

his shop, and teaching music and the languages to the rising generation of her own sex. She talked to us and appeared to look upon us as her countrymen, and this is the light in which we were held by all the foreigners whom we encountered in Mexico. The kindest feelings were manifested towards us by the English, Irish, and Scotch, and also by the French and Germans we met on our sorrowful journey. They manifested the liveliest emotions of pity at our unfortunate situation, and extended to us a sympathy that appeared to spring from genuine fraternal feelings.

Our departure from Chihuahua was fixed for the next day after the interview with the little French woman, a fact we had no sooner learned than we set about making preparations for the long journey. A young merchant from Massachusetts offered me every assistance in the way of money, clothing, or necessities. Of the former I had a sufficiency; but not wishing to expend it, I accepted his kind offer so far as to purchase some clothing, chocolate, *piloncillos*,\* and other little luxuries for the road, for which I gave him drafts. Doctor Jennison gave each of the Texans a pair of shoes and a tin cup, and in addition to this a large supply of clothing and blankets was purchased of an American merchant for the use of the Texan soldiers, besides several mules for the officers to ride. For these, drafts on the Texan government were given by General McLeod and Mr. Navarro. The situation of all the prisoners was materially improved by this seasonable supply, and the long journey to Mexico still before us was robbed of many of its terrors by the fact

\* The *piloncillo* is a small loaf of coarse brown sugar, manufactured in the middle districts of Mexico, weighing some pound and a half. I think I have given the word the correct spelling.

that we were now in a condition better to encounter its hardships.

After partaking of an excellent dinner on the 27th of November, provided as usual by Mrs. Magoffin, we took our leave of Chihuahua and our kind friends. I cannot depart from this city, however, without relating one little circumstance which did not help me forward much in the estimation of the more ignorant among the native inhabitants. Some old meddling busybody of a Mexican, whose name I have now forgotten, got up a small breeze of excitement by saying that in the paper I published at New-Orleans I had called the great Mexican people a nation of brutes—quadrupeds was the term he used. I had no recollection, at the time, of ever having applied any such term to the people of Mexico, but thought that if ever the opportunity occurred, I most certainly should, at least to a portion of them. I should be loath to insult the larger part of the brute creation by comparing them with the inhabitants of New Mexico, always making a few honourable exceptions. The hyenas, wolves, and jackals can find innumerable kindred spirits on two legs north of El Paso del Norte, and many of them even south of that place. But to return to our departure from Chihuahua.

Mr. Navarro had a brother-in-law, a colonel in the Mexican service, who had sent an order to a friend in Chihuahua to furnish him with a carriage and pair of mules. A Mexican officer had informed our little party that we were to be furnished with transportation as far as Cerro Gordo, a small town some two hundred miles distant; but on starting we found that he had disappointed us, and that we were again to proceed on foot. The horse furnished me by the kind-hearted cura of El

Paso was completely worn down and unable to travel, and I determined to purchase another if possible.

The entire population of the place turned out to see us off, the streets on both sides being lined, as usual, with the lower orders of men, women, and children. The foreigners, too, rode out some little distance, and I had an opportunity of seeing nearly every one of them, with the exception of the gentleman who had furnished me with clothing. We were to proceed but a few miles the first evening; I therefore asked one of the Americans to inform my friend in the city that I was in want of a horse, saddle, and bridle, and at the same time desire him to send them out early the next morning. This he promised to do, and then bade us farewell.

At dark we encamped by the roadside, and at a place where there was neither wood nor water. The night was extremely raw and cold, and we were again compelled to take lodgings upon the ground; but as we were now well provided with clothing and blankets, our situation was far more comfortable than even between El Paso and Chihuahua.

Early the next morning a servant arrived from my friend in town, bringing me a strong and very serviceable Mexican pony. He was wild and frisky as a mustang at my first approach, performed a variety of unseemly antics, and for some time manifested a set determination not to allow me the innocent little familiarity of bestriding him. A ragged, grim-visaged Mexican, with an expression of countenance sinister enough to frighten any well-bred animal from his propriety, would walk directly up to and mount him without the least trouble; but the moment I undertook such a liberty he would sheer off, jump and kick about "like mad," and keep such distance between us as a twenty-foot rope

would admit. At one time he wound me up in the rope, threw me down, and came near injuring me seriously; and it was not until I had made repeated efforts that I succeeded in reaching the saddle. Once there, I permitted him to show off his eccentricities *ad libitum*; but after snorting, shying, rearing, pitching, dancing, and capering about for some five minutes, and whirling in circles, much to the amusement of a score of half-clad Mexicans, he finally cooled down into an easy, mincing pace, and I ever after found him a very well-behaved and extremely serviceable animal. I have just remarked that the Mexicans were amused on my first effecting a lodgment upon the back of the horse. In truth, it was my first appearance in one of their saddles, and my horsemanship probably partook more of the awkward than the graceful on the occasion. At all events, I did not feel that perfect security which is agreeable as I mounted upon a saddle of a shape I was entirely unused to, with a horse under it displaying a variety of anything but gentle antics and curvettings. I attempted to act with perfect indifference, but I am far from denying that I had serious misgivings all the while, lest by some extra feat of the horse I should be compelled to leave him in that unceremonious manner which is generally styled, among jockeys, "being thrown."

To one unaccustomed to the Mexican saddle it is extremely awkward, and far from being easy at first; but when once habituated to its use, it is almost invariably preferred to those of English or American manufacture. The rider has more command over himself, sits easier and steadier, and is far less liable to be thrown. The one I purchased with the horse, at Chihuahua, I rode to within twelve miles of the city of Mexico, and on afterward mounting an English saddle I felt unsteady, and

like being thrown from it every moment. For the horse and saddle I gave a draft, written upon a piece of paper resting on my hat, and oddly enough, this draft, with others I gave the same person while in Chihuahua, reached the city of New-Orleans on the very day I myself arrived: while I travelled by way of the city of Mexico, subject to slight detention upon the road, the draft came by way of Santa Fé, the immense Western Prairies, and St. Louis—in all a distance of nearly four thousand miles.

On the night of the 28th of November, and an extremely cold night it was, we reached El Ojito, a poor hacienda where we could obtain no accommodations in-doors. We passed three or four wagons during the day, loaded with piloncillos and dry goods, on the way from Parras to Chihuahua. The drivers of these wagons were Americans, stalwart and robust men, who had strayed thus far by way of Santa Fé. They informed us that Colonel Cooke's party were some three weeks in advance of us, and taking the road towards Durango; well treated on the road, and generally in good health. They manifested no little astonishment that so large a party of Americans had been taken prisoners by a population so contemptible as that of New Mexico; but when we informed them of the treachery of Lewis, and our previous starvation and sufferings, they appeared better to understand the matter. After a conversation of some ten minutes with these men, we were forced to pursue our journey.

The night of the 29th of November we passed at another small and poor rancho, the name of which I have forgotten. On the afternoon of the next day we reached the village of San Pablo. The inhabitants, numbering some ten or twelve hundred, all flocked out to see

us on our approach, for the officer who now had charge of us, a dapper little major of the redoubtable Chihuahua militia, had heralded our approach by the clangour of two badly-blown trumpets. He was a proud and ignorant fellow, extremely fond of display, and I have no doubt honestly thought himself a very great man. Our old friend Ochoa was still with us, however, acting as a man-of-all-work, and from him we invariably received every kindness and attention. I have entirely forgotten the little major's name, else I might make farther mention of him, and the many annoyances we were subjected to while under his charge.\*

On one side of the principal plaza of San Pablo, which was entered through a large and heavy gate, Ochoa had provided rooms for the principal officers and merchants, while the men were compelled to occupy the centre of the square, with no shelter from the weather. This was the case on nearly the entire march, the men

\* This petty little tyrant frequently beat his own men most unmercifully with the flat of his sword, and almost invariably without provocation. The half-clad, sandalled, and ill-fed wretches stood in continual fear of him, while from Ochoa they experienced the kindest treatment and all becoming respect. I never saw the latter strike but one man, a New Mexican horse-thief, who doubtless well deserved the severe castigation he received. While journeying between El Paso and Chihuahua we met a party of New Mexican traders on their way from Sonora to Santa Fé. One of them was mounted upon a miserable hack, raw-boned and rough-coated, and to give the horse an additional forlorn appearance, his mane and tail had been close shaved. The unhealed mark of a fresh brand was also seen upon the animal—a mark which not one of us would have noticed, but which the eagle eye of Ochoa at once detected. The fellow was commanded to halt, half a minute's examination convincing our captain that the fresh brand had been placed over a former mark. Another minute was sufficient to assure Ochoa that the horse had been stolen, and that he was really the property of the government in disguise. The thief was instantly dragged from the animal, and the next moment a shower of blows from Ochoa's sword was falling upon his back. With perfect indifference did we look upon this scene, and I doubt whether a single Texan prisoner would have shed a tear had the New Mexican horse-thief received a blow at every step between El Paso and Santa Fé.

sleeping in the open air except in the large cities, where convents or other spacious buildings could be obtained for their reception. Generally, I am inclined to think, the Texan soldiers had the best of it. They suffered occasionally from the cold; but nine times out of ten the officers found their rooms overrun with fleas and chinchés, besides innumerable other vermin, the names of which I do not care to mention. Little did I think, on first leaving the United States, that my vestments were ever to afford harbour and shelter for swarms of insects of the most loathsome description; but imprisonment and misfortune bring strange companionships. They enabled me to get a practical knowledge upon entomological subjects, of which before I did not understand even the theory.

While at San Pablo, Mr. Falconer and others expressed a wish to purchase horses for the journey. But a few minutes elapsed before several nags were paraded in the square, their Mexican riders mounting, spurring, and showing them off in every pace and to every possible advantage. At this game the Mexican jockey is far more expert than his brother of the same calling even in Yorkshire or Yankeeland. Mr. Falconer, after having tried several, finally made choice, as was his wont in the selection of horseflesh, of a discreet and very well-behaved animal, for which, with a saddle and bridle, he paid twenty-four dollars. The nag was considerably advanced in years, set in his ways withal, and notable for taking a jog to suit his own convenience, regardless alike of whip and spur and other incentives to rapid locomotion; but then he was fat and strong, and as his purchaser chose him rather for use and comfort than show or fancy, he made an excellent bargain. Two or three other ponies were purchased at the same time, and at prices varying from

ten to fifteen dollars apiece, the purchasers having obtained small loans of money while at Chihuahua.

Leaving San Pablo early on the morning of the 1st of December, we were enabled to reach Saucillo the same night, although the distance was more than ten leagues. The only business carried on at Saucillo is the manufacture of lead, there being a mine of that mineral in the immediate vicinity. There are but few inhabitants, and they are wretchedly poor and ignorant.

At this place the plan of an escape was agitated by a number of the bravest spirits among our officers and men, and although opposed by others, was finally determined upon. The plan was to seize upon the guard the next morning, shortly after starting, disarm them at once, and then make a forced march for the Rio Grande. It failed from a want of unanimity, and from the impossibility of inducing every person to keep the station assigned him. Our guard usually marched on either side of us, and although they were tolerably well armed, we outnumbered them. We could have seized upon and disarmed them with the greatest ease, and probably not a man would have been killed on either side in the scuffle; but it is extremely problematical whether any of the Texans would ever have reached home had the plan been carried out. Between us and the Rio Grande ran a ridge of bold, steep, and in many places impassable mountains; the plains were covered with thick and scraggy thornbushes, rendering the travel extremely slow and painful at every step; the exact route and distance were unknown to any one, and there was no certainty that water or provisions could be found on the route. I have enumerated but few of the difficulties to be encountered, and from what I have since learned of the country between our road

and the Rio Grande, by the route we should have taken, I am led to believe that hardly a man would have got through alive.

Mr. Navarro opposed the scheme, and mainly by reason of his opposition it fell through. He was so lame that he could neither walk nor ride on horseback, and it was utterly impossible to go with his carriage across the rough and broken mountains. His own destruction would have been inevitable, and this he told the men. He farther stated that not a man, with the single exception of himself, would be detained six months in Mexico; that we should endanger the safety of Colonel Cooke's party by an escape, and be certain to bring about his own death, as the exasperated Mexicans would shoot him on the spot. Few of our men believed his words; but, as matters have since turned out, the old gentleman spoke with a spirit of prophecy—he alone has been kept in prison at the city of Mexico, while all the others have been liberated.\*

During the night we spent at Saucillo a man named Larrabee died in one of the carts. He was the same person whom Major Howard had pursued upon the prairies, mistaking him for an Indian, and it was said that poor L. never got over the fright of that singular chase. When first discovered in the morning, the body of the man was perfectly cold; but Captain Ochoa asked Dr. Whittaker, our surgeon, to examine him, and see

\* The attempt since made by the prisoners captured at Mier, in which both Brenham and Fitzgerald were killed, proves, beyond doubt, that we must either have been all retaken or have starved to death. The Mier prisoners were successful in securing all the arms of their guard after a short struggle, and this, too, at a point much nearer and more accessible to the Rio Grande than ours at the time of our contemplated escape. The former were finally retaken, half starved, in the mountains, and what were left after a barbarous decimation were marched to the city of Mexico, ironed, and compelled to work in the streets.

if he was "*dead enough to bury!*" Singular as was this expression, I believe I have given the captain's own words. He had heard of the horrible barbarities practised between San Miguel and El Paso—knew that the ears of some of our unfortunate comrades were cut off by Salezar before they were yet dead, and that their bodies were thrown by the roadside unburied, to be devoured by wolves—he had heard all this, and the kind-hearted man was anxious to pay every respect now that one of the prisoners had died while he had charge of us. Poor Larrabee was buried by the roadside at Saucillo, and sorrowful enough were the faces of those present at his funeral; but the eyes of kindred, of those who would have bedewed his grave with tears, were far from the scene.

After a tedious day's march, we reached, just at night, a corn-field near La Cruz, and here encamped. During the evening we were visited by a young lad from a rancho close by, who brought with him a harp of his own manufacture. He had learned to play upon this instrument without a teacher, and although he could not be more than ten or twelve years of age, his execution was really good, and his style that of a master. The Mexicans generally are extremely fond of music, and great numbers of the men can strum the mandolin, a species of small guitar, and give the rude airs of the country with much skill and effect. They play from the ear alone—not one in a hundred of them, in all probability, could tell a note of music from the hieroglyphics on some of the old ruins of his country.

About noon, on the 3d of December, we arrived at Santa Rosalia, a pleasant town situated upon a pure, swift-running stream of water. As was universally the custom, the entire population—men, women, and chil-

dren—assembled in the streets through which we passed, and gathered in great numbers in the plaza where we were ordered to encamp. We had scarcely halted, before the *alcalde* arrived and invited our little party of officers and merchants to a dinner at his own house. He was evidently a poor man, and his dinner was far from being as sumptuous as many I have seen; but we were waited upon by his two daughters, one of whom was a blooming, blushing, bouncing girl of sixteen, and the *tortillas* and *frijoles* held out until all of us were satisfied.

Next morning, and just as I had saddled my horse, a couple of Mexicans stepped forward and claimed him as belonging to them. They said that he had been stolen some two months before, and after proving property, were about taking him off without paying me any of the charges or expenses I had been at on his account. I appealed to Captain Ochoa, and told him the circumstances of my purchasing the horse of an American friend at Chihuahua. That the animal belonged to the two men who claimed him there was not the least doubt—they pointed out brands, marks, and numbers, and proved the fact of his having been stolen, by a statement under the *alcalde's* own hand and seal—but Captain Ochoa decided the case in my favour, told me to mount him, and turning to his owners, gave them leave to whistle for their property, or look to the person who had sold him to me. I am far from justifying the decision of Captain Ochoa, although I profited by it; I only mention the circumstance to show that the military power in Mexico tramples upon the civil—that there might makes right.

I was extremely fearful that the fellows would follow us and steal back their property; but Captain

Ochoa placed a special sentinel over the horse at night—had it not been for this watchfulness, I should probably have found myself on foot the next morning.

By making an early start from Santa Rosalia on the 4th of December we were enabled to reach a small rancho before nightfall, encamping in the open field near the roadside, for we had no desire to enter the miserable adobe huts of the inhabitants. Immediately in the rear of the place stood four or five crosses, new and recently put up, marking the places where that number of the little population had been killed by the dreaded Apaches some week or two before.

The traveller on the great thoroughfare between Santa Fé and the city of Mexico, in fact on every road throughout the country, meets numbers of these rude wooden crosses on every day's journey. Whenever a man is murdered his friends erect a cross, and frequently the name of the murdered person is cut with a knife upon the transverse part, together with his age, the date of his death, and any little circumstance of note attending it. Around the foot is a heap of small stones, brought thither by friends; and the importance of the murdered person, as well as the number of prayers which have been said for his repose, may be learned by the size of the pile. Many stories of romantic interest were told us, by our gossiping guard, of these roadside graves and their occupants, but I have now forgotten them. Should the traveller treasure up all the strange tales, wild legends, and superstitious traditions related to him in Mexico, he would soon have his head full. For the most part they are entirely destitute of foundation, for the Mexicans have very fertile imaginations, and are sadly addicted to dealing in the marvellous and romantic.