

several of the state legislative assemblies had passed strong resolutions to that effect—resolutions which must, sooner or later, drive the naturally tardy General Government into other measures than mere argument in order to secure the liberation of its citizens. He moreover was aware that General Thompson, a gentleman whose character for promptness and decision was well known, was now on his way to Mexico as the accredited minister of the United States, and he naturally enough supposed, from the tone of the public journals, that he must bring with him stronger instructions in relation to our release than any which had been sent to Mr. Ellis. With all these circumstances staring him in the face, it was plain enough that Santa Anna was disposed to shuffle out of a dilemma in which he found himself involved; and to do it with as good a grace as possible, and to preserve the dignity of the great Mexican nation spotless, he now concluded to get rid of us on the best terms he could make. Hence his artful *ruse* to have the facts I have alluded to above—those in relation to the squadron, young Combs, and Spencer—accounted for, knowing all the while that there was really nothing in them to arouse the suspicions of his government.

But even should Santa Anna refuse to grant my release, I still had the satisfaction of knowing that my individual case would be definitely acted upon—that I must shortly know my fate, whatever it might be. Should the Mexican government still refuse to give me up, I had made every arrangement to effect an escape. In doing this, I had studiously avoided implicating any member of the United States legation, but had found friends among the foreigners who promised to assist me in any way. Money, that great talisman, I had at my

command to an amount that would open any prison-door in Mexico; and in addition to this, the escape over the wall, a mode I have previously described, was open so long as I remained in San Lazaro. Under all these encouraging circumstances, it will be imagined that my spirits were not a little raised, and that my mind was relieved of many apprehensions by the bright anticipations of once more regaining my liberty, either through the influence of my government or by my own individual exertions.

It was on Friday, the 15th of April, that Mr. Mayer called upon me with the good news just related. During the day I received no other visits, but on the afternoon of the next Mr. M. again called, and this time in company with two or three American citizens. He said there had been no farther action in relation to my release, but that there probably would be that evening, and that I should be made acquainted with the result immediately.

From the Americans I learned that General Thompson was expected that evening in the stage from Vera Cruz, and that a large party of them had come out as far as San Lazaro, by which the stage passed, to meet and escort him into the city. While we were speaking of the circumstance, the distant rumbling of wheels was heard. My friends immediately retired, but not until they had promised to visit me again before dark.

Shortly after their departure I could plainly hear the stage, in which was the new minister with his suite, rattling by the hospital, and making its way towards the centre of the city. To me there was something unusually enlivening in the sounds, for I well knew that I was now soon to be relieved of the annoying suspense which had long weighed upon me like an in-

cubus. There are few men who have had the opportunity of feeling the harassing annoyance of suspense to the degree I had experienced for the last two months. Imprisoned unjustly in one of the vilest holes in Christendom—surrounded by loathsome wretches, whose very aspect was enough to drive one almost to desperation—shut out completely from the world—taunted almost daily by my Texan comrades with invidious comparisons between my own government and that of Great Britain in looking after the rights of their subjects, and half convinced, as I was, that the former was not moving with that promptness the case demanded, I was also suffering under an indisposition which was far from inconsiderable; and when to all this is added the circumstance that during much of this period I had little hope of a change, except such change as is found in chains and labour, the reader may easily imagine the irksomeness of my situation. But now the time had arrived when the dark curtain of suspense was to be raised—a suspense so torturing that a sentence to ten years' imprisonment would have been almost a relief—now my position was about to be defined in some way, and I certainly felt an elevation of spirits I had been a stranger to for months.

At sunset two of my friends returned, bringing me a large file of papers, and word from General Thompson that he would visit me early the next morning. I spent hours in poring over the papers from different quarters of the United States, and absolutely forgot my troubles as I read the many articles I found in them relating to my own case, and saw the warm interest taken in my behalf by my editorial brethren throughout the country.

Shortly after breakfast the next morning I was visited in San Lazaro by General Thompson himself. I

was reading when he entered, seated with my feet resting against a large medicine-chest in the centre of the room. On seeing him at the door, I advanced to meet him. He inquired the nature of the diseases in the hospital, and on my informing him that we had none other than leprosy and small-pox, he obtained, through the assistance of Mr. Mayer, permission for me to walk with him as far as the front door of the building, where there were several benches or seats. Accompanying General T. were Lieutenant Faunce, of our revenue service, and Messrs. Coolidge of Boston, and Perrin of New-Orleans. These gentlemen brought me a large package of letters from my friends, and expressed the greatest confidence that I should return with them to the United States.

General Thompson asked me every particular in relation to my arrest and subsequent imprisonment—promised to exert himself to the utmost in procuring my unconditional release—and moreover said that he would endeavour, at least, to obtain an order for my removal to other and better quarters forthwith. If possible, he intended to procure my release upon parole until my case could be definitely settled one way or the other, pledging himself to give me up whenever the Mexican government might call for me. After a little farther conversation the new minister and his party took their leave.

With spirits elated I returned to my gloomy quarters, passing much of the day in perusing and reperusing the letters from my friends. There is something at all times soothing and grateful to the feelings in receiving one of these written tokens of attachment—something which convinces that you are not forgotten—that you still hold a place in the memory of those en-

deared to you by ties of friendship; but how doubly grateful to me were these kind evidences of regard—the first I had received for nearly a year. They carried me back to other and happier days—to scenes I had strong hopes of soon visiting—and I almost fancied myself free as I scanned their pages. But alas! how often is the cup of happiness dashed from our lips when we have it within our very grasp. Thirty-six hours after I was indulging in these pleasing anticipations, and while bright hope was opening to me a prospect of the most flattering nature, I was plunged into the very lowest depths of uncertainty—I may almost say of despair.

On the morning of the 18th of April, the day after General Thompson's visit, Mr. Perrin called upon me at San Lazaro. From his conversation, although he endeavoured to offer me hope, I could plainly enough see that the chances of attaining my liberty were not as favourable as they had been some two or three days before. The partial promise to release me, given to Mr. Ellis by Santa Anna on the 14th, the latter had probably found some means to evade entirely or to defer, and I was confident he would temporize to an extent which no other diplomacy than Mexican can ever hope to equal. In that particular branch of diplomatic science—deferring or “putting off” the main question—the Mexicans excel even the Chinese.

On leaving me, Mr. Perrin advised that I should make no attempt to escape, at least until General Thompson had been duly received as the accredited minister of the United States; but a circumstance which occurred soon after he left the hospital determined me to make the attempt at once. While walking in the little yard which we were allowed to visit during the

day, I noticed, standing against the wall, a long pole, strong enough to bear my weight, and at equal distances, and about one yard apart, were placed pegs. For what use this pole was originally intended I am at a loss to conjecture; at the time I looked upon it as a special interposition, as by means of it I could easily enough climb to the top of the wall, and then, after dragging it over, let myself down, without danger, on the other side. Watching an opportunity when I supposed no one was observing me, I removed the pole to one of the corners of the yard, and then returned to my quarters in the hospital. I am confident not one of the guard observed my movements, as on entering the hospital I found them all engaged in conversation with the inmates, where they could not possibly have seen me.

The fact of my having either seen or moved the pole I did not disclose to any one, not even my friends. My plan was, in case any of the foreigners called upon me in the afternoon, to divulge the circumstances I have mentioned to some one of them who knew the city well, and ask for his assistance in enabling me to escape. All I wished him to do was simply to name either the first or second street, running from San Lazaro, that led directly into the city, and place himself at the head of it at dark, dressed in such a manner that I might easily distinguish him. I then intended to risk the danger of being observed while clambering over the wall. The attempt was to be made at twilight, and just before the time at which the door leading to the yard was generally locked for the night.

In order to be every way in readiness, I put all my money and valuables in my pockets, intending to leave my clothing, books, &c., to any one who might take them. All these arrangements made, I now awaited,