VI.

ACROSS LOTS.

A drowsy Beginning.—Paradise somewhat Lost.—Trees of Paradise.—A lingual Guess at the Aztec Origin.—Tizayuca.—Zumpango.—The Lake System.—Guatitlan.—Hotel San Pedro.—Into Town.—Tree of Noche Triste.—Tacuba.—Aqueduct of San Cosme.—Tivoli.

Do you want to know where I am writing this? In bed, on my side, by the light of a candle, very dimly burning. Sitting on a bench, by its side, are a brass bowl and a brown pitcher. One chair is the only other piece of furniture besides the bed. It is the Hotel San Pedro, the chief hotel of the place.

I had gotten so far when eyes and fingers gave out, and the candle followed. Nothing like tired nature to overcome disagreeable surroundings. The boy on the top of the mast can sleep as soundly as on a hay-mow, one of the best places ever got up for sleeping purposes. It only needs a sufficient degree of hunger to make any food palatable, and a sufficient degree of drowsiness to make any couch restful. The best bed I ever had was the planks that incline from the platform of the Jersey City dépôt to the floor of the dock. Getting off there about two in the morning, with a regiment of soldiers, we stretch ourselves on the floor for sleep. I was fortunate enough to get the slope that is a substitute for a step or two. The inclination was perfect, and I have often thought that was my bed of beds. I could get out a patent for a bed after that fashion which would do away with pillows, and, if one is sufficiently sleepy, with mattresses and other softnesses as well.

I was going to describe my quarters at Guatitlan, when sleep came down for my deliverance and yours. So I will bring it in at the right place now, and begin at the beginning.

We had done Pachuca — mines, rides, feastings, and worship.

The time came for us to go. It always comes to blissful or painful sojourners. Four nights and three days had we traveled and chatted, and prayed and preached, and mingled all the good things of both lives happily together. "How to make the best of two Lives" is the title of a good book. One might answer, "Go to Mr. Comargo's, the commandant of the mines at Pachuca, and spend a Sabbath and two week-days in and about that romantic spot." General Palmer had engaged a mule-team to take him and his Philadelphia-Paris *compadre* across the country. He generously offered me a seat in his "waggin," as they pronounce it here. You would never dream how it was spelled from that pronunciation. I do not know now. It sounds like a corruption of our word wagon.

The offer is gladly accepted, and we pass out of the narrow streets of the city of silver at about sunrise, into the paradise that incloses the town on its southern side. Paradise always looks a little more paradisiacal when at a distance than on closer inspection. Shall we be disappointed in heaven? Disappointed in getting there, I fear. As Dr. Watts said, "disappointed at three things: at seeing some there whom we did not expect to see, and not seeing some that we did expect to see, and especially disappointed at seeing ourselves there." May this happy disappointment be ours, every one.

Our Pachuca paradise is as green as it promises from the hill-top, looking down. The road runs amidst trees, a brown river with greenest banks. The favorite tree is called the Peru-tree, of slight green leaves, bearing a red berry in clusters; not unlike in look to the checker-berry, as it is called in New England, but very unlike in taste, for this berry is puckery in the extreme. Yet birds like them, and so every thing has its uses. It makes a pretty ornament to the landscape, its varied colors making the fields into an aviary of cardinals—an appropriate effect for a papal land. The maguey flourishes in all its greenness, and very handsome it is in its sweep of leaf and depth of hue. The mountains rise on our left, near and dark and cool. The fields spread out, a level upland, limited by

ranges near on the left and rear, remote on the front and right—a prairie of scores of square miles.

We scamper over the plain in the brisk Septemberish morning, finding our shawls and capes no incumbrance. The land is very fertile, and quite generally cultivated. We pass haciendas where barley is being reaped and wheat sown, and all the offices of nature going on all the time. The chill morning air melts before the hot sun, and an August noon fits on to a fall sunrise.

We breakfast at the snug little town of Tizayuca. The funniest thing about Mexico is the names of the towns. It is a sport that is jaw-cracking. It is the punishment the Aztecs inflicted upon the Spaniards, almost equal to any they suffered. As compared with the rich vocabulary of Spain, or the sounding words of more Northern tribes, they are horrid. They sound Chinese and Japanese, and are another of the hints toward the solution of the problem as to where these races came from. Japanese junks now drift on to the western Mexican shore. This people look and act like those Asiatics. They are equally imitative, patient, subdued, industrious. They have a likeness of language. Their habits are Asiatic. There is more indifference to propriety in these Aztec women than in any of the peasantry of Europe or Egypt. It is Eastern Asia that they reproduce. So their consonant names are a like production. All of which is respectfully submitted to the learned societies of Asia and America.

Tizayuca, which brought on this *excursus*, seems incapable of bringing on any thing else. It slumbers like any American cross-roads at midday. Not a breath nor whisper, not a buzz nor a bite, except of invisible fleas and too-visible dogs. The church absorbs the town, which consists of one-story adobe huts, hidden among useless Peru-trees and more useless maguey.

The breakfast was served from twelve to two, and was the best thing in the place, except the pleasant-voiced woman that served it, her pretty children, and the church aforesaid. It is surprising what good meals they get up in these out-of-the-way places. Beef-steak, thin-sliced fried potatoes, chicken-stews, and chocolate or

coffee of the best, make us long and lovingly remember Tizayuca. You can remember it by saying, "'Tis a—favorite game of gamblers or food of these natives."

The power of the Castilian to manufacture derivatives was funnily shown by our hostess, who, when scolded at for her delay in bringing on the chocolate, responded, "Ahouta-ta-ta-ta-ta." "Ahouta" meant "immediately." Every added "ta" shortened the time. Could one have been made to say "quickly" in any prettier manner? It is a pleasant privilege, and makes the family and friendly diminutives very cordial and delightful.

Ten miles, and Zumpango is reached. These miles go through a road but slightly traveled, and across fields susceptible of high culture. We cross the divide between Mexico and Pachuca, a hardly noticeable swell, and find ourselves in the rich valley of the capital. Zumpango is a pretty and lively town of five thousand souls. A noisy crowd of chanticleers are keeping up great disturbance. They prove to be some four hundred fighting-cocks, which are brought here for sale. "Elegant-looking birds," said one of my companions, who saw them. More elegant-looking now than when torn, bleeding, from each other's embrace.

This place lies at the head of the lake system which imperils Mexico. Three lakes flow down upon that capital. The remotest one is that of Zumpango. It lies at the base of a range of mountains, and stretches along the rear of the town for several miles. Its hill-sides, opposite the town, look as if it would be a delightful winter resort for Northern people. It is over twenty feet higher than Mexico, and about thirty miles distant. To preserve it from inundating the city, a huge dike or wall, ten feet high, is built along its southern side. This dike is repeated more elaborately at the next lake, San Christoval; and so the last lake, on whose edge the city sits, rarely rises above its proper level. Millions of dollars have been expended on these works, and they are yet unfinished. They need a drainage from the lowest lake into some river flowing down to the Gulf. This is projected, and will be accomplished, "mañana?"

The ride from Zumpango to Guatitlan, where this story began, is very pretty. The haciendas grow frequent; cattle fill the fields; grains are being harvested; and some fields, well irrigated, look wondrous green. The acres are lowly, and often wet. Great herds of cattle and horses are grazing in the drier meadows, while the huge snow-mountains rise higher than ever before from this half-watery base. Iztaccihuatl is more beautiful than from any other position. Both that and Popocatepetl are grand diamonds, flashing solid light in that sun-bright sky. What other fields of earth have such a guardianship?

As we enter the town, it seems certain that it must be an American summer village. Trees line the roadside, lustrous in July verdure; fields equally lovely lie behind the trees; flowers blossom on the wayside. What better place possible to spend a night? Alas! for the vanity of human expectations. The street is busy, and the two boys who are driving our mules, well loaded with pulqui (the boys, not the mules), are greeted by another, more loaded, if possible, than they. He misdirected us; but hung round for his medio, or half a real (six and a quarter cents), till the foot almost followed the voice in ejecting him. The Hotel San Pedro admits us to its ample yard, and that is about all.

Not to disappoint you, when Rosecrans's railroad takes you to this hard-named city, let us take you now to its chief hotel. Imagine a square yard, three hundred feet across. Around it are one-story, low-roofed sheds of adobe. At its entrance is a small fonda, or restaurant. On its rear are some steps going up to a second-story veranda, low-browed and wide, on which are six small rooms, with brick floors and bare bedsteads, with a chair, a table, and a bench as their furniture.

There are the quarters for fastidious guests, the first-class cars for unseasoned Yankees. They are remote from the house, if house that single room can be called which provides your meals alone; and they are easily assailable by any body in the spacious yard, and there are many bodies there. A range of huge mule-wagons is backed along the rear of the yard, just under our balcony, and morning reveals the muleteers sleeping soundly under their wagons. Their women find beds under the shed or under the canvas of the wain. An Indian and his wife are stretched, asleep, on a common blanket, on the common ground, under the shed near the gate-way. So we have plenty of comrades inside the gates to rob us of our slumber and our watches. The watch we left at Mexico, fulfilling (this once) the command against putting on of gold and costly apparel; and the slumber they left undisturbed. "I both laid me down in peace and slept, and I awaked; for thou, O Lord, sustained me." David laid himself down and slept in a caravansary not unlike this. His condition, protection, and comfort are ours to-day. How true is it that our Lord is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever!

TREE OF TRISTE NOCHE.

The morning rays creep in at our doors. We are up and out and off. How splendid is the weather! They never talk of the

weather here. It changes not. The sun comes exquisitely up over Guadalupe. The fields beneath the hills are very like the farms of the West, all except the mountains. Culture and comfort seem to nestle in these shaded retreats. The sierras of Toluca and Guadalupe come together in a narrow and not lofty pass, which our engineering associate is easily surmounting with his gauges and his trains. Over it, and we are in the Valley of Mexico. The city lies fifteen miles off, a garden of foliage being our ceaseless escort to its gates. We move moderately through village and town, examining churches, olive-groves, plazas, riding under broad-spreading branches, slowly wading through droves of burdened mules and asses, going to town with the "truck" of the country.

The morning is delicious, and our spirits hardly less so. We could not help exclaiming, although it was not Mexican—inspired, doubtless, by the Massachusetts memories of Samuel Adams and Hancock, on the morn of the battle of Lexington, "What a glorious morning is this!" Yet they have them here all the time and all the day long; although the peculiar preciousness of the Lexington morning is not yet fully transferred to this rare clime.

Just before we reach Tacuba, a few miles from the city, a big old tree, walled in and inscribed, stands almost in the road-way. It is the tree under which Cortez collected the little remnant of his soldiers in that "noche triste" (sad night), when they had been driven from the city by the uprising natives, determined to extirpate the invaders, avenge their gods, and save their country. It was a terrible night. None more terrible in the history of battles. The Indians had rushed upon them in the dark from boat and marsh and at the open crossings of the dike, until but a handful was left to tell the tale. These gathered here a moment on retreat to the victory which another year saw accomplished.

It is a huge and gnarled cypress, with scant boughs and foliage —old then, and held in great veneration to-day by the Spaniards. How do the Mexicans regard it? If New England were to-day three-fourths British, and they were held in subjection, how would they regard the Lexington Monument? But the natives are

GARDEN OF THE TIVOLI, SAN COSME.

mounting to place and power; and so the tree may be allowed to stand, like our battle monuments. A fire almost consumed it last year, and it is preserved with as great difficulty as the big tree on Boston Common.

Tacuba is passed — not pretty in its high, inclosing walls, but lovely in its opening glimpses of gardens and groves. The Street of San Cosme is entered, and its solemn-looking aqueduct passed. This aqueduct, built after the "high Roman fashion," on stately arches, rises gray and black and moist. Its sides drip with coolness, and are flecked with mosses, grasses, and tiny shrubs. It seems a projection of Antechristian times into the bustling present. Along these arches fought the men of Scott against the men of Santa Anna, inch by inch, to the plaza and the palace. Along

them now the horse-car flies, the ass tugs under his big and bulky burden, the peon toils under his relatively bigger and more bulky loads. The whole broad avenue is full of life, while by its side stalks the majestic aqueduct, a Roman legion slow marching into Rome. It is as artistic a line of beauty as ever strode along a busy city pathway. It brings the Chapultepec waters to the town, an old-fashioned water-way, but far grander than our modern counterpart of hidden pipes and siphons.

The Tivoli gardens open on this avenue, and just below the terminus of the aqueduct. There we pause for a breakfast, amidst foliage, birds, and summer delights. This is a favorite resort for out-of-door dinner-parties, and has every conceit for such tastes—bowers, boxes, and even tables up in the trees. We can there eat, and chatter like and with the birds. That is high living, at not very high prices. Try it when you go to Mexico. The few deciduous trees are putting forth fresh foliage, and every thing is lovely. How lovely! Oh, that grace and goodness kept step with nature! Where do they? In you?

The perilous journey of sixty to seventy miles is passed without peril, and a new and pleasant chapter added to the book of experience.

VII.

THE TOWN OF THE ANGELS.

Warnings unheeded.—Slow Progress.—Christ in the Inn.—Why Angelic.—Bad Faith and worse Works.—First English Service.—Outlook from the Cathedral.—Tlascala.—The Volcano.—Inside View of the Belfry.—Inside the Cathedral.—Triple Gilt.—Cathedral Service.—La Destruccion de los Protestantes.

When Cortez was told he must not go in a certain direction or to a certain place, he always went straight thus and there. His success was in no small measure due to that quality of his nature. When he came to the wall of Tlascala he went through its gates, not around it. His battles with the Tlascalans assured his success with their Aztec foes. So when they told him he must not go to Cholula, since the priestly city was too cunning for him, into it he marched.

If when in Rome one must do as the Romans do, in Mexico it is worldly-wise to follow the footsteps of Cortez. Puebla had been held up as an especial object of fear. "It is very fanatical," they said. "It got up a riot, and drove out the Protestants three years ago. It is a city of priests, and the sacred city of Mexico. Keep away." So we went to Puebla. Where should a clergyman go but to the city of clericos? Where an angel of the churches but to "The Town of the Angels," as it is always called?

It was Friday, the 7th of February, that two of us essayed to take the eleven o'clock train for a ride thither of about one hundred and twenty miles. The time had been changed to twelve, and we occupied it in lounging through a park adjoining the station, which has swings, dance-sheds, a little amphitheatre for gymnasts and theatrical performances, and a level tract of open prairie, edged with trees. This is a great Sunday resort, and is then busy with