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LEAVES FROM MY JOURNAL.—By J. F. B. M.
No 5.—TOUR ACROSS MEXICO.

The Cathedral of Guadalajara is a magnificent edifice, surpassing in the imposing appearance of its exterior, and the richness of the interior anything of the kind that I have ever seen, my experience in respect to public buildings being to be sure limited to those of the new world. As I entered, the scene was a solemn and impressive one. The sight of its lofty and majestic arches, the statues of saints, the profusion of gold and silver ornaments which reflected the dim light admitted through the stained windows, the kneeling forms around on the marble floor, some still as statues, others repeating the paternoster, or confessing to the dark-robed priests, impressed me with a feeling of awe, and I did not wonder at the hold which the priesthood have obtained over these superstitious people, with the imposing ceremonies of the Church of Rome. This city is the citadel of priestly influence in Mexico, and all the ceremonies calculated to impress a weak-minded people with awe and superstitious dread, are here practised in their fullest extent. Every evening during our stay here, I saw a procession of the "Host," marched through the principal street preceded by a full military band of music, the splendid carriage containing the consecrated wafer surrounded by chanting priests and flaming torches, and wo to the person, whether high or low, native or foreigner, who does not bow the knee in adoration while the procession remains in sight. I was strolling through one of the principal streets at dusk, when I suddenly found myself close upon the Host, and the object of many glances of horror from the kneeling and apparently pious multitude around me. Remembering with wonderful distinctness my adventure with the mob of Valparaiso upon a similar occasion, when I was attacked by a guard of soldiers and my companion severely bruised, for our ignorance of the language and customs, in not kneeling before the Host, I looked about for some avenue to escape, and being fortunately near a cross street, I succeeded in making good my retreat, though from the scowling looks which I received from the kneeling faithful, I saw that my motive was known, and I considered myself fortunate in evading any personal insult or violence. It is said here that the priests are of the most corrupt class, and the greatest gamblers and rouses in the city. One grows heartsick to hear some of the stories of their vices, and were not many of them evident to the stranger, such stories would be considered as foul slanders, though told by those entitled from their standing in society to the fullest credence. They are constant attendants at the bull baits and cock fights which are held on the Sabbath, and are frequent visitors at almost every scene of dissipation.

The Sunday after our arrival, I was attracted to the window by the sound of music, when I saw one of those ridiculous processions so common in most Catholic countries. First came two clowns painted most hideously, riding on miserable looking donkeys, with their faces to the tail, and endeavouring to excite the attention of the mob by their antics, in which laudable purpose they were completely successful; these were followed by a huge Gothic made of pasteboard, which was kept in motion by a man enclosed in the case. Other similar follies came after,

and the object of the procession was made known by a trumpeter, who announced that the bull bait would take place in the afternoon, and this was a procession of the "dramatic corps" attached to the establishment, who would perform during the intervals between the killing of the bulls.

The next day I saw a spectacle of an entirely different nature. I was in the balcony listening to a young lady who was performing on the piano in the house opposite, when the huge bell of the Cathedral struck, and at the same instant the whole population threw themselves on their knees, and remained in that posture for the space of almost two minutes when the bell again struck and all was life again. The scene was a very novel one to me, and could I have believed in the sincerity of the performers would have been a very impressive one. It seemed as if the whole populace were suddenly turned to kneeling statues. All were on their knees. The arriero in the street, beside his mule which he seized by the tail, the Don in his coach, the pedestrian in the middle of the street he was crossing, the huckster beside her wares, the young lady at her piano, and the caballero beside his steed. I do not know what ceremony of the church was thus performed, but it was certainly a solemn and striking one.

We were just in time to avail ourselves of a fine opportunity to proceed to Mexico in a comfortable and economical manner, two desiderata which are but seldom found combined in this country. A Mexican gentleman who had been worth considerable property, among which were four large coaches, had been stripped of every thing he possessed by gambling, and these coaches were to be sent to the city of Mexico to be disposed of. We were thus enabled to charter one cheap, as it was all clear gain to the owners, and obtained one for \$150 to take us to Mexico, about fourteen days journey, the drivers finding themselves as well as their animals, which was a great relief to us, as we were continually cheated by the natives who supplied them with food. This made our proportion but thirty seven and a half dollars each, for carriage hire for a journey of fifteen days, or two dollars and a half per day, while our expenses from Tepic to Guadalajara were four dollars per day exclusive of the keeping of the animals, which was nearly a dollar per day for each of us, although we had but one horse each, and but two baggage mules for all four. The usual price paid for the charter of a coach from G. to Mexico is two hundred and fifty dollars, and it would cost as much for a single person as for four, besides the greater risk which he would run of being robbed.

We left Guadalajara June 3d, after a week's stop, and were much pleased at the change in our method of travelling, exchanging a hard horse for a large and easy coach in which we might sleep all day, keeping watch by turns for the gentlemen of the road. Our vehicle was drawn by eight mules, harnessed two abreast at the wheels, two leaders, and four abreast in the centre. The other three coaches were empty excepting one which contained three Mexican officers, with whom we soon made acquaintance and found their services of much use in preventing the impositions to which in our ignorance of the language we had been subject. Each coach was driven by two postillions, one on the leaders and the other at the wheel, and our mules being

fresh and the roads good we rolled merrily on, there being little or no fear of larders, from the apparent strength of our cavalcade. Our first day's journey brought us to a small town with a name much too extensive for it, viz. Tepetitlan-ejo, ten leagues from Guadalajara. One description of an Mexican town will answer with but little or no variation for all. Each contains a Plaza, a miserable Meson, and a handsome church.

The next day while stopping at a small village, while our postillions breakfasted, we were attracted by the sound of music, to a spot where we found a collection of peasants under a rude shed, who were apparently enjoying themselves exceedingly. Two performers, one on a guitar the other on a violin, were accompanying a chorus of singers, who seemed to gratify the audience very much by their rude song. With true Mexican politeness, a settee was cleared for us, and we were favored with a song extempore concerning ourselves, which threw the audience into roars of laughter. A dance followed, and at its close I was about to take out some money to offer them, when I was stopped by one of the officers, who made me understand that the less money I showed the better, as there were many among that apparently jovial and friendly group, who would not scruple to form a party strong enough to overpower us, if they suspected that the booty would be worth the risk. So it is with the Mexican. Unsurpassed by any nation in the little courtesies of life, and acts of politeness, he will salute with a cheerful "a dios Senor," and at the same time will watch for a chance to rob you, which they will do with the same saucy of manner, offering you while you are "shelling out," a bunch of "cigaros" in one hand, while with the other a pistol is held at your breast. We travelled fourteen leagues the second day and reached Tepetitlan, a larger town than Tepetitlan-ejo and consequently with a smaller name.

Our third day's journey brought us to Talos a small town not worthy of note, excepting as being the scene of an amusing adventure, or rather the first scene of a farce which was concluded in the next town. Our Meson was kept by an immensely fat old landlady, who following up the *gouging* system which had been so universally practised on us, charged us three dollars for our supper when the usual price was but one. One of the Mexican officers offered to settle the business for us, and accordingly the next morning at daylight as we were about to start, he offered her the money which she refused to take unless she could have the whole of her demand. He said no more, but getting into the coach held the money out of the window. As the coach began to move out of the courtyard she began to edge up nearer and nearer, till at the last moment finding that she was likely to lose the whole, she seized it just in time, vowing that she would be revenged upon us, and we rode off laughing at her rage.

After a short ride of but seven leagues we reached the town of San Juan de Sagos. While sitting in our room at dinner, we were surprised by an order from the Alcalde for our immediate arrest, which was a proceeding the nature or cause of which we were totally at a loss to comprehend. As nearly as we could understand our friend the Mexican officer, our crime was a *political* one, and we again began to suspect that our connexion with the California affair had brought us

into trouble. This was a very pleasant idea for us to reflect upon as we were conducted by the officers of Justice to the court house, and knowing how hardly it fares with foreigners accused of political crimes in this country, we did not at all relish the idea of becoming the inmates of a prison in the interior of Mexico. We felt rather *cheap*, as we were ushered up a broad flight of steps through files of grim guards, into the hall of Justice, and I began to speculate on the probability of my having an opportunity to see David Crockett, whom we had just heard was alive in one of the Mexican mines. The hall which we entered was a fine large room, at the head of which behind a table covered with books and papers, sat "His Honor" the Alcalde, swelling with conscious dignity. We walked up to the table, and Mr F. carelessly laid his hat upon it, which was whisked off by the magistrate, who with a terrible frown, that made our hearts leap into our mouths, majestically motioned for us to sit down on a bench near him. He then commenced a speech, the purport of which was as nearly as I could comprehend, that serious charges had been brought against us, and that we must abide the trial, and suffer the just penalty of the law if proved guilty. This speech being concluded he sat down apparently convinced that his eloquence had made a strong impression upon us trembling culprits, who in answer gave him to understand that not being acquainted with the language, they were no wiser than when he commenced. The military captain then stepped forward, informing his honor that he was a fellow traveller and would act as advocate for us. The Judge then ordered the accuser to appear, and we were expecting to see some official character approach, to charge us with fomenting revolution, when who should make her appearance, boiling with rage but our fat old landlady of the day previous, and accuse us of cheating her out of her supper. Our lofty notions of our political consequence, at once vanished, at this step from the sublime, and we could hardly refrain from a burst of laughter at the absurd nature of the denouement. This corpulent old lady sacrificing interest to revenge, had followed us with her servants through the heat and dust of our day's journey, and now demanded redress, and recompense for her supper, her days journey, loss of time, &c. and damages to the amount of about twenty dollars. On hearing her complaint the Alcalde rose in all the majesty of the law, and expressed his indignation at the treatment which a Mexican female had received at the hands of foreign travellers. He said it was a thumping shame that a lone female should be thus imposed upon and have to travel seven leagues to obtain redress. The old lady heard his honor with much satisfaction, bridling up and looking daggers at us, as much as to say that she would make us suffer for our insolence, and we really began to think that it would have been more economical for us had we allowed ourselves to be cheated by her, as the affair then looked rather against us. She knew that we did not understand the language sufficiently to defend our case, and supposed that her statement would be heard uncontradicted. But after the Alcalde had finished his speech, our friend the officer rose and stated the case as it was, calling the arrieros and postillions to prove that we were overcharged. The Alcalde's countenance gradually relaxed from its stern expression until the witnesses on each side being examined, he

was convinced that "the boot was on the other leg," and decided the case in our favor, much to the chagrin of the old lady, whom he informed that although she had an undoubted right to impose upon strangers, when she could, yet that she must not appeal to the law for redress when she failed in her laudable attempt. Thus was this important legal case closed, the most interesting one probably, which has ever been brought before the tribunals of San Juan de Lagos. The old landlady made her exit in a tremendous rage, having had her day's journey for nothing, abusing the officer who had been of such assistance to us, telling him that he had no business to interfere between his own countrymen and foreigners. We left the Hall of Justice, quite satisfied that we should not at present have an opportunity of visiting the mines or seeing David Crockett, and returned to our room to enjoy a hearty laugh at our adventure.

Our next day's journey brought us to the town of Lagos, fourteen leagues from San Juan. Here we met with another adventure, and with an instance of Mexican honor. Some Mexicans who were interested in the sale of the coaches in which our party was travelling to Mexico, met us here, and after a consultation with the Patron who had charge of them, he informed us that as they wished the coaches to proceed to Zacatecas, as they were in demand there, they had concluded to leave us to proceed to Mexico as we best could. Here was a charming situation! to be left in the heart of Mexico, ignorant of the means of proceeding, after we had chartered a coach and paid for it to take us the whole distance. We expostulated, but in vain; the coaches must go to Zacatecas. We threatened to appeal to the Alcalde, but the Patron, knowing that we had no receipt for our money and no means of proving the bargain, only laughed at us. At last, in the morning we seized our pistols and ordered the servants to lash our baggage as usual to the back of the coach, and made the Patron understand that we were determined not to be so imposed upon, and that we should not allow the coach to leave without us. Seeing our resolution, they held another consultation and concluded to take all the coaches but the one we occupied, and furnish the officers with horses and mules, forcing two of them upon us, and crowding our crazy old vehicle, which we had hired for ourselves exclusively, when it would hardly hold the weight of us four. This affair being settled we proceeded slowly and uncomfortably, our mules having begun to give out before, and the additional weight of passengers seeming to check their go-a-head propensities in a great degree.

This our sixth day's journey brought us to Leon; a large town where is held annually an extensive fair for the disposal of produce and merchandise, which are sent here from Mexico and Guadalajara, and bought by the merchants in the interior who flock from all quarters of the Republic. In the evening we walked round the Plaza which was lighted with torches, having a very picturesque appearance, and crowded with people buying and selling. Goods of every description were exposed for sale, and one would suppose that this was a fair in a large city rather than a daily custom in a town. Here one of our coach wheels broke down, and we were obliged to remain all the next day to have a new one made, a necessity which was caused by the avarice of our Patron, in crowding the coach rather than hiring mules.

Our wheel finished, we travelled on for four days, stopping at Salao, Salamanca, and Celaya, when we reached Queretaro, the third city in the Republic. It is a handsome city, regularly built, and contains some of the most magnificent churches and convents in the New World. The

convent of Santa Clara, which we did not have time to visit is more than two miles in circuit. Its famous Aqueduct is a grand work. It is more than ten miles in length, supported on bold and lofty arches, and gives the city an air of great magnificence as you approach it from the side towards Mexico. The Hotel where we stopped was much superior to the one at Guadalajara, and we were allowed the luxury of a fine warm bath, which we duly appreciated after our many dusty days journey.

We remained at Queretaro but one night, and passing through several nameless little "Haciendas" or farm houses, arrived at the towns of Arroji Lara and San Juan del Rio, the latter of which is also celebrated for its fair, we arrived at the famous city of Mexico, June 18th. It was the greatest holiday the Mexicans have, and in all the towns through which we had passed since leaving Queretaro we had seen great preparations going on for the celebration of this festival of the "Corpus Christi." We had heard much of the splendor with which this anniversary is celebrated in the city of Mexico, and we had made all haste to arrive in order to witness it; but our postillions, early in the morning had got tipsey in honor of the day, and were totally unmanageable. Our appearance this morning was most grotesque, as we entered the far famed valley of Mexico, with one of our postillions sitting with his face to the tail of his mule, to which he was holding fast, singing and waving his hand, and looking in at us with drunken gravity. Our coach was all covered with mud, the wheels braced with coarse pieces of wood lashed on with an abundance of rope, our mules and harness alike worn out, ourselves dirty and shabby, while muskets, fowling pieces, cutlasses and pistols were sticking out of the sides of the coach in all directions. We tried to bring our coachman to his senses, but in vain, as he sat or danced about now on one mule, now on another, with all the gestures of a harlequin, causing shouts of laughter to the multitudes who thronged the road on their way to the scene of the great celebration. We at last gave up the attempt, and as we were not afraid of being recognized by any of our acquaintances, threw ourselves back and roared with laughter at our ludicrous appearance, and the comical absurdities of our postillion; in this way we made our "grand entree" into the city of Mexico, too late to witness the grand procession, which was passing as we entered. The streets through which the procession passed were shaded by awnings and filled with immense crowds, which rendered it impossible for us to get near the Hotel where we were to stop, as well as to see the procession. Not wishing to get out of our coach for fear that we should be taken for highwaymen in our warlike costume, we were obliged to drive round the most remote streets of the city for several hours before the crowds had dispersed sufficiently for us to gain our hotel; crowds of well dressed people were hurrying through the streets, all of whom stared at our cortege, as if we were monsters escaped from a caravan, at which I did not at all wonder. At last the grand procession being over we reached the hotel, which is a fine establishment kept by an Englishman. Here we were to wait until the next Packet should sail for New York, as the climate of Vera Cruz is so unhealthy, especially at this season, that it is unsafe to remain in the city longer than necessary to get one's baggage on board the vessel.

Our party was here increased by the addition of another traveller from the Hawaiian group, J. C. Jones, Esq. late consul at Oahu, who had sailed from there some weeks previous. We found the California affair making a great stir in the city. The British and American minis-

ters were both taking measures to have the affair sifted, and redress obtained. The venerable President Bustamente was very indignant at the transaction, the more so as he said it was then the grand object of Mexico to conciliate the favor both of the United States and Great Britain, and this business would prove a damper upon all the friendly relations which they were trying to establish. Castro had been sent for to answer the accusations brought against him, and it was thought by many that he would suffer severely for his conduct.

We were within three days travel of Vera Cruz, and within twenty five days of home, and my impatience to be on the road overcame all my curiosity to witness the lions of the far famed city of Mexico. But here we must wait or proceed to Ialapa, and there wait for the sailing of the monthly packet; there being at this time no opportunities for New Orleans, which generally are frequent; but an English steamship had advertised to ply as a packet between New Orleans and Vera Cruz, and having made one trip and driven away the small packets from the line had found it too unprofitable to continue and thus we were without any opportunity of reaching the place. We made the best of our disappointment however, and amused ourselves with looking at the lions of this splendid city.

THE POLYNESIAN.

Honolulu, Saturday, Nov. 27, 1841.

As the accounts which we have hitherto published of the loss of the U. S. Ship Peacock, have been but partial, and in some particulars incorrect, we are induced to give a fuller report, gathered from more recent intelligence. The Peacock in company with the Flying Fish, made Cape Disappointment July 17th ult.; both vessels having been detained on their southern cruise, and in putting into Oahu for provisions, three months later than the period appointed for their junction at the Columbia with the Vincennes and Porpoise; in consequence of which Capt. Wilkes had become much alarmed for their safety, and indeed entertained fears of their total loss upon some one of the coral islands at the South. The next day, being Sunday, the 18th of July, Capt. Hudson in the Peacock approached the mouth of the river, and supposing that the Vincennes was inside, determined to enter immediately, by sailing directions and chart which had been furnished him at Honolulu, by a vessel recently from the river. There was no hope of obtaining a pilot. The first attempt was made with a light breeze from the south, which brought the ship to the leeward of the mouth. She was then put about, and stood off. After divine service the wind becoming more favorable, Capt. H. stood inshore again, following compass bearings according to directions, until the water shoaled to about four fathoms, with breakers in sight; the ship's head was then kept more to the eastward until the water deepened, but no channel being discovered, Capt. H. had determined to stand out to sea again, when smooth water was reported to him, with every appearance of the channel sought for. The vessel's course was then changed for it, and in a few moments she struck upon the outer edge of the north bar, in smooth water, and lay thumping heavily. Every exertion was made to get her off, but all were fruitless. As the tide changed, the breakers rolled in, and the ship forged further ahead upon the bank, thumping more heavily each time, while the sea rose so high that no boat could have lived in it. With night the dangers increased, and she remained in a most critical situation. The rudder was torn away, and the weather bulwarks broken. The heavy shocks threatened to shatter the ship in pieces, and indeed nothing but her great strength

enabled her to hold together until morning. The water forced itself through her strained sides, and notwithstanding the continued exertions of the ship's company at the pumps, gained upon them. Several times it was expected she would have broken up, in which case not a life would have been saved. Yet through all this trying scene the most perfect discipline and coolness were displayed, both by men and officers. One of the boys was seen sleeping soundly upon the deck. In the morning the sea moderated and a canoe came along side, with information in regard to the other vessels of the Squadron. As soon as it was thought safe, the boats were lowered, (in which act the first cutter was stove,) and the ship's company arranged to go ashore in three trips. The sick, with the medical officers, the scientific corps, and the clerk in charge of the charts and papers were sent in the first. They found a safe landing on a little beach inside Cape Disappointment, and about two miles from the ship. On the second trip, it being three hours later, the breakers had risen with the tide, and the boats found great difficulty in getting safe ashore, as their course lay directly through them; in attempting to return the third time to the ship, one of them was swamped, and the crew rescued only by great exertion. Capt. Hudson seeing their danger, made signals for them to go back, which they were forced to obey, though not until it would have been madness for them to have proceeded. Had the boats have been lost, the only hope of escape for those on the wreck would have been cut off. The masts had been cut away to ease the vessel, but still she thumped and pitched heavily, and those on shore were fearful she would not hold together until another tide. Capt. Hudson, Lieut. Walker, with about thirty men remained on board. The fearful state of suspense with which the company on shore watched the wreck, cannot be described. At length, about four o'clock, p. m., another attempt was made, and the sea having gone down a little, they succeeded in reaching the ship, and bringing off the whole remaining number. The Captain was the last to leave. He was received on shore with three cheers, by his gallant officers and crew, who had so well supported him throughout this dangerous crisis. The conduct of the whole was admirable, and as we have been informed by a passive eye witness, every thing was done with as much order and composure as if the ship had been merely brought to an anchor in a safe harbor, of the whole event had been foreseen. Conduct like this when death was momentarily expected by the whole ship's company, is high testimony to the perfect confidence displayed in the commander and officers by the crew, and in the discipline and harmony that prevailed on board.

Nothing had been saved from the ship excepting public documents, and private papers, with the clothes the officers and crew stood in. Many things afterwards floated ashore from the wreck, which however were immediately plundered by the Indians, and carried off beyond recovery. The ensuing night was passed on the beach, and in the morning they went up to Fort George where every thing was done for their comfort that lay in his power by Mr Birnie, the H. B. Company's Superintendent. As soon as the loss was heard of at Fort Vancouver necessaries of all kinds were immediately forwarded to them by Dr. McLaughlin. Twelve hours after the last trip from the ship nothing but the head of the bowsprit remained above water, and in the course of the summer the wreck had been driven by tide and breakers about half a mile nearer shore. The Flying Fish made a thorough survey of the mouth of the river.

The Porpoise went into the river, and afterwards spent two months at San Francisco. The Vincennes after receiving on board

