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EAGLE PASS;

OR,

Life on the Border.

BY CORA MONTGOMERY.

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TO

Mrs. Lemuel Hawley Sherman,

OF BROOKFIELD, CONNECTICUT.

To you, dearest guide of my youth, these pages are most appropriately offered, since but for your suggestion they would, probably, never have seen the light. To you, and for you, they were written, as you earnestly desired to hear what I saw, and what I thought, of "Peon Slavery on our Border." My observations are plainly and simply told. Few will heed these hasty and undeveloped sketches; but there is subject for serious thought and Christian action in this, as in every other form of human servitude, and so I cast my tiny protest-laden shell upon the ocean of public opinion. It may never touch haven, but with yourself, and the friends who make my world, it is sure of favor and sunshine, and that will more than repay the slight labor of,

Your grateful and devoted niece,

CORA MONTGOMERY.

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## P R E F A C E .

It was not at "the urgent solicitation of friends" that this volume was given to the press, for nobody was consulted in the matter. Beyond the assurance of the only one who had the "veto power" that he would not object thereto, and the wish of the beloved relative to whom it is dedicated, to see in printed record some shadowings of our border life, the writer never heard or cared for an opinion on this small subject. Still less was it for the pride or profit of authorship, for she was in no wise ignorant that neither could arise to any tempting extent from these crude pages, thrown off without system or premeditation, as the events occurred, or the thought pressed for utterance. They were written, and are published, because the facts existed, and the writer—wishing them known, and seeing no one else disposed to take the trouble—found no better way of giving them to the world.

It may not be true long—and every ray of publicity helps the cure—but it is true now, that the interests of humanity and the honor of the country are utterly neglected on the Rio Bravo frontier. Whether it be from ignorance or inertia, it is certain that a class of the highest officials of the nation closely imitate the Mexican dignitaries of a similar rank, in profligacy of expenditure and profound indifference to the wants of the people.

Our Indian policy is a blot on the very name of Christianity, yet what Senator or what General proposes any change, except, perhaps, something a little more veiled and indirect in our inexorable system of despoilment and extermination?

We have before us abundant evidence of wrong and outrage to American citizens in various parts of Mexico, but we have no

evidence that one step of firm, manly and decisive protest has been taken. With Mexico diplomatic compliments cost nothing and mean nothing, for her politicians are just as rich in words, and about as poor in acts, as ours are becoming in these latter days.

Unoffending and free-born residents on our soil have been torn from it by force, and carried with lawless violence into Mexico to be enslaved for debt, and not one victim, at the end of two years' supplication, has been officially demanded or returned to us. So far from it, indeed, that the *official record of impunity* is given in these pages—to the eternal shame of the public servant who refused to vindicate the outraged majesty of the Union. But it is also true that if a persevering demand is made for justice, the appeal must touch, at last, the popular heart; and then it is to be hoped we shall have done with apathy and evasions, and see these principles engraved in uneffaceable letters on our American policy:—

*Free-born citizens shall not be enslaved for debt in Mexico. Americans and their property shall be protected from spoliation. The sanctity of our soil shall be vindicated with firmness.*

We know our derelict public servants have failed to do their duty in these matters, and they will continue derelict so long as the people are silent; but they will hasten to amend their ways when the searching blaze of popular inquiry is turned upon their acts. The corruption and imbecility of our officials will grow upon us, until the press is aroused to take up the work and apply the cautery. Before this vague and irresponsible administration of our executive trusts is reformed into something more respectable and trustworthy, we may have to impeach some cabinet officers, and bring legislators under stringent laws of penal accountability; and why not? Why should our best-paid and most learned public servants do with impunity those things for which we would send a poor, untaught, poverty-tempted domestic servant to the penitentiary?

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# Eagle Pass;

OR,

## LIFE ON THE BORDER.

---

### *THE FRONTIER.*

THE lone and remote border sentinel of the frontier state of Texas—the patient, unnoticed watcher in the gates, for the coming harvest from the equally unthought-of silver region; that rich ore-land which shoots down its sierras from a thousand miles to the north and west, to her very side, to within two or three hundred miles of the sea,—Eagle Pass, with only its one rude edifice, and its tented encampment, where the future Fort Duncan was to arise,—Eagle Pass, fair and healthy as is its site, and full of promise as are its position and prospects, did not seem on New Year's day of 1850, the place for stirring recollections. Yet it is a true miniature of Americanism; roughly limned and in water-colors, but with the genuine family look. We see it in the colossal beauty and conquering energy of the republican stock, and we can see, too, if we will consent to see them, some past stains not easy to cure, and some present blemishes which we would do well to amend. If we were to trace out in full the parentage of Eagle Pass, it would unveil some awkward passages in our national policy; and if the people would heed the warning, there is much to be said of an evil growth about to

take root on our border, and spread the baneful fruits of a new family of injustice, oppression, domestic strife, and foreign war, over the Union. It is here on this border that we must meet and blight, by the scorching fire of public opinion, the threatened iniquity of *peon servitude*.

The prosperous, well-stocked stores, the intelligent society that have started, as if out of the ground, in one short year, at this frontier point, more than a hundred miles from the nearest American town, are of themselves an expressive illustration of how the bold enterprise of our people knows to acquire territory, and to build up towns, and states. More than this, Eagle Pass is a piece of Texas; and around Texas is entangled the noblest, and the meanest acts, the most brilliant and the most clouded diplomacy, of the men and measures of our times. If the drapery and masking could be rent away, and all exposed in stern and rigid truth, not a thousand of our twenty-three millions could, or would believe the schedule of our last ten years' diplomacy to be a verity; they would say so many instances of weakness and corruption could never force their blots on the pages of our history. Neither could they, if the masses would be just guardians of their own interests, and not allow themselves to be sold and trampled down by that slimy monster Party, whom they have allowed to make his nest in their treasury, and rule from thence, the Union.

The highest statesmanship, the lowest evasions, the brightest and the vilest of our public acts, encircle Texas as with a mosaic frame. The ground mass is of the white imperishable marble of our institutions, bound with constitutional fillets of purest gold, and set with countless gems of precious ray, yet crossed and spotted with some most unsightly flaws of human infallibility.

At Eagle Pass we study the busy world at a safe distance;

as from a beautiful hermitage on the mountain side, that overlooks the city's turmoil, without being affected by its din or sharing in its strife. The cares and clatter of life come to us so calmed and tempered by distance that we can handle and probe their sickly unimportance at our convenient leisure, without the least danger of infection. Sectional opinions have lost their heat, and party malice its venom, before the papers, freighted with their prejudices, can reach the two hundred miles of Indian-infested country that lies between the coast and our home in the wilderness. Here we review and criticise, condemn or approve, with all the freedom of our American birthright, the wilful inertness, or obstinate blunderings of our public servants.

The Union—ocean-zoned and star-crowned; with all the treasures of the earth glittering on her bosom, and her imperial robe embroidered in flowing silver with a matchless tracery of lake and river; with climes of every hue cast over her like a gorgeous canopy; with thirty-one illustrious sons, already come to man's estate, to guard her with duteous love, and many a fair territorial daughter to grace her coming years—the Union, peerless mother of this noble family, can well afford in her greatness to confess that some specks dim the sun of her glory. So too may Texas, in the plentitude of her rich gifts, afford to own frankly the short-comings of her children, and keep henceforth to higher aims and more settled purposes.

*A BIRD'S-EYE GLANCE.*

I LANDED early in March, in Texas, and, as almost everybody is, was led captive by the fresh and verdant beauty of the coast region. The north was still shivering in the frost and sleet of lingering winter, but already green and laughing

spring was holding her revels on a carpet of flowers in the bright sunshine. A gay and radiant freedom seemed to pervade this land of fertility and promise, and with every drawback, in the shape of confused land titles, and the beginner's privations, there is no country under the sun in which a sober, sensible and industrious man can more certainly realize a quick independence and a delightful home. Somewhere or other in its vast extent, every one can find the features and productions that interest him most. There are those whose associations are with the interminable plains of the Mississippi, and who love to look out from a little island of trees on a boundless level of verdure, perhaps dimly marked in one direction by the undulating line of darker woodlands that fringe and define the course of some stream, like a shore of the sea, with its windings and promontories. Such must be delighted with the rich, broad prairies of southern Texas. They have there the deep alluvial for sugar, plenty of fish and game, splendid cattle, good horses, and some mosquitoes. Those there are again who demand a rolling, picturesque country, pure and sparkling water sources, and a soil that will return cotton and tobacco, as well as wheat and corn, and who turn their backs on sugar cane and trees veiled in garlands of gray moss. These have but to go back from the coast and find all the heart of man can desire in the way of cheap soil, and healthy, poetic situations in middle Texas. If he have a taste for the sublime and exciting, he has but to leave the coast some two hundred miles behind to hunt buffaloes and wild horses on the head waters of the Brazos and Colorado. If mine-hunting and glances of sparkling gold be more to his appetite, he can play at their own game of warfare with the Indians and explore the ore region that belts Texas on the north and west. If, finally, he would live like the patriarchs—and in a

country like their own promised land—surrounded by flocks and herds, in simple and bounteous plenty, he may come to the valley of the Rio Bravo and pitch his tent in the pleasant recesses about and above Eagle Pass. All these sections offer sure employment and independent homes on the easiest terms. If a healthy man is poor and homeless in Texas, it is because he is not manly enough to turn his hands to useful labor. It is the scourge of Texas—or rather has been, for these locusts are now less felt—that an army of idlers made of her hospitable homes the refuge of their worthlessness. Hundreds, too genteel to earn honest, independent bread—but not too genteel to accept their daily food in indirect alms from those who do—swarmed into Texas and lived on speculation until the vigorous life of the young country outgrew the canker. The scar of this plague is still visible in the chaos of law suits and land monopolies that overspread the state and so infect her titles that no prudent man will touch them without great precaution. But it is in process of cure.

#### INDIANOLA.

THE steamer Palmetto cast its swarm of sea-sick passengers ashore at Indianola the fourth day out from Galveston. Both Laraca and Indianola must be chartered cities, for it is the curious and laudable custom of Texan towns, to elect a Mayor and Common Council as soon as they have men enough to fill out the offices; and then, in paper-money days, they instantly issued their notes for circulation. Some of them did not wait for such an exuberance of population. Fair Richmond had, I think, but one building in it when it began to issue its amendments to the specie currency. The store-keeper in that one building was probably the Mayor and

population in general, and his clerk enclosed within himself the Recorder and Common Council. Yet Richmond is a lovely place, and will not fail to say of itself, as says every one of the precocious children of the Lone Star, that it is the most promising babe of the whole family.

Almost every league of land on the coast, or navigable rivers of Texas, has a town surveyed off, and each one of this legion of paper cities is avouched by its proprietors to be the most desirable spot on earth. Yet by a singular inadvertence it has rarely happened that business and capital have pitched upon the positively best locations, that is to say, almost never have they chosen with care and forethought those points of intersection of the foreign and domestic trade, at which the best facilities of communication have opened the widest range of demand for what came from abroad, to meet with the largest means of supply of home products. There was a tall, slow-spoken gentleman on board our steamer, who had become the possessor of "an interest in a town tract," who was more than anxious to make a huge, fault-finding Englishman's fortune by selling him a few lots in his "splendid sea-port." If he succeeds, I can fancy the blank dismay of the purchaser when he finds wild cattle the only inhabitants of the prosperous city.

These sales and the persevering ill-will which rival places manifest towards each other, have injured incalculably the character and growth of the country, yet, in spite of all that, there must be towns and commercial outlets, and fortunes will be made in creating them, as fortunes have been made elsewhere in the Union, by the judicious selection and outset of new places. But in doing this it must be borne in mind that steam has revolutionized the old rules, and the winds no longer confine commerce to those harbors that are accessible to sailing vessels. Trade is pressing its favorite depots more

and more inland, and as steam supersedes sails, thinks less than of old of being exactly on the coast.

Every body was disappointed in Indianola, it was so different from their ideas, but nobody found serious room for complaint. A belt of white sand separated the ocean of green prairies from the ocean of blue water, and along this belt was arranged a line of wooden buildings, unrelieved by trees or enclosures, like a string of overgrown packing boxes set out on the beach to dry. Lavaca, its neighbor and rival, is much the same thing, yet when these forlorn, undraped villages plant trees and robe themselves in verdure, as Galveston has done, they will be charming places. They were in such a hurry to commence business that they deferred adornments for a season. They are on the verge of a rich and extensive back country, intersected by numerous streams that fall into the Bay, all around them, and one or another of the hundred towns laid off on the smaller bays, that set up and indent the country from Matagorda Bay, *must* become the centre of a handsome trade. Where the most favorable point exists I might perhaps give a shrewd guess, as I have given the subject some attentive study, but it is not worth while to be ostracised by the ninety-nine towns that are out of the question, so I will bless them all and keep silence.

## THE EBERLY HOUSE.

I SAID every body was disappointed, but astonished would be the better word, to find all their pre-conceptions so at fault on their arrival in Texas—not even excepting those who had lived there before. A brace of lounging, good-natured, indifferent *boys*, as they call their male servants from nine to ninety, had taken charge of the baggage of a dozen or so of the passengers, and marshalled us up to “our house,” and

in a short time all were disposed of somewhere. The house was brimfull before, but in Texas single gentlemen are the unprivileged order, and a gallant colonel was ejected from his snugery, and I installed in the very midst of his books, boxes and newspapers, not to mention a whole clan of fire-arms of every size and degree, as a matter of course. Instead of murmuring at the summary process of our landlady, who, by the way, is not used to rebellion in her household, the gentleman himself was the most active of any body in putting things in order for a lady stranger. In such prompt and cheerful sacrifice of their personal comforts and paid-for rights, the gentlemen of the Southern States shame the boasted chivalry of the knightly ages, as well as the courtliest of the court-bred of our days. It is a beautiful and distinguishing trait that this high-toned deference is paid not merely to the young, beautiful and distinguished, who command politeness any where, but to the poor, lowly and unknown. Every American, and most especially every southerner, holds himself as a man, bound by his manhood to render every protection and courtesy to woman. When I pressed my regret, therefore, at the inconvenience I was imposing on the Colonel in thus abruptly entering upon the possession of his private sanctum, he refused to think of it in any other light than a thing of course.

Eberly House and its lady proprietor are an epitome of Texas History. She was among the first settlers; had faced with resolute cheerfulness all the dangers and privations of its colonial infancy, and rejoiced as became a mother of the land when Texas boldly set up an independent existence. And never did a young housekeeper in the world of civilized nations, begin life in such utter destitution of the usual household gear of governments. There was not a church, a court-house, a prison, or an alms-house among the Anglo-



American settlements of Texas, when the Lone Star put forth her banner of Independence. She began with school-houses, and they soon grew into churches—with the printing-press, which soon unfolded into a free republic, and a state constitution that was the admiration of the highest statesmen of the country, for its liberal forethought and wise adjustment.

#### THE NORTH AND SOUTH.

A MILD, gentle-mannered Pennsylvanian intimated to me, in a quiet tone, under cover of discussion between the ladies, his pleasure and surprise at the well-dressed and comfortable appearance of the public—"even the colored persons seem to be decent and contented!" The truth was, Mr. Grey had come out with his head full of whips and chains, and his fear of being agonized by the shrieks and sufferings of the slaves, had troubled excessively his inclination to live at the south. The laughing, well-clad blacks, whose merry quips and gibes rung all day in such careless unconstraint in and about every house, turned all these preparations for indignant sympathy upside down. The poor gentleman was ready to be angry with them all for being so happy in servitude, but there was no help for it. The race in its present state of cultivation, cannot be reasoned into taking much heed of any thing that does not strike forcibly on their animal nature. I reminded him of this, but he shook his head doubtfully and sadly. "It is melancholy to see the race set down to slavery, as if it were in the natural order of Providence." "I was struck," continued Mr. Grey, "to observe at New Orleans, that if the population there could be divided into two portions, one including all the thin, anxious, care-worn faces, and the other all the jovial, contented, and well-fed ones,

there would be but a small sprinkling of whites among the healthy and happy looking, and a still fainter sprinkling of blacks in the class of troubled faces. Still I could come to no opinion from a three days' visit to a slave city."

"Did it ever occur to you," said a lady, suddenly turning from the window whence she had been contemplating the bay as it unrolled a sheet of molten silver under the noon-tide sun,—“Did it ever occur to you to arraign the plan of Divine Wisdom in giving these Africans black skins, thick lips, flat noses, and woolly hair?”

“Certainly not,” said the astonished northerner, “but permit me to inquire the bearing of the question.”

“Only this,” replied the lady. “It seems to me exceedingly difficult to separate the facts, and determine how far this state of servitude is the inevitable consequence of the *physique* and the undeveloped character of the negro, and as such a part of the Divine plan. In short, how far it is the ordinance of heaven, and how far it is the work of human sin, and a stumbling-block to the progress of man.”

Mr. Grey's blue eyes opened wider and rounder, and I gave a closer heed, for here the north and south, the principles of the one, and the practice of the other, had their champions. It grew interesting.

“Divine plan? Ordinances of Heaven? Surely, madam, you do not believe slavery was created by God?” asked the gentleman, completely afloat at the audacity of such a claim. “Surely you do not claim for it Divine parentage?”

“Only as it is claimed for the docility of the elephant, the endurance of the camel, the fleetness of the horse, and the fidelity of the dog. Thus far and no farther; they have the qualities for man's service by divine creation, and whether by divine appointment or not, man, sovereign of animals, and, above all, white men—the sovereigns of the inferior human

racés—are endowed with the gift and power to reduce them to his own uses.”

The clamor of the dinner-bell cut short this thoroughly characteristic argument too soon for my satisfaction, but as we rose to attend the summons, Mr. Grey inquired of the lady on what ground beyond difference of color she founded such an absolute judgment of the inferiority of the blacks.

“Three reasons,” replied she, carelessly, as she descended to the dining-room. “A negro nation has never attained eminence since the birth of history; next, no pure negro ever made an important invention, not even an alphabet, neither has mankind ever found among them a great teacher, whether as prophet, legislator, or poet.”

Mr. Grey’s reply was lost in the confusion of taking place at table, but whatever it was it gave a shade of thought to the countenance of his listener. Our English passenger was so delighted with the fine oysters, and so astonished to meet roast beef so juicy and tender, and turtle so perfectly delicious in this out-of-the-world corner, that his charity bubbled up to the brim, and he observed, in a semi-confidential tone, “There are many awkward things in the way, and many excuses might be urged in palliation of Texas having committed herself to slavery.”

#### GEOGRAPHICAL MORALITY.

WITH Mr. Grey came out Mr. Jobson, an English gentleman, who had purchased in Philadelphia the fourth part of the town of Arista, and was now in anxious quest of his town site. He had asked every body on board the steamer about it, and the more he inquired the more confused became his data and his ideas. He was the personal friend and correspondent of a celebrated anti-slavery leader, and like him was

inclined to set down every fault of church and state, as well as every mischance by land and sea, to the sin of slaveholding. He intimated to me semi-confidentially that he imputed to that "the general want of correctness in the land transactions of Texas," and especially the "unfindability of Arista," on which a mischievous young Kentuckian was continually condoling him. Mr. Grey was rather anti-slavery by the accident of his birth than for any other reason. Apples and anti-slavery are the natural growth of his latitude; oranges and negro servitude demand a warmer climate. He was almost certain to change his views with his residence on coming south. He was an American, and our morality on slaveholding topics is curiously geographical. It hardens into ice and marble in New England, and softens like the winters, with amazing rapidity and steadiness of progress as we move southward. With us it is a real wide-spread and deep-rooted social fact, and we deal with it for what it is—a political necessity and a constitutional existence.

With our sturdy Englishman it is simply and purely an abstract question of right and wrong, and he will never change his opinions, for he will never change his point of view. At all costs and by whatever way, he desires instant emancipation and the most perfect equality for the blacks in marriage relations, social influence and political rights.

That twenty millions of whites would certainly lose, and perhaps the three millions of blacks not gain by this abrupt amalgamation of the races, is nothing to the purpose; the principle is right in his estimation, and he thinks the right principle should be put in action immediately, if it sows earthquakes.

## TEXAS LIVING.

THE sharp, impatient clang of the dinner-bell called some of the party to their first meal on Texas ground, and it was so abundant and excellent as to win the commendation of even our critical Mr. Jobson, with the single reservation that the venison and wild turkey had no justice in the cooking, a universal fault in America, he observed; and I therefore record it, that my countrywomen may amend their ways. In my ignorance I thought them excellently done, and if a fault there was, the biscuits and coffee atoned amply for the deficiency. Fish, oysters and turtle abound along the whole coast of Texas, and may be had for the taking; the prairies swarm with fine cattle, and where cows may be had at seven or eight dollars a head, and can run out and take care of themselves the whole year, it must be a poor manager that cannot ensure milk and butter, beef and veal, and working teams to his utmost desire. The woodlands that fringe every water-course, more or less deeply, shelter droves of swine that, like the herds of cattle, ask nothing better than to purvey their own subsistence. Poultry requires a little better tendance, but they do well here, and so do sheep and goats, except exactly on the coast. Add to this the facility of raising almost every variety of fruit and vegetable, and it may be said, in one sentence, that the established farmers of Texas, and of the western states of the Union generally, have abundant and hospitable tables, and the traveller must be delicate and difficult indeed if he is not suited with the fare. Almost the only really hard dinner that ever came before me in Middle Texas, I encountered at a day's stage from San Antonio, and that was served up in extra style. A handsome turcen, and china soup plates to match, were set forth on

irreproachable damask, but the soup was only dirty salt and water, and the after course a very small desolate island of bacon in a prairie of something green and greasy-looking, mournfully flanked by a plate of very dry corn cakes. We did not venture upon the eatables, but we cheerfully paid for the sight of the nice tureen and soup plates, they were so refreshing. As no volume of reasonable capacity could hold an account of the substantial comforts of the table I have shared in sunny, abounding Texas, I take the traveller's right to dwell heavily on the *per contra*, and therefore must mention, with emphasis, that to my taste, the most unsatisfactory food ever set before me was that dinner of stone china.

At Indianola, our cheer was of a more varied and digestible character, and our party returned to the sitting parlor with the comfortable assurance that, whatever other privations might be before them, settlers in Texas need not apprehend dying of famine.

The sea-breeze came up gratefully from the bay as it unrolled its glittering sheet under the declining sun; and we gathered in the balcony, in front, to arrange our plans and admire the gorgeous canopy of crimson and gold that overhung his place of departure.

One day was given to Lavaca, and the next we took up our line of march to San Antonio in a stage chartered for our own private service. Mr. Jobson and his friend engaged a smaller carriage, in which they proposed to make an extensive circle of exploration—Mr. Grey to select a promising situation for trade, and Mr. Jobson to prosecute his voyage for the discovery of the unknown whereabouts of the city of Arista, of which his only landmark was a "certain blaze on a live oak tree." When he effects the discovery he will colonize it with knowing Lincolnshire graziers or sell out to a company; but, at the last advices, it was still unfound.

## A CONVERT.

THE plan of travel being settled, the chat fell back on Texas and her most prolific staples, sugar, cotton, paper cities, cattle and slaves. It was amusing to trace back the gradual change in the views of my excellent friend, Mr. Grey. In Philadelphia he was held to be an able, and doubtless was a sincere, advocate of immediate emancipation. He had almost persuaded our gifted and ardent friend, George Lippard—"he with eye of light and soul of fire"—to write one of his burning romances, of which each sentence is a scathing sermon to oppressors, and make its heroine a fugitive colored girl. Gentle George, however, could not engage in the work, as he was already in harness against the Tyranny of Capital, and had full employment for lance and shield. Two months at Washington, and a most exemplary and believing attention to the debates of Congress, did for Mr. Grey what speeches in legislative bodies rarely do, simplified the matter, and modified his opinions. He was disposed to give over school-mastering the south on its home duties, and, with a more believing trust, leave emancipation to the progress of light and God's Providence. These were his words, and as he floated down the Ohio, on one side of which slavery is wicked and illegal, and on the other proper and lawful, he continued to grow in the faith that each State should be left to regulate its own morals. When he was down as far as Memphis, with slave-cultivated cotton fields on either bank, and slaveholding gentlemen on either side of him at table, and lovely slave-tended damsels glancing in beauty opposite him, he threw off an item or two more, with his cumbersome overcoat, now too heavy for the climate, and decided, in his secret mind, that it would be highly

absurd to insist on breaking up the Union for the sake of helping such pretty girls to black husbands, and he began to think this would be the prominent results of the wholesale levelling system. At Natchez he concluded that, with an equal population of ignorant blacks and prejudiced whites, some laws of self-preservation might be excusable in the existing social state, and fully excused the whites for so much of their code as was necessary to guard against insurrection and bloodshed. He had gradually discarded the courteous phrase of "colored brethren" for the pithy shortness of "blacks," and finally landed at New Orleans perfectly tranquil, if not slightly indifferent, about the "spread of slavery," against which he had been so actively and sincerely eloquent five months before. His northern anti-slavery morality had unconsciously, and quite honestly, too, softened and expanded in the warm rays of the southern sun. I am ashamed to confess it, but, on that subject, there is an enormous capability of expansion in American consciences; they are like that peculiarly useful article of which we make shoes and life-preservers—they stretch indefinitely when they come among cotton fields, and melt altogether in the ardent heat of sugar and rice plantations. But, then, we are a great people and extend our power—therefore, why not our consciences—over a vast reach of climate, latitude and production.

Mr. Jobson had hoped, on starting from the north, that his young friend, on witnessing the whole iniquity of slavery, face to face, would be strengthened up to the firm, uncompromising attitude of the British platform—perfect equality and entire amalgamation; and when he saw the hands steadily travelling backward on the dial, he could not conceal his astonishment and dismay. What if the Union does part in fragments in the strong convulsion, let the cure be instantly applied and slavery expelled from the system. Children in medicine talk



of patience and time curing the cancer and saving the frame entire, but he said cut off and cast out the cankered limb.

A lady, northern born, but transplanted to the south by a happy marriage, interposed the observation that in cutting off the Southern States from the family of the north, slavery would not be cured the sooner, and that in no case were the unaffected members of the Union in danger of taking the disease. "Cast them out all the same as leprous sinners, unless they will quit their sins and embrace their colored brethren as equals," insisted Mr. Jobson.

But, said Mr. Grey, half ashamed of his conversion, and ashamed still more to see the inconsistency of his old position, "Absolute equality, this marrying and giving in marriage, between opposite races, is what not one of the Northern States would desire or consent to, and still less would the Southern States tolerate it, for the number of blacks is so great that half a dozen States would soon be represented in Congress by colored delegations."

"Surely, your free States would not object to meeting and mingling on equal terms with the representatives of the race for whose elevation they had labored so earnestly?" asked Mr. Jobson, warmly. "I think they would," said Mr. Grey, coloring; "yes, undoubtedly they would. We demand political equality for the Africans among us, but object to intermarriage as deteriorating and inexpedient for the whites."

Mr. Jobson thrust his hands in his pockets, and choked off with difficulty a low whistle. "Well, upon my word, Mr. Grey," he broke out at last, "your distinctions are too nice for me. You are excessively anxious to give the colored race their rights, but equally resolute against the natural and inevitable consequences of their possession. Political equality and social amalgamation are twin sisters, and if you insist on one how can you reject the other?"

Mr. Grey murmured something about prejudices of color, inexpediency and late hours, and withdrew to his bedroom, apparently unwilling to continue the argument, and reluctant to avow the fact that he was already a convert to southern opinions.

I cautioned the stalwart *negrophilo*,—to borrow a word the Cubans have lately coined,—not to be rash in his arguments, for they might be misunderstood at the south, where it was a stringent necessity of self-preservation to suppress all discussions that could tend to unbridle the tiger that sleeps by their hearths. And so the “good night” passed around, and all went their ways to dream of other scenes and other subjects for the morrow.

#### THE ROAD.

WE paused but one day at Lavaca, and that was passed in-doors, for it was one of those days of unintermitted sunshine in which a Texas March is as rich as a New York June. The day fled agreeably, for the intelligence and polish of Mrs. S.'s family were equal in tone and interest to the requirements of good society anywhere. And here I may observe that persons from the olden States, and, still more, those from Europe, are astonished to find in a new country such a mass of mental force and acquirement as they encounter in Texas, without considering that the advantages of its fertile, well-placed domain, and the absolutely nominal price of land, are calculated to draw hither the choicest enterprise of the enterprising Union; not to mention that it was also, for a time, the most pleasant and convenient refuge in the world for such gentlemen as, by any chance, came to have a falling out with the laws at home. It is not now, neither has it ever been, the right home for the baser class of crimi-

nals. Thieves have to turn honest here, or leave the country. Nobody can thrive in any of the leading branches of their ancient and extensive profession, but a few border Mexicans in the horse and cattle line, with here and there a small lawyer who pilfers under license of statute, as in other countries.

After we left Lavaca, and had leisurely rolled some fifteen or twenty miles over the track to Victoria, we were joined at dinner by Mr. Grey and Mr. Jobson, who had fully kept pace with our four-horse stage in their light carriage. They were both enchanted with everything. The country, the climate, the people, all came in for such a plenteous bounty of praise that I fairly changed sides, and was forced to remind them of the inconveniences they might expect, instead of, as before, dwelling on the advantages that lay within their grasp. They looked around at the tidy comfort of the room we were in, turned over some books that filled three or four well-arranged shelves, glanced through the open windows at the boundless vista of green, rolling prairie gemmed at intervals with trees just bursting into foliage, and then sat down before the snow-white cloth to praise the golden butter, delicate batter cakes, and nicely dressed chickens, of our well-mannered hostess. The country between Matagorda Bay and Victoria is almost Belgic in its level and rich repose. Thence on to San Antonio it is park-like in its varied yet tranquil beauty. More green and fertile it cannot be, but more rolling and picturesque it is, though rarely rising to the dignity of precipitous hills. The road is wholly inartificial, and just winds where the chances of travel led the track over the immense expanse, like a huge dust-colored serpent taking his own time and comfort over the carpet of grass and flowers. In the rainy season, of course, this road through a rich alluvial region, becomes heavy in mud, and makes travelling very hard upon the poor horses; yet even in blithe

March, when the roads were as hard and smooth as a Macadam street, we only moved on at the rate of thirty or thirty-five miles in a day, and were five of them in getting to San Antonio.

The first two nights out our acquaintances slept in different hostelries from those we stopped at—for in Victoria and other towns there are more taverns than one—but on the third night we continued in company on from our dining-house.

#### A PIONEER MOTHER.

THAT was kept by an excellent dame, whose land extended like a small German principality, a mile or two in every direction from her log castle. She was united to her third or fourth husband, I forget which; but I recollect that the first was killed by the Indians while defending his homestead; the second fell in defence of Texas, at the Alamo, when Travis and his band resolved to hold it until no man was left to haul down the Lone Star, and deliver the fort to the Mexican besiegers. She observed quite philosophically, that it was well enough for single men, who had good horses and no families, to run away from the Indians, but when people had stock, and children, and house plunder, and a stout log cabin to cover them, the shortest way was for the mother to sit down by the fire and run bullets for her old man to give to the Indians. "There is a heap less trouble in it, and less scare too, than to be scattering off, and letting the hogs and cattle scatter off, every time the Indians come about." So said, and so acted the old lady, and, sure enough, there she is at last planted safely and comfortably in the midst of her flocks and herds like one of Homer's rural princes.

Mr. Jobson was much taken with this remnant of the early history of Texas, and somewhat in violation of his implied pledge of truce, he endeavored to requite her information by devoting to her use some of his lights on the subject of slavery, and the equalization of the black and white races. He eulogized the courage and industry which had made her the mistress of such a homestead, and then went on to draw a comparison between the servitude of wages and the servitude of inheritance. It was so profound, so logical, and so philanthropic, that Channing, had he heard it, would have hailed him as a disciple, and Frederick Douglas as a brother; but our stout-hearted, practical border-mother only opened her eyes wider and rounder, as she drifted farther and farther from his meaning. His long words were too heavy for her dictionary range, and generally overshot the mark, but all the same she liked the grand resounding tones, and listened with devout attention until a chance ball made a breach in the wall and let in some light, and then she flew to the defence.

Mr. Jobson had, at last, sailed back to the shoals under her eye, when he rounded off his essay by a sort of general axiom that, as suffering and ignorance were the only difficulties in the way of real equality, the whites had but to free their slaves and educate them, to make them in every way like brothers of the same family. This was throwing the shell into the very magazine of the prejudices of a woman "born in Tennessee, raised in Alabama, married in Mississippi, and settled in Texas."

"No, sir," she said, in the resolute tone of one who sees the thing through and through, and cannot be talked out of her mind. "No, sir, there is no sense in that, no sense at all. If a poor white woman like me sends her children to school, and has them learn the same books and ways as the

President's children, and if they are as bright and well behaved as the President's children, they are just as good, and all of the same color; for I reckon their father and I are as white as any body; but all the schooling in the world won't grammar that child's wool into straight hair," pointing to a shining black urchin who had come to the door to take a full and satisfactory survey of the strangers.

"But, my dear madam," said Mr. Jobson, not a little surprised at the sudden waking up of the storm, "consider that these differences are merely physical."

"Physic can't cure it," replied the unconvinced dame. "No medicine can doctor away that black skin or woolly head. No, sir, all the plasters and poultices in the world, nor all the colleges either, wouldn't make them thick lips, and that flat nose, into a likely white boy's face. Physicking indeed!"

"Not into a white boy's face, but the same teaching and encouragement might make him the equal of a white boy," insisted Mr. Jobson.

"At that rate it would be just as well for the white folks, if all colors were put into one dish and shook together in one mess, and I don't believe in that doctrine," replied his antagonist, in high disdain; and she set about clearing off the table, and with it the argument, with an air of abated respect for her guest's eloquence.

"Did you ever hear such narrow and bigoted ideas?" observed Mr. Jobson, as he parted with us to join Mr. Grey in their own vehicle. His only answer was a gentle admonition for provoking such discussions in a slave country, where the people were almost absurdly sensitive and irritable on those points.

We waited a few minutes longer to hear the opinions of the other party, and were pleased to find her equanimity

fully restored, and the more completely as she remarked, half in the way of question, that the gentleman was likely a minister, or something of that sort, whose head was turned by hard study.

“Only to think,” she said, laughing at the recollection, “that a little physicking will make a white gentleman of a nigger boy. Well, the Lord above knows what is best, and he has fixed it all his own way. He has made the blacks and the whites as he pleased, and gave them their places without asking a crazy doctor where he should put them.” With this reference of the whole matter to the will of Heaven, we exchanged farewells, and resumed our way. It was the last argument but one that Mr. Jobson ventured upon, and there he was overwhelmed and silenced by the audacious flight of his antagonist, who boldly averred that the negroes were fitted, and, as it were, ordained, in the creative scale of arrangement, to an inferior existence by their conformation, like camels, horses, and elephants. “I think self-interest and a broiling sun discomposes the brains of southern men,” said the astounded Englishman, and this conviction, far more than personal prudence, tended to wean him from these discussions.

#### SAN ANTONIO.

WE drew up, on the fifth day from the coast, in front of a spacious and handsome house at San Antonio. The grounds were ample, neatly laid out, and beautifully encompassed by a curve of the river, but it was a new place, and the trees and shrubbery were not large enough for shade. Two or three ladies, whose dress and manners did not belie their rank, and an officer or two in undress, were chatting in the

shade of the broad piazza. With a more flowing abundance of vines and flowers it might all have passed—house, grounds and company—for a suburban London villa, occupied by some retired officers, and I mourned that we had parted with Mr. Jobson a day back on the road, for it was a sight to charm his neat and cosey taste.

Here a stout mule carriage and our servants awaited us, and we but permitted ourselves a few days to see the old missions and the far-famed crystal springs—from which the San Antonio gushes at once a full grown river—before we entered upon our trip across the belt of uninhabited and Indian-haunted country that borders the Rio Bravo. Another lady—Mrs. C. the wife of the senior proprietor of Eagle Pass—was to be of the company. Our train consisted, therefore, of two strong, well appointed mule carriages, protected by our two gentlemen and three armed servants on horseback, one of whom led, with the saddle ready to be adjusted at a moment's warning, an easy-paced pony, to diversify my mode of travel when I tired of a covered carriage.

We are now leaving behind us the broad, fertile zone of southern Texas, in which negro servitude prevails, and glancing by the edge of that healthful, picturesque middle region that the Germans have come over from fatherland to make free soil, and dispart from Texas, somewhere about 1860. At last we enter upon the grassy solitudes that border the Rio Bravo. Here is met a system of servitude new and alien to the sentiment of the United States, but it may take root, acclimate itself, and flourish on our soil, as is said of certain noxious insects with which the old world has gifted our grain fields. So far we have made no gain out of enslaving the Indians. We have slaughtered the red race, driven them from their groves, buried their history and traditions in the graves of a hundred exterminated tribes, yet we have failed to turn their



blood and sweat into dollars. We have conquered their lands wherever we fancied them worth having, but have fallen far short of the Spaniards in success. In taking the soil they seized also the native lords of the soil, and turned them in with whip and chain to till it for the benefit of the conquerors. We Anglo-Americans have not managed so well; our Indian tribes will drink our fire-water and die, but they will not give their limbs to our service, nor bequeath to us their children for slaves—stubborn creatures that they are—so we have to be content with killing them off and taking all their lands. Like good Christians we resign ourselves to do without the bones and sinews of the red race—since they are not to be had—and take care of the rest.

Such thoughts forced me to look history in the eye, when Victor, our confidential servant, and a man of pure Indian descent, stood in silent, motionless respect to receive the order of preparation for the journey. He was slight, rather well-formed, easy and lithe in his movements, but with the serious, self-contained air that characterizes his race. His dark face was seamed with the small pox, but it spoke intelligence and courage, and his eye wore a winning expression of attachment and confidence when it turned on his master. In a few, but remarkably well-chosen words, Victor intimated that he understood his orders, and then disappeared with noiseless step. In the future my sole trust for servants, domestic attendance, and the most part of my human companionship, is in these tamed Indians. Well, I rather like the prospect.

The early evening was soft, fresh and star-lit, and I remained in my room alone for an hour, musing over a thousand confused fragments of the past and present, when my attention was attracted by two figures in deep chat, a short distance from the open window. One I fancied, and correctly,

to be Victor ; the other was a larger person, and as I could readily observe in the clear obscure, an Indian of fine and graceful proportions. Victor was waiting to speak to his master as he came out from supper, and as I soon gathered from their conversation, his companion had seen him as he entered the garden for that purpose, and made himself known as an old friend. At first I only noted the flowing elegance of their mutual compliments and the rigid politeness with which each entitled the other Señor, but the stranger's remarks soon absorbed my entire attention. It was a moving tale, and opened to me an unexpected view of border life. I give it now, though in fact it was only completed by after inquiry and information.

#### THE INDIAN SLAVE.

SEVERO VALDEZ and our Victor had been scholars together in a free school attached to some convent in their distant and fruitful Guadalaxara. They had both learned to read, and Victor even to write, when they were parted, Severo to follow his parents into servitude, for they had fallen in debt, and were sold by debtor's law as peons to the magnificent estate of Santa Merced (Holy Mercy), many leagues this side of his native city. Victor came eastward in the service of a Mexican officer, and after many wanderings, found himself at Matamoras some two years before the Mexican war. Here he met again his old class-mate, Severo. The hacienda of Holy Mercy was one of those vast peon-holding properties peculiar to Mexico, and even in that land it had a bad reputation for giving over-allowance of work and an under-allowance of food. The peck of corn allowed per week to the *peons*, or slaves, for debt, was of two or three years' old stock

and often alive with insects, as the fresh corn of the current year had to be stored. A thousand head of cattle ranged on the outskirts of the estate, and seven thousand sheep and goats divided with them the pastures, but the peons only tasted meat about twice a month, and then each pound served out was charged to them, to swell their debt of servitude. Severo endured his lot while his mother lived, but when she died he broke away. His situation of *vaquero*, or mounted herdsman, gave him a fine start in advance, and he was fifty miles on the road to freedom before his flight was announced to the overseer of the Holy Mercy. The poor old father was suspected of counselling his escape, and in his rage the mayor domo handled the old peon so cruelly that he laid down on his mat and never left it again. In a week from Severo's departure the other peons dug a hole, rolled up the corpse in his ragged mat for coffin and winding-sheet, and cast it in the earth without further ceremony, for such is the usual peon custom of burial. All this, when he came to hear it, did not increase Severo's desire to return to the sweets of Holy Mercy; and he worked, starved and travelled forward until he reached Saltillo. There he fell sick, and after enduring his situation with Indian fortitude for two weeks, the peon who lent him all he had to share—a corner of his hovel for shade and an ox hide for a bed—induced him to sell himself to a baker of the place for the necessary medicine and sustenance. He served his master, the baker, with fidelity and good will, for he was treated kindly, but the fear of being reclaimed by his first owner haunted him continually, and he was more than glad when it was proposed to transfer his services to a muleteer bound for Laredo. To Laredo he went, still in peon servitude however, for it is a sort of miracle for a bound debtor to regain his freedom, and there he ranged the banks of the Rio Bravo in his original capacity of va-

quero or herdsman. Here begins the entanglement of his story. An American merchant of Matamoras wished a reliable and competent man to go down to the coast with his mule train; and by a triple arrangement between Severo, his master and the merchant, the active and faithful young peon was to serve six months for his debt of \$30, and then become free when the American went to New Orleans in the spring. At Matamoras he chanced to encounter Victor, and renewed with him the friendship of younger days. Victor was about to go up the river to Laredo, and was charged by his friend with many messages to a peon family to which it turned out Severo was united by the strongest bonds. He loved deeply the young niece of a Laredo peon, Josefa, who was free and appeared likely to remain so, as she was active, industrious, and a good seamstress. To earn her hand in legitimate marriage was the great object of his life, and to become free himself was such a helpful and desirable step, that he consented joyfully to six months' servitude, including, also, a season of yellow fever, which he was expected to stay over and above his time, during the absence of his new master in the United States. Victor, while at Laredo, discharged punctually his duty to his friend, and even wrote letters for Josefa, informing Severo from time to time of her steady remembrance. Meantime Severo completed his probation, and returned in less than a year, well dressed for his condition, and much improved by his residence among Americans. He hastened to claim his bride. Unhappily she had fallen into peonage by some misfortune, but Severo did not hesitate to become surety for her debt of \$15, and make her his wife. This exposed him to be peonized himself any day, but his work was mainly devoted to the service of the creditor, who kept his own open account with them, advancing, while they were at work for him, the beans and corn for the daily bread of the couple.

They settled from the first on the east side of the river, and when, at the close of the war, all the hither bank was recognized as United States territory, they became, by the express terms of the treaty, American citizens. This, which should have been a sure guarantee of liberty and protection, cast the unhappy family into the most incurable misery. I would state the case distinctly, for it presents what most Americans will find it hard to believe, that our country permits on her border an atrocious and peculiar system of

#### KIDNAPPING.

WHEN hostilities first kindled with Mexico, Severo entered into the employ of a muleteer, who continued near and with the army during that memorable first campaign in which such splendid victories were won to no particular end, and such massive movements were so bravely pressed for no particular object. This service kept Severo far from home most of the war season, but more than once the fond husband mounted his horse and rode all night through a dangerous region to pass one day with Josefa and his child; and then he would repeat the same rough ride the next night, and report himself at sunrise ready for his usual duties. About the conclusion of the war, the knowledge of their citizenship, and the enhanced security and prosperity they hoped to attain under the American laws, began to make a deep impression upon the Indian families on our side of the Rio Bravo, and on none more than the freedom-loving Severo. To educate his first-born, his boy Marcos, to the stature of a free-born American was a dream of delight to his soul. When peace was proclaimed he made an eager, hurried visit to his home at Laredo, and then hastened to the healthy and romantic town of Corpus Christi,

to solicit permanent employment from the celebrated Col. Kinney, the proprietor of a domain exactly three times as large, and ten times as fair, as the principality of Queen Victoria's father-in-law. The sorrow-stricken Indian returned to find his home desolate. Although American citizens by law, by service, and by loyalty, the Mexican hawks had not feared to swoop down upon our soil, and clutch away his helpless ones in his absence. The thrice-paid creditor of Josefa had conveyed her by threats and force to the Mexican side of the river, where there was little trouble in having her assigned to him as a debtor-slave. Her young American-born son was consigned to the same fate to meet the cost of bringing him up, and thus with every form of Mexican law they were sent, mother and child, to wear out their lives in the harshest slavery known on this continent.

Severo appealed to an officer of the United States army for redress—it was not in his line of duty. He applied to the civil judge—he could not pursue the offence into a foreign country; this provision, so necessary to border tranquillity, having been overlooked in the haste of making the peace treaty. In his despair of other help, and perhaps with a lingering faith in the sanctity of his American citizenship, Severo set forth to have an interview with Josefa and her master, and if he could make no other offer for her freedom, he resolved to give his own body to redeem his wife and child. He had a few dollars in money and a good horse; perhaps he thought he could prevail on Don Matias to accept them—as they were of more value than the original debt—together with a year or two of their united service, and then dismiss them all in freedom. It was an illusive hope. Instead of listening to his proffers of triple payment, Don Matias coolly claimed the horse as the stray of some friend or other, and seized Severo as his own lawful peon. Severo

heard the sentence of the alcalde in the stern, unmoved silence of his much enduring race, and whatever he nourished in his heart, no severity of labor or suffering wrested a complaint from his lips. He toiled and watched more than a year before an opening for escape offered for Josefa, and without her he would not leave. At last, when Don Matias returned near the bank of the Rio Bravo, and placed them all on a rancho, or cattle farm, not far from Mier, the time of deliverance seemed at hand. Patience and courage brought a favorable moment for the attempt, and it was made. The river was gained, was crossed; the whole family stood free citizens on the soil of the Union; some miles were travelled in the direction of the town of Brownsville—for Severo had learned to fear the absence of protection at Laredo—and the happy family laid down to rest in the serene freshness of the open sky. They folded themselves in their recovered liberty as in a garment of joy, and slept without fear. Alas, for the weakness or obscurity of our laws! their pursuers had followed keenly on their track, and before the dawn they were overtaken, bound, and re-conveyed to the Mexican bank and a more embittered slavery.

Four months of suffering, distinguished only by the death of their boy, again terminated in the escape of Severo by a desperate flight, in which Josefa could not share. This time he did not pause until he reached the interior town of San Antonio, whence he proposes to dispatch the money for the purchase of his wife, if, indeed, her broken health holds out until he can earn the amount.

## MISSION OF SAN JOSE.

My heart was still echoing to the sad notes of peon bondage, and heavy with the prophecy of wrong, exile and extermination to the Red Race, when I stepped into the carriage to visit the ruins of San José. A ride of five miles over the pastoral plains that environ San Antonio brought us before what was once the beloved school and abundant home of hundreds of reclaimed Indians. Silence now reigns in the desolated mission. We drew up before the broken arcades of the cloisters, and glanced hastily at the plan. The ground floor had been divided and occupied, as is generally seen in religious houses, by a refectory, or dining hall, and the other larger rooms of the community. The second story was devoted to the cells or sleeping apartments of the fathers. They were plain, substantial, and reasonably commodious, all opening in a line on the gallery over the ground arcades. We then went round to the church front, to observe if it could be true, as we had heard, that parties of volunteers for the Mexican war had in mere turbulence of spirit defaced the old sculptures that dated back almost to the first Christian settlements. On one side of the old carved doorway stands the statue of Joseph, "the just man," the husband of Mary. He is the San José to whom the church is dedicated. On the other side in a corresponding niche is Mary and her child Jesus. All these figures have been shot at, disfigured and mutilated by parties of Americans, who thus evinced their dislike to bigotry by a bigotry still more intense. They proved the soundness of their Christian and republican instruction, by a dishonest waste of others' property and a spiteful intolerance of others' creeds.



The country around lay in green and tranquil repose, scarcely changed in aspect since, two centuries ago, the first fathers of the mission astonished the cannibal idolaters of this region with the tidings of the Christ who died on the cross for the salvation of man. They saw the image of the Redeemer crowned with thorns, and were made to understand how the cross is the symbol of atonement. From his manger-cradle through all his miracles and trials, to his radiant ascension, the divine life and mission of the crucified Saviour was laid before them, in pictures so clear and vivid that, to the untutored children of the forest, these paintings were but little less miraculous than the acts they represented. These lessons were repeated in processions, and enforced continually on heart and soul by the solemn ritual of the church. In this is one of the secrets of their wonderful missionary success. They clothed their teachings in forms of life, and voiced them in melody. Then the community system surrounded their lives on earth with peace and abundance, while it gave them tranquil preparation for the life to come. If this government would shelter and ration the tribes that it is slaughtering in cold blood by paying them annuities in rum; if it would gather their children in Manual Labor Schools instead of leaving them to demoralize and waste away in idle, untaught vagabondism, it would cost the treasury no more, and would certainly accord better with the missionary spirit of our people. We who send two or three hundred thousand dollars a year to enlighten the heathen of Asia should not refuse a tithe of this aid to our heathen at home. The less so, it is to be hoped, as we have deprived them of all things else, and so hemmed them up in little barren corners of what was once their heritage, that they must accept civilization or death—they have no other choice at our hands.

## COMMUNITIES.

THIS way is open to us, and there is no other in which we can redeem the two unhappy races who are in contact with white domination on this continent. Assign them homes and give them industrial teachers—I am speaking now of the Red Race, for to the African, colonization abroad is the only resource, but on the same principle, of community and patriarchal guidance—assign sufficient and permanent domains to the tribes still in existence, use the money which the Federal Government is expending upon them for their hurt, in establishing comfortable quarters for those too old to learn, where they should receive soldiers' rations, and cloth and blankets to their taste, up to the value of a soldier's clothing, all this to be issued to them at their homes and no where else, and in no other form than that of subsistence and raiment. Let their own chiefs report whether these duties be fully observed, and not made the speculation of Indian agents.

The youth of the tribe to be collected and taught letters, morals and industry, at permanent and systematic schools. As they advance in years they can till the land and man the workshops for the community, on such terms of reward as shall be just and beneficial to the general weal, but always under the joint supervision of government and their own chiefs, until civilization and the capacity of self-government shall have taken firm root. These tribes would be nurseries for such a powerful, efficient and economical border cavalry as is the especial want of this republic.

How grievous it is to hear a senator reply to this petition for an effective guardianship of the Red Race, that "it would be so troublesome." We can plunder, but we cannot protect,

and at the same cost we find it more acceptable to exterminate than to make reparation.

It cannot be said that it is uncongenial to the wild nature of the Indians to live, labor, and be instructed in a settled community. So far from this being true, there was near half a million of these wandering tribes collected in the course of a century in the various Missions which dotted, like islands blooming in the desert, the whole expanse of wilderness from one end to the other of our double continent. A line of these Missions stretched from California to the Mississippi a hundred and fifty years back, and diverging in the great valley in two lines of light, one crossed the peninsula of Florida to meet the Atlantic, and the other boldly pressed up the Ohio until its rays illumined the dark forests of the northern lakes. In South America a beautiful and flourishing state arose in the wilderness under the hands of the Jesuits, so beautiful and flourishing indeed that the kings of Europe grew hungry for its spoils. They drove away the missionary fathers, and blackened their fame with a thousand falsehoods in order to seize the more freely their helpless prey. Like this was the fate of San José, and other missionary stations in Mexico. Their greedy rulers saw these estates were well-cultivated and profitable domains, the Indian proselytes most convenient slaves, and as such they were too tempting to escape the merciless grasp of a soldier despotism. In that one sentence is told the fate of the chain of desolate habitations that extend from New Mexico to California, and of a hundred thousand peons, whose fathers thus fell into bondage and transmitted to them an inheritance of misery.

Doubtless these old fathers were in the wrong, since popular opinion says so, and popular opinion ought to be revered as infallible, albeit it called vehemently for the crucifixion of the Prince of Peace, and took Barabbas the

thief to its arms. Doubtless they were criminal in not teaching the poor Indians a better Christianity than they knew themselves. Doubtless the uninstructed children of the wilderness deserved slavery and death for making processions in honor of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and asking her intercession, when they should have been inspired to address their prayers directly to himself; but it was still something better than their old sacrifices of prisoners of war. Doubtless they sinned deeply in cherishing the relics of Christian martyrs, almost as devoutly as we would a button of Gen. Taylor's battle-garments at Palo Alto, or a cast shoe-string of Bonaparte or Victoria, but even this was better than the usages of their ancient faith—to tear open the breasts of living men and cast the quivering heart, yet warm in blood, in offering to their grim, monster idols.

#### OUR TRIP.

ON St. Patrick's day our company mustered for the trip across the broad prairies and untrodden hills that unroll between San Antonio and the Bravo. Our two carriages, three mounted servants, led mules, and escort of friends made a gay and joyous cavalcade. The sides of our carriages bristled with fire-arms, like a brace of small travelling arsenals. Our two gentlemen never laid aside their trusty six-shooters, for even in sleep they were under the head within prompt touch. At night, the baggage was taken out and embanked under the carriages, and our beds made upon their comfortable floors, for they were on the ambulance pattern of vehicles, strong, spacious, and fit for all weathers. Victor, who had decided to enter my service for the future—of his own free judgment and without my asking,—had charge of an active, docile black pony, that bore my saddle

in case I desired to exchange my seat in the covered carriage for an occasional canter over the tempting flower-embroidered plains. In his anxiety to be generally useful he had piled on my saddle a small tower of kitchen-commodities for the road ; but at the first halt we amended that, and Victor and Chino held their after-way a very respectable and satisfied-looking palfrey and squire of dames.

At the little streamlet Rosita we stopped to lunch on Mrs. C.'s delicate biscuit and cold chicken. There we bade farewell to our escort of friends, who turned their horses' heads towards San Antonio, while we launched forth on the interminable prairie. To me it was a holiday of delight. The country is one wide-rolling, ever-varying ocean of verdure, flashing back in golden smiles the radiant glance of the sun, while the fresh breeze tossed and waved the changeful tresses of bright flowers in frolic gaiety. Through the day we seemed to have all this world of beauty to ourselves as our train wound—the only sign of human existence—over its broad, silent expanse, but nightfall brought hints of darker omen.

#### INDIAN SIGNS

THE sun was low, and our eyes were wandering admiringly over a small tarn encircled in copse-wood, and gleaming serene and clear as a beryl in its emerald setting, when suddenly parting through the thicket we came upon some broken and abandoned carts. The experienced eyes of our gentlemen instantly detected marks of Indian handiwork. We know now that an unhappy family met there a bloody end, all but a young daughter or two who were led to a more horrible fate. Some years hence, when it would be more wise and merciful to leave them with their Indian

lords, our government will make atonement for its present negligence by bringing back these girls—with many a ringing flourish of dollars and trumpets—to kindred who will be ashamed to receive them, and who will condemn them to a life of neglect and abasement.

Scores of captive women and children are now sinking to this miserable lot because Congress would spend the time in *talking* economy, and wasting money on useless, and worse than useless, missions of compliment to foreign royalties, when it should have occupied itself in providing for the survey of national communications, and the defence of this Indian-infested border. I say the *survey* of national highways, for there is no need of opening the sluices and flooding the country with corrupt contracts to construct them; only tell the people where run the best routes from sea to sea, and assure them that the government will protect these national channels of communication, and trade and travel will find the way to work it straight and smooth as soon as it will pay dividends.

Our course lay nearly in a line with one of the great natural routes to the Pacific, as well as the present barrier of separation and defence between the inhabited and Indian-ranged districts of Texas. This line, drawn from the head of navigation on the Bravo nearly in direct course to the Red River near its outlet into the Mississippi, would intersect the three great rivers of Texas—the Colorado, Brazos and Trinity—at their respective heads of navigation and through their ducts, each tapping the Gulf of Mexico, would bring into action an extent of fertile domain equal in productive powers to all France. It would touch the Mississippi where it would meet the long, grasping, railroad fingers which the Atlantic shoots forth to bring closer in family union the sisters of the west. Here is the great track to the Pacific which

the government, with the grave and solemn blindness of an owl, is looking for everywhere else. The eagle symbolizes well the daring flight of our restless and resistless people, but the owl is the bird of their rulers. It is slow, portly and voracious, with a keen scent and a mighty clutch for the spoils, but not at all gifted with eye and pinion to mark the way and clear the path from sea to sea. No, my poor owl, you will flutter your stupid wings among the treasury-vouchers at Washington, and leave the great national lines of union and defence for the eagle-enterprise of the people to discover, and clear from hovering Indians.

We were taking our last breakfast of the trip at the Chacon, in a fresh, keen norther, when we heard again of the Indians. Our people found two soldiers who had been killed by them. The bodies were committed to the earth, and in an hour the incident was forgotten. Life sits lightly on a borderer. Neither his own nor his friend's is spared any risk, and as for the Indians, in his eyes they were only made to be killed. The slaughter therefore of a soldier or two was hardly of sufficient interest to supply an hour's chat, and they were never recurred to after their graves were left behind.

In the afternoon of that day we wound through some romantic hill-slopes, and entered what appeared like an endless succession of orchards. The river flashed out and disappeared at intervals like a chain of lakes on our left, and on the right a range of precipitous hills came down to the road, as if to question the right-of-way. On reaching the shoulder of the hill the foremost carriage wheeled into a green nook embosomed in this rocky wall, and some one called out,

“This is Eagle Pass.”

I glanced round, and saw a vast tree-sprinkled plain, between the hills and the gleaming river, and at its farthest

edge a cloud of sheep, like the snow-capped waves of the sea breaking on the green shore, came surging towards us with extended front. With slower step a herd of handsome cows were pacing towards the milking-pen. A white tent, recessed in the lap of the hill, and the words of welcome issuing from its parted drapery recalled my attention, and I truly answered to eager questions, "I like this sunny wild, and am content to build me a home in Eagle Pass."

#### MY NEW COUNTRY.

VICTOR had spurred on before us to announce our coming, and the board was spread with hospitable cheer when we arrived; but the fragrant coffee, delicate kid, and fresh honey, with other less considered dainties, had to wait until we had taken a long draught of the pure air, and feasted on the prospect from the summit of the hill. Somehow Eagle Pass is less beautiful to my eye now, though it has all the airs and graces of a two year old village, than it was in its wildness, with its one white tent nestling, like a dove at rest, in the cool and quiet hill-nook. A lady, its mistress, was hoped for rather than actually expected; but an inner apartment had been hastily prepared for her reception. It was lined with printed muslin, of a pale, clear blue running pattern, and its pointed ceiling was freshly wreathed with verdant branches. Some stools and travelling boxes, cushioned and covered to match, served as ottomans, and gave an air of repose, and even elegance, to this temporary abode. The light stole in, tinted and softened, through the floating curtains, and harmonized well with the tranquil hush of the place. Mr. C. had been thought rash in thus planting his home—for this house of canvas was soon to be replaced by



one of stone—so far from any other residence, and the more so, as he had in the frail tenement, goods to an amount calculated to tempt Mexican robbers, if not a regular Indian foray; but he was not to be turned from his way. Fort Duncan was two miles farther up the river, but it was a mere infantry encampment, and so stinted by government in men and officers, that they were hardly strong enough to take care of themselves, and was then, as it is now, at the mercy of the Camanches any bright day it might please those respectable red gentlemen to muster for the extermination of that important sentinel post. The reputation of the United States—not the reality of its care—has been the protection of this commercial depot. We have lived and prospered under the shadow of what Fort Duncan ought to be, and so peace and good-will to political shadows evermore.

Victor, who watches every movement, and seems most anxious to understand and serve aright his new mistress, ventured a timid and respectful query as to my contentment with the place. I answered that it was better than I had hoped, for the current voice was against it as the driest and least beautiful section in Texas; yet it was evidently capable of becoming as lovely as it was undeniably healthy. Thereupon Victor, who is a very Cicero in his round and swelling periods, began to contrast this wilderness with his own gorgeous and fruit-crowned Guadalaxara, and the magnificent scenery of Tehuantepec, where fruits and flowers chase each other in endless succession through the round year. It is true Heaven has given Mexico everything but stable laws; but that one default cankers and poisons all the rest. We have on this side of the river the anchor of firm freedom, and by that we can outride the roughest weather. It is true that even here the breadth of the Bravo river—about as wide as the Hudson at Troy—separates the Americans from a much

finer country than they possess on this side ; yet while that paradise of natural beauty remains unpopulated, insecure, and waste, a fair and prosperous settlement will rise in wealth, strength, and security—is rapidly rising, in fact—under the wings of our Eagle. A year has made this hope a realized and permanent existence ; but for a time my home was established nearer to, and a little above, the fort, as the destined town of Eagle Pass had not then planted a stake, or laid a stone towards human accommodation. The spacious double tent, pitched by Mr. C., and his temporary corrals for his stock, were all that existed of the prospective town in the spring of 1850. Above the camp, and opposite the military colony of Piedras Negras, on the Mexican shore, a neat cottage had been called into existence for my use, until we could build below. It lacked some finishing touches when I arrived, and a tent near it was my home for a week or two. Under its folds I passed in sound repose the first night of my pleasant sojourn on the border—a calm, contented, indolent period, which I shall always remember as a sweet, half-waking dream of fairy-land.

Yet my first mornings were as full of keen inquiry as if I was in search of diamond fields or gold mines. Wherever I am, I like to know the features, character, and capabilities of the region ; what it has done, and what it can do, though I am too idle and indifferent to turn anything to my own profitable account.

#### CAPABILITIES.

UNLESS a fair division of my private means may enable me (as I sometimes fondly dream) to establish a missionary manual labor school to be in part supported by it, I shall

never be personally interested in sugar culture, yet I was not the less curious to verify the capabilities of our vicinity for the growth of the cane. In the watered glens, and on the vast plains susceptible of cheap irrigation—an admirable aid to agriculture, yet almost unpractised in the United States—the sugar cane succeeds perfectly. But these sugar lands are almost entirely on the Mexican side of the river; though, on this side, we can have profitable crops of melon sugar—at least, I have a hopeful faith in this new feature of American production. The soil and climate is adapted to the vine family. The Texan flora shows a great variety of climbing plants, and the success of the grape has been conspicuous wherever attempted. Above us, at El Paso, and below us again, in the Parras district, the juice of the grapes of the country is absolutely unequalled by any known in the world, although as yet wine and raisins are not made at either in a regular and proper method. Our situation ensures that at no distant day these uninhabited wastes will echo the merry vintage songs of the distant Rhine. There is no harvest more productive than the purple grape in any favorable climate, and this is eminently propitious to wine culture. To the grape and melon sugar, we may add the castor bean as another production suited to this region in a peculiar degree; only that whoever enters into it must bring out the needful apparatus, for machinery and machinists are crying wants throughout the upper valley of the Bravo. In all the finest wheat regions, there is not a single mill that turns out bolted flour. The bran and the white heart of the grain is all given back together to the customer, duly and inseparably mixed in a way that would be balm to the heart of the health-apostle Graham.

The mining region enfolds us on almost every side. The Indians are slowly retiring from the silver and copper region

that comes down from the Gila, and hems between its lofty mountain walls hundreds of miles of the Bravo, even to the Painted Rocks (Piedras Pintas), scarcely a day's ride from Eagle Pass. Just beyond these the Indian traditions tell of valleys seamed with rich veins of gold, and of the outlines of ruined cities once occupied by an unknown and vanished race. Indeed, all geological analogies indicate the presence of rich ores near us. Coal we know exists at our door. A fine bed crops out on the bank of the river opposite the upper line of Eagle Pass; and the settlement near Fort Duncan takes its name, Piedras Negras (Black Stones), from the masses of the coal detached and cast along the margin of the river in high freshets. These "black diamonds" may be worth more to us here, at the probable head of navigation, for the steamers which must wend down a thousand miles of crooked channel, than the silver, lead, zinc, tin, fire-proof mica, or even the gold mines, which are now springing to light. Without any of them, we would still have a pure atmosphere, corn and milk, wine and fruits, wool and honey, and with these one should not fail of content and independence, if the elements of either are in his heart.

#### MY NEW FAMILY.

I FOUND a numerous and well-disposed family had been assembled with affectionate care to welcome me to Eagle Pass, and make me feel that I could still enjoy most of my old habitudes in this remote border. I lost no time in establishing myself on cordial terms with them all, and most particularly with my handmaiden Francesca and her husband, Fabiano, who is an excellent factotum general. It is the best answer that can be made to the maligners of poor, weak,

abused human nature, to take an average character—one that evil circumstances has not utterly perverted, and is, moreover, endowed with average sense and kindliness—and try fairly the effects of equitable treatment. By equitable treatment I neither mean capricious petting, nor what some very excellent people call a “regular system of dealing with them,” if this regularity is to be as cold and hard as a block of granite. The golden rule of our divine example is good enough for me—if I could but live up to it—and that is my plain and simple law, although nearly everybody has a better law for servants, and laughs at my oddity in thinking He of Nazareth laid it down in earnest as a rule for genteel people to walk by in real life.

The morning after my arrival at Piedras Negras the drapery of my tent was lifted, and almost without my knowing how, a Mexican woman stood before me in respectful silence. Her large, patient black eye was bent on me as if in mute request to be noticed, but her whole attitude was as fixed and motionless as a statue, and looked as if it might remain so for all time if it did not please me to speak and set the machine in motion. I scanned her face steadily for a moment, and then gave it a degree of confidence which has been abundantly justified by her after conduct. It wore the sad, submissive, much-enduring expression of her race, yet withal there was something so trusting in those melan holy eyes that they won trust in return; and a grain or two of mutual confidence is a pleasant capital to begin with in a new family.

“Your name?” I inquired, for I knew not even that much about my new domestics. “Francesca, with your permission, and always at your service, my lady.” In common with the Arabs, their cousins, and the wild Indians, their brothers, the Mexicans, even of the lowest rank, are wonderfully rich in courtly and poetical phrases.

“Well, Francesca, can you take charge of the chamber-work for me?” Francesca made a timid, glancing survey of the tent. The plain outsides of several trunks and the pile of blankets that composed our travelling bed did not look very formidable or complicated, yet, in a slightly hesitating tone, like one slow to assume a weighty responsibility, she replied :

“If it is your command, señora.” The poor girl *had* once in her life slept on a mattress and seen somewhat of household gear, as I learned in time to my great comfort, but I was prepared to find her ignorant of the uses of any bed or bed furniture beyond a blanket, for that is the case with nine-tenths of the poorer Mexicans.

“Can you sew?” “Si, señora.”

This was asserted with cheerful promptitude, as if she now touched known and firm ground. But, poor Francesca, your first needle-work *was* indeed extraordinary. Encouraged by this, I ventured on another of my habitual requirements, and here I must remark that the most thoroughly valuable personal attendant I ever had, or, indeed, ever knew in any lady’s service, was a Spanish-American girl.

“Can you dress hair?”

This was an overwhelming question. Francesca put her hand to her own head, and then looked at mine, with a comical, half-frightened bewilderment, as if to inquire which head she was expected to cultivate. At last she stammered out that universal phrase of refuge with the Mexicans, “Quien sabe?” Who knows? I saw that was a hopeless quest, and passed abruptly to the consideration of the well-being of another portion of my family.

“Are you accustomed to the care of fowls and pigeons?”

If Francesca was alarmed at the idea of assisting at my toilette, she was yet more puzzled to understand my interest

in the feathered tribe, and there peeped out of her widening eyes a sort of vague fear that my inquiries about her capacity for needle-work and taking care of the feathered tribe had some connection with each other, and possibly had reference to a charitable design on my part of making clothes for them. If, in fact, such a fancy had entered my head, it would never come into hers to manifest any other feeling than a patient desire to obey my wishes ; so, of course, I only received the invariably peon response to all questions and commands, possible and impossible of fulfilment.

“ If you command it, señora.”

To relieve her perplexity I stayed, for the time, all farther questions on her capacity for general usefulness, and directed her to put the tent in better order, by way of practical trial. She went out and gathered a handful of shrubs, tied them into a broom, and swept the floor, while I wandered out to look at the river, whose high, gravelly, treeless banks and scant fringe of herbage—for this is its character just there—was new to me and close at hand. It did not detain me long—this half barren, yet not unpicturesque, scenery—and when I returned I found my raw recruit waiting for my approval with a quiet air of “ I have done well” consciousness that was really comfortable to look upon.

#### A BORDER CHAMBERMAID.

A ROUGH box, in which effects had been transported, had served, with a white cloth thrown over it, for an impromptu dressing-table. This cloth Francesca has carefully removed and piled up on the box, with all the carpet-bags and blankets that had to do duty for us in the place of chairs. Among these she had snugly folded in the wash-hand basin, out of

harm's way, and laid in it as daintily as a cradled babe, my bonnet, only that its fair proportions were somewhat marred by laying on it again a heavy, bright-colored horse blanket, which, like the genuine Indian she is, the woman thought the choicest article in that crowd, and treated accordingly to the most honored place. My dressing-case chanced to be standing open on the ground, and open on the ground she was most particular to leave it, only in addition to its usual trimmings she had contrived to put in my watch, my husband's spurs and bullet-pouch, and as much other small gear as she found in circulation in those quarters. We made some slight changes in our household arrangements, and parted for the day, pretty well satisfied with each other; and now, after some months of mutual instruction, we come on together admirably.

This is a specimen, and those who have not succeeded so well will tell you a favorable specimen, of the Mexican border servants. But I still insist that this obedient, passive race have in them the elements of good service for whoever will have the forbearance to be good masters. They are wayward as children, and have much of the singular unteachableness of the unconquered tribes of their race, but they are willing to learn where they like the teacher, and they *can* learn if properly taught.

In the afternoon I walked down to the little ravine in which Fabiano and his wife had their tent, and found it, like most of the Mexican homes, as bare of every comfort as an Indian hut. They are much the same thing, in fact. Some rude cover of reeds and grass, or hides and branches, to fend off the extremities of the climate; a hide and a blanket for bed, table, chair, and all other household furniture; a coarse bag, made of woven grass or the all-useful *pita* of the country, and sometimes a box as well as a bag, to hold their brief



inventory of clothes and valuables; a gourd or two, and a kettle to cook in, out of which they also eat; this is what you will find in a Camanche camp, and you will rarely find more than this in the possession of a peon family.

Francesca was sitting just within the entrance of the tent—calmly and meditatively smoking in the midst of a very sociable and contented family—when we caught the first glimpse of it, and we paused to take, unobserved, a more deliberate survey. A large, fawn-colored turkey was strutting in and out in search of his mate, or something to eat, and saying a great deal I could not understand, as I am not learned in turkish, to a demure duck that was couched down close at her side, and apparently as much occupied with his own reflections as Francesca. This duck is a forlorn bachelor, and has attached himself most Platonically to his human mistress, whom he follows about like a pet dog, and never goes to sleep until she retires, when he squats down at her feet, to be ready to attend her the moment she wakes. He gave himself no more trouble about the discontent of Sir Turkey than Brother Jonathan does for the authority of the Mosquito king, or the irregular murder of our people in Cuba. A beautiful spotted hen was gathering up her chicks on the other side of the tent, in which they were all as much at home as Francesca herself, while a pair of white pigeons were running to and fro, building a nest in some invisible corner, and, like all the rest of my feathered friends, evidently on terms of the closest intimacy with my docile, if not accomplished, chambermaid. This scene settled her position securely as a member of my establishment, for these were my pets, and valued above all my Eagle Pass possessions. The pigs were useful in their way, but they were pert and forever putting themselves disagreeably forward, as the vulgar will do everywhere, and besides that, pigs can take care of themselves all the

year, and ask no favors; the cows, though respectable and inoffensive—as such well-to-do personages ought to be—were dull; but the graceful, bustling, capricious plumed aristocracy of idlers are always charming. They have as much variety of character, and are as full of small broils and petty emulations, as the majority of human-kind. Their tricks and rivalries, their friendships and their quarrels, are, if you watch them as closely, fully as sensible and quite as entertaining as those of common neighborhood gossip. They are of the same real value at last, and as theiriffs and scandals are not near so mischievous to each other, or so tiresome to me, as those of the unplumed human bipeds, I would always rather give my attention to their ways than hear Mrs. Snooks' criticism on Mrs. Smith's last lace, last party, or last flirtation.

A pair of fawns shared my attentions with a pair of enormous white geese, who are a perfect pattern of conjugality, by the way, and absolutely worth setting up as an example of loving kindness to all others in the yoke of matrimony. An array of parti-colored goats and swarms of gentle lambs and kids came to replace the loss when my last fawn died—as too many children do—of over-feeding; but I have turned them all in charge of our shepherd, as I look forward to the luxury of fruits and flowers in this favorable clime, and they are things not likely to flourish in the range of the four-footed class of favorites. For this reason I limit my special household intimacy to my feathered pets, but they are quite sufficient to make me forget that we have here a small population and limited social circle.

## OUR PEON SERVANTS.

I HAD wished to examine impartially the workings of the peon system of servitude here on its rugged border edge, where we can track it freely in its incomings and outgoings; and truly fate has gone beyond my wishes, for I find that nearly all our servants are runaways from debt-slavery. Victor, our spoiled man of all work, is a freeman born, and, moreover, a full-fledged citizen of the United States; but that does not prevent a Mexican, who has a claim against him, from coming about the place and threatening him with servitude. The old, petulant, gray-beard of a creditor talks as fluently of selling a citizen of the United States and a voter of our new-born county of Kinney as if a citizen and a voter of this glorious Union were of less account than his ragged skeleton of a pony. In fact, it is for a part of the purchase money of another such a ten dollar affair as he rides, that the gray-beard intends to sell Victor into peon slavery. There are plenty of men, whom it would be a scandal to well-behaved ponies to compare in value to a horse, but our Victor has such a mint of useless accomplishments, and some useful ones, withal—if they were ever at hand when wanted—it would be a shame to rate him at the fourth part of this starved and ill-gaited thing. If that is the way voting citizens stand in this market, it is not worth while for Women's Rights Conventions any farther to reduce their market rates by bringing in the softer sex. If they can induce the American cabinet to define positions with Mexico, and secure American womankind from being sold for debt into life-long servitude, it would be a surer and clearer gain. If they fancy this is a visionary dread they are mistaken. American citizens *can* be, American citizens *have been* enslaved for debt

in Mexico. So have French and English subjects been enslaved. One of the born subjects of Victoria, who was the bound peon of Señor Rafael Aldapa, of Santa Rosa, our neighbor—the Santa Rosa of the silver mines—ran away from his master this season, because the luxurious fellow thought a peck and a half of corn a week, without meat or salt, poor living. Some people are never pleased, and he was one of them; he objected to the allowance of pure and healthy diet provided by law, and he objected also to the bracing exercise of the whipping-post, and left them both behind him. Equally unreasonable, Victor is not at all in a hurry to succeed him in these luxuries; and if he is prudent, he will not trust to his citizenship or his government, but make haste to settle his accounts with his importunate creditor, and keep the while near home. One of our shepherds is here by license of his master, and is laying aside half of his wages, month by month, to pay up the debt. He has left in pledge the most sacred security an Indian can give—the persons of his aged father and mother. Filial love is a deep-enduring trait in the Mexican character, and a beautiful, redeeming light, it throws on some of its darker shades. I have seen a strong man in the prime of life stand, in mute submission under a perfect hail-storm of invectives, aye, and hard blows as well, from his angry mother, without even offering to move out of her reach, and only attempting to avert the storm of her wrath by tender and respectful signs of deprecation and obedience. A rude and unkind child is a sort of monster in Mexican eyes, and with all the faults inevitable to an oppressed and untaught people, they are faithful through life to their parents. On this Domingo's master built his trust, and as he had no use for his services, and the peon market was dull, he took the old people in pledge, and suffered his serf to come over among the Americans and earn

wherewith to buy his liberty. Faithfully is one half of his wages remitted to the master, and something taken from the remaining half to send in loving tokens to his parents; and then he is so grateful and happy when some little gift is added to his own well-earned offerings, that it is a delight to contribute a trifle.

## FABIANO.

OF all our people I am most puzzled to understand our quiet, attentive, sensible Fabian, who comprehends at a glance all that concerns his duty, and meets every requirement with such intelligent promptitude, yet flutters like a wounded bird if you question him touching his former life. He is small, yet well knit, and as quick, active and observant as a cat. When in attendance, his eye is alert to catch the slightest movement, and you hardly look at what you want before it is already at hand. He is a devoted husband withal, and as anxious to help his wife, and as eager to cover the defects in her service by his own extra toil, as if his cherished one was an angel of beauty. Poor Francesca is no such thing. She is a clumsy, heavy, full-blooded Indian woman, and much older, as well as much larger, than Fabian, so that in everything she has the weight on her side. Yet she is not wanting in wit, and is, with all her slow ways, the terror of the whole establishment for her keen, unsparing sarcasms. Our herdsman Francisco, who is also a character in his way, is the only one of the dozen or twenty men about us who does not stand in awe of her tongue, and what a rushing, rolling cataract of resounding words they do pour forth when they enter into one of their discussions over the long-drawn-out Sunday breakfasts. The echo floats up to my chamber with the murmur of the river rapids, and for an hour or two

they will flow on unceasingly and undistinguishably together. Fabiano listens in tranquil silence, perfectly convinced that his better half will triumph in the end over even the voluble herdsman. Still, by no chance does she let fall any clue to the latter years—the years of her married life. Fabian was from Monterey, but that was a long time ago, and it is amusing to observe how adroitly the pair veil their after residence; yet with all their precautions, chance—that sleepless mischief-maker—has told their story:—*They are runaway peons; fugitives from slavery for debt.*

Fabiano was a free-born Indian—with a dash of white blood I think—of Monterey, and drifted this way in the service of one master and another as far as San Juan—the town dedicated to that San Juan who has in charge the best peaches, figs and grapes within a radius of thirty leagues around us. Here it was his destiny to meet a lost wife, or to lose his heart anew to Francesca, who had been sold while a child by her parents to a citizen of Monterey, and had moved to San Juan with her master's family. Her master forbade his precincts to the pertinacious lover, but Fabian was not to be forbidden. He continued to roam about the house by day and night, to snatch brief interviews with his loved Francesca. The laws of the republic, which a wise and illustrious senator quoted in Congress as a “bright model of pure liberty worthy of our imitation,” permits whipping, imprisonment, and the like gentle persuasives to industry, to the masters of peons, and the master of Francesca made large use of his legal fights. By the way, would it not be well for those members of Congress who believe in this example, to propose the enactment in their respective states of the Mexican debtor law, and to allow employers to whip, starve, and send to jail, those whose labors are unsatisfactory? Will not the factory-girls of New England petition for the intro-

duction of the laws of that purely free Mexico, to whose "soil undefiled by slavery," such profuse libations are poured out by their profound and patriotic members of Congress?

Well, Francesca, who boasts the best Indian blood of the state, felt the inexorable lash, and every blow cut to the loving heart of Fabian. He plead for instant flight across the Rio Grande. Under the stars of the Union there is no slavery for debt, and whatever else happened, the Red Race went free from bondage on that portion of their native inheritance.

It was so arranged, and Fabian was hovering about the house watching for the favorable moment of flight, when he was discovered and arrested by Francesca's master. To throw him in prison, make formal complaint to the Alcalde, and prepare a list of costs on which he could legally be made a debtor and peon, was a thing of course. This peril Fabian had looked in the face, and prepared for beforehand. He had his friends without, and within accomplices are easily gained in prisons. A few days of bitter agony about his companion, for he could guess, but not know, the measure of punishment that awaited Francesca, and then all around him fell back into careless, unwatched neglect. While the master was listlessly smoking his cigar, and perhaps mistily coming to a decision how and when he would turn his new peon into ready money, Fabian and his prison mates forced the unguarded door, and sped across the uninhabited fields to the Bravo. But not for himself alone had Fabian dared the risk; his fleet and hardy mustang bore away Francesca too, and when, hungry and exhausted, their worn-out horse sunk under them on the banks of the wished-for river, each was the other's only earthly possession. There Victor, who was in quest of a cook and chambermaid

to meet my arrival, stumbled upon them, and inducted them in due form in my service.

#### MY NEW HOUSE.

TEN days after my arrival on the Bravo, my house—the first, and then only, habitation with glass windows and panelled doors in this young island of civilization—was in a state to receive us, and with no small importance we went into possession. The large symmetrical sashed doors gave our cottage in the wilderness a cheerful, lightsome appearance, and it seemed to look out upon the desert hills, and lonely, untravelled river, with a wide-awake, astonished air of inquiry into the wherefore of its position. We had a house then, but no furniture; some was exploring its way to Eagle Pass at our order, and in the course of time was likely to find its destination; but—meanwhile? In these improved times furniture is difficult of attainment at Eagle Pass, for we are still destitute of skilled mechanical labor, though the caricature thereof by Mexican hands does exist, but in the ancient days of this settlement, that is to say, fifteen months ago, a suite of decent movables was but a flattering dream. It might come to pass at some dim far-away period of the future, but the chances were not in its favor. There was, however, a resource open to us, and, thanks to some border experience, we soon made it available. A wide, shallow box was raised on some very strong, if not elegantly carved, feet, and there was a tablè. With a white cloth, our breakfast-tray did not make a bad figure on it, and covered with a bright blanket, it did duty as a centre-table. A side-board, out of a large, square box, with a shelf in it, and curtained with a high-colored French print, and a lounge to match, was soon created, together with a stand and dressing-table *en suite*, as



people are particular to say of their carved rosewood Louis Quatorze *ameublements*. Ours flashed out with a dashing air of pretension that would be quite unbearable in mere rosewood and mahogany, and I felt in my heart all the pride and self-satisfaction the creations of our handiwork carried in their faces. I had never before given much thought to the adornment of person or house, beyond the essentials of comfort and propriety, but now that I had found how much could be done with calico and old boxes, the tape, tacks, and tack-hammer were never out of my hands for the first two or three weeks. I am not sure whether, in the exuberance of my vanity and delight, I did not take them to sleep with me, and, at any rate, I am certain that when my New York made furniture did arrive, it was received in the family with as much contemptuous indifference as an expletive, third cousin from the country. What was it in comparison to the dear offspring of our love?

#### GARDENING.

THE next engrossing object of ambition was a garden, but in that all my efforts were foiled, all my aspirations doomed to disappointment. I tried vines, they only sprung from the ground to wilt and die; I tried flowers, they would not spring at all; I tried vegetables, they only raised their heads in green promise to grow sick and die, or be eaten off by the rats. The soil about Fort Duncan, and the little settlement above in which our pioneer tent was pitched, is a high bank of sand and gravel, and seems but lately upheaved in some Plutonic throes. Gardens can be made almost any where under this sky, if the soil is patiently fertilized and watered; even on the sterile spot that encircles Fort Duncan. This is stated advisedly, for I noted carefully the progress of the

only crop raised there as yet—a single bean, an enormous red giant of the family of running beans. It was brought out and presented by me to our neighbor, and was regularly watered on the alternate days, or thereabouts, and carefully tended always. This crop of one bean had a prodigious growth, and produced fifty fold, but then a man and team were necessary to cultivate it properly, and it certainly occupied more time and industry than will be given to these leaves, so that it becomes a fair question in productive economy whether this book is worth a bean, and also whether that bean was worth the cost of cultivation.

My horticultural failures were the more dispiriting from the perfect success of the family at Eagle Pass—there was then but one family at the county seat, three miles below Fort Duncan, and that one lived in a tent, not having been there long enough to put up a house, though they had made haste and fenced in a garden.

Mr. Campbell was one of those open-handed Christians, whose principal joy is to share out whatever good things of this life fall to his lot, and his garden at Eagle Pass gladdened all the tables of the settlement as fully and liberally as his own. The towns on the Mexican side sent in their contribution of green corn, sweet potatoes, monster onions, yellow plums, peaches, quinces, apples and figs, but with such provoking irregularity, that we were more than ready to listen to Mr. Campbell's advice, and choose our homestead where we could plant orchards for ourselves. Others went down to Eagle Pass to settle opposite the Escondida for commercial reasons; because it was on the right side of the fords and paths precious to contrabandists, and because it lay in better vicinity to the semicircle of Mexican towns that spread their arc in front of it, and radiate trade into the mining districts beyond them; but the reasons that moved me thereto were of

less solid nature. I pined for shade, and fruit trees whose over-arching arms should enfold me in a temple of tranquil repose. It is only under the shadow of living foliage that I can entirely possess myself and live—untrammelled by the tedious weight of society—with my thoughts, my books, and my birds. Gardening is with me an occupation and a delight, and I could not wait the slow outcomings of the ungrateful soil above Fort Duncan, neither was my good lord and master disposed to forego the fine fishing and bathing proffered by the Escondida, or any of us unmindful how far its clear waters were preferable for taste and health, to the turbid and often brackish current of the Rio Bravo. The pecuniary interests we had plapted on the dry gravel bank above the military post, were thrown overboard under the pressure of these considerations, and at an early day we rode down to select a site for our homestead and garden—and perhaps decide as well the exact location of the town of Eagle Pass.

## CHINO.

BEFORE this was absolutely fixed upon, or rather as an important preliminary to any study of the country, I made it my particular business, after establishing friendly and well-defined relations with my servants, my pigeons and my poultry, to come to a perfect understanding with my black pony. Chino was a full-blooded, native-born citizen of Mexico, endowed, like his human peon brothers, with the Mexican virtues of patience, endurance, and abstemiousness, besides several other somewhat less creditable habitudes. He was sly, terribly inclined to petty larcenies, and at first rather addicted to shying off his burden, if the rider was not on the guard; but he always maintained a most demure and respectable countenance, and had such soft, well-bred ways

that he never suffered in his character. It is astonishing how many quiet, well-mannered sins that sage moralist, the world, will forgive to smooth-paced men and horses. Unfortunate circumstances educate too many of the youth of both classes into evil ways, and I imputed Chino's sly immoralities to cruel treatment in his colthood, and the use of that barbarous implement of horse torture, the Mexican bridle, which fills the poor animal's mouth with a load of jagged iron, to such an extent that he cannot drink with it, though the flowing river may lave the saddle skirts. The stoic Mexican, true to his Indian nature, endures suffering himself, in silent, passive fortitude, and he has no tenderness or sympathy for the sufferings of any thing else. The worst trait I have observed in them is this almost universal want of feeling for animals. I know society and Mrs. Grundy keep their keenest ridicule for the weakness of caring for the agonies of helpless and dependent beings. They were made to be abused and trampled upon, doubtless, and it is childish to pause in the important pursuits of life,—the set of a hat or the length of a skirt, for example,—to think of such trifles; but still I could wish the enslaved Red Man on our borders to share more largely in the genialities of life, if it were only that it might soften his heart to more kindness toward those things that feel and suffer below him on the ladder of existence.

When I ordered a light American bridle to replace the heavy, uncouth Mexican bit, Chino shook his head with a short, disdainful toss that spoke his mind as plain as a dictionary: "That smooth and slender bit of wire can't check me. I see I shall have my own way on the road."

Victor, who is now a fixture in the family, hinted a fear that Chino would have no respect to this new and gentle system of government, yet he seemed gratified, for he and Chino are intimate personal friends. When I assured him that I had

no fear about it, and should adopt it invariably, for I could not ride with pleasure while I knew my horse was in misery, Fabian, who was adjusting the girths, raised his great, sad Indian eyes in surprisè that any person of sound mind could take so seriously the comfort of a horse, and to this day I suspect he and the rest of our Mexican family set down my determined aversion to Mexican bridles as a touch of harmless insanity. As for Chino, after satisfying himself on one or two occasions, that arguments of force really did lay in the American substitute, he yielded the point with an excellent grace, and thenceforth stepped off as I like my horse to step, lightly and cheerily, as if he was out for his own private pleasure, and carried me where I desired to go, out of pure good will, and a general disposition to oblige. This being amicably settled, as such things almost always may be, if the rider is not more perverse than the average of horses, Chino and I rambled about at will, and without much troubling ourselves about Indians or anything else; we explored together, with great mutual content, the grassy dells and tangled thickets around our home. In most cases it was, probably, the first time their silent shades had been disturbed by the visit of a white person, but we found many lovely nooks that well repaid my hermit tastes for the trouble of exploration.

#### THE MULBERRY GROVE.

It has been already explained that Eagle Pass is a two-headed child, with one face looking above and the other below Fort Duncan. Our new cottage and our first rest was in the upper place; but one delicious morning, about the middle of April, when the northern world is yet fretting at the chilly, frosty, changing weather, we rode down the green

tree-sprinkled terrace, between hill and river, to examine more closely the advantages of the elder Eagle Pass; that old, official Eagle Pass, whose name already boasted the venerable rust of three years' antiquity, while its young counterpart was but a new christened three months babe. As we cantered along, now glancing at the silver face of the Bravo, here about the width, depth and outline of the Hudson at Albany; now admiring the leafy arcade that veils the bridal of the coy Escondida with the sullen and capricious Bravo, and again pausing to measure with a second look, the long fantastic arms of some far-reaching mesquite, we came all at once on a charming little grove of mulberry trees, laden with fruit and foliage, and drawn up in close company at the foot of the last terrace towards the river. We wheeled into it, and discovered, hid away like birds' nests under the cool, interlacing shade, a brace of Mexican tents, with a whole family of men, women and children humming and swarming around them, like bees stirred up at our unexpected advent. A wonderfully ragged and stately gentleman came promptly to my bridle rein, and proffered his services with the mien and language of an emperor. Indeed I doubt whether his crowned namesake of Brazil carries his honors with such a princely air as our adobe-maker Pedro does his tatters. I often marvel how such brevity of original material could be manufactured into this extensive showing of fluttering shreds. I am confident Pedro of Brazil could not get up such a display on the narrow limits of four or five yards of cotton; yet Pedro of Eagle Pass did it with the easy self-possession of a finished aristocrat. Does this oriental grace of speech and bearing come to the Indian race by Asiatic descent? It is not the gift of the white race. The peasantry of Europe have their poetry and their noble aspirations, but they have

it not in the form or in the wild plenitude which is common to the red race, whether bond or free. It is a part of their inheritance, with that wearisome *metate* before which this poor girl kneels and grinds her corn for bread, exactly as the handmaidens of Abraham's household ground theirs some thousand years ago. These are the "nether millstone" which scripture law made a household exemption from debt, and it is, I think, one of the first precedents on record; but like the Puritans, who resolved to be governed by the laws of God "until they had time to make better," we have spent many centuries in amendments before we came round again to the simple justice of heaven. Just such round blocks, like a granite cheese set up on three little feet, are painted in the oldest tombs of Egypt, and by this time Layard has, doubtless, disinterred the like in the ruins of ancient Nineveh, but he may not know their uses if he has never seen America, and fancy they are the altars of the domestic Lares of the buried nations. Not exactly a wrong conclusion after all. Whether or not the Lost Ten Tribes, or the colonists of Sesostris, brought the *metate* to America with the art of building with the huge sun-dried adobe, the same things have been common to them all; only the daughters of Judea ground barley, and our native American girls, Indian-corn, to make the unleavened cakes called—I know not what in Asia—but here, *tortillas*.

## DELICATE FARE.

PATIENT Barbara had just ground off one batch of dough, when our visit fell upon her, and electrified her spirit with hospitable visions. The lye-soaked corn was ready at her side, and she set about preparing another mess with more scrupulous nicety. The process attracted me, it was per-

formed with such quick and peculiar dexterity of hand. To bite out one by one the dark spot of every kernel of corn, just where it was set in the cob, would be slow work for the uninitiated, but our hostess of the mulberry grove kept her hands and teeth in action with the quickness and sleight of a practised biter. "Why take all this trouble, Barbara?" I inquired, after watching her a while.

"To make the tortillas clean and white, if you, my lady and mistress, (*mi ama y dueña*) will honor me by eating them," said Barbara, dropping the last kernel from her white teeth.

"To make the tortillas *clean* and white," I repeated. "Ah, yes, I understand now, but I cannot stay to eat, to-day; we absolutely must return home in time for dinner;" and I retreated to the overhanging branches of the mulberries, now in full fruit, and raining their purple wealth on the ground whenever the breeze swept their thick and rustling foliage. There, too, had been over much care for my entertainment. Eager to serve and to please, the children had made a rapid foray on the largest fruit, which they knew best of anybody where to find, and as I turned from the choicest of tortillas, I confronted a boy of some ten years, anxiously holding up to my acceptance a lap-full of the choicest mulberries. But that lap! At some foregone period it had been white cotton, at least there was something in its mixed complexion that hinted at such an origin, but time and the experiences of boyhood had invested it with a strength of tint rivalling in depth of color the berries which the polite owner was offering to my use. I was taken with a sudden disinclination to eat more berries before dinner, but not to wound the feelings of the little fellow who had taken this pains to please me, the berries were carried home with us,—a part of the way—and his exertions duly acknowledged with a piece of silver.



From that day, the mulberry-grove became the home of my heart, and when I leave it for another, whether it be on this side, or the other, of that gate which opens not to the returning traveller, I trust it may become the seat, or in some degree the helpful appanage, of a free mission or manual labor school, for the dispossessed but natural inheritors of this soil—the homeless and neglected children of the Red Race.

#### THE SEMINOLE CHIEF.

WE were sipping our chocolate, with every door thrown wide to welcome the breeze, which rarely denies us its rustling presence, when we were astonished to see Francesca coming up at a rapid pace. "What can this unexampled haste in our easy-paced handmaiden possibly mean? It has a portentous augury," thought we. In she came, so much excited as almost to let go her tenacious hold on the ever-present reboso, and pointed, too far gone for speech, towards the hills. We looked out in surprise, for there, emerging from the broken ground in a direction that we knew was untraversed by any but the wild and hostile Indians, came forth a long procession of horsemen. The sun flashed back from a mixed array of arms and barbaric gear, but as this unexpected army, which seemed to have dropped upon us from the skies, drew nearer it grew less formidable in apparent numbers, and opened upon us a more pacific aspect. Some reasonably well-mounted Indians circled round a dark nucleus of female riders, who seemed objects of special care. But the long straggling rear-guard was worth seeing. It threw Falstaff's ragged regiment altogether in the shade. Such an array of all manners and sizes of animals, mounted by all ages, sexes and sizes of negroes, piled up to a most bewildering height, on and among such a promiscuous assemblage of

blankets, babies, cooking utensils, and savage traps, in general, never were or could be held together on horseback by any beings on earth but themselves and their red brothers. The party began to break away and vanish into the little ravines that dip down to the river edge, and we understood by these signs they were encamping among us.

The word soon circulated that it was Wild Cat, the famous Seminole chief, who played fast and loose so long with our army in Florida, baffling adroitly the efforts of our best soldiers, and showing us many acute lessons in savage tactics, though we never had the wit to turn them to profit. His tribe had lands assigned them in Nebraska, the territory allowed, for the time, to the Indians who were driven or inveigled to come west of the Mississippi, by the relentless policy of the whites, but he has left them in discontent. He has won too much savage glory in his wars with the whites, and has in him too much of the restlessness of his race, to stay cooped up among government forts and agents, with no higher hope or employment than taking once a year a long brutal debauch, when the annual bounty for their lost inheritance is paid to his tribe. Wild Cat has turned his back on all this and come out to the Mexican border, with his immediate servants, followers and kinsmen, to find a home and a field more congenial to the heart of a Red warrior.

He came in state to make his call on us, attended by his cousin and lieutenant, the Crazy Bear, and some other braves, and marshalled with all ceremony by his interpreter, Gopher John, a full-blooded negro. John does not look as dishonest as his character runs, but might very well have earned his pre-name of "Gopher" in the way it is told of him. He was employed, so runs the story, by one of our gallant officers serving in Florida to supply and guard a reservoir of the kind of turtle called *gophers*, in the "Orange State." Every day

John presented himself with a fresh supply of the luxury, and receiving his stipulated silver therefor, consigned it to the reservoir. After some time it occurred to the officer as singular that his stock did not increase, as it ought with all these daily reinforcements. A watch was set, and then it came out that John stole back at night the gophers he sold the General in the morning. He took his detection very calmly, and has rather prided himself on the title of "Gopher" John, which was fixed upon him by that affair for life.

Wild Cat was dressed in fanciful Indian costume, but his whole attire had the rather un-Indian merit of neatness. A row of crescent-shaped silver medals, arranged in something like a breast-plate, glittered on his breast, and he had good arms. Perhaps he reads Byron, for not only he

"Shawl of red lightly round his temples wore,"

but the whole air and costume closely resembled one of the poet's favorites.

He saluted the ladies with a sedate and graceful bow, and accepted a chair with a grave dignity of attitude becoming a chief. He then directed his interpreter to say, he thanked the Great Spirit for placing him, face to face, and in peace, with the whites, whom he now regarded as friends and brothers, in this distant country. The conversation was continued on both sides in the same strain, and in every sentence and attitude there shone out the same impassive habit of self-command, and the same proud, inflexible spirit of self-reliance. On taking a glass with the gentlemen he gave a pledge indicative of a desire for mutual good-will, and added, afterwards, that once when he met white men, blood flowed, but now he had no thought in his heart but friendship and a desire for peace.

One of the ladies, not dreaming that his ignorance of ou:

language was but the politic feigning of the wily chieftain, remarked on the beauty and force of his language, the dignity of his bearing, and the probable insincerity of heart that kept it all company. Not a shade of look or manner betrayed that he comprehended a word of it, but we are now satisfied that Wild Cat can talk English fluently enough when it pleases him to find use for his tongue in that way.

His present role is that of a pacific and mediating leader, and if, as we suspect, all this is but acting a part, it must be confessed he plays it superbly, and while he chooses to sustain it nothing could surprise him out of this pre-determined calmness, and cold assumption of ignorance.

For six months he has been passing from tribe to tribe, along this extended frontier, as he says, to urge them to abstain from hostilities, and enter into peace-treaties with the whites. He has, with his band, suffered immense fatigue and privations, but no one can estimate the extent of the knowledge he has acquired of the border country, its passes, its capacity for forage, water, and all the items of savage attack and defence. A seven years' Indian war would not teach our white officers so much of what it is necessary to know, as this ambitious, far-reaching chief has laid up in this painful but effective six months' study. So, too, of the powers and dispositions of the long list of jarring Indian tribes in whose councils he mingled with the self-reliance of a renowned chief of their own lineage; what white man could learn as much, could he even speak their tongue, and think and reason in the habitudes of Indian life and sentiment?

Crazy Bear has more of the crude, imperfect savage in his logic and his aims than his chief, but he seems to believe in him, and follow him as the model, according to his Indian ideas, of all that is wise, heroic, and illustrious. Left to himself the Bear would kill any white man he met alone in the

forest with ferocious delight, because he hates the race, and feels that, whether in peace or war, the Red Race is alike dying under his heel. Yet on the morrow he would beg rum at the white man's door, and profess deceitful friendship; for his brutal appetites are strong, and he thinks all arts, even falsehood and treachery, are well used in spoiling and circumventing the enemy. Beyond the success of the moment he cannot stretch his eye, but Wild Cat is of loftier mould; *he* feels and bows to the triumph of the white man as to the inevitable decree of fate, and next to conquering the conqueror, his extended vision shows him that it would be wise to make terms and become the ally instead of the victim of this irresistible greatness.

With a grain of wise and liberal forecast, this aspiring savage could be made the soldier of the Union, and the surest and most invaluable defender of this frontier

#### THE CANE COTTAGE.

IN a few weeks after my first visit to the mulberry grove, I was delightfully established in a reed cottage under the thick-set canopy of foliage, exactly where we found Pedro's tent. The *metate* had given place to an extempore table for writing, embroidery, and a variety of other female helps to idleness, disguised in the form of work. This change was not an inapt expression of the difference of female life in patriarchal and city periods. Cities do not imply the highest possible civilization, though they are schools, and aids to it on its upward path, any more than patriarchal customs imply the highest moral good. The bread-making, blanket-weaving period, in which woman walks out her tread-mill round of life in mental torpor and laborious usefulness, reads well in Arcadian poetry, but it is not the purest nor the happiest.

Sacred history, in depicting a life not far removed in its main outlines from this we are witnessing on the border, gives us strong details of domestic strife, fraternal wars, neighborly deceit, and mutual injustice. Man was not high where woman was so low, and he cannot rise without taking woman with him.

But neither is the busy trifling of that we call refinement very much better; though it is more pleasant to the sight, as the gay tulip is fairer-looking than the rough-favored, but useful potato. It is only when society has shaped itself so as to expect service from all its members, when the fruit shall follow the flower, and graceful adornment keep time with solid utility, that woman and civilization can be admitted to have found a position of value. Hard-working Barbara, who cooks and washes for her hard-working mate; bustling Martha, who makes pickles and preserves to help out the fussy hospitality of hers, who, in turn, lives perhaps by thrusting himself between producer and consumer, and leeches from their industry what supports his non-producing existence; exquisite Madalina, who touches the harp, out-paints nature, and out-perfumes the rose, the tulip ornament of the ball and promenade, are neither of them more than the third part of the complete woman of complete civilization.

Francesca, seated on the ground, pretending to sew, beside Barbara, while her companion is crushing the lye-softened corn under that ceaseless roller, inspired me with all these philosophical ideas—that is, if I have not borrowed them of somebody and forgotten where to return them—for surely the three women who now live under the shade of this grove do not altogether perform what one should do, and could do, under better arrangements in the duty assigned to human kind as the inheritor of the world's dominion. The condition of the gift is to “subdue the earth.”

A comprehensive phrase, and with its corresponding condition, that labor is man's lot, clearly implies that all the descendants of Adam are bound to aid in bringing forth the beauty and the riches of their earthly estates and stewardship.

All this has very remote application to the building of our house of reeds, yet that is worth some notice for its simplicity. This class of shelters—house is rather an assuming word, and a mere hovel it is not—is common in all the rich sequestered valleys of Mexico, and has the merit of demanding no heavier machinery in the construction than an Indian's knife. In the magnificent and enchanting vales of Tehuantepec, two or three of the natives will build one in a day, without a nail or the sound of a hammer. Here the material is not so excellent or abundant, and it required about three days to bring the wherewithal from the river side, and construct a weather-proof apartment of something like twelve by twenty feet. Some upright forks are cut and set in the ground to receive light cross-poles for the roof. To the uprights are lashed long reeds with threads of *pita*, both growing spontaneously and ready for use all about us: the cane in the low borders of the river, and the *pita* on the dryest ridges. The *pita* bears in March and April a splendid cone of creamy flowers in the centre of its cluster of evergreen leaves. These leaves, slightly scorched by a slow fire, break into strong and durable threads a yard long, and with the tall golden reeds, make excellent building materials for summer houses and a vast variety of garden architecture. My cottage resembled an enormous bird-cage; the light and air streaming through its lattice-work, at will; or shut out, when desired, by curtains lining the inside. This roof, however, was rather too open to the rain, even with the help of the flexile mulberry boughs that interlaced above and around it; so a light

thatching of a kind of long, broad-leaved grass, was laid upon it, and held in its place by another course of reeds tied across and to the inner basket-work. A cooler, fresher, and more picturesque abode I never expect to inhabit, and all was nature's unbought gift.

Pedro and his wife Barbara, whom we displaced, receded to the verge of the grove on one side, and Fabian and his wife were disposed in a temporary kitchen and dining-room, under another clump of trees opposite, and thus within call on either hand, the triple family sit down, each portion under its own shade trees, in contented sociability.

#### OUR FLAG INSULTED.

OUR little ark in the ocean of solitude has been stained with crime. The blackness of the peon iniquity is overflowing upon us, and we are too weak and inert to dash back or dyke out the hateful tide.

It comes, too, in the form of a daring insult to our flag; an open high-handed violation of our laws; a noonday invasion of our soil; and all this in the sight and hearing of one of our military posts, in the presence of one of its officers, and yet no man had the manhood to hinder the perpetrators. A quiet and peaceful resident, on the American side of the river, is passing his day of rest in the settlement above Fort Duncan, and, while he is on the highway passing about his own affairs, he is pounced upon by the birds of prey. He is not accused of any crime, he is guiltless of every form of offence against the laws of the United States, but he is accused of owing somebody in Mexico, and their agents—bold in the sufferance of our government, and the countenance and aid of a few miscreants who deal in kidnapping—have not scrupled to set our flag at defiance, and come on our soil to



seize their victims, and bear them off to peon bondage. There is a foreigner, who partly makes a public brokerage of it—a sort of general dealer in cards, calico, cheap rum and kidnapping—who drives his trade in men, without scruple or disguise, under the very eye of Fort Duncan; for felonies do not spoil his reception there, nor prevent other men who make resounding professions of superlative honesty, from helping him, in this brave sport of hunting down debtors for the slave market. They course down, like bloodhounds, the poor helpless peons, that have fled to our soil for refuge. These gallant souls would not face a real danger so freely, but it is gay sport to intercept a frightened fugitive, keep him from defence while they hold—miracles of valor that they are—pistols to the breast of the stricken peon, and tie his hands, and take him to the ferry to cross him over into Mexico, to the debt-peonalty of a prison, stripes, and slavery. This was done while the drums of Fort Duncan were beating their martial assurance of safety, in notes fraught, as our children are taught to believe, with amplest protection for our citizens, our soil, our laws, and our national honor!

One Sunday was marked by three such deeds, equally cowardly, cruel, and defiant of our laws against kidnapping. On that day three peons were caught, bound, and carried by lawless force from our soil. One was a woman, a slave for no debt of her own, but seized and peonized for the expenses of her father's death and funeral. She had served years, scantily fed and worse clothed, until, wearied of her miserable condition and hopeless of any change there, she escaped from Mexico, and hived out on our side of the Bravo. She was soon tracked, and, as our laws stand for naught, hurried back to bondage without ceremony. *And, if either of these reclaimed peon slaves had been American citizens, their fate would have been the same.* This will startle the slavery hat-

ing citizens of the Union, and they will deny the fact; yet I shall presently show them, by official warrant, that it is true, and what will surprise them more—that their most zealous free-soil leaders have, unwittingly perhaps, clenched a thousand fetters by a misdirected effort to make one of them a shade lighter.

### THE FALSE WIFE.

ONE of the victims of these chartered man-hunters was in our employ, and the atrocious impunity with which he was kidnapped gave me a deep, indelible distrust of our border habits, which nothing else I have ever known here would justify. It shook asunder at once and forever the bonds of neighborly good-will with all the sharers in the assassin work, and made me feel that Wild Cat and his band were safer, nobler, and to me more acceptable company.

We were a month perhaps under the shelter of our beloved reed cottage, when a tall, slender, and not ungraceful man, of nearly, if not altogether, pure Indian blood, came to seek employment in our bee-hive, at Eagle Pass, as a carpenter, general servant—anything. He plead for instant work and bread for himself and his wife, Saloma. She came with him—a pert, lively, fluent creature—a very Delilah in her officious, caressing ways, and a Delilah, indeed, she proved to her fond husband. He lived in her, and hardly could keep his eye from her even while he was taking orders for the business of the day. There was something restless, perturbed, and wandering in his looks and ways; something so different from the stern, self-control of the Indian habits, that it attracted our notice, and, before many days, we learned that he was a peon fleeing from the stripes of a rigorous master at San Juan, some thirty miles in the interior.

His blindly loved Saloma shared his flight, and her un-wifelike boast that she was free and could go back to San Juan, and be happy whether her husband was peon or not, as well as the exaggerated value which she placed upon the simple act of following her husband's fortunes, gave me very early an unpleasant insight into her flippant and selfish nature. Poor Manuel Rios held no such opinions of his angel. In his eyes she was the perfection of grace, goodness, and devotion. In the still softness of the summer nights I was often an amused listener, when their social circle gathered round the prolonged supper, and all the gossip and witticism of their class were in circulation, and never failed to observe how like the needle to the pole, his thoughts always trembled back to the slight, talkative thing at his side. While her workmate, our gentle, patient, industrious Barbara, had no eyes, ears, heart or happiness, that did not cling to and enfold her ragged, stately, kind, but—ah, me! for poor, weak, wicked human nature—most inconstant Pedro: the loving, confiding Manuel fixed his steadfast worship in the same way, on a false and wandering object. Even in their lowly orbit the serpent, Deceit, made his entrance.

This traffic in debt and bondage is an eternal premium to falsehood and treachery; it rusts and corrodes every bond of love and confidence, as a pestilential vapor eats away and blackens precious steel-work. It is the social demon of Mexico.

One Saturday evening, after the work of the day was over, and all the people were clustered round their supper in the open air, enjoying the transparent freshness of the sunset breeze, for which this climate is remarkable, I observed a stranger in the circle. I was told it was the father of Saloma; and therefore did not think it remarkable that, while her husband Manuel went to the river with the horses, they

drew apart, and engaged in confidential and whispered conversation. They stood close to the reed basket-work of my cottage, and I retired from that side, not to play the listener to family secrets. In the morning, Manuel asked for some money in advance; and, although it is not wise to indulge these untaught and unreflecting children in embarrassing themselves, there was such pressing need of apparel, that in part he obtained his wish. Saloma was full of glee, and eager to set out for the camp above, to obtain, as we thought, muslin from the sutler's store, for a new dress. I little dreamed that her impatience was to obtain the price of her husband's blood. Some of our people, suspicious, by bitter experience, of the temptations and facilities to this kind of domestic treason, had watched and overheard enough to believe that the errand of Saloma's father was to inveigle Manuel back to bondage. Saloma engaged to lure him from the precincts of our place—for there a kidnapper dared not come—and deliver him into the hands of his master somewhere about Fort Duncan. I could not credit the astounding tale, or be made to believe that enslavement for debt would be upheld by force on our soil. The afternoon brought us the whole story, but it was too late for help or redress.

Manuel went with some misgivings, but they were lulled to sleep by the endearments of his Delilah. After they had made their purchases, she contrived to separate from him while he continued up the highway towards the warehouse of his employer. Nearly in front of it he was beset by the kidnapper in wait for him, but, for a moment, he shook himself clear, and took refuge in a house near by in which he had a right to expect safety. He was driven forth to meet the presented pistol of the pursuer, who was now reinforced by an American *gentleman*. Defence was now impossible; his hands were bound, and he was led to the ferry and speedily

crossed over to the Mexican side, and then lodged in prison. What became of his false-hearted Saloma I know not, but the next day Manuel was bound on a horse and conveyed to the chains and whipping-post of San Juan.

All the most respectable inhabitants of Eagle Pass united in laying this case in particular before the Secretary of State, because it was so open and public, and because it embodied facts and precedents on which it was imperative for the well-being of all the inhabitants of the border to have some definite understanding with the Mexican Government. It was hardly possible that any American Secretary of State would fail to demand back the victims thus wrenched by force from the shelter of our flag, much less that he would allow such a practice to stand unrebuked—and even sustained—in its insulting violations of our national soil and sovereignty. The meanest power in Christendom would not endure such an outrage without protest; and he who could write such an elaborate letter to Hulsemann for his own honor, could hardly do less than bestow an hour on a question that touched to the core the honor of the republic. Spain had invaded our soil at New Orleans, and bore off Rey, and the outrage was hushed up and overlooked in a most ignominious manner. She had seized the letter-bags of our ships in the ports of Cuba, and we resolutely shut our eyes, we even recalled the able and patriotic consul, General Campbell, in the fear that he would be more strenuous than civil in defending our flag and citizens from outrage. Austria had offered us a deep insult at Constantinople, but as it made no text for eloquent declamation—it was borne in silence, and buried forever in the Dead Sea of the State Department. Yet, with all these omissions of duty before our eyes, we, credulous borderers, were actually sanguine enough to believe that our Cabinet would have the courage to protect the inhabitants of the frontier from actual

invasion by these lawless Mexicans. Thus far we had seen no example of this hoped-for border protection, and some said even then that the Government which permitted our citizens to be plundered and maltreated, as they had been at Tehuantepec and other parts of Mexico, would take it very lightly if the Mexicans came a step farther, and carried us off of our own soil to deal out their pleasure on us in Mexico. However, the memorial went on to Washington, and after a time there came this very luminous and logical reply from the Department of State. If it emanated from a less renowned head than that of the "foremost lawyer of the age," one might venture to say that it is as weak in its legal positions as it is imbecile in its patriotism and false in its statesmanship. I have put in italics the closing sentence; but aside from this, here is an exact copy of this extraordinary

CABINET LETTER.

"DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON, }  
17th December, 1850. }

"SIR—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th ultimo, with the accompanying papers relative to the abduction of Manuel Rios, from Eagle Pass, in Texas, in September last, by Dennis Meade, of Piedras Negras, in Mexico, who claimed the services of Rios, as a Peon, under the law of the Mexican Republic.

"As it does not appear that any officer of that Republic was concerned in the abduction, the case is not one which would warrant an application to the Mexican Government. If, however, Mr. Meade should have violated any law of the State of Texas, the authorities of that State can cause him to be prosecuted therefor whenever he may be found within their jurisdiction. *If also Rios should assert that he is wrong-*

*fully held in bondage in Mexico, he must make good his claims to freedom, before the judicial tribunals of Mexico.*

“Your obedient servant,

“DANIEL WEBSTER.”

It would be a salutary hint to some of our public servants to hear how their short-comings in law and patriotism are discussed by our straightforward, plain-spoken men of the frontier. They care not a pin for high names; if they do not see common sense and manly truth in it, they will let nothing pass without trying the ring of the metal. They yield to Cæsar, frankly and generously, what is due to Cæsar, but they must believe it is due before they grant their tribute.

Mr. Webster's letter was read to a little knot of these sturdy reasoners, and each characteristic comment had a voter's weight:

“To say that it does not warrant an application to Mexico, when a resident on our soil is kidnapped,” exclaimed one; “Mr. Webster never said that; he can't take such a position, it would leave every man and woman on the border at the mercy of the Mexicans.”

“It is so set down,” said the recipient of the letter, showing the signature and official seal of the Secretary of State.

“Nothing but my own eyes could have convinced me that such a paper could come from this administration,” was the slow response.

“We need not send to Washington to learn that the State authorities can punish an infraction of their State laws,” observed one of the memorialists,—“What we asked of the wisdom of the Cabinet, was the redress of a wrong done to the nation, and in the case when the offence and the victim had passed beyond State jurisdiction.”

“You have the answer, here: the crime against our flag and laws goes for nothing, and if kidnapped people don't like slavery they must ‘make good their claims to freedom before the tribunals of Mexico.’”

“But, Sir, suppose the kidnapped man were an American citizen—one of us here present?” persisted the profane doubter of Washington infallibility.

“The principle here set forth is the same,” was the reply. “There is no hint of security or redress in any case where the kidnapper is not an officer of the Mexican government.”

“Then you mean to say that any body else can come here and seize people to make peons of them in Mexico whenever they please,” repeated the unsatisfied querist.

“I repeat that such is the tenor of this official document,” replied the proprietor thereof.

“If there is no help against Mexicans coming here to steal men, there can be no way to prevent our following up and shooting the stealers on the Mexican side,” put in an old borderer, who, upon the whole, liked this independent, self-relying view of the case.

“Well,” said the first speaker, after a long pause, “Well, I thought this administration more patriotic,”—another pause—“and this Cabinet more politic,”—another pause—“and Mr. Webster a sounder lawyer,”—and then a longer and sadder pause—for he had always been an enthusiastic “Webster man.”

“As to administrations, they are pretty much alike in these omissions,” said his friend; “and as to the legal soundness and patriotism of the thing, they never expected to hear of it again from this remote border, and that makes an immense difference; but, honestly, now, would this affair change your



vote in any degree, if the man you now condemn were nominated for the Presidency by your party?"

"Candidly, then, I should all the same feel bound to support the nominees of my party," was the frank reply.

So faded and effete has become the preserving salt of republican virtue, that sensible men, of good repute, make no scruple to avow that party over-rides principle and country.

"I must support the candidate of my party."

What an abyss of mire and corruption; what a sinking depth of moral decadence; what a departure from the lofty spirit of '76 there is in that perverse cry! It loads the air, it taints the moral health of the nation, and makes every returning election day more vilely opposite to what it should be, a jubilee of sacred duties.

"We will support our party, even in its wrong-doings."

"We will elect our men, by whatever means we may."

"We will divide the spoils, though the Union dies under the knife."

These are the reigning laws of party in these latter days; and if on these rocks we are not wrecked, our national greatness may outlive the stars, for if not in them, there exists no danger for our republic.

In dismissing this subject—for the time at least—I will only add that on the receipt of this singular, and, to most, unexpected, refusal to guard our soil from invasion and our residents from enslavement in Mexico, an appeal was had to the United States Senate. On the call of that body for information, February 26th, 1851, the Secretary of State *suppressed* the above letter, and presented such an incomplete account of the affair as laid the matter asleep. If Mr. Webster were by any chance to be so extravagant as to get into debt—which, however, is scarcely supposable—how painful it would be to his legion of admirers to have his rules applied to himself; how

afflicting to see the most illustrious son of New England rated on the serf-roll at five dollars a month, and condemned to live on a peck and a half of corn a week!

#### BAPTISTE THE BORDERER.

THE first family that raised a roof-tree and gathered round a hearth-stone in Eagle Pass, after the proprietors, was such an one as can only be found in our American frontier settlements. Our invaluable Baptiste and his family are born children of the border. They could not find contentment and house-room if a clear, untroubled space of forty or fifty miles of wilderness did not lay behind them, for air and exercise. There is only this difference of taste between husband and wife, and that is almost universal in genuine frontiersmen. The man looks back with an ever-longing eye to the wild freedom of the receding forest; the woman, and mother, turns hers eagerly forward to meet the coming civilization, and thinks hopefully of the day in which she shall be able to dress and school her children, "as they do in the settlements." Baptiste carries with him my heartiest sympathies, when I see how kindly and bravely he rules down his strong natural impulses, and strives and toils, and builds and plants, with affectionate docility, to gratify his wife with a regular home, and to gather around her the household wealth of a thrifty farmer. His honest, weather-beaten face beams all over with proud satisfaction when his wife and children are dressed to their taste in fine and fashionable apparel, although, for himself, he would not give his fox-skin hunting-pouch for all the contents of all the tailors' shops in the Union. So, too, of churches and schools; he is ready to admit they are excellent things for the children, since his wife

says so, but can't conceive how such things could be of any use to him. Yet, Baptiste is not without a rough-hewed idea of religion, or rather of superstition, which is a kind of left-handed religion, since it rests upon a reverential sense of some Great Cause, above and independent of human self-sufficiency. He offers, in his own crude way, his incense of prayer and thanksgiving to the Eternal Father, and could not be persuaded that any other mortal could teach him better than he knows himself, how his helmsman conscience must steer his way to the narrow gate that opens into the other world.

He reminds us incessantly of Cooper's inimitable Leather Stocking, if we could imagine that simple and sincere woodsman falling in love and winning the heart of a sprightly, industrious girl of mixed blood, whose greatest ambition it is to live in the settled and comfortable independence of the white women.

Parthena—for that, in true border taste for original and high-sounding words—is the classic name of Baptiste's wife, had lived awhile in the precincts of a Mexican frontier camp, and her impatient desire for a respectable and secure home was increased by the absence of everything like it, in that sink of lawless misrule. She wished us to assign them a homestead within our limits, where her pigs and poultry, her bee-hives and dove-house, her cows and her children, could live and flourish under American laws. I liked her honest ambition and straightforward plans, and cordially promised her all the aid and good will I could command. Baptiste, who thinks no labor painful that contributes to his wife's happiness, chose forthwith the site for his habitation, and took possession. He threw a blanket over a long outstretching arm of a mesquite, leaned his gun against the trunk, hung his shot-pouch by its side—a sure sign that hard work was

in question—and began, single-handed, to construct his house. His canoe and hatchet, with a spade and pick-axe, borrowed for the emergency, was all he wanted, and almost before we had thought twice about it, he came to borrow a team to “bring home his old woman and his plunder.” Our kind-hearted neighbor, Mr. Campbell, turned out his enormous wagon, a second Noah’s ark, on wheels, with a faithful hand and a perfect procession of the magnificent oxen for which Texas is famous. Our contribution was less imposing, but it was sufficient, and in due time Parthena was installed in her own house by her exulting husband.

His house, the work of his own hands, is worth describing, both as a model for self-helping architects, and because it is like Baptiste himself, a curious graft of civilization on the natural stock.

#### *A FRONTIER DWELLING.*

OUR embryo town lies on a sloping prairie, sprinkled with mesquite trees like a vast and venerable orchard, and falling in successive platforms or terraces down to the river’s edge. The bank nearest to the water—and only divided from it by a narrow strip of rich interval, scantily dotted with young mulberry trees—is a steep bluff of ten or twelve feet in height; and in the face of this bluff our man of nature has concealed his temporary dwelling. I say concealed, for there is nowhere around it a sign of human habitation to break the smooth expanse of the platform, until you wend down its face and actually penetrate the little hidden ravine that opens into his door. Then, all at once stands revealed a spacious, lightsome chamber, scooped out of the hill-side. The front, looking towards the river, and on the intervening garden-ground, is latticed with reeds, and cunningly veiled by the

earth and herbage of the bank, but is still pleasantly pervious to the cheering breeze and fresh light of this genial climate. The other three sides are cut square and even from the solid earth, which is here a favorable admixture of sand and clay, and requires no other walls or support. On these rests the roof. Willow and sycamore poles of sufficient size and strength stretch from side to side; and closely laid on these supporters is a cross carpet of reeds, which is again covered with a thick layer of grass and earth. A carriage might drive over this sod-roof, so sily spread, even with the general surface, without suspecting the existence of a dwelling beneath, or endangering in the least the safety of its inmates. A plaster of mud, slightly tempered with lime—which any man may make for himself in this limestone region—gives whiteness and finish to these earth walls, and the quarries of beautifully stratified sandstone from the hills that back the town supplies a firm and durable floor for the trouble of bringing home and laying down the natural flags.

All this is Baptiste's own handiwork, and a proud, little woman is his busy, saving wife, as she surveys it, while she bestirs herself among her milk-pans and her poultry. For love of her, this wandering hunter gave up the life of his choice; for her sake his hands resigned the gun and dug this grot for her comfort; he explored the islands for his reeds and rafters; for her sake he forgot the tempting fish in the limpid Escondida, to handle the axe and raft over, with only the help of his light canoe, the timber for his simple framework.

The millionaire, who gives the partner of his wealth the overflowings of his golden cup, wherewith to make ostentation of their luxury, cannot make such a heart-offering as does this love-tamed rover of the wilds when he thus "gives his body to painful toil" to create for his wife comforts, which

to him, personally, are absolutely superfluous and of no value whatever.

— Yet, with wifely tact, Parthena is careful not to interfere with her husband's ways, or undervalue his favorite pursuits. He hunts, and fishes, and traces up the wild bee at discretion, and his table rarely lacks a plentiful supply of the best that the field and river can furnish, though now and then, perhaps, a little to the detriment of his more regular pursuits. We come in largely for the benefits of these excursions, in consequence of the little acts of kindness we were enabled to show his "old woman," who by the way must be decidedly on the bright side of twenty-eight. Scarcely a day passes in which the tall form of Baptiste does not loom along, and, without more ado, deposit in the cook's hands a choice wild turkey, a brace of ducks, a handful of pigeons, partridges, or some other offering of the chase, and then he disappears, as abruptly as he came.

Setting aside these bribes to good-will, this obliging, off-handed, independence sets so well upon them, and is brightened withal by such a willing, self-helping industry, that I am never tired of watching the busy, cheerful ways of the family, and never see them without a wish that the millions of working men who have, as he had at first, no capital but their own strong hands, were able, like him, to build themselves free homes, and collect around them the elements of independence, and so rear their children to the stature of free-men.

#### SOCIAL DISTINCTIONS.

YET I ramble from the main subject. Our town was begun. It held a commodious double tent, with the first settler and proprietor, Mr. C., and his lady, that was the aristocratic party. Then our reed shelter and its twain. We were the

democratic middle class, and close upon us was the thatched shed of Don Guillermo the mason, in blood, bone and sinew, pure Indian; he constituted the radical native American party. Finally there was a score of men quarrying out stone and making adobes; some of these were free-born toilers, the working-class, about which all men talk brotherhood and philanthropy, but to whom few give the warm right hand in cordial fellowship with a hearty "Let us work together, my brother." Below this is still another rank, enduring all the ills and blight of slavery, but with none to sorrow, none to pray with them, for there is no political capital, no religious fame to be made out of the Mexican peon.

If he lived in the almost impenetrable heart of Asia, and the trumpet of benevolence could come sounding over the ocean billows, bless me, how busy would be our missionary love! If he spoke an impracticable tongue, how we would send him tracts! but who ever did, how can any one get up a high-steam-pressure of enthusiasm for the misery and darkness that lies down and dies at our door-step? The thing is preposterous. When we live among it, even African servitude excites no sympathy, that is, none of that generous over-boiling sympathy that unlocks our purses and disposes us to burn the houses over the heads of cold-blooded, unfeeling owners. Distance lends enthusiasm as well as enchantment to the view, and against the crowds who devote their lives to the Malays and Hottentots, we have hardly a Fry or a Howard to do as much for our domestic heathen.

In our Mexican family, now that they were in such close vicinity, I could trace the destructive course of peonage, and was forced, against many prejudices, to see that it was more deadly and blighting than African slavery. Laying aside specialities and special pleading, peonage has dragged down ten or twelve millions of Indians on this continent to half their

number and to a most abased and hopeless condition. African slavery snatched some hundred thousand slaves from a land of gross and cruel slavery, and raised them and their descendants to a Christian and moral elevation incomparably superior to any condition we know of the race in their native land. I do not say we should continue a wrong that good may come of it. I do not say we should, and I know in this age we cannot, keep alive the slave-trade, or unduly retard the liberation of the bondman; but whoever will look at it calmly, will say that the broadest and deepest of American sins is the enslavement, degradation and slaughter of the Red Race.

#### SLAVERY EXTENSION.

HERE, then, was the first blow struck towards the creation of the town of Eagle Pass. The name existed before, a simple translation of the term "Paso de Aguila," the "Eagle Ford," or Pass, by which this crossing was known to the Mexican traders and soldiers. Here a part of those who came to re-conquer Texas from the Texans swept across the Bravo. Here, when Mexico was in turn invaded by the Americans, Captain Veach had his encampment, and recorded its name in his dispatches to Washington. It shows how very willing this section of Mexico was to be conquered; in that Captain Veach kept a population of more thousands than he had tens, of armed men in quiet order during the fiercest portion of the war. The first clamor of discontent broke out in the towns of this district of Mexico, when it was understood they were to have back their own soldier despots. The peon holders were the least willing to be Americanized, because they also own all the land, are not taxed either for land or slaves, and are themselves co-partners in the government



with the soldier chieftains. The actual tillers of the soil, the tenders of the herds, those whose labor extracts from the earth what wealth Mexico produces, would have gained freedom, hope, education and religious light under our laws, and so far as they knew, or cared anything about it, desired the change. With what glossy rhetoric, but most absurd statesmanship did members of Congress declaim, day after day, until the very columns of the legislative halls must have ached with their stupidity, on the danger of "*extending slavery*," by taking in Mexican territory! Every town so received was an orphan caught up from the desert of sin and servitude, and folded to the cherishing bosom of light and liberty. Where the African slaves were to come from to extend slavery I never could learn, for none are brought to us from other countries, and those who merely change their residence from one section to the other leave room behind them for free labor to step in and reign. Slavery may roll away more and more to the South and prepare the way for white industry, as it has been doing from the first days of the republic, but this "extension" cry is a chimera, a fiction of party pleading, and in twenty years men will wonder at those who believed in it, as we of to-day wonder at witchcraft, epidemics, and religious wars. As African slavery recedes southward and breaks into new fields, waiting to be subdued to civilization, it leaves at the North, State after State, emancipated ground, and always on it an offering of freedmen. Slavery has had its mission, and when the work is done, and the lesson taught, it will expire by its inherent terms of limitation.

## A CHARACTER.

THE very day I came to take possession of my cane cottage I unearthed a new and valuable inhabitant of our city—of the future. I mined out an excellent carpenter and a useful neighbor from the heart of a small mountain of lumber, in which he had interred himself with his box of tools, workbench and kitchen assortment. I have pondered long and thoughtfully upon it, but to this day I cannot make out whether he contrived his own path to the centre, or whether those huge piles of boards and beams closed up spontaneously around him. He was an eccentric genius, from North Carolina I think, not at all afraid of hard work or rough fare, and well skilled to improve his wild and independent house-keeping by fishing and hunting, but stoutly resolved not to know anything, or approve anything, about the Mexicans. It was his daily comfort to lecture them upon their careless, unskilful ways, and it did not seem to abate a particle of the unction that none of them understood a word he said. They would stand still and listen with an air of grave and respectful attention to the end, and when he clinched his rebuke with his regular closing question:—

“Now, don’t you think you are the most trifling, good-for-nothing beings that were ever seen upon the earth since it was created?”

They would as regularly reply to what they could observe was an emphatic interrogatory, and but polite to answer in the affirmative, with a cordial—

“Si, Señor.”

After this refreshment Harris would return to his saw and plane, a relieved man for the day. It was not his fault if the Mexicans did not know their deficiencies.

By way of parenthesis in his contract for a warehouse and ferry scow, he built a light skiff for Don Juan Fernandez, who lived in an island of live oaks on the rolling prairie, almost as solitary and self-sufficing as his famous namesake did on his island of the ocean. A fertile, well-watered, and eminently beautiful and healthy stretch of country, equal in extent to the State of Delaware, and no whit behind it in the value of its natural resources, is owned by the Fernandez kith and kin, but all this immense sweep of splendid land is unoccupied by its proprietors. With the exception of Don Juan, who now has come over to Eagle Pass with about three hundred of his cattle, there are none of the owners who bring their families even temporarily to live on their ranchos. Nothing but peons and cattle, with a slight occasional sprinkle of Indian visitors, have homes in this tempting range. No Mexican I ever met has even an idea of what English and Americans mean by a country life.

We found our boats delightful auxiliaries, for we followed Don Juan's example, and supplied ourselves with the means of enjoying the water, and we visited in them many a cosy little nook for a gypsey dinner, that we never would have found by a land path.

The first trip was to the Bathing Rapids on the Escondida. For half a mile the stream shoots along between its walls of verdure in a clear and steady volume, but at that distance we came upon the dancing, singing, rejoicing rapids, that rush laughingly over the rocky bed, water-hollowed into innumerable natural baths. In these cradles the idle or timid bather may recline at careless length, and the caressing tide will lift him in its cool embrace, and enfold and lave his indolent limbs in its watery delights without the cost of an effort. There is not such another limpid, refreshing consolation and cure for indolence within a hundred miles. The

two miles that Fort Duncan is above the pure current of the Escondida, places it just that distance above its proper location, not less on account of the health and comfort of its garrison than in the military view of its also being that far removed from the point commanding the best fords and inlets to the Mexican trade and settlements.

It is a singular dispensation of nature that for scores of miles the Mexican bank of the Bravo is enriched with a continual succession of ever-living springs—'ojos de agua,' or, "water eyes," as the Mexicans call them, while on the American side opposite, no one has been found. The want of frequent and permanent water-courses is felt on our side of the Bravo, from Santa Fé to the Gulf, as a great drawback to rapid and extended settlements.

#### WELLS.

SPEAKING of water supply, I would remind those who are opening farms that in this climate, where, with water, crops are so varied, so certain, and so abundant, and land withal so cheap, wells and means of irrigation should be counted as a part of their capital investment, for no part of it would so securely return them a high interest. A farm of a mile square, with more or less water front, can be purchased, together with a pair of working oxen and half a dozen milk cows, for a thousand dollars. Another two hundred dollars—to take sure margin, say five hundred—will, by the various improvements lately made in water-raising machinery, insure irrigation to gardens and orchards that will give back annually and certainly thirty or forty per cent. on this whole investment. There is no space here for long sums in arithmetic, but the whole history of agriculture where irrigation is practised, establishes the fact. The same outlay in land, the

same labor in cultivating it, will, under this sky of almost ceaseless sunshine, ensure double crops to the farmer. If, therefore, his works for the supply of water do perchance cost half as much as his land, they will still remain that portion of his invested capital which returns to him the largest and surest interest.

Wind-mill wells can certainly be erected to good account any where in the long-extended valley of the Rio Bravo. The breeze is strong and constant from the sea most part of the year, and the nature of the country argues extensive substrata of water. It is found at about thirty feet below the surface at Fort Duncan, but how far the amount would supply irrigation has never been tried. Americans are hardly aware that the richest and most productive countries of ancient civilization depended almost wholly upon artificial power for water, but that with it their two or three crops a year made them marvels of wealth and fertility.

Embankments, and machinery for making the rapids and even the high annual freshets available for irrigation, can be applied with great economy and effect at Eagle Pass and a hundred other points on the Bravo, and some day the right man will come to confer on us this one thing needful, and ensure himself the while a splendid fortune.

#### MELON SUGAR.

THERE are certain valuable productions for which this valley is peculiarly adapted, and which are in all times unfailing staples of national wealth. Among them will be sugar, and wines of generous quality. At the World's Fair will be seen the first feeble offerings of the experimental vintages of the Union, but it is not probable the Lone Star will be there.

So, too, I look in vain for a display of sugars, and our in-

fant sugar interest is no contemptible feature in our domestic trade and home consumption. There are several varieties of sugar besides that extracted from the cane, which can be profitably manufactured in the United States, if from war or any cause it is desirable to be independent of other nations for that article of daily, abundant and universal use among the Americans.

Of these ranks first, the delicious sugar of the maple, whose healthy and delicate sweets are almost unknown in Europe.

Then comes pumpkin sugar, as simple and economical, or rather more so, than the beet sugar, which France is finding so available in her domestic industry. Then we have beet sugar, and corn-stalk sugar, like the last, only to be made profitable on a large scale and with adequate machinery. There are localities in the Northern States in which the soil, amplitude of intelligence and corps of fit laborers would make the culture of the pumpkin sugar desirable. The North American Phalanx—to whom all prosperity—have the soil and the men to make it a profitable branch of their system. I trust when the next World's Fair is mustered under United States auspices, (and to do it well, the American Institute has but to take it in hand and make Mr. Barnum one of their managers,) that we shall have a fine collection of specimen sugars. Three kinds I have named, besides the luscious maple and the well-known cane sugars, but there is a sixth kind sleeping in darkness, that only waits a kindly introduction to become of great importance to us on this border river, and to the Union, and that is *melon sugar*. There is no limit to the quantities the Rio Grande country is capable of producing, and an acre of melons will yield as many gallons of syrup, and of course we may presume sugar also, as the average yield of the cane fields of Louisiana. The apparatus for

crushing melons is simpler and cheaper than for the cane mills, as a common cider press, propelled by mule or horse power, will make five hundred barrels of the melon juice, which will yield five thousand pounds of sugar, in a month. The sugar is sweet, finer in flavor and color than the Mexican cane sugar, and will command here ten cents a pound to the producer. I do not know (it remains to be tried) how many hands would be necessary to boil and finish off the sugar with the necessary apparatus, but it may be observed that Mexican laborers can be hired and rationed at less cost than plantation slaves can be maintained, if to the interest on the purchase price of the slaves we add the cost of their regular food and clothing. On the Mexican side of the river five dollars a month, and an allowance of a peck and a half of corn a week for food, is a fair rate. We have always paid more than twice that for our permanent servants, but of late we have repeated proffers of good shepherds and field hands for six and seven dollars a month, with the addition of meat and coffee rations, which the Americans have made the custom, and therefore a social law at Eagle Pass.

Our whole-hearted border man Baptiste has made the trial of the watermelon syrup in comparison with the cane juice, and the result satisfies me that melon sugar can be made a regular and profitable item of American agriculture. In all that wide belt of Southern States in which cane sugar is of doubtful or impossible culture, the more hardy melon can take its place. There are immense districts in Virginia and North Carolina in which no other crop can be raised to equal advantage. The watermelon is a proved experiment, as far as its saccharine qualities and productiveness are the question, but I am waiting in most anxious faith for the trial of the muskmelon, for I have an idea that it will be the best sugar producer after cane, with the advantage of living in a

colder climate and on land too light for the cane. If I am right in this opinion, it will introduce a new and profitable culture in other sections than the valley of the Rio Grande.

#### THE BLUE WATER.

ABOUT three miles from us on the Mexican side is a lovely tree-embowered lakelet, so deep, clear, and transparent, that it looks like a little piece of the sky dropped down under those cool shades, and for this it is called *Aguita Azul*, or, the Blue Water. Few about us have taken the interest to explore the beauties of this sylvan waste, and are therefore ignorant of the fine fishing and bathing that may be found within an hour's easy ride from our ferry. The scenery, the primitive inhabitants, and the wild, out-door repast are sufficient for me, and the like thereof no city can proffer to my taste. Yet so many other charming places tempted me, that I was long in reaching the crowning enchantment of the Blue Water, but the while it grew to my memory by some indelible way-side incidents that chanced to join themselves to its name.

One day we were loitering under the twisted vines that wove together the branches of a brace of sturdy elms, turning over some curious petrified mosses that bordered our chosen spring, and discussing with our biscuits the comparative merits of the Blue Pool and a sister lakelet somewhat on this side of it, when a handsome boy of fourteen or fifteen glided into the circle, with the usual soft, noiseless step of an Indian. Unseen by us, he had observed us busy with the petrified grasses, and brought, by way of introduction, some specimens still whiter and more curious, from another spring. We accepted and admired them, and gave him of our refreshments, but he still lingered near, though modestly silent and apart from our conversation. This is the Mexican



and Indian way of hinting they have a favor to ask or something to communicate, and the very children will wait in calm patience for hours to be questioned, before they will obtrude their errand. Our winning lad was soon brought to confession. He wanted a *remedio*, that is, a cure for a sprained wrist. He never changed a muscle while they examined whether the bone was displaced. Happily it was not, and the cold-water remedy was ordered—as it proved—with eminent success. After directing our impromptu friend where to find us at home, to get bandages and some other little matters which we thought proper to prescribe in our medical capacity, we exchanged ceremonious *adios*, and he returned to the house of his friend Placida, who lived, as he said, not far from the Blue Water. “Not far,” means in Mexican any where between two rods and two leagues.

A Mexican *circa* (near by) is a dangerous trust for a tired traveller, but our boy was not more than a mile or so at random that time.

The next week he came, by permission of his master, to thank me for his now perfected cure, and to bring me a pretty pair of chickens, probably the whole sum of his earthly wealth. It would not be kind to refuse a gift which he had walked some miles and consumed his holiday to bring me, and besides, as I glanced at his scant garments, I saw a mode of honorable restitution, but I did not know his name, and I inquired it.

“Jesus de Dios (Jesus of God,) at your service, Madama.”

“Where is your father?”

“I have none; he is dead, but *mi tio Dios* (my uncle God) is a peon on the poor little rancho of the Holy Ghost (Espiritu Santo), near Monclova.”

“Then you do not like the rancho your uncle lives upon?”

“No; the Holy Ghost is very mean; it is too dry to pro-

duce corn or beans, and the peons are badly treated, so I ran away from it, and *was accommodated* by my master."

*To be accommodated* is the phrase for being sold, or selling one's self. The soft, smooth way in which law and custom words the whole system of peonage, is in strange contrast to the levity with which sacred names are lavished on every hand. We have a farm laborer named Jesus, and two or three female Jesusas about us. A low drinking-shop in the Mexican capital was called *La Madre de Dios* (the Mother of God), and the like blasphemous uses are made of all the names of the Trinity without the slightest sense of impropriety, throughout Spain and Spanish America.

#### PLACIDA.

THE boy Jesus spoke of Placida as the friend who stood closest to him in the absence of parents, home and kindred, and I afterwards learned that his esteem was not misplaced, for even in her rude and stinted lot, she found scope to show kindness and practice virtues. But what a commentary is her story on the social abasement fostered and forced by the adulterous union of church and state! The law bribes the Mexican priesthood to lend its influence to the proprietors of the soil, by exacting enormous fees for every religious service. The legal rates for marriage, baptism and sepulture, are beyond credibility. The poorer classes must sell themselves to the rich to buy them, or they must dispense with them altogether, yet the poor toiler, whom no one cares to instruct in anything else, is most carefully instructed that the due observance of these rites is the only gate to heaven. The legal marriage fee ranges from twenty to twenty-seven dollars, a sum the ill-paid laborers of Mexico rarely can command. Of course immense numbers have the

alternative of not marrying at all, or of selling themselves into bondage to satisfy the church. Many mate without its sanction, and if the priests were not very much better than the law desires them to be, thousands more would live and die unwedded. The demoralization is frightful where the primary bond of society sits so lightly. The perfidy, ill-treatment, desertions, and depraved family obligations, that grow out of it, are undermining the whole social fabric, for the higher orders do not escape the reaction of the poisonous harvest sown by their cankered laws.

By the fountain side, as she sat alone at the close of a week of sorrowful toil, I found Placida, and drew from her heavy-laden heart her history and her griefs. Her mother, a peon, and the wife of a peon—though both claimed more white than Indian blood—had lived in poverty and hardship an unwedded wife, until death struck her down. Her tardy conscience woke in the delirious agonies of dissolution, and then she gave two of her children to servitude to purchase the marriage rite and secure for her body Christian burial. Thus she ended a life of sin against herself by a not less sin against her little children.

The young Placida was one of these motherless ones, but she fell into gentle hands and was reared by a kindly mistress more like a daughter than a servant. She was taught all the elaborate handiwork for which Mexican females are celebrated; and in the capacity of *camerara* or chamber companion of her mistress acquired as much of grace and intelligence, with more wit and beauty, than fell to the lot of any of the old lady's numerous band of nieces and kinswomen.

A young man of pure white blood and excellent family, though poor and an orphan himself, saw Placida and fell in love like an Indian. That is to say, with the deep inflexible determination to win her at any cost, through any danger

and with no care for the future. He offered his own body to servitude for her freedom and her love in marriage band. He was accepted, or rather the Mexican law, which is very good—when a man is rich enough to buy it—enabled him to gain his wishes in this way. A peon can demand his *cuenta*, or account with his master, if he finds another master who is willing to take him and pay it, and for this reason every master is strenuous to increase the *cuenta* by setting down the soap the peon uses to wash his clothes, every ounce of meat, or lard, or sugar, with which he is tempted to improve his miserable ration of a peck of corn a week; every day lost in sickness and every particle of medicine he is forced to swallow, every thread of raiment for himself and family, if in his loneliness he is mad enough to seek the solace of a companion, all goes to swell his account and make a change of masters hopeless, and often mortgages his children also to slavery.

A capable, active man like Marco, light and lithe of limb, and skilful alike in the charge of herds and the labors of the field, is worth ready money, wherever bone and sinew is current coin (and I know not the corner of the world where the sweat and life-blood of the laborer is not bought and sold for the benefit of the rich man), and so Marco found his master in a cousin more favored than himself by fortune. The *cuenta* of his betrothed was demanded and paid, the benediction of the church bought with the same blood-money, and he came with his bride to a solitary but pleasant rancho, a few miles from Eagle Pass, to commence with her the hard and narrow life of a farm peon. In time their lowly abode was brightened by the sunshine of childish mirth. How unspeakably dear is this gift from heaven to parents like them! In their loneliness and poverty, that baby-boy was the sole light of life. The sun darkened in the sky when the angel of death snatched him from their arms. In the frenzy of their love

and bereavement, they gave all they had left to sacrifice—the freedom of Placida—to lay the cross of baptism on its expiring brow, and buy a place for the too dear clay in consecrated ground.

The unhappy parents must not die slaves in that gloomy and desolated hovel ; but when I strove to make the afflicted mother share in such hopes, she only replied by words of her lost child. She mourned less that she is no longer free than that she is no longer a mother.

#### VICTOR IN PERIL.

AN evil genius seems to pursue our heedless, poetical, tender-hearted, light-headed favorite, Victor. He is always pitching headlong into some difficulty, and at whatever cost he extricates himself from one to-day, he is always ready to plunge into another to-morrow. Yet he never bears malice, never casts reproach or blame on another, but forgives everything, and goes about singing as merrily as a lark the moment the pressure of the hour is lifted from his heart. To speak of a Mexican singing *merrily*, however, is a stupid inconsistency. The key-note of all their national melody would suit a funeral hymn. The wail of death, the melancholy anthem of a hopeless and expiring race mingles in every strain. Did ever any one hear a child of the Red Race carol a lay of joyous, brave-hearted promise ? I think not, and this listless despondency half-writes the epitaph of that peculiar and mysterious family, who, four centuries ago, were the sole inheritors of this vast double continent, and the lords of the rich and splendid empires of Mexico and Peru. They are prophetic in their sad melodies, and Victor is only a little less sad than most of his race, not really merry and heart-free like a confident child of promise. But he is naturally void of

thought, or fear for the future, and almost forgot he owed money that might cost him his liberty. With promises and part-payment he put off his Mexican creditor for many months, reckless of Mexican laws, and the danger of being shipped into peonage, if caught on the wrong side of the river. He had high ideas, too, of the dignity of American citizenship, and the omnipotent protection of the American Stars. With the case of Rios and the letter of our Secretary of State before us, we knew better than he did how frail such a reliance would be, in an emergency that demanded manly and prompt action from Washington, and we warned him to keep on our own soil, and hasten to a settlement with his creditor. This was difficult, as the old horse-dealer wanted ten dollars, the whole original debt, while in justice there were but three due; but he insisted on considering the payments made on account as presents, and not to be included in the settlement. This Victor resisted, and he only went on singing his eternal ditties when told of his insecure position.

On the festival of San Diego, which the Mexicans religiously celebrate by an extra intensity of dancing, gambling, and horse-racing, there was to be a grand fandango at Piedras Negras, and Jesusa, Victor's coquettish flame, was resolved to display at it the unsunned glories of her new muslin dress and lace reboso. I have said he was careless of consequences at all times, and a thousand dangers would not frighten him, enamored and jealous as he was, from following in the footsteps of his charmer, and watching in person over his own interests. His creditor, the wily old Sousa, knew the parties, and guessed as much. Scarcely had Victor touched the opposite shore, when he was pounced upon by those who lay in wait for him, and promptly conveyed to prison, there to find the means to pay the full charge against him, or reconcile himself as he might to a long career of bondage. He

was told by the Mexican officers, and he felt, too, at last, that his American citizenship was but a broken reed against the Mexican slave laws, and he turned to his employer as his sole refuge. He can read and write like a padre, and a brief statement of his situation was soon penned and on its way to us, though on rather hard terms. The price of this favor was the admission of the whole face of the original debt before the alcalde, and thus secured either of his money or the body of a peon, the son of old Sousa, a fair-spoken, well-favored youth, rode over with Victor's appeal for aid.

#### A VEXED QUESTION.

THE young man received a brief and cold response, for it had been determined on this side to press home to the authorities at Washington whether they would permit the citizens of this Union to be enslaved for debt in Mexico. Some have said—and woe to the faltering, faint-hearted politicians who set open this door to bloody mischief!—that as our government had failed to chastise foreign wrong-doers, who came on our soil with deeds of violence, that they would, under that same charter, enter at will the soil of Mexico and deal out with armed hand their own code of justice. Others, and most of our immediate circle were of this opinion, were disposed to proceed with every formality, so long as law could be found, and when and just where the thread snapped off, to finish the matter according to the light of their own conscience, but always in a way to compel the attention of the Cabinet and force Congress to turn its sleepy eyes towards this troubled border. In keeping with this resolve, the messenger had his answer.

“This debt was contracted on this side of the river, and

must be settled by our laws, and we are besides more than ready to come to an issue, and bring both governments to the necessity of stating whether American citizens can be sold for peons in Mexico."

"But the great jurist who is now Secretary of State, has decided that they must submit to the tribunals of that country," I ventured to observe. "Oh, that was applied to persons kidnaped from our soil," was the reply; "and as even Mr. Webster cannot nullify *all* our powers as men and citizens, I think I shall bring home Victor this day."

"I must be of this party," said a friend: "I have a curiosity, a decided curiosity to hear the opinion of a Mexican commandante on the propriety of making slaves of our citizens," and while he spoke he buckled on his trusty six-shooter, and looked inquiringly into the state of the neat flask and pouch that usually kept company with the revolver.

"And I, too, must be of this agreeable company," added our careless, good-natured friend McG. "I like to take my share in these entertaining conversations when they are going forward," and with the word, another six-shooter was buckled on, and another saddled horse led to the door.

"Victor himself might choose to put in a word if the discussion grows warm, and here is an argument for his use," observed one of the party, throwing, as he spoke, an extra pistol over the saddle-bow.

And so in as brief time, and as lightly as I have written it, were they armed, in saddle, and under spur, to carry their bold errand on to the soil of Mexico, into the precincts of one of her military stations.

Away they dash, fearless and light-hearted borderers that they are, as to a festival, with smiles and words of courtesy on their lips, but stern determination in their hearts. These resolute and well-armed men will not fail to be sufficient unto



themselves: they are of the manly mould and free hearts of the people, used to be their own church and state in the scorching hour of trial, and not like that dead, spongy excrescence of the popular will—no, of party intrigue—a partisan cabinet.

They go in determined earnest to claim back their fellow-citizen from the clutch of iniquitous bondage, and while they clothe the demand in respectful phrase, they are altogether likely to bring back their man. If they do not, they will so place the affair that our derelict public servants must answer at the bar of Congress, and to the people of the Union, why they have sanctioned so long this system of enslaving American voters.

If blood flows in such a quarrel, as flow it must if our officials continue their passive connivance, on whose head rests the guilt of treason and the shame of cowardice? Let the blind and gorging owl of party that has supplanted our bold bird of liberty at Washington, prepare to look the people in the face, and in their indignant glance read their verdict of condemnation.

#### VICTOR RELEASED.

AFTER all, the main question was not brought to the test. We must wait a little longer to know whether, and when, the Government at Washington will deign a glance of inquiry and a word of protection to citizens of the Union, who are sold into slavery in Mexico. The principle still remains in abeyance, and my prayers that the Mexican officials would retain Victor, and our friends compel, by his resolute rescue, the timid time-servers of the day to show themselves at the bar of judgment, fell dead to the ground. Victor's friends went first to the commander at Fort Duncan, and requested him

to demand, officially, in the absence of all civil authority here, the restoration of an American citizen held in prison, and in danger of perpetual bondage, for a debt contracted on this side of the river, and therefore by no fair construction of law amenable to the Mexican penalty of servitude. The Colonel felt the case as a man should, but he was uncertain of the range of his powers and duty, and still more uncertain how far our Cabinet would justify him in too much zeal in defence of our own soil, flag and citizens; so he excused himself from taking an active part, at least until everything else was tried. This was exactly what suited the spirit so fast growing up on this frontier. The people have been so long and so shamefully neglected, that hundreds are as willing to put our own officials in open and blazoned default, as they are the Mexicans. Acute eyes and ready wits lie in wait to seize upon every clearly provable and inexcusable lapse, that can be carried home to the conviction of the people. There are some who only wish so to use the facts as to bring the owls of party to a clear vision, and a better performance of their duty. This is the sentiment of my family, and it is my own aim and wish, but it ought to be known in the United States that this is not the feeling of the "rest of mankind" out here. There are hundreds, on both sides of this border line, who want a war, and who *will make a war*, before this Administration goes out. The criminal neglect of our public servants is accumulating for them a beautiful entrenchment of justifications; and Millard Fillmore won't find his place a bed of roses, if he does not look to it himself. His sound, patriotic sense will soon set this all right, if he but takes it and his subordinates firmly in hand when he comes home from his travels.

Well, our party having duly acquitted their consciences by laying their plaint before Colonel Wilson, now at Fort Duncan, and having received the invariable border answer, "We

have no means to protect any body, and no powers to do anything," they went on very contentedly to settle things in their own way with the Mexicans. They found the Commandant asleep, and the Alcalde out of the way; but they courteously ordered the officer to be forthwith awakened, and laid before him their errand without delay. He talked Webster to them for the first ten minutes, and the Secretary of State himself could not have dwelt with more unction and logical force on the nullity of American rights, the nothingness of the American flag, and the sweet and sacred duty of respecting above all things, and before all things, the supremacy of foreign laws, whatever befalls Americans. We are lazy here—distressingly lazy. It comes, I suppose naturally, of a soft southern climate, and an idle border life. We cannot put ourselves to the trouble to bend the knee and kiss the garment-hem of beings no better than ourselves, whether they wield the lash in Cuba or Mexico. Our party made him comprehend that no time would be lost in idle petitions to a distant and apathetic authority, but that, nevertheless, they were not disposed to leave an American citizen to be enslaved for debt. The Mexican Commandante had a shrewd guess, also, that they were likely to go on with their purpose in a fashion to create work for both governments, with very little regard as to how far either the one or the other would be pleased in the matter. So he met the emergency with good grace, and offered them Victor as an evidence of his own personal good-will. He could not gainsay the fact that Mr. Webster, in his zeal to side with the Mexicans, had left the door wide open for American retaliation. If Mexicans could not be punished for invading our soil and carrying off our citizens, neither could our citizens be punished for passing into the Mexican territory and rescuing the wrongfully captured with armed hand. Like other dilemmas, this of

Mr. Webster has two horns, and he cannot eschew both. The liberation of Victor was yielded under show of a special concession of friendship, and with a distinct insistence on the principle laid down by our own Secretary of State, that no matter how he got there, whether by dark deceit or open kidnapping, an American once on the other side loses all his rights, and must submit to slavery or whatever the Mexican law—or the want of it—may inflict. We must wait yet awhile to test to the core this principle and the intentions of our government. In the case of Victor—and I confess I regret it—it was not brought to trial. The prison doors, though closed by Mexican laws, and guarded by the written decision of our Cabinet, flew open at the significant request of a few earnest men, and the illegal captive walked forth free. Before the sun set Victor was at home chanting his interminable ballads, but some of us were but half content that his liberty was granted under protest and as a favor, when it should be his by admitted right as an American citizen.

#### MR. WEBSTER'S MANAGEMENT.

CLOSE upon the deliverance of Victor by the resolute will of the citizens, who, in the absence of government-protection, decided on protecting themselves, came up tidings of similar disorders, similar omissions, and similar necessity of acting in self-preservation at other points on the border. It was too evident that this unhappy charter of impunity for all manner of crimes would provoke retaliation, and if Mr. Webster's unheard-of doctrines were fully acted upon, deluge the frontier in blood. Congress and the country seemed entirely oblivious to the fact that the border was virtually abandoned to the Camanches, without one earnest effort for its defence, and its inhabitants officially given over to be carried off and

enslaved for debt, at the pleasure of the Mexicans. The Senate was appealed to, and received statement of the exact situation of the frontier with incredulous surprise, but on the 26th of Feb., 1851, it called on the Secretary of State for information "concerning the forcible abduction of any citizen of the United States, or of any person living under their protection, and of his conveyance, to be reduced into Peon servitude in the Republic of Mexico." On the 3d of March, the day before Congress adjourned, and when it was too late to prosecute the inquiry very closely, Mr. Webster sent in all the correspondence respecting the abduction of poor Manuel Rios, with but one exception. This exception is so peculiar and unprecedented that it would never command belief if it was not of undeniable record. It is this: the Secretary of State *suppressed*, withheld utterly, from the Senate, his own letter of legal judgment and Cabinet fiat, which is given a few pages back, and which was the principal object of the call of the Senate. In the stead of the letter of scornful discouragement which he positively did send to the remote, uncared-for borderers, but which he dared not lay before the searching eye of the Senate, he says, "the Legation at the city of Mexico have been instructed to inquire into the case to which these documents relate; but as there is no treaty of extradition with the Mexican Republic, it will probably be difficult to reach the offenders."

No one will have the rudeness to doubt Mr. Webster's veracity, and of course he had "instructed the Legation at Mexico" to do something or other, though in what form, or to what end, is not visible, since in more than a year there has been no sign of any result. Even the rebuke of the Senate did not provoke the slightest attention to the deplorable state of the border. His license to marauders still remained an unrepealed and effective decree of outlawry for the

border, and not the slightest movement—at least there is no evidence of any—has been made to obtain the “treaty of extradition,” which he declared an all-essential preliminary to any act of self-defence. Band after band of Mexican robbers crossed the river and committed the most atrocious outrages, until at last, after about thirty Americans had been plundered and slaughtered at their own camps and firesides, the terrible state of the frontier was brought before Mr. Fillmore himself. His upright spirit was moved to active measures, and something may possibly be done before it is altogether too late. Still it must not be concealed from the people of the United States, that up to the month of July, 1852, after nearly two years of strenuous complaint, this is still the shameful position of our border population.

The country is abandoned to the Indians, who press their depredations up to the very precincts of our posts, leading their trains of stolen horses and captive women, and slaughtering the herds of our citizens within hearing of the drums of our posts, and those posts being but feeble infantry stations, are carelessly left without the means of repressing the savages. The citizens themselves are liable to be carried by violence from their homes and sold for debt in Mexico; unoffending residents on our soil have been, and are, torn almost weekly from their homes in the midst of our settlements, and still, *even to the call of our magistrates, the Secretary of State ventures to reply that this Republic cannot prevent, or chastise, the abduction and enslavement of an American citizen for debt.*

#### INDIAN RANGERS.

MEANTIME our settlement thrives apace. Workingmen and mechanics come over to us from Mexico with their families,

and women and children begin to flit about the prairies. If the government forgets to take care of us, we will try to take care of ourselves. Yet something like a national system of border protection begins to dawn forth in a few imperfect rays, it is true, but still they foretell the coming day. The utter absence of connected, judicious lines of communication along this whole frontier is absolutely incredible, and it is rather to the neglect of Congress and the inertia of three or four of the highest officers in the army than to the Cabinet, that this glaring default is to be imputed. Fort Duncan was intended, if anybody had a clear intention in the matter, to check the Indians and protect the great line of travel which crosses into Mexico and there branches on the route to California, and to the right and left of it on the paths of trade to the mining districts. The site chosen is not the very best, but if there was a sufficient force, which Congress refused, it would still be of infinite value in cutting off Indian forays on the lower country. There are several famous old Indian crossing-places above, and still others not far below, the fort, which, if a little more frequently visited by reconnoitering parties, would have to be abandoned by these enterprising red gentlemen. But unhappily there is seldom enough men at the post to do garrison duty, and of course the Indians come and go at their leisure. Wild Cat has chastised them occasionally, and might be converted into a permanent and powerful safeguard if the government would assign his band a home and rations. Bread, powder, and shot would be the main part of the tax, and it would be at once most humane, most politic, and most economical, to create a kind of border militia of the friendly tribes. It could so be arranged as to gather their families in settled homes where they would be systematically fed, clothed and instructed, at once a present hostage for the fidelity of their warriors, and a

pledge of the future good conduct of their tribe. We owe something very different to the Indians on our borders from the mockery of gifts and treaties, which we have dealt them—gifts of rum to destroy, treaties that covered their sure destruction with specious promises of peace and protection. Yet we call ourselves excellent Christians, and thank God we are not wicked, like other nations.

Feebly as Fort Duncan is manned, its mere presence gives security to the settlement, although the most formidable thing about it is the name of a United States military fort. That has an imposing sound, and the Indians will not attack it, or the dwellers under its shadow, although if they chose, they could muster strong enough to take it almost any day. Three or four skeleton companies—and very thin skeletons they are—are all the government can allow for four or five hundred miles of this river frontier. If these infantry companies cannot be supplied by contract with the seven-league boots of the fairy tale, there is no use in the world in sending them after the Indians. Yet, to say the very truth, we have no fears of the Indians at Eagle Pass. Their tracks and camp-fires are seen almost weekly by our shepherds, and they are known to pass near us with trains of captive Mexican women and children, but an armed neutrality is the order of the times between them and the Americans. They steal our horses and cattle now and then, and far afield a dead body is sometimes found bearing their death mark, but they give a wide berth to the dwellings. I ride out in my rambling way two or three miles, and never think of the danger of an Indian surprise.

#### PABLITO.

WE have an intelligent, brave little fellow with our shepherds who escaped from the Indians with the intrepid fore-



thought of a veteran. Pablo, or Pablito, as we call him to distinguish him from the old shepherd of the same name, was living with his mother on a rancho near Monterey. The Camanches swept down on them one black night, and with many a dead body and bloody sign left behind on their desolating track, they returned homeward with a plentiful booty in horses, women and children. The Camanches have adopted a course towards captives of this class, which seems the result of a fixed policy. The young females are given as slave-wives to their warriors, and the children are enrolled among their own native-born youth. Among the Indians this has always been done in partial instances, to supply a loss by death, or to gratify the fancy of a favorite brave, but these Camanches seem to make it a subject of premeditated effort to obtain as large an infusion of white and civilized members as they can obtain for their tribe; yet they have no appearance of wishing to learn any of the habits of civilized life. Some think there is under this a superstitious hope to convey to their tribe some of the resistless powers of the whites. However this is, Pablito, a clear-eyed and ready-witted boy, was destined by them to share, with many a weeping girl in their train of captives, the capricious adoption of the Camanche lodges. With a quiet resolution, wonderful in a boy of ten, he determined to escape even from their distant hunting grounds, if Providence did not favor him with an earlier day. On this resolution he acted, and his first step was to calm suspicion and conciliate good-will by assuming an air of content, and evincing on every occasion a prompt desire to obey and oblige his captors. The young philosopher had even the wisdom to recommend to the female companions of this harsh journey to suppress their tears, and follow his example of a tranquil and resigned demeanor. "But," said he, with the slightest possible smile curving his handsome lip,

“ I did not think it discreet to trust them with my whole plan of escape.”

The savages had crossed the Bravo and were far beyond pursuit on the American side, before they relaxed in their haste or watchfulness, but when the nearest settlement was a hundred miles in their rear they abated their pace and allowed some rest to their worn-out captives. Pablito had noticed among their stolen horses a hardy black mustang that never stumbled or flagged in their desperate flight—and this he marked for his own. There were, he said, more beautiful horses among them and some that were fleeter for a race of a few miles, but not one that could carry him so far without rest or food, as he intended to go towards his mother and his country before he stopped. He had made up his mind, with the stoic endurance of Indian blood, that he could have nothing to eat for the first three days, but in no wise daunted by this he launched out on his dimly-known course. In the night, when the tired and unsuspecting savages had at last abandoned themselves to untroubled sleep, he stole softly round to the desert-steed of his choice, detached him noiselessly from his picket, led him gently over the grass to a safe distance, and then alone, with no equipment but the Indian halter on his horse, unarmed and unprovisioned, he turned his face towards home and his mother. His general direction was correct, and at the end of three days he was met on the prairie by a friend of ours, and conducted to Eagle Pass. I claim the bold boy for my own particular service. It would be a sin to crush the spirit of this forest Bayard, into the narrow, down-trodden space of a peon's life ; but we must bring his mother to him before we can arrange his future, and, meantime, by his own choice, he ranges the hills and river-dells on his bonny black in company with the shepherds and mounted herdsmen.

## SHEPHERD LIFE.

Our shepherds have their autumn camp in a sweet, secluded *fulda* or lap of the hills, that slopes down to the water's edge in a thick carpet of mezquit grass, about six miles below Eagle Pass. It is hedged up and veiled around by a luxuriant frondage of wild growth, and so backed and walled in by a steep range of barren hills, that the traveller might pass it at a short distance twenty times before he discovered it, or noted the deep path that winds into it between the river and the almost perpendicular mountain-side. It is amusing to see Pablito sorting out and keeping order among a hundred or two of young lambs and kids as they frolic about the shady pen, impatient for their mothers, who have been led out to pasture in a separate flock. He has made some changes in the family distribution, and the mothers who have twins are to be robbed of one of their young to supply some bereaved ones with substitutes for their lost offspring. The older shepherds are not half as tender and adroit as my active, attentive Pablito in making these substitutions, and he is evidently gratified with my visits and the warm interest I take in his extensive young family. He will announce to me with the gravest solicitude, that the real mother of that painted kid has a daily quarrel with its adopted mother to regain it, and tell me how "that black lamb with the white mark on its head, like a royal crown," was lost by its dam and searched up by itself another one in that fine blooded ewe. In fine, we have an infinity of important consultations together, and neither of us ever tires of watching the ways of the animals. In these visits I have learned to comprehend the charm of a pastoral life, so hard to be understood, like the freedom of the sea, by those to whom it is not congenial. This out-door life and the easy movement from place to place,

has sufficient occupation to give relish to his simple diet and airy couch, with so much care and aim as to keep astir his faculties, but not enough of either to load him with anxiety. The shepherd wakes in the morning with something to do before him; he throws himself down to sleep at night with the consciousness of something done. The daily task and daily bread are finished together, and he passes into slumber on the wings of duty done, and the lulling certainty that to-morrow's work is within the easy compass of to-morrow's strength.

This calm monotony would not suit the eagle soul who feels a higher but more troublous mission beating at his heart for outlet, but to those who are of lowlier ambition there is a sweet independence and an unspeakable repose in a pastoral life. The sun disappears behind his golden curtain, the stars glance kindly from the cloudless sky, a light blaze flickers cheerfully under the over-hanging branches, lighting up with changeful smiles, the white tent picturesquely gleaming among the foliage, and cheerful voices rise and fall around it, like the music of the distant sea. Our shepherds are enjoying their supper of *atole*, or meal boiled in milk, roasted ears of corn, and broiled kid, and Pablito, with wide-open and astonished eyes, is hearing, for the first time, what everybody on the border hears doubtingly at first, but at last comes to accept as truth, that the Americans bring regular rains and seasons, such as they desire, with them. Pablito, with much polite deference, ventures upon some incredulity, but Domingo assures him upon the faith of a baptized Christian, it is true, for *he* knows that in Texas they had, in old times, the same serene, unweeping skies that now overhang the Bravo and despoil its harvests, year after year, but as soon as the Americans came and tore up the soil far and wide with their great steel ploughs, the rains began to fall wherever they made settlements, and kept step with them as they advanced

westward; from the Trinity to the Brazos; from the Brazos to the Colorado; from the Colorado to the Nueces, and now the harvest-giving rains were following their march to the Bravo. This is a singular truth, and a more complete philosophy may explain the *rationale* in the planting of trees, and household fires, and the upturning of the earth, but young Pablito was rather slow of faith in such phenomena.

"It is a curious thing," said Pablito senior, who is the deacon of the Peon circle, as Victor is its scholar, "a marvellous thing in truth, how these Americans persuade the rains to follow them wherever they go, while Christians have to dig *acequias* (canals for irrigation,) it is really wonderful."

"Do the bees also go before the Americans?" asked Pablito with interest.

"You may believe not," interposed Domingo with energy. "The bees belong to St. John the Baptist, and they always appear before Christians come to a country, in order to warn the Pagans to make way for them, but the Americans have no religion, and San Juan will not send his bees to drive out anybody for them. Yet it is true rain *is* given to them, though they have no saints or any religion."

None of the company could explain this mystery, and it may still be agitated in their star-lit councils, unless, indeed, they have finally accepted a suggestion of Pablito's. He remembered, at Monterey, the celebration of some national day by a party of Americans, in which they fired salutes, drank *aguardiente*, and made as great an uproar generally as twice as many Mexicans could do, with all their facilities of noise-making excited to the highest, and all this squared so exactly with an Indian's ideas of a grand religious festival that the boy thought, very naturally, it must be in honor of their patron saint. The name of Washington had some association with this tempestuous jubilee, and he modestly intimated his

belief that San Washington was the patron of the Americans, and that it was his intercession that brought them these refreshing and crop-producing showers. For some mischievous reason of his own our man Victor, who was saddling the horses for our homeward ride, thought proper to encourage this opinion, and almost clinched their belief that after all it was possible the Yankees had a religion and a saint of their own, by reminding them how parched and rainless northern Mexico has been since the American army had withdrawn from the country.

#### THE INDIAN ALPHABET.

WE were riding one day among the broken range of hills, that press down close to the river, some seven or eight miles below Eagle Pass, when Pablito quite calmly observed that eleven mounted Indians had passed along there the day before, with a train of horses and captives.

“Who gives this information, Pablito?” I naturally inquired.

“I see it with my eyes; here are the tracks,” said the boy confidently, and almost surprised that any eyes could fail to see them. I dismounted, and with careful observation could discern through the short grass a confused multitude of tracks, but they seemed too faint and too much overlaid, one upon the other, to be worth much as guides, but I desired to know how my brave and intelligent little shepherd came to such definite conclusions.

“There were three large American horses, as you can see by the size of their foot-prints, and two mules, and the rest, as you may see by their little unshod feet, were mustangs, (native ponies,) and they were afraid and went fast, for here

the hoofs all come down in a gallop, and close to the leader, for the track is narrow and equal."

"But how do you know that these eleven animals were all that bore riders out of so large a *cavallarda*?"

"The horses that are free scatter out in a broad and unequal line, and those that carry the weight of a master leave deeper prints." He pointed out to me the difference, but I could discover none. It would be invisible to any sight but that of an Indian, or a keen and practised borderer.

"And why are you so sure that they passed yesterday, and late in the day?"

"Ah! it is very clear. It was not before the norther that blew so freshly in the forenoon, for that would have covered the tracks with more dust, and yet there are signs on them of the sprinkle we had before sunset."

"Are you willing to take your pony and follow up the trail, for more information?"

"If you command it," was the prompt reply. I had no thought of sending him out on this dangerous quest, but I am sure he would, if so ordered, have taken the trail at once. They have no other books, but they read letter by letter these signs and marks in the wilderness, and spell out their meaning as certainly as if they read it from a printed page; and these Mexicans are as far from cowards, and as willing to face any danger, of which they can comprehend the nature and the way of contending with it, as any people in the world.

### THREE FORMS OF SLAVERY.

HERE, then, we have side by side, as if laid out for dissection and verdict, the three forms of slavery into which Christendom divides its profitable custom of trading in the bones

and blood of human labor. We have African servitude on our side of the river, and they have white and Indian servitude on the other. It is comfortable to have this difference in our ways, for by it we can be as much shocked as we please at our neighbor's iniquities and read him glowing lessons on the awfulness of his doings, and he can do the same by us; and so nobody have time to look at their own sins. What a miserable, moping set we would be all around, if we had no faults but our own to cure! Then the superfine free-soil Christian that kills nothing but white factory girls and hired bond-servants with neglect, contempt, unwholesome fare, overwork and the like, has such a delicious charter to be severe on the owners of *bought* black slaves and red ones. It would be a pity—and a new thing in human nature—if we did not enjoy the banquet of self-glorification.

The third form of servitude—the hireling servitude of want, ignorance and vice—is not, on this side of the Atlantic, an hereditary destiny, at least, not quite so absolutely as it is in the Old World, but still there are thousands born in our large cities with the taint of sin and neglect so strong upon and around them, that the honest, full grown life of freedom is as nearly impossible to their fettered souls as emancipation, and the light that must keep step with it, is to the born thrall of a southern plantation. The man who *must sell* his sweat and sinews to hard repulsive toil, or starve, is not free. The child who is nurtured in misery and vice, who is never taught how to live a useful life, and who from the cradle is goaded into a war of self-preservation against the interests of his fellow-man, is not likely to win a true and honorable freedom. The place of beginning is to so frame the laws and customs of society, that instruction and employment shall be the sure and well-understood right of all the children of the State. The next step will follow more easily and naturally, which is



to make labor honorable. Not to talk of its honor and utility in general abstractions, and then descend from the pulpit or forum, to wither with courtly scorn, or trample down in the mire with aristocratic heel, your hired servant who has been provided with no honest way of getting bread but by selling you all the good years of his life.

My test of a sincere and consistent anti-slavery man is very simple, yet in some scores of intelligent professors of that faith, I have found but two who came up to it. It is this: *Will the disciple of equal rights give a place at his table to his hired domestics? Will he welcome to his parlor the mechanic who has created its elegance?*

One of these two men was a preacher, and an ornament of the Methodist church, and if his whole household were gathered at one table, and shared in all the amenities of a simple yet refined family circle, he was careful that none were admitted to it who would endanger its purity by the shadow of vicious coarseness. The other was simply a fanatic, and goes for nothing, since fanaticism, like other insanities, teaches nothing except by its warnings. The good Shepherd, for that was his name as well as his vocation, practised the equality he preached, but even this high-minded exception to the general army of theorists did not, in his actual practice, put the rough, unhewn block in the place of the polished cornerstone. He did what all pretend a desire to do, yet few of us even attempt to perform in fact; he gave, in every respect, due honor and fellowship to the honorable and worthy laborer. By this course of justice, respect *and fellowship*, the toiler is polished and elevated, and without asking any one to endure the companionship of vulgar, narrow-mindedness (though such often comes to our doors in carriages), it is in the power of every member of good society to help largely in this mission. Most of all, women may do much for our domestic

heathen by reserving and *using* for the bloated intemperance of the rich man, the careless scorn that now rains down discouragement and abasement upon the head of the man of toil. I only supplicate that worth and intelligence shall be honored wherever it is met ; that it shall have a welcome and courtesy wherever you are ; that it shall be held as ill-bred, as it certainly is unchristian, to affect a shallow contempt for the representative of any trade or calling, while the man is your equal in the gifts of heaven and in their proper cultivation. Let every just man and woman in the nation resolve to treat all the working people in their sphere of influence with the social distinction that his or her own conscience declares to be merited, and at once the whole national character will be ennobled, for man will outrank money. There are many who will meanly and timidly shrink from receiving in their drawing-rooms an able mechanic or a practical inventor perhaps, while they make haste to kiss the shoe-tie of any weak, idle, dissipated young *lord*, who has no merit on earth more than that some ancestor was a fortunate robber, or adroit court perjurer. But these are as unworthy of the imperial birth-right of an American citizen as they are in faith and practice unfit to sit at the table of Jesus of Nazareth. They are as deficient in the courage and dignity of republicans as they are in the loving-kindness of Christ.

#### PEONIZING A MOTHER.

A TALL, fine-looking woman, with every mark of gentle nurture that can be seen in any Mexican lady, came to ask a confidential interview. We conversed at length, and her grace, gentleness, and well-turned expressions left a deep impression on my feelings. This lady was the bond-servant of her son's widow, assigned to her with other portions of the

deceased husband's chattels as the widow's share of his property. This is the bitter feature of peon servitude; the most delicate white lady, the fairest child of promise may be dragged down to it on the first cloud of misfortune, and those of their own blood are often tempted by the facilities of the law to traffic in the bondage of their kinsmen.

Anita was the daughter of an old Spanish officer who died, sword in hand, in defending the cause of the crown against revolted Mexico. The orphan was protected, as were hundreds more of portionless girls, in a nunnery of San Luis, or Monterey, until a home was found for her, and she finally married a merchant of the place. When at his death his eldest son succeeded him in the business, it was discovered to be in a bad state, or at least so averred her son Don Blas, and on his proposal the family removed to one of the towns nearer the Bravo in order to be on the line of contraband trade. Here Doña Anita gave away her daughter in marriage, but only to see the fair young bride begin to wither and sink into the grave under the rule of a harsh, miserly, unloving husband. The unhappy mother received in her arms a helpless infant, the dying gift of her daughter, when she closed her eyes. Before this blow fell upon her, Don Blas, her now prosperous son, had also wedded the heiress of a wealthy ranchero, and on bringing home his wife he thought proper to come to a settlement with his mother.

It is among the curious inconsistencies of the Mexicans that while it is most uncommon for a child to treat a parent with unkindness or disrespect, it is not so uncommon to reduce them to bondage. Custom—in all lands, the law of laws—permits the one, but will not tolerate the other, and perhaps resting on this certainty of filial treatment, Anita made no opposition to being “accommodated” with her son. That is, she confessed before the Judge, that for her own and her daughter's

needful clothing—and the like matters—she was indebted to her son Blas, and consented to serve him in legal peonage for the debt. Don Blas permitted his peonized mother to bring home and nurse his sister's orphan, and when a year or two rolled on, and its brutal father took another wife of his own mould, there seemed no other refuge left open to the little Margarita. But when Don Blas died suddenly two years ago, the sky was again overcast. In the division of the estate the peonized Anita became the personal property of her daughter-in-law, and, in addition to a severe change in her own labors, she was told, first softly and indirectly, but at last with stern distinctness, that Margarita, now approaching her seventh year, must find a new home or be "accommodated" with a peon's bonds. The widowed, childless, heart-broken Anita resolved to come to me for aid. The unfeeling father of Margarita is now a ruined, dissipated wanderer—and rumor says a pitiless robber—about Mier, Comargo, and the towns on the lower Bravo. I was encumbered already with engagements beyond my strength, but it was hard to resist the modest yet urgent petition of this sorrowful woman. She only prayed to enter as a servant in mine, or if that could not be, any American family that would shelter her Margarita also, and bring her up in the enlightened customs of the free American. "Let me become your peon," she said, "and I will devote to your service my body and blood, but open your heart to this poor child." Oh, how eloquently did she plead for that helpless one!

I explained, what she partly knew, that she could not enslave herself to me, as it is a form of servitude not recognized by our laws; but that if she chose to remain on this side of the river, so that we could enforce her mistress to accept a just settlement of her debt, instead of the long-drawn-

out iniquity of two hundred dollars, my house was open to her, and we would see what could be done.

"But I have promised to return to my duties, (*mis deberes*), if I cannot pay the whole *cuenta*."

"Then you have promised away every chance of liberty, for on neither side of the river can a person be found to advance this sum, even if they trusted, as I would like to do, to your remaining faithful to your new service," I was constrained to reply. I felt the necessity of this plain speaking, for it is a false charity to pay to any grasping master these exaggerated demands, and waste on one object that which, if properly applied, would open the prison doors of a dozen peon families. If they can get a just balance struck, and will keep this side of the river while they are paying it, half of the peons I know could, with reasonable help and countenance, work out their debt in a year.

"But tell me how you came to owe your son so large a sum," I continued.

"It was not a large sum, only twenty-seven dollars when my son 'accommodated' me."

"How then did it swell to two hundred, when you were working all the time?" I knew pretty well how it was done, but I wished to hear it from her own lips.

"By putting in my *cuenta* the sugar allowed for Margarita's atole, (meal porridge,) and the soap for our clothes, and a wool mattress to sleep on, and for meat, and medicine sometimes, and for all we wore, and for two blankets and some cotton for sheets," (sheets and a mattress are, by the way, most unpeon luxuries,) "and all this in nine years made a large *cuenta*."

"Then no clothing was given to you or the orphan without putting it in the *cuenta*?"

"Nothing, Señora; but then, on Sundays, and days of

permission, I embroidered for others, and earned a little money to buy things for Margarita. Embroidery and fine needle-work was my *destino*, (allotted occupation,) until lately. Since I have suffered much pain in my side, and feel an occasional cough, I have been taken from the needle and put to the *metate*, which is worse."

There was a gleam of explanation in this: her mistress' daughter saw the consumption was stealing upon the over-worked needle woman, and she was sent to the *metate*, or corn-grinder, to be tormented into finding another buyer before she grew altogether useless.

"I think such a daughter does not deserve that you should go back at all; but since you have given your faith, I see no other way," I was forced, most unwillingly, to reply.

The enslaved lady—for lady she was in every graceful word and gesture—left me with a slow, reluctant heart, to return to the house of bondage, and before a way could be devised to snatch her, and the child of her yearning love, from their chains, death, the pitying angel, unloosed her bonds. The young Margarita is now enslaved for the debt charged against her grandmother, and thus all that is left of a gallant Spanish name is brought within the inexorable abasement of peonage.

Theorize as you will, your own heart will rebel against your conclusions, if you affirm that slavery is not most grievous to a mind and spirit born and trained in the hopes and expansion of a better life. I turn back always in the comparison to these facts, and think that wiser pens should take up the text:—

Twelve millions of the Red Race have been degraded, and are dying off, by the slow poison of peonage, and no one consoles, no one instructs the feeble half that remains of the Native American stock. Less than half a million of stupid and

ferocious blacks, brought from Africa, have become three millions in number, and a vastly improved race, even in the worst of our slave States. Letters and the arts have been conferred on them, they have been aided to create a new and flourishing realm in their benighted fatherland, and emancipation hovers over them like a banner of promise. Colonization opens to them wealth, country, and distinction, and all Americans—except those who have some fanatical uses for them—cheer them helpfully on their way. Yet, this growing, thriving, hopeful black race, for whom reparation is shining out in every quarter; who have their rich ancestral continent for a home and heritage, finds a pitying orator on every political stump, while the half-slaughtered Red Race, to whom remains not home, refuge or country, meets no glance of sympathy or kindness.

Oh that a Presidential election could turn on some show of justice to the hunted Red man, what a plenitude of generous missions would put forth their blossoms! What a chant of tender sympathy would chorus through the land! What patterns of brotherly love we would all be—if it would elect a candidate—until after election!

#### DONA REFUGIA.

ANITA, the well-born and pure-blooded white lady, was not alone in this intense desire to rescue her child from the thralldom of ignorant peonage. Doña Refugia, the lovely widow of an officer in the Mexican army, requested me to receive herself and two children, a bright boy of fifteen, and a sprightly girl of twelve, in my family to do the work of the domestic servants. She stipulated that the work should be done, and well done, but for the honor of her husband's name she would expect the children and herself should be treated as of the family. This, too, I had to decline, for I

could not, in any case, displace those who were tried and faithful in their duties; yet, when I heard, six months after, that evil tongues were busy with the fame of this still young and beautiful woman, I was fearful that I had fallen short of what might have been done to shield and sustain a lonely, unprotected woman.

Both these cases were of white women cradled in prosperity and nurtured in elegance, but among the Indians, backward and reserved as they are, we discover rich veins of ambition, whenever they are encouraged to unfold, or rather to form, hopes of a manlier destiny than peonage. This is what people deny of the Red Race; but have these loud-voiced skeptics ever made the trial? My own experience is not extensive, it only amounts to the study of those who have come in contact with me as our own servants, those of our friends, and the Mexicans we encounter in travel. Yet it is sufficient for my conviction that the Indian is more susceptible to mental effort than the African. I have had failures, and I have had success, with both in my limited range, but the most cheering success has certainly been with the Red Race. Two young girls, one a mulatto, the other a pure Indian, applied to me to teach them to read. They had an idea that a book was a mystery they could soon unlock, if one who had the key would show them the way. It was a sad interruption to my idle ways, but they were so anxious to learn, that I received them into my house, to the great discomposure of my new handmaiden Jesusa. There was a pretence of assisting her with the needle, but she declared they only plagued her to death. In about two months they began to read, and understand something of what they read, when my patience gave way, and they both were sent home, prepared to forget—or improve as might chance—all they had learned. A friend said, the mulatto would soon dismiss all thought of



the matter, while the Indian would retain, if no more, all she had acquired, with the usual tenacity of her race, and so indeed it proved. I have sometimes seen this exactly reversed, yet in ranging back over my field of observation, the balance is largely in favor of the Indian capacity.

#### AFRICANS AND INDIANS.

So while we are ranging the world to find something as bad as our Southern slavery, we utterly forget that Mexico, with one third of the population of the United States, has more millions of bondsmen than we possess. Of the two classes, the Africans are infinitely the best cared for in the matter of physical comforts, and are the least crushed by the deep and hopeless sense of unjust degradation. While the Indian pines away in sadness and discontent, the Black laughs cheerily through his existence. His light heart is free from those biting traditions of a nobler state which haunt the fallen white and the enslaved Red man. How many white men there are in the bonds of vice, who sleep every night in the mire of abasement, and wake every morning under the goad of that hard task-master Want—a task-master who spares his serfs as little, and who drives them, as the statistics of civilization show, to miserable graves, much faster than the slave and peon owners do theirs—we will not compute, but when money and emancipationists are busy in “freedom’s cause,” they should not be forgotten. There is much hereditary bondage in this class of bondsmen. Tens of thousands of children are cast upon earth by this army of intemperate and vicious parents, to be trampled upon and crushed into early graves by the hurrying feet of their Christian brethren. No one expects those who are rushing on in the monomania of some one-ideal benevolence to turn from their path to Africa, Ceylon, or China, to raise up the dying little heathen in their

own streets, but surely there should be a juster distribution of alms when *sane* Christians convene in the temple of truth.

When I venture thus to petition that the infant heirs of white degradation, and the helpless children of Indian bondage, should share in the magnificent outpourings of emancipating love, let it not be perverted into a wish to deprive the exiled African of his portion of sympathy. We owe him—and in the march of the age it will come to him—instruction, freedom, and a home in the land of his fathers. This, too, we owe to the plundered, exiled, and half-slaughtered Indian. Out of the imperial realms and countless treasures we have robbed from him, give him back a little corner for home and shelter, a small mite to feed and comfort the feeble remnant that remains to him. Let the annuities which he is now encouraged to squander in spirituous poisons be used to reconvert him to a man. So, too, of the African. The sums that are lavished upon two or three doubtful individuals would, if used with a broader wisdom, build up a town of free and pleasant homes, and convey to them the parents of a new life and freedom-giving colony. It is well to liberate one African slave; it is better to raise a hundred to the elevation of self-government, and make of them a beacon-light before the race.

Here on the Mexican frontier we can see in its broadest lights and shadows, the course of these unprepared, undisciplined races, when left to themselves. Here, the hundreds of runaway slaves, who are tempted to escape from Texas into Mexico, have all the social rights and honors of the most esteemed citizens. His joyous hilarity is a welcome relief to the serious Mexicans, he is at once accepted as a favorite, an equal, and there is no impediment to his popularity or success, and yet by far the greater number soon get "accommodated" with peon bonds. Many, however, of the young

men of mixed blood, who have been well-trained perhaps, in the household of their masters, settle themselves advantageously, marry in the best families, and carry their honors with high dignity. They are a most jocund, generous, forgiving race, and many amusing stories are told of their ways.

#### THE COLORED DON.

AN American of my acquaintance was travelling in Mexico, and as he was walking one fine evening, in the city of Monterey, his eye was attracted by the comfortable, self-satisfied air of a gentleman, slowly walking down the street towards him, swinging as he went an enormous key. A second look convinced him that this portly key-holder was the runaway cook of a friend in southern Texas, so he accosted him with, "Ah, Dan, is that you?"

"Don Dionisio de Echavaria, if you please, sir," said the cidevant Dan, with a courtly bow, recognizing at the same time the stranger.

"Well, Don Dionisio be it then," said the accommodating traveller. "But how did you come by such a fine name, Señor Don?"

"Oh, I did my father-in-law, the judge, the honor to adopt his, as mine did not suit me. It was only fit for a plantation nigger," said Don Dionisio, with an air of ineffable disgust.

"But what in the name of wonder are you doing with that ponderous key, Don Dionisio? You are not the keeper of the city prison, are you?"

"No, it is the key of my warehouse," said the Don, with dignity,—his warehouse was garnished with about ten dollars' worth of soap, candles, sugar, and cigaritos, be it observed.—"I cannot find a confidential clerk among these lazy

Mexicans," continued the magistrate's son-in-law, "and I am obliged to take in my own charge the key."

"You want a clerk, Dan—I beg pardon, Don Dionisio?" inquired the traveller, with a serious face. "Well, suppose you take me? But, first, what about the treatment and salary?"

"As to the salary," said Don Dionisio, a little disconcerted, "we must talk of that afterwards, when we see how you answer, but as for the treatment, upon the honor of a gentleman, you shall fare like myself, with a place at my own table. My lady will receive you as if you were my own brother."

"Excellent, I will see you to-morrow, Dan—ten thousand pardons—Don Dionisio, but if I should not conclude to stay here, have you no message to send to your old home?"

"Give my respects to the old gentleman, my uncle," (so it pleased the Don to designate his former master,) "and tell them all that if they come this way my house is open to them. But how is my old friend, Gen. H.?"

"Very well, indeed, and he has become as steady as a church."

"I am very glad to hear it. I used to be ashamed of his company, sometimes, but if he is so much improved, I would like to take him by the hand."

"I thank you in his name. Good bye." And so they parted, not to meet again; but this colored man, with all his little harmless pomposity, has more than once rendered kind and efficient service to Americans.

There are not many colored persons, however, who prosper in this stricken and paralyzed country; it only yields its latent treasures to the energetic and intelligent grasp of the white man. Yet this equality of caste and color is a great allurements to the Africans on her border, and it is also the absolute guarantee against a hasty consummation of that

dreaded annexation—and the still more awful chimera of Slavery Extension—which, like the black shadow on the Hartz mountains, overshadows and terrifies so many believing spirits.

#### INDIAN FORAYS.

SOME idea of the make and character of the country must be borne in mind, in order to understand the entire absence of system and forecast in the arrangements for border defence. The Indians have no longer homes or families in the wide band of unsettled country that borders the whole length of the navigable current of the Rio Bravo down to its mouth—for Laredo and the few towns that at far intervals dot the lower part of its course have no settlements back of them—and all this range of a thousand miles in length, from the coast back, is a field for their sudden forays. They pour down from their distant fastnesses, far beyond Eagle Pass, in parties of from a dozen up to some hundred warriors, mounted on the fleetest of their desert steeds, and free from every incumbrance but their light trappings for war or the chase. They had been driven by the Texans beyond this region, as a place of encampment with their women and children, before the annexation, and only revisit it at intervals to plunder and destroy the Texan settlers. The old Texan style of border defence was exceedingly simple and effectual. They gathered at the first note of danger—for every colonist had something dear to protect, and no means of protection except what lay in his own stout arm and sure rifle—and they all went on the trail of the savage with the single and direct intent to exterminate him wherever found. As the outer edge of settlements pressed deeper and deeper into the wilderness, and their herds and flocks—the chief wealth of these frontier farms—

multiplied around them, they became a perpetual fountain of supply to these roving Indians. They rush down so suddenly upon their prey, and disappear with it so rapidly, that it requires an alert, light-armed, experienced woodsman, like themselves, to pursue them with any hope of success. Judge, then, of the sagacity of the Solomons at Washington in sending infantry to suppress these wild horsemen of the wilderness! On one occasion they made such havoc of life and property all around the towns and posts low down the river, that the commanding officer sent forth detachments in *wagons* in the hope of cutting off some of their scattering parties, and rescuing the women and children the savages had captured. It was a forlorn hope; but what brave and feeling man could omit to do whatever he could, however faint the probability in its favor, to save a score of helpless beings from such a fate? If his efforts were insufficient, let the blame rest with those who were so reckless of border wants as to provide no better means for its defence. Unless the Indians were polite enough to come up to the soldiers' muskets and ask to be shot, I do not see how infantry were to hurt them. With a suitable mounted force to range along the line and interpose an ever vigilant barrier to incursive parties, an adequate infantry force to maintain the fixed posts that flanked their operations would be of effective service. Rangers are best for out-service, for scout and pursuit, for courier and escort necessities, and for whatever offers in which quick action in the wilderness is the thing most specially desirable, but in posts of concentration and supply, the order and discipline of the regular army becomes of great value. The more so, as on a frontier line delicate cases of international right and courtesy will occur, in which the authority and responsibility of the officer commanding on our side should be of the best recognized character.

In whom, then, lies this default of fit and adequate protection for this blood-stained frontier? Is it in Congress, in not providing the means; or in the Cabinet, in not using them with sounder wisdom? The useless, and forever useless, ship-of-war *Pennsylvania*, has cost more money than is needed to open and defend a mail route from the Gulf to California, and such a route would soon dot its whole course with a line of settlements competent for their own protection.

#### WILD CAT'S POLICY.

THE Mexican authorities found no impediments in the way of making a firm treaty of alliance with the Seminoles. A beautiful location about thirty miles above Eagle Pass was assigned to his people, after converting them one and all into full and entire citizens of the "golden republic," by a quick, simple, and satisfactory process of naturalization rather peculiar to Mexico. Even the black slaves among them—and Wild Cat himself owns several—were "accommodated" to the Mexican system of servitude under all the necessary legal forms, though a very old woman among them told me the only difference she ever found between being a slave and a peon, was in the harder way they had of grinding corn in Mexico, and that meat seemed scarcer. The Chief, and his cousin, the Bear, were made Judge and Sheriff of the new municipality. Wild Cat also took rank and pay—or the promise thereof—as an officer of the Mexican army; so, as the colonel and magistrate of a *partido* of the Mexican republic, he had a double stake in its glory. Nevertheless, whether by force of habit or sound judgment, his predilections were evidently with the Americans. He kept his hunting camp as near our settlement as he could, ranged in amity the passes that covered it, and in many ways was a willing and useful guard

against the too near approaches of the common foe, the savage Camanches.

One fine morning Wild Cat drew up unexpectedly at our door, with only his two interpreters and an inferior servant in attendance—a small and confidential train for a chief who delights to ride forth with a strong display of armed warriors and captive servants. It was a quiet business call, but bore as plainly and distinctly on the great plan of his life, as these dark untrusting Indians ever show forth their thoughts. He wishes to become the accepted soldier and agent of the United States, and win renown and influence by taming down the hostile and troublesome border Indians to keep peace with the whites. To do this, and become in our eyes and theirs the foremost man of the Red Race, it is as necessary to chastise and subdue the refractory as it is to win over and harmonize the willing tribes. He had but lately returned from one of those long and inexplicable trips, which unquestionably have reference to the grand object of his ambition, and he looks wearied and care-worn. His dress was unusually plain and travel-soiled, and altogether there was something exceedingly stern and unsatisfied in his air; but it might be only that he was not well content with the summons from his military superior which he met on his arrival home. His orders were peremptory, to muster all his followers and allies, and move with all his force down the river to attack the insurgent—Carvajal.

At the first glance, Wild Cat might have passed for a white borderer arrayed for a long hunting expedition, but a second look revealed many little Indian peculiarities. He wore a shirt of blue printed cotton, and overalls of deerskin, dressed to a dark color, and fringed neatly down the seams—probably the work of that favorite wife, whose name he suffers no one to pronounce but himself, and who is only spoken of in the tribe



as the Chief's Companion. A crescent-shaped silver medal decorated his breast, and a collar of gay bead-work encircled his neck. All the party wore turbans of bright-colored kerchiefs wreathed around their brows, in a style that would sit with legitimate grace on the brow of an Arab. And strange to say, one of his interpreters was an Arab. He was a tall, stately, self-possessed being, with the aquiline features and round glittering eye of the desert-born. They called him a Moor, but he was really an Arab, from the Asiatic side of the Red Sea. He had been decoyed on board a Spanish trader, and borne away to slavery in Cuba. He was in Cuba long enough to acquire so much Spanish as served to make him a fair interpreter for the Seminole chiefs, when he escaped across the dividing straits and sought a refuge among the Florida Indians. The other interpreter was our famous Gopher John, a full-blooded negro, whose immediate parents were from Africa. John, or as the Lipans call him, "Laughing Dog," is, in all his ways, true to the records of three thousand years of dependent servitude. He is pliant, docile, heedless of race or nationality, and only intent to serve his chief in the way he is most pleased to be served, yet no coward withal, and as generous and light-hearted as he is thoughtless of the future. The Arab, on the contrary, bore himself as if he felt the pride of his ancient nobility of thirty-five centuries of warlike self-sovereignty could not be torn from him by any mortal robber. As they placed themselves by the side of the Indian chief it was impossible not to be struck with the remarkable coincidence. Here, on this remote frontier line, the types of the three races of men so hardly pressed by the relentless, all-grasping whites, were confronted by one of the conquering race, and on a mission, too, that had its rise in, and avouched for, his supremacy. In that small room plundered Asia, enslaved Africa, and mar-

tyred America, were each represented in blood, in character, and in suffering by a lineal son ; and to make the meeting as complete as it was extraordinary, the fourth man of this singular convocation was of that haughty Norman stock which for a thousand years has filled or shaken the thrones of Europe, and which erases, with the point of the sword, the laws of every nation it enters, to write its own in their stead.

Yet these four men never thought of it at all, or only thought of it as an inevitable and irresistible destiny, as they calmly discussed how best to subdue the restless Indian tribes who still roam at will in what we have left them of their ancient heritage ; how to quell the fierce insubordinates, who are so slow to learn that the whites have a stronger title than themselves to the huntings-grounds of their fathers ; how to save from utter destruction those who had been subdued, and were willing to live in peaceful submission if the United States would but secure to them a City of Refuge. It is to be regretted for the Red man's sake, as well as our own, that we cannot give permanent homes, present support, and eventual civilization, to the suffering and friendly tribes on the frontier, and particularly to Wild Cat and his band. It is entirely in the power of our Government to make this able chief an instrument for good or evil service, for his restless ambition and versatile talents *must* be employed, and in his fate and plans there is now a pause for breath and decision which a bold, prompt policy, would not fail to seize and turn to the right account. Shall this untamed tiger of the desert make his spring on us, or on the savage tribes ? They are his enemies as they are ours, and if we but give him easy scope and fair encouragement, he will bound on them teeth and claws. His pride of rule and his savage fame are the breath of his nostrils, he lives but to win command, and would freely die to have it said in his death chant, that he was the highest chief

of a hundred tribes. If the whites will open to him a pathway to renown by sending him against the hostile tribes, he will do their work better than half a dozen regiments. If they shut the door upon him, then he will continue his plans of combination, and strive to pour out upon this border a fiery torrent of desolation. Eagle Pass nestles safely in its nook, and has less to fear than the richer settlements that spur out and fringe the edge of the cultivated country, but nowhere are flocks and herds secure in an open district of one hundred and fifty miles wide by fifteen hundred long on this frontier. Yet Wild Cat, with a regiment of dragoons and a company or two of mounted Texan riflemen, would sweep this region clean in a year, and leave it as dainty and secure as the Capitol grounds.

#### SLAUGHTERED HERDS.

AT the call of his commanding officer the Seminole chief withdrew from our range and went down the country to take the part that became a Mexican dignitary of his rank, in the war against Carvajal. Some of the Americans call it "Carvajal's calico war," the question in issue being, as they averred, whether he should pay, or escape paying, the duties on sundry bales of cotton goods. It may be so, for it too often happens with Mexican revolutions and American elections, that the spoils is the only principle at stake, and in proportion to *their* value is the vehemence of the contest. The Camanches conduct their wars on the same plan, only that they are too ignorant to dress up their motives with such fine words and plausible excuses as we do, and in sheer poverty of speech they are forced to tell out the story and say their object is plunder, their excuse hunger and necessity. We have driven them back, and farther back, from the rich pastures and wooded

vales of their old inheritance, and when the grass fails in the stony defiles and parched mountain sides of their barren land of refuge, they *must* pour down upon us who have possessed ourselves of their ancient camp fires, and filled their hunting grounds with our herds,

“ And from the robber rend the prey.”

We who represent the victorious and usurping race, must, as heirs and sharers in the common deed, take with it our portion of the consequences. We must have the justice to feed and civilize these famishing outlaws, or we must have the hardihood to exterminate them. In recording some little of the blood-thirsty work they perpetrated all around us, I must also record my painful conviction that, according to their light and the measure of their provocations, their sin of blood is not so heavy as ours. Out of the millions upon millions of revenue derived from the domain we rifled from them under the plea—which would be valid enough if we urged it more honestly—that we give it to humanity and civilization, how many Indians have we rescued from barbarism? how many dollars have we expended to fit them for or place them in Christian homes? We have professed to make treaties and pay the Red man with Pharisee exactitude, the full price and value of his destroyed independence—but in what wholesome coin? Powder and rum—murder and suicide—this is what enlightened Christianity gives him back for the matchless empire bequeathed to him by a long line of the free lords of the forest.

We all need Christian instruction, whether in the city or wilderness, but most out here. We have had but one visit from a clergyman in two years, and the devoted Odin, bishop of Texas, made a long and trying journey to see us, and if possible, open a way for a church and school at Eagle Pass.

He dwelt much on this rule, "Do unto others even as ye would have others do unto you." This was a part of his teachings, but it is strange doctrine, and would be a curiously perplexing practice for American Christians. It may be a line stolen from some old pagan after all, for Bishop Odin is a Catholic, and Catholics are said to be idolaters; and taking unfair advantage of our great distance from proper instruction, they have passed it off on our innocence as a Christian precept. If it is in the sacred writings, it is to be feared that our Cabinet never read the Bible.

After Wild Cat and his rangers departed the hostile Indians pressed closer down to our homesteads, and I was forced to narrow down to closer limits my free and delightful rides over the wild and boundless prairie. It spoiled their zest, when the order to saddle my pony inevitably brought with it the rattle of preparation for armed attendance and a close scrutiny into the health of six-shooters.

Yet all this taught me to confide in my household. There was not a coward in it, not even my coquettish young maid Jesusa, who had set our combustible-hearted Victor distracted, and made a bashful lamb of our sedate and dignified mayordomo, Reyna. One day, in the temporary absence of my husband, we were all collected on the highest part of the house, to watch the antics of a party of Indians, on the opposite bank of the river. They had rained down suddenly, from no one knew where, on the rancho of Don Felipe Garcia, and appeared to enjoy amazingly the pastime of lancing some of his finest cows, that, unluckily for themselves and their master, happened to be in the *corral*. There would be no end to the confusion such a scene would create in a New England family, fresh from the calm shadow of the village church; there was not a troubled eye or quivering lip in the whole of that attentive circle. Mexicans, of the peon class, are neglected

children, and often behave badly in a strait from want of self-confidence or good leaders, but cowards they are not. I have always found them collected and resolute, and in this case, being willing to try—for on the frontier it imports one to know—the mettle of our servants, I asked Guillermo, the mason, and the oldest of them, if he did not think it would be well to arm our men and go to the aid of Don Felipe's rancheros.

“If you command it we are ready, señora,” was the cool and prompt reply. I remained a little longer, and when I went down they were all getting their guns loaded; for, with thoroughly Indian improvidence, these Mexicans, who are rarely without a gun about them, almost never have it ready for use. In this is the vast superiority of the American over the Mexican frontiersman: his horse and his arms are the best he can get, and he attends to their condition with vigilant care. He feels that he is ready to fight or flee to the best advantage; and is conscious that the wild Indian knows him for a strong and watchful adversary—and this alone makes odds in his favor. Thus the small American population of Eagle Pass, and the reputation of a United States post at Fort Duncan, commanded a distance and respect from the hostile Indians, which its actual strength by no means entitled it to, and which the same force of Mexicans would not inspire. Whether the Indians on the opposite bank were moved by any consideration of the presence of the two or three houses on our side, or whether they refrained in pure good nature from further mischief, they confined, on that occasion, their slaughter to the cattle, and retired before we had decided that it was necessary or advisable to interfere, and for some time we heard no more of Indian depredations.

The inquiry naturally and necessarily occurs to every one who knows we devote twenty millions a-year to the military

and naval service, "Why is not the force at Fort Duncan called out to drive back to their hills these marauding Indians?" But, if it has not been said before, we will say now—or if it has been said, it is still worth repeating—that there is no effective force at Fort Duncan, not even enough for escort duty. There is something like thirty infantry soldiers, on an average, for garrison duty, and if four or five of them were detailed—which is the most that could be spared, unless the ladies of Eagle Pass were to charge themselves with the care of the post in the absence of its regular defenders—to go in pursuit of the Indians, they would have to go on foot. The unpolished savages never take the trouble to wait long for such visitors; and unless they did wait for them with exemplary patience, how is a squad of infantry to overtake well-mounted Indians?

In the month of December, 1851, not less than six or seven hundred head of horses, stolen from Mexico, were passed over the Bravo, within a dozen miles of Fort Duncan. The Mexican losers will say there were as many thousands, and demand indemnity for them from our government; and some member of the Cabinet will consider the law, the percentage, and the Galphin precedent, and arrange a draft on the treasury. Don Juan Fernandez, who brought over a herd of three hundred head of fine cattle to place them under the protection of our flag and the military post of Fort Duncan, was informed, early in December, that a band of Indians, with a large train of horses, were crossing the Bravo in the direction of his herd. Information was sent to the fort, but there were no horses to make pursuit. Don Juan then took the trail, with one American gentleman, and traced their crossing place and line of march before he slept. After ascertaining that our shepherd's corral had escaped their notice, the two gentlemen camped there for the night, and re-

sumed the trail with the dawning. A few miles on they came upon the night-fires—not yet cold—of the Indians; and there, in every direction, Don Juan found his cattle lying about, perforated with lances and arrows. While he was counting them, and noting how many, or if all, bore his brand, he heard the drums of Fort Duncan beat their morning call. A day or two after, we rode down to look at this field of wanton slaughter. In every direction there were dark path-like streaks of dried blood, where the poor animals, maddened with the pain of the arrows that were sent tearing and quivering through them in ferocious pastime, had rushed hither and thither through the chapparal, until they fell down in the death agony. I picked up some arrows, feathered in three colors, and fashioned so as to indicate the tribe, and kept them—a lasting memento of the wise distribution of our means of border defence. A Comanche warrior will send one of those arrows through a horse, and with little less precision and force than a rifle ball. They had taken their own time and way with Don Juan's herds; and, as he rightly thought, and all of us well knew, this destruction of his property was owing to the unpardonable ignorance or neglect of our officials somewhere: he laid his case before the Senate, and demanded some notice of the state of this suffering border. There is no excuse for this; there is the will and the means on the part of the people of the United States to protect efficiently this whole line, but their servants will not be vigilant in their duty. They do not inform themselves sufficiently at Washington of the nature and resources of the country, and are generally ignorant, to an incredible extent, of the data on which to found any system of border defence, and consequently none exists. This seems an incredible summing up of all the expenditure and parade of our frontier establishment; but it is unhappily strictly, unde-



niably, and disgracefully true, that on the Rio Bravo frontier there is no systematic plan of defence—none whatever. Supplies “wander about indefinitely,” as the Texans used to say of General Houston’s administration. Posts are scattered in aimless confusion, where chance or the caprice of an officer placed them, without suitable connection of mutual support, without communication with the sea, generally strongest where there is nothing to defend, and always weakest where the most is in peril.

#### LYNCH LAW.

THERE is one feature of border life which never fails to strike with horror those who live calmly and securely under the genial protection of a well-established community. I mean that state of things in which, in the absence or nullity of the legal machinery of justice, society—feeble, crude and suspicious—returns to the first elements, and makes itself law-giver, judge, and whatever else it deems essential to its safety. It is the stern primary law of self-preservation—this border custom of bringing criminals before the whole body of citizens for judgment—from which men sitting beside law-guarded hearths recoil in dismay, and hearing only its cruel side, stigmatize as the utterly unpardonable Lynch Law. Most true it is, that nothing but urgent and deplorable necessity will drive a just and merciful man to participate in its tribunals, but it is not less true that in frontier settlements, if the fear of its quick vengeance did not overawe the wicked, the innocent and peaceful would be in hourly danger of wrong and outrage. We have escaped—partly through the near presence of Fort Duncan, but more through the orderly character of our settlers—the terrible example of a court of lynchers, yet I trembled not long since at the ominous sha-

dow of such a proceeding. Happily, the accused man proved to be innocent, and the guilty one fled these precincts. Since then formal writs of election have been issued, and in the regular course we are supplied with a magistrate.

We had already witnessed (or rather suspected) a strong case of individual retribution, the irregular personal vindication, by the sufferer, of that wild justice of redress that every human bosom believes in, and nourishes, until it is taught to forgive by religion, or to wait for revenge by the law. This individual action of revenge is a step—a long and dangerous step—worse than Lynch law, just as lynching judgments are a step worse than the guarded measures of strictly legal vengeance. The one-man court, the settlers' court, and the sacred, decorous, law-attended court of the well-regulated community, have each a certain currency and respect in border opinion, as the inevitable, incurable, and not altogether dissimilar flaws in the cement of society.

But before I give the examples which kept step together, of illegal individual retribution and of legal justice, I will take time to relate how near circumstantial evidence came to bring a Lynch verdict on the head of an innocent stranger.

#### THE FOOT-PRINTS.

WE had working at the quarry a tall, stupid, heavy-eyed peon, who had been whipped and starved by his master until the whole powers of his mind and body had concentrated down into one idea—that of saying "yes" to every requirement, possible or impossible, that was propounded to him—and one capacity—eating the whole day long. "Carlos would eat up the *Carcel*, locks, masonry and roof," his companions said, and that was the reason he was never imprisoned in it by his master, who exhausted his ingenuity to tor-

ment the wretched slave into searching up a new home. Poor Carlos had not the wit to do that; but he made out to run away at the instigation of a cunning, unprincipled fellow-peon, who delighted in the not very apposite name of *Santo de Dios* (Holy of God). How Santo stirred such a lump of apathy into this decided action, is really a marvel, and the instigator was not so far from the mark, perhaps, when he slyly said, "It was the smell of the American kitchens that drew him along." Carlos was a slow and inefficient worker, and his friend Santo was the mirror of laziness, so the heaviest end of the duty fell upon a strong, hardy German who worked with them, and amused himself all day with abusing his co-workers, and wound off at night by recapitulating all their shortcomings to their employer. Santo de Dios had a flippant fluency of argument, and while they were occupied with these wrangles, silent Carlos would devour the best part of their supper, and then as silently digest it under the stormy wrath of the German. Some way this came about so often that a feeling against Carlos, as an unfair dealer, was general, and between the attacks of the German and the almost desertion of Santo, he became the incessant target of the whole corps; and although he never replied, except by a meek assent, to all they chose to make him endure, at last he found his situation intolerable. His old master, on learning that his escaped serf was making good wages on the safe side of the Bravo, had addressed himself in such a way to the fears or conscience of Carlos, as to obtain from him a promise to give him one half of his earnings. When Carlos applied for an advance for this purpose, his account was carefully read to him, and he saw it was already overdrawn; for he came so miserably destitute that every needful article, from his shoes to a blanket for his sleep, had to be supplied as soon as he was taken into employment. One of the most discouraging ob-

stacles to those who would fain raise the standard of peon existence, is in their childish distrusts and their uncertain faith. Their whole practical knowledge is of wrong, deceit and oppression, and anything else is to these heirs of suffering an unknown tongue, a doubtful land. Carlos had not the head to decipher either. He was alarmed to find himself in debt to his new master, while his old one was yet full of terrors. At the break of day he had attempted to recross the river and fly into his own country, but the Bravo had risen in the night, and the Eagle's Ford was impassable. With not a little surprise we heard that he had been watched, pursued, and brought back by Baptiste, on a charge of stealing, before we suspected his departure.

Wet, frightened and confused, he appeared, in the stalwart grasp of the inflexible borderer, the very picture of forlorn guilt. Baptiste, now occupied in building him a neat dwelling-house in the place of his first grotto-like quarters, had, from time to time, lost flour and other matters—in the line of food principally—which his limited house-room compelled him to leave in the gallery or shed outside. His suspicions fell on Carlos, who was always cooking and eating at night, and on the preceding evening he almost caught him in the act. He saw a figure stealing down into our camp of laborers, just at moon-set, and from the broken glimpse among the mesquites and mulberries, he thought the stature above that of any other of the Mexicans. He "would not come down and disturb the lady by a night-row," he said, "but he took his marks and kept watch." The track from the flour-barrel was of large heavy boots, "rights and 'efts," and on one the heel was missing. This mark he had noted before, but only the day before had found that it was Carlos alone whose large-sized boots would correspond with the track, and that one of them, also, lacked a heel. The secret and unaccountable at-

tempt of Carlos to leave the place, which Baptiste had intercepted, was another feature against him, and the blundering confusion of his statements made it darker every moment. With regretful yet resolute faces the employers and head masons drew together, to consult upon what example should be made in the absence of legal means of the first convicted criminal of Eagle Pass. But, first, it is the custom for the judges in such case to review carefully the circumstances, and examine for themselves, and in a body, all the minutiae of evidence. The tracks were first examined, and the keen eye of a frontiersman caught the fact, that although of the same size, the lost heel of Carlos did not correspond with the track left by the thief. One was on the left, the other on the right foot, and then Baptiste himself frankly observed the impressions were deeper than Carlos usually made.

"Where is the Dutchman?" exclaimed some one, suspicion now turning, for the first time, in the correct channel. He had been a cool spectator until the self-constituted judges started to make what may be called a judicial survey of the foot-prints, and then he all at once became invisible. How he managed to get away from the settlement without being observed by any one was a puzzle to all of us, for it must be borne in mind that he had no horse, and our nearest American neighbor was seventy miles off, at the post on the Leona, and between us—and for hundreds of miles up and down the Bravo—there was nothing but uninhabited prairies roamed by hostile Indians. It was never known what became of him, but with the best that could happen the miserable man paid a heavy atonement for his fault. Yet, the question may well be asked, what other line of self-protection is open to these isolated frontier settlements?

Carlos was so used to cruelty and injustice, that he could scarcely believe in his entire acquittal under such a close chain

of suspicious circumstances ; and there is no doubt that men have been brought to the gallows by more incomplete circumstantial evidence. He was sent to get a warm breakfast, and dry clothes, and then questioned about his sudden and stealthy attempt to run away. With long and patient cross-examination, we came at last to the reasons, and at the same time to a new argument, in favor of his honesty. Stolid and unfeeling as he appeared, the gibes of his companions had goaded him past endurance, yet he did not "desire to bring them under castigation," as he expressed it, by complaining to their common employer, and therefore he resolved to return and throw himself on the mercy of his old master ; but knowing himself in arrears, he gave his new *fresada*, or blanket, which was all he had for coat or bedding, to the faithless Santo de Dios, who promised him to settle up his account. But for his summary arrest and acquittal, no one concerned would ever have heard of this arrangement, for he trusted to a brittle reed in Santo ; however, all was made right now, and he carried home with him—for go he must and would—his *fresada*. The rush of events among the Americans was perfectly overwhelming to his stunned faculties, and it was doubtless a relief to get back to the regular whippings and stated rations of his former home.

#### MEXICAN PEONS.

WITH Carlos we dismissed his chief tormentors, Victoriano and Pedro Chico, and his untrustworthy friend Santo de Dios. They heard in silence the serious decree of banishment—for to them it was serious—but it is a rare and stern misfortune indeed that wrings a Mexican from his impassible self-control. Yet, on the least occasion, they will pour out a mellifluous tide of five-syllabled words that would overwhelm, drown,

and bury fathoms deep in its insignificance, an average Congressional speech. It is the universal characteristic of the Indian race, and the natural eloquence of the Red Man is wonderfully aided and enhanced by the noble grace of the matchless Spanish language. Here were a band of common untaught laborers brought up in every respect, but hard work, like their wild Indian brothers, unseen and unseeing of more than half a ray of civilization, yet when they make their *Adios* every sonorous word and sentence rings with courtly pretension. Queen Victoria's retiring cabinet cannot profess their loyal devotion in finer phrase—nor perhaps with more insincerity—for these docile and over-respectful peons are too hardly treated to be reliably honest. They are crushed and plundered until they are driven to rob their robbers in self-defence; but they do cheat you with such infinite courtesy; they explain away their little depredations in such graceful and resounding Johnsonians, that one feels it is almost impertinent to name such trifles amid so much fine talk. Our curt, plain-spoken Americans find their deeds so much inferior to their words—for it would not be easy to keep up with such magnificent holdings forth—that there is a disposition to judge the Mexicans with severity and to deal with them beyond the law. This is not Christian charity. They have the faults inevitable to their position. For them there is no standing ground left for public virtue or private independence. The soil has been torn from them by the great landholders who monopolize what should support a thousand prosperous and instructed families, for the pasture of as many head of cattle and horses, and the homeless peon must starve or tend the rich man's herds at his own price. Schools are beyond his reach, and the law doles out to him the solaces of religion at exorbitant prices. Homeless, untaught, and oppressed, he sinks into sullen despair or desperately rushes

into crime ; and when the most daring deeds of robbery and murder have rendered his own country unsafe for him, he crosses the Bravo, and probably pursues his career at the expense of our herds and horses, until he is caught in the fact and handed over to, the verdict of Lynch law.

#### THE ONE MAN COURT.

THE tendency of individual man to enforce for himself the retribution when the law is too negligent or too feeble to exact it from the wrong-doer, has been fearfully illustrated of late at Fort Duncan.

Two Germans enlisted and served together in the United States forces at that post. Whether they were united by near ties of kindred or only attached and faithful friends, they were noticed by their fellow soldiers for that deep, silent, unchanging constancy of brotherhood of which we see so many remarkable instances among the children of the Rhine. Alone in a new country, and in the midst of strangers and an unfamiliar tongue, they kept apart from others without offence, and lived by themselves in the language and memories of the beloved fatherland. It happened, for their misfortune, that there was in the same service a riotous and ill-tempered man, noted for his quarrelsome, abusive habits, and boastful of his former deeds of bloodshed. He was one of those beasts of prey, whose wild tusks and dangerous claws a well-organized society would cut off while they were tender, or enclose in strong walls, until he learned better uses for their energies. One day, while roaming about the camp in an irritable mood, he encountered one of these unoffending Germans, and in his frenzy cut him down with a mortal wound. His horror-struck companion never left his side during his lingering death agony, and when all was over attended the last rites with



such silent composure of sorrow as surprised the company. Some said this speechless grief was the more bitter, and argued all the worse for the murderer, Fay.

The brutal assassin was kept chained in the guard-house two or three months, awaiting the action of the civil authorities. They were a hundred and fifty miles off at San Antonio, and as their county jail was already overburdened with criminals, they were in no hurry to claim the gift in store for them at Fort Duncan. The officers there grew tired at last of keeping guard over a ward that seemed to belong to no one, and between hands Fay found himself on the outside of his prison. He was seen hovering about the limits of the camp during the next day, and then he totally disappeared.

Two months or more had passed when Juan, the *techedor*, or chief thatcher at Eagle Pass, was out in search of grass proper for roofing, and he encountered in a thicket, scarcely a league from the fort, the body of a man. The limbs were composed, and a cloth thrown over the face, not for concealment, for there was no show of such a thought, but as if in a sort of respect to the helpless remains of mortality. Yet the hand that paid this reverence to the dead had, beyond doubt, sent a ball through the brain of the living man. The dead man was buried as he lay, without farther care or question, by throwing a few shovels of earth over him. Those who went to see the corse on Juan's report, thought they recognized in the dry, discolored object before them, the victim of a just atonement in the person of the murderer, Fay, and suspected, without blaming him, the murdered man's friend. He had exacted for himself that retribution which society had omitted, though it usually assumes the right of vengeance as a collective duty and benefit. No one chose to press inquiry, and the secret sleeps undisturbed in the shallow grave of him who has thus met the law of "blood for blood."

## THE COURT-MARTIAL.

THE other was a case of collective retribution, of regular legal vengeance, although the crime and the punishment were of a milder hue. It is true the culprit would have been hanged in the navy—the poor seaman Jackson *was* hanged in the bay of Vera Cruz for such an offence—but in this instance the accused had the advantage of judges more disposed to show lenity than to exact the fulness of the law.

A non-commissioned officer, of generally prudent habits and fair repute, who has served the United States some ten or fifteen years to the satisfaction of his superiors, went over to that den of wickedness, the military colony on the Mexican side of the river, to buy some little comforts for his family. While there, he drank some of the abominable brandy of the country, and whether it was drugged or only the natural poison of the liquid, it completely unsettled the reason of the unfortunate man. His companion was surprised at his wild conduct, and tried to quiet him, but he only became more turbulent, and finally made an onslaught on a Mexican woman who came in his way. Just at this moment the surgeon of the post came by, and, surprised at the violent and unusual conduct of Brown, he interfered to save the woman and bring the maniac to his senses. In doing this, the officer received a blow, but as he settled the account fully on the spot, and saw as well that Brown was under evil influences, he was not anxious to make the matter worse for the offender than it already stood. This forbearing wish, however, was destined to have no effect: Brown's infraction of discipline became known, and the army code made it indispensable to call him before a court-martial. The man of many murders went forth free, but he who in blind madness raised his hand against an officer could not escape

punishment. The least that could be done was to convene a court-martial; the least a court-martial could do, with proper regard to the preservation of order and obedience, was to destroy his prospects, and the hopes of his family. There was no disposition to exaggerate his offence or its punishment. As kindly and merciful men as we have in the army sat in judgment upon him, with the sincere wish to soften the rigors of military law as much as they could, consistently with military discipline, but the necessities of discipline set narrow and well-guarded limitations to mercy. They laid upon him the lightest penalties of martial law. They only confiscated his arrears of pay, the savings of many weary months, and his bounty land. This was the end of the devotion to his country, of one-third of his years of manhood—to be driven from the camp with ignominy, and forfeit the homestead land promised by the country to her faithful soldiers. This was the gentlest fine that could be taken for an hour's madness, and a blow that hurt nobody. The officer that received it would have been well pleased if the exigencies of the service had permitted this act of insubordination to pass by in silence, for in restraining the man's insane folly, he had been forced then and there to inflict upon him some decisive chastisement. This poor, dismissed, ruined man would call his sentence severe, perhaps unjustly severe, for his fault, yet he was spared the lash, he was spared a degrading confinement in chains, for his term of service had nearly expired; and let it be said clearly, and at once, that the whole tenor of the military command at Fort Duncan has been eminently kind, equitable, and considerate towards the soldiers, and the fault lies in the sordid manner in which the United States pays its defenders. It is not to be expected that a high grade of *men* can be hired for peon's pay and treatment, and the law is shaped for the government

of such as it expects to get at such wages. I only cite this case to show that men in all circumstances must and will find—or make—such rules of retributive justice as they believe necessary to the occasion.

#### THE COMMUNITY COURT.

THE wild verdicts borderers sometimes enact, in the faith that they are just and needful, sound uncouthly to those fenced round with regular courts, and must seem dreadful to Christian men accustomed to the solemn decorum with which constituted courts deal out their legal awards of chains, lashes, and hangings; yet, seen close at hand, with a knowledge of the situation of the community, and of the life and deeds of the evil-doer, many of Judge Lynch's verdicts will appear more just and necessary than half of the sentences of the regular courts. Let some Samaritan, thrice armed with patience, and imbued to the uttermost with an innocent faith in the wisdom and necessity of our existing laws, search out the data, and he will find that we have not one ship of war afloat that is not stained with more blood, "on slight pretences shed," than he can verify in the entire annals of American lynching. There are a dozen ships in our navy, aye, a round score of them, without counting the Somers infamy, that have witnessed in almost any one of their long cruises, more undeserved tortures, and more lives let out through them, than has ever been perpetrated in all the Lynch courts of the wildest of our frontier States. I am no apologist for Lynch law, and trust it has run its race; yet even its brutal blood-thirstiness is as often "a social necessity"—as the gallows party term their altar of civilization—as the legalized cord. Until universal instruction and universal employment work out their mission, crime will follow tempta-

tion, and punishment pursue crime. They are the inseparable furies of classic fable.

A lawless Ishmaelite, that some older society has neglected, trampled upon and cast from its bosom, rushes into a remote settlement burning with a feeling of war with all his race. This community, planted by itself at a long distance from legal succor, becomes from the necessities of its position its own Church and State. If it finds in its midst a murderer or a thief, it deals with the outlaw as seems to it best for its own peace and security. Statute law is but the formal expression of what the larger community deems wisest and most just for the general welfare; the small, crude, remote settlement does the same for itself, only without writing down its enactments, and in the more summary way enforced by its peculiar situation. It has no prison houses in which to detain a criminal, no courts in which to try him, no funds wherewith to support him in long duress. If a crime is committed the accused has the whole community for judges and jury, and if he is found guilty by common suffrage they proceed to execute the verdict. Instead of sending him for ten years to a penitentiary, where he will receive uncounted lashes, when and how it may please a warden as brutal as himself perhaps, they tie him to the most convenient tree and have out the whole cup of vengeance at once. They are not prepared to sip it sweetly under law-sanction for years onward, and must have it in one draught or remit it altogether.

A man in north-eastern Texas had an amiable habit of biting and pinching his wife—just for his own independent amusement—whenever he came home drunk, and that happened about weekly. The helpless wife, the sickly mother of a young family, had no choice but to endure these cruelties, for he had brought her a long fourteen hundred miles from her friends on the Schuylkill, and there was no asylum

open to her little ones. For their sake she bore these wrongs; for their sake she swallowed her tears and dragged her bruised limbs through her incessant daily toil, while the master of her person varied the delights of his cards and cup with the music of her agony. The wife dared not, could not, repel the ill-treatment of her tyrant, but the community resolved to protect its abused member, and in full assemblage it fixed upon the chastisement proper to the offender. One hundred lashes was the fine imposed by this impromptu common law, and his own cart happened to come best to hand for its execution. He was bound to it by twenty volunteer sheriffs, while his wife in vain implored for him the mercy he had never extended to her, and the fine was promptly and duly exacted. It was not a tithe of the physical suffering he had imposed on the feeble frame of the woman who had left behind all other life to share his lot, but nothing was said of his crime when the press caught up and bruited the punishment as an evidence of the "horrid license of the Lynch Code." In the State they came from it was cited as an example of the barbarous manners of Texas, yet in that same pattern State the law had permitted this John Smith to squander his wife's little inheritance of three thousand dollars, against her will and entreaties, and leave her and her babes without a shelter. It permitted the rum-seller to seize the household goods she had acquired by her industry, and sanctioned her husband sending to auction the trifling gear the law exempts for the pressing needs of a family. The law and custom made him so inexorably her master, that, on his promise of better temperance, she was fain to forgive him all this and follow him to Ohio, where her brother had bequeathed her an interest in the proceeds of some land. This money enabled him to drag her, sorely against her health and her wishes, to Arkansas—where he began his habit of personal abuse—and thence to

Texas. Here the free grant of land to settlers gave her a home at last, and the law of homestead exemption made it safe to her children. Lynch law effectually frightened him into better behavior—for the brutal coward who can raise his hand against a woman is exactly of the mould to yield to fear and brute force—and fenced around by loving children in a secure home, she is to-day a prosperous woman.

#### THE BORDER NEED.

HAPPILY, Eagle Pass has now outgrown the danger of Lynch tribunals. We have, with most other appliances of civilization, a precinct organization and a competent local magistrate to deal with offenders—if offences come—and to marry if any are anxious to be bound. The Padres of the nearest Mexican towns can be called to the aid of the sinful and suffering—if the fees are ready—and happily, the general health of the country renders less important the absence of a physician. With half a dozen stores above and below Fort Duncan, and a fair tale of laborers, (I wish I could say artisans, but we have them not,) there is not a doctor of law, of medicine, or of divinity, among our citizens. Law-suits and sectarian controversies have not taken root as yet, and nobody seems to suffer in mind, body, or estate, in our happy and quiet corner. The tone of society is quiet and kindly, because its members are principally of the best grade of morals and intelligence, and because there are not so many ladies here, that they can afford to break up into little rival coteries. We have, all told, about a dozen, and we can't well subdivide them into many classes. There is, in means, manners, education, and social rank, a most happy equality. Not one is in anything particularly favored above her peers, and not one is below the standard average of an American lady. Neither

are there salient advantages in the position of any one husband to elevate his wife to the rank of lady patroness, unless we were to concede it to the commanding Colonel's amiable lady, and she would never accept the honor. We have no bickerings for precedence therefore, and would have to make an occasion, since none exists, if we were bent on finding any one to put to slight. As this harmonious state seems in flat contradiction to the inexorable laws of village existence, and must, of necessity, be a transient phenomenon, I hasten to put it on record, while the unique fact is still a living truth. It ought to embalm the name of Eagle Pass in the history of womankind forever.

Yet, we have here a wide untrodden field for high effort. Science and mechanical skill have vast mines of wealth to explore, for, to a known certainty, rich mineral stores exist untouched, within an easy and profit-ensuring distance of the navigable current of the Bravo. But capital and combined industry is the key to the noble resources sleeping in this vast valley. Association, the association of capital, science and labor, in honorable fraternity, is to be the "open sesame" of this central heart of our continent. No immense sums of money, no large bodies of laborers are needed, but in sufficient and compact force they must come, if they would disinter these treasures. Still a greater need, still a higher duty calls the Christian pastor to this vineyard.

Canting, sectarian bigots, who would shut the gates of heaven to every soul who did not go there upon their special endorsement, are not the men for this duty. The self-righteous Pharisees, whom our Divine Teacher rebuked daily for their strictness in dogmas, and uncharitableness in deeds, still hold the chief seats in many of our polished synagogues, and there let them stay; but give us, and still more give to the neglected, untaught, despoiled Red Race, the gentle,



guileless, and forbearing disciple of Him who placed the kind and practical Samaritan above the formal and self-righteous Levite. There is an oppressed remnant to be saved, there is a wandering and benighted people to be redeemed, and surely the will must exist where the power is so ample for this work of salvation. Ask not in what mode, or by what sectarian name, the forlorn and friendless exile is conducted to the altar of the living God, so that his understanding is raised, and his heart opened to know and feel the redeeming truths of Christianity. Give the outcast a home, and in the genial glow of its calm sympathies teach him to labor, for this is the saving probation allotted to man: to love his kind, and to reverence God by obeying his commandments, for this is the teaching of the Prince of Peace, of him who condemned forms and phylacteries when charity did not reign therein. To do this, the Indians must be gathered into communities and made to realize the tender relations of peaceful family life. The school-book and the Bible must keep step together, the plough and the reaping-hook must work *for* them until their young children have learned to value and live *by* them. The Church must be planted amid the fields and orchards of a settled and permanent civilization, to perform its whole mission. The government can give a home, build quarters, assign rations, and gather into regular communities, many of the tribes, directly under its jurisdiction, with half the money squandered upon them in rum-paid annuities. Surely, if it can afford to expend so much in making this unhappy race like the beasts that perish, it could find the way, if it had the will, to instruct and civilize them into men.

In these communities, while the old and stubborn were held in peaceful submission, the young could be trained to habits of civilized industry, and their children again would rise still higher, and be good citizens and Christian examples.

The noblest possible missionary effort would be the establishment of an industrial school, for the instruction of the bright and well-endowed Mexican youth, who, under a benign and steady guidance, could be modelled into teachers for their savage kindred. Ten thousand dollars would found on this border such a self-supporting, agricultural, and mechanical missionary school. The suitable land waits the acceptance of the fathers in Israel, who will undertake the arduous yet delightful task of laying the first corner-stone for the social and moral redemption of the Red Race.

#### PLEASANT DISCOVERIES

IN the mouth of babes and women we often find the wisdom which we have sought in vain from the elaborate reports of high-titled officials. There are millions of acres of United States domain that no one cares to buy, because it is only grazing land, and even so, but thin pasture, which want nothing but a free application of that fertilizing absorbent, ground gypsum, to bring to immediate profit. A wide region on the Bravo is in the same position. I was convinced by certain indications that we were not far from a plenteous supply of this redeeming gift, and I inquired for it diligently from those whose duty it was to know, but the nearest answer I could ever get was from Harry Love, who brought me some fine specimens of alabaster from the extreme navigable head of the river.

One day I was admiring the pure and pearly whiteness of the walls in the house of an industrious and enterprising woman on the Mexican side—so active and resolute, indeed, as to inspire a sort of dislike among her slow-going countrymen, for with her own hands she helped to build and plaster her house—and I added, they had the marble finish of plas-

ter of Paris. "And they are of that material," was the prompt reply.

"My little son and I gathered and broke the rock at the river side, and my daughters ground it into meal on the *metate* and boiled it. A Frenchman who was sick at my house explained to me the way to utilize this abundant white rock, and here it is, as you see, the work of my own hands."

This is the contagious influence of American enterprise, which Guadelupe caught up at San Antonio, where she lived awhile, and engrafted on the stubborn stock of her native Indian patience. This border could be made to bear much of this hardy fruit with a small outlay of kind and unselfish justice.

Her son, and as it chanced, my ever active young henchman, Pablito, were by, listening with grave wonder to my minute queries as to the whereabouts and probable extent of the gypsum bed, and although they could not see why any one should take so much interest in such dry matters, it inspired them with a project to give me pleasure.

A few days after, some clear and handsome blocks of gypsum were presented to me in modest triumph, with a very exact account of how and where they were to be found in profusion. With some hesitation, and with a sly look to catch whether he had not done a foolish thing, a clear, smooth piece of fine potter's clay was also drawn out of its hiding-place.

"Where did this come from?" I asked in pleased surprise.

"Oh, there is a hill of this two or three miles from the Escondida."

"But how came you to think of going to find it?" I inquired.

"My lady wanted something better than lime to plaster

her new stone house," said Pablito modestly, "and I thought of this, for I heard Don Fernando say that the stone buildings at La Fiesta, which have been abandoned twenty years on account of the Indians, were plastered with it, and the coating is perfectly sound and beautiful to-day."

"So boys and women bring us the treasures which men—wise in their own conceit—pretend do not exist. Well, my boy, I think we must teach you what there is in books, and send you out to look for mines."

"If my lady will give me permission," and here Pablito stopped in some confusion, as if he feared he was transgressing all bounds.

"What permission do you desire? Speak frankly, you know me to be still more your friend than your mistress. Be assured that I am disposed to gratify you in all that is for your own good, Pablito."

"If such a thing would please you; if you would permit your horses to go," stammered out the boy, "there is another of your faithful servants who would go with your poor Pablito and bring you some silver from a mine in the mountains."

"Silver from a mine in the mountains, my lad! how do you know of such a mine?" I inquired with interest.

"We have both seen it. I noticed it when the Indians carried me there a captive, and your herdsman saw it, also, once, when he was ranging for some strayed horses," replied the boy, gathering confidence from my interested manner.

"Then it is not far from here?"

"It is, we both think, ten or twelve leagues (thirty miles perhaps) from the river, at the nearest point."

"But why do you think this mine is silver? We know there is lead at about that distance, and in the direction you indicate, but we are not certain of silver."

“Because it is so bright and hard to melt,” said he, promptly. “The Indians stopped to eat and drink at a spring near it, and they made bullets of it, but bits of it did not melt at all.”

“Since at least two of our people knew of this mine, why have you kept silence on it so many months?”

The child hesitated a moment, but his attachment prevailed over his Indian instinct of caution, and he gave, as I have no doubt, the true answer. The locality was dangerous to visit, and they were not disposed to be sent to it, for the benefit of any stranger, the less as in no event—so say the elders of their race, and so says history—had a mine ever proved a blessing to an Indian.

“Yet you are willing, and so you say is the herdsman, to tell me of this, and even to risk going for some of the metal.”

“Señora,” said the boy almost solemnly, “you are teaching us both to read, which will make us American citizens, you know, and mines are a blessing to Americans and to every nation but Indians. Therefore, when my namesake was sick, and he was kept in your house to be cured and you gave him a book, we said we would lay before you this secret.”

“So you have told no one else your ideas, and only me now because you are to be Indian peons no more, but Americans?”

“That is it precisely, and if it pleases you and the Holy Virgin, we are ready to go when you command and bring you plenty of this lead-silver from the mine.”

“Is there much of it?” I asked among fifty other questions.

“There is bands and snakes of it” (these are his literal words rendered in English), “looking out and creeping along the slopes of a long steep valley. These must be more than would load a thousand mules.”

Thus in one week I had from the hands of ignorant children, what has led us to sure evidence of the existence of two valuable minerals within an easy reach of our village, and of a third—a fine coal bed—I knew before.

In taking the necessary steps to secure the property of Pablito's silver mine, we became thoroughly convinced that it is a rich deposit of argentiferous galena, and without any obligation to the hollow display of government explorations, which thus far have produced nothing but doubt and discouragement; the women and children offered to Eagle Pass at least, two important aids to its prosperity, in gypsum and porcelain clay, and without counting the coal we may find another not less—it cannot be more—important, in the silver mines in the Lunita hills.

#### OUR MINERAL EMPIRE.

FROM the borders of the great Lakes to the shores of the Pacific, from the copper cliffs of Superior to the sparkling sands of California, stretches a broad mineral zone, across the entire breadth of the continent at its widest point. Even under the developments of its crude infancy, the extent, value and variety of its productions, baffle the boldest calculators, and none may presume to compute the highest capabilities of this vast mineral empire. Coal, Iron, Copper, Lead, or Gold, in the abundance with which various States are crowned, would either of them have been esteemed a kingdom's boast and wealth in the Old World, and taken together, even in this great Republic, they must immediately rank as an extensive and distinct National interest. Like the Commercial, the Manufacturing, the Southern and the Northern Agricultural interests, Mining will make its own separate and magnificent contribution to the National wealth, and, like each of them, demand

the guardian and impartial care of the National Legislation. Asking no favoritism and needing no exclusive fosterage, it will demand that the settlements it creates, and the roads to them, shall be duly protected, and that mail and other intercommunication shall not be omitted; in brief, that its Territorial minority and the independent rights of its majority shall receive the care and respect corresponding to its weight and importance in the Union.

As if to chain with links of eternal strength all the members of the Union in one unbreakable circle, this mineral zone bands the continent at the head and confluence of all the great arteries. The Lakes carry its various tributes to the Atlantic, or circulate them as required among the Grain States. The Missouri—though that section is hardly in its dawn—the Upper Mississippi and the Ohio each bring rich tidings of ore-abounding regions. The Rio Bravo del Norte indents the land of Silver, and, with the rivers last named, offers an open highway from the Mining regions to the Mexican Gulf. The Gila carries its golden sands to the Gulf of California, and the Sacramento pours her shining freights into the Pacific Ocean. Thus this magic belt of ore land, sweeping from the far North-East to the extreme West, finds its outlets in every sea that bounds the continent, and gathering up and interlocking in her bosom the sources of our mightiest watercourses, she will allow no mad fanaticism to rend them asunder, and divorce the river's outlet from the parent fountain. The Mining Country buys of all and sells to all, and therefore it has a direct and pressing interest in keeping the peace among the confederated sisters of the Union. And when she is older, she *will* enforce more sensible ways.

Among the last *known*, and least heard of in the list of mining sections, is that on and west of the Upper Rio Grande. There is no more doubt of the overflowing riches of the Silver

regions in this direction than of the *placers* of California, but hitherto it has been a sealed book to the white race. There was no highway to it known except by a difficult land route, swarming with Indian enemies, and the task of shortening it by better surveys and more efficient defences, has gone on but tardily until now. The Treaty with Mexico opened to us the peaceful exploration of the Rio Grande, and it is now ascertained that steamers can ascend to the gates of the mining country. When steamers come Indians disappear, and the frontier is safe for settlement.

Harry Love reports but one obstacle—the Island Rapida near Presidio de Rio Grande—and that obstacle is easy of remedy, and then there is a thousand miles of navigation. This covers that long range of frontier with the cheap and effective defence of a few economical steamers, and unlocks to us the Silver mines on its higher sources. Sante Fé and California are brought a thousand miles nearer to the navigation this side of their sierras by these late explorations, and only two broken links—Nebraska and Centralia—are to be made whole to unite this Mineral Region in a connected chain from the Pacific to the Atlantic and the Northern Lakes. The unexplored Centralia between the Gila and Colorado of the West, will yet unite California and Northern Texas—the Pacific and the Gulf—in close embrace. If Nebraska is also endowed with like Mineral gifts, as there are indications, they are linked to Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin and the Lakes in a continuous line, which again descends the Lakes and radiates to the Atlantic through the Coal and Iron States.

This line discloses almost every mineral known to Commerce and the Arts, and as the Mining interest will help to employ and make more productive all our other National interests, they are all interested in clearing the path and protecting the operations of the profitable buyer and seller.



## NAVIGATING THE BRAVO.

SOME wiseacres of our day are as positively certain that the Rio Grande is not navigable, as their learned prototypes of Salamanca were in their day, that there was no land for Columbus to find on the unknown side of the Atlantic. When it is navigated, as it can and must be, many hundred miles above *their* "utmost limits of possible navigation," they will be as much puzzled to understand the feat as the persecutors of Galileo were to comprehend the "impossible" possibility of the earth moving round the sun. These positive gentlemen have not yet even learned the name of the river on whose capabilities they pronounce, for the most part, on hearsay. They use the old Spanish term of description of "Rio Grande del Norte,"—the Great River of the North,—or simply the Rio Grande, the Great River, applied to it by the inhabitants on or near it, to distinguish it from the smaller streams—its tributaries. In the earlier reports on this river, some of these scholarly writers talked of the River "Rio" Grande and the River Rio del Norte, taking in their untaught innocence the Spanish for river, "*rio*," as a part of its proper name. BRAVO is the proper name of this stream, and the English prefix of "river" would be more suitable than the Spanish word "*rio*," in a national document of record in our own tongue.

It is rather much to say that the river is not navigable, when, of the only three efforts to test this, every one was successful. These three efforts were made in common boats, at diverse seasons, without any preliminary knowledge of the current or its various difficulties, and without the force or means to remove the slightest impediments in the bed of the river. The first boat, the Harry Love, came up to Eagle Pass

and Fort Duncan, and reported the Rapids of The Isleta (or Kingsbury's Falls) as the only important obstruction. The boat's crew, however, took her through these rapids, and where that can be done, a strong, suitably constructed, iron steamer could force its way when a channel is cleared. To place on unanswerable ground the facility of conquering this "impassable barrier to navigation," the official report of a competent engineer, which has been on record in the War Department already nearly two years without action, states unequivocally that a channel can be made for a small steamer for fifty thousand dollars. Contractors could probably be found who would give bonds to the United States to execute the work for one hundred thousand dollars, and if so, it would open to steam navigation one thousand miles of this boundary river. The boats would be small, but they could carry each a gun or two, and transport troops with activity from point to point, to meet, drive back, and effectually overawe, the wandering tribes of savages who now baffle and set at derision our slow, and always after-time, pursuits.

The second boat was the "Maj. Babbett," a keel boat fifty feet long, sixteen wide, and drawing eighteen inches water. In this Capt. Love ascended the river one thousand miles, and to within two hundred of El Paso, finding as before the principal, if not the only important obstruction, at the rapids at Kingsbury's Falls, through which the boat was warped by her crew. The last exploration was made by Lieutenants Smith and Mechler, who went up from the mouth of the river to about one hundred miles above the mouth of the Pecos, and this at the very lowest stage of water. Their report I have not seen, but their trip confirms the feasibility of the Bravo to light draught steamers, since they actually navigated it at the worst season up to the very gates of the sil-

ver region, and through the range of Indian infested country, in which even the smallest steamers would be the most efficient of all defences.

Before the government or any of its servants ventures to abandon the protection of the frontier, let one hundred thousand dollars be placed at the disposal of the Secretary of War (provided he is not infected with Galphinism), for the purpose of opening the channel of the river, and, if it can be done, we have trebled the hopes and security, and cleared away the worst impediments, of the frontier settlements. How any practical man dare, or can, set his private interests and opinions against such a national necessity as the navigation of the Bravo to its utmost capacity, would be a marvel, if we had not so many official shortcomings to take the edge off our astonishment.

#### THE TRUE SOUTHERN SYSTEM.

LET the South look to her interest and her laurels, for there is that ripening on this border which concerns them nearly. A new republic is rising on this side of the Sierra Madre, and she will bring no mean baptismal offering to the altar of freedom. I do not speak of that phantom giant, "Slavery Extension," which troubles so keenly all the unbalanced wits in that extensive and interesting region designated in our political charts, as the State of Buncombe. Wherever our bird of power flies, wherever our stars shine, there is increase of light and liberty. The States of Northern Mexico will do much for human amelioration, in the change in the peon system, inevitable to a state of closer relationship with us; but the return she will make is apart from all slave questions. Through this region, west of the Bravo, now in the act of secession, lies one of the great continental highways that should

span the Union. It is second only to the supremely important route of Tehuantepec, and of both the South would hold the outward gate, the genial and honored warder of the general interests of this arm of our entire commercial greatness. From about the outlet of the Red River, on to the Father of Waters, draw a line to the head of navigation of the Bravo, and thence continue this line to the confluence of the Gila and the Colorado of the West, and you have the shortest, most feasible, and, both practically and commercially, the most desirable land route to California. With all the materials, if it were necessary to construct them there, even to the copper for the boilers, and the iron for the rails, as well as the coal to work them on the line, this is the most inviting path for the national railway to the Pacific States. It will pay dividends,—and, after all, the certainty of this is the soundest and discreetest guarantee for enterprise,—sooner than any other of the much discussed routes. It cuts through the rich heart of a paying country.

The line from the mouth, or thereabouts, of the Red River to the Bravo will intersect, in succession, very nearly the head of navigation of the Trinity, Brazos and Colorado—not to speak of some valuable minor streams—and crosses the whole breadth of Texas just where the general-lay of the country is most favorable to such constructions, and where the amount, wealth, and enterprise of the population, would come forward most powerfully in its aid. Each of the principal rivers of Texas would be an auxiliary duct of trade, and all they drew away from the main trunk, to their respective gulf ports, would be made up by the more impetuous circulation of the whole round of business. The State of Texas might invest a permanent fund for the support of her domestic Government, in this section of a highway, that must make her the thoroughfare of this immense national communication

for, besides at once enhancing the value of Texas property to the full amount of her outlay, it would bring in a secure annual per centage to relieve her tax-payers. Louisiana could scarcely fail to bring up her section to the Sabine, for the same reasons; it would pay dividends to her capitalists, increase vastly her taxable property, and draw to her emporium a direct emigration from Europe. Emigration and direct trade are two mighty levers of prosperity. This direct trade and emigration from Europe is one of those needs of the South, to which she has been hitherto over careless, and it is now all the more seriously her duty to open and defend those great avenues that lie within her guard. Three of these arteries of national life now solicit her attention, and the meanest of the three enfolds wherewith to make even a poor State powerful and respected by her confederated sisters.

The Arkansas route, from the head of navigation, through Utah, to California and Oregon, should find its sea mart at New Orleans, and its early and thorough survey should be pressed by every patriotic statesman, regardless of sectional prejudices.

The Red River and Texas route belts a more southern, populous and accessible region, and would interlace with the Arkansas route, by means of the higher waters of the Red River.

The Tehuantepec, or sea route, need not now be dwelt upon, but it closely twines its important bearings with the other two, and, together, they make what may well be termed  
THE GREAT SOUTHERN SYSTEM OF UNION.

To pursue this with efficiency, brings us back to a missing, though attainable link. From the Mississippi and Red River to the Bravo, is an open, known, practicable and alluring section of this circle of national highway; but between the Bravo and the California line, intervenes a confused space of

foreign obstructions. Precisely here begins, then, one of the high duties which the South owes to herself and the Union. The right of way should be pressed, insisted upon, and *obtained*. Ask it *now*, of this Government, that professes to rule Mexico, and take no rest or pause until this path is safely our own. Our cabinet should not permit—it should not be permitted a nay—either for Tehuantepec, or the Northern land line. They are national necessities, and at any price, they must be made secure, and if the President is true to his duty, they will be made secure.

In this northern route, in ample and generous concessions of way, lies the first love-offering of the seceding Mexican States. That which we should make haste to demand of Mexico, the embryo northern Republic will soon make haste to proffer, as the seal of a sincere amity—together with such other advantages of intercourse as will gladden Northern manufacturers, and make, as it should, all the Union partners in the gain.

This triple band of national highways lies the second time in the grasp of the South. Will she arise in her wisdom, and make the whole family of her Northern sisters her contented debtors, by adopting, cherishing, and maturing, in generous rivalry, a Southern system—a system which, without arrogance or selfishness, may be nobly national?

Let Louisiana lead heartily in this, as becomes the elder and more experienced sister, and be certain that astute, keen-eyed Texas and golden California, will answer with ready voice. Let every Senator, whose heart's truth keeps time with his tongue's loud profession of devotion to the Union—and the whole Union—give his hand to this work, at Washington, and in another year Europe will bow her weary head and retire from the contest. With twenty States on her old Atlantic realm, it was more than difficult; but with another

ten, belting, in mighty array, their own steam-defended inland sea, and stretching to the Pacific, in one continuous and invincible line, she could but retire, and leave the matchless Union victor of undisputed sway—mistress of this continent—guardian of the Atlantic—arbitress of the Pacific—protectress of the Gulf and its cluster of inland gems! The seal of all this is the vigorous circulation of the blood of the Union, from ocean to ocean,—and this is now the pressing and particular—though I fear much neglected—care and the duty of Southern statesmen.

#### GALPHINISM.

SPEAKING of the corruption of Mexican officials, it may be well enough to give here a slight idea of an affair, in which high members of our own Cabinet are by no means exempt from suspicions of partnership. For myself, I do not hesitate to say that enough has fallen under my own observation, to leave an indelible conviction that there are high accomplices at Washington, in a fraudulent, but plausible scheme, to plunder the United States Treasury of several millions of dollars. It will be led off by one of the ablest and largest of the landholders of Northern Mexico, who expects the lion's share of the prey. Señor Sanchez owns tract after tract, and all the laborers thereon, in such long succession, that one may travel three hundred miles on the route from San Juan de Sabinas to Saltillo, and in all that way find no commodity for man or beast except on his ranchos. In that long line of untaxed land monopoly and unrelenting peonage, there is no family that does not live in daily terror of Indians and no less brutal Mexican robbers, and scarcely one family—no, *not* one—that enjoys the comforts of bed, board, and shelter, as amply as they are habitually provided for the inmates

of the New York alms-houses. Where the impoverished and trembling inhabitants are not gathered in their comfortless Pueblos, there is nothing but desert fields, and here and there a few half-starved peons to look after the enormous, uncounted herds of wild cattle that swarm on these wastes. Over this immense wilderness Don Jacobo Sanchez is the supreme lord. He is church and state, and his decrees, issued from his luxurious abode in Mexico, come undisputed and undisputable as fate. Only in this is he paying the penalty with the rest of his class, in leaving this fair region a wilderness for the abode of cattle and peons, instead of making it the home of *men*; the soil has no defenders, and the Indians are more the masters of these vast estates than Don Jacobo himself. The tithes which he will not give to humanity and civilization, for the creation of a free and soil-defending population of homestead owners, the savages have taken from him sevenfold. How many ages will it take us to learn that nothing is so unprofitable as avarice—nothing so uncomfortable as selfishness? Of course, Don Jacobo's servants cannot know with certainty how many horses, cows and sheep are destroyed in these forays during the year; but their lord is an acute reckoner, and he takes care not to let his accounts suffer by under estimates, as he expects to be paid all his losses at his own enumeration and at his own prices, by our credulous people. He has also had several peons killed by the Indians, and many more have fled from their ration of a peck of corn a week, and whipping at discretion, to our side of the Bravo. These will likely figure on the list as "mules, or beasts of burden," and that without making any ungenerous subtractions from their money value. Even these peons, and other live stock which he has sold from time to time off his property, will not fail to appear, so runs the voice, in his catalogue of the lost; and not a hoof or horn of them will



lack full and complete authentication, under the sign-manual of his true and faithful servants. Oaths are not much dearer in Mexico than in certain courts of the Empire City.

By the treaty with Mexico, the United States were bound to protect the frontier, but if that is stretched to defend all the interior towns of Mexico, which their own government abandons to Indian ravages, we must double our standing army, and increase our military expenditures five or six millions a year. It would be cheaper to take or to buy the country at once.

If speculators are to cipher up such claims, and Galphinize them out of the treasury, a round ten millions will not end these "indemnities for Indian depredations."

Señor Sanchez, enlightened by certain late proceedings, will give a pair of influential senators an interest in his claim; and, I think, with the aid of a clairvoyant or a spiritual medium, we could indicate the precise gentlemen. This by way of beginning; next he must give a counsel fee of five or ten thousand dollars to an experienced lawyer who has enlarged and purified his legal wisdom by a seat in the Cabinet, and then the end will be in sight. We are a little curious to know who in the Cabinet has been, or will be, the recipient of the great Sanchez fee; or whether it will be tendered instead to a son, brother, or partner of a Cabinet member. It will require brilliant legal talent, and most able management, to get up a plausible showing for such an interpretation of the treaty, (for most assuredly a fair construction will never justify these claims,) and Señor Sanchez can well afford to pay a tenth—say a hundred thousand dollars—to the genius who is able to convince the Cabinet of the justness, and Congress of the expediency, of such a payment.

Mr. Fillmore has been urged by a—doubtless disinterested—member of his Cabinet, to propose giving six millions of

dollars for a discharge from this class of claims. No man would have dared propose such an unjust levy on the public funds to one of our earlier Presidents, and Mr. Fillmore rejected the idea as they would have done, but one who ought to know, says, that he will be "argued into opening the question with Mexico, and when the wedge is entered, the work will soon be done." Yet to our border citizens, not one mounted regiment can be afforded for a thousand miles of river frontier. We do not ask indemnity for our slaughtered herds, but those whose fault it is shall not escape their proper share of the responsibility.

#### THE CRISIS.

YET, if we are approximating to the "Reign of Spoils," under which Mexico lies prostrate and bleeding, Northern Mexico is slowly, but certainly taking the inoculation of practical self-government from us; and, as it gains upon her, the worst features of her social system will be reformed with their constitution. The first great convulsion at the capital will rend asunder the ill-adjusted confederacy, and erect the northern states of Mexico into an independent republic.

The whole country this side of the Sierra Madre is inexorable in its contempt and detestation of the Central Government. A few of the richest and most corrupt of the priesthood, a few more of the great landholders, maintain from interested motives their attachment to the soldier-despotism of Mexico; the priests because their exorbitant fees are secured to them by the laws, natural to this unholy union of Church and State, and because they are upheld in their luxurious and riotous debaucheries by their equally corrupt military compeers; the landholders because it is the stay of their grinding peon system, the most debasing servitude on this

continent, and more cruelly enforced on the four or five millions of Indians than our hereditary system of bondage can be made to bear on the Africans; the enormous untaxed land-monopoly, which enables the owner of two or three hundred square miles to dictate the terms on which the homeless, starving poor man may toil out his life, and which reduces the laborer to sell out his blood and sinews, his mortal life and his immortal hopes, for the meanest shelter and the scantiest pittance which will hold their existence together. Noble Brotherhood of the Union! well did a gifted member of your glorious order say of corrupt governments: "*As Freedom, Home, and Instruction make the sublime trinity of political good, so is Servitude, Destitution and Ignorance the evil trinity of political debasement.*"

Each order of the Mexican state, as it now exists, is eager to sustain the dominion of the evil trinity. They are the pillars of this temple of wrong, now tottering to its foundation. The military power quells liberty and helps the profligate priest to stifle expansion, while the merciless and all-powerful landlord starves and beats the very desire for better things out of his dispirited serf. We need not go to Asia to find suffering heathen; we have five millions at our very door, and what is written in black letters against us—loud-voiced, self-praisers that we are—is that we have just taken eighteen millions from the industry of our own honest toilers to supply their tyrants with more scourges and stronger chains. We knew when we were paying all these millions to the Mexican generals that every dollar would be expended to the hurt of the oppressed workingmen of Mexico, yet we had the audacity to demand that all the world should sing pæans to our magnanimity. In this our hypocrisy was yet more superlative than our absurdity.

But the time has come at last in which the evil is becom-

ing its own cautery. The rich are alarmed at the anarchy and insecurity of property; the better class of priests are startled at the frightful indifference of the masses to the rites of the church, caused by their being *sold* at prices above the common reach; the soldiers find themselves hated and ill-paid, and there is no remedy but in a war where they will become necessary; the suffering people want something different from their present oppressions, and all demand *change*. With all this there needs but a leader; a man of name and ability who will put himself in the field, and promise them security, trade, and *no soldiers*. They are narrow and incomplete in their wishes, but so far as they can see there is a unanimous will for revolution. A rumor, a faith, an expectation that Arista will be driven from the capital by his and their old enemies, pervades the air. No one can tell why he is so thoroughly confident that President Arista will come across the mountains in deadly feud with the plundering faction that has its nest in the city of Mexico, and take the captainship of the new Republic this side of the Sierra Madre, yet everybody seems to wait for that event as if it were the appointed signal for decisive measures. When you hear of a revolution in Mexico, you may prepare to celebrate the birth of another nation.

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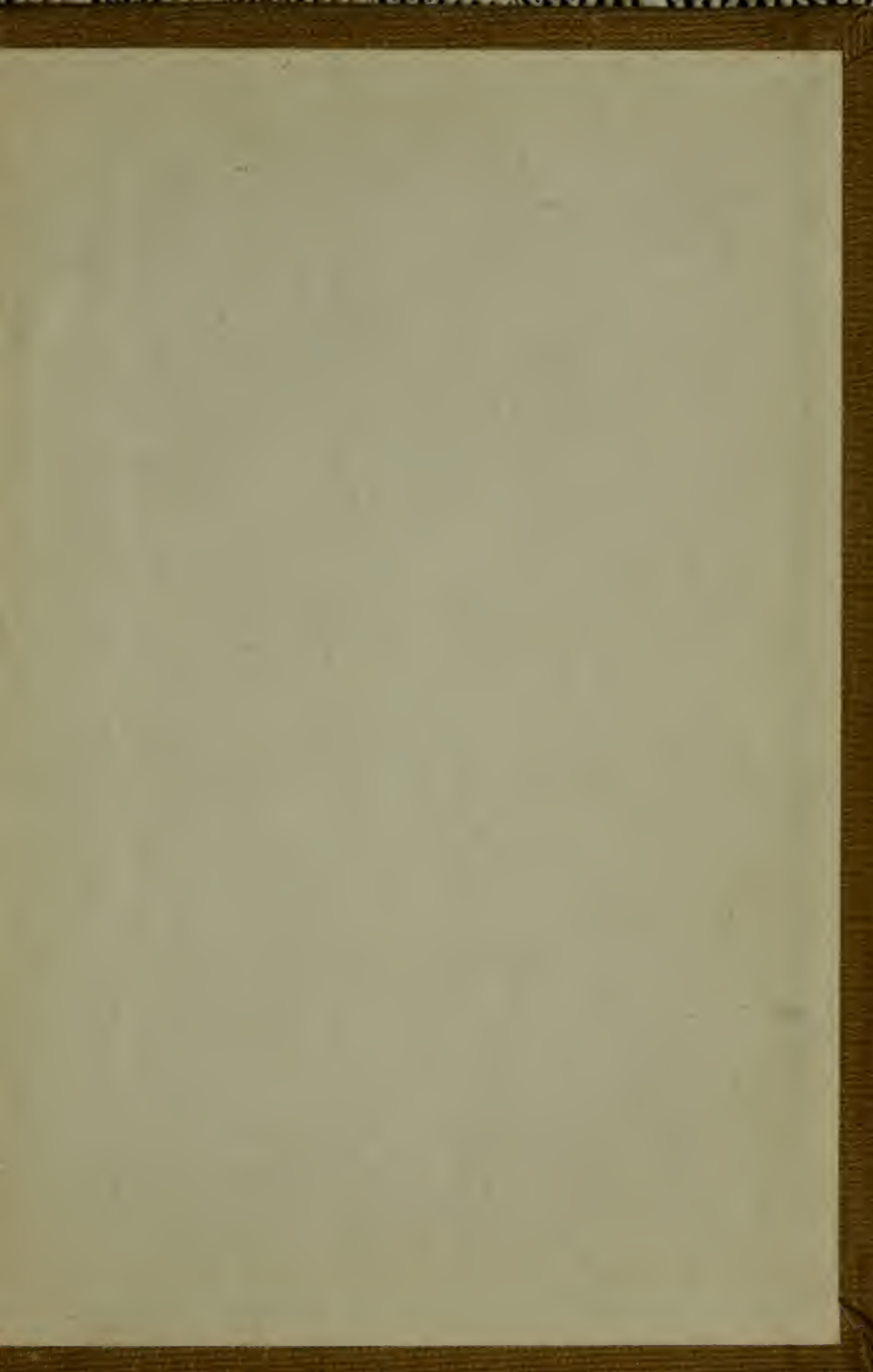












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