

skill, who said they could fasten their lasso where they wished, was asked if they could catch hold the tip of the tail. He has not answered yet. The heifer casts itself on the ground; but it is no use. Its fight is fought, and it has lost. It surrenders, and trots submissively into the corral.

The country still holds its wildness, whiteness, and greenness. For a dozen miles the road winds in and out among the mesquite-trees, a good pathway and exceedingly romantic. It enters then the pretty town of San Francisco.

No village so ornate in water-color frescoes have I seen in Mexico as this bit of a city. Irapuato is its only rival, and that is not so daintily touched up. The hand of a master is here. Look at that drinking-saloon on the south-west corner of the plaza. Never was an inner fresco of a Parisian parlor more beautiful. The straw-tinted wall is bordered at top and bottom with mode colors, representing cornices and pediments of variegated marble, rich and strong and delicate. La Plaza it is called: it deserves a better business. All round the square this passion rages. It has caught the church, which rejoices in its blue and white dress. All are more pronounced than the La Plaza, which has touched perfection's height in this cheap and pretty adornment. A statue in the square is an additional proof of the taste of the inhabitants.

Jesus Maria is the next dirty village, a good name for a Nazareth of a town.

Arroyas, the changing-place for the mules, has two or three huts, one of which without chimney was full of smoke of a tortilla-frying fire. At the other were a half-dozen ancient oranges, of which the lady sent me one by her little six-year-old boy, and which I as generously gave to the mozo, sending her back my card for lack of a more valuable commodity less than two reals, which I thought too much for such a compliment. You will find it, doubtless, on her card-rack when you pass through that station.

Now comes another hard pull over the uncovered rocks. Where the soil is on, the road is good; but where it is off, no attempts are made to replace it, and we stagger along on the bed rock which

the one or two feet of loam has left in some summer shower for parts unknown. The hills lose none of their grandeur. In fact, they increase therein. Nowhere in the country have I seen a more magnificent colonnade than accompanied us, on our left, this last ten miles. It was close at hand, and we could see far into the depths of these cavernous cliffs. Here are truncated cones, with their craters lying open half-way down their sides, a hollow to which sun and cloud-shadow give yet greater effect. Other portions of the vast façades are rent in twain from the top to the bottom. Chasms, hundreds of feet deep and wide, wind inward, and present, from this distance, rare effects. What would not nearer views afford?

The road rocks its way along on the level earth at the foot of this cliff range, and begins to slightly ascend a more ridgy but not more rough path, and suddenly the Valley of San Luis Potosi breaks magnificently on the sight. How exceedingly fortunate is Mexico in the location of her cities! If great rivers elsewhere flow by great towns, as Nature is said to condescend to man, here, for lack of great rivers, she surrounds the chief towns with superb circles of field, lake, wood, and hills—always the last, and one or more of the other three. Mexico has lakes for her chief circlet, a necklace of pearls; Puebla and Queretaro and Leon, fields of greenest green and brownest brown; Guanajuato is bound about with mountains only and closely; and San Luis Potosi with forests, a necklace of emeralds. The woods fill all the hollow for twenty miles by fifty, as seen from this slight eminence. Two villages peep above them, at least their church towers do, all that usually have height or right to arise and shine. La Pila the nearest one is called. The other perches on a shelf beyond the woods and under the hill-sides. To the north, look, and amidst the foliage you see many a steeple and dome, with which the setting sun is playing. The trees hide every thing but those dancing lights on the church tops. Even in the chief cities every thing is lowly but the church. That is every thing. San Luis Potosi is that congregation of flashing minarets, the chief city of Central Mexico. All

over the green valley are corresponding points of glittering gray and gold, telling where subordinate churches rule subordinate towns. Clouds that have hugged us close all day lift a little to let us drink in the beauty of the scene. They break clear away from before the face of the sun, and let him smile his parting *pax vobiscum*. It is a picture long to be remembered.

The fields are not all woods as you approach them. Those near us have them scattered over the plowed grounds, as elms stand in the heart of New England pastures, and maples in those of New York and Pennsylvania. The Peru or pepper tree grows to an elm and maple size and beauty in these rich spots, and sets off the fields as well as its statelier sisters. The effects of irrigation are seen in the barren and utterly worthless common, one side of the roadway, and the dark, loamy, fruitful soil on the other. It separates the sheep and the goats. Natures human so near are often as far apart in real condition: all for the want, or the possession, of grace. Not Athabasca's divide alone sends its streamlets to opposite seas and eternities; this dusty roadway is a like division between life and death. Every path of life reveals the same profound, perpetual departure, each from each, forever and forever.

The mules change their slow pull into a gallop, and go, lashed and leaping, through the streets to the plaza of the city. This northernmost of the central cities has but little in it that is attractive to a sight-seer, but much that will draw the heart of the Christian, much over which to grieve, much already over which to rejoice. It was good to meet on the hotel stairs the greeting of Rev. Mr. Thomson, the Presbyterian missionary, located here. He had been here six months, and this was the first opportunity he had had to take a brother by the hand; so our joy was mutual. Saturday was spent in that most delightful of tasks, the reading of the mail. It had followed me from Mexico, and I greeted the far-off faces of home and friends in this unexpected place. How doubly dear all such favors are when thus served up! It is possible that

"The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren."

But the wren is as sweet as the nightingale when heard in a far-away land, and no nightingale of professional art can equal the melody of the home bird, heard on a foreign shore.

So, also, these ministerial letters are full of refreshment. Why is it that ministers so seldom correspond? There is a world of richness in the mutual unbosoming of their souls. How passionate for Christ are these outgoings! How uplifting these aspirations and dedications! How the world melts, and three thousand miles is a cipher to the burning pulsings of electric souls! Write to your brother in Christ warmly, frankly, naïvely, wholly. The best letters are clerical. "Forty Years' Correspondence with Dr. Alexander" is the only American book of letters worthy to stand with Cowper's and Lamb's.

There is not much to see in San Luis. Its sixty thousand people are as monotonous as six. The cathedral is an improvement on the one in Mexico, in putting its choir behind its altar. It gives breadth and effect to the height and arches. Other churches many it has, some costly, and heavily laden with gilded altars. Chief among these is the church dedicated to Mary at the end of the paseo, or *calzada*, a broad tree-lined walk of over a mile. This church has only ascriptions to Mary on its walls. "Madre del Creador," "Madre de la Divina Gracia," "Madre del Salvador," "Madre del Jesu Cristo," and many others. Some of these are on the high road to blasphemy, if they have not reached it. The Mother of the Divine Grace, the Mother of the Creator, are two vast strides in that direction. They are like those on the cathedral of Leon, though these fall short of the suggestive divine assumptions that Leon ascribes to her nature and power.

This city still maintains its bull-fights, and the amphitheatre is preserved, and used every Sunday night, except in Lent. The priest has to be busy then, said a good Mexican Christian, in absolving the bull-fighters. Near this favorite resort is the alameda,

dry and treeless, and far inferior in beauty to Queretaro. For so large a city its attractions are exceedingly small.

But that which drew me hither was exceedingly great. Small it is in the estimation of the people, small probably in the opinion of the country at large, but it is by far the greatest thing in the city or the State. Let us go and look at this marvel of San Luis Potosi. You pass up the long and narrow street that goes out from the west side of the plaza, as I locate points of compass. It may be the other way, for all I know. You will see on the side of the house, on the corner of the plaza and this street, many scars, made by bullets and cannon-balls. They are reminiscences of the revolutions which are apt to rage fiercely in this city, and which always centre about the governor's palace, on the plaza close to this corner, at right angles to his house. The fight ran up and down this street, and around that corner. Go down the narrow lane a third of a mile, and you reach the first street crossing it. On the corner of that street was another battle fought, another revolution won, and one that is not to be lost, though it may have to be fought over several times before it is completely achieved. The Christian's battle, like the freeman's,

"Once begun,
Descending long from sire to son,
Though often lost, is surely won."

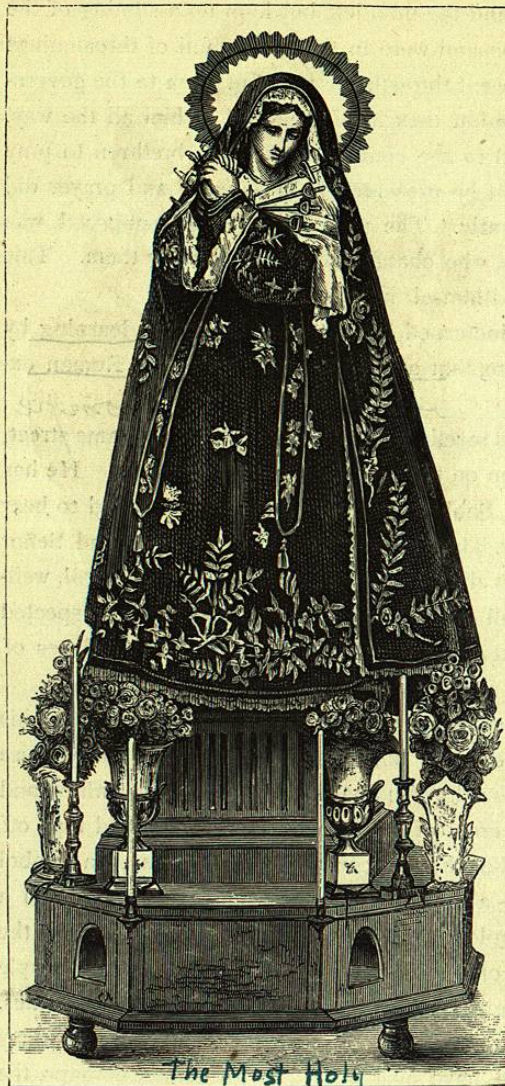
In that corner building, a few weeks before I was there, a mob attempted to break up Christian worship. Señor Vivera, a live man he is, as his name signifies, has been preaching here for some time; of late under the direction and with the co-operation of the Presbyterians. That Sabbath there was an attempt made to mob him down. A gang, made drunk with pulqui, were pushed into the room by their confederates and leaders. His little daughter, only five years old, began to cry. He told her not to be afraid; that the same God and Saviour would take care of him that took care of the prophets and apostles when mobbed; that he did not fear their wrath. He appealed to them as to his conduct, for they had known him for many years. They filled the room, and insulted him. The

police were sent for, and the mob left, but kept up a stoning of the windows. Three thousand were in the streets, full of threatenings and slaughter. He went through the midst of them to the governor's palace for protection, they hurling stones at him all the way. Afterward summoned to the court, he asked the brethren to pray for him, that he might be preserved from danger; and prayer did ascend for him fervently. The prosecution, as he supposed, was caused by the priests, who charged him with abusing them. This he denied, and proved himself innocent.

These riots have increased his congregation, many learning by them, for the first time, that any other church but the Roman existed in the city.

He was holding his meeting a little farther down the same street, his lessor having risen on the rent till he was driven out. He has a pleasant casa, and Sabbath morning a roomful gathered to hear the Word. Rev. Mr. Thomson assisted in the service, and Señor Vivera read a written discourse and prayed. He is a small, well-knit, resolute man, full of faith and zeal, well known and respected in the city, as I found on visiting with him many of the places of business.

He is fond yet of symbols, and has a flag in preparation for his Sunday-school that exhibits both his taste and the skill of these natives. It is of equal longitudinal sections of purple, white, and blue silk. A small cross of *lapis lazuli* tipped with gold tops off the flag-staff. On the white or central section is placed a symbol of the sacraments — a conch-shell, significant of baptism, with a wreath of wheat in gold embroidery and a cluster of grapes for the Lord's Supper. A crimson cross is to be wrought on the purple silk, and twelve silver stars on the blue, for the twelve apostles. This is wrought exquisitely in silk and gold, and surpasses any Sunday-school flag I have ever seen. It illustrates, perhaps, the education of this people, and they may need to be taught the vanity of all symbols. But there is stuff in him, doctrinal and practical, and I think he will be more and more a power in this city.



The Most Holy
THE VIRGIN.

and their worshipers. This failure may open their eyes to the folly of this idolatry.

We held English service at Mr. Thomson's house in the after-

Yesterday was observed at St. Louis and throughout Missouri, as a day of fasting and prayer, in accordance with the Governor's proclamation, for relief from the grasshopper plague. *Letter to Phila. June 4. 1875.*

It needs him, for it is woefully given to idolatry. The image of the Virgin of the Ranchos, a league out of town, is visited by the image of Joseph, just before the rainy season begins, and he escorts her to town, where she stays as his guest until the rain falls, when she is escorted back again. This procession, it is said, causes the rain. It was worldly-wise to select that time for the visit. But it has failed lately, perhaps because of the presence of the Protestants. There has been scarcely any rain here for two years, despite these visits of the images

noon, which many Mexicans attended. He re-preached the English sermon over to them in Spanish. It was an exceedingly impressive occasion.

Here is the seed-germ of the new life that is to come to all this people. They are beginning to discern it. A priest said that very afternoon, at a funeral, that the Protestants would succeed, for they cultivated piety. May they cultivate it more and more, here and at home! That is the true trait of the Christian—cultivate piety. These brethren and sisters seem to enjoy religion. I was charmed with their simplicity and heartiness.

One, a poor shoe-maker, was dressed in his white cotton pants and overshirt, his whole wardrobe for all days. He repaired my boot, but would take no pay, nor could I force it upon



S. San JOSEPH.

him. He clung to me as a child to its parents. Others are faithfully seeking the light. Students are spending hours in searching the Scriptures. The dawn is breaking. The Sun of Righteousness appears. May His beams soon fall on all this darkened land!

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VII.

OUT AT SEA.

Leaving Shore.—A hot Companion.—Parallel Mountains.—Parks and Divides.—Hacienda of Bocas.—Gingerbread Pigs.—A ragged Boy Apollo.—Marriageless Motherhood.—The Widow's Reply.—Sierra Prieto.—Mortevillos.—Reveling in the Halls of Montezuma.—Strife of Beggars.—Dusty Reflections.—Venada.—Chalcos.—The Worship of the dying Wafer.

To launch out from San Luis Potosi is like leaving the Irish shore for America, or Halifax for Europe. You feel that you have got fairly to sea. San Luis is the last of the group of central capitals, lying nearest the north, yet identified in its location and life with the cities lying not far below. Zacatecas, farther to the north, may claim like kindred, but not as close. The five towns of Queretaro, Guanajuato, Leon, Guadilajara, and San Luis Potosi are a sort of central league. To push above the latter, especially on the road to Monterey, is like swinging out into another country. It is four days to Saltillo, with no town of importance intervening; four days of reported peril from robbers and greater peril from the fears of robbers. If a sense of loneliness comes over one when he rounds Cape Clear and steers straight into the harsh Atlantic, even though he is facing, and moving toward, home, so may a like sense affect one as he turns his back on the real Mexico of population, history, and power, and moves northward and homeward from San Luis Potosi. Especially would this loneliness deepen if in his case he were a solitary traveler. It is like crossing the ocean with no fellow-passenger. That abyss is yet more abysmal. One is then apt to feel and to quote the dreary lines:

"It is not grief that makes me moan;
It is that I am all alone."