

him, the more he wouldn't. At length he responded to their attentions by kicking, which he did in a manner that only a donkey knows how. The lady was greatly frightened, but could not dismount. The poor animal then took a sudden start, and jumped off the stage into the midst of the ladies below, producing the greatest confusion, and screams in abundance. Here he was soon brought to a stand; the lady dismounted, and soon ascertained that she was not hurt. She again ascended the stage, when she was joined by another lady, dressed in a similar manner. They held a short colloquy, and then left the stage. A man now made his appearance, dressed in a most comical style, and his habiliments were arranged in such a manner that it gave him the appearance of a giant; his hat was near eighteen inches high, and the rim ten or twelve wide. He attempted to play the clown, and to his auditors afforded some amusement; but I thought it any thing but amusing.

At the commencement of the performance I had been invited to sit in a private seat, occupied by a lady and her daughter. When the two ladies made their appearance on the stage, the one next me inquired which of the two I thought the most beautiful. I replied that the one by her side, her daughter, I thought, was the most beautiful, and, if I was allowed a choice, I should prefer her to all the others in the crowd. This I thought would be the end of the matter. But my lady friend thought otherwise, for in a few days I received an invitation to call at her house. Wondering, and not dreaming what could be the object of this request, I went there forthwith.

She received me with great cordiality, handed me a seat, and at once commenced conversing about the performance of the other evening. After she had dwelt on generalities as long as it suited her, she asked if it was my intention to remain in Mexico, and not return to my country. A very faint idea of what she was driving at now dawned on my mind, and I shaped my replies accordingly. I therefore told her I should remain here. She then inquired if it was really my intention to marry. I told her that one great difficulty hindered me, which was the want of sufficient funds to enable me to enter at once into some lucrative business; and the objection that most young ladies would have to wed with one so advanced in years (I was actually twenty-six), and who was both a stranger and a foreigner. To this she replied, that with regard to funds it was of minor consequence, as they could easily be supplied; and the latter objection was of no weight, as age was not considered, and foreigners were preferred to natives. This last assertion my after experience proved to be true.

After beating the bush some time, she asked me, in round terms, how I would like her daughter. To this home question I replied that, as it was a subject so entirely new to me, I must beg the indulgence of a few days to consider it, when I would give her a decided answer. With this assurance she seemed satisfied. I then took my leave, promising to repeat my visit soon. With regard to the young lady, I can only say that she was in possession of considerable property, and exquisitely beautiful, and that she

would, no doubt, have made as good a wife as any Mexican woman.

I have mentioned the preceding scenes, as showing the state of the people in regard to taste and intellectual culture. The Carnival continued some three weeks. I will say no more of it here, but may speak of it hereafter when describing other festivals. With regard to the proposition for marriage, it need only be said that matrons do not think it at all indecorous to seek husbands for their daughters, neither do the daughters think it out of character to ask a young man to have them. The most probable reason why I was received thus favorably was, that on my first arrival, my friend Don Pedro, either because he was anxious to show off the value of my acquaintance, or for some other reason, I know not what, had reported that I was not only an Irishman, and of course a good Catholic, but was, in my country, a man of wealth. They finally got it that I was some way connected with some noble family; and as the report was so currently believed, I of course would not deny it, but was willing to enjoy all the benefits of my newly-acquired honors; and, if I am not mistaken, the prospect I had of getting a rich wife was wholly or in part owing to these reports.

It will be recollected that I came here with a view of teaching some little boys the English language. I have nearly overlooked this subject. On my arrival at my friend's house, he showed me two bright, mischievous-looking boys, who hereafter were to be placed under my tuition. I soon ascertained that as yet they could hardly read; I, however, engaged in

my new duties with as much industry as I could muster. They would sometimes be rather stubborn and refractory, and I took the same measures to make them submit that I would have done under the same circumstances in my own country. But it did not suit the case here: the old man fretted; the woman scolded; the boys ran away, and I closed my school. I soon found that nothing which had been promised me relative to business would ever be performed. Don Pedro was as kind and obliging as ever. But the difficulty was, that not one of the many promises he made did he remember five minutes after he had made it. His profession yielded him a great income, but so bad was his management that he was always poor. He was a slave to the vice of gambling. When he was lucky he generally gave me a good portion of his winnings; and if an insult was given me, he would resent it as quickly as though it had been offered to himself. He once went out of his house, sword in hand, to punish a drunken wretch who had thrown a stone at me, and he was appeased only when the man was taken to jail. From these circumstances, I am thoroughly convinced that he would have done all that he promised could he have been made to act while it was yet fresh in his mind; but he was too indolent to do more than he was actually compelled to do for his own subsistence.

I must now give some account of the interior arrangements of a Mexican household. In the largest houses they have but few rooms, but these are large and spacious; chairs and sofas are not used except by the very wealthiest; but, where it can be afford-

ed, benches are substituted. Often there are none even of these, when the ladies are forced to sit on a mat, which is spread on the floor. This mat is also used to sleep on. Very few have tables, and those that I saw were made of oak plank, some two inches thick, three feet wide, and generally eight or ten feet long. An American lady would, in my humble opinion, cut a poor figure in commencing to keep house with no more furniture than this.

The Mexicans have a great taste for music. The guitar and the harp are the instruments most generally used, and these they touch with exquisite skill. It is quite amusing to see dirty, ragged beggars take hold of these instruments and play at the fandangoes, attended by the aristocracy, with the skill of a celebrated artist.

At this time a rumor spread that President Polk was dead. The news diffused universal joy throughout the village; the bells were rung, guns were fired, and in the evening there was a display of fire-works. They rejoiced because they hoped that now peace would be made. The nation was tired of the war. They said that they were already so largely in debt that it was almost impossible for them to get out of it, and this war was plunging them into debt still deeper and deeper. Their ports were all blockaded, and foreign commerce was stopped, producing a perfect stagnation of trade. Their business men were all opposed to the war, but their military leaders panted for glory, and they reaped it in defeat. But that this war will be of some ultimate benefit to Mexico, every candid man will admit. They may,

for instance, see the utility of forming a strong, vigorous government. The experience of past misfortunes should suggest improvements for the future. That they are incapable of governing themselves, their past history plainly shows, and they have still nearly an annual revolution. The people have no sectional jealousies—nothing to cause these frequent pronunciamientos. They are the result of having so many restless, turbulent spirits commanding their armies. So long as these are suffered to dictate to the civil rulers, as they often do, so long will they have an unsettled and unstable government. When speaking on this subject, I have heard eminent men say that they really hoped the whole country would come under the jurisdiction of the United States, for then they would have a strong and vigorous government, capable of carrying out its measures with energy. Of this they had ocular demonstration during the war.

Having mentioned the subject of cock-fighting, I may add that this practice is universal in Mexico, and at Iztlan it is practiced with a zest and frequency truly remarkable. Every Sabbath afternoon the Plaza de Gallos is filled; judges are chosen; a ring is formed; and the combatants, being previously armed with long, sharp steel gaffs or blades, fastened to their spurs, are then let loose, when they fly at each other in perfect fury, and use their steel blades with great precision. One is generally killed, and sometimes both. When a stranger comes in with a game-cock, and wishes to give a challenge, he procures a red sash, and folds the little warrior within

it; he then gets some one with a violin, and with this music marches all over the town. This is considered a challenge, and in the afternoon the place is crowded to witness the combat. At these amusements I have seen thousands of dollars change hands at a single game. Judges are appointed to decide the game, and also to hold the stakes. Bull-fighting is another common amusement; but, never having witnessed one, I will say no more of it.

CHAPTER XI.

Departure from Iztlan.—Arrive at Amatlan.—Visit to a Gold Mine.—Situation of Amatlan.—Hot Spring.—Mexican Names.—Practice of Medicine.—Office of Alcalde.—Judicial Cases.—Mode of Swearing.—Join an Expedition against a Band of Robbers.—The Result.—Career of a Murderer.—Schools.—Peonage.—Gambling.—Fandangoes.—The Carnival.—Lent.—Processions.—A serio-comical Scene.—Visit another Gold Mine.—A Rose in the Desert.—Remove to Garabato.—Remarkable Phenomenon there.—Disgraceful Scenes.—Stung by a Scorpion.

I WAS NOW very anxious to leave Iztlan, though where to go I knew not, as I had been informed that the American fleet was not yet at San Blas. I made frequent applications to my friend Don Pedro for permission and assistance to leave him and go to Tepic. To this he strenuously objected. He urged the dangers of the road, and the present impossibility of getting out of the country. It was useless to urge, for to let me go he would not consent; and, in order to induce me to remain, he now mentioned the subject of marriage with the young lady before spoken of. He said she was in favor of it, and her mother was anxious to have it take place. He further said that, with her wealth, I could live like a gentleman, and no longer be a beggar as I had formerly been. Our conversations on this subject were numerous, and at length I desisted entirely from mentioning it. His secretary, however, took part in my favor. He advised me to remain quiet for the present, for in a few