

on me, for the combination of comfortless Mexican saddle and constant downward pitch reduced me, mentally as well as physically, to a jelly-like consistency. The night overtook us long before we reached the plains, and we rode in the dark, seemingly for endless hours, along the edge of a bottomless abyss, while the mountain whip-poor-will made mournful music to our misery. When we, at last, arrived before the door of the decent little fonda, which our host had recommended to us, I slipped, a boneless mass, from the saddle and bewailed my fate. But everybody was very good to me; the horses and the donkeys rubbed their velvet noses sympathizingly against my face, the Indian dogs rallied to my support, and the Indian woman of the fonda stayed me with flagons and comforted me with apples—in other words, she brought to my room a cup of varnish-like coffee and a crust of hard bread, and I slept as sweetly upon my wooden pallet as if it had been a bed of down.

We had upon our journey to San Marcos the next morning some fellow-passengers who were very different from our former traveling companions. The youngest member of this party of four had a face like that of one of Raphael's young saints. From their conversation we learned that the men were cock-fighters returning from a *professional* trip in the mountains. They drank

whisky incessantly—not at all a common custom among the Mexicans—and their conversation and manner showed the greatest depravity. I grieve to say that the saintly faced young fellow was the most reckless of the company. One cannot always judge the flavor of an apple from the color of its skin.