

outs at their stations—awnings closely tented, and veiled around the quarter-deck—arms and ammunition glittering beneath the light from a lantern swinging beneath the main boom, while the arrangement for the banquet was spread in two exact rows, along the lid of an arm-chest, with camp-stools ranged around. Captain Luigi and his mate brought their own spoons and white sugar. Our worthy boatswain, Mr. Mills, who came as lord of the seine, was our common guest, and was spooned and fed from the general contribution. We fell to and did full justice to the feast, pleasantly diversified by a narrative from Doctor Barret of his dark true-love in Boston, and a pitched battle that suddenly arose towards the close of the entertainment, between Monsieur Gashé and Captain Luigi's butler, a youthful Swede, called Baron Stockholm, who incautiously accused the valet of surreptitiously secreting divers table-knives and crockery, belonging to the Correo. Thereupon the fight ensued, and when finally concluded, much to the regret of the audience, our guests withdrew to a canoe, and paddled to their vessel.

Soon after daylight the next morning, the report of a gun came booming from the Commodore. A large ship was lying becalmed in the offing; by the aid of the glass we could see the little bright-colored flags talking to the stranger, and presently our number was displayed, and the telegraph said, "Prepare to give up the schooner." Alas! shorn of our honors, we slowly hove up the anchor—made all sail—spliced the main-brace—and thus ended our fortnight's cruise in the Rosita.

CHAPTER XV.

DURING the period of our blockade, which lasted but thirty-four days, there were no demonstrations made by the authorities of Mazatlan, to pronounce against their government, nor any steps taken on our side to compel them to do so. Finding there was no intention of molesting them, the alarm excited by our arrival soon subsided, and with the exception of exchanging a few musket shots occasionally, between the boats and shore, everything went on as quietly and peacefully as if no hostile force was at their gates. The commandanté of Mazatlan was Colonel Telles, an Habanéro by birth, and withal a brave man. He had pronounced against Vegas, the President of the province, and the troops of the town being devoted to him, he, of course, like all other disaffected persons in Mexico, assumed supreme direction of affairs, and laid violent hands on all moneys in the custom-house. He was described as a pleasant convivial person, keeping quite a seraglio of his own, and altogether an eligible acquaintance; a character, of which at a later date, when there was better means of judging, we found no cause to change our opinion. Just previous to our arrival a messenger reached Mazatlan with instructions for Telles to resign his authority to General Bustamante.

who was en route, and charged with full powers from the Mexican government, to direct the province of Sinaloa. Colonel Telles very discreetly incarcerated the emissary in the cabildo, and begged him to inform his master, the General, that there was no necessity for disorganizing his ideas about the government of the port, as he, Telles, would retain authority so long as he deemed proper. It had the desired effect, for there was nothing afterwards heard of Bustamente.

Leaving Mazatlan to be guarded by our consort, we sailed on the morning of the third of June, bound once more to Upper California. Long before dark, Creston had disappeared below the horizon, and the ship went calmly pushing her way towards the broad ocean. At meridian of the twelfth, the sun measured an altitude nearly vertical, our shadows vanished, and we resembled that facetious Dutchman, Mr. Peter Schemmell, who, it is said, disposed of his to the devil; at the same time while throwing the log, a voracious monster snapped up the log-chip, swallowed some fathoms of line, broke it, and went on his way unconcernedly, thus verifying the old song:

"A shark being on our starboard, boys!
For sharks d'ye see don't stand,
But grapple all they get at, boys!
Like sharks they do on land."

Without any other incident worthy of remark, we continued hugging the wind, and describing a great segment of a circle, until after passing through the prevailing north-easterly trades, we attained a latitude of thirty-six, and then being met by the west winds, we turned to the coast, and began sailing swiftly towards our destination.

The twenty-fifth day from Mazatlan saw us in sight of the red woods that fringe the Santa Cruz mountains, and that night as the moon sank glimmering down, we let run the cables in the bay of Monterey.

CHAPTER XVI.

BEING charged with dispatches for San Francisco, an early breakfast and hasty preparations soon placed me astride a dragoon's saddle. Attended by an artillery soldier and six horses for escort and cavallada, I drove a sombrero hard on my head, the spur yet harder in the ribs of my cavallo, and away we sallied en route. The sun had passed the meridian when we reached the Salinas plains, and we stopped to change horses at the Molino—a simple performance for one who can swing the lasso at any time, but for those unacquainted with the mode, it is requisite to drive the beasts into the corral, near every rancho, and catch one at leisure. I found my friend Anderson as hospitable and convivial as ever, and, after a mutual exchange of greetings and drinks, we galloped off across the plains. Instead of the smiling grassy deserts, gaudy flowers, and narrow canals of spring, I beheld parched earth, large patches of wild mustard, and miles of wild oats. Before accomplishing many leagues, one of the best little beasts of the cavallada eluded the vigilance of my body-guard, and we were compelled to abandon him. However, I made a forcible loan of a black mare brousing by the road-side—according to the custom of the country—and which, indeed, proved an admirable ally towards the close of our journey. Before entering the gorge that leads over the mountains on the opposite side of the Salinas,

we halted at a rancho—and peeping in at the door of an out-building, I discovered two industrious persons playing cards with much interest and deliberation—there was no cash up, but they assured me that each bean before them, which marked the game, was a transferable I O U for a bullock. One of the party was brother to the last Mexican governor of the territory—who absconded to Mazatlan, after showing a feeble and futile resistance to Commodore Stockton. He appeared somewhat pleased by the information I was able to communicate from his relative, Don José Castro, but not sufficiently so to interrupt the constant interchange of beans between him and his grave companion. We commenced ascending the pass that bars the road to the valley of St. Johns, and after winding a couple of hours slowly among the hills, gained the topmost ridge—which commands a fine triangular view of the rich slopes and plains below—and then soon accomplished the descent—passing the ruined village and dilapidated mission of San Juan, we galloped briskly around. On the road I enticed a mounted Indian into service by a taste from the brandy bottle, to act as *vacuero*—by no means a sinecure birth with such a lazy perverse set of brutes as we possessed—but I was grieved to find the soldier, sent as my guide and defender, had more than he was equal to in keeping himself and musket in the saddle. Moreover, he was neither amiable nor companionable—a serious crime for a traveler—and I was obliged at times, to drive and catch the horses, talk for him, and in fact, do all but eat and sleep for him—which last accomplishments he enjoyed in perfection, having a constitution like refined steel. I am happy to add, out of regard for the army, that he deserted shortly afterwards; although he forgot in his hurry to return a silver cup of mine.

Skirting along the banks of a rapid stream, the shades of night

began to fall as we drew bridles at a small rancho of one Don Herman. Our host, as usual with the race, was making a slight repast on a paper cigar: he was very cordial, and good-looking, as was also his still handsome old sposa. Like everybody I encountered before and since in the interior, they inquired when the United States Government would pay for horses and cattle taken during the war. *Quien sabe*—who knows—always came to my aid, and I drawled it out much to the purpose. Indeed, though our Californian Volunteers be good men and true among their own kith and kindred, yet their mistaken ideas of what constituted civilized warfare made them the most unscrupulous of freebooters; and they could be tracked far and near in their thirst for their enemy's horses and asses.

My host had no children, but, like Spanish padres, lots of nephews and neices. Amid a detached group of young people, I observed a pretty little girl, as I at first supposed a child, nursing an infant, but on inquiry I learned that she was the mother at fourteen, and had been married two years and a half; a fact which beats East India jungles for the precocity of women. Again on the road, with the husband of the little baby-mother for guide, who, by the way, was a most consummate scamp, incessantly urging me to make a short detour of five or six leagues, to dance all night at a fandango; and on taxing him with his gallivanting, and inconstant disposition among the softer sex, he replied, with an air of triumph,—*O! yo he engañado muchas!*—Bless you, I've broken the hearts of dozens—although he did not inspire me with being so determined a Lothario as he himself believed.

On we spurred, and urged the jaded steeds some leagues further, when we came upon the rancho of Carlos Castro. I was half famished from a long day's fast, but there was neither bread

nor edible matter in the hut. At last the buxom mistress asked me, *Quiere huevos?*—have an egg;—*caramba! si amiga!*—Why did not you tell me of this before? She was good enough to boil exactly fourteen, hard as bullets, but, what is equally incredible, I ate them all without salt; and then being in good humor with all the world, threw a peso in the kind Señora's lap, and with a lively adios, turned our horses' heads again towards the north star. The moon was riding high, round, and gleaming as the silver dollar I had just thrown the good lady, flooding the whole lovely plain, with its waving fields of yellow oats, and magnificent clusters of oaks, in one continuous vista of unexampled beauty. Five leagues beyond we struck off to the right, and after losing our path repeatedly, amid beds of water-courses, and bolls of trees, and when I was on the point of giving orders for a night bivouac on the sweet and yielding grain, we became aware of our proximity to a habitation by the usual barking diapason of half an hundred dogs and curs, and I was not sorry to swing my weary limbs from the saddle after a hard ride of eighty miles. In a few minutes I was stretched beside the proprietor of the rancho, Mr. Murphy, and as kind a specimen of the true Milesian as ever took leave of the Hill of Hoath. I knew that by the kindly tone of his voice; but I fell sound asleep, giving the old gentleman an account of the battle of Cerro Gordo, and never moved until long after sunrise. On awaking, I found myself in a dwelling constructed of pickets, driven perpendicularly into the ground, the apertures filled in with mud, and all covered by a roughly-thatched roof. The enclosure was rather a primitive, and I should judge temporary affair, to serve the first year or two of an emigrant's home. The dwelling was large enough, however, to comprise capacious beds in three of its angles, a couple

of tables, dresser, chairs, and a variety of useful articles scattered around the earth floor, but all presenting a far neater appearance than usually characterised the ranchos of the country. I was not left long to conjecture the cause of this tidiness, for whilst lacing my moccasins, preparatory to a yawn and shake, by way of toilette, I was saluted by a very nice young woman, with the hope that I had slept well, and at the same time presented with a large bowl of water and clean towel, by the young lady herself, who was afterwards introduced to me by her good father, as his daughter Ellen. She was tall and well made, a very pleasing face, lighted by fine dark grey eyes, black hair, and beautifully white teeth. I learned from her own rosy lips that she was the first American girl that ever walked over the mighty barrier of the Californian sierras, which she accomplished with one of her brothers, leaving the wagons, and her friends, to follow on a longer route. They were a large family, and most of the children born in Canada, thence *locating* in Missouri, and so on to the farthest west in California. There were four stalwart sons, who had all more or less been engaged in the last troubles, and had shown the natives a choice mould of bullets from their unerring rifles. They treated me with the utmost kindness; and after partaking of a capital breakfast of new eggs, hot bread, cream and *lomo*—tenderloin—prepared by their pretty sister, I felt quite equal to a short tramp among the hills, particularly upon finding the horses well nigh knocked up, and requiring a few hours more rest.

The rancho was situated on the northern verge of the broad valley, on the borders of a pure sparkling stream, surrounded in every direction, far and near, with golden lakes of wild oats, thickly studded and shaded by the oaks. In company with one

of the boys, Dan, we followed up the course of the stream for a mile or more, and I then had the satisfaction of sending a ball through and through the shoulders of a large doe. Dragging the carcass down to the water, and divesting it of its jacket, we then did the same ourselves, and swam and plashed for an hour in the little torrent. At the same time, with an extempore rod, twine, hook, and a "devil's darning-needle" for bait, Dan pulled out from a limpid pool delightful salmon-trout, full two feet in length; I ate part of one, and a charming fellow he was. Leaving our deer to the varmints, we returned to the rancho at noon, dined, and again boot and saddle; struck the road, and six or eight leisurely leagues brought us to the settlement of Puebla de San José. Here I was most civilly received, and entertained by an American gentleman, Mr. Ruckle, to whom I bore a letter. Supper, good old sherry, a cigar, and four hour's sleep; up betimes, and sent the jaded animals on to the Mission of Santa Clara for a bite of grass. I remained to break my fast at the house of an agreeable white-toothed lady named Pico, and then, accompanied by Mr. Ruckle, we hurried along the road which traverses the plain, shaded by noble avenues of oaks and willows. The Mission stands but a league from the Puebla, presents a tolerably flourishing appearance, with a well-preserved church, clusters of out-buildings, and well-cultivated gardens. It is by far the most important and respectable settlement of its kind in this portion of the territory; and since the dispersion of the priests, and confiscation of church-lands, has still fortunately retained a mite of its former wealth and influence. The good Padres, a score or more years ago, were pleased to live well; and their well-filled granaries, cultivated grounds, and myriads of horses and cattle—in all praise be it said—were the first to induce

the native Indians, who, in brutish ignorance and social degradation are even now but a remove from beasts of the field, to devote their time to some useful employment. By these means the shrewd Fathers never lacked comfortable houses to shelter them, nor raiment to clothe their sleek skins.*

Tarrying but a few minutes at Santa Clara, and selecting the best horses of the cavallada, I parted with Mr. Ruckle and continued my journey; the first fifteen miles was wearisome labor with our worn-out beasts, and we stopped for breath at a ranchito of a pretty little widow, who did the amiable most refreshingly by handing me a dish of raspberries and cream. Seeing a filthy Indian poke them out of a bottle with a stick, occasionally giving it a suck, did not enhance the flavor of the fruit. A short league beyond, we came to another mud-built rancho, and our horses having apparently determined to proceed no farther, accordingly tumbled down; there were half a dozen women and children about the hut busily employed in cutting beef in long strips for drying; but they continued their occupation without deigning to cast even a glance of sympathy upon our pitiable plight. Indignation getting the better of my misfortunes, I kicked off the spurs and marched

* This Mission, according to Vancouver, was established in 1778, by Franciscans, which, with one founded three years previously at San Francisco, were the northernmost settlements of any description formed by the court of Spain, on the continental shores of north-west America, exclusive of Nootka. Although the Jesuits had planted the cross on the lower territory, on the peninsula at Loretto (1697), they had not explored the west coast. Of all the numerous voyagers of note who have visited and written upon California—Perouse, Vancouver, Kotzebue, Belcher, Wilkes, and others—there is not one whose delineations are characterized with so much truth and simplicity as Vancouver,—not only in this territory, but in the groups of Polynesia. He must have been truly a good man. His intercourse with the untutored savages of the Pacific was ever tempered with justice and humanity. He did more than any succeeding navigator in stocking the islands with cattle, and his scientific duties were executed with exceeding accuracy for the means at his command. The English may well be proud of the renown he has shed upon the land of his birth; and his name will be for ever cherished in the Pacific, when the unscrupulous deeds of his great Commander shall have been forgotten.

bravely up to the mansion; then, after dodging about under long fringes of raw beef, I was suddenly confronted by a stout dame, with a mass of meat clutched in one hand, and a dripping knife long as her arm in the other; this savage apparition rather abashed me, and I timidly inquired how she did? She merely gave a sharp upward jerk to her chin, with an ireful visage—as much as to say, “I’m in excellent preservation, don’t bother yourself”—pointing to my foundered studs, I politely urged the necessity of procuring fresh horses! “No, Señor! no hay! the horses are all mares, the mares are wild—there is no one to catch them”—in other words—I’ll see you in purgatory first. So I called up a little resolution, though far from feeling it, and letting the butt of my rifle fall heavily to the ground, I said, “Hark ye, my friend, if you don’t speedily furnish me with beasts I’ll make a seizure of that fine animal I see saddled in the corral; besides, I’m willing to pay liberally.” At the word “money” the patrona’s features relaxed, *tu no eres voluntario*—she remarked!—*por dios! no! mi alma yo soy de la marina, y Católico ademas!*—I’m a sailor and a good Catholic to boot. At this last admission and the sight of a handful of bright pesos, the whole party surrounded me—*ah! tan maliciosos son esos malditos voluntarios! Ave Maria! El oficial no es heréges—es Christiano—y pagara los caballos*—ah, what light-fingered gentry were the Volunteers; but the gentleman is a Christian, not a heretic, and going to pay like a trump—they exclaimed. There was still some doubts as to whether I intended to pay in *effectos* or hard tin, and if I could make it convenient to liquidate a few outstanding claims which some of my countrymen had forgotten to adjust; but when satisfied on that point a small boy ran off to drive in the cavallada. Meanwhile the Señora poured me out a cup of aguadiente, touched her lips to it, and handed it

to me to quaff. The drove of horses was soon brought up, and as a particular favor, the patrona selected her own nag to bear me—a small mare and natural pacer that rattled along at a great rate without whip or spur—embracing the party, we again mounted and started off in fine style. The country has the same lovely aspect as in the vicinity of San José; great level plains teeming in wild grain, and wide-spreading foliage of oaks, chesnuts, maple and willows, enclosed between high-swelling hills. In fact the country for more than forty leagues of this broad valley is so perfectly level that a coach could be driven in any direction without serious obstruction; however, there is one annoyance to which horses are subjected, in the multitudes of holes burroughed by a species of ground squirrels, very frequently bringing horse and rider to their faces. A few leagues rapid travelling brought us in sight of the southern arm of the waters of San Francisco, and skirting along its shores, by sunset we had left the low country, traversed the rugged hills of the sea-girt peninsular, floundered knee deep in the sandy road, and by nightfall I found myself comfortably housed with a generous batchelor friend, Mr. Frank Ward, in Yerbabuena.

CHAPTER XVII.

REMAINING but a few days in Yerbabuena, and when on the point of taking leave, I met with a brace of navy men, who were about to sail up the Bay for a hunt among the hills; so giving orders to the brave courier to join me at Puebla, I embarked with my friends one day at noon in a small launch, and a stiff sea-breeze soon wafted us forty miles; then entering a narrow creek, formed by high sedgy reeds that sprang from the shallow water, we performed a tortuous serpentine track, in a labyrinth that fairly required Ariadne's clue to thread its mazy windings, actually sailing sixteen miles to gain three, as the bird flies; at last we arrived at the *embarcadera* of San José, and after a fatiguing walk, at dark we came upon a tenement. The house was filled with women and dogs, who chattered and cheated, dinned and dunned us to such a pitch that we were obliged to seek shelter elsewhere; and accordingly we *packed* our saddles, blankets and rifles, and at about nine o'clock reached the estate of one Don Ignacio de Sylva. Our host received us with open arms, prepared a supper of beef and *tortillas*, and in return, we complimented him with strong rummers of punch; his fat spouse joined in the festivities, and when the evening was somewhat advanced, a shake-down was arranged for us on the floor of the *sala*, which, fortunately for fleas and ourselves, chanced to be laid with a floor of boards. My