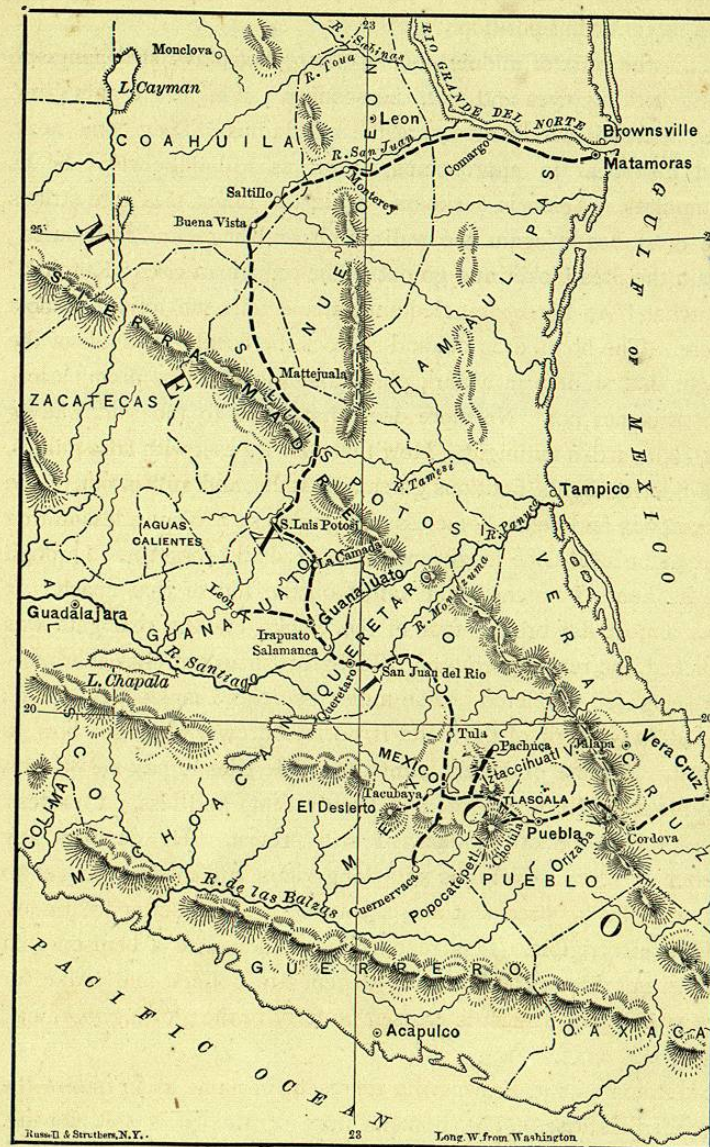


trate them? Yet as we approach them they vanish, or move back to a more defiant position.

It is the mist of midnight, or of sleep, that plays such fantastic tricks with my eyes and with the scenery. Which? Lights glimmer in front; surely these are the city lamps. They come near, and disappear in approaching, either as will-o'-the-wisps or as camp-fires. Again is darkness; again the damp mesquite strikes the dizzy head; again the walls, high, and huge, and false, arise; again the fires flicker and go out. The coachman cries "Kutchah! Kutchah!" to his bedraggled mules, and tells me we are almost there. The hours drag on, and so does the coach. I think of the Light that shineth in a dark place, and wish for like illumination. But it comes not. No more does that come to the soul, wading through earth's midnight. How that soul is beset with false guides, bewildering lights, fictitious gates and walls, and still is out in the wet woods and fields, homeless and guideless. What a lesson that last night in Mexico taught me! Never shall I forget it. Through all its hours I watched and waited on the top of that coach. It was almost day-break—four of the clock—ere the real gate was touched, the real city entered. The guardsman searches sharp, because no fee is offered. The mules spurt and make their finish; the drowsy clerk of the hotel is not too drowsy to forget how to cheat. A score of dollars is my due. He tries to pay me off with worn-out quarters smoothed to twenty cents and less. I protest. He proffers smooth dollars. I still protest. He declines any better currency. Nervous with long vigils, and anxious to get to Brownsville for breakfast and a couch, I entreat better treatment. He is incorrigible. I surrender, and snatch with a benison that burns, not blesses, I hope, my degenerate dollars, and strike for the river. The stream is crossed by ferry in the glowing morning; Mexico is done.

Matamoras and Brownsville represent in name as in nature the two civilizations. The nomenclature of Mexico is soft, flowing, enervating; that of America, short, sharp, energetic. Matamoras in pronunciation is like lotus-eating; Brownsville like the crack



THE ITINERARY—FROM VERA CRUZ TO MATAMORAS.



of a pistol. So are the civilizations they represent. Idle and incurious, letting things go as they come, is the one; obtrusive and ever-moulding is the other. The cities are like their nations. The old-style house, barred windows, barred gate-way, narrow street, dead wall, plastered and tinted, is Matamoras; open windows, narrow door-ways, no coach-doors, no city walls nor gates, wooden houses, painted sometimes, wide streets: Yankee of Yankees is Brownsville. The two, when blended and built up in Christ, will be a beauty and strength, husband and wife, one "entire and perfect chrysolite."

*¿Es posible que se liguén dos cosas  
tan desiguales?*