened it, I was carried out in the current among the first. How grateful, how instantaneous was the relief! Cold as was the northern blast, it was pure—we could now breathe. The guard escorted us to a cow-yard, and there herded us for the night. I crawled under the lee of a low mud wall, still reeking with the perspiration which had issued from every pore while undergoing the tortures of heat and suffocation—the cold wind penetrated my blanket and chilled me through, yet I was content. So piercing was the blast, that even our guard left their posts, and sought the friendly shelter of the neighbouring houses, yet we had neither the power nor inclination to attempt an escape. Huddled together under the walls, shivering with the cold and without a minute's sleep, we passed the hours until morning came; yet even for this poor boon we felt thankful—felt rejoiced that we had escaped the horrid tortures of suffocation.

On the 21st of October, Salezar giving us no other rations before starting than an ear of dry, hard corn to each man, we reached the large Indian village of San Dias. The *pueblos*, or town Indians of New Mexico, are by far the better part of the population—are frugal, industrious, and honest—cultivate the land, and are very kind-hearted and hospitable to all strangers. Their religion is Roman Catholic, mixed up with many of their own superstitious rites and ceremonies, and the same may be said of nearly all the inhabitants of New Mexico. The Indians certainly retain, to the present day, many of their original rituals, feasts, and ceremonies, having ingrafted such of the Romish rites only as were calculated to strike the eye by their imposing pageantry. Stories of their strange ceremonies I myself heard, while at Sandia and other towns upon our march, but one that was told General Pike is more singular than all. If this tale be true, it would seem that once a year there is a great feast, prepared for three successive days, which time is spent in eating, drinking, and dancing. Near this scene of amusement is a dismal, gloomy cave, into which not a glimpse of light can penetrate, and where places of repose are provided for the revellers. To this cave, after dark, repair grown persons, of every age and sex, who pass the night in indulgences of the most gross and sensual description. Such is the account given of one of their ceremonies, cloaking, under a religious guise, an indiscriminate commerce, which bears strong resemblance to some of the mystic revels of the ancients.

At Sandia the population came out in a body to see us, and during a short halt the women gave to each of our men a watermelon, besides apples, cakes, and, in fact, everything they could spare. A gray-

headed old man, who had been in St. Louis several times, and who spoke a little English, told us that the people were in our favour, and that Armijo was universally hated and despised. He would have said more, but our guard hurried us from the place. The dress of these people varies but little from that of the Mexicans; that of the men being a coarse cotton shirt and loose and flowing drawers of the same material, over which they draw a pair of leather or cloth pantaloons, open from the knee downward, and flapping about whenever they are in motion. The women—and, for Indian women, many of them had strong pretensions to beauty—were attired simply in a chemise and blue woollen petticoat.

The inhabitants cultivate the soil, live principally upon corn and pumpkins, and appear to be a simple, mild, and inoffensive people—not having the spirit to rise upon their cowardly oppressors. Their complexion is a light, clear brown, or copper; their limbs are symmetrical, and denoting great activity and strength, while their eyes are dark and piercing, yet possessing a singular mildness and an expression of resignation.

We should have remained a night at Sandia; but the policy of Salezar being to tire and worry us down to such a degree that there would be no possibility of our attempting an escape, we were barely allowed to pass some five minutes in the place. After a long and tedious march in the afternoon, many of our men nearly ready to drop from pain and exhaustion, we finally reached a little village called Alameda. Here we were penned in a large yard, without any protection from the cold. In the early part of the night I made out to catch a little sleep, but before midnight it was so cold that I rose, to find, if possible, a warmer location. I tried to crawl

into a large oven standing in the yard, but found it already occupied by two or three of my companions. Surely, misery not only makes us acquainted with strange bedfellows, but also with strange beds.

In the morning, and after we had each received our day's ration—a hard ear of corn—the tiresome march was continued. Passing through the fertile bottoms of the Rio Grande, the land on either side of the road covered with cornstalks from which the ears had but recently been plucked, about ten o'clock the still distant church of Albuquerque appeared in view. The land in the vicinity of this city appears to be under a higher degree of cultivation than in any other part of New Mexico. The inhabitants do not depend upon rain in making their crops, but, on the contrary, the entire valley appears intersected by irrigating canals, from which the waters drawn from the broad but shallow Rio Grande can at any time be let upon the earth. Among the stubble, on either side of the road, we noticed immense flocks of blue and white herons and wild geese, so exceedingly tame that we could approach within a few yards of them. The Mexicans seldom kill them, and hence their tameness.

We were yet some two or three miles distant from Albuquerque, journeying along at a rapid pace, when a single horseman was seen speeding across the fields and making directly towards us at a sweeping gallop. Soon he was up with the rear of the party, when checking his horse into a prancing canter, he politely raised his hat and with great cordiality addressed the prisoners as gentlemen while riding up the line towards the head. His horse was a beautiful black, of glossy skin, clean and well-made limbs, spirited eye, expanded nostrils, and proud and gallant action—the rider, a gay, dash-

ing, and handsome Mexican, dressed in a pair of green velvet trousers, slashed at the sides, and with a profusion of bell buttons, while his close, neatly-fitting jacket, although now somewhat faded and worn, showed him a fashionable blade among his countrymen, and altogether a different personage from the ragged rabble by whom we were surrounded. There was a flashing, dare-devil expression in his eye, too, and a jaunty set to his hat—and then he sat so fearlessly in his saddle while his proud steed curvetted and caracoled along, as if impatient of the slow pace at which he was compelled to amble, that we could not but look with admiration at both horse and rider, so gallant was their bearing.

The horseman rode twice up and down the line of prisoners, nodding gracefully as he passed, and eyeing the crowd as if in search of a friend. By-and-by his eye fell upon one of our officers, Lieutenant Hornsby, who happened to be the best-dressed man in the party. His well-wadded and full-buttoned Texan dragoon-jacket was new, or nearly new, his cap and military trousers had seen but little service, while his blanket was of that fiery and showy red which could not fail to attract in a country where gaudy and glaring colours are so much sought after and admired.

The Mexican cavalier at once checked his steed on seeing Hornsby, and immediately asked him if he was tired. This was a question he could not but answer in the affirmative. The horseman then asked H. to jump up behind him—his horse, he said, could easily carry double, and a short ride would rest the weary limbs of *el prisionero*. Instantly Hornsby was comfortably seated behind his new friend. The Mexican told him to place one arm around his waist, and then to hold fast:

Hornsby did so. The next moment the horseman suddenly wheeled his steed in an opposite direction from that we were pursuing, plunged his heavy Mexican spurs in the animal's sides, and dashed off at a speed which was truly astonishing considering the heavy weight his steed was obliged to carry. He did not pursue the road over which we had just travelled, but leaving it a little to the right, struck off diagonally across fields and pastures. Here was an abduction, and we could not help congratulating our friend upon his good fortune. Whenever the party came to an irrigating ditch the horse would stop, brace himself, settle firmly upon his haunches, and then at a bound carry both his riders safely across. In the mean time we continued our journey towards Albuquerque, yet we could not but turn our eyes, ever and anon, to gaze at our rapidly-receding comrade. We watched him until naught could be seen but his red blanket rising and falling gently in the distance from the motion of the horse, and when we finally turned from gazing it was with the firm belief that we were not soon to look upon him again.

About noon we entered Albuquerque, somewhat famed for the beauty of its women, besides being the largest place in the province of New Mexico, and the residence of Armijo a part of the year.* His family

* General Pike, in his *Narrative*, speaks of having met with numbers of beautiful women at this place during a couple of days he spent there, in the winter of 1807, while on his journey from Santa Fé to Chihuahua, a prisoner. The following I quote from his journal: "We were received, at Albuquerque, by Father Ambrosio Guerra in a very flattering manner, and led into his hall. From thence, after taking some refreshment, into an inner apartment, where he ordered his adopted children, of the female sex, to appear, when they came in by turns, Indians of various nations, Spanish, French, and finally, two young girls, whom, from their complexion, I conceived to be English: on perceiving I noticed them, he ordered the rest to retire, many of whom were beautiful, and directed those to sit down on the sofa beside me; thus situated, he told me they had been taken to the east by the Te-

were living here when we passed through, and treated Van Ness, who was allowed many liberties by Salezar, with much respect and consideration—loading him with excellent bread and other luxuries on his departure. As we were marched directly through the principal streets the inhabitants were gathered on either side to gaze at the *estrangeros*, as we were called. The women, with all kindness of heart, gave our men corn, pumpkins, bread, and everything they could spare from their scanty store as we passed, and had Salezar allowed us to remain but an hour, all our immediate wants would have been supplied; but the hard-hearted wretch appeared to delight in acts of cruelty, and drove us through with scarcely a halt of ten minutes.

It was at Albuquerque that I saw a perfect specimen of female loveliness. The girl was poor, being dressed only in a chemise and coarse woollen petticoat; yet there was an air of grace, a charm about her, that neither birth nor fortune can bestow. She was standing upon a mud-wall, the taper fingers of her right hand supporting a large pumpkin upon her head, while her left was gracefully resting upon her hip. Her dark, full, and lustrous eyes, overarched with brows of pencilled regularity, and fringed with lashes of long and

taus, passed from one nation to another until he purchased them, at that time infants, but they could recollect neither their names nor language; but concluding they were my countrywomen, he ordered them to embrace me as a mark of friendship, to which they appeared nothing loath. We then sat down to dinner, which consisted of various dishes, excellent wines, and to crown all, we were waited on by half a dozen of those beautiful girls, who, like Hebe at the feast of the gods, converted our wine into nectar, and with their ambrosial breath shed incense on our cups." Now, I neither saw as much nor enjoyed myself as well while a prisoner at Albuquerque, as did General Pike when he passed through there under circumstances somewhat similar; still, I saw enough to convince me that the race of pretty girls has not altogether degenerated, a fact of which my reader will be acquainted by reading the two following pages.

silken texture, beamed upon us full of tenderness and pity, while an unbidden tear of sorrow at our misfortunes was coursing down a cheek of the purest and richest olive. Her beautifully-curved lips, half opened as if in pity and astonishment at a scene so uncommon, disclosed teeth of pearly, dazzling whiteness. Innocence and the best feelings of our nature were playing in every lineament of that lovely face, and ever and anon, as some one of us more unfortunate than the rest would limp halting by, again her tears would gush from their fountains and illumine a countenance of purity. If

"Crystal tears from pity's eye
Are the stars in heaven high,"

some of them fell that day from the poor village girl, drawn from their firmament to lighten the sorrows of those upon whom misfortune had laid her heavy hand. She could not be more than fifteen; yet her loose and flowing dress, but half concealing a bust of surpassing beauty and loveliness, plainly disclosed that she was just entering womanhood. Her figure was faultless, and even the chisel of Praxiteles himself never modelled ankles of such pure and classic elegance.

As the long and straggling line of prisoners passed the spot upon which this lovely form was standing, sore and worn down by long marches, and want of food and sleep, her rare beauty drew the eyes of all towards her, and exclamations of wonder were upon every lip. She understood not our language, and in the artless simplicity of her nature knew not that her singular loveliness, combined with the display of charms her unstudied yet graceful attitude and scanty dress had given, was the theme of almost universal admiration.

She beckoned to a youth among the prisoners, a German lad but little older than herself, and presented him

the pumpkin with infinite delicacy and grace; and as she did it, the exclamation *pobrecito* was heard gently falling from her lips in tones of softest pity. The fairest flowers are oftenest found in obscurity, and I trust my readers will not doubt my sincerity when I assert that the prettiest girl I ever saw was selling woollen stockings at twenty-five cents a pair at Holmes's Hole, Massachusetts—her twin-sister in beauty was standing in her bare feet upon a mud-wall at Albuquerque, New Mexico, with a pumpkin on her head!

I lingered to take a last look at the beautiful girl, and when I turned from the spot I could not but regret that the lot of one so kind-hearted and so fair had been cast in such a place. There are faces we see in our journey through life surpassingly beautiful, faces that leave a deep and lasting impression on the beholders, and hers was one of them. Among the crowds of beauty her image will stand out in bold relief, and not one of those who saw her on the day we passed through Albuquerque will ever forget her.

VOL. I.—K κ