

than their own shall be preached or inculcated in the land.* The almost countless number of ecclesiastics in Mexico are well aware that their expensive system of church domination inevitably tends to diminish the resources and retard the prosperity and advancement of the country; but it is not in the nature of men holding power, whether Protestant or Catholic, political or religious, to resign it willingly, or give up any office of influence or emolument already within their grasp, because it conflicts with the interests or liberties of the people; and to expect the priests of Mexico to abandon their sway or abdicate their ascendancy would be to suppose them more than men. All reformation of existing evils, either of Church or State, must come from the people themselves: whether the Mexican nation will ever be brought to know, feel, and exert itself against the powerful ecclesiastical and military establishments which are pressing and keeping it down, is a matter extremely problematical.

The Catholic reader must not construe these remarks into an attack upon his religion, for such is far from my

* No other religion than the Catholic is allowed or preached up to this day in Mexico, but a greater degree of tolerance is manifested towards the professors of other creeds now than formerly. I have read in some book—but its author I cannot call to mind—of a debate in the Mexican Senate in relation to the allowing Protestant foreigners a burial-place. No such privilege was permitted them until within the last ten or fifteen years, and it was only through the urgent remonstrances of the then British minister that the point was conceded. One of the Mexican Senators, when the subject was debated in Congress, made remarks something like the following: "There is one of four things we must allow these heretics who may happen to die in our land: we must eat, pickle and send them out of the country, throw them in the fields, or bury them under ground. To eat them would be most repugnant—not one of my colleagues would taste the flesh of a heretic; to send them out of the country would be expensive; to throw them in the fields would be pestilence-breeding, and otherwise exceedingly offensive. To move, therefore, as the easiest, cheapest, safest, and every way the best course for us to adopt, is to allow them a burial-place"—and the motion was carried.

intention—towards both faith and its professors I entertain no other feelings than of respect. My object has been to draw a rough picture of Catholicism in Mexico, and the power and means by which it is sustained, and in so doing I have confined myself strictly to the truth. In its essentials the Romish religion in Mexico is doubtless the same as it is in the United States, or in any country where toleration, that firm and enduring foundation of all political liberty, is known; but in its administration there is as much difference between the two as there is between the religion of the Pilgrims of New-England and that of the Hindoos or New Zealanders.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mode of passing our Time.—Herr Cline.—Mexico by Moonlight.—Note from Madame Calderon.—Rambles over Mexico.—A Dance.—The Jarabe.—Change of Scene.—A murdered Soldier.—Touching Instance of Grief.—More Moonlight.—"Quien Vive?"—A staggering Padre.—Release of Americans through the Exertions of General Thompson.—Visit to Tacubaya.—Cruel and mysterious Murder of Egerton and his Mistress.—Visit to the Acordada.—A Show-case of Murder.—Gloomy Entrance to the Acordada.—Some Description of the Interior.—Release of a Female Prisoner.—Mr. Navarro.—Story of his Wrongs.—Robbery and Crime in the Acordada.—Texan Prisoners within its dreary Walls.—Take Leave of Mr. Navarro.—Farther Description of the Prison.—Encounter with Dutch Broom Girls.—An old Acquaintance in the Broom Line.—The Ballad-mongers badly patronised.—Evangelistas, or Letter-writers of Mexico.—Their singular Calling.—Stock in Trade of the Evangelista.—Mexican Coaches and Mexican Coachmen.—Another Visit to Santiago.—More of the Mexican Coachmen.

OUR days, from the 21st to the 27th of April, were passed in roaming over the city and environs, in rides through the Alameda and Paseo, and in occasional visits

to our companions still in confinement at San Lazaro and Santiago, while the evenings we whiled away at the Italian Opera, at the monte rooms in the vicinity of the Plaza, where heaps of doubloons dazzle and allure gambling adventurers, at fandangoes, in midnight walks over the city, or mayhap in seeing the feats of a company of pantomimists under the direction of the celebrated Herr Cline, who had engaged the Italian Opera House on alternate nights.

No city in North America, or perhaps in the wide world, can vie with Mexico as seen under the softening influence of moonlight—can equal the sweet and silent grandeur with which her palaces, churches, and innumerable establishments, rich in architectural beauty and exterior painting, are clothed by the subdued beams of the queen of night—and on one occasion I spent hours in wandering at random through her streets, completely absorbed by the beauty of the scene.* Attracted by

* Madame Calderon draws a graphic picture of Mexico by moonlight. She says that it is the most flattering medium through which the city can be viewed, with its broad and silent streets, and splendid old buildings, whose decay and abandonment are softened by the silvery light; its ancient churches, from which the notes of the organ occasionally come pealing forth, mingled with faint blasts of music borne on the night wind from some distant procession; or with the soft music of a hymn from some neighbouring convent. The white-robed monk—the veiled female—even the ragged beggar, add to the picture: by daylight his rags are too visible. Frequently, as the carriages roll along to the opera, or as, at a late hour, they return from it, they are suddenly stopped by the appearance of the mysterious coach, with its piebald mules, and the *Eye* surrounded by rays of light on its panels; a melancholy apparition, for it has come from the house of mourning, probably from the bed of death. Then, by the moonlight, the kneeling figures on the pavement seem as if carved in stone. The city of Mexico by moonlight—the environs of Mexico at daybreak—these are the hours for viewing both to advantage, and for making us feel how

“All but the spirit of man is divine.”

Such is the picture drawn of this splendid city, as seen under the influence of moonlight, by the author of “Life in Mexico”—a picture the strict fidelity of which I can attest.

the sounds of a mandolin, coming from an open door in a street near the market-place, I first took the precaution to gather such small amount of silver as I was possessed of at the time into my hands, placed my hands in my pockets, and entered the apartment. The dimly-lighted room was rendered even more obscure by a cloud of cigar smoke; yet I could plainly discern the faces of some dozen swarthy and blanketed léperos and the same number of scantily-clad girls, watching the movements of a party of dancers who were executing one of the rude *jarabes* of the country—a species of dance consisting chiefly of shuffling with the feet and singing, and at the termination of which the males are expected to treat their partners to refreshments in the way of dulces.* One of the girls politely made room for me upon a rude bench, but my stay was short—the fumes of cigar smoke, and the odour of pulque and mes-cal, drove me from the apartment at the conclusion of the first dance.

While passing a house but a few steps from this haunt of revelry, and certainly within hearing, I saw through the open door the face of a corpse, lying in a coarse box or coffin upon a table, and with some half dozen long candles burning on either side. Two or three females, their faces covered with their hands as if in deep grief, were seated upon the floor near the head of the table, while a single soldier was unconcernedly smoking on a rough chest in one corner of the apartment. Wishing to ascertain the circumstances attending the death of the man in the coffin, and to see any ceremony that might take place, I noiselessly entered the room. The soldier informed me that the unfortunate man upon the table

* *Jarabe* means, I believe, some species of sweetmeat, so that it can be called the “Dance of the Sweetmeats.”

was a comrade of his, who had been stabbed by a girl some two hours before in a fit of jealousy. The knife had reached the soldier's heart, killing him instantly, and one of the women on the floor was sobbing audibly her grief that he had died without the presence of a priest and unconfessed. Whether she was his mother or sister I did not learn—she lifted not her face while I was in the room.

The lateness of the hour, the sorrowful spectacle before me, with the attendant train of thoughts upon the insecurity of life in Mexico the scene called up, now admonished me to hasten towards my quarters at the Gran Sociedad. The moon was riding high in heaven as I once more found myself in the streets, and shedding her mild and subdued light upon the innumerable religious establishments—now kissing, with sweet radiance, a towering dome or steeple; and anon, as some wandering cloud would brush hastily across her face, flitting and spectral shadows, as of misshapen giants, would stalk silently across the plazas and thoroughfares, and dissolve or lose themselves as the vapory intruder which had created them resigned its momentary sway. The air was soft, pure, and balmy—such an air as would, in many countries, tempt thousands from their couches; yet the streets of Mexico were deserted—that stillness which can be heard, that indefinable hum which seems to be the breath of nature while asleep, reigned on every side—and I even essayed to advance on tiptoe, as if fearful of awaking the deep loneliness of night.

The startling "*quien vive?*" of a sentinel, after I had walked two or three squares without meeting a single living being, was a relief as I neared the Plaza Mayor. When within this noted square, the clattering of half a

dozen horsemen, dashing over the rough pavement in hot haste as though to arrest some midnight assassin or quell some drunken brawl, was really a welcome sound—the previous quiet had been so intense that it was painful.

I crossed the Plaza and entered the Plateros. Ten steps farther, I encountered two servants assisting homeward a staggering priest. Charity induced me to hope that the padre was lame or infirm, but the strong light of the moon constrained me to believe that he had been dining or supping with some holy brother, and that his potations had been other than of chocolate or water. A walk of some few minutes brought me once more to my quarters, and still another five minutes added me to the list of sleepers within the Gran Sociedad; but the memory of that moonlight walk awoke with me in the morning, and the remembrance of the scenes which I beheld that night is vivid as was their reality.

On the morning of the 27th of April we were rejoiced to learn that three of our comrades in imprisonment—S. B. Sheldon, Allensworth Adams, and W. Tompkins—had been released through the interference of General Thompson. The liberated men were soon comfortably quartered in the city, and their wants provided for.

During the afternoon of the same day a party of some six or eight of us, composed of Englishmen and Americans, visited the garden of an Italian at Tacubaya, who kept a ninepin alley and provided refreshments for such foreign guests from the city as might visit the little village. Before we returned to the city, an English artist of great celebrity in Mexico, a landscape painter named Egerton, was pointed out to us by

one of his countrymen, who also related several anecdotes referring to the many attainments of the artist.

While breakfasting the next morning, with an English gentleman in the city, we were shocked with the intelligence that Egerton, together with a female with whom he lived as his wife, and who possessed rare personal attractions and endowments as a landscape painter, had been cruelly murdered during the night. The whole city was at once thrown into the highest excitement by the startling news, and to increase still farther the commotion, many Mexican families, who had made Tacubaya their country residence, packed their furniture with all haste, and with their families returned immediately into the city, as if fearful of being massacred.

It seems that on the evening of the murder, Egerton and the unfortunate woman were walking in a large garden attached to their residence, as was their custom, and that while thus engaged they were attacked by some person or persons unknown, and both slain. The body of Egerton was found some distance from that of his companion, run through apparently with a sword, while by his side was a walking-stick much hacked, rendering it evident that he had fought to the last and made a stout resistance. The body of the female, who was on the point of becoming a mother, was also stabbed and otherwise horribly mangled, and this induced the belief that she too had resisted to the last. Her face was scratched and otherwise disfigured, a piece was bitten from her breast, her person had been abused, and the perpetrator of the outrage, as if fearing that she might not be recognised, had written her name upon a piece of paper and pinned it to a fragment of the dress that still remained upon her body, most of it having been torn off in the struggle which ended in her death. The

formation of the letters was plainly English, a circumstance which went directly to prove that the murder was neither planned nor matured by Mexicans; and to corroborate this belief, the money and watch of Egerton, and the jewelry of his companion, were untouched—rendering it certain that the act was not one of the native robbers, but of deep revenge. Among the thousand reports and rumours circulating in Mexico the next morning, was one to the effect that the murdered man had a wife and two children in England, and that some two years previous he had visited his native land with the intention of bringing them to Mexico; but instead of returning with his wife, he had seduced and enticed away the murdered woman, who had since lived with him as his wife. Rumour also had it that the latter was engaged to be married to a young man in England at the time of her elopement with Egerton. Among the many speculations afloat among the countrymen of the unfortunate couple, the one which received the most credence was, that the murder had been planned in England, and effected by some acquaintance of the woman, as a matter of revenge. There was also a story that Egerton had been involved in a love affair with some fair Mexican; but this report received little credence. The British Minister, Mr. Pakenham, exerted himself to the utmost to ferret out and arrest the perpetrators, in which he was assisted by General Valencia and the Mexican police and authorities; but up to this time no clew to the authors of the horrible outrage has been discovered, and the whole affair remains a profound mystery.

Determined, if possible, to gain admission into the noted *Acordada*, and have one interview with my old companion, Antonio Navarro, before leaving Mexico,

on the morning after the murder I have just hastily described I obtained the assistance of a young and influential Englishman, who spoke confidently of his being able either to coax or bribe his way into the interior of the prison. Arrived in front, my companion pointed, through a barred window, to a species of form built upon an inclined plane, on which the bodies of such persons as have been murdered during the night are exposed in the morning, so that they may be recognised by their friends! With a shudder at the thoughts of scenes of misery and deep woe which must almost daily be enacted in front of this revolting show-case of murder, by the wives, sisters, mothers, and other relatives of the victims, we passed onward.

After a few words of parley with a guard of soldiers stationed at the main entrance, we were admitted within the gloomy walls and commenced the ascent of a flight of solid but much-worn steps. Either side we found lined with ragged and squalid wretches, doubtless in some way related to the prisoners, and lounging about with the hope of being allowed to visit them. Arrived at the head of this dismal staircase, and after a few words of farther parley, we were admitted through a strong and massive door. Here we at once found ourselves involved in a labyrinth of gloomy galleries and dark passage-ways. Soldiers, keepers, officers of the courts, gentlemen and léperos, were hurrying to and fro; ponderous locks were turned in opening or closing heavy iron doors and gates on every side; curses and deep imprecations were heard in unseen quarters; while the clanking of chains, as they were dragged along the floors of the different apartments and across the stone pavement of an immense patio below us, were grating harshly on our ears.

My companion asked a young man, who appeared to be in some way connected with the dreary prison, if he could be allowed a few minutes' conversation with Señor Navarro. "Presently," answered the individual addressed, at the same time ushering us into a small office on the outer side of the main corridor. A hard-featured man, who seemed as though he might be a captain of the night watch, was reading the *Diario del Gobierno* in one corner of this apartment, while a clerk was making out what appeared to be arrest-warrants or subpœnas for witnesses, at a desk on the opposite side. Here we remained anxiously, for some half an hour, until a Mr. Navarro, but not the *right* one, stepped into the room and asked our business. On telling him that we had called to see another prisoner who bore the same name, he pointed to a heavy iron door or gate, leading to a species of anteroom, and said that we must inquire there. A word or two with a keeper through the grates sufficed to gain us admission, and no sooner had we entered than the door was closed and locked after us, with a clang that sent a shudder through our frames.

The young Englishman who accompanied me now again made known our wish to see the prisoner, Mr. Navarro, adding that we had received permission to that effect. The keeper, after telling us to wait a few moments, unlocked another grated door, which seemed to open into an inner corridor, and went in quest of my former comrade. During the few minutes that elapsed before his return, we had an opportunity of learning some of the secrets of this celebrated prison, and of seeing the cold, business-like air with which it is conducted. On every side it seemed as though we could hear keys turning in ponderous locks, the dreary sound of

bolts, and the clanging of the heavy iron doors as they opened or were shut. On one side of the interior they appeared to be admitting prisoner after prisoner, crying aloud their names as the unfortunates crossed the gloomy thresholds: at an opposite side, the passage leading directly through the room in which we were standing, seemed to be the outlet through which the prisoners made their way on being liberated, for while we remained three or four were escorted through in the direction of the main entrance to the building from without. A sickly, deadly, prison-like smell, arising from damp and dirty walls and floors, ragged and filthy wretches covered with vermin, and a close and confined atmosphere, pervaded the apartment, and as if to make the air doubly offensive, the opening of a heavy door would bring in some freshly-foul current from the dismal interior.

Three times was the name of each liberated prisoner shouted aloud, and three times, it seemed to us, was the cry accompanied by sounds as of keys turning in the prison locks and of doors slowly opening. "Guadalupe Ribas" was heard, in low and muttered tones, from the inner recesses, followed by sounds almost indistinct, but which resembled those of a heavy door within doors as it swung upon its hinges. "Guadalupe Ribas" was again heard, in tones far more distinct, succeeded by sounds which it was now plainly evident proceeded from a key turning in some heavy lock and the opening of still another iron door. "Guadalupe Ribas" once more resounded in our ears, louder and more distinct, a strong door grated heavily upon its hinges, and Guadalupe Ribas was passed through the room in which we were awaiting. Who or what she was, or for what crime she had been confined, we did not learn; but for

attempting the life of her lover in a fit of jealousy, or for some act of a like nature, she had probably been provided with lodgings within the gloomy walls of the Acordada. She was a pretty girl, of not more than eighteen, was neatly and cleanly dressed in garments brought probably by the friends who had procured her release, and with downcast eyes and hurried steps tripped from the place as the last door was opened.*

No sooner had she departed, than a ponderous iron gate, leading apparently into another part of the prison, was slowly opened, and Mr. Navarro stood before us. Three months' close imprisonment, combined with the horrible associations of the Acordada, had wrought terrible changes in the appearance of my old companion—his unshaved face was pale and haggard, his hair long and uncombed, his vestments ragged and much soiled. On first entering the walls, his fellow-prisoners, composed of the most loathsome and abandoned wretches, had robbed him not only of his money but his clothing, and with emotion he now told us that the only sustenance he received was the scanty allowance of tortillas and frijoles given to each of the immense horde of felons and assassins by whom he was surrounded—a pittance barely sufficient to sustain life. He spoke of his wife and children at San Antonio, of a son at college in Missouri, and with tearful eyes begged me to convey to them information that he was still alive and not without hope of ultimate release. Stealthily, and without being seen by the surrounding Mexicans, we gave the unfortunate man what money we had—shaking hands with him three or four times previous to our final parting, and at each grasp slipping a

* I may have mistaken the name of this girl, although I heard it pronounced three times.

few dollars into his possession: then, after expressing our ardent wishes for his speedy liberation, we left the Acordada, but not until I heard the ponderous iron door close, with a dreadful clang, upon my old comrade.

As we were leaving the building, I looked down into an immense patio, paved with stone, where some hundreds of male prisoners were sitting, lounging, working, and sleeping—the apartment for the females I did not see. Near the main entrance we found several of the men belonging to the Santa Fé Expedition—Englishmen, Americans, Frenchmen, and Prussians—who had been liberated through the intervention of the ministers of their different governments. They were now awaiting an opportunity to see several Texan prisoners, who had been captured on the Rio Grande in the vicinity of Matamoros. I, too, was anxious to give these prisoners a call, although unacquainted with them; but as my companion had an engagement to fulfil in the city, was compelled to hurry off without accomplishing it. Another opportunity to visit the Acordada did not offer while I was in Mexico.

A full description of this dreary prison might not prove uninteresting, but I am unable to give it. Hundreds of wretches, male and female, and of every grade, are confined within its walls—chained, ill-fed, dirty and ragged. In 1828 occurred the Revolution of the Acordada, and during some of the more recent pronunciamientos the prisoners, or many of them, have escaped; but in the spring of 1842 the place appeared to be stocked, even to overflowing, with murderers, thieves, counterfeiters, wives who had stabbed or poisoned their husbands, girls who had assassinated or attempted to assassinate their lovers—in short, a miscellaneous collection of every hardened class in Mexico, from the

highest to the lowest. Some one of the guards, attendants, or keepers should have been provided with a chain and a lodging within the prison while I was there, for among them they robbed me of a handkerchief. This was a mere trifle, however, for it is impossible to turn a corner in Mexico without having your pockets picked. Even in the churches, it is said, the léperos ply their calling; for while their spiritual wants are administered to by the priests, the ragged rascals have an eye upon their temporal need by introducing their fingers into the pockets of their neighbours, and this with a dexterity unknown in other lands.

On our return to the heart of the city, I proceeded at once to the great coach stand in the Plaza Mayor for the purpose of hiring one of the clumsy vehicles to ride out to Santiago. In the Plateros I met a couple of Dutch broom-girls, with their “fader and big broder,” squalling away at one of their street ballads, and with the usual tambourine, hurdy-gurdy, and dancing monkey accompaniments. One of the girls I recognised as a veteran itinerant, well known in the thoroughfares of every city of the United States. She spoke a little English, and on my asking her how she liked Mexico, she remarked that “dese peoples is very poor in dis city, so poor as we can’t make de expenses.” Presuming that the expenses of one of these families are far from heavy, it may be naturally inferred that the patronage they received in Mexico was not very extensive, and that the demand for brooms and ballads of Dutch manufacture is not sufficient to induce a farther exportation.

As I passed under the Portales, with the intention of examining a showy sarape exposed in front of one of the shops, I paused for a moment to watch the move-

ments of one of the letter-writers of Mexico—*evangelistas* they are called—who was intently scrutinizing the countenance of a customer, seated upon a small box in front of him, as if to read his thoughts. If the customer was not an assassin, or a noted robber at least, his face certainly belied him; for a more hang-dog expression of countenance was never worn. As he whispered a few words in the attentive ear of the *evangelista*, I could not but think that the fellow was consenting to an offer made him to assassinate or rob some unfortunate person, and wished the letter-writer to make the fact known upon a note he was in the act of sketching.

These evangelistas, it is said, ply a profitable trade by writing letters for those of the inhabitants whose education, in the matter of expressing their thoughts by intelligible signs on paper, has been neglected—and of the entire population of the city of Mexico, I do not believe that five in every hundred adults can read and write. Where it is impossible, then, to communicate by verbal message, the professional letter-writers are called in requisition, and thus they are made the repositories of secrets innumerable, and secrets which it is well understood they will never betray. There, in the neighbourhood of the Plaza, do these evangelistas sit from day to day, their stock in trade consisting of pens, ink, and a few quires of assorted paper, with a small tablet upon which to write. As their principal customers are girls, it is more than probable that love and intrigue are the themes upon which their talents are oftenest called in requisition; but that they are ready, for “a consideration,” to indite epistles in relation to treason, assassination, or robbery, there can be little doubt.

As I approached the coach stand, I suppose there

must have been something in my countenance which indicated that I could furnish a job, for twenty Mexican Jehus at once crowded around me, and each pointed out his establishment as in every way preferable to those of his fellows. Coachmen are the same the world over, and if you do not ascertain that their animals are faster, their vehicles newer, easier to ride in, and less liable to break down than any others, it will not be because these circumstances are not told you with open-mouthed vehemence. In the present instance I threw myself entirely upon the generosity of the assembled crowd of “whips,” and after undergoing the usual amount of pulling and hauling, at last found myself in one of the coaches. In another moment the postillion mounted the “near wheel mule”—I believe that is the technical term—and I was whirled and jolted off on a short visit to my imprisoned friends. In an hour I was once more in the city, my hat suffering severely from the jolts of the coach as it crossed one or two of the gutters, while a new bump was developed on the crown of my head by sudden and forcible contact with the top of the vehicle.

A few words in relation to the appearance and construction of the Mexican coach, and I have done with this chapter. The superstructure, or body of the vehicle, is well enough, being somewhat after the fashion of our own light hackney-coaches; but the huge frame or scaffolding upon which it is swung is altogether a different thing, and gives the whole affair a clumsy, ill-proportioned appearance. The wheels are large, strong, placed at a distance of three or four yards apart, and were the immense platform upon which the top rests taken away, the American would at once suppose it to be a lumber carriage, such as timber and heavy stone

pillars are transported on in his native land. The sides of the body are painted, the scaffolding upon which it rests elaborately carved with queer conceits, and not to speak far out of the bounds of reason, there is timber enough wasted in the construction of the whole to build a small class Western steamer of the lighter model. Such is a hasty description of the coach: the animals and driver require a few words. The latter is generally a swarthy, brigandish, dashing fellow, dressed in a leathern jacket not lacking in embroidery and bell buttons, stout trousers of the same, with a broad-brimmed hat covered with oiled silk, and frequently decorated with silver cord and tassels. This is perched in a jaunty, devil-may-care style upon his head, and thus arrayed, the stranger, who has read some life of brigands illustrated with plates, cannot but think the Mexican *cochero* an individual even more ready to attack and rob his coach than to drive it. His mules are often large and strong animals, and although encumbered with heavy and useless ornaments attached to the harness, and frequently with a leathern case which completely covers their hind quarters and tails, he contrives to get over the ground with a celerity which could hardly be expected. What the charge per hour is I have now forgotten—I only know that, like coachmen in other countries, the Mexicans get all they can, and almost invariably ask for more.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Alameda.—Visit to that noted Pleasure-ground.—A Yankee Livery-stable-keeper in Mexico.—A Shower.—Paseo Nuevo.—Family Parties in their Carriages.—Mexican Cavaliers on Horseback.—Singular Gait of their Steeds.—Manner of training them.—Race with a Shower.—Santa Anna.—His Courtesy, Policy, Power, and ambitious Projects.—Reasons for the Decline of the Mexican Republic.—Our last Night in Mexico.—More of Captain Hudson.—Santa Anna's Benevolence!—Take leave of our Friends.—San Lazaro again.—Mexican Escort.—Mexico from the Mountain Sides.—Arrival at a Breakfast-House.—Arms and Equipments of our Party.—A Yankee Driver.—Roadside Crosses and Graves.—Stories of Robbers.—Robbing the Stages reduced to a System.—Señor Garcia and the Ladrones.—Rio Frio.—Mexican Dogs.—Cholula in the Distance.—Arrival at Puebla.—Visit to the Texan Prisoners at the Presidio.—Their unfortunate Condition.—The Cathedral of Puebla.—Its great Riches.—Anecdote of the Angels.—Superstition from which Puebla received its Name.—In Bed and Asleep.

In my last chapter I related the particulars of a visit to the Acordada. Although that prison is situated near the Alameda, a celebrated park or resort for all the fashionables of Mexico, up to this time I had not entered its gates or examined its beautiful fountains. The day was now approaching when Mr. Ellis was to leave the capital for Vera Cruz, with such American prisoners as had been liberated; and, determined to enjoy the pleasure of a ride through the Alameda before our departure, a small party of us procured horses after dinner, and sallied out with the intention of galloping over the pleasure-grounds of the *élite* of Mexico.

April seems to be a month of "smiles and tears" in Mexico as with us; for although the sky was bright and clear when we mounted the nags procured for us at the stable of a Yankee, who has found his way to