

meeting, or a log-cabin preaching. The table has nice white ware, also of the latest Yankee pattern; the Yankee candle stands in its shining brass candlestick in a plate in the centre. Surely here is no *antiqua* Renosa, but one most modern. But even this word is modernized, for the name they gave me was, Los Renos a Viejo, or some such affair; Viejo is too old-fashioned a word, and so gives place to La Antigua—"old" to "ancient."

The dinner, at eleven o'clock at night, is being got ready. Not old that; they never prepare that till the passengers come. The coaches from Matamoras have just arrived, and quite a crowd criss-cross at this out-of-the-way corner. Longfellow's "Wayside Inn" could much more properly have been written of this spot than of Sudbury, where such characters as his could no more have been weather-bound than born.

A good meal follows, and a good sleep, though all too short; for at four we are off, half asleep still.

XIII.

JOLTINGS AND JOTTINGS.

A Creator and an Imitator.—Church-making and Carriage-writing.—The oldest Church and the youngest.—*Compagnons du Voyage*.—A Brandy-sucker.—Prohibition for Mexico.—Talks with the Coachman and Mozo.—Hides and Shoes.—San Antonio.—Its Casa and Inmates.—Rancho Beauties.—Women's Rights in Mexico.—Sermonizing in the Wilderness.—A Night on Stage-top.—Fantastic Forms.—Spiritual Phantasms.—Light in a dark Place.—Matamoras and Brownsville.

"JOHN WESLEY created a Church," said an ambitious minister not long since; "why may not I?" One effort to imitate that example would have satisfied the aspirant. Many have tried it before and since, but few with such results: Mr. Weinbrenner, Mr. Shinn, Mr. Capers, Mr. Scott, Mr. Campbell; but they did not make such a big thing of it after all. I heard a good story in Mexico of Mr. Campbell and his church. The late Roman Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore was talking with an earnest female Campbellite cousin of his. Said he, "If I was not a Roman Catholic, I would be a Campbellite." "Why so?" asks the lady, delighted at this half a loaf. "Because," he answers, "if I did not belong to the oldest Church, I would to the youngest."

Now, if I can not imitate John Wesley in creating a Church, I can try to copy his example in a hardly less remarkable gift, writing in a coach. If this is so very difficult, as the compositors would affirm could they but see the sheets on which this is penciled, how much more difficult must it have been for his ecclesiastical composition. True, I have not his smooth roads and table fitted to the carriage, but I have a road almost as good, and a slow and easy-going coach. The last day in Mexico I may well be treated to this luxury. I am nearing Matamoras, having been for twenty days,

Sundays excepted, an occupant of a locomotive house, which, though changing itself regularly, has never really changed. It has ever been the self-same vehicle, of a faded red without, a dirty and dusty leathern buff within. Along its upper edge has always been printed, "Empresa Diligencias Generales," or General Diligence Company. Here I have laid off, sometimes on nine seats, almost always on three, slept much, seen much, talked little, read less, and written least. I have had many talks with myself, because I had no better or worse companion, if worse there could be; sad talks and pleasant, worrisky and worryless.

As it was the only seat taken through, so not many others have been occupied for even an occasional *posta*. One started from Mexico with me, whom I left at Queretaro, as my going forward would have necessitated my riding on the Sabbath, and from that, my edition of the Litany reads, "Good Lord, deliver us." And He has so far delivered me. He has also added a favor not especially asked, and allowed me to speak in every city of Sabbath sojourn, save one, the words of His grace. That one, Queretaro, I strove hard to get three English-hearing people to arrange a service. I failed, perhaps because I did not ask the lady of the trio. She would have let me in, I think.

I took up one and another companion for short stages, one of whom I recall as a very polite gentleman, who gave me much information, talking slowly and distinctly, so that my untrained ear might distinguish the words, a gift my untrained coachman never could attain.

His successor, for a *posta*, was of another type. Bringing a leathern bottle with him, with a very small faucet, he kept steadily sucking brandy out of that tiny hole, leaning back his head to catch the oozing drop, slowly descending, as if it was ashamed to leave the upper leathery bag for the baser human one below. I was rejoiced to see any such sign of a not utterly fallen sort of brandy. It does harm enough to more than offset this only symptom of a better nature. It is the drink of all foreigners and the better-off class of natives. I have seen Germans nearly drain a full

flask in a single day's ride; and an Englishman pour a half-tumbler, undiluted by water, down the throat of a six-year-old daughter. Of course, they themselves set the bigger example; for our English brothers are the hardest drinkers in the world, or are only excelled by their American cousins, who excel them in debauchery, since these trample conscience under their lust of appetite, or more usually, fear of man; for it is love of fashion, rather than love of liquor, that makes the American drink. How glad I was to read in Monterey last Saturday that Massachusetts had repealed the Beer Act, and by such a grand majority. The fall of '66 is the rising again of '73. Though she may fall again, it will only be to a perpetual struggle until she shall attain a permanent deliverance. How far shines that good deed in this naughty world! Away across the country, and into this land, that no more dreams of Prohibition than it does of Protestantism, burns this ray of the coming sun that shall renew the face of all the land and of all lands.

But the few people of the coach have not interested me so much as the coachmen themselves. They and their *mozos* have been a constant study. The one that took me across the battle-field of Buena Vista was a vehement talker, especially after he had been promised a dollar if he would deliver me at Saltillo two hours earlier than his accustomed time. He described every mountain, some of them, I have no doubt, for the first time, and with a nomenclature of his own creation. He described the plants and their qualities—this for soup, and that for medicine; went over the whole battle-field and battle as though his side had conquered, just as our guides do to British visitors at Bunker Hill.

Yesterday's drivers were of a younger sort. They were near of an age, not far from twenty-four. Usually the *mozo* is a lad, the driver a man of forty. These, boys as they looked, drank muscat, a strong liquor of the smell of whisky, lashed and stoned the tired mules beyond boyish enthusiasm, sang, and were jolly exceedingly. They knew but little, and seemed glad they knew no more. The driver was smart, dark, fine-looking, and would make a good gen-

eral or preacher, if he had had the chance of the one, or the grace of the other.

To-day's mozo is of another type. The driver slept all the morning under his seat, and I acted the part of the mozo, plying the lash to the rear mule, and the stones to the leaders, as if anxious to show my zeal in order to get promoted. The poor fellows were so sick with the epizootic that they could hardly move. And the only response they made to my applications, not sermonic, was a kick or two occasionally from the off-mule. Or was it the nigh one? My horsemanship can not answer that conundrum. They did right to kick. As Balaam's ass was wiser than he, so these, his half-brothers, were wiser than the half-brother of that prophet. For they had dragged the coach in on the last night's posta, and then, with only four hours' rest, had been compelled to drag it back again; and sick at that. No wonder they were *no quiere* to any request for them to urge their step beyond the slowest walk. I beg their pardon for my stony salutations. They made the five leagues in five hours, less than three miles an hour, and they did well.

Between the beatings with whip and stones, in which latter I became quite expert, I talked to the mozo on all sorts of subjects: home, business, prospects, religion. He said that he was thirty-seven years old; married at thirty. His wife was then fifteen. He had one child, Thomas, aged four. He had no more children; it cost so much to support them, and they all took to drink. He said ladies were called young at twelve, thirteen, and fourteen, and as late as fifteen, but old at twenty. His wife attended church, but he was kept at work on the road Sunday, and rested Monday, just in order to break the Sabbath. He thought I must be rich: worth not less than two hundred thousand dollars, and was surprised to see that fortune dwindle to naught. What could I be? he asks. "*Predicador*," I say. It was a sort of Spanish he had never heard, nor I either before I used it; but it was a guess at "preacher." A "*padre*" he knew too well, and a friar; but a preacher was a new vocation. So I added, for his illumination, "a

missionary." "Romanista?" "No! Metodista." "Protestante?" "Si." He is a little surprised at this, and ready to draw back, for his wife's faith has a hold upon him. He soon recovers, and tells me about a señora who had often passed over this road. "Señora who?" "Señora Protestante—Señora Virga," he adds. A new phrase to me, as I had supposed that señora was only applied to married ladies, señorita being the unmarried title. He showed that the Spanish followed the English custom, which very properly calls unmarried ladies of mature age after the married ladies' title. Yet, as a maid with them is old when past fifteen, this remark is not as sure a proof of advancing years as it might be in higher latitudes.

I thought he was trying to say something about the Señora of Guadalupe; so I sought in this direction. But I found I was off the track. It flashed upon me. "Señora at Monterey?" "Si! si!" "Señora Rankin?" "Si!" This lady's work and fame have thus made her known to the common people. And well she deserves to be, for hers is by far the best work in all this part of the country.

We pass a load of ox-hides. "How much are they worth?" "A real apiece, here. In Matamoras, a real and medio." "How much do your boots cost?" "In Matamoras, four dollars and a half; in Monterey, seven dollars." So they sell the hide for twelve and a half cents, or get eighteen and three-quarters by carrying it a hundred miles, two weeks' journey (fifteen miles being a good day's journey for mules and oxen), and then pay from four and a half to seven dollars to get that same hide transformed into a pair of boots. So much for the difference between Mexico and Massachusetts. No more duty protects the latter than the former. Not so much, probably; for every thing here is taxed, and taxed horribly.

He asks which I like best, Mexico or the United States. "Both," I diplomatically answer. I try to describe the beauty and wealth of Mexico, and the comfort of the people of the States, especially the poor; floors to their rooms, not earth, as here; chairs, tables,

beds, all nearly unknown. His eye flashed with longings for that goodly land. When will ours be altogether such, and this be like it?

I asked how long it would take to reach the next posta: "An hour?" "Two." "No, one." "Two." He drew out a dollar, and offered to bet. So I had the privilege of resisting no severe temptation, especially as there was not even a watch among us three; and therefore it would not have been possible to prove either true. I had also the better privilege of setting forth the evils of gambling; how it made him lose all his wages, leave his wife and child without bread, and otherwise destroy him. I was astonished at my liberty of prophesying in the unknown tongue, and could almost see how that the love of Christ, without a miracle, under the mighty breathings of the Holy Ghost, could make the disciples speak with other tongues. The Spirit gave them utterance.

The village of San Antonio is reached at length, a blazing speck of white on a low hill overhanging the Rio Grande. It looks almost as pretty as a New England town, as you approach it through the interminable groves of mesquite. But enter it. Only a perpetual fire, a perpetual desolation. The huge plaza is without shrub or speck to mitigate its whiteness. Not a flower to relieve the white heat of the houses. Many of the houses are in ruins. The church has a skull near its entrance, an appropriate symbol of the town.

Yet here I found several things of a contrary sort. There are a custom-house and its officers; for this is a smuggling port, and each nation has its officers to protect its rights, or its claims rather, for rights in customs there are none. People have as much right to carry their wares across the line as to cross it themselves. It looks as if these officers had killed the town, for smuggling was its life.

The place where we had our breakfast was another novelty. It was a casa with three rooms, the first large, with a wide bed in the corner of the American type. All Mexican beds are single. It also had high-posters, after the old American fashion. Its dirty

pillow-cases suggested livelier dirt below. A fashion-plate and a fancy girl of the period—a bright-colored Hartford print—set off the walls, evidently showing travel on the part of the ladies of the house or desire for it, there being no room for fashion-plates in the rebosa and skirt, which compose their usual costume.

I glanced into the kitchen, and concluded to take a nearer view. It was a farmer's kitchen, larger by far than any rancho or peon could boast of. Its high thatched roof looked cool, and the smoke from its tortilla frying-pan wandered unharmed and unharmed among the rafters. The good lady, young at forty, sat on the ground, busy over her stew-pans. A daughter, of the overripe age of sixteen, was frying the tortillas, which a twelve-year-old young lady was kneading. A taller miss, between the two, was walking about in a very draggly pink skirt, and a very old daughter of, possibly, eighteen, sat on the ground, assisting her mother. Three younger girls were sitting or toddling around, and a ten-year-old was chatting with a boy of like age, while also busy with kitchen duties of the vegetable sort. I was surprised to see so large a crowd, and they were doubtless more surprised to see me, with my unwashed and unshorn face, huge sombrero, and dusty garments, peering into their common room.

But they were too near the border to be disturbed by this Yankee freedom. The good lady told me that these were all her daughters. The boy was not hers; he was an outsider. She has eight children, seven daughters. They were unusually comely, and the one just a little year beyond "young," according to our mozo, would make an impression in any society. She was as beautiful as the ragged and almost naked Apollo lad whom I had seen as near the beginning of the trip as I had this industrious and modest Venus near its end. I could easily see how my Vermont brother in Saltillo had been swept from his bachelor moorings by a rancho beauty. As she sat there on the ground frying tortillas, she made one think of Thackeray's "Peg of Limovaddy:"

"Hebe's self, I thought,
Entered the apartment:
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As she came she smiled,
 And the smile bewitching,
 On my word and honor,
 Lighted all the kitchen.
 See her as she moves ;
 Scarce the ground she touches,
 Airy as a fay,
 Graceful as a duchess."

This maiden of San Antonio had like natural graces, and was doomed to a like wasting of them on this desert air. What would not this group of superior girls do with the advantages of superior society? Culture and Christ would make them all beautiful within. Now they were comely of countenance; then, also, of soul. Yet perhaps they are safer and happier in this humble obscurity than if exposed to a city's culture and a city's shame. May this family be kept as godly as goodly.

The dinner was hardly equal to the handsome, youthful cooks who had prepared it. In variety it was sufficient. Four ways of preparing meat, and two of eggs; but its ways were too new for me. Soup, made by stewing fat meat in water, was eagerly drank by the coachman, but was too greasy for my palate. The two fattest parts of the meat, served up separately, were pointed out by the gentleman of the house as especially excellent. Solid junks of fat they were, and each was eaten by the cochero and his mozo as confirmatory of the landlord's judgment. The fry, and the tortillas, and the unskimmed coffee, and the poor water, just made the dinner passable, and that only because I was comforted with the thought that one more meal, and Brownsville and a beefsteak were mine. The handsome cooks spoiled the broth, and a plainer face and better *cuisine* would have been more agreeable. Thackeray wisely omits the description of Peg's dinner.

A sign of the esteem in which the fair, fat, and forty lady of the house is held by her husband, or a token of the manner in which she rules him, is made manifest to all visitors; for is it not printed in good round letters on one of the beams that crosses the ceiling of the dining-room?

"CEDO, YO, FRANCISCO, ESTA CASA A MI SPOSA, MARIA LUCIA ZEPADA DE CONCLINGO."

(*I, Francisco, give this house to my wife, Mary Lucia Zepada de Conclingo.*)

How many husbands have the courage to make like proclamation? "Very uncommon in Mexico," says the American custom-house clerk; very uncommon anywhere. Yet the fact is not uncommon. In a town adjoining Boston, a gentleman said his was the only house that was not deeded to the wife of the occupant. Better put the fact over the door. Still, though the wives own all the best houses in that large town, and can sell them, and be sued for them, they can not vote to protect them, to keep out the liquor-shops which injure their property, and to create a government which shall improve it. I read in the coach to-day that the Maine House of Representatives had voted woman the ballot. The Senate should follow its example. It is the seal of assurance to her liquor legislation. It is the only salvation of the ballot-box from the stuffing and bribing abominations of to-day. Señora Maria Lucia Zepada, etc., is a sign of the coming woman in the State, in all save her cooking. She looks as if able to bear her honors, with her large and healthy and handsome family; not a solitary and sickly unit, to which social ideas now diminish and degrade the household. With her abundant kitchenly ways, owning her casa and honoring it, shall she not also jointly own and honor the State?

Much more, the Church; for there her heart is, and her treasure also. Let not the Church lag behind the State in opening every door to her admittance. Let her be welcomed, especially when she is knocking at these doors; nay, when the Lord has Himself come down from heaven and opened these doors, not by sending His angel, but by the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit with signs following. Not more clearly was Paul thrust among the unwilling Peter and his ten—the vacancy in the apostolate being kept open by the Head of the Church for his admission—than is the sisterhood of the Church thrust by the same Head into like fellowship with their elder, but not superior, brethren. He that hath ears let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

"*Buen !*" (Well), as they say here, the same as we ; our bad dinner has given us a good long dessert in the shape of a dull sermon.

"Now good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both."

Good-bye to the hung beef, a clothes-line of which is stretched across the yard ; to the poor cooking and pretty faces ; to the casa and its owner ; and, it must be confessed, to the somewhat hen-pecked-looking husband and father ; to the custom-house friends ; and to San Antonio.

The hot day drags to its close. The mules onward "plod their weary way." Gray's ox is not slower. How their prancing fleetness is changed.

The same green wood everywhere embraces me that has embraced me for this last two hundred miles—mesquite, mesquite, mesquite. It sometimes rises to the height of an apple or willow, very rarely to that of a maple. Brush is its proper level. Grass, weeds, thorny bushes, ground-flower cactuses of yellow and purple and magnificent crimson, humble, but hardly less beautiful, thornless pink, and daisy, and dandelion—very old, dear, homely, and homeful creatures—and chiquitite, tiniest flowers of every sort, a bed of beauty ; such is the rich, green desolate valley on the Mexican side of the Grand River of the North.

For three hundred miles it is practically without inhabitant. Not less so is the American side. Every inch fertile, and capable, like the ground of a certain rich man, of bringing forth abundantly. Why should so many starve and pinch and toil when this abundance goes untouched ? How alike is the God of nature and of grace ! Ever thus He spreads His table of salvation in the wilderness, and ever thus man prefers starving in sin to sumptuous fare at His overlaid board. For four thousand years has He said, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Still they come not ; they dig out their own broken cisterns ; they eat their own tasteless food.

Shall it be always so ? Will every generation thus treat the Lord and His royal feasts ? Many have come ; more will.

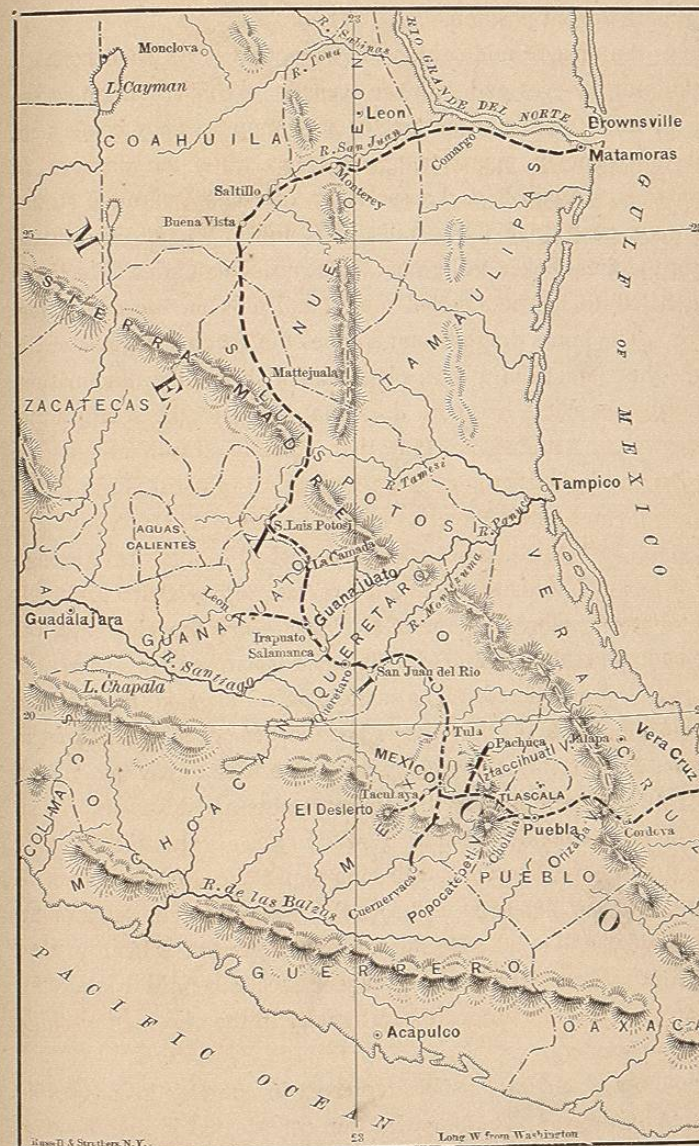
These lands are filling up. Those superb white Roman Campagna oxen that just passed us are driven by a new settler. That pretty log-hut, with its half-dozen Yankee-looking men and women at its door, is the first I have seen in Mexico. How like Minnesota it looks. Only Minnesota does not have such a soft spring garb on this second day of April. They are the indices of the coming myriads that will make this lovely desert lovelier with human life and love. So shall the overflowing and ever-neglected gifts of God in Christ, this wilderness of grace, this prairie ocean of salvation, be more and more appropriated by the sinful, sensual heart of man, famishing for bread, hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of Christ. They shall reject alike the crudities of superstition and of false and haughty self-sufficiency, the religion of idolatry and of a spurious humanity, and, sitting at the feet of Christ, Creator, Saviour, Brother, shall grow up into Him who is the head over all things, blessed forever.

The sun is gone ; the shade is coming. Matamoras is a long sixteen miles off, at our slow walking pace, but the first jotting in a Mexican coach is ended. Not so the joltings ; they continue till day-break. The musings with the pencil end at dusk at a rancho by the roadside, the last and worst of all. Still the tortillas and the coffee, as being the last, were kindly entertained, the children duly patted and pennied, the parents praised ; and gladness unspeakable filled the heart as the slow mules pulled slowly away. No more starting off in a whirlwind rush ; that is reserved for city taverns, where glory and gain go together. It is night-fall ere they leave, and six leagues (sixteen miles) are to be dragged over. Midnight they are due, and in expectancy thereof I foolishly mount on the top of the coach. The woods grow denser as the sky grows darker. The branches brush my head, but I am no fly, and not to be brushed into the empty coach below. I sit it out, seeing fantastic forms in every shadowy clump, riding up to vast walls that bar our way, straight, smooth, and high ? How is it possible to pene-

trate them? Yet as we approach them they vanish, or move back to a more defiant position.

It is the mist of midnight, or of sleep, that plays such fantastic tricks with my eyes and with the scenery. Which? Lights glimmer in front; surely these are the city lamps. They come near, and disappear in approaching, either as will-o'-the-wisps or as camp-fires. Again is darkness; again the damp mesquite strikes the dizzy head; again the walls, high, and huge, and false, arise; again the fires flicker and go out. The coachman cries "Kutchah! Kutchah!" to his bedraggled mules, and tells me we are almost there. The hours drag on, and so does the coach. I think of the Light that shineth in a dark place, and wish for like illumination. But it comes not. No more does that come to the soul, wading through earth's midnight. How that soul is beset with false guides, bewildering lights, fictitious gates and walls, and still is out in the wet woods and fields, homeless and guideless. What a lesson that last night in Mexico taught me! Never shall I forget it. Through all its hours I watched and waited on the top of that coach. It was almost day-break—four of the clock—ere the real gate was touched, the real city entered. The guardsman searches sharp, because no fee is offered. The mules spurt and make their finish; the drowsy clerk of the hotel is not too drowsy to forget how to cheat. A score of dollars is my due. He tries to pay me off with worn-out quarters smoothed to twenty cents and less. I protest. He proffers smooth dollars. I still protest. He declines any better currency. Nervous with long vigils, and anxious to get to Brownsville for breakfast and a couch, I entreat better treatment. He is incorrigible. I surrender, and snatch with a benison that burns, not blesses, I hope, my degenerate dollars, and strike for the river. The stream is crossed by ferry in the glowing morning; Mexico is done.

Matamoras and Brownsville represent in name as in nature the two civilizations. The nomenclature of Mexico is soft, flowing, enervating; that of America, short, sharp, energetic. Matamoras in pronunciation is like lotus-eating; Brownsville like the crack



THE ITINERARY—FROM VERA CRUZ TO MATAMORAS.

of a pistol. So are the civilizations they represent. Idle and incurious, letting things go as they come, is the one ; obtrusive and ever-moulding is the other. The cities are like their nations. The old-style house, barred windows, barred gate-way, narrow street, dead wall, plastered and tinted, is Matamoras ; open windows, narrow door-ways, no coach-doors, no city walls nor gates, wooden houses, painted sometimes, wide streets : Yankee of Yankees is Brownsville. The two, when blended and built up in Christ, will be a beauty and strength, husband and wife, one "entire and perfect chrysolite."