

Soon after midnight, with a copy of this document in my jacket, and a promise, from the Secretary of War, of an escort for ten leagues, I once more began my journey towards the Pacific Ocean.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

It was quite dark on taking my place in the diligence, but getting comfortably seated, I heard one of the passengers inquire if there was to be an escort; so putting my head out of the window, I asked my man Juan if he had any idea where the troops were concealed? *No Señor, no hay!*—not a soul to be seen. *Bueno!* I consoled myself by being sure of meeting them at the *garita*—and then we came to the gate, but never a sabre visible! *Malditos* were of no avail. Señor Rosa, in a multiplicity of *negocios*, had forgotten me! Truly, I was scared out of sleep the first few posts, but at last my eyelids gained the day—I sailed away in the land of dreams, and never awoke until reaching Salamanca—much refreshed and decidedly happy not to have been rifled by *ladrons*.

It was four o'clock and raining heavily as we drove into the cellar, as it were, of the sky-built city of Guanajuato. The water was bounding and leaping down the naked sides of the hills, converting every narrow gully into a boiling torrent, until cascades and rivulets all poured into the deep valley beneath, and went roaring and foaming away, increasing in bulk and impetuosity at every gorge, to feed some rapid river in the plains beyond. I was intently occupied speculating upon the chances whether

the diligence would be swept along with other floating matter, or ultimately stranded on dry land; for not long before, one of these same vehicles had been caught in a freshet—carried some distance, drowning three insides. But fortunately, we steered clear of these dangers by flood and coach—with saturated garments—and were soon safely housed in the comfortable fonda.

Much to my chagrin, the rain prevented a visit to the great mines of La Luz. They are said to be the largest in the world, and well worthy of a sight, employing no less than fifteen thousand workmen, including their families. The owner died in Querétero the day previous to my departure, bequeathing a fortune of twenty millions of dollars to his heirs.

I left Guanajuato before daylight—the heavens were dropping tears, although not sufficiently lacrymose to keep the gorges surcharged, and thus we again escaped coach-wreck. We reached Leon to a late breakfast—there I exchanged the youthful valet Juan for my horse equipments, and having but a single companion in the person of an Englishman bound to Zacatecas, we continued the route: the cocheros swore there were none other than virtuous people in that vicinity and we had no fears of being molested; the road became rocky and uneven—occasionally no beaten track at all—and had not the coach and our bones been constructed of the toughest materials, I imagine neither could have reached Lagos—but we got there at three o'clock, with no more serious mishap than being jolted asleep and awake, at least four or five times in as many minutes.

Our stopping place was a decent little fonda, administered by an old Spaniard. While standing in the gateway I observed two persons, and, from something indescribable in their appearance, immediately accosted them in Anglo-Saxon: they were North Americans, and had resided many years in Mexico: they treated

me kindly, and extended every assistance in their power. I visited one and saw as pretty a wife and family as any bachelor might envy. The town itself is extremely pretty—a remarkably handsome church faces the Plaza—the houses elegantly adorned externally in fanciful frescoes, with designs of flowers, wreaths, gardens, and mythological figures, while a branch of the Rio Grande rushes swiftly through the heart of the town, fringed with a profusion of verdant foliage. During my visit the river coursed in two separate channels, divided by a narrow strip of pebbly sand, whereon were hundreds of little nude boys and girls, and women nearly so, bathing and washing in the pools along the shores.

Returning from the walk, we had hardly entered the inn, which looked into the Plaza, when some fifty ragamuffins, armed with many varieties of weapons, but principally broken muskets and naked sabres, passed by; they had music, too, an undeniable drum, which never for a moment ceased being thumped and pounded, during all the proceedings that afterwards transpired. There was to be a Mexican Pronunciamento! The band marched straight to the Quartel near the upper end of the square by the church, where, after much shouting, expostulation, bluster, and reading of proclamations, they induced about five and twenty meagre soldiers, who composed the garrison, to declare in favor of the rebellion; then a number of bottles of strong waters circulated briskly, the mob mingled with the fraternised soldiery, possessed themselves of their muskets, broke up into groups, and filled the air with cries of "*Abajo los Yankees! Viva Paredes! Viva la Guerra! Viva El Padre Jarauta!*"

The Pronunciamento was completed.

My friends prepared me for this ebullition by stating it to be part of a combined movement, fomented by Paredes, who was

at Aguas Calientes, seven leagues beyond, awaiting the action of Guadalajara and the western provinces.

It had been my intention to take the route to Mazatlan by way of Zacatecas and Durango, but I was earnestly urged not to attempt it in the present unsettled state of that district, and as the advice was based on sensible grounds—not without a deal of regret—I at once ordered horses for Guadalajara. Whilst dinner was preparing I took a stroll with the innkeeper, around the Plaza to get a glimpse, if possible, of the sanctified assassin Padre Jarauta. I had heard much of the villain's atrocities, both from the papers and individuals. The young adjutant whom I met in Guañajuato related of him, that he boasted of having killed fifty-three Americans with his own *cuchillo*, and though styling himself priest was nothing but a student who had taken to arms "con amore." To say the least of this good padre, he possessed unparalleled courage and audacity, had done immense mischief to small corps and trains of our army, and he was, in fact, the boldest, bloodiest Guerilla chief in all Mexico.

I was gratified for my exertions, and passed twice beside him; he was striking in expression, perhaps thirty years old, with fine fierce dark eyes, and little beard: he was about the middle height, dressed in a round jacket and cloak, with a short straight sword on his hip. He appeared absorbed with great events, regarding the sky and other celestial bodies, never deigning to honor me with a glance.

One of my countrymen dined with me, and we had an excellent repast, but it was most unseasonably interrupted by the entrance of the host, who after a short consultation with my friend, informed me that the good Padre Jarauta had learned the arrival of an American officer, and had expressed a determination

to make an *ejemplo* of him in the square! I reposed full faith in his pious regard, and did not doubt for an instant that he would be at all loth in executing his virtuous designs—and as for my passport and papers, they might possibly have given additional zest to his holy orders, and been considered just long enough to cock half a dozen carbines, and—*fuego!* However, there was no time to deliberate, and but one course to avoid the dilemma—*Gracias a Dios*—the horses were fortunately in the corral of the meson, and in a very few seconds the guide had clasped on my spurs, and I jumped into the saddle. With warmest thanks to my friends, and a trifle, more solid, to the true Biscayno for his good offices, in the darkness, the animals were led down a stone flight of steps, through some outbuildings, where, gaining a back street, we made the dust whirl in clouds around us, as we gave lash and steel to the beasts.

At early dawn we halted at a place called Encarnacion for change of horses, and losing no time, mounted and struck a by-path to shorten the distance. At sunrise we observed a group of travellers ahead, and pushed on to overtake them. Perceiving, however, a wish to avoid us, and warlike demonstrations begun by two individuals unslinging carbines in the rear, I sent the guide in advance to relieve their anxiety; they proved to be the family of the commandant of Lagos, flying bag and baggage to a more safe retreat; there were two ladies in the party, and we remained in company for some miles: they had lost a valise in their flight, and, on parting, I was under the belief that they regarded me as the lucky finder thereof.

Further on we passed a remarkable elevation called *La Mesa*, a table hill of a perfect oval, rising like the palisades of Hudson River; some three hundred feet, with a dead flat surface,

and but one gateway-like aperture leading to the summit—making altogether a most regular and inaccessible natural fortress. My guide assured me, there was a deep, clear lake on top, and many acres of good soil.

The sun was getting high up, when we drew bridles at a fork of the road, beneath a wide-spreading tree, and in fact the only one to be seen. Here, squatted on a stone, was a jolly old gentleman, with a great earthen jar of pulque, and platter filled with the same sour fermentation, on the grass before him; the guide, as in honor bound, swallowed a centavo's worth, but I was contented with a little diluted muscal, which is far more palatable, and has much the taste of Scotch whiskey. Both preparations are made from the same species of plant—the American Argave—and to see the immense extent of land under cultivation—the great droves of beasts carrying the juice to market, one might readily believe enough was made to keep the whole Mexican nation in one continued state of intoxication. The keeper of the small ambulating pulperia informed us that a pronunciamiento had taken place that very morning at San Juan de Lagos, and that large bands of armed men had entered the town at daylight. Padre Jarauta had destroyed my appetite the night previous, and this news equally perplexed me—for there was but one route directly through the town, and I had no inclination to run a muck; so following the advice of my guide José Maria, to lay by a few hours, and learn the state of affairs from some one passing along the road, we descended a small ravine entirely sheltered from view, where the horses were unsaddled, and a temporary screen made with the serapas, to shield us from the noontide sun. Here I stretched myself upon the grass, and before many minutes elapsed had cut buttons and straps from my jacket: the uniform I wore

was generally taken for that of a Mexican cavalry officer, but in this instance I was resolved to make assurance doubly sure, and not be mistaken for a gringo: and accordingly hurled buttons and lace far down the gully.

Two hours past meridian I was awakened by José, who reported having heard firing in the town, and that he had learned from a paisano, in hot haste from Lagos, that Señor Jarauta, after making a forcible razzia of all animals to be found, marched with over a hundred compatriots for Aguas Calientes: whether he put himself to any inconvenience or not in regard to my movements, I did not hear or care, so true is the adage, "sacabo il pericolo, adio il santo." All I ever learned of his after history, was that a month later he was made prisoner by the troops of General Bustamente, and immediately shot. Thus being relieved of the good father, I gathered courage to proceed, and mounting, we gave spur for San Juan de Lagos; we had but a league's travel, and I was soon put out of suspense, for on descending a steep hill, which led down to the town, we encountered a number of arrieros, who gave the pleasing intelligence, that the place had declared in favor of the existing government, and the towns people had driven the agents of Paredes outside, and thus we rode to a meson without molestation. I noticed about eighty citizen soldiers drawn up in front of the church, listening to the harangue of a clerical gentleman, attired in a stove-pipe hat and flowing gown.

There was not a *remuda*—change—to be had for love or money in San Juan de Lagos; all the horses having been secured and carried into the country during the pronunciamientos; after a bowl of frijoles and tortillas, we were obliged to remount our wearied beasts, and toil slowly onward.

The same evening we reached the town of San Miguel, when

another of these infernal pronunciamientos was brewing, but a polite old gentleman procured me a relay, and away we rattled over a dry undulating champaigne country to Mirondillo, where finding another remuda, and leaving Cerro Gordo on the left, the full moon lighted us safely into Tepetitlan. Here I proposed tarrying, but the meson was so filthy and detestable—so full of fleas and uncomfortable, that wearied as I was, after vainly trying to sleep on a table, I ordered fresh horses, and departed at midnight. In two hours, becoming too sleepy to keep the saddle, notwithstanding José made his *macarte* fast to my steed's neck and towed us some distance, we fell in with an encampment of arrieros and their mules, who, after a strict reconnoissance, very kindly allowed us to bivouac near their fires.

In no other part of the world do I believe there can be found such a worthy, brave, hardworking, and industrious class of persons as the arrieros of Mexico; they are proverbial for honesty, and there is scarcely an instance known where they have proved unfaithful; trusted for weeks and months with the most valuable cargoes, from silks to gold, in a country, too, where crime in its worst forms is rife, and where detection is vain, they still appear a distinct race from their thievish countrymen, and preserve an integrity seldom met with.

At the first blush of morn, the encampment was astir. Calling and whistling to the mules, the sagacious brutes came regularly to the spot where their pack was deposited, were in turn loaded, and sent on after the bell mules in advance. Meanwhile, the drivers prepared a hasty breakfast, which was hastily eaten—the cigarillo lighted, and off they trotted after their beasts. A good day's journey is six leagues—resting during the heat of the day.

I stood gazing at them until they disappeared in the dim light

of morning; then, by the embers of their fires, my guide boiled a small measure of coffee in a broken earthen pot found near by, when we put foot in stirrup, and came on in the opposite direction. We rode rapidly to Puente Calderon, a small village at the foot of an abrupt elevation, with a noisy torrent dashing its turbid waters against the stone arches of the bridge. It was the spot where was fought one of the bloodiest revolutionary battles between the republican and royalist forces. Dismounting at a rude dwelling fronting the shelving, rocky street, with *Meson de la Patria* chalked over the entrance, we entered the patio, where was standing a huge, ungainly vehicle—a kind of family van, drawn by nine stout mules—while beneath the portals of the inn-yard were half a dozen juveniles and a couple of staid, portly parents. *Para servir ustedes*, quoth I, *Pasé vd bien*, murmured the party; *Vamonos almorzar!* and accordingly I sat down on a saddle and partook of their hospitality. The family were destined to Guadalajara from a two months sojourn on their plantations, and were as ignorant of what was going on in the world as a fish under water. Indeed, in this particular, they were not singular examples; and the ignorance of the peasantry was almost incredible. I frequently met individuals in the Western provinces, who, though they had heard of the war, had not the slightest conception with whom—*unos gringos*—some foreigners, they would say—and as for the simple information regarding short distances from place to place, or the nature of the road, and such trifling matters, it defied the most acute cross-examinations.

The conversation at our breakfast ran upon the war, and revolutions of the country. “And where are you from, Señor?” asked the old lady, as she chucked a hot tortilla towards me. “From Mexico, and the peace is declared!” *Valgame Dios!*—is

it possible! exclaimed they all in a breath; "and will those horrible Yankees ever leave the city?" *Si! si!* "But, Señor, we are wondering who you are?" Oh! I'm one of those demonios Yankees! *Jésu Maria! dispense mi amigo!* screamed the Señora. The old gentleman offered his apologies, and we all laughed heartily; but still I remarked the younger shoots of the family observing me with furtive glances, as if I might have been a wild animal lately uncaged. My hunger was soon appeased, and fresh horses carried us to Puente Grande. The river was much swollen and flowing over its rocky bed with turgid violence. Before crossing, I turned up the stream, selected a clean grassy bank, threw off my clothes, and plunged in. It afforded me great relief, in its icy coldness, for my leg was still painful with the hoof-prints of the vicious brute near San Juan del Rio. My ablutions seemed to create much surprise and amusement to a group of brown damsels washing on a green islet near by, who, on swimming towards them, changed their tune and retreated to the willowy thickets. My guide, José Maria, was vastly horrified and shocked, not so much at the conduct of the girls, as my own regardlessness of life and health, in having the temerity to lave in cold water. *Se hace daño*—be the death of you—he continually repeated, and related many direful incidents where persons had contracted diseases thereby, and had lived but a very few minutes after coming out; perceiving that I was not affected to that extent, he at last discovered me to be a *gringo*, who could endure anything. We again mounted—changed horses in the town—were exempted from paying the rial toll at the bridge, on account of being an *extraordinario del Gobierno*—ate a melon—purchased a new whip with a lash like the thongs of a knout, and thence proceeded towards Guadalajara. Half way, we overtook two ladies with

servants, mounted on fast mules, and we accompanied them to the city. As we rode through the suburban town of San Juan—where is the residence of the Bishop of Jalisco, with many fine houses and beautiful gardens, the rain began to fall, and by the time we reached the long Paseo, it was descending in cataracts, with thunder and lightning resounding and flashing around us. I halted for shelter under the close-leaved protection of the trees that fringed the promenade; but no arguments could induce my lady companions to do the same, and they were drenched with a torrent of waters, while standing in the middle of the road, fearing a shock of the *rayo*, beneath the foliage.

I was the first to bring confirmed intelligence of the peace, to Guadalajara. The news of its passage through the Mexican Congress had already been received, and had caused some demonstrations in one of the regiments, instigated by agents of Paredes: more was anticipated upon the confirmation of the treaty, but nothing of importance occurred. There existed, as in Querétaro, a violent party among the military, opposed to the new government under Herrera. All moderate and reflecting *ciudadanos* were for peace: it was the policy of the State of Jalisco, though as patriotic as any. It was the wealthiest district of the whole Republic, and had much to lose and naught to gain, should the waves of invasion have rolled towards the Pacific. They had drawn a sage moral from the misfortunes of the neighboring provinces: they had beheld the largest and best appointed army Mexico ever put in the field, vanquished at Buena Vista; they had seen a compact body of six thousand troops cleave their way through six times that force into the garitas of the capital, and they felt convinced that even half that veteran band of North

Americans could sweep over the grand plateau, and as easily conquer the fair city of Guadalajara.

At the time of my arrival, the state government felt assured of support, and besides having means at hand to prevent any insurrection, had dispatched a battalion of three hundred soldiers, with two pieces of artillery, to oppose Paredes. Nevertheless, preparations had been made to guard against any attempt nearer home, and on passing through a private apartment of an official residence, I observed a number of persons busily employed making ball-cartridges, but, as usual, they were too greatly disproportioned with powder, and as a consequence the Mexicans generally overshoot the mark.

CHAPTER XXXV.

I WAS duly installed in my former lodgings at the French fonda, and in the afternoon, being a holiday, went to the Plaza de Toros. The arena was spacious, but without the wooden screens within the circle to protect the tauridors and bandilleros, as is seen in the bull-rings of old Spain. The amphitheatre was well arranged, and capable of containing many thousands, with a separate enclosure, at a more elevated stand, filled with troops, with fixed bayonets, and commanding a good sweep around the audience. The exhibition was more of a cow-combat than an old-fashioned bull-fight; they are miserable, disgusting scenes at best, and the stranger ever takes sides with the tortured beasts against their brutal tormentors. Here the horns were sawed partly off, or blunted with leaden beads; in other respects the affair was conducted as elsewhere. As the military governor, Yañes, appeared beneath his crimson canopy, the music ceased; the gayly-dressed bands of picadores, bandilleros, tauridors, on foot and horse, headed by the Matador, with long toledo in his hands, bowed reverently before the General and Judges; then crossing themselves, a pause ensued; the dulce men, and cigar venders, old beldames with chairs, and boys with *sombra*—shade tickets—held their peace. The arena was cleared of all but the mounted prickers and scarfmen; a bugle sounded, low, heavy