

tured at Troy, New-York, was of the same class as the stages in use in the United States, and as it rattled by, full of passengers, forcibly reminded us of freedom and of home.

At night we reached a poor rancho called La Caleta, where we stopped to sleep. Here one of our men, who had been complaining for two or three days, exhibited unequivocal symptoms of that loathsome disease, the small-pox. Eruptions appeared on every part of his body, he became partially delirious, and although we hoped that the disease might prove one of a lighter nature than appearances indicated, all were disappointed. It was small-pox of the worst type, and as there was no guarding against the infection, each one of our party could only hope that he might not become its victim.

## CHAPTER VII.

Approach to Zacatecas.—Tedious mountain March.—Picturesque View.—First Sight of Zacatecas.—Its singular Situation.—Specimen of Roblado's Vanity.—Entrance into Zacatecas.—Character of the Inhabitants.—Passage through the City.—Arrival at a deserted Mining House.—Miserable Quarters.—Permission obtained to visit the City.—Inquisitive Urchins.—Arrival at an Irish Restaurant.—A sumptuous Breakfast.—Visit to a New-York Gentleman.—A Stroll through Zacatecas.—Dinner at the Restaurant.—Invitation to another Dinner.—A goodly Company.—Painting of Washington.—A pleasant Evening in Perspective.—Unrealized Hopes.—Again at our old Quarters at the Mining House.—Mr. Falconer in Trouble.—Mexican Justice.—Dr. Whittaker's Mode of getting rid of a troublesome Sentinel.—Subscription raised for the Prisoners.—Liberality of a Mexican Lawyer.—Departure from Zacatecas.—Convent of Guadalupe.—Santa Anna, and his Fight with the Zacatecans.—Sack of the City.—Refugio.—Arrival at Ojo Caliente.—A Bathing Scene.—Customs of the Mexican Women, and their Fondness for Swimming.—El Carro.—Arrival at Salina.—A Kentucky Circus Proprietor.—His Adventure with Roblado.—The Mexican House of Entertainment, or Meson.—The Foreigner meets with but poor Fare.—Modes of living, and Customs of the Lower Orders of Mexico.

On the morning of December 30th we commenced ascending the high range of mountains to the northward of Zacatecas. A very good road winds up the sides, but the ascent was steep and tiresome. Small parties of women, driving asses and mules from market, were passed as we toiled up, and exhibited no little astonishment as they gazed at us.

On reaching the summit we had a fine view of the valley through which we had just travelled, the distant smoke of the mines at Fresnillo being plainly visible, with the numerous little ranchos we had passed. Before us, and on different points of the mountain-tops, the silver mines of Zacatecas were seen—many of them

deserted, while others were still in operation. As we descended the mountain, the parties of market-women became still larger and more frequent. We continued our winding way down the sides until within half a mile of the city, wondering where a spot could be found for the habitations of men in a vicinity so wild; for mountain was piled upon mountain on every hand, with no other passes between them than yawning *barrancas*, or deep ravines. We could not believe that we were near one of the richest and proudest cities of Mexico, until a sudden turn in the road brought it fully into view, with all its domes, spires, palaces, churches, and convents. A more picturesque or grander spectacle can hardly be imagined than the city of Zacatecas as entered from the north. It appears to be hemmed in on almost every side by high and precipitous mountains, and of course has but scanty suburbs. The deep ravine in which it is built is filled with houses, even to the very base of the mountains, which seem, in many places, ready to slide and fall upon the town below them. The streets are not very wide, but are almost straight, and many of the buildings are of large size, handsome architecture, and costly and elaborate workmanship.

Before we entered the city a halt was called, for no other purpose than that Captain Roblado might change his ordinary fatigue-dress for a gaudy uniform, and mount a dashing bay horse upon which to "show off" at the head of a body of ragged Texan prisoners. With a loud blast from the Mexican trumpets we were then ordered to advance. Housetops, balconies, doors, and windows were filled with women and children on either side of us, and a crowd so dense thronged the streets that every exertion of the dragoons was needed to

force a way through the ragged, dirty, and squalid mass. On many occasions the lower orders of this city have manifested great hostility towards foreigners, not a few unfortunate heretics, or Jews as they are more frequently termed, having been hooted and stoned from its gates; but latterly this hostility has in a great measure subsided, and not an insult was offered to us by a single individual. It may be that our forlorn and destitute appearance, and a belief that the government would punish us with the utmost severity, chilled any feeling of hostility into silence. Many of the foreigners on the road openly expressed their fears that we might be ill used and insulted at Zacatecas, but such was not the case.

We were taken completely through the city, passing numerous churches, convents, and palaces, besides the *mineria*, or mint. One of the buildings we passed was a large quartel, filled apparently with convicts destined to swell the ranks of Santa Anna's army; and the wretches gazed at us, as we went by them, with malicious looks. After going by the *paseo*, a large enclosure set with trees, we reached the outskirts of the town, and then, after climbing a steep hill, were marched into an old deserted mining-house, and locked up. Two mouldy, dirty rooms were set apart for our use, and even these were not sufficiently large to accommodate us all with shelter; but as Roblado would not allow us to go out of the place without permission from the governor, there we were obliged to take up our quarters for the night.

To show how uncomfortably we passed our first night at Zacatecas, I will describe the sleeping apartment in which I was allowed such space on the floor as I could cover with my person—no more. The room

was about fifty feet in length, by twenty-five in width, destitute of windows, had a broken and uneven tile floor, and from having been long deserted, the walls were damp, mouldy, and fast crumbling to decay. No air found its way into this gloomy hole save through the door, and as the night was raw and cold, even this we were fain to close to protect those immediately around it from the piercing blasts. There were seventy of us in the room, all rolled up in blankets upon the floor; and when I add that many of the men were covered with every species of vermin, others suffering with distressing coughs, and one in the worst stage of that loathsome disease the small-pox, the reader is under no necessity of racking his fancy to imagine that we passed anything but a comfortable or pleasant night.

Early in the morning Van Ness obtained permission for Falconer, Doctor Whittaker, and myself to accompany him into the city, we all promising Roblado that the confidence he placed in us should not be abused. Scarcely had we entered one of the principal streets before we were surrounded by a gang of half-dressed urchins—inquisitive little fellows who jogged along on either side of us, and examined us as closely as they would so many strange beasts in a menagerie. As we passed the houses, the cry of "*Mira! mira! los Tejanos!*" would be heard from the women and girls, and then a general scampering and rush to the doors and windows to obtain a sight of our little party.

In order to get rid of the constantly-increasing crowd of boys, we quickened our pace, and after turning three or four corners, reached a large and well-conducted *restaurant* kept by an Irishman. This we entered, and immediately called for a breakfast such as we had not seen or tasted for eight months. It consisted simply of

beefsteaks, mutton chops, boiled eggs, Irish potatoes, coffee, and claret—all simple and common enough—but then we had long been unused even to such a variety, and having a table before us, with chairs to sit in, and knives and forks to eat with, we did ample justice to our breakfast. The wife of our host, or female superintendent of the establishment—I am uncertain which—made her appearance just as we had finished our meal. She was a stout, fresh, red-checked Irish woman, wore a clean, flowing, and neatly-crimped cap, and as she was the first female I had seen since we left the frontiers of Texas who naturally spoke my language, I could not but regard her as my countrywoman, although she had a brogue as rich as that of the lamented Power in Pat Rooney.

Leaving the *restaurant*, I went to a German tailor and ordered such articles of clothing as I stood most in need of, and then had my measure taken for a pair of boots by a Mexican shoemaker next door. They were all to be delivered at our quarters at the old mining-house on the following morning, and the prices of the different articles were about the same as are paid in New-Orleans and other Southern cities of the United States—a trifle cheaper, perhaps. My next visit was to the office of an American gentleman, a New-Yorker, who showed me every attention and kindness. After writing several letters to my friends in the United States, we visited the different churches and public buildings of the town, attracting all the while not a little attention from the inhabitants, although no rudeness was offered us. The day was cloudy and raw, with intervals of rain; but regardless of this, we roamed about the place until dinner-time. I may here add, that from the day on which we left San Miguel, in October,

to the time of which I am speaking—the 1st of January—we had not been annoyed by an hour's rain.

At two o'clock we again visited the restaurat and ordered dinner, selecting corned beef, cabbage, and the like plain "substantials," instead of the tempting knick-knackeries, decoy birds, and other luxuries that were hanging in profusion in the windows, or otherwise displayed with that ostentation so characteristic of eating establishments, as well in Zacatecas as in New-Orleans or New-York. How much have restaurat keepers, the world over, to answer for in the way of leading gouty gourmands and dyspeptic subjects into temptation by these window exhibitions!

We had scarcely finished our meal when a servant arrived with an invitation from a Mexican gentleman, a lawyer, to visit his house and partake of his hospitalities. We found dinner over when we reached the house, the servant having been searching some two hours before he found us; but at a table, covered with choice wines and cigars, we joined Mr. Navarro, General McLeod, and two or three Texan officers, besides a pair of fat, jolly priests, and in such mixed but goodly company we passed an hour very pleasantly. Our kind host was a distinguished advocate of the place, extremely liberal in his opinions, as were also the priests. In the centre of the library, and occupying the most conspicuous part of the room, was a well-executed painting of General Washington, enclosed in a splendid frame. Before we retired, our entertainer delivered a neat eulogy, extremely well expressed, upon the "Father of his Country," manifesting the high regard in which his memory was held. This little incident over, our party took their departure, leaving our friends still at the table.

After a ramble of some two hours, we once more repaired to the restaurat and ordered a luxurious supper, determined to make the most of our time and commence the new year as happily as possible—at least in the way of eating. We had scarcely finished our meal when a party of Mexican gentlemen invited us into an adjoining room to partake of wine with them. Shortly after, an English gentleman arrived from Fresnillo, with whom we had become acquainted there, and who insisted upon our supping with him. This pressing invitation we were compelled to refuse; but we joined him in a glass of wine. There was to be a splendid New-year's ball given that evening, to which we had received an invitation. Just as we were going to it, with full anticipations of finishing a delightfully-spent day by a ball at night, one of the officers of our guard, a bustling, fretful little Mexican, rushed into the room out of breath, and ordered us instantly to accompany him to our disagreeable quarters of the previous night. From his excited manner we could easily perceive that something had gone wrong, but the nature of his mission was not revealed until we had reached the gloomy prison, which we had determined not to visit until the following morning. The night was rainy and pitchy dark, the hill we were obliged to climb was steep and so slippery from the moistened clay that we could with difficulty make the ascent. Three or four times we fell sprawling to the earth while clambering to the summit; and it was not until we were all covered with mud, and wet to the skin, that we passed the portals, and the heavy gates of the old mining-house were locked upon us—a sad termination to a pleasantly-spent day, but such ever appeared to be our fortune.

We were not long kept in suspense as to the cause

of this sudden and unlooked-for movement. It appeared that the Governor of Zacatecas had that evening received a letter from General Tornel, Minister of War and Marine at Mexico, ordering him instantly to place in close confinement, and under strict guard, Colonel Milam, Antonio Navarro, and Robert Foster. The former had been dead for years, having been killed at the Alamo of San Antonio. Mr. Navarro was then on the spot, but no person answering to the name of Robert Foster could be found, and Roblado questioned each one of the prisoners and examined the different lists thoroughly. The only name that came anywhere near Robert Foster was *Thomas Falconer*, and Roblado presuming that he must be the person alluded to, he was instantly sent for with the rest of us. We all told the captain that Mr. F. was not the man; but this did not alter his purpose, and poor Falconer was accordingly placed in a small, close room with Mr. Navarro, two sentinels being paraded before them, who shouted "*centinela alerta!*" every ten minutes during the dreary night, to keep themselves from falling asleep.

In the mean while, Van Ness, Whittaker, and myself were constrained again to occupy our disagreeable apartment, where we passed our New-year's night—now rendered doubly disagreeable to us by contrast with the expected pleasures of the ball, in which we had promised ourselves such delights as would have made some amends for the annoyances and hardships of our unwilling journey.

We were no sooner in the close and dreary room than new inconveniences presented themselves; for not supposing, until the Mexican officer came in such haste for us at the Irishman's fonda, that we were to pass the night at the old mining-house, we had made no prepa-

rations for our lodging before leaving it in the morning. On our return, therefore, we found that our blankets had already been taken and our places occupied by some of our friends, leaving us almost as badly situated as was poor Falconer. The night, as I have said, was raw, rainy, and uncomfortable, and we were obliged to take up our quarters near the door. A drunken sentinel, whose duty it was to walk outside and see that none of us left the room, finally opened the door and took his station within—and not content with thus annoying us, he howled the disagreeable "*centinela alerta!*" almost incessantly in our ears, until Dr. Whittaker took a summary way of getting rid of both his presence and his noise. The doctor told the fellow to shut the door and his mouth; the sentinel answered impudently; the next moment the doctor knocked him sprawling into the mud outside, musket and all, and then closed and fastened the door after him. We expected that the fellow would make a complaint, and that we should receive a visit from the officer of the guard for an explanation; but we never heard anything more of it.

An American gentleman promised to forward the letters I had written to my friends in the United States, in such a way as would ensure their safe delivery; and he kept his word, for every one of them reached its destination. I speak of this circumstance, as many of the letters I sent from different points in Mexico never left the country—at least they did not arrive in the United States. Generally speaking, the mail arrangements of Mexico are well conducted, and letters and newspapers are forwarded with promptness and great regularity; but the postmasters who stopped my letters doubtless knew that they were written by some one of the prisoners, and thought they were serving their coun-