

ture time, will give law and a stable government to that now distracted country. Whoever will do so may reap ample rewards from their rich fields and valuable mines. What Mexico is now, California was; what it now is, Mexico would be, if it were under a similar government. It has all the advantages of California, with but few of its disadvantages. It is further removed from the frontier, and is less subject to incursions from hostile Indians. Added to this, the country is more densely peopled, and affords a good market for all kinds of productions.

To sum up the character of Mexico. In natural resources she is one of the richest countries in the world, and yet she is actually one of the poorest. She has a very rich soil, but it is miserably cultivated. She has nominally a most liberal government, yet it is actually quite despotic. Her people are apparently very devout and religious, yet they are extremely deficient on the score of morality and honor. She has many seminaries of learning very munificently endowed, yet the masses are nearly as ignorant as savages.

With these remarks I take my leave of Mexico. If I have made any misstatements, they are the result of wrong information; for I have taken great care to write nothing except what I either saw or received from what I might consider good authority. I will now resume my narrative at the place where I left off.

I had started for San Blas. Our road the first day was dreary enough; we were all the time passing high hills and deep valleys. The country around, so

far as the eye could reach, was at times a dreary and uninhabited waste. The soil was mostly fertile, but the climate is very unhealthy.

That day I was able to go only half of the way, and about three o'clock I stopped at a large rancho. The weather had been exceedingly hot, but the night was still warmer. Added to this, the mosquitoes almost drove me crazy. Speak of the mosquitoes of Michigan or Arkansas as large and savage! It may all be; but those that troubled me at this place beat them to nothing. When I found that there was no sleep, I started to smoke them away; but all would not do. They had smelled the blood of a Yankee, and they were determined to have it. I then thought that if there was no rest here I might as well go on; so the servant got the horse ready, and I mounted and started, it being about three o'clock in the morning.

My guide was not well acquainted with the road, it being a new one, and the consequence was, we lost our way. In trying to find it we got into a quagmire, which detained us more than two hours; yet daylight did not appear. At last we got out, and found a path, which we took, and soon came to a house. Here was a river to cross, and the bridge had been swept away by a flood; so we could not cross till daylight. At this place the mosquitoes troubled us worse than where we had stayed part of the night; but we built a fire and sat in the smoke, and this partly relieved us from their kind attentions.

At last we could see the gray streaks of morn appearing; and soon a man came up to us, and point-

ed to a ford a little above us, where we could cross. He said that we had come just half way to San Blas. We got a breakfast, and started on over a level road. The water was a little brackish; and on passing to within ten miles of the sea, the land appears to have been overflowed by it. A white incrustation covered nearly all the surface of the ground. For some distance the road was built up about three feet above the level of the water; otherwise it would not have been passable. And it was the most crooked road imaginable, being made so to suit the whims of the most winding river in the world.

When we came in sight of the town, it appeared from this side like the ruins of some ancient castle, situated on a high hill. We soon entered it, and found that it was almost as ruinous as it looked when we first came in sight. It was regularly laid out, and had once been of considerable importance, being the only sea-port for that portion of Mexico, and possessing considerable commerce. But at the present time it is nearly deserted, and many of its public buildings are a mass of ruins. Complete solitude appeared to reign throughout the place.

I rested a few moments in a building that was formerly occupied by the British consul. The staff was still standing on which once waved proud Britain's haughty flag. But I was anxious to go aboard of the ship, so I took my things and went down to the landing on foot. The distance was over half a mile; and when I got there, I was completely exhausted. I soon made arrangements with a Mexican to take me on board, for which I gave him one dollar.

We had a long, narrow canal-boat, in which he placed a chair for me to sit. The boat rocked and tipped, and I was afraid that in so frail a craft it was dangerous to go out of the harbor, as there was a considerable sea running; but the pilot said nothing, and I did not. When we got out into the ocean, however, the waves rolled so high that the water flowed into the boat. This alarmed the boatman as well as myself, and he was desirous to go back. This was as dangerous as to go on. So I ordered him on, and took a cup and bailed out the water as fast as it came in.

In about an hour we came alongside of the ship. As I was too weak to climb up, a rope was lowered to me, which I tied round under my arms. They then hauled me on board, and I was again free. I requested to see the captain, and was conducted to his cabin. I gave him my letter, and after reading it, he asked me several questions relative to my fare while in Mexico, &c., and promised to send me home in the first vessel that went. This was on Tuesday, the 7th of June, 1848.

The next day they hoisted anchor, and set sail for Mazatlan. Just as we came in sight of this place we met another vessel, which they made out to be the *Cyane*, which was bound home. The *Lexington* then went back to San Blas and anchored, and the *Cyane* did the same. Captain Bailey then went on board of her; and just as he was starting, I begged him, if possible, to engage a passage for me home. To this he pledged himself. He soon returned, but brought me no encouragement. He said that Cap-

tain Dupont, of the *Cyane*, would come on board the *Lexington* in the afternoon, and give me an answer. My anxiety was indescribable. Home! home! was what I mostly cared for. The surgeon of the *Lexington* advised me not to go, as my health was such that it was doubtful whether I would live to reach the States. To this I answered that I would go at all hazards; and if permission was given me to do so, no consideration would induce me to forego the opportunity. Whence this strong attachment to home? I had been a wanderer "o'er the world's wide waste," and experienced every vicissitude that a man could well experience; and now, when I thought my thread of life was nearly run, it was the earnest desire of my heart to die near my native home, if I was destined to see its hills and valleys no more.

In the afternoon Captain Dupont came on board, and I was called up before him. He asked me when and where I was captured, the reasons for making my escape, &c., to which I answered satisfactorily. He then asked if I was anxious to go home. To this I replied, that if he had been in captivity as long, and suffered as much as I had suffered, and should finally make his escape, I believe he would also be anxious to go home the first opportunity. At this he smiled, and said that I might go. These words fairly made my heart leap to my mouth. No criminal condemned to death could have heard of his reprieve when on the scaffold with greater joy than I did these words of Captain Dupont. Had I been possessed of thousands, in the fullness of my gratitude I would have given it all to him. There was a sailor,

whose term of service had expired, who was also going on board.

The next day we left the *Lexington* and went on board the *Cyane*. Just as we were over the bulwarks, the first lieutenant met us with a paper in his hand, and told the sailor to follow him to the capstan. Not knowing any better, I went also. The lieutenant eyed me sharply for some time, and then, in tones that I suppose were intended to sink me into nothing, asked, "Who are you?" I answered, in tones equally important, "A soldier, sir." "Where are you from?" "The ship *Lexington*." "Who sent you here?" "Captain Bailey." Then, in still louder tones, he asked, "Where in h—l are you going to?" "The United States, sir. Any more questions to ask?" He then looked on the paper which had been sent from the other ship with the names of the passengers, and, seeing mine, he told me to go forward. I now knew that, by treating a man of his rank with so little deference, I had made him my enemy; for there is nothing that most naval officers will resent more quickly in their inferiors than neglecting to appear before them with abject submission.

Of the customs of a man-of-war I at the time was ignorant; and I never yet learned to treat an officer, whatever might be his rank, as any thing but an equal. All that I apprehended from the first lieutenant was a few petty annoyances, which he, in a vindictive spirit, might cause me. As for inflicting any corporal punishment, I knew he durst not, as I was only a passenger.

I was assigned to a mess, and soon made myself as comfortable as was possible in such a crowd. Of the crew there were two hundred and twenty, besides the officers. The ship was taking in provisions and water preparatory to setting sail. Here every thing was new to me, and I seemed to be always in the way. Go where I would, I could remain but a few moments before some one would come along and ask me to move. I then went below; but here, too, all was confusion and hurry. I managed, however, to get acquainted with the sailors, and while conversing with them I was not annoyed, for they saw when I would be in the way, and warned me to remove in time.

In two days more all was ready; the anchor was hoisted, sails set, and San Blas was fast disappearing. On one side was the vast expanse of the Pacific, and on the other a low blue streak marked the shore; even this at last disappeared. I soon became quite familiar with things around me. The boatswain's shrill whistle I soon understood, and the piping up of the watches, instead of causing me to start from my hammock, would tell me the hour of the night.

On first coming on board this ship I was struck with surprise on seeing such unlimited and absolute power given into the hands of a single individual as there is to the commander of a man-of-war. Some use this power with moderation, while others have rendered themselves perfectly odious to the crew by their tyranny. The ship is their kingdom, and over it they rule with absolute sway. The men are some-

times looked upon as brutes, and treated accordingly. Should any of them be so unfortunate as to tread on a young midshipman's toe, he is at once reported to the captain as having been guilty of treating his superior officer with disrespect. Soon after the boatswain's shrill whistle is heard, and a call for "*All hands ahoy to witness punishment.*" There stands the captain and his officers. The former, clothed with supreme authority, tells the culprit the nature of his crime; no chance for explanation or apology is given, and if any is attempted he is cut short by the order to strip. This being done, his feet are lashed to the gratings, and his hands tied to the gun. Just behind him stands the master at arms, whose duty it is to count, in a loud voice, the number of blows; and at the side stands the boatswain's mate, with the instrument of punishment in his hands. At the words "Do your duty, sir," he carefully draws the cords through his fingers to keep them straight, slowly raises his hand on high, and then rapidly, and with fearful effect, deals the torturing blows. By the time the allotted dozen are inflicted, the back is fairly cut in pieces. The offense for looking cross-wise at a midshipman and throwing him overboard is about the same, so far as the punishment is concerned.

On Sundays, when it is pleasant, all hands are required to dress themselves in their best clothes, and at a certain hour they are called up on deck, when the captain, if there is no chaplain on board, says prayers. Then he appears as pious as an old Dutch minister; but perhaps, within fifteen minutes after, he will be swearing at some of the sailors and flog-

ging others. The religious instruction of these men generally amounts to this: "Honor and obey the officers of thy ship, and next to them thy God, and thou shalt escape punishment."

Nothing worthy of note occurred until the night of the 4th of July, when some of the sailors contrived to get some liquor, and got about three sheets in the wind. One of the midshipmen was coming forward, toward whom the sailors bore a mortal grudge, when all at once an iron belaying-pin was hurled at his head, which just grazed his cheek. He turned and quickly went below, where he stayed the remainder of the night. To explain this, I will give a little of this young man's history, which will at once show what his character was, and how it followed him. He had been on the Pacific station nine years without once coming home. Thrice he had made the attempt. The first time he came as far as some of the West India islands; but such was his cruelty to the crew that they swore he never should reach home. This alarmed him, and he was transferred to another ship, in which he went back on the Pacific without being examined, as was his intention. He remained there three years more, and again started home for examination. He came to Rio Janeiro, but durst proceed no further, on account of the ill will of the crew. Here he met another ship outward bound, to which he was transferred, and again he went back to the Pacific, and remained there three years longer; he then came on board our ship as a passenger. But his reputation had preceded him, and the sailors omitted no opportunity of annoying him in every possible

manner. This, however, was the only instance in which they attempted violence. By keeping perfectly quiet, he now came home safe.

The second lieutenant was another such character. While on that coast, a sailor whom he had caused to be flogged seized him round the waist and jumped overboard, determined to be the death of him, even though he sacrificed his own life.

Such instances are not very rare, but they are carefully kept from the knowledge of the public. With regard to this assault on the middy, no notice was taken of it until our arrival at Valparaiso, where we arrived one Sunday morning about the last of July. Then the sailors were anxious to go on shore on liberty. For several days no notice was taken of their applications. At last the captain called the crew aft, and related this circumstance. He then said that if the authors of this attempt were made known, he would give them the desired liberty. This was touching a sailor in a tender point. It required them to betray their comrade to certain punishment. An obstinate silence was all the response the captain received. He had required what a sailor never would grant, namely, the betrayal of his comrade. They would sooner have died. At last, as nothing could be gained from them, the captain gave one half of the crew liberty for one day. The other half were to take it the next. When they came on board again, they were, for some trivial offense, put into the brig until the next morning. Then they were called up to receive punishment. Nineteen were thus punished at one time.

I did not go ashore with the sailors, but went in company with Sergeant Sheppard, of the marines. The city was larger and more beautiful than I had any reason to expect from its appearance from the ship. It is almost entirely built on the hills, there being very little space round the harbor. As this city has been often described, I will give only a few brief notices. Its situation is very singular, being on the ascent of the hills, or tops, as the sailors call them. Every top has its particular name, and is very steep. Most of them are formed by means of steps the whole distance. The city is not regularly laid out in squares, but there is great uniformity in the buildings, which present a fine appearance. Their police is all mounted on horses, and armed with a sword and pistols. They may be found in every street, and in every part of the city. Some of their laws are quite singular. One of them prohibits the riding of horses through the streets faster than a walk; and every transgressor is fined two dollars.

Of this regulation I had experimental proof; for, soon after coming on shore, the sergeant and myself went to a livery-stable and got a horse to ride round the city. As we were leaving, the keeper told us of this regulation, that we might govern ourselves accordingly. We had been some time out, and were coming back, my horse prancing along, but not trotting. Soon one of the police came up, stopped my horse, and reached out his hand, saying, "*Dos pesos, dos pesos*" (two dollars). I asked what he wanted that for. "Because my horse was trotting," he said. At this instant some noise was made by my comrade

that caused the guard to look round, when I put spurs to my horse. The animal started with all vengeance for the stable, and I let him go just where he chose, as he knew the way better than I did. When I started the policeman blew his whistle and followed after. This signal was followed by others; and presently I saw a host standing in the street, ready to intercept me as I passed. But such was the speed of the animal that it was impossible; and they also followed after. My horse ran through the market, jumped over fruit stands, knocking them here and there, and frightened some women and children not a little. At last he came to the stable, where he stopped. I jumped off, ran through into a back street, then went round the block, and came again to the stable. There I found over a hundred policemen looking for me. As I had just come in from the main street, I was not suspected. My comrade now came in, but we did not speak to each other until after we had left the stable, when we had a hearty laugh at outwitting the police.

In the afternoon we went into the country a short distance, but did not see enough to make it worth while giving a description of it. I will only say that, from the information I gathered, it is one of the most healthy climates in the world. The soil is immensely fertile, and the mountains produce large quantities of gold and silver. Its mines are said to be as rich as any in the world.

We remained here fifteen days, when we again set sail. Our passage now was rougher than it had been. We were nearing the Southern Ocean, and a violent

gale drove us into the regions of almost perpetual darkness. We were far south of Cape Horn, and the day was only six hours long. The weather was the coldest that I ever experienced. This place is justly termed the terror of sailors.

In about three weeks time we came into warmer weather. The winds had moderated, and we glided smoothly yet rapidly along. No stop was made at any port until we reached Norfolk, Va., where we landed on the eleventh of October.

As it regards the prediction of the surgeon of the Lexington, who said that I would not live to get home, I have only to say, that I was not only alive, but in better health than I had been for some time before. I now weighed one hundred and sixty pounds; when I came on board at San Blas, I weighed but one hundred and fifteen. I remained here a few days, and then went to Washington, where my dues were paid me. I then returned to my friends, who had long mourned me as dead.

THE END.

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