

uary we took our departure from Guanajuato, our route conducting us through the same streets by which we had entered—I am not certain that there is any other outlet to the place. The city is built in a deep but narrow ravine, some two miles in length, while its greatest width is perhaps not more than three or four hundred yards. On either side high and precipitous mountains rise—so steep that the very goats can hardly find a road up their sides. There are but two or three main streets; but these run the whole length of the city, are very narrow, and the houses extremely high, so that a large population is congregated in the deep and dark barranca. A more singular site for a city probably does not exist in the wide world, and nothing induced the early settlers to select it but the fact that the surrounding mines were among the richest and most productive in the country.

After crossing, some twenty times, a little stream of water which runs through the principal street leading into the city, and after passing the suburbs, we began the ascent of the mountains at the only point where a road was practicable. A single turn shut the city we had just left completely from the sight, and I doubt whether there is more than one spot within half a mile from which even the highest of its numerous domes can be seen, so completely is Guanajuato hidden from the world.

At night we halted at La Puerta, where we slept, and the next afternoon we reached the city of Salamanca. This is a neat and tolerably well-built place, containing several colleges, besides convents and churches. As we were leaving it the next morning, I had an opportunity of seeing a *volunteer* for the army *caught*. The man's crime I did not learn, nor in fact could I ascertain

that he had committed any: be this as it may, he was seized and tied in front of the meson where we had passed the night, and dragged onward by two dragoons detailed for the special purpose of preventing his escape. The fellow had a mother, who, with tears and prayers, begged the commander of the dragoons to release her son. The officer turned a deaf ear to her entreaties, pushed her from him, and strode onward. With frantic shrieks the woman sprang after him, fell at his feet, and while clinging with convulsive grasp to his knees, besought him, in accents most piteous, to allow her son to remain with her. Again the officer threw the woman from him, and jumping upon his horse, was soon out of hearing. The last I saw of the mother she was flying about from one person to another, wringing her hands in the very phrensy of despair, and beseeching all to intercede in behalf of her boy. This in a republic which boasts of its freedom, and cannot issue the most trifling despatch without tacking "God and *liberty*" to some part of it!

In the afternoon of the 22d we reached Celaya, a neat and busy, but small city. The residence of General Cortazar, the gentlemanly and liberal governor of the State of Guanajuato, is at this place. From him and his officers, not only our party but that of Colonel Cooke, invariably received the best treatment; and even the common soldiers of our guard, while within the limits of Guanajuato, appeared to partake of the better qualities of the generous commandante and his officers.

Cortazar had us all quartered in a clean and airy convent, gave us the full liberty of the city on parole, and sent word that we might remain thirty-six hours in the place to rest and recruit ourselves. This favour was

the more agreeable to us, as the following day was Sunday, and we thus had an opportunity of seeing the religious observances and public amusements by which this day is celebrated in a Mexican city.

At an early hour on Sunday morning a small party of us left the convent. Our first stopping-place was at a meson near the market square, where we partook of as good a breakfast as the tavern afforded. Our next movement was to the principal cathedral of Celaya, to observe the religious ceremonies of the morning. A party of Indians were in attendance, in addition to the regular worshippers, and the strange mingling of some of their own customs with the rites of the established Catholic Church, formed a picture of striking singularity. The early Spanish missionaries were never able entirely to eradicate the superstitious ceremonies of the original inhabitants, but by allowing them to ingraft some of their own rites upon Catholicism, they partially brought them over to their faith. This state of things still continues, and the religion of a large portion of the mixed classes is to this day but a blending of whimsical and grotesque ceremonies with the solemn and imposing observances which appertain to the religion of the Romish Church.

After twelve o'clock the innumerable liquor-shops of the city were thrown open, and in the afternoon cock-fighting commenced at the theatre. The pit seats were taken out for the purpose, and on visiting it we found a large assembly of gamblers, loafers, gentlemen, soldiers, and priests assembled to enjoy the sport. The Mexicans of all classes are passionately fond of it, and will frequently stake their all upon the result of a single fight.

The amusements of the cockpit over, the seats were replaced, and every preparation made for the produc-

tion of "*El Campanero de San Pablo*"—the Bell-Ringer of St. Paul's—by a Spanish company of actors then playing at Celaya. This performance we also attended, and found the house well filled with many of the more fashionable families of the place, and among them that of General Cortazar. Ladies and all, as is the custom in a Mexican theatre, kept up an incessant smoking between the acts, and the rising of the curtain even was no signal for them to throw away their cigarritos. The drama was a translation from the French, but is founded on a story of the reign of Charles I. of England, and is extremely popular in Mexico. The actors were all perfect in their parts, but the play dragged heavily enough along to those who but imperfectly understood the language, and after seeing three acts of it, and inhaling cigar and candle smoke until we were half suffocated, we returned to our quarters. Thus did we spend our Sunday at Celaya.

On the next morning we took our departure from this hospitable town. As we were about starting, it was ascertained that young Curtis Caldwell had broken out with the small-pox.* He was not more than fourteen years old, but an extremely intelligent and active lad for his age, and Cortazar had him taken to his own house and treated with every possible attention. On his recovery he was sent to his father at Guanajuato, and finally returned to Texas with him.

In the afternoon of the 24th we reached a miserable rancho called Calera. During the palmy days of Guanajuato, when the mines of that district yielded their richest treasures and employed immense numbers of men, the Baxio, or fertile valley in which Salamanca, Celaya,

* His father, it will be remembered, had been left at Guanajuato with the same disease.

and innumerable rich haciendas are situated, found a ready market for the corn and wheat grown upon its surface; but now that the demand has been in a great measure cut off, the estates are gradually sinking in value and going out of cultivation.

In one part of this valley—I think between Queretaro and San Juan del Rio—the traveller passes through an immense corn-field, or rather a succession of corn-fields, miles in extent, the produce of which supplies the neighbouring cities. During a march of nearly two days nothing could be seen on any side but stacks of Indian corn, the husks still on, and each stack surmounted with a rude wooden cross. The owners of the grain had taken the latter precaution, so it was told us, to prevent the ladrones from preying upon their property; for it is said that nothing can induce the most hardened thief, in that country of petty pilferers, to touch aught which is thus guarded. Whether this is true or false is a point upon which I do not intend to decide; if true, I can say that it is much the cheapest and safest method of preventing theft that could be devised in Mexico, and I would prefer having my property under the guardianship and protection of one wooden cross than of twenty armed men. Robert Macaire would have starved to death had his lot fallen among Mexican ladrones, and the noted "Pony Club" of Georgia might have found valuable members by sending to Mexico.*

* The candidate for admission into this "Club" was obliged to pass through the following ordeal successfully before he could receive his diploma, or certificate of membership. A committee of passed members conducted the tyro to a secluded place in the woods, placed a hat upon a stump or rock in a conspicuous position, and then arranged themselves around it in such situations that all could plainly see the hat. If the candidate was successful in stealing it, while all were watching, he was at once admitted into full communion and fellowship; if not, he was dismissed with advice to practise still farther his "sight-of-hand" tricks, and by untiring industry endeavour better to qual-

Finding that he could procure no food for the prisoners at Calera, the officer who had charge of us determined upon an early start in the morning, with the intention of reaching Queretaro by breakfast-time. We were all in motion by two o'clock; and so raw and cold was the early morning air, that such of us as were mounted dashed onward at a brisk gallop, with the hope of thus obtaining warmth and a circulation of the blood. The days, at this time, were delightfully warm and pleasant, but the extreme height of the table-lands made the nights raw and chilly. To show how negligent were the dragoons who accompanied us as a guard, I may add that the little party with whom I made the morning ride did not see one of them from the time we set off until we had nearly reached the city gates.

We were but a short league from Queretaro when the sun rose—within sight of a city whose numerous public buildings and works, whose lofty and imposing domes, towers, and steeples, present to the view of the traveller, enter it from what quarter he may, a sight than which one more grand and magnificent can hardly be imagined. The city is in part encircled by lofty mountains, and as the rising sun first kissed their towering summits, the gray and sombre-shadowed town, lying far beneath them, was buried in profound repose. Anon, as the sun's rays came flashing from the mountain tops and lit up the higher domes of the place, the scene assumed an appearance of light and life. Soon the sun itself rose from behind those mountain barriers, and the whole city was at once aroused by its animating pres-

ify himself for the high station to which he aspired. So adroit is the veriest dunce among the Mexican thieves, that he could steal the hat from the very head of a sharp-sighted man without being detected, even if the latter had friends on the look-out to prevent it.

ence. To forget that morning's dawn and its effect upon Queretaro were impossible. Now a blushing ray would linger and play upon the loftiest peaks of the surrounding mountains; the next moment it would flash across the plain, dispel the deep shadows from the mountain sides, and gild some towering dome with a flood of light. To watch the bright beams reflected from tower to tower and from dome to dome—to see the dark shadows disappearing, as if chased from their retreats by the vivid flashes—and then to behold the entire city lit up as by enchantment—all combined to form a spectacle of almost inconceivable grandeur. The morning was now bright, beautiful, and balmy, and the stillness which surrounded us was only broken by the distant deep-toned bells calling the dwellers to mass, and that busy but undefinable hum which betokens the awakening of a great city to the labour of another day.

As the last straggling loiterers of our party came up, we were formed in regular order, and then marched through the city. Quarters had been procured for us at an old convent on the side of the city opposite to that by which we entered—a vile, dismal hole at the best—but our commandante said that no other could be obtained.

A circumstance of a very amusing nature occurred while the officer of our guard was absent at the house of the commandante, for the purpose of obtaining permission for us to roam about the city on parole. We had scarcely been ten minutes in the convent when we were visited by the usual crowd of venders of oranges and other fruits, women with tortillas, frijoles, and guisado, all anxious to dispose of their little stock in trade. Mr. Falconer picked out some half dozen oranges and sweet limes from the basket of a fruit-girl, and in pay-

ment handed her a dollar. There was not small coin enough among them all to change the dollar, and Falconer sent it out by a corporal, telling him to get it changed. The fellow shortly returned with *sixty-four cakes of soap*, tied up in a handkerchief. Falconer told the corporal he wanted *change*, not *soap*. The corporal replied that it was the currency of the place—legal currency—and that there was no other. Such proved to be the case; and however singular it may appear, soap is really a lawful tender in the payment of all debts, and our companion was compelled to keep this singular substitute in the way of change for his dollar. He could not very well pocket it, as there was nearly a peck in bulk.

The cakes are about the size of the common Windsor shaving-soap, and each is worth one cent and a half—in fact, a fraction more, as eight of them pass for twelve and a half cents, or sixteen for a quarter of a dollar. Each cake is stamped with the name of the town where it is issued, and also with the name of the person who is authorized by law to manufacture it as a circulating medium; yet Celaya soap—for it also circulates in that city—will not pass at Queretaro. The reason I cannot divine, as the size and intrinsic value appear to be the same. The municipal authorities of either town appear to have made no provision for equalizing the exchanges between the two places, and there are no brokers' offices for the buying and selling of uncurrent soap in Mexico.

Many of the cakes in circulation were partially worn, and showed evidence indisputable of an acquaintance with the wash-tub; but all were current so long as the stamp was visible. Frequently I remarked that our men would use one of these singular bits of currency in

washing their hands and faces, and then pass it off for a plate of frioles or an orange. Much amusement, too, did we have among ourselves while in the district where it passes as a legal tender, and "Are you out of soap?" and "How are you off for soap?" were expressions continually passing from mouth to mouth. The same cant phrase is common enough in the United States, and has been for years; but how it originated is a matter of which I am most profoundly ignorant. At all events, it is applicable enough in some parts of Mexico.

In the afternoon we received permission to roam through the city without a guard. As we passed a prison, we were hailed from its gloomy, grated windows by a voice in our own language. There were two Americans—natives of Philadelphia, I believe—in the prison, who had been employed to work a woollen or cotton factory near Queretaro at a stipulated sum. Their employer had in some way broken his faith, and they had left him; but his power was superior, and he had thrown them into prison to gratify a mean spirit of revenge. We told them that we, too, were prisoners, unable to afford them assistance, and then left them with wishes for their speedy release.

We next strolled through the principal streets, entering some of the stores, taverns, cigar, and barber shops. In one of the latter I noticed two men busily employed in grinding and sharpening gaffs for fighting-cocks, showing that this amusement is common among the denizens of Queretaro. One man was shaving a customer, but instead of lathering him after the French or English fashion, he placed a large composition or silver basin, having a hollow in one side to fit the neck, directly under the chin of the customer, and then soaped his face with his hands. It is a vile Spanish custom,

this; but, like thousands of others of that anti-go-ahead race, is persisted in. I thought of Don Quixotte and Mambrino's helmet the moment I set eyes upon one of these basins.

In our stroll we passed the walls of an immense convent or nunnery, said to be a large village of itself. We could only see the tops of the buildings above the walls, for no one is allowed to pass the gates. We entered a large dry and fancy goods store, having for a sign "Tienda de los Palomos," or Store of the Doves. Why the Mexicans name their shops and stores after cats, dogs, doves, and other birds and beasts, is a mystery to me. Their fondas and mesones all have religious names, or nearly all. It was quite common for us to stop at the tavern of the Holy Ghost, or Hotel of the True Cross, and others, a translation of which would appear irreverent and almost blasphemous to my countrymen.

Just as dark was setting in, and while three of us were crossing the market-place in the direction of a little Mexican restaurat, several stones were thrown at us from the dense throng at that hour congregated in the square. Fortunately not one of the missiles hit us, although they whizzed by close to our heads. Who the authors of this outrage were we did not ascertain; but they were probably some of the very lowest class, who only insulted us in this way to show their pitiful spite at our nation and religion. It was almost the only direct insult offered us south of El Paso, for generally the lower orders looked upon us rather as objects of pity than of hatred or revenge. We immediately entered the restaurat, after the outrage had been committed, and called for a supper, the perpetrators not following or molesting us farther.

While we were waiting for our meal, a monk or friar, of some poor and abstemious order, entered the apartment with a noiseless step. Tied about him with a piece of rope was a coarse blanket or gown, of a grayish yellow colour; his head was bare, the top of it being close shaven; and he may have been barefooted, for I do not recollect seeing either boot, shoe, or sandal upon his feet. In his hand he had a small tin box, resembling, in many respects, a lantern. At all events, I took it for a lantern; for as the room was but dimly lighted, and as he silently held the box close to my face, I thought he was endeavouring to scrutinize my countenance with the hope of recognising me by some mysterious and hidden light it might contain. A *galopina*, or kitchen girl, standing by, soon explained the business of the holy brother by dropping a quartillo into the box through a hole in the top, which I had not previously seen. Now the mystery was solved—the friar was holding the box in my face for alms. Fearing that I might have insulted him by rudely, although innocently, staring in his face, I resolved upon purchasing forgiveness to such extent as a quarter of a dollar would obtain, and accordingly dropped a coin of that value into the box. The amount purchased my pardon, if he thought I owed him one; for, making a low bow, he gave me his *benedicte*, and then, with dignified meekness, left the room.

Weary from our long walk, and the early morning ride, we remained no longer than to obtain our supper, and then retired to our quarters at the old convent, meeting with neither obstruction nor insult on the way.

CHAPTER X.

Departure from Queretaro.—A stupendous Aqueduct.—View of Queretaro from a Mountain Summit.—Number and Magnificence of its Churches.—Meeting with Englishmen.—News that Colonel Cooke's Party were in Chains.—The Diligence.—Letter from Mr. Lumsden.—Liberation of Frank Combs.—Arrival at San Juan del Rio.—Escape of two of our Companions.—They are retaken and punished.—The Indian Village of Tula.—Strange Celebration.—Queer Characters.—Crackers and Sky-rockets.—Approach to the City of Mexico.—Speculations as to our future Lot.—Mr. Navarro separated from his Companions.—Route altered.—“Quien Sabe?”—Kindness of the Indian Women.—Arrival at the old Palace of San Cristobal.—The Texans locked within its gloomy Walls.—Visited by Mr. Lumsden and other Americans.—A joyful Meeting.—Prospects of Release.—Description of San Cristobal.—Release of Falconer and Van Ness.—Visited by Members of the United States Legation.—Difference in the Policy of the United States and English Governments.—Cause of Mr. Falconer's Release.—Another Visit from the Americans.—File of American Papers.—A Letter from Chihuahua, and its Effects.—Gloomy Presentiments.—Our Men supplied with Clothing and Blankets.—Celebration in Honour of Santa Anna's Leg.—Supplies cut off.—Sufferings on the Increase.—Nothing to Eat.—Resorts of the Texans to obtain Food.—Singular Tribunals, with the Results.—A Humorous Witness.—Wild Revel in San Cristobal.

IMMEDIATELY on leaving Queretaro, our road took us directly under the immense aqueduct which supplies the city with water. This aqueduct is a stupendous work, having been built many years since, by the Spaniards, when money was abundant and Indian labour easy to command. Pure water is carried by this means across a wide valley, the head spring being on a mountain side at a distance of some six or eight miles. The arches which support the stupendous fabric are of stone, lofty yet light, and of graceful proportions. Far as the eye can reach, the aqueduct is seen stretching across the valley; now rising high above the surface of the ground