ful cheeks and forms. It did not seem possible that rocks could be so lady-like; soft, yet firm;

"So moving delicate, so full of life."

I gazed, and envied the coming circuit-riding brethren over this hacienda. We pass one of its ranchos, clean and comfortable compared with many below, the men gentlemanly and the women lady-like. They came and shook hands with the driver; a chatty mother offering him cold water, and all showing the American training of the young haciendado, and preparing the way for the chapel and the stationed preacher.

This posta of twelve long leagues is pulled across through heavy, dusty, level roads, but also through this munificent landscape of green and silver, and we come where we began, and where, at near the midnight hour, this writing is being finished, in the peaceful rancho of Bonaventura.

One more day and we see the city that concludes this ocean section, and we get to the end, practically, of Mexico. May the robbers keep still aloof, though my German lad sleeping over there says they are plenty and bad above, and tells a story of what they lately did, to put me in bodily fear, shooting a woman, and tying two men to a tree. He is armed, and thinks that is his protection. Shall I get out my tin-foil sausage, or beg a revolver? Nay. I sing my talisman:

"Jesus protects, my fears begone!
What can the Rock of Ages move?
Safe in His arms I lay me down,
His everlasting arms of love!"

X.

INTO PORT.

Sunrise.—Villa de Gomez Firias.—A lost American found.—Flowering Palms.—An unpleasant Reminder.—A charming Park.—Agua Nueva.—La Encantada.—La Angostura.—Battlemented Mountains.—Buena Vista.—The Battle-field.—The Result.—Why.—Saltillo.—Alameda.—Friends.

THE four days' trip across the wilderness ocean is completed. The pleasant harbor is made; the perils by land are at an end. True, four days' staging yet remain, or ere the country is left, and the robbers, if such there be. And as a vessel has been wrecked in sight of its port, and coaches have been robbed within two miles of Mexico, there are plenty of chances yet to experience all that is threatened and feared. But the chief perils are past, and the chief weariness; and it is to be hoped none that follow will exceed those that have gone before. Our night in a rancho was without excitement. "I laid me down in peace and slept. I awaked, for Thou sustained me."

It was not much after midnight when the men sleeping on the ground at the door of our biggin began to bestir themselves; at a little after one we were all up, and at two off, one party of two for the South, one of one for the North. The coach had several rent windows, and let in the cold air full freely. But as the air was not very cold, the shawl sufficed for a protector, and I tossed and slept till morning broke. The same level was before me, shut in by the same hills. The light grew rosy in midheavens, then on the western ridge, and then the blaze boiled and steamed up the east, and all was done.

It was a long pull through the unchanging fields of stunted mesquite and palm, varied by equally stunted castor-oil bean, whose

very leaves and tiny yellow flower had a slimy and sickly look. At last a miserable cluster of huts appeared, thirty-five miles from our starting-place, and we stopped at the rancho with the ornate title of Villa de Gomez Firias. This was once a favorite resort of the Indians for its water, which is bad enough, and shows how the region round about must suffer. It was a favorite fighting-place also, and there were skulls and bones enough to furnish a half-dozen secret college societies, not only with their hideous symbols, but with a secret greater than any of the boyish ones they profess to possess, even that which these embody and express—the mystery of death.

An attempt was made to get up a breakfast here, but it resulted in a fried egg and frejollis, all the intermediate meats being absent. Nice fresh milk made the place of the absent and the present more than good.

A colored boy, lounging at the half-cent grocery, had wandered hither from Texas. He had got on the Mexican white trowsers, sandals, hat, and language, but his pink shirt and black face he had not changed. He is working here for "two bits" a day, living in a rancho with his master. He said he preferred the dollar a day in Texas, but why he does not go and get it he says not. His name is William Henry Griffin. It was a pleasant sight and sound, this American skin and tongue, even as a variety to the universal brown. He was brought up a Methodist, and I hope may yet help these poor people into that liberty, though I fear he is not a shining example to-day of its achievements, whether of faith or works.

Our wide prairie, extending from Mattejuala, here comes to an end. Hills gather around us, and grant no opening; they must be crossed. The level has been not less than fifty leagues, or one hundred and thirty miles. The hills before us are not high, but they are sufficient to conclude that feature of the itinerary. We ascend a hard, handsome road, and wind into a round valley a thousand or two feet across, and shut in by hills. It is well filled with palm-trees that in this high mountain wall are getting ahead

of their prairie kindred outside. They are crowned with white blossoms. It is one of the strange contraries of this country in nature, as in men, that such hideous-looking creatures as cactuses and palms produce such marvelous flowers and delightful fruit. This palm bears this tree of white blossoms on the very top of its head; out of the middle of these green spires, like bayonets, rise the tall white plumes, some of them two feet high, and half as tall as the trunk that supports them. Here, too, these trees are uniformly straight, as if, like country people, they are simple and sturdy when at home, but, brought into city society, grow odd and shoddy. Another slope lets us into another park, longer and wider, but not long nor wide. The driver kindly points to a hole in the side of the hill, goes through the motion of cutting his throat, and says that here the coach was once stopped, three men taken out and robbed, and their throats cut, and they thrown into that hole.

This is a comforting word. I ask him if there are any robbers here now. "Oh no; farther on," is his still comforting reply. "Farther on" I saw three men descending a long slope. The hill looked near, and yet I could not tell whether the men were on foot or on horseback. They drew near, and I saw their horses. "These are the men," I said. Stage stops. They part, and pass on each side of the coach. I am up with the driver. I wait to hear the cry to Zaccheus, "Come down!" They chat with the driver, laugh, and drive on. So goes that fear, like all its fellows. Compadres of the driver, they could not pass without saluting him.

Another harder pull yet, and a more beautiful wild orchard of blossoming palms, and we enter a valley of great beauty, with mighty mountains guarding its eastern side and entrance. These are the loftiest peaks that have appeared on the road since leaving the green hills of Mexico. They rise close to the pass, and leave only a narrow path into the valley. They appear as if placed here on purpose to protect the land from invaders, and to that purpose they were put. For we are now close upon the historic ground of Buena Vista. These southern gates are the rear-guard of the land. The real battle was fought some miles to the front, across this val-

ley, and amidst the ravine which opens out of it at almost right angles. But, undoubtedly, this wall was chosen because of its partial protection and defense, and, had the front been maintained, this would have afforded a strong barrier.

The hacienda of Agua Nueva is located at the upper end of this long valley of La Encantada. It is on a dry and rolling rise of ground, well under the tall hills. Here we change our mules, and start on the last posta across this wide sea, whereon we have been cruising these last four days. This is the most exciting of all; for it passes over from end to end the track of that famous battle which more than all others conquered Mexico, as the people of the United States believed, and showed their faith by their works in making its victor President.

The mule-changing Agua Nueva is as hot a spot as one cares to pause on. Yet some decaying buildings, one of which is especially roomy, give us momentary shelter from the storm of heat, as well as the sight of dirty damsels frying their perpetual tortillas. A bit of a chapel, dirty as any of its worshipers, stood among the huts and the larger semi-ruins of a once valuable hacienda. It was, therefore, especially agreeable to see the mozo harnessing up his eight mules for the pull across a famous field, and to a civilized town. It was like that last day out at sea, when the hills of Neversink are almost in view, and you know that to-morrow morning will see you safe in the dear old port.

The mules whiz out of the dusty and decaying plaza, and rush for the gorge that opens straight on to the Gulf. The sweet valley of Encantada, running in the opposite direction, looks fruitful and green as we glance down it, just before the high rocky walls close us in and close it out, perhaps forever, to these eyes.

These walls are like those at the entrance behind, except that the latter run east and west, and these run north and south. The last is the more usual lay of the hill lands. So that the valley of Buena Vista is simply in the same direction as almost every valley we have passed through since leaving the capital. But the previous valleys have been from five to twenty miles wide; this is hardly two. It is well named La Angostura (The Narrows). Its rock forms are very remarkable, especially those on the left, or toward the west. They rise in huge castellated shapes, not unlike the basaltic columns near Velasquo. The range is five hundred to a thousand feet high, and full of surprises in its angles no less than its striated surface. The opposite side is higher, and more after the usual form of mountains.

Between these ranges is a deep dry river-bed that has cut its crooked way through the valley, and scooped out a path twenty feet below the original level, and present roadway of the valley. This *barranca chico*, as they would call it, or little ravine, is not an unusual sight in the country. The hill-sides west of the capital exhibit some of great depth. But this one differs from any I had previously seen in that it is exclusively and evidently a river-bed, and probably is a river itself in the rainy season.

On the eastern side of the narrow valley there are several moraines, as seemingly artificial as is the river barranca. If the one is scooped out by violent action of the elements, the other is heaped up by like violent action. They are as high as the bed of the river is deep. They extend from near the river's edge to the side of the tall rock-hills. How they were cast up is not evident. There are no glaciers to make them, as in the Alpine moraine. They can not have been tossed up from the bed of the river, for they have no connection with the stream. Riding past them, I could not solve their cause. Perhaps some scholarly soldier, who fought on them and under them, may be acquainted with their origin.

They had a use that day. On their summits were placed the American cannon, which did no little to carry the field. Perhaps it was on one of them that the famous order was given, "A little more grape, Captain Bragg," an order which strengthened the American heart, and so helped gain the day.

The battle was fought on this strange field. Along that dry gulf General Taylor's troops made their perilous pause; on these seemingly manufactured hill-tops they planted their guns. There

was never a better Thermopylæ than this; only it was the invading troops that took possession of it and held it. Santa Anna made the attack. Had the Persians held Thermopylæ, would the Spartans have forced them? I fear not.

Yet the Mexicans ought to have forced these gates. They could not have been flanked; they should not have been routed. But they were wearied with a long march, and the Americans held the position. Pluck and prowess, and, above all, Providence, overthrew them. "Providence," for God was in this war more than most Northern Americans dreamed, and very differently from what Southern Americans dreamed. It was not to give slavery a stronger hold or to hasten its destruction that our war occurred with Mexico. It was to open that country to the Bible and the true Church. It was to Christianize Mexico, not to free or enslave our land, that this war arose. Its fruit, planted then, has been growing since, daily and hourly, and will grow until this land is free from the curse that has so long and so grievously rested upon it.*

* General Lew. Wallace, in a late letter to a reunion of the Mexican veterans, thus describes a late visit to the field of Buena Vista: "I have ridden over the old field three times in the seven years last past, and always with the same feeling of wonder at the audacity of the chief who, with his four thousand five hundred, abided there the shock of the Mexican Napoleon's twenty-two thousand, and of admiration at the pluck and endurance of the few who, turned and broken, crushed on the right and left, and, by every rule of scientific battle, whipped oftener than there were hours of the day, knew it not, but rallied and fought on, the infantry now covering the artillery, the artillery now defending the infantry, the cavalry overwhelmed by legions of lancers, and union of effort nowhere —fought on, and at last wrung victory from the hands of assured defeat.

"The field is but little changed. The road to La Angostura is still the thoroughfare across it; winding along the foot of the hills on its left, and looking down into the fissures and yawning gaps which made the valley to the right so impassable even to skirmishers. I stopped where the famous battery was planted across the road, literally our last hope, and tried to recall the feeling of the moment. On the left all was lost; Clay, M'Kee, Hardin, and Yell were dead: where all were brave, but one regiment was standing fast—the only one which through all the weary hours of the changing struggle had not turned its face from the enemy—I mean the Third Indiana. Against the battery so supported,

BUENA VISTA.

This victory gave General Taylor the command of the whole country we have been traversing the last four days. In fact, it gave him control up to the capital. Had it not been for political fears lest his great success, especially if he added to it the capture of the city, would insure him the Presidency, he would have undoubtedly been ordered to advance. As it was, his troops were taken from him, and transferred to General Scott. Among them was a youth who was lowest on the roster, Lieutenant Grant. General Taylor was left idle, while a new fighting to the same city level had to be bloodily carried up Cerro Gordo and like terrible heights, simply to divide the honors between two generals of the same party, and so prevent the Presidential success of either. The Government squandered millions of dollars and many lives for purely political reasons. Mexico was actually conquered at the battle of Buena Vista. Had it been vigorously followed, a month would have seen Zachary Taylor at Chapultepec.

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along the narrow pass, surged a chosen column of Mexicans. History tells how they were rolled back. In all the annals of war nothing more gallant on both sides, scarcely any thing more bloody and terrible. From the position of the Third Indiana at that moment, away over the plateau, quite to the mountain, reaches a breastwork not there when our comrades fought, but signalizing an incident in the war of the Mexicans against the French.

"The last time I was on the sacred ground, I saw a 'greaser' working with a hoe on the side of a hill by which we identify the position of the Third Indiana at the turning-point of the battle. My curiosity was excited. I rode to see what he could be doing. A moment ago I said the field was unchanged. I was mistaken. The man was conducting a little stream of water from the mountain miles away to irrigate a wheat-field below, in the mouth of the very ravine down which the regiments of Hardin, Yell, and M'Kee had retreated, seeking the cover of Washington's battery—the very ravine where the blood was thickest on the rocks at the end of the fight. I looked down upon the velvet green of the growing stalks, darker from the precious enrichment the soil had that day received, and then at the stream of water which came creeping after the man, like a living plaything. I looked at them, and understanding the moral of the incident, thanked God for the law that makes war impossible as a lasting condition, however it inspires the loves and memories of comradeship, and teaches that each succeeding generation of freemen are as brave as their ancestors."

The hacienda from which this battle takes its name is north of the field, and some two or three miles away. It is a pretty, peaceful spot, its pinkish-white houses girting its plaza showing that it is well kept up. The fields about it are green with produce for the city of Saltillo, which is six miles still farther northward. A pulverized road, broad and usually level, with only slight rises, winds its way through the valley, which widens here to the usual park-like width, five to eight miles. There is no sight of Saltillo. Looking for it, and hastening after it, as I have been doing now this many days, the end, feelingly, of the long and hazardous journey (for no fears affect one beyond this city), still it hides itself from the eye. Where can it be? The mountains throw themselves out before us as a vast amphitheatre, whose diameter traverses a score of miles. But where can the city be? At our feet? We drive along the same dusty and level plain, and suddenly look down, and lo! Saltillo.

There is a lower level out of which that circle of the mountains swings, a hundred feet at least below the Buena Vista plain. At its upper or southern edge, which is as marked as if cut like a cheese against the higher plateau, crowds this Northern town. A glimpse of it, and the diligence plunges down a very rough and noisy hill, leaps past open houses, whose brown occupants hasten to the doors to see the infrequent and much-welcomed coach, and with whirl and dash and snap of whip flings itself around corners, through courts, and comes up, with its crunch, at the hotel door.

The town is enjoying its siesta; our noise awakens it. It drowsily peeps from veranda and hut upon our disturbing mules and coach, and then folds its hands to sleep. It is the hottest hour of the day, three in the afternoon. How presumptuous for the coachman to rush in upon it so early! He would not have done it but for the promise of an extra peso if he made an extra hour; for I could thereby "do" the town before dark.

It was done, and the cool arcade of a pretty hotel welcomed me. Bath and clean linen, the first I had dared to assume since leaving San Luis Potosi, put me in good outward condition, and so, in a

degree, good inward also. A big room opened on a broad shaded patio. Singing birds and birds of rich plumage made it all the more home-like. It seemed more beautiful, perhaps, than it was; for the contrast with ranchos and horrid Ceral and dirty Chalcos and wild half-desert living was as sudden as if it had been a new revelation from Heaven.

Especially was it nearer home. One could almost fancy that he was home; for only one day separated him from Monterey, and that was the next town to Matamoras, and that adjoined the United States. It was so near, it seemed as if the dome of Washington must appear over that farther rise of inclosing mountains. But it took long and wearisome days to bring that dome into view.

The clean skin and clean shirt being secured, the town is subjected to inspection. It is soon done. A half-dozen streets run east and west along the upper edge of the plain; a dozen or two, narrow and dirty, cross them. One-story white and tinted adobe dwellings line these streets. There are no sidewalks. The plaza is without ornament. The cathedral is cheap and frowzy. Every thing is asleep.

There is one beauty—the alameda. This lies at the foot of the street, toward the west; it is the prettiest I had seen in all the country. It is lined all around with a hedge of rose-bushes, then in bloom, perhaps always so; its paths are richly shaded. It lies close to the base of high hills, and a river babbles along its edge, which invades its own borders, with its minor streams of irrigation. Outside, the brook gets up a sort of independent alameda, in an open pasture, where it gallops among apple and olive trees at its own wild will.

I find in this city two gentlemen of my own language. One, then far gone in consumption, has since passed away. He had a strange marriage experience. He had remained unmarried till he had reached the ripe age of thirty-five or forty. His master left him in charge, and went to Europe. A rancho beauty came to town, killing lovely. This sober, sturdy, and mature New Englander fell desperately in love with this wild slip of the pueblos. He married

her. She appropriated all the diamonds, silver, and whatever else she could beguile her becrazed husband into bestowing. She finally left with a French gentleman. She was captured, brought back, and cast into jail. Getting released, she went as far as Indiana, got a divorce in that State, and married the lawyer who obtained it. Never a word against the wayward wife fell from the sick man's lips. He loved her still. Many waters could not quench, nor floods drown this flame of, in him, purest and most unselfish affection. She had killed him, but he died without saying a word against the rancho beauty that had captured him whole. We read of broken hearts, and usually they are supposed to be of the feminine gender. Here was one of the opposite sort—a sober, sad, modest gentleman, worn to the grave by love and sorrow.

Another gentleman invited the sick friend and myself to dinner. He was an Irishman, but had lived from a child with Jerry Warriner, the famous caterer in Springfield, Massachusetts, thirty years ago. He came out here, and amassed a competence, if not a fortune. His children are all about him, and he is rejoicing in a green old age. It was a delightful evening that I spent in his cheery parlors, among his pleasant family and over his table, that had flavors in its dishes of the old tavern in Springfield.

The change from the wilderness wanderings was more marked by these additions. It was not only reaching land, but home. May every like traverser of that dreary track find like refreshment at these hospitable quarters.

XI.

MONTEREY.

Songs in the Night.—Open Fields near Saltillo.—Effect of Irrigation.—"The rosy-fingered Dawn."—Gathering together of the Mountains.—San Gregario.—A Thousand-feet Fall.—Rinconada.—Wonders of Flowers.—A Hole through a Mountain.—The Saddle Mountain.—The Mitre.—Santa Caterina.—A Tin God.—A familiar Color.—St. Peter.—No Bathing after Midday.—The Smallness of Mexican Heads.—Miss Rankin's Work.—Strife between Brethren.—Its Benefits.—The two Dogs.—The Eye of the Town.—Revolutions.

THOUGH near the midnight hour, the birds in the court are singing as gayly as at dawn. Hear that clarine! deep and long and swelling and falling are its notes, with a true operatic touch. How that madcap mocking-bird is caroling! They are making a night of it, truly. The day is too hot for their work, as it is for that of men. But, unlike their bigger and featherless biped kindred, they give songs in the night. Only that watchman's whistle replies to their softer and richer note, and a hallooing somebody, who bellows as if mad or afraid, or both. What is his office? To call a revolution? The air is full of that cry.

The roomy court of this hotel is unusually luxuriant. The arcade inclosing it is spacious; flowers, as fragrant as the birds are brilliant, fill the air with odors. Every thing is for coolness and rest. Rest with the pen is a goodly rest: let us take it.

It was at day-break this morning that the coach rattled out of Saltillo with two sleepy passengers, a German and myself. The face of the country in that warm gray dawn looked changed from all behind it. America had touched it with her wand. The huge, high walls of the haciendas gave way to no fences at all. The land lay utterly open. Not the least impediment to your going