

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.

"To his Honor the Commandante of San Juan del Rio.

"SIR,—Having by the fate of war fallen into the military power of Mexico, myself and comrades (they being now in Mexico) experienced at the hands of our captors nothing but continued cruelty; and not until my arrival at this place have I known what good treatment is. But I am proud to acknowledge that I have, during my residence in this city, with but few exceptions, received marked kindness from the hands of those who recognize in me an enemy. Still, sir, I need not always remain a prisoner; and I am informed that a treaty has been made and entered into by and betwen General Scott on the part of the United States, and Santa Anna on the part of Mexico, in which treaty it is stipulated that all prisoners held by the respective parties should be given up. As this is official, there is no possible room to doubt it. I therefore ask why I am detained, contrary to the stipulations of this treaty. Is not the faith of Mexico pledged to its strict fulfillment? And my being here now, is it not barefaced evidence of treachery and duplicity on her part?

"Sir, believing that I am asking no more than is my right, by the rules and regulations of war, I am thus bold in addressing you, having all confidence in your honor. I believe this to be sufficient. Should I receive some information regarding my destination, it will be considered as the greatest favor done to, sir, your most humble servant,

"W. W. CARPENTER."

I sealed this letter and gave it to the doctor, who translated it, and gave it to the officer. In a few days I received a verbal answer, through my friend the doctor, stating that I was to remain here; for, although an exchange had been made, no orders had yet been received to give me up, therefore I was to remain. But this I determined not to do. The idea of the possibility of making my escape was now forced on my mind; and the more I thought of it, the more practicable it seemed. It was requisite for me, however, to form some plan relative to the route, means of support, &c. The distance to Mexico, I ascertained, was only one hundred and fifty miles. This I could easily walk in three days. By a few cautious inquiries, I satisfied myself as to the road I should keep, and what towns I should pass through. The risk I knew was great, but the object to be gained was greater. The thought of being again restored to my country, home, and friends, rose superior to that of the risk I was running.

I saved some little money, and one night, when all was silent, and not a soul was stirring, I picked up all my clothes and started. I got out of the city without being discovered, and traveled all that night, and next day until near noon, without stopping. Being now very tired, I sat down on the side of a hill, a short distance from the road, under the shade of a bush, and began to eat a luncheon. I had been there probably half an hour, when, on looking in the direction I had come, I saw a sergeant and a file of men in pursuit of me. Escape was impossible, for they saw me at the same moment that I saw them. They

were six to one, on horseback, and well armed, while I was on foot and unarmed. Had I had even a sword, I should have tried hard to preserve my liberty. They put spurs to their horses, rushed up to me, dismounted, seized and bound my hands, placed me on a horse, and then tied my feet round under the horse's belly. So tight did they tie me that I had not room or power to move. The man whose horse I was on then mounted in front of me, wound another rope around us both, thus lashing us together, and then started back to San Juan.

Thus were my fondest hopes blasted in a moment. The prospect of freedom had made my spirits elastic; but now I was conducted like a felon to the place from which I had come. As a matter of course, I expected the worst of treatment. They hurried on with all possible speed, constantly ridiculing me for the failure of my attempt, and reviving my drooping spirits with the prospect of being shot as soon as we arrived at San Juan.

Sitting on the horse behind the saddle, and being lashed in such a manner that I could not move one way or the other, the rapid rate at which we were traveling almost killed me. But there was no rest until late at night, when we arrived at San Juan. It seems that I had got about fifty miles on the road toward Mexico. They immediately put me in jail, in a narrow, dark, and damp cell, where, without a blanket or any comfortable clothing, I was forced to pass a miserable night; a sentinel stood at my door all night, as though the thick and massive doors and huge lock was not enough to keep me with security.

I verily believe they thought I was an evil spirit in human form.

I passed a sleepless and dreary night, although I yet had plenty of company, for vermin completely covered me; and the next morning I was full of blotches and sores, from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot. Into this lonely cell the rays of the sun never entered; perpetual darkness reigned; and the only way that I knew when it was day was by the creaking of the lock, and the squeaking of the rusty hinges of the door as they opened it in the morning.

I now supposed that I should be liberated; but they brought me a dish of meat, and, after eating, a soldier came in with a chain, which they quickly fastened to my ankle, and then made fast to the wall. A perfect load of chains and manacles was now brought, some fastened round my waist, and the rest round my wrists, and the whole made fast to the wall. After doing this they left me, locking the door as they went out. I begged them to kill me at once, instead of heaping injury upon injury by subjecting me to this load of iron. But I might as well have begged for mercy from fiends as from these devils incarnate. Their countenances gleamed with intense hate, and their souls exulted in deeds of cruelty.

Victuals were given me but twice a day, and then in very small quantity. I therefore saw before me another prospect of starvation. I would here mention, that when I was taken this last time, the soldiers took what I had, and also the clothes that I had not on at the time of my apprehension. Conse-

quently I was now reduced to a miserable and pitiable condition. The irons that were put on me, they exultingly said, weighed thirty-six pounds. In utter despair did I hear their parting footsteps. My spirit was completely broken. In unutterable agony I fell to the earth, and in insensibility I for a time forgot the horrors of my situation. When I recovered myself, I prayed God that death in mercy might come and relieve me from this loathsome dungeon.

In a day or two I began to take a more rational view of my case, and to devise means to escape. As I well knew that my life would be the forfeit, should I be detected, great caution was essential. It was necessary to drive away the sentinel from before my door, at least so far that he would not hear what I was doing. I tried several experiments, but all of them failed. As a last resort, I took the pitcher in which they put the water for me to drink, filled it with the filth of my cell, watched my opportunity, threw it on him, and completely besmeared him from head to foot. One or two more applications of this kind induced him to keep at some little distance from my door. This was just what I desired.

I now set to work to divest myself from my irons, particularly my hands; the operation was extremely painful, as I was forced to contract my hands so as to enable me to slip the irons over them. After two or three days' trial I at length succeeded, but in doing so I nearly stripped them of their covering. To divert the attention of persons from the noise made by the chains, I kept up a sort of singing; by this they were completely deceived; and as no one ever

came into the cell to examine my irons, I was in no fear of detection from that source. Having disengaged one hand, I made use of the bolt which had secured it, and which was about ten inches long, to bend the irons of the other so as to enable me to slip it off and on at pleasure. In this I was successful. Now both hands were at liberty. I also succeeded in getting the chain from off my waist; this I did by twisting a link and breaking it. With the bolts I pried the staple from the wall. I was now, comparatively speaking, at liberty.

My dungeon was an outside cell, and by digging through the wall next the yard, egress could be had. The exact situation of the jail and the back yard I became acquainted with during the time that I had the liberty of the city. This knowledge I was now in hopes of putting to good use. Surrounding the yard was a wall some ten feet high. On one side of the yard, and next the wall, were the remains of an old house not quite so high as the yard wall; by this I hoped to mount to the top, and gain the street. When I had mounted this, my only resource was to jump down and make the best of my way off. I still determined to go to Mexico, though by another route than the one I formerly took.

This plan being settled, I now began to dig a hole through the wall. I would here remark that the sentry had been withdrawn, and this afforded me a better chance to act. The wall, being made of adobe, was not very solid; yet, as I had no sharp tools, the work was very slow. I succeeded, however, in digging nearly through, and in two more days would

have accomplished it, but for an unfortunate accident. It seems that some noise had been heard, sufficient, at least, to excite suspicion that all was not right. Accordingly, one day the jailer came in with his guard and examined my irons. Judge what his astonishment must have been on finding me freed from them all except those around my feet. My work in the wall he did not discover, probably owing to the darkness of the room. However, he sent for a blacksmith, who came and riveted them on again, and then bored a hole through one of the posts beside the door, and riveted the end of the chain through that; then he exultingly said that if I now broke them loose or got them off my hands, he would take my place.

In this manner was my second project defeated. I now began to contrive a third project; but how to begin or what to do, I did not exactly know. I was satisfied, however, that if I was once out of this accursed hole, half of the work would be done, and I would eventually succeed in escaping from them. I also became well satisfied that stratagem alone was required to effect this object. The jailer now entered my cell twice a day, examined my irons, and left my victuals and water. I determined to make this circumstance serve my purpose; I feigned sickness, and left untouched the food that he brought me. This I did two days, when, being alarmed lest I should die, he sent word to the commandante that I was in a dying condition. The doctor was then sent to visit me. By his orders I was removed to another room, my irons taken off, and a bundle of straw was given me to lie on.

By my sufferings in this jail I was again reduced almost to a skeleton; but, under the doctor's care, I soon recovered my former healthy state. I now urged him to procure my liberation, promising almost any thing that would be required in order to obtain it. He made no direct reply, but soon went out. My main object in wishing to get the doctor here was to exert himself in my behalf.

The next day the doctor returned with the commandante and Priest Miranda. Several questions were asked of me relative to my motives in running away, &c., to all of which I gave correct answers. I was then informed that if I would take an oath to make no more attempts to go to Mexico, I might be set at liberty. This was a dead set; however, I determined to take it; it was administered, and I was set at liberty. At the same time, orders were given me to report myself every night at sunset to the commandante.

I stepped forth once more a free man, but fired with feelings of deadly vengeance for my cruel and unjust confinement for the crime of trying to regain my liberty, an act which any man would have done in my situation. Besides, I was robbed of the small quantity of clothes that I had been able to procure. All this was as money lent, and I determined that not one cent should be lost.

Quarters were again assigned me in the hospital, and I remained quite peaceable for a few days, not knowing which way to turn myself. About this time a detachment of cavalry, the same that Santa Anna had taken as his escort, passed through San Juan; but

they had deserted from their commander, and left him to find his way to Vera Cruz alone, and in the best manner he could. The officer who was second in command I recognized as one that was with General Urrea at the time I was taken prisoner. I conversed with him some time, during which he related several barbarities that the Mexican soldiers had committed on that sanguinary field. He said that after our surrender, and the burning of the wagons, &c., they rode over the field, cut the hearts out of the dead bodies of some of our soldiers, and hung them on the bushes. Some who were wounded, and yet alive, had their eyes dug out and stuck in their wounds; others were mutilated in a shocking manner. In this horrible procedure they were not checked by their commanding officers.

This barbarous manner of carrying on war so disgusted this officer that he made application to his government to be put in another command, a request which was granted; and he was accordingly transferred to a command under Torrejon. He was from one of the first families of Mexico; his father had once been president, but had died some years before. He spoke English well, and had been educated at Cincinnati, Ohio. He said that he was then going to Guadalajara, and thence to Guanahuato. I then asked him how far the former place was from the Pacific coast. He replied, ninety leagues. I then asked the names of some of the most important places between San Juan and that city. He named them; and I obtained from him additional information relative to the route to be taken to get there. I made

these inquiries, because, while conversing with him, the idea of getting to the Pacific had occurred to me; and I asked these questions in such a manner as not to excite any suspicion relative to my intentions. In fact, he could have had none; for it was one of the most desperate attempts, I believe, that a man ever undertook, especially considering that it was very dangerous for any man to travel without a passport, and that it was impossible for me to get one. Some of the difficulties of the attempt I had calculated on, and so great and insurmountable did they appear that I partly gave it up.

The officer above mentioned confirmed the reports relative to the intense excitement against Santa Anna, and said that, after the surrender of Mexico, he left with an escort of some four thousand lancers; but, at the time that the officer and his division left, not more than one thousand remained, and his desertion reduced it to one half. The probability was that the rest would leave him in a few days. He then said that nearly every battle that had been fought with the Americans had been followed by one between themselves: those of the eighth and ninth of May were followed by a revolution at Mexico; that of Monterey by one at Guadalajara, the effects of which I saw when in that city; and that of Buena Vista was followed by another revolution at Mexico, caused by Santa Anna's attempting to take the property of the Church wherewith to carry on the war. This the priests resisted; and they employed all the young men in the city to defend their property. They succeeded in creating a great excitement, and enlisting

a great many men. They fortified the city, and made every preparation for defense.

At length old Santa appeared before the city, and matters were compromised, so that no battle was fought; neither did Santa get any gold or silver belonging to the Church. After the capitulation of Mexico, a quarrel and a skirmish occurred between Santa Anna and Valencia.

Next morning this officer and the detachment left; but he left behind him one ray of hope that I might yet escape, although he was unconscious of the fact. I daily pondered on this conversation; and the more I reflected, the less seemed to be the danger and the difficulty. In the mean time, I began to make preparations for a start somewhere. I asked for and obtained a new suit of clothes of the priest, and borrowed some money from some of the citizens.

I now determined to go to the Pacific; for my oath bound me only as to Mexico, and not to any other part. Still they no doubt regarded me as released on parole of honor, and bound not to go to any part until authorized by the government; but I considered that I was bound to get away, if possible, let the parole be what it might. I had been out of jail ten days, during which time I was watched somewhat closely throughout the day, and in the night the hospital doors were shut and bolted in such a manner that it was supposed to be impossible for me to get out. I, however, made the attempt, and succeeded; and with my bundle of clothes I started toward Queretaro, a distance of fifteen leagues. As near as I could judge, it was about twelve at night. I traveled briskly

until morning, when I hid myself, to lie by for the day. I lay concealed in a thick cluster of bushes, where I could see every one that passed on the road without myself being seen.

During the day I saw several citizens and the commandante of San Juan pass me toward Queretaro, but whether in pursuit of me or not I can not say. I carried provisions for three days, and therefore there was no fear of starving for the present. As soon as it was dark I again commenced my journey; I trudged along, through mud and mire, at a slow and tedious rate. The rain fell in torrents. This, combined with the pitchy darkness of the night, almost stopped my further progress. Still I persevered, and kept on until the next morning, when I again hid myself in the bushes. As near as I could calculate, these two nights I had traveled twenty miles. When I stopped, I was so completely worn out that I almost immediately fell asleep, and slept nearly all day.

At night I again resumed my journey. It continued raining all night, and I now began to feel stiff and sore. My clothes had not been dry since I first started; and, in fact, they were stiff with mud.

The fourth night I came in sight of Queretaro. I went through the city, and up to the factory, where were some Englishmen, from whom I was in hopes of getting some assistance in procuring a passport, some provisions, and other things. I hid myself in the bushes until morning; and as soon as they were out around, after breakfast, I went to some of them and asked a little assistance on my journey to Guadalupe. They treated me with supreme contempt,