

was able to go out, a mob several times collected around me, abused me with all sorts of vile language, and even threw clods of dirt and stones at me. All this I passed over, as I was not in a condition to resent it. But it was remembered, and afterward paid with interest; for, when I became sufficiently strong, I prepared myself with a good and heavy oaken staff. With this I boldly went where I was most likely to meet with these cowardly ruffians, and, should any one presume to interfere with me, I was sure to belabor him with my cane until I was perfectly satisfied. By this means I not unfrequently got into scrapes that I had not bargained for; but by good luck and a little hard fighting, I got safely out, though occasionally I bore the marks of the knife or bruises from a club.

Once, when attending a funeral, on my return in company with a few young friends, a crowd followed in the rear. When in one of the back streets and far from any dwelling house, a stone was thrown at me, which hit me in the back. I turned around and inquired who had thrown it. No answer was returned. My friends said they would stand by me. I then picked up a large stone weighing some twenty pounds, went into the midst of the crowd, and demanded who had thrown the stone at me. At this appearance of determination they became frightened, and forthwith pointed to the man who had done it. I stepped up to him, raised the stone over his head, and brought it down with all the force I could muster. The blow completely stunned him; he fell like a log. I then began to beat the rest over their heads

with my cane; and as no resistance was made, being deprived of their ringleader, they soon ran like a flock of sheep.

This adventure established my character among them as a desperate man, and, in consequence, they were afterward more cautious how they molested me. So great was their dread of me, that, when meeting them, they would turn off and give me the sidewalk. I now feared an attack in the night, and consequently remained in doors.

One day Father Miranda came to the hospital, and asked me if the clothes I had on were all I had. On being answered affirmatively, he said that if I would go to his house with him, he would give me some new ones. As mine were nearly gone, of course I went, and he gave me a pair of new shoes, pantaloons, shirts, a hat, and coat. In short, he dressed me up as well as he was himself, and gave me some money. After this he continued to give me some occasionally as long as I stayed there.

My daily rations were not cooked in the hospital, but were brought to me—I know not whence—three times a day, and dealt out with what I considered a very sparing hand. Some chocolate, about a gill, or some sour orange-leaf tea, and a small piece of bread, was my allowance for breakfast; for dinner, about half a pint of beef soup, a small piece of meat, and three or four tortillas, was all that I was allowed. The supper was the same as my breakfast. For a Mexican, this, in ordinary circumstances, would have been sufficient, as they are very small eaters; but for me, after my long fasting and sickness, it was

barely sufficient to keep soul and body together. But the deficiency was supplied in part by occasional receipts of money.

I continued my visits to the doctor's, and in one of these visits he asked what was my trade or profession. He seemed anxious to do something for me that would be of permanent utility, as, from all appearance, my residence among them was to be a long one. The steward in the hospital was a shoe-maker, and worked at his trade when not otherwise engaged. I worked with him until I became tolerably expert at that business; in fact, I could make a passable shoe. I therefore told the doctor of this, and also that if a little money was furnished me, I would undertake to support myself by this kind of work. He then gave me two dollars, with which I purchased materials and commenced work. The first I made were women's shoes. I worked up all my stock and then sold it. On striking a balance, I found that my work netted me just three cents per day. This interesting discovery rather discouraged me in my attempt to obtain money in this way. I then undertook to make men's shoes. For fear of the worst, I first engaged a pair, bought the stock, and then made them. These were finished off so as to look tolerably well; but they were so poorly made that they did not wear two weeks. I made another pair, but could not sell them, so I kept them on hand a long time. At last fortune favored me, for one day I found in the public square a man selling shirts. This was just what I needed; so I plied him with liquor until he was, as the sailor's say, three sheets in the wind, then took him down to

the hospital, and gave him the shoes for a good, new shirt. Thus ended my effort at shoe-making.

About this time, some of the prisoners who had been left at Queretaro came through on their way to Mexico, the rest having died. Why I was not sent along with them I can not say. I called on the officer commanding in that city, and earnestly entreated for permission to go, but it was in vain. I almost every day heard of the progress of General Scott. The news of the battles of Huamantla, Cerro Gordo, and Contreras was rapidly spread through the country. The bulletins were boastful, and full of misrepresentation. They would tell of the defeat and flight of the Americans, and the next day would come the news of the further advance of Scott. Finally we heard of the investment of the capital. But I am getting ahead of my story.

I will now give a description of San Juan del Rio. It contains about five thousand inhabitants. There is but one street that can be properly called a street; the rest are narrow, like alleys or lanes. The city is on one side bounded by a river, which in the dry season is so low that one might walk across on the stones without wetting his shoes; but in the rainy season I have known the water to rise five feet in one hour. It frequently overflows its banks, and forms a perfect sea. The part next to the river is protected by a thick and solid wall. The city is built without any regard to order or regularity, each one building where it best suits his fancy; consequently the streets are narrow and very crooked. The houses are made of adobe, or unburned brick. These adobes are made

in the form of brick, about eighteen inches long, ten wide, and three thick, dried in the sun; and when of sufficient hardness, they are put into the walls forming the house. The length of the adobe forms the thickness of the wall.

The roofs are generally covered with a sort of reed, and made sufficiently steep to carry off the water. The houses of the rich are covered with burned brick, and thickly plastered over, both inside and out, with cement, which renders them impervious to water. The roof is made slightly to descend, just enough to carry off the water. The rooms are generally rather destitute of furniture, containing only a bed and some benches to sit on, chairs being a luxury which only the rich can afford. Tables are not in common use. When eating, the people sit down on the ground, take their dishes on their lap, and eat with their tortillas and spoons, knives and forks being rarely used. Tortillas are made of Indian corn. It is first soaked in weak lye for a few hours to remove the shells, then mashed or ground up fine, then kneaded with the hands until it is like a common pancake; it is then baked on an earthen griddle. If eaten when warm, it is very good. This is all the bread the poorer classes have, and it is likewise used by the rich twice a day. Some women support themselves by making tortillas to sell; they can be seen in the Plaza every hour in the day, with their baskets under their rebasas or shawls, crying their tortillas.\*

In almost every part of the city are large gardens,

\* The preceding paragraph would apply to other Mexican towns as well as to San Juan.

sometimes occupying four or five acres, in which all kinds of fruit are cultivated, such as apples, pears, cherries, grapes, figs, plantains, granadas, and numerous other kinds, both of tropical and temperate productions. I have been invited many a time to go into these gardens and eat fruit, accompanied, too, by some of the great people of San Juan. Indeed, so much in favor had I grown with the wealthier classes, that they have offered to advance me capital sufficient to go into business, on condition that I would renounce my country and become a citizen of Mexico; and they often expressed a determination to keep me there after the war closed.

At this time, one of the priests, by the name of Romero, had a fandango (or, in common parlance, a ball), to which a large party was invited. I went in, and as soon as I entered, before I could take my seat, a bottle of excellent wine was handed me. I drank some, and then sat down to hear their music and see the dancing. The music I did not admire much; but the dancing was beautiful, so graceful and light they seemed not to touch the floor. Some of the ladies were dressed with a splendor that I never before saw equaled. The wine was again passed round, and this was repeated so often that I became rather foggy, and I thought some of the rest were so too; for soon a young priest, who had just taken orders, thinking to show off a little learning, sat himself down by me, and began to question me on my religious principles. He asked me first if I was a Catholic. I told him yes. "Do you believe in the Trinity?" "Yes." "Do you believe in the

mystery of the Virgin?" "Yes." "Do you believe in the doctrine of transubstantiation?" I replied, "I do not understand you," although I understood him perfectly well. He then put the question in another form; still I could not understand him, and still he persevered in his endeavors to make me answer. But, failing in all, he got out of patience, and in an angry manner arose, pointed his finger, and shaking it in an emphatic manner, said, "You are a Protestant." Being heated with wine, and therefore easily excited, I arose, and in an angry and defiant tone declared I was a Protestant, and added that I was a prisoner of war, and the Mexican government was bound to protect me, and dared them to touch a hair of my head. I know not what might have been said further had not my friend, Priest Miranda, at this instant come up, and said that he wished us to be friends, and retain no hard feelings. He then brought the wine, turned out some in glasses, gave me one, and insisted on our drinking to our mutual friendship. I took the proffered glass, but with the firm determination of giving them another blow. He drank his glass off; I raised mine to my lips, and said, "Here is success to the armies of the United States, hoping that peace will not be made until the whole of Mexico is annexed." I then put down my glass, and said, "This, ladies and gentlemen, is the toast that I drink; how do you like it?" I looked around, as though waiting for an answer, but no reply was made; all were too much surprised at my boldness to make any. I soon saw that I had gone too far; and, thinking that my absence was better

than my company, I took my hat and left. None opposed my departure. As soon as I got into the street, fearing a pursuit, I ran with all speed to the hospital, a distance of one mile. I hurried into my room, and barricaded it from the inside, to prevent a forcible entrance, should any be attempted. I remained here till the next morning, when I was awakened by the steward, who had brought me my breakfast; soon after which the young priest, accompanied by the doctor and priest Miranda, came to the hospital to arrange the difficulty between us. We both acknowledged ourselves too hasty, and a little too much excited with wine, &c., and so the matter dropped. It was soon noised abroad that we were reconciled, after which I was in just as good favor as ever.

During the time of which I am now speaking, a portion of the Mexican army passed through San Juan on their way to Mexico. Ten thousand passed one day, and ten thousand the next, under the command of Generals Valencia and Rincon. The former commanded the infantry; the latter, jointly with Torrejon, the cavalry. Both were subsequently killed at Mexico. Valencia was a good and meritorious officer; Rincon was a noted coward; and Torrejon was known as a robber, and distinguished for his gasconade and cowardly conduct on the field of battle. The wealth and influence of Rincon and Torrejon were boundless, and therefore they could not be deprived of their command. Santa Anna, also, has been accused of being leagued with some of the most noted bandit leaders; he is said to have given them information where and when a successful blow could be struck. and then

gave them commissions in the army, he having a certain share of the plunder in consideration of his information and protection. This was said to have occurred when he was president; and in this manner they accounted for his vast wealth. This statement I saw in one of the leading journals of Guadalajara, and never saw it contradicted; I therefore have so much reason to believe it is true.

Santa Anna first entered the army as second lieutenant under General Mijia, if I am not mistaken in the name. This man discovered in him superior talent, and took immediate measures to secure his promotion. From this he rapidly rose until he became general; and finally, by the influence of the army alone, he became president. When in the chair, he caused to be tried and shot, for some trifle, that friend who had made him what he was. It was also boldly said, at the time I was in Mexico, that when he received any money to pay the troops, he first liberally paid himself, then handed the balance of the money to his officers, who paid themselves in the same way, and out of the small remnant paid the soldiers, who actually never received one quarter of their regular pay. It was also said that Santa Anna was in the habit of embezzling one half, at least, of the public money that came into his hands: that he attempted to rob the churches in the city of Mexico is matter of history. It was this which caused that tremendous excitement against him which ended in his downfall and ultimate expulsion from Mexico after its capture.

At San Juan I saw an officer, holding the rank of

captain, who was a noted robber; his name is Thomas Gonzalez. I was told by some of the San Patricio\* company that this man owned two large blocks of houses in San Luis Potosi, all of which he had accumulated by robbery; and they related some incidents of an expedition in which they had borne a part. After the battle of Buena Vista, when the Mexican army had returned to San Luis, this Gonzalez obtained a commission from the governor to select twelve of this company, and go back to Saltillo on a robbing expedition. The governor was to clothe and arm the men, and have one half of the proceeds. Accordingly, they started, and in every town they came to they robbed. The terror of their leader's name (for he was well known) produced instant obedience to all his wishes. In going to Saltillo and back it took them six weeks, during which time they cleared some six thousand dollars, exclusive of their heavy outlays.

The cavalry under Rincon was really a good-looking body of men; they were well armed, well clothed, and well mounted. In fact, had I not seen them on previous occasions, I should have supposed them to be rather a formidable body of men to encounter. They had with them some twenty pieces of heavy artillery, all of which eventually fell into General Scott's hands. With them was the San Patricio company, commanded by Captain Riley, who is now a general in their service. Lieutenant Stevenson, formerly a private in the eighth regiment of our in-

\* These men were deserters from the American army, and joined the Mexicans. Some had received commissions; but the majority were worse off than brutes. They numbered two hundred.

fantry, was one of these; he wore an officer's uniform; but so seldom did he see any of his pay with which to clothe himself, that he was quite ragged, and his shoes were almost completely worn out. Dearly did he pay for the whistle; for he was despised by the Mexican officers, those especially who made any pretensions to being gentlemen, and in the battle of Buena Vista he was unfortunate enough to lose his right arm. The whole of this company were in a most miserable condition. They rested here two days, and then passed on.

I now began to hear of the progress of Scott; that in all the battles fought between Vera Cruz and Mexico, the Americans had been successful; and also that they had now invested the city. But the Mexicans, having forces so greatly superior to ours in numbers, were most sanguine as to the ultimate result. Daily expresses came, bearing intelligence of the progress of the war. The first news was favorable to our arms; then came the news that Scott was forced to retreat. This was received with universal joy. All the bells of the city began to ring, rockets were fired, and an intense excitement prevailed all day. Many of the citizens came to see me, and asked what I thought of that. "Very valiant are the Mexicans," said they. My reply was, "Yes, very, since General Taylor, with four thousand five hundred men, defeated and completely routed twenty-two thousand of Santa Anna's best troops." I also referred them to Monterey, and the battles of the eighth and ninth of May, for further proof of the valor of the Mexican soldiers. I also added, that if the

Americans retreated, it was simply to gain a new position, as they never *could* be driven—a statement which subsequently proved to be correct. This language set rather firmly; they doubted, and offered to bet. This I had no money to do; but I offered to bet that which was of infinitely more consequence to me, viz., my ultimate liberation. I offered to wager my liberty against one hundred dollars. If they lost, the money was mine; if I lost, I was to be no more subject to exchange, but should remain with them for life. This was a queer offer on my part, but I was confident of winning. They declined my offer, but turned and walked off, cursing the Yankees.

The next day another express came in, bringing news of the capture of some of the most important points of their defensive works, the rout of their cavalry, &c., &c. This news made them look rather crest-fallen; no bells were rung, and no rockets were fired; groups of men might be seen around every corner, with consternation depicted in their countenances, conversing on the subject of their calamities, and wondering where and when the victorious career of our army would terminate. They daily expected that Scott would follow up his victory by marching to Queretaro, where no means of defense existed. In fact, no defense could be made at any point; another army could not be collected. On the one already defeated and dispersed hung all their hopes. In a few days came news of the capture of the city. It was now my turn to rejoice, and I did so to my heart's content; for, taking what money I had, I bought some rockets and fired them nearly all day. Every

one knew for what I did this, but no one molested me. This was to me the proudest day of my life: I gloried in being an American, although a prisoner. In a few days the news was officially published in the papers in Mexico, which contained also the treaty for the exchange of prisoners, in which both parties were bound to give up all they held.

Parts of the Mexican army began to return; straggling bands, parties of a few hundred, came in every day, under no order or discipline whatever. In the course of four or five days, five thousand passed through, the officers looking gloomy and crest-fallen; some appeared to feel as though it was a disgrace to be a Mexican officer. Last of all came the Mexican Congress; they had abandoned their capital, and were now going to Queretaro to hold a session. But Santa Anna was not with them. I inquired where he was; they replied that he was going to Vera Cruz to leave the country; curses, loud and deep, were heaped on his head, and the excitement of the citizens ran very high against him. Could he have been found, it was their firm and expressed determination to kill him. I was told that in the capital they carried stones in their hands for that purpose; but the object of their fury was safely concealed in a corn-field hard by the city.

Occasionally a few of the battalion of San Patricio would arrive; of the two hundred, fifty did not now remain, large numbers being taken prisoners by the Americans, and as deserters, tried and executed. The few that did remain were formed into a body-guard, and retained in the service of the commander-in-chief.

## CHAPTER V.

I am detained after the other Prisoners have been exchanged.—Application to the commanding Officer.—Unsatisfactory Answer.—Plan, and Attempt an Escape.—Apprehended and brought back.—Confined in a Cell, chained and manacled.—Renewed Plans of Escape.—Frustrated by an Accident.—New Project.—This proves successful.—Mexican Barbarities.—Important Information obtained.—Intestine Troubles in Mexico during the War.—Prepare for Traveling.—Start for the Pacific.—Arrive, by night Journeys, at Queretaro.—Information obtained regarding my future Route.—Haciendas.—Wander from the right Road.—Mode of Traveling.—Celaya.—Mexican Women.—Difficulties of the Journey.—Fertility of the Soil.—Productions.—Tobacco.—Sugar Manufacture.—Horse-shoeing.—Catering for Food.—Change my Mode of Traveling.—Consequent Danger.—Expedient to procure Food.—Placed in a Dilemma.—How relieved.—Bad Effects of Exposure and Fatigue.—Removed by the good Offices of a Stranger.—Appearance and indigenous Productions of the Country.—Indications of Volcanic Action.—Chapparal.—Cactuses.—Century Plant.—Horned Frog.

SEVERAL days had elapsed since an exchange of prisoners had been made, and I was still detained. I determined, therefore, to ascertain the cause of this unjust proceeding. Accordingly, I wrote to the commanding officer in that city, asking information relative to my future destination. To this letter I received no answer. In a few days I wrote another, a copy of which follows. It was not dated, as I did not know the day of the month.