Swinging round one of these blank and profitless points after another, we suddenly strike a small but beautiful green garden, full of loungers. Another sharp turn, and we are in the busiest street I have seen in Mexico: one side set with seats all occupied, the other with shops, chiefly of drink, and all the street alive with people. So we race through street after street, narrow, backed up against the hills, intensely crooked (as how could they otherwise be?), until another green plaza is passed, and we halt with a jerk, and a crunch as of steam-brakes, in the heart of the hole, at the Hotel Concordia.

It is the most Yankee town in Mexico. Indeed, few in Yankeedom are as Yankee. Dover and Lynn do not turn out as many gazers at the passing trains as these sidewalks and windows do to the rattling coach. Lowell is as full of street loungers; Manchester, perhaps; but no other.

I found Americans here, and was at home, both in the place and the language, from the start, and rejoiced at so delightful an ending to my unusually bad beginning. The road of which I had heard nothing, and which I had supposed so rough, was smooth as a Red River prairie. The robbers changed to chatty drivers and market-women, and the end was as home-like as the Merrimac or the Alleghany. So may every dark still turn to brighter day!

IV.

A SILVER AND A SACRED TOWN.

Native Costume.—Reboza and Zarepe.—The Sombrero.—A Reduction Hacienda.—The Church in Guanajuato.—Its Antipodes.—A clerical Acquaintance.—A mulish Mule.—"No quiere."—The Landscape.—Lettuce.—Calzada.—The Town and Country.—Fish of the Fence.—The Cactus and the Ass.—Compensation.—One-story City.—High Mass and higher Idolatry.—The God Mary.

Dust off, and clothes changed, let us go out and look at the city. The streets are full of people. This is a festa day, the day of St. Joseph, and nobody is at work. The folks are out in their best array of *reboza* and *zarepe*. The reboza is the mantle of the ladies, and their weakness; the zarepe that of the gentlemen, and one of their weaknesses. For sexes, like every thing else here, go by the contraries to what they do elsewhere, and men are much more dressy than women. The reboza is always quiet in color, black, blue, and brown being the prevailing tints. It is a thin-wove, light cotton mantle, some three yards long and three-quarters wide, which is worn over the head and shoulders in an easy and graceful manner. It is the only adornment they possess, apart from the pleasant faces that beam from within it, and which are as good-looking, that is, look as good, as their whiter sisters here or elsewhere.

The men are more set forth. They essay the zarepe. I do not find this word in my lexicon, but suppose that is the way to spell it. This is a thick shawl of many colors, sometimes striped in red, yellow, green, blue, and white; sometimes with light centre and embroidered edges. They muffle up their face, and wrap their shoulders in this gay shawl even in the hottest days. It is their pride. Some of them cost two or three hundred dollars, and they rise, with

gold and silver lace embroidery, to the height of five hundred dollars and over. Not so the ladies' mantle. The highest-priced reboza I have seen was worth fifteen to twenty dollars, and was a plain light-blue, checked, not looking a whit better in color than a blue checked calico of a ten-cent valuation, but of course soft and fine. It has also an edging of stiffened netting, a quarter of a yard wide, which is a sign of its aristocratic rank.

The men are not content with their radiant zarepe. They essay the sombrero in silver and gold. Broad, light gray-and-white felts are faced with broad silver lace, and fantastically wrought. They have bands of silver swollen into a snake-like form around the bottom of the crown; also buttons and stars of silver. They are often very costly and ornate.

Then come their pantaloons of leather, if they are on horseback, with a row of silver or brass buttons, close packed from pocket to heel, on the seam of either leg. The extra-fashionable adorn this garment by fancy facings on back and legs, set in very prettily, and making that rude patch of our childhood and of many a manhood a really handsome ornament.

It is but proper to say that the ubiquitous European is changing these fashions, and that more soft hats and silk hats after the New York and Paris fashions are seen to-day on the plazas of all the chief cities than the magnificently gotten-up sombreros, while the zarepe is almost entirely remanded to the working-classes. Even the brimless hats, with their towering feathers and flowers and lace, are replacing modest lace veils and black shawls for church, and blue rebozas; and Mexico will soon, I fear, be undistinguishable in dress from New York.

The mines have created this city, and still enrich it. They are located in the hills behind and above the town. Humboldt reckoned that one-fifth of the silver of the world had come from one mine here, and the yield now is five millions a year. They are worked on shares—the laborer half, the owner half. These "diggings" are carried to the reduction haciendas, as grain is carried to a mill, and are either sold to the haciendados, or reduced by

them for their toll. There are over fifty of such haciendas, some of them quite extensive. Mr. Parkman, of Ohio, has one of the oldest and largest. He is now somewhat feeble in years, and his sons carry on his business. His house, spacious and cool, overlooks his works. The miners and owners bring their ore here. It is distributed according to its apparent value, the best masses being reduced by themselves. The ore is beaten under huge hammers, ground by mules walking round a press, in which it is reduced to powder, placed in open vats, mixed with dissolving chemicals, salt, sulphurets, and powerful solvents, and trampled by horses to get the soil and solvents well mixed together. But the powerful chemicals soon injure their feet. Mr. Parkman, with his Yankee wit, provides a cheap and admirable substitute. It is simply a barrel moving along an axle. The axle stretches across the patio from the centre to the circumference. Horses outside pull it round. The barrel on the axle both revolves upon it and moves up and down it, reaching thereby all the composition, and commingling it more perfectly than horses' feet can do, yet with injury to none. It is a simple and seemingly effective remedy.

From this patio the substance is put through several waters, and the silver at last nearly extracted. It is then placed in furnaces, and by heating, the still adhering and undesired elements are driven out; and so, through fire and water, the well-sought silver is brought into a narrow compass. Even then it is ragged and unfit for working. It must be run into bars, and carried to the mint, and coined into solid dollars, halves, and quarters, for the delight and destruction of mankind. In Guanajuato they vary this form of its ultimate disposition with those more pleasing and artistic; and horses, horsemen, muleteers, carboneros, and other native peculiarities are cast in solid silver, and sold as curiosities at comparatively low rates. In fact, silver is about all that flourishes in Guanajuato. The people, like those of most mining towns, are reckless of money and morals.

The church is more than silver. How is it in Guanajuato? Not very hopeful. Like most mining towns, it is more free than

religious. It has several Roman churches, some of which are rather handsome. But there is little power, even of this church, over the city. Making money too easy, it is feverish, gambling, dissipating, indifferent to the Church. There is room here for work of the right kind, much room. It would do no harm, but much good, if every Christian church had earnest missionaries among this half a hundred thousand population.

One thing does flourish, if the Church does not—the liquor saloons. Here, as everywhere the world over, the chief of devils is drink. But here, unlike the States, it assumes its true name. See that one on the chief street, rightly named, "El Delirio" (The Delirium); and this is "La Tentacion!!" with two admiration points—(The Temptation!!). Well named. I have seen one entitled "El Abysmo" (Hell). If our beer and whisky saloons were equally honest, some of their victims might be saved from temptation, delirium, and hell, which they now, under false pretenses, too surely bestow.

Let us wind out of Guanajuato, and see its antipodes. One need not go half round the world to find his opposite. He meets him often at the next door, nay, usually in himself. So we find the antipodes of Guanajuato fifteen leagues off. Leon is said to be the second city of the republic in size. It must be worth visiting. Five in the morning we are scampering through the streets of the city, in which the mules, like the Oregon, according to Mr. Bryant, hear no sound save their own dashings, and the city does not wish to hear even that. I am alone in the coach, and essay sleep, not very successfully, for I had unwisely been advised not to take my shawl, and more unwisely had followed that advice. The morning here is chill, though the day be hot. Since I could not sleep myself warm, I strove to sing myself thus, and to admire the sun rising over the Queretaro plain. But all of no avail. So, believing the best way to conquer any disagreeabilities is to face them, "and by opposing, end them," I concluded to take the whole dose of cold, fresh and full, on the top of the coach.

The first posta is at the brisk town of Silao, where I mount behind the driver, and find a seat on the same shelf occupied by a priest dressed in his robe, beads and all. It is the first sight of this sort I have seen in the country. He would not have dared to have done it in the city of Mexico. But they are less rigid here in respect to all interdicted matters. They allow bull-fights and priest's robes, neither of which can occur in the capital.

He seems clever, this priest, and is disposed to be conversational. By means of broken English and Spanish, helped on with some broken French and Latin, we contrive to get at each other's meaning quite fairly. He informs me that he is a priest of the new order of the Paulists, that he is conversant with Greek, Hebrew, Italian, and French, as well as Spanish; that he has never been at Rome, but expects to go next year. He inquires my profession. "A writer for the press," I innocently answer. It is well sometimes to have two strings to your bow. But I add, "I am a Methodist." I meant to tell half the ecclesiastical truth, if I shrunk from telling the whole. This reserve is not unwise; for Leon is the most fanatical of cities; and the knowledge that a Protestant minister was entering it, even as an observer, would have been reported to the bishop before I had been fifteen minutes in the town. What consequences might have followed, poor Stevens's fate suggests. It was only about two days' ride beyond Leon, in a less religious town, that he was massacred by order of the Church authorities. By this semi-reticence, too, I got out of my Paulist friend light that I should not otherwise have gained. He caught at the word "Methodist." "How many churches have you," he said, "in the States?" I tell him there are six leading churches: Baptist, Catholic, Congregational, Episcopal, Methodist, and Presbyterian. He asks the peculiarities of the five of which he is ignorant. They are given. "Any Lutherans?" "A few churches of that name, composed principally of Germans." "Any Calvinists?" "Many of that faith, but no church organization of that name." "Are not many *indifferentestas?*" I repeat that word, not catching its meaning. "Yes," he replies; "no religion, no faith, no confession, nothing?" "Yes, there are some who are not Christians, but most

+ Fondo del jesuita -

have some religious opinions they hold to, and many who are not members of Christian churches support and sympathize with them." Being asked what objects of interest were in Leon, "The theatre, the cathedral, and some haciendas," he answered. "Methodists never go to the theatre," I replied; a remark at which he winced a little, and perhaps I ought to have winced also; for it is rather a past truth, I fear, than a present one, though it ought to be true to-day as it was aforetime. He explained by saying that it was architecturally attractive.

¡Vaya una recomendable abstinencia!

A mule displayed his nature in an unusual degree. The epizootic had reduced the working force of the road, and new mules had to be brought on. One of these dirty cream-colored fellows was in the thills. He was not disposed to be conquered, even with seven obedient fellows to drag him along in the path of duty. He was not to be fooled by any such tricks, so he held steadily back while they trotted fast, and was dragged forward in spite of himself. The lash and the stones did not change his views of his duty to himself. He only held back the more. It was a novel sight to see him thus dragged along by his collar, his heels flying in violent resistance to his will.

At last, determined to end the contest by a *coup de grace*, down he flung himself on the ground. The seven brothers were on the full gallop, and would have dragged him to Leon. But he had cost too much to be used up that way. So the coach is stopped; the obstinate chap, after a deal of resistance, is got upon his feet; a rope is tied from his saddle under his tail, so as to make resistance less agreeable to himself; and off we start again. He begins soon, like Barbara Lewthwaite's pet lamb, to pull at the cord as bad as ever. He spurns the tail and saddle device, and after letting his legs oppose his will for a mile or two, down he goes again. He has learned the trick, and will play it till it wins. He is dragged fifty to a hundred feet on the flinty soil. It is of no use. He will not get up if he has got to go on. "*No quiere*," says the priest (he does not desire). This is the Spanish way of putting "he won't." Pretty evident is it that he does not desire to conform. So he is

released, put into the hands of the *mozo*, and we are subdued, not he, and go into town with only six animals, while he walks in, free of harness and coach. He had to pay for his liberty, I doubt not, and a big price, too, in the flogging he got, and did not afterward very often lie down in the middle of his route.

Is the mule here called *mula* because of this force of will? And did the word come from *mulier?* The opprobrious epithet of the parent of the mule is never applied to the sex. "An ass" is an insult given only to man. *Mula* takes the other side in its termination, and in this instance forcibly illustrated the saying, "When she won't, she won't, and there's an end on it." *No quiere* settles many another attempt on the part of driving man to bring the other and higher creature into subjection.

The mountain ranges on each side are about ten miles apart. The plain is very level, and most of it very fertile and highly cultivated. The hills are full of silver, quicksilver, and other precious minerals, so my brother-priest informs me, but can not tell why they are so little mined. They are awaiting a people who can make them unveil their charms. "*No quiere*," they say to-day, and their human masters respect their wishes, showing thereby that they are not their masters. It will not be so always. Either these or others will subject these mountains to their sway, and compel their gorges to disgorge their treasures of ages.

The fields lie very lovely to the eye, outspreading in their everlasting verdure, fed perpetually by streams from the mountains; the beds and roadside glowing in tulips, roses, violets, and many a strange beauty none the less beautiful for her novelty. Wheat, alfalfa, barley, and corn are making glad the heart of man by their abundant growth. Haciendas claim immense territory on the left, but on the right the soil is cut up among little proprietors, or at least those who can lease and cultivate a few rods in comparative independence.

Leon draws near, spread out at the base of a range of hills that terminates the valley. The older Indians and the children note the priestly dress and take off their hats in reverence; but the