

ed, and murdering those who might yet be found. No cries for mercy were of any avail; the groans of the wounded were heard with savage delight. After a long time, our two comrades, who had gone with the wounded teamster, returned, stating that they saw about fifteen hundred soldiers in and around the town. Captain S. was retained with the Mexican general, and did not join us for two or three days.

CHAPTER III.

Treatment of the Prisoners.—Marched to Caterita.—Saddle Mountain.—A Row.—Petty Plundering.—Plan of Escape.—Arrive at Urrera's Head-quarters.—Hard Treatment.—Don Juan.—Kindness of the Mexican Guard.—Occurrences round Mariné.—Proceedings at Head-quarters.—High expectations of the Enemy.—Addition to our Number.—Marched to Mont Morales.—Incidents.—Great change at Morales.—Quarrel with a Soldier.—Depart for San Luis Potosi.—Cruel Treatment.—Arrive at a Town.—Hostility of the Inhabitants.—Wounded Prisoners.—Statements of Mexican Officers.—Suffer from Heat and Dust.—Mountain Passes.—Our Persons searched.—Gloomy Surmises.—Appearance of the Country.—Remarkable Scene.—Receive kind Treatment from the People.—Great Scarcity of Water.—Severe Sufferings.—Generous Conduct of a Woman.—Means of procuring Water.—News of Buena Vista.—Arrival at San Luis Potosi.—Our Reception.

THE people at the rancho treated us kindly, especially the women. Our captors certainly were very much elated with what they termed this important capture. The soldiers appeared to be a sullen, savage-looking set. Frequently they would draw their hands across their throats, to intimate that we were to be thus put to death, saying, "Poco tiempo" (in a little time). This did not alarm us, as we were expecting just such treatment. At last they prepared to march us forward. We were formed into two ranks, and numbered about sixty. A strong guard was placed over us, well mounted and armed. No information was given as to where we were going; but on, on they marched at a rapid pace. At length

we arrived at a place where the road was very narrow, and a high fence on each side of it, composed of the thorny chapparal-bush. Here we thought, without fail, they would murder us; but no—onward we marched, over hill and dale. For a variety, we were forced sometimes to ford rivers that were fifteen or twenty rods wide. These pure and cooling streams would refresh us, and give new life and vigor to our limbs. At length, after a very fatiguing march, we arrived at the city of Caterita about nine at night, rejoicing greatly in not having been shot by the way. During the march that we had made we were in sight of a mountain near Monterey, that was, from its peculiar form, called *the Saddle Mountain*. Often did we gaze at this, and think the farewell that we would like to bid our comrades who were lying securely encamped not far from it. We intended, should circumstances take such a turn that we could make our escape, to make this towering height a landmark to guide us to our friends and the protection of their arms.

The excitement of the people now ran to the highest pitch against the Americans, and we were insulted in almost every shape. Liquor was given to the soldiers, and, drinking to excess, they soon became beastly drunk. One of them, in a fit of generosity, gave one of our men a piece of corn-bread; another soldier, on seeing this, began to quarrel with him about it. Swords were drawn; others joined in the *mêlée*, and soon it became general. In the affray two of our men were wounded—one severely, the other slightly. We were sitting on the ground, resting.

Some of the most drunken of them ordered us to rise. As several did not understand them, they did not rise. This incensed them: they poised their lances, and threw them with all their force. We all made up our minds to die, expecting that a combined attack would be made to cut us in pieces. At this moment a man came to me, saying that, should they make an attack, it was his intention to unhorse one of the guard, mount his horse, and go back to Monterey. I said that I would go with him. He then showed me the horse that he had singled out, and pointed me to another, a fine, noble animal. Then separating, each of us went close to his chosen horse, anxiously waiting for the crisis. About this time, the officers, coming up, inquired into the cause of the row. To settle it, and prevent its repetition, they flogged the principals severely with their swords. This put an end to it, and we breathed more freely.

We stayed here about one hour, when we were ordered to form in line. We were again counted, and then started, followed by a great number of boys and men, who were continually hooting at us, and throwing clods of dirt and stones, and cheering General Urrea. They followed us a great distance, robbing us of any article of clothing that they might fancy. Some would take a neckcloth, others a jacket, hat, or shoes; and, by the time they had finished, we were completely stripped of all our clothing that was of any value, notwithstanding the weather was exceedingly cold. But we might as well have expected mercy or compassion from fiends as from these demons in human shape. On the march they kept their horses

trotting, and forced us to keep up with them, weary as we were; and should any of us fall back from fatigue or any other cause, he was either pierced with a lance or struck with a sword. During the night, seven or eight of our men were thus mercilessly wounded. Such being the treatment we were to expect for the future, Mr. Parker, captain of a train of wagons, who had been a prisoner among them during the Texan wars, suggested to us to attempt taking the guard, mounting their horses, and going back. The enterprise was desperate, and many, no doubt, would lose their lives. Still, many consented. He then went to the lieutenant for his approbation and assistance. It was by him discountenanced, and no more was said about it. Whether we could have succeeded or not, I can not say; they were well armed and mounted—we, destitute, wearied, and fatigued, would have no advantage at all. But, balancing against these despair, and a determination to find liberty or death, some, doubtless, would have made their escape, and the rest would probably be killed.

By this time the night was well advanced. We would frequently ask our guard how much further we had to go. They would answer, "Five or six leagues," as the case might be. This encouraged us but little, for fears were entertained that some of the men would give up, in which case their death would inevitably follow. The crowd that came out of Caterita had nearly all returned; there being nothing more of which they could plunder us, they became tired of the unprofitable pursuit. But our troubles were not yet at an end, even in this respect, for

many of us had canteens for carrying water; the Mexicans began to take these; and soon every one was taken. About three o'clock in the morning we arrived at the head-quarters of General Urrea, more dead than alive from cold and fatigue. While the commanding officer was inspecting us, we were made to take off our hats as a mark of respect; and those who did not take them off voluntarily had them taken off for them. Officers, men, and women stood gazing at us as though we were the first white men they had ever seen. At this time, an officer who spoke good English, having the appearance of a foreigner, came up to us and asked how we had been treated—whether any of our men had been wounded, and if we had had any thing to eat. We told him all. When informed of the robbery of our clothes, he promised to get them back for us; but we never saw them again. He also told us that if we wanted any thing, and could not call for it, to send for him, and he would come and interpret for us, giving his name as Don Juan. We afterward were informed that he was a deserter from the American army.

At length, to our relief, their curiosity being satisfied, we were marched off to a place used as a corn-house. There was in it some three or four hundred bushels of corn; and, without any thing being given us to eat or drink, we were allowed the privilege of lying on the corn, or cold, bare earth, without coats, blankets, or any thing to cover us, and shelter us from the cold air. A more miserable night (or rather morning, for it was near daylight) could scarcely be passed. At length we fell into a kind of slumber.

As though to torment us as much as possible, when they saw that we were asleep, they awakened us and ordered us to form in for another count, this being about the thirtieth time since our capture. Looking through the door, we could see the gray streaks of morning decking the distant horizon. We gladly hailed the rising of the sun; for as it shone alike on the oppressor and the oppressed, we hoped, in its refulgent rays, to forget, at least for a time, some of our troubles.

We numbered only sixty—twenty-three soldiers and thirty-seven drivers, and we concluded the rest must have been all killed. About eight in the morning Don Juan came to see us; he told us some additional news—said that Urrea had a force of twenty-five hundred men—that they had been fighting in Mariné two days. As that little force was only one hundred and fifty strong, great fears were entertained for their safety. But of one thing we were satisfied, viz., that those brave boys would do their duty. He further stated, that when we were encamped at Ramos, they had us surrounded, but did not dare to attack us, as they feared that we would go into the houses, and from these show fight. This assuredly would have been done; and probably we would not, in that case, have been taken. This clearly accounted for the singular disappearance of the inhabitants that night. About ten, some coffee and tortillas were brought in and divided equally among us. This was to last us for the day; and Don Juan informed us that it was after the most earnest entreaty on his part that even this pitiful morsel was given us. Oc-

asionally a woman would bring some tortillas, hand them through the window to the soldiers of the guard, and they would give us a portion of their rations. In this we were agreeably disappointed, not expecting this act of generosity from them. It was little that they could give; but that little, I believe, saved us from starving.

That day some more prisoners were brought in; they stated that soon after we were taken, and on the same day, two hundred men came from Monterey with two pieces of cannon to succor the garrison in Mariné; that General Urrea, although more than five times their number, would not fight them, but packed up and fled to the mountains, leaving the garrison and also some prisoners, who were so badly wounded that they could not take them. These next day started with the rest of the Americans for Monterey, and having gone as far as Agua Frio, they saw the enemy coming at full charge from the chapparal. They were ready to meet them, and sent a few messengers of death among them from their big guns, following them with volleys from their small arms, killing and wounding a great number, and driving the remainder back to the mountains.

That day we were allowed to go out into the yard around the house. As we went out they counted us, a strong guard watching our movements, and crowds of citizens thronged to see us; but the best order was observed. They made a few attempts to converse with us, but we did not understand them, and they desisted. Frequently did we hear some of the women exclaim to one and another, "pobrecitos" (poor fel-

lows). We felt thankful for their sympathy, but wished them to show it more effectually by giving us something to eat. We stayed out near an hour, when they ordered us to go in, counting us as we passed the door. By this time hunger began to operate on us rather strongly. We begged for something to eat, but it was of no use. They said "poco tiempo;" therefore we waited as patiently as we could for "poco tiempo" to come. About ten o'clock that night two quarters of beef were brought in, and a portion given to every man, without bread or tortillas, and this was to serve until the same time the next night.

A fire was made in the middle of the room with corn cobs. On this we broiled our meat, and ate it as best we could. Before they permitted us to sleep we were counted. The next morning we were turned out for counting, when another fire was made for us to roast more meat. After a while we received another visit from Don Juan, accompanied by some Germans, but they were unable to speak English. Don Juan inquired if there were any who spoke German. On this four men came up to him and held some conversation with their countrymen. They gave them some advice, and, in particular, charged them not to make an attempt to escape, as the Mexican forces were in the possession of all the roads and passes, and an escape, therefore, was impossible. They further said that a speedy exchange would probably take place. They were accompanied by some ladies, who seemed to pity us greatly, and even bought some provisions for us, which were most

thankfully received. They soon left and went their way.

The officers of the guard would try to amuse us by saying how they were going to retake Monterey, Camargo, Matamoras, and, in short, all the places held by the Americans; that Santa Anna had General Taylor entirely in his power, having him completely surrounded by twenty thousand choice troops; that in Vera Cruz were some thirty thousand, in Chihuahua was another large force, and in California about twenty-four thousand, and they were just on the point of defeating the Americans at every place. But these high anticipations came to naught.

We remained here five days, the same routine of treatment being continued. During this time some ten or twelve more prisoners were brought in, making our number about seventy-two. On the sixth day we were paraded in the street and counted preparatory to a march. Previous to starting, however, they gave us two shillings each. The officer that was to command the escort had an air of noble frankness about him that won our confidence and esteem. We surely thought that with him we would at least find protection, nor were we disappointed. He proved himself to be a gentleman and a man of honor. The troops were all leaving here and going to Mariné, having the prospect of another battle with the Americans. At length, all being ready, we started; Don Juan, we found, was to go with us. At this all greatly rejoiced, thinking that he might be able to render us some assistance, which he did, too, though over the left shoulder.

The place we were going to is called *Mont Morales*, distant eighteen leagues. We moved off just as the sun had risen. This place, which a few moments before was a scene of bustle and activity, was now entirely deserted, and silent as the grave; we were among the last who left, and were forcibly struck with the silence that reigned around us. The air being cool, we moved at a rapid pace; many were quite stiff and sore from the effects of the severity of our first march. The road was very rough and rocky, from its proximity to the mountains; the country was uncultivated, and only in one place were to be seen houses or inhabitants.

At this time we looked back, and for the last time saw the Saddle Mountains; and many were the surmises and conjectures relative to what our friends were doing. The guard, whose attention also had been directed there, well knowing about what we were speaking, laughed in derision, saying, *Mucho bueno los Mexicanos*, and *Carajo los Americanos*. Then from another quarter would we hear some of them boasting how valiant they were, and what cowards were their enemies. About eleven o'clock we came to a large hacienda, where we rested and purchased some provisions. While here, Don Juan came to us, saying that he wished to make a proposition to the men, which was, that as he was going with us through the country, and understood the language, the prices of provision, &c., it would be better for us to give him our money, as he could get more with the same amount than we could. To this we readily acceded, and each one gave him his two shillings.

Soon after we were ordered to march, and they counted us as we fell into line. The sun by this time was very hot, which, with the dustiness of the road, added greatly to our inconvenience. But not a murmur was heard. We determined to bear all that they could inflict unflinchingly. And when it was nearly sunset, our caterer went forward at a swift pace. From this we thought that our day's march was nearly through, and we quickened our pace; but we did not reach the town until eight at night. They conducted us to the carcel, where we found a large concourse of citizens, crowding around to see us. A few months before, a body of Americans came into this town and fortified it. The works were still standing; and in front of us was the staff on which waved our victorious flag. Then the Mexicans were all submission and servility; now they were overbearing and insulting.

After standing here nearly half an hour, we went into the jail-yard, where we found provisions of all kinds, and utensils to cook them in. We soon prepared our supper, and for the first time since our capture had enough to eat. Being very tired, we soon went to sleep; previously, however, I had purchased of a soldier a blanket, for which I gave him a dollar, the last and only money that I had. The room assigned us was far too small for so large a company. We some way or other, however, made room to lie down; but the air soon became insufferably hot and close, as there was no circulation. So a rush was made to the door; but, as it was locked, one made room for another, in order to get a little fresh air