

Buena Vista; our interpreter merely told us that Santa Anna was forced to retreat. This we guessed; for none would believe that the one-legged chieftain, with his 22,000 choice troops, could cope with the hero of Palo Alto and Monterey, with his five thousand volunteers. We were encouraged by this news to hope for a speedy exchange.

At last San Luis Potosi, the long-wished-for place, hove in sight; it was a long way off, but there we were to rest. In the joy of the moment, our fatigues were forgotten, and we hurried on, anxious to behold the second city of Mexico both in population and wealth. We arrived at the city, but could see nothing, as we were hurried at a rapid pace to the quartel, escorted by a band of music, and saluted with the shouts of the citizens, and the gibes and jeers of the soldiers. After marching us through several streets like a drove of cattle till their curiosity was satisfied, they at last took us to our quarters.

## CHAPTER IV.

Mexican Army return from Buena Vista.—Hard Treatment of the Prisoners.—March southward.—Rich Mexican.—Appearance of the Country.—Hospitality of the People.—Escorted toward Mexico by a Division of the Army.—Condition of the Mexican Forces.—Mineral Wealth.—Arrive at Queretaro.—Our Condition there.—Relieved by the Charity of some Citizens.—Description of the Town.—Aqueducts, Squares, Market, and Convent.—Religious Festival.—Our Liberty abridged.—The Cause.—Attempt to Escape.—It Fails.—The Result.—Sickness.—Depart for Mexico.—I am left at San Juan del Rio.—Delirium and Insensibility.—Recovery.—Sad Condition.—Kindness of Visitors.—Hospitality of the Doctor.—He becomes my Instructor in Spanish, and learns English of me.—He makes a surprising Discovery.—Introduced to a Priest and several Citizens of the higher Classes.—Different Conduct of the lower Classes.—Difficulties with them.—Generosity of the Priest.—Short Rations.—Learn a Trade and commence Work.—Discouraging Result.—Debarred from proceeding with other Prisoners.—Description of San Juan del Rio.—Domestic Arrangements of the People.—Generous Offer.—A Ball.—Religious Discussion.—Mexican Generals.—Santa Anna.—Account of Captain Gonzalez.—The San Patricio Company.—Various Views regarding the War.—Dismay and Rejoicing.—Results of the Capture of Mexico.

THE Mexican army had just returned from Buena Vista, and from some deserters from the American army, who had fought with the Mexicans, we learned that Santa Anna had been totally routed, and in killed, wounded, and deserters, had suffered a loss of near one half of his army; also that he was now raising new forces, and endeavoring to collect a still larger army, determined to overwhelm General Scott. A part of the army was quartered in the same quartel with us, though they were separated from us.

We remained in the quartel five days, during which time no food was given us. What could have been the object of the governor in thus treating us, I can not say. During this time the cry was not for water, of which we had plenty, but for bread. Our hunger became so great that we even wondered why we had not eaten more when we had it to eat. We pleaded for some food, but in vain. They seemed to delight in our sufferings.

On the morning of the sixth day we were paraded in the yard; two shillings was given to each of us, and without time being allowed us to buy any victuals, we were marched off, weak and debilitated as we were. They marched us thirty miles before we halted; and then, for the first time within six days, we procured something to eat. Most of us spent our two shillings, and were as far from being satisfied as when we began to eat; and as we were determined not to starve when plenty was within our reach, we adroitly took by stealth enough to satisfy our wants. Some fuss was made about it, but the perpetrators could not be detected, and we escaped a punishment which might have been severe.

This night we stayed in a town containing some two thousand inhabitants; and, as we were informed by our interpreter, it was owned entirely by one man. He also told us that we would travel four days on this same man's land, and every night encamp in towns fully as large as this, all owned by this man. He likewise said that, at the commencement of the war, the same man gave four thousand horses to government, and clothed, equipped, and supported one

regiment of cavalry on service during the war. This statement I at the time doubted, but afterward found it to be correct.

The country through which we were now passing was mostly level, and generally highly cultivated; corn, beans, and red pepper were the staple productions. The land was supplied with water by irrigation. The inhabitants appeared to be better educated than in any part which we had yet seen; and they certainly were more hospitable, for many a time did we experience their kindness.

We traveled for some time, under the escort of one of the divisions of the Mexican army, toward the city of Mexico. While with them we had a good opportunity of seeing the discipline and treatment of Mexican soldiers. From the elements of which the army was composed, I should think it was next to an impossibility to maintain any thing like strict order, or make it a force which a man might be proud to command. The subordinate officers were, generally speaking, ignorant and illiterate. In proof of this, I will relate the following occurrence. After we went into quarters at night, a captain of the guard came into our room and conversed with us for some time, asking us questions about our country, &c. At last he asked us if General Washington was coming to Vera Cruz with General Scott. It took us some time to be convinced that he was in earnest, and it really was a difficult matter to convince him that the great Washington had been dead nearly fifty years. Many of these officers were taken from the fields, and placed in command of men as illiterate and boorish as them-

selves. Others were taken from the ranks, and, without education or instruction in the first principles of military matters, they were placed in responsible and prominent positions. The men were, as a body, exceedingly degraded, and controlled only by the fear of the sword. While on a march, should any through fatigue fall behind, they were sure to be severely flogged with the sword. Many were so worn out that they fell dead on the road; and this was a common occurrence. We saw one killed on the spot by an officer while attempting to desert. They are poorly fed and clothed, and worse paid; of their pay they never receive the full amount. Under such circumstances, their army was little more than a mere rabble; but where they have good officers, and are properly treated, they make good soldiers.

This section of the country, besides being extremely fertile, is said to abound in mineral wealth; but as yet it yields them little, and that little is derived principally from the foreigners who now occupy the richest portion of the mining region. The natives are either too ignorant or too indolent to derive any more benefit from this internal wealth than the simple two shillings per day which they receive as wages. They would sit and play cards all day on silver stone, and not know it.

After a hard march of six days we arrived at Queretaro. Here we found some five or six Americans, prisoners of war, who had been here some months. They were taken by General Canales, of whom I have before spoken, and who, by-the-way, had been appointed major general in the Mexican army. Be-

ing so few, they had received much better treatment than we.

At this place we were allowed the freedom of the city; and, after a few days, we had liberty to go where and when we wished. But at first no provisions nor money was given us; and I, for one, was so hard pressed with hunger, that I would pick up orange-skins and old tortillas out of the gutters in the streets, and eat them with a relish. We now, for the first time since our capture, had sufficient water and time to wash our clothes, during a period (as near as I can remember) of about two months. So thick was the dirt on our clothes that their original colors could not be discerned, and we were literally covered with vermin; indeed, our appearance was very revolting. For want of a barber, our hair and beards had grown to a great length; and in this miserable plight, without jackets, and nearly all of us without hats or shoes, we paraded round the capital of the state of Queretaro. At length our miserable appearance excited the sympathies of a few of the citizens. Some were supplied with blankets; to others, clothes, shoes, and other necessary articles were presented. One day, as I was passing along one of the main streets, I was called into a house, and furnished with a pair of pantaloons, shoes, and a shirt, and about twenty hats to supply myself and my comrades, so far as they would go. As I had been bareheaded long enough, a hat was very acceptable, as, indeed, was every thing else.

After some four or five days, they again gave us our two shillings, on which we lived very comfortably.

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The city is situated in a large valley, and is regularly laid out in squares. It contains two public squares, in one of which is a large fountain. The water that supplies it is brought three miles in an aqueduct, which supplies the whole city. This great work was begun and executed by an American. The buildings on the main streets are large and well finished, and the public edifices are the most splendid of any I saw in Mexico, except those of Guadalajara. The interior of their churches is richly ornamented with gold and silver; and the walls are ornamented with paintings executed by some of the great masters, and seeming to breathe the breath of life. It is their custom to go to church and say mass every morning. During service they all kneel, both from reverence and necessity, as there are no seats in any of their churches. It is a universal custom here, as in every part of Mexico, when meeting a priest, to take off their hats. To this custom we did not conform; on the contrary, if we met a priest on the sidewalk, we had not even manners enough to turn out for him to pass; and, as a natural consequence, he was forced to give us the walk.

The squares are used as a market-place; and every evening, and all day on Sundays, they are filled with people, some selling, and others buying, every thing that grows in that country. A great variety of manufactured articles also are there exposed for sale; and in every part hucksters may be seen vending all kinds of victuals, ready cooked, by the claco's-worth (one cent and a half). On one side of the city is a large park, containing some ten acres, most beauti-

fully laid out; in the center is a large and splendid fountain, and around this, at a distance of about twenty feet, are several seats, capable of accommodating two hundred persons. From this central point graveled walks extend to every part. The whole is inclosed with a stone wall, the entrances being guarded by an iron gateway. There is also a cotton factory near the city, conducted by some Englishmen, which appeared to be doing a heavy business.

Just in the very heart of the city is a convent, the largest I ever saw, occupying an entire square. From the outside it appeared to be a massy wall; windows and doors there were none, and but two entrances, secured by large and massive gates. Of its arrangement in the interior I know nothing, as we were not permitted to enter, although hosts of holy fathers could be seen passing in and out at all times of the day, and possibly of the night.

About this time occurred one of their religious festivals, which lasted several days. Day and night processions were marching through the streets, with martial music, some of which could not have been less than three miles long. At the head marched a priest, carrying a golden cross and Christ. When this passed, the spectators all took off their hats, and many knelt down, repeating their Ave Marias, and I know not what else. In the night they carried torchlights, and also images of a ghastly and horrid appearance, which personated the Jews. During the marching of the procession, all the bells of the city were kept ringing; so that, between the noise of the bells, and the loud praying and singing of this great

mass of zealots, a noise was made that would rival old Bedlam.

The last night of the performance was to end in burning the Jews in effigy. This we did not see, as the officers thought that the religious excitement of the populace might get so high as to endanger our safety; and so we were confined in the jail. The liberty which we had so long enjoyed was now drawing to a close; the change originated thus: One day one of our number was reading a Testament, which we had succeeded in bringing along. The captain of the guard discovered this book, flew into a terrible passion, took it away, threw it on the ground, stamped on it with his feet, and shook his sword at us, cursing and swearing roundly at us; but it was all Greek to us, not a word could we understand. From this day forth our liberty was taken away. When this man was on guard, he treated us with great severity, not allowing us even to exercise in the yard.

Such useless severity induced us to make an attempt to escape and go to Vera Cruz, having heard that General Scott had taken that place. There was among the officers taken with us one who had formerly been a prisoner for two years during the war between Texas and Mexico. He understood their language thoroughly. Under his guidance we determined to make the attempt. All the officers had still the liberty of the city, and through them we obtained all the requisite information as to where we could obtain a sufficiency of horses, arms, &c. We ascertained that the main body of troops had left for the city of Mexico; consequently we had little to fear

from them. Attached to the jail was an arsenal, and just across the yard was an armorer's shop. In these two places we were in hopes of getting arms sufficient for our whole number. The day of trial was at length fixed; it was to be when the old tyrant who had deprived us of our liberty was on guard, for we wished to settle up with him before we bid good-by to our old friends of Queretaro.

At last it came. As soon as the old guard went away and the new one was stacking their arms, we rushed into the arsenal, secured the arms, and found that not more than half could be supplied. We then went into the shop, but there was not enough. By this time the guard was alarmed, and an express was sent off for re-enforcements. In about two minutes it came, and halted in front of the quartel. Two companies were marched into the yard in front of where we were standing. The commanding officer ordered us to lay down our arms: we hesitated. He ordered his men to fire. There we stood, in front of near two hundred men, with their loaded guns pointing directly at us. Again he ordered us to lay down our arms, when, thinking it was fool-hardiness to persevere, we did so.

They now put us into separate cells, and no longer allowed us the liberty of the yard. We afterward discovered that some two thousand soldiers had come into the city, of which we had heard nothing; and thus our attempt failed. Our treatment now was extremely severe. So many were crowded into these small cells that room could not be had to lie down to sleep, and we were forced to sit, leaning against

the walls. There were no windows; consequently, all the light and air we had came in through the cross-bars in the door: through these a miserable pittance of food was given us once a day. Again we were reduced to nearly a starving condition, and annoyed almost to death by the vermin that constantly assailed us, and from which there was no protection.

Our sufferings proved too much for many of us, for almost daily some were carried to the hospital, being too sick to take care of themselves. I was also taken sick; but, as I could contrive to stand up, I would not go to the hospital. I was the more anxious to remain with the rest, as we were informed that in a few days we should move on to Mexico, and I desired to go with them. I was daily growing worse, but I was determined not to yield.

In a day or two we started, and I went with them, staggering at every step from weakness, and my comrades supporting me on each side. In this way I went a couple of miles, when the commanding officer, seeing my condition, placed me on a mule. The first day I got along very well; but the second, I was so sick and weak that they were forced to hold me on. I continued to grow worse and worse, and at length I became delirious. Of the latter part of that day's march I know nothing.

We that day stopped at San Juan del Rio, where I was left in the hospital. As I parted from my comrades, they came to me, shook hands, and bade me good-by. This was the last of my recollection; nor did I come to myself sufficiently to know where I was

until four weeks afterward. This period I must pass over. The first that I recollect, a man and woman were at my bedside, urging me to take a dish of at-tale. This I disliked, and therefore I refused. They urged and urged, but still I refused; and, as they continued to urge me, I took the dish from their hands and dashed it on the floor, and went without my supper.

From this time I perceived that I slowly recovered. I was reduced to a mere skeleton; my fingers seemed to be six inches long; and clothes that before my sickness fitted me tight, now would go nearly twice around me. I was visited daily by the doctor, and several priests, and ladies and gentlemen also, who appeared to be of the higher circles of society. In the course of three weeks I was able to walk about; but, being unable to converse with those around me, or they with me, I was dumb, and nothing could arouse my naturally lively feelings. I even wished that, from my sick-bed, I had been carried to my grave, so hopeless appeared my prospects.

Beside the hospital was a church, where mass was said every morning, commencing before daylight. After church many would come to see me. Some gave me money; and the kindness I received here in part reconciled me to my fate. All seemed anxious to lessen the weight of my afflictions. As soon as I was able to walk out, the doctor gave me an invitation to go to his house. The hospital steward was to accompany me, and one of his own servants was to come with me back to the hospital. Accordingly, in the afternoon I went up to his house. He received

me very cordially, and before sitting down, inquired which I would have, coffee or chocolate. I did not wish for either at the time; but thinking that this was a customary mode of treating visitors, I replied chocolate, being determined not to betray any ignorance of their manners and customs.

After this he got some books, and came and sat down by me. He showed me an English and Spanish grammar and dictionary. He was trying to learn our language; and his wishes were, that I should teach him, and, in return, he would teach me Spanish. This offer I gladly accepted; and our intercourse was carried on by means of writing and translation.

In the course of three months the doctor could speak our language so as to be easily understood, and his instruction was certainly a great benefit to me. I went daily to his house; and in the morning, when he came to see the sick in the hospital, he would remain to converse with me two or three hours. I found him to be a man of education, and, for a Catholic, possessed of liberal principles. One day he asked me if I understood arithmetic, geography, and grammar. I told him I did. At this he seemed surprised; for, among the majority of Mexicans, the Americans are considered as ignorant and unlettered; in fact, they are looked upon as a nation of barbarians. It was, therefore, a matter of some surprise to him to hear of rail-roads on which we might travel ten and fifteen leagues an hour, and of a telegraph, by which one might transmit messages any distance and receive a reply in a few moments. One day,

when at his house, on looking over some books, I found one in the Greek language. I opened it, and began reading. On seeing this he was utterly amazed. That a foreigner, and an American too, should understand Greek, was almost impossible. He, however, believed the evidence of his senses, and asked if I understood Latin also. I replied that I did.

From that time forth the doctor was my firm and fast friend. He took me to see a priest, by the name of Julian Miranda, a wealthy and influential man. By the two I was taken to visit several of their most distinguished families, by whom I was treated with marked respect. From this time forward I was a popular man, and, being under the protection of two such prominent persons, none durst publicly molest me. During the eight months that I remained here, I was treated by the well-bred with marked kindness, but by the lower classes I was occasionally misused. My life was threatened, and once even attempted. It occurred as follows. While I was yet confined to the hospital, and so weak that I could scarcely walk, a man came in and passed me two or three times, and then addressed me. Not understanding him, I made no reply. He became greatly excited, drew his knife, seized me by the hair, and appeared as though he was going to plunge it into my heart. But, before he could accomplish his murderous intention, the steward came in, forcibly thrust him from the hospital, and closed all the doors. By his timely appearance I was saved from destruction.

To illustrate the feeling of the lower classes toward me, I will relate some other circumstances. After I