

The physician has always to make good his fee before he commences the healing art, or otherwise he will receive nothing. The Mexican, on being confined by indisposition, hangs the picture of the angel Gabriel at the head of his bed, and during all the time of sickness, he is praying to the saint. If he recovers, he attributes the cure to the direct interposition of Gabriel, and with much sanctity makes a present to the priest,—leaving the doctor unpaid, unless the wily physician has received his pay in advance. Doctors do not prosper well in Mexico, excepting in the large cities; first, because of the superstition of the people, and next, for the reason of the great good health of the table lands.

Simon was desirous that I should employ him as a servant, but not liking the cast of his physiognomy, and not wishing to be troubled with the music of his organ, as his speaking English was no inducement, I determined to decline the proposition. To convince me of his bravery, he showed his wounds which he had received in hard-fought battles, and related the history of the murder of a party of Americans, to whom he was a servant; but these were also reasons why he would not suit me, for I did not know but that he might have been an accomplice in such horrid transactions, and as much of a robber as any of the Mexicans.

On the evening of the second day the diligencia was to arrive from the city of Mexico. I felt much gratified on its arriving at the office, at perceiving that the only passenger in it was either an European or an American; and much to my joy he afterwards proved to be a citizen of the United States, although for a long time, a resident in Mexico. His name I must be excused from giving, as the reason may hereafter prove obvious.

The American was good-looking, and as intelligent a gentleman as I had ever met with. His journey was in the same direction as my own, at least as far as Zacatecas. I informed him of the arrangement made for me by the polite Frenchman, at whose house we were, and proposed that he should share the accommodation. He gladly embraced the offer, and expressed much gratification at his good fortune of having it in his power to travel with a fellow-countryman.

## CHAPTER XII.

Departure from Lagos. Chocolate, cups, knives and forks. An American for my companion. The new plain called La Villita. The polite Frenchman. The plain of La Villita. Having arrived at Villita. In towns in Mexico. Public houses called Marons. Furniture. Spanish Caritalia. My misfortune. Hire a bed for the night. Fondi. Cook-shop. The rent of the room. La Villita. Departure. Roads, bridges and ways. Wheeled Vehicles. Ancient customs. The hacienda Pennucles. The extensive fields. An artificial lake. Arguas Calientas. Palace of the Conde Guadalupe. We were foreign padres. Extravagant charges. Italian Opera company. The city of Argus Calientas. Churches, priests, and soldiers. The case of the White Jack and the people. Decision of the Judges. American waggons. A pleasing sight. The difference between Mexican and American waggons. The Moors who invaded Spain. Our day's journey. Dust and wind. The skin. Display of badges. Our ride for the most of the day. Corn-field. At San Jacinto. The Indians. The body-guard. Garrisons of disciplined regulars. Conjectures of the people. Volunteers of the army. Her Britanic Majesty conquering Mexico. Servants sleeping on the hard, cold pavement. The American servants. Remarks to the Secretary of the American legation. Hot sun. South-west winds. Dishonest and barbarous habits. The more polished circles. Swindlers, thieves and murderers. John Randolph. Gentlemen of character above suspicion.

On the morning of the 16th instant, the American and myself departed from Lagos. The carretilla in which we were seated, was obtained from a priest, upon the reasonable terms of sixty dollars for the journey. Our equipment consisted of one armed out-rider and a postillion, to the admiration of the good people of Lagos.

From the long residence of the American in Mexico, I was better provided to meet all the exigencies of my journey than I otherwise should have been; for although I had learned much, as to the inconveniences of travelling in Mexico, yet more I had to glean at every progress and each change that I should make. My new friend had provided us with chocolate, cups, sweet bread, and spoons, with knives and forks, articles which never would have occurred to me to be necessary in my travels.

With an American for my companion, my ride promised to

be a pleasing one. The day was warm, but tempered and rendered delightful by the winds continually blowing fresh from the south-west. It was not long after we had begun our journey, before we passed the pleasant valley of Lagos, by the difficult crossing of a mountain. The pleasing prospect of the new plain presented to our view La Villita.

But the chief luxury we enjoyed, was travelling over a smooth surface, mounted in state as we were in the priest's coach, attracting the attention of all the country folks as we journeyed along, for they knew the vehicle, and no doubt imagined that the holy father was seated within, and from this cause alone we had to attribute the marked attention shown to us on that day.

It was a device of mine host, the polite Frenchman, for he said that he could insure me my safety in the well known *carretilla*, for the Mexicans would sooner eat off their fingers than offer insult to their beloved and holy priest. The postillion and outrider, too, the body-servants of the holy father, had their badges hanging in full view from around their necks, the sight of which not only held out pleasant hopes to the lookers-on, but at the same time, in the bountiful profusion of indulgences granted them, his favourites, the people had also to dread his anger and his denunciations, if good cause should demand them to be exercised.

I had good reason to congratulate myself likewise, that it was not my destiny on my journey, of perhaps a dozen days, to Zacatecas, to be driven in a diligencia, under the lashing and stoning of the animals, over rough and smooth, all alike, amid the shouts of the drivers, and the barking of dogs.

The plain of La Villita was broad and long, more than a day's journey across. I did not pass any towns or water on my journey, but, as usual, had my intention chained by the peculiar scenery which Mexico always and every where presents—that of lofty mountains fencing in an Eden beneath.

Having arrived at La Villita, a town of about two thousand inhabitants, we were obliged to put up there, for the reason that we should not be able to find houses at the close of the evening, beyond that place, to stop at. In having ken leave of all public ways of travelling, I found that I had also to adopt the modes of accommodation as practised in Mexico, doing in Rome as Romans do—and the longer I travelled the more I had to learn, for that is the only way to get along in Mexico; as to make a stranger understand all your wants and necessities is a matter of impossibility. Hostels are not kept here as in the United States; in fact, agree-

able to our understanding of tavern-keeping, there are no such things in the country.

In towns in Mexico, through which there is much travel, there are public houses called Mesons, which are nothing more nor less than the *caravansaries*, stopped at by travellers in Asia. Having selected, by inquiry, the meson at La Villita, and chosen one of thirteen rooms in the establishment in the upper story, (for those of the ground floor apartments are chiefly occupied by arrieros and other-filthy travellers,) our baggage was carried into it; and it did seem to me as if we were fitting up quarters for housekeeping for "life," as the room was divested of all kinds of furniture, saving a large wooden table and a long bench. My friend being acquainted with the customs of the country, by his long residence in it, had brought with him from the city of Mexico his bed and bedding, called in Spanish *cartera*. This cot is made for travelling purposes that it can be quickly put together, and soon taken to pieces. It weighed with all the bedding but fifty pounds, and was admirably adapted for the accommodation of the traveller, on account of its portableness.

It happened to have been my misfortune not to be possessed of a *cartera*, although I remembered being informed by a friend, in the city of Mexico, not to fail supplying myself with one. But I deferred the purchase until I should reach Zacatecas, believing that I should find no difficulty in obtaining a bed to sleep on, at any house that I might stop at, as I had always met with them at the Casas de la Diligencia.

My mistake was on this occasion very mortifying to me, for I then for the first time became sensible that I was to repose without the comforts of a bed, the luxury of which I had never before been deprived of; and as I cast my eyes over the dusky brick floor that promised to rest my weary limbs, my mind's eye could but review in retrospect the feather beds, clean sheets and white cotton counterpanes of old Virginia. In my dilemma, however, the American proposed that our postillion should go into the town and hire me a bed for the night.

The servant, after a long absence, returned and acquainted us that he was unsuccessful, and that the ladies of La Villita had informed him that they had use for their beds, and I could not obtain one unless I would take for life the owner with it. As flattering as the proposition was to me, to obtain in La Villita a companion, and as beautiful a one perhaps as the Mexican ladies were, yet in the distress of my fatigue, and in despair, I again directed the servant to make the second and last effort, and to say that I was willing for one night to pay double price for a bed, without the incumbrance. It was not

long before the postillion returned with an excellent bed and linen sheets, with which, by the aid of my cloak to keep me warm, I had a comfortable night of it. My night's lodging cost me fifty cents, and as there was no *fondi* (cook-shop) attached to the meson, we had to despatch our servant to purchase of a baker our repast, at the rate of a dollar and twenty-five cents per meal. The rent of our room was sufficiently moderate, as the keeper only charged twenty-five cents.

La Villita is an ugly, cheerless-looking place, and there I was deprived of much sleep by the soldiers, from an old fort that overlooks the town, shouting and applauding some rope dancers near the meson. At eight o'clock the following morning we repacked our baggage and departed from La Villita. The road over which we travelled that day was equal to any that I had ever seen, and I doubt not that no country in the world could, with as little labour, have as good roads as Mexico.

The road over which we travelled had perhaps never been repaired since it was first marked out by the old Spaniards. It is true that bridges had been thrown across some rivers, and other inaccessible places, but the remainder of the roads have never been thrown up in form, excepting, as before remarked, for short distances, and near the large towns; and indeed there appears not to have been the necessity for that attention to roads in Mexico as in most other countries, as the table lands have no elevation that require excavations for thoroughfares through them, while the depressions of the mountains can be crossed without labour; besides, as it only rains there from September until June, the earth is always in a parched condition during the rest of the year, so that the traveller never suffers but from dust or the heat of the sun, nor is retarded in his progress, excepting in the lake regions.

Another reason may be assigned why the Mexicans do not devote more attention to public improvements, which is, that they cannot be persuaded to believe that wheeled vehicles are safer and better modes of transportation, than by the packing of mules; they are like the boy who went to mill, with the corn in one end of the bag and a stone in the other to balance it, could assign no reason why he did so, other than that his ancestors did so before him.

About fifteen miles from La Villita, we stopped at the hacienda Pennueles, to take chocolate. From the high state of improvement in that place, I felt satisfied that it belonged to a gentleman of good taste. The dwelling in which he lived was commodious, and ornamentally painted on the outsides besides, all of the houses, necessary for his servants and e

purposes, partook of the same degree of style. They were erected in regular rows, and stuccoed, which gave a degree of finished freshness to the whole place, superior in point of completeness to any other hacienda that I had passed.

The extensive fields were enclosed by a stone wall four feet high, and discoverable, from the elevated position of the castle, for many miles in extent; and not only reaching to the mountain, but winding up its steep ascent beyond the power of human vision. There was an artificial lake near the house formed by a stone dam of about one-quarter of a mile in length across a shallow, though broad, ravine, the surface of whose waters was grateful to the eye of a weary traveller in that thirsty land. The proprietor of Pennueles was a wheat grower, as by the aid of the lake he could irrigate his lands.

Our journey was an uninterrupted one to Arguas Calientes, at which place we arrived late in the evening. This is a city that has seen more prosperous days, and was once the pride of the Spaniards. It does not now contain more than four thousand inhabitants; and, as an evidence of its decline, the meson at which we stopped was once the sumptuous palace of the Conde Guadalupe—and a fine looking building it was—better than any I had seen in the upper country.

When we dismounted at the meson the wicked old postillion told the mob in the court, that we were foreign *padres*, (priests) and with courteous smiles, and great reverence, did the ragged and motley crowd let us pass to our rooms, without our receiving a single *dun* for alms. After we had taken our quarters, and the servants had brought our baggage into them, all the operations had to be acted out, as were the evening before, at La Villita; that of setting up my friend's carter, and of hiring myself a bed for the night, which I obtained for the extravagant charge of one dollar.

Our dinner was a most indifferent and unsatisfactory one for hungry appetites; yet the servant said that it was the best he could procure for one dollar and fifty cents. It cost me, likewise, six-and-a-fourth cents to have my pocket inkstand filled and so extravagant were the prices, for every thing, that it caused me to inquire if the people of that country were inimical to Americans? to which I was answered, that they were only friendly to those who had money; and I have no doubt that they would not hesitate much to the mode of filching it from travellers.

The prefect of that city, I was told, was an enemy of the human species, by his having been a captain of banditti. However, I found some amends for all my hardships in Arguas Calientes; for at this place I found the Italian opera company

of the city of Mexico, who were on a travelling excursion through the upper country. My friend and self spent a portion of the night in attending their delightful performances. I felt much regret there were no printed bills for the accomodation of the audience, and for the want of these I was unable to learn the names of the actors.

The city of Arguas Calientas takes its name from the celebrated hot-springs that are in the vicinity of the place. These springs are said to vary in temperature from 80 to 129 deg. Fahrenheit, and afford delightful baths. The invalids of the surrounding country resort in considerable numbers to the city for the benefit of the hot-baths, and, indeed, are never empty of men, women and children of the city, although they are not covered by houses, or shelter of any kind.

The city is as well built as any other of the Mexican towns and has from one to two churches to every square: and, judging from the number of priests and soldiers I saw lounging about the streets, I have no hesitation in believing that a congregation of either could have been obtained at any time. In the centre of the plaza, in front of the meson, was a handsome fountain, built after the fashion of a monument. It was a solid pillar of stone, of about twenty feet in height, sitting upon a square basement of ten feet high, upon the corners of which were four swans in a sitting position, spouting water from their throats.

To give an idea how justice is administered in Mexico, and the influence of the wealthy over the administrators of the law, I cannot refrain from relating a case which came before the city prefect for his adjudication.

It appeared that a wealthy citizen was the owner of a white guaranon, (a jack,) and that, whenever the animal went to the fountain with his master's water-buckets, packed upon his back, as was the custom, to have them filled for the benefit of his owner, the haughty beast would, upon his arrival at the common watering-place, if he found there any poor women or children, who had also come with their earthen vessels for water, for the reason that they could not be the owners of such animals as himself, through mischief or pride, or some other cause, jump and kick all about until he would completely demolish all the crockery of the terrified and defenceless sufferers. Such doings had long been complained of by the good citizens, but his master was rich, and it was thought useless to prefer a charge against the wealthy man, to the town authority, of the many breaches of the peace committed by the wicked creature.

It happened one day, however, that while Guaranon was on

his way to the said fountain, and, as usual, all the good people were, at the sight of him, scampering with their frail jars from the watering-place, which was designed for the benefit of all the inhabitants, the said white beast, as it were, perceiving that he could not, by the retreat of the poor water-carriers, have a frolic, smashing jugs at the fountain, suddenly turned aside into a market place, and, driving out all the buyers and sellers, he made his heels dance amongst the toy, dry-goods, and glass-ware stands, as well as by overturning many pyramids of fruit and precious chili, committing grievous trespass. So great was the outrage that the hucksters could not endure it; and, although his master was rich, they all determined, to the great joy of the water carriers, to sue for damages. Accordingly, the owner was summoned to appear before the honourable prefect, judge of the law.

The master did not hesitate to appear, and when the charges were preferred, he, in defence, said, that the jack was a dumb brute, and that he could not hold himself responsible for his acts, and if the learned prefect wished to prosecute a suit for the benefit of the market people, that he must send for the animal, the guilty one, and not for him, to answer to the allegations. He was accordingly discharged, and the guaranon duly summoned and brought into court, where it was thought, from his sense of guilt, he behaved decently. The judge, unable to obtain any defence from the dumb prisoner at the bar, and having sufficient evidence against him, proceeded to deliver the judgment of the court, and decided that the animal should have twenty lashes upon his bare back, and work at hard labour upon the public streets, for the term of three months.

Early on the following morning we again commenced our journey, and, having reached the suburbs of the city, I discovered ten American wagons encamped near the highway. Upon inquiry, I found that a majority of those wagons had American drivers, but the wagons and teams were the property of a Frenchman, residing in the department of Chihuahua, and that he had transported them from Saint Louis, Mo., by land, to Mexico, and I was told, that not unfrequently those wagons made trips from Chihuahua to the city of Mexico, a distance of one thousand miles. I was informed that they had made drives, from the above city, of more than two thousand miles, to Santa Fe.

It may be surprising to some persons that I should have taken any notice of the wagon train; but to an American, who was travelling far distant from his native land, in the midst of a people differing in language, usages, and, in fact,

in all their appearances, from the rest of the world, it could not be astonishing that my attention should have been attracted by any thing American, and that I should have been delighted in beholding a fellow-countryman, though a wagoner.

It may not be improper here to attempt to describe the difference between the American and the Mexican wagon. Without exception, the Mexican constructed wagon has but two wheels, and is manufactured, generally, without the use of iron. The hub is a single cut from a tree, about twenty-eight inches in length, and fifteen in diameter. There are but four spokes to a wheel, four inches through; while the felloes are twelve inches thick, and as many broad. The whole is made of the heavy, strong wood of the country, and, from its solidity, is difficult to break. The body of the wagon is about equally balanced over the axletree, the front resting upon the tongue, after the fashion of the ox-carts in the United States. The body is never planked, but thatched with straw, as also the sharp roof to it.

From eight to twelve oxen are at a time yoked by the horns, and not with a bow over the neck; while the driver carries a stout pole, from ten to fifteen feet in length, having a sharp metal spear affixed to the smaller end, by the cruel use of which they prick and goad the animals along. It is true, that there are some lighter wagons used in the cities, which have two sets of shafts, so that the whole weight of the body of the wagon rests upon the backs of the horses. However, as transportation is carried on the backs of mules, they have but little use for wagons in Mexico.

The individual who visits Mexico, from every thing that surrounds him, finds himself retrograding to the age of the Romans, in some things, while in others, to the days of Abraham. The Moors, who invaded Spain, brought nothing of improvement with them, and the Spaniards, who conquered Mexico, have indelibly stamped the character of the people of that country with a predominant prejudice against all the useful arts. All of their implements of agriculture, and simple fixtures of raw hide harness, are of primeval invention, and the present Mexican seems to have degenerated from what their masters had perfected them in.

Our day's journey was a dusty one, for the wind set strong from the south-west, from which quarter it scarcely ever changes its direction during the dry season. As we were gradually ascending a more elevated table country from Lagos to Zacatecas, those strong winds, sweeping from the Pacific over the plains, have a disagreeable effect upon the traveller. For in the first place, it must be remembered, that we were at

least seven or eight thousand feet above the level of the sea, and under the tropical sun, where rain had not moistened the earth for months, and then had a continual current of strong wind blowing upon us, its drying influences being felt according to my previous conceptions of its deleterious effects.

*Los ira*, as the Mexicans call it, (the air,) appeared to have absorbed the fluids of my eyes, and they had more or less distressed me, from the time of my first ascending upon the table land; besides my skin had entirely become divested of moisture, as if the liquids of the system had refused to perform their functions. The skin had a hard parched aspect, as if it was almost audible to the touch; while in the shade I was neither cold nor hot, and with not so pleasant a feeling as lukewarmness.

The dry earth, under all of these causes, was easily raised in clouds of dust, and as it floated in solid bodies, like a *str-occo*, or a whirlwind, we were obliged, with mouth and eyes shut, to charge through the thick array; but as exhausted nature would require respiration, it could not be performed, but by taking the dust with the atmosphere on the lungs. Well did I dread the *ira* as the Mexicans, although it has often been hooted at by some foreigners, who have had but a short residence in the country. We had not been long on our way that morning before I observed that our out-rider had made a more considerable display of badges than at any former period, and upon inquiring the reason of the increased ostentation, he informed me, that as murders were very frequently committed on the road we had that day to travel, he wished the more strongly to impress the robbers, that he belonged to the coach of a *father*; and thus the man believed that religion could restrain the hand of a pirate, when the laws of his country would not.

Our road, for the most part of the day, was over a barren country, and I discovered that in many places of the plains, the blue thistle, or weed, that has in recent years covered the fields of some States in the Union, and in fact, supplanted, in many instances, the brown straw and other spontaneous vegetation—abounded in that region, and as the American planter was at a loss to conjecture from whence the new invader came, may it not be reasonable to suppose that animals brought through Texas to the United States, carried with them the seeds of the useless and barbarous growth.

In the evening we travelled by the side of a continued corn-field, which extended seven or eight miles. This I know is difficult for the inhabitants of the United States to believe,

but is nevertheless true. With equal veracity it is stated, that the eye could not detect the breadth of the cultivated field, for it was lost in distance over the level plain. It was the hacienda of San Jacinto, and was the property of Conde Perez Galvez. Besides the maize grown on that farm, there were wheat and other crops. At San Jacinto terminated our journey for that day. My bed here cost me seventy-five cents, and indeed my sleeping was dearer to me than my eating; and but for the fact, that I should reach Zacatecas on the following day, I had determined that I would not repose at all, but employ my time in writing, and sleep in the day time, while travelling in the coach.

At the meson of San Jacinto many officers of the Mexican service had stopped, and among them was a Deputy from the department of Santa Fe; his name had escaped me, but he stated that the Camanche Indians had made war upon the department of Chihuahua, and were destroying all before them. He related that he had had a distant view of Indians who were engaged in murdering all the inhabitants of a hacienda. He said it was calculated that the Indians had taken the lives of about three hundred thousand Mexicans in the last five years, and that hundreds of haciendas, which had not been devastated by the Indians, had been abandoned to the merciless foe by their proprietors. I was of the opinion, from the narration of the deputy, that the Texians, in some short period, would only have to subdue the savage conquerors of the northern departments, and people them with the Anglo Saxon race.

With the body-guard of the deputy, and the military officers who were quartered at the meson of San Jacinto, for that night, if they were brave, we could have resisted a considerable force of Indians. From the many cavalcades that were, from every direction of Mexico, making their way to the capitol, many were the speculations created by the good people of the country. Some were of the opinion that Santa Anna designed another revolution, with the object of making himself the absolute and permanent despot. Whilst others believed that the President was organizing a body of troops for the conquest of the United States. Their ignorance was to be pitied; the foreigners and the intelligent portion of the Mexicans felt satisfied that preparations were making for the invasion of Texas.

It appears to be necessary, for the maintenance of the government of Mexico, that every city, town, and farm should be strongly garrisoned with well armed and disciplined regulars. These troops, in my estimation, are not what they are

represented to be by some, as having been taken from the prisons and hospitals of the country, which in some periods of the revolution, has been the case. But on the contrary, they are now likely, active, young men, selected from the athletic of the whole population of the republic.

My attention was attracted, while in the city of Mexico, by beholding some four or five hundred men march into the place, dressed in all the peculiar and tattered costumes of the country. A gentleman informed me that those men were volunteers for the army, and that they were obtained by a squad of soldiers, who marched through the villages and haciendas, capturing the best looking men of those places: and although the poor wretches would lament and remonstrate much at first, yet when they had received their uniforms and found themselves well provided for, they became pleased and delighted with their condition.

The soldiers of Mexico have been mostly impressed from among the aborigines, while the officers have had their appointments generally from the Spanish race, and foreigners of every nation. If the people of Mexico are not military, they must become so, under the present military despotism, by which they are governed. And if Mexico should continue to be ruled by an ambitious chieftain, the United States may have a troublesome, strong and envious neighbour. It is not wisdom to despise an enemy until the breaches are repaired, and the fallen towers are rebuilt, for the garrison will thereby become refreshed and invigorated within, and, in an hour not expected, the self-secure may be surprised, and with a heavy loss, taught to turn their contempt into admiration, if not trembling.

On a certain occasion an officer of her Britannic majesty was in conversation with me, upon the subject of the efficiency of the Mexican army, and I could only be amused at the fluency of his imagination. The captain said that her royal highness, Queen Victoria, would not want an easier task than to subdue Mexico, for she would only have to send over some two or three thousand negroes from the West Indies, and after they had lassoed some one or two thousand Mexican Indians, and they found that they were well fed, and clothed in the red coats of her majesty's troops—the balance of the Indians would soon come in, and there would be no battle to fight. However, I am of the opinion that, if her majesty's black troops were to come to Mexico, they would meet with the same gallant reception that the French did in 1839—and that they would have to make the best of their escape, to prevent being lassoed in return!

At the break of day, my American friend and self arose from our carteras to commence our journey, it being the 20th day of January. When I opened the door of our room it was with pain I perceived that our servants, (one of them was an old man,) were lying upon the hard and cold pavement of the court of the meson. The night was the coldest that I had felt since my arrival in that country, and I found that a close room, with several lays of light clothing, was necessary to make me comfortable. But having given expression to my sympathy, my friend informed me that it was the habit of all the servants of the country, and that in any of the climates of Mexico, the common classes preferred sleeping in the open air to being lodged with the fleas in the houses, summer or winter. From the dryness of the atmosphere, no known diseases are said to have been engendered from the exposure. The American servants who have ever been used to summer and winter clothing, besides having blankets and fires in their rooms, could not, if transported to Mexico, stand what Americans call exposure, for the entirely different habits of the people of the United States from those of that country are such, that I have no doubt that persons of the hardiest constitutions would perish under the hardships. The Indian servants of Mexico have, by nature, no fears to apprehend from storms or change of climate. From the experience of those who have seen much of the world, it has been acceded, that the slaves of the south and west of the union are better provided for, and are happier than the indigent servile communities of any other part of the world.

A Mexican gentleman once remarked to the Secretary of the American Legation, that he had visited New Orleans, and was very much pleased with the city, but that he could not bear to witness the sufferings of the poor slaves. The secretary appropriately replied, by inquiring, if he had ever compared the relative condition of the slaves of the United States with the servants of his own country? and if he had, his sympathy would be the more awakened by beholding the aggravated sufferings of servitude among his own blood and fellow-countrymen.

Since I have touched upon the subject of slavery, I will here take the privilege of saying that nothing, to my mind, can be more absurd, under the American constitution, than to attempt to break the bands of relationship between master and slave, without giving entire and perfect civil liberty to the disenthralled free men; for liberty, otherwise, to the black man, would be a mockery and a paradox. This sentiment I express in strict truth and justice to the subject—

not that I desire either of the modes, or wish to meddle with the delicate institutions of my country.

Our journey for this day was as the preceding one; a hot sun, hard south-west wind prevailing, with clouds of dust, and often during the day the wind was more violent than I had known it to be on any former occasion, for I could at elevated points hear the gravel strike against the sides of the coach. The hard winds of this region are attributed to the higher elevation of that part of country over any of the plains south of it. Zacatecas is to Mexico, what Mount Airy, in Virginia, is to the United States, for the waters, that east their rise at either of those places, flow to both oceans, east and west, and north and south, affording conclusive evidence that its summit is above any other portion of table lands in Mexico. It is said to be 8,500 feet above the level of the sea.

I felt rejoiced that my journey would terminate on that day in the Padre's coach although it was with some apprehensions that I should not be so fortunate again. However, we did not have a happy deliverance from all molestation, for about two o'clock in the evening, a party of men were discovered in pursuit of us, and, upon their overtaking the coach, armed with guns, swords and pistols, they advanced by dividing their party upon each side of us, three on one and two upon the other. They most impertinently scrutinized our persons and our baggage, yet without making the least hostile show. If they had, as undesirable as the necessity would have been, myself and friend were resolved to defend our lives and our property, and were well prepared for the rencontre, It was our intention that both of us should maintain the action upon our two sides at once with our six barreled pistols, flanked as we were with the enemy. Our escape, perhaps, from harm, resulted first from riding in the priest's coach, and next, by our being foreigners.

Such a condition of dishonest and barbarous habits, existing in a country called civilized and Christian, must appear to the nations of Christendom to be incredible, but the truth has nevertheless been attested by all travellers who have had the temerity to journey much into the territory of ill-fated Mexico. From the dreadful results of the attacks by the freebooters, committed upon men and women, whose business has called them abroad, it would be madness in any individual to attempt a journey, without furnishing himself first with all the necessary equipments of defence.

The consequence of such an imperative custom is, that you cannot at any time see a miserable huckster driving a donkey,

or a peasant engaged in his agricultural pursuits, without his having his gun and rusty old spear swinging to the side of his half-starved animal. I would impress upon the minds of my readers that there are no unarmed citizens in Mexico—it matters not when or where you find the man, in his house, in the street, or on the highway, although he may be needy for food or raiment, yet you will see an implement of death in his hands, for the double purpose of attack and defence.

As a people, the more polished circles of society, as also the lower classes, possess decorum and finished manners, and in their guileless aspect, and professions of punctilious performances, the stranger, in the contemplation of the Mexicans, has much to admire—yet, at the same time, if his confidence should be won in them, he will often find himself the dupe of the basest treachery.

True, there should and must be some good, honest, and high-minded citizens in Mexico; yet, so difficult are they to be found, and so few the number known to the world, that they are not sufficient to give a respectable character to society. It is a fact that perfection cannot be found anywhere, and some wicked persons are to be met with in every community; yet it is monstrous when the great majority of the inhabitants of a country are swindlers, thieves, and murderers, in an unqualified manner, as is the case in Mexico; it must be with shame and remorse that Christianity and civilization, in the enlightened world, are compelled to denounce them as a nation of pirates.

It is needless to garble the truth, for covering the iniquities of these people in any form, is but encouraging them in the perverseness of their ways, and deluding the credulity of those who are earnest seekers after information, some perhaps for future interested motives. Far be it from me to beguile a foreigner into the serious difficulties and dangers which must follow the travelling and residing of any one in Mexico.

Never could have I comprehended the correctness of Mr. Randolph's declaration, upon the floor of Congress, that, in Mexico, "the men were all rogues, and the women all \*\*\*\*," and have been impressed with the great error and responsibility of the government of the United States, when she received that country into the family of nations, until chance and necessity obliged me to visit Mexico, and when there I was compelled to believe ocular demonstration. I have the boldness fearlessly to charge home the disgrace of their national character, with the sincere desire that it may be but as a drop in the bucket, to chastise our sister republic into reform.

The government of Mexico, in 1842, made some efforts to

break down the universal practice of wearing arms, by Santa Anna's issuing a decree that none, excepting gentleman of character above suspicion, should be permitted licence to have private arms; yet the decree failed to correct the evil, for the good citizens all believed that they came up to the requirements of the law; besides, the keepers of the custom-houses would have been foiled in securing their fees had they enforced the intentions of the decree. Therefore the robber, as well as the honest man, alike, as formerly, carried weapons.

### CHAPTER XIII.

Del Refugio. Flock of sheep. The hacienda Paras. Ascending the Plain. The Mexicans in the fields. Vein of silver on the surface. Abundance of silver ore. Laws of Mexico on Mining. The principal vein of silver. The appearance of the range of Mountains. A large Convent. High wall. Don Garcear's granary. Battle-ground. General Andrade Santa Anna. Colonel Harcourt's defeat of the Zacatecans. Santa Anna flushed with pride. Conquest of the United States and Texas. Napoleon of America. First view of Zacatecas. The streets. Meson. The American my interpreter. An Irish gentlemen. Many public buildings. La Parroquia Convento de Muestro Senora del Petrocenis. The Saint. Location of the resident Saint. Subject of divinity. Government Palace. Spanish Marquis. Child christened. The Mint of Zacatecas. Mr. John Scott. Mexican horse. Hacienda de Beneficio Santa Clement. Cultivated gardens. Water from the Mines. Bags of hides. Ropes of hide. Shafts of the Mines. The ore-yards. Labourers. Captains. Specimens of silver ore. Native silver. Reflections. The eminence of Santa Clement. Mountain and Valley Scenery. Machine for pulverizing ore. One thousand bushels of ore. Washing the ore. Examinations of the labourers. Thefts. The blackleg.

DURING our day's journey we had to pass Del Refugio, a hacienda said to be of considerable value. I was informed that the present possessor is not its proper owner, but that, upon the demise of its proprietor, in *fee simple*, the creditors of the deceased disagreed about the sale of the estate, and the limb of the law who had been appointed curator of the property, having the possession, chose to retain it in defiance of the just claims of the creditors.

At Del Refugio I saw a herd of sheep that must have numbered several thousands, and, as they extended over the plain,