

VI.

TO AND IN SAN LUIS POTOSI.

Aztec Music.—Low-hung but high-hung Clouds.—Troops and Travelers.—A big, small Wagon.—Zeal of San Felipe.—Lutero below Voltaire.—Rough Places not Smooth.—Mesquite Woods.—Silver Hills.—Two Haciendas.—How they Irrigate.—Lassoing.—The Frescoes of Frisco.—Cleft Cliffs.—The Valley of San Luis Potosi.—Greetings and Letters.—The Church of Mary.—The coming Faith.—A costly and Christly Flag.—Joseph and Mary worshiped in vain for Rain.

How different the strains that fell upon the ear last night and those that are now addressing us; and both are musical! Then it was the dancing-girls' guitars and harps, making a twitter as of caroling swallows. Now it is a Government band that, on a broad and lighted plaza, discourses music that even Berliners would walk around to hear, especially if they could soon thereby reach a beer-stall. These Government bands are found in all the large towns, and are a great source of pleasure to the citizens. They play twice or thrice a week, and draw many loungers and listeners to their soirées. They are exceedingly refined in their touch. You never heard a clearer, softer note than that flute is now trilling; and the airs are gentle and recondite. How one forgets the long hard ride of more than eighty miles, the slow pulling along over heavy and rocky roads, as he listens to these rich strains!

"Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears; soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony."

The country and the people are made for music. Remember that all these players are Indians, "brown as the ribbed sea-sand," and a good deal browner than any I ever saw—brown as the old red sandstone. Are they made from that antique dust? All these are admirable performers. I have never seen a white face among

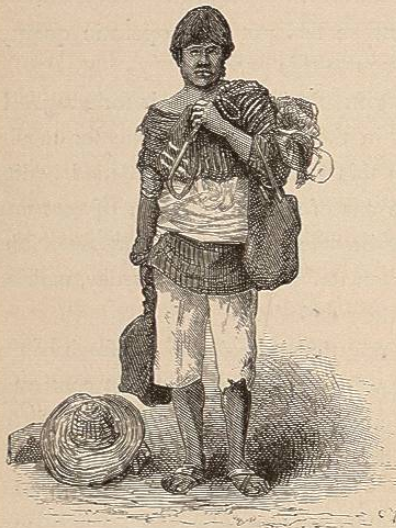
them. In Mexico and all the cities of the land they are of one hue. The passion of the people is for music. The upspringing Protestant churches are bursting forth in song. As this hard, dry soil breaks forth in flowers the instant it scents the water, so the water of life touches their parched and barren souls, and they flower into song. I heard a poor untrained clothes-cobbling sister and her daughter sing the "Gloria in Excelsis" as I never heard Trinity or the Tremont Street choir approach; so simple, so full of soul, so grand, so upswelling. They bring forth new songs day by day. Once visiting their house (the husband is a preacher), they sang me Juan Bron. I was surprised to find my old friend John Brown in this new shape. How it rung, especially the chorus, closing with "Al Cristo alevad!" (praise to Christ). They had set it to the praise of the Creator, Christ; for it is as easy for them to make poetry as it is to make tunes. Their gifts of improvisation are Italian. Our frequently no browner brother of the South is their only equal in this respect, but he has not that operatic quality, that delicate tone, which belongs to this people.

Then the climate helps the gift. It is just the air for song. It is never too hot nor too cold in the evening, the time for music. Every night they can revel in this relief. Their burdened bodies and souls can rise on these wings of song to a realm of rest and joy. But this band must not beguile us from our purpose. The rather let them accompany us on our story of the journey, making its rough places smooth with their melody.

It is a good trait of this staging that it begins in the fresh of the morning. You get a good start of the sun, and the hot centre of the day is given to breakfast and to rest. So I am up at a little after three, take two cups of delicious coffee and milk, and a single roll, and go in the strength of that beverage and bread till mid-day. One cup is the usual allowance, but, being tired, I treat myself to a second cup of hot milk with a suspicion of coffee therein. It is also odd that one feels little desire for more food or ere the ordinary hour for dinner arrives—so easily we can get accustomed to our condition.

Rain had fallen in the night, and clouds, as the morning broke, appeared, hugging the bases of the hills. They almost swept down on us with their wet wings. Had they been in action they would have done so. Low to us, they were high in the heavens, being two miles above Vera Cruz or London, a high point for raining clouds to hang.

They do not hide the landscape, which lies wide, and level, and rich, and cultivated, a grand plain, like so many of Mexico. Soldiers pass us, dressed in the white costume of the country; artillery-men follow, five cannon, drawn each by ten mules, and their attendant caissons; cavalry and commandery—quite a detachment of an army. Their faces and shoulders are wrapped in their bright zerapes, not so soldier-like as comfortable. Following them are a score and more of heavily laden wagons, each drawn by a like number of mules, and each having a goodly company of men, women, and babies on the top of the baggage, one woman sitting on the beam (I know not its former name) that passes from the wagon to the oxen's yoke, as I have seen many a farmer at home ride, but never before, his spouse.



MEXICAN MULETEER.

Following these are the other mule wagons of ordinary luggage, a baggage-wagon like that of the States, except that this is half as long and well-nigh twice as high. Perched up on tall wheels, and its maguery-cloth roof, covering wide flaunting bows, it seems a monstrous affair, till you get close to it, when you find all this enormous height and swell is only two wheels long—half the length you

anticipated, and that its pretensions required. It is a little giant, and is not unlike many another swell who begins his career much bigger than he ends.

This multitude of teams shows the readiness of this country for the railroad, as the level land shows its fitness. There is no doubt that a road, well and wisely made, will be a paying investment from the start.

The city of San Felipe is our first stopping-place. It is a largish town of five thousand inhabitants, dirty and adobe in most of its streets and houses, gayly got up, with colored washes and fancy figurings in its plaza and neighborhood. The time for changing horses allows me to visit the church. It is about eight in the morning, and fifty to seventy-five persons are at worship, while a priest is delivering the consecrated wafer to an altar full of coming and going recipients. At the corner near the entrance is a painting on the walls of the church, with the face of a woman, but habited as a pope, with the triple crown on her head, and two angel boys offering her an open book, on which is written in Latin, "The Word was made flesh." Her right hand is waving authority to lightnings that are diving at the heads of four apostates, who are disappearing under their forked fires, while over them is written, "*Qui ecclesiam non audierint, sit tibi Sicut Ethnicus et Publicanus*"—Matt. xviii., 17 (Whoever will not hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican). Now who do you suppose that verse and these lightnings were hurled at by that female pope of a church? Arreo, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Lutero. The last was the lowest, as if the quickest to sink into hell. That painting was fresh, and put up by some priest who scented what was in the air, and is getting the people ready to resist its coming. But Luther will be erased yet from those walls, and the triple crown from the head of the church; and those poor sisters, that are only allowed half the sacrament, shall enjoy the whole supper of the Lord in company with the disciples of this Lutero.

The road soon enters a divide, which is rough, though not high nor long. An attempt is made to have a smooth and handsome

road, and this succeeds for a few rods, and shows what might be everywhere, were a little constant care kept up. It soon gets tired of being good, like a spoiled and wayward child, and cuts up badly, as such a child is apt to do after its fit of momentary excellence. It goes round the spurs of hills staggering fearfully, and makes us, who are two only, stagger as bad as the road and worse. There are two ways to arrange for traveling safely over rough regions: one is to make the road good, the other to make the coach strong. They prefer the latter course here, or rather the diligence company do that for the preservation of their custom and coaches. So you have no fears, how much soever you are knocked about, that the coach will be knocked to pieces. It is made to stand, and it will stand. Never a lesion have I seen in these hundreds of leagues of travel, and over intolerable ways. They tumble into holes, whirl and toss and heave among loose boulders, or rocks *in situ*, down hill and up, trembling sometimes like a ship struck by mighty waves, but never springing a leak, or shivering a timber, or loosening a brace. They reel out of the rocky gulfs, and are off on a gallop in an instant, if road permits.

These low but tortuous and tossing hill-sides open shortly on another valley more attractive to the eye than the one just left, in that this is full of foliage. As far as the eye can see, it is one mass of feathery green. But all is not gold that glitters, or silver, even in Mexico, and this fascinating woodland turns out to be cheap mesquite and cheaper nopal, or cactus, that are growing wild. It is an uncleared forest. Still, an uncleared forest is a novelty here as well as in most of the United States, and will soon be in all parts of both countries; so I like it perhaps none the less.

The mesquite is not unlike the Peru, and both resemble in some sort our willow, except that these grow everywhere, the driest places suiting the Peru just as well as the moistest. It spreads like the apple and peach, though lighter of trunk than the former, and not so loose in the lay of its limbs as the latter. It bears a pod, which is sought as an esculent. These woods are encompassed with high bare hills, those on the left hand being not over a league from the

roadway. They are of the type that lay behind La Camada, a gray and silver frame to that fair picture. The hills may not all be full of silver, but they all suggest it. They are all of the same blood as the silver mountains proper, and put on airs as become the kin of so rich a house. They are basaltic almost in their castellated forms, and look rather like a column of giant "graybacks" opening their serried ranks to let this column of green, and perhaps this coach and company also, march through.

Our change of mules is made in the heart of this forest. The turtle-dove (*palumbra triste*, they call it here) fills the air with his melancholy wail, a single note of the whip-poor-will's strain. Women are frying and men eating tortillas under a cactus by the wayside; the vista opens deep into the green forest, and every thing is quiet, soft, salubrious. One could almost make himself into a Robin Hood, and live his life in this secluded richness. How wonderfully human nature adapts itself to its condition! We go from mountain to sea, from cell to city, with a zest for each that seems insatiate. But only one offers its attractions at a time. We can not at once sail the sea and climb the mountain, unless it be a mountain wave. We are like the lad who wished every season might last forever, and was met with a record of his contradictory wishes at the end of the year.

They are not contradictory; for we are so fortunately as well as wonderfully made, that we like truly and with all our heart the conditions in which we are placed. Thus the Creator fits the clothing of the world to the shape of the soul. Whatever be that wardrobe, it seems a part of the spiritual being whom it incloses, and every place affords a sympathy with every fibre of that being.

"Where it goeth all things are,
And it goeth everywhere."

The two haciendas are called San Bartoleo and Goral. They are practically one. From six to eight thousand persons live on these vast estates; from four to five hundred men are employed in their cultivation. They and their families absorb the chief of the

population. The rest, as in all the *pueblos*, or towns, find their little livelihood as they can, carrying burdens, driving mules, here a very little, and there still less.

The grand house at the hacienda of Goral is elaborate enough for a castle or a convent, the two biggest things in this country. Its high front wall is set off with square pink blocks of water-color, and it looks big enough for the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth and her retinue. The contrast between this palace and the clay-colored adobe huts about it is painful, though it is universal outside of the United States, but nowhere else more violent and extreme than here.

The fields lie wide and magnificent before it; but the fields are not for the tillers. For a real day or thereabouts they work and starve; for nothing a day this gentleman idles and abounds. I think some of the most scared anti-agrarians would be almost as fanatical and wise as Wendell Philips, the wisest man as well as the most eloquent of his generation, could they but look on these Mexican pictures. How much better are the huge manufacturing corporations, and railroad monopolies, and land-grabbers of the United States? Take heed in time, and let Christianity have its perfect work, or antichristianity will have its.

Curious grain vaults are on its plaza, pyramids or cones built of mortar, thirty feet high, for the storing of the harvests. The reason for this shape I did not learn. They give a quaint air to the plaza. A school and two churches and a half-dozen begging old women help break up the monotony of scenery and silence of this grand farm-house. The lordly owner ought at least to take care of his own paupers, and not allow them to prey on the traveler.

The wild wood, after leaving this posta, soon gets inclosed in a wall on the right hand, too high for us in the coach to see whether it be still a forest, or has become a fruitful field. It is a part of two haciendas in name, and one in fact, that stretch all this posta and beyond, from four to five leagues, from ten to twelve miles. The wall is admirably built of stone well capped, or of adobe brick, its only fault being that it is too high for our heads. Glimpses oc-

asionally show much culture, and a ride on the stage-top afterward exhibits a wide range of rich fields. All of it could be subdued easily. It only wants water. And that is obtained by the simple digging of wells. You can see them all over this land. They are usually of the old-fashioned Yankee sort, a pole balanced on a cross-bar, with a stone at one end and a bucket at the other. The drawers of water stand two and two, either side by side or front to front, so that they can stimulate each other in their work. Sometimes they arise to the aristocracy of a horse turning over a wheel around which buckets are fastened that catch the water below, and dip it up, and turn it into troughs and tanks. This for surface wells. Deep ones have still a different way of being operated. A large cowskin bucket hangs by a pulley over the well. The rope passes over this pulley and is passed round a big wheel, or barrel, six feet in diameter, a hundred feet away. The horse pulls the rope around this wheel and so hoists the water to the trough.

Still other modes are used, but the chief is the old beam and the double man-power. We can save all drought in the States by these and more simple and cheap appliances. The long dry seasons to which we are not unfrequently doomed can be remedied by these preparations. It is far better for the farmer to be thus busy than to sit and see his crops perish of thirst. They will not cost much to get ready, if they are not used, and will repay all their expense in a single year of drought.

The hacienda continues for two or three miles, blasted outside its walls, luxuriant within. It closes with a handsomely constructed corral, into which a company of horsemen are driving a herd of cattle. One of the younger fry, not having learned the futility of all attempts to escape, breaks away from the herd and scampers adown the field. Instantly three of the horsemen race after it. It is an unequal contest from the start. The little black "beastie" shows pluck. But they are too much for him, those three men and three horses. Forty feet off out flew the lasso, and caught him just where it aimed, around the horns. They can grip anywhere, it is said—hoof, ear, horn. An enthusiastic laudator of their

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 Athabesca'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 Viverra, 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 Viverra 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 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-

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



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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!

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."