when the firing began on the morning of the revolution, and galloped home in consternation.

7th.—A long discussion to-day in Congress on the propriety of granting extraordinary powers to the president; also a publication of the despatches written by Gomez Farias during the revolution. He speaks with the utmost confidence of the success of his enterprise. In his first letter, he observes, that General Urrea, with the greater part of the garrison and people of the capital, have pronounced for the re-establishment of the federal system, and have, by the most fortunate combination of circumstances, got possession of the palace, and arrested the president. That troops have been passing over to them all day, and that the triumph of the federalists is so sure, he has little doubt that the following morning will see tranquility and federalism re-established. The different accounts of the two parties are rather amusing. It is said that Gomez Farias is concealed in Mexico...

8th.—Paid a visit to-day, where the lady of the house is a leper; though it is supposed that all who are afflicted with this scourge are sent to the hospital of San Lazaro.

We rode before breakfast this morning to the old church of La Piedad, and, on our return, found a packet containing letters from London, Paris, New York, and Madrid. The arrival of the English packet, which brings all these nouvelles, is about the most interesting event that occurs here.

LETTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH


August 30th.

In the political world nothing very interesting has occurred, and as yet there is no change of ministry.
Visitors

Yesterday morning C——n set off in a coach-and-six for the valley of Toluca, about eighteen leagues from Mexico, with a rich Spaniard, Señor M——r y T——n, who has a large hacienda there.

Last Sunday morning, being the first Sunday since the revolution, we had forty visitors—ladies and gentlemen, English, French, Spanish, and Mexican. Such varieties of dresses and languages I have seldom seen united in one room; and so many anecdotes connected with the pronunciamiento as were related, some grave, some ludicrous, that would form a volume! The Baron de—— having just left this for your part of the world, you will learn by him the last intelligence of it and of us.

As there is a want of rain, the Virgen de los Remedios was brought into Mexico, but as there is still a slight ripple on the face of the lately-troubled waters, she was carried in privately—for all reunions of people are dreaded at this juncture, I had just prepared pieces of velvet and silk to hang on the balconies, when I found that the procession had gone by a back street after sunset.

I went lately to visit the nuns of the Encarnacion, to inquire how they stood their alarms, for their convent had been filled with soldiers, and they had been in the very heart of the firing. I was welcomed by a figure covered from head to foot with a double black crape veil, who expressed great joy at seeing me again, and told me she was one of the madres who received us before. She spoke with horror of the late revolution, and of the state of fear and trembling in which they had passed their time; soldiers within their very walls, and their prayers interrupted by volleys of cannon. Thanks to the intercession of the Virgin, no accident had occurred; but she added, that had the Virgin of los Remedios been brought in sooner, these disorders might never have taken place.

I went from thence to the convent of Santa Teresa, where I saw no one, but discoursed with a number of voices, from the shrill treble of the old Madre Priora, to the full cheerful tones of my friend the Madre A——. There is something rather awful in sending one’s voice in this way into an unknown region, and then listening for a response from the unseen dwellers there. I have not yet been inside this convent, but now that affairs are settled for the present, I trust that the archbishop will kindly grant his permission to that effect.
The rainy season is now at its height; that is, it rains severely every evening, but in the morning it is lovely. The disagreeable part of it is, that the roads are so bad, it is difficult to continue our rides in the environs. Horse and rider, after one of these expeditions, appear to have been taking a mud-bath. It is very amusing to stand at the window about four o'clock, and see every one suddenly caught in the most tremendous shower. In five minutes the streets become rivers; and canoes would be rather more useful than carriages. Strong porters (car-
gadores) are in readiness to carry well-dressed gentlemen or women who are caught in the deluge, across the streets. Coachmen and footmen have their great-coats prepared to draw on; and all horsemen have their sarapes strapped behind their saddles, in which, with their shining leather hats, they can brave the storm. Trusting to an occa-
sional cessation of rain, which sometimes takes place, people continue to go out in the evening, but it is down-
right cruelty to coachmen and animals, unless the visit is to a house with a porte-cochère, which many of the houses have—this amongst others.

September 1st.—Had a dispute this morning with an Englishman, who complains bitterly of Mexican insincerity. I believe the chief cause of this complaint amongst foreigners consists in their attaching the slightest value to the common phrase, “Está á la disposicion de V.” Everything is placed at your disposal—house, car-
riage, servants, horses, mules, etc.—the lady's earrings, the gentleman's diamond pin, the child's frock. You admire a ring—it is perfectly at your service; a horse—
ditto. Letters are dated “from your house;” (de la casa de V.) Some from ignorance of the custom, and others from knavery, take advantage of these offers, which are mere expressions of civility, much to the con-
fusion and astonishment of the polite offerer, who has no more intention of being credited, than you have when, from common etiquette, you sign yourself the very humble servant of the very greatest bore. It is a mere habit, and to call people who indulge in it insincere, reminds me of the Italian mentioned somewhere by Lady Blessington, who thought he had made a conquest of a fair Englishwoman, though somewhat shocked by her forwardness, because, in an indifferent note to him, she signed herself “Truly yours.” Shall I ever forget the
Mexican Sincerity

crestfallen countenance of a Mexican gentleman who had just purchased a very handsome set of London harness, when hearing it admired by a Frenchman, he gave the customary answer, "It is quite at your disposal," and was answered by a profusion of bows, and a ready acceptance of the offer! The only difficulty with the Frenchman being as to whether or not he could carry it home under his cloak, which he did.

If all these offers of service, in which it is Mexican etiquette to indulge, be believed in—"Remember that I am here but to serve you"—"My house and everything in it is quite at your disposal"—"Command me in all things;" we shall of course be disappointed by finding that, notwithstanding these reiterated assurances, we must hire a house for ourselves, and even servants to wait on us; but take these expressions at what they are worth, and I believe we shall find that people here are about as sincere as their neighbours.

8th.—A good deal of surmise, because four Texian vessels are cruising in the bay off Vera Cruz. There is also a good deal of political talk, but I have no longer Madame de Staël's excuse for interfering in politics, which, by the way, is a subject on which almost all Mexican women are well informed; possessing practical knowledge, the best of all, like a lesson in geography given by travelling. I fear we live in a Paradise Lost, which will not be regained in our day. . . .

My attention is attracted, while I write, by the appari-
tion of a beautiful girl in the opposite balcony, with hair of a golden brown hanging in masses down to her feet. This is an uncommon colour here; but the hair of the women is generally very long and fine. It rarely or never curls. We were amused the other day in passing by a school of little boys and girls, kept in a room on the first

door of Señor ——'s house, to see the schoolmistress, certainly not in a very elegant dishabille, marching up and down with a spelling-book in her hand, her long hair hanging down, and trailing on the floor a good half-yard behind her; while every time she turned, she switched it round like a court-train. . . .

You ask me about this climate, for ——. For one who, like her, is in perfect health, I should think it excellent; and even an invalid has only to travel a few hours, and he arrives at tierra caliente. This climate is that of the
tropics, raised some thousand feet above the level of the sea; consequently there is an extreme purity and thinness of the atmosphere, which generally affects the breathing at first. In some it causes an oppression on the cnest. On me, it had little effect, if any; and at all events, the feeling goes off, after the first month or so. There is a general tendency to nervous irritation, and to inflammatory complaints, and during September and October, on account of the heavy rains and the drained lakes on which part of the city is built, there is said to be a good deal of ague. Since the time of the cholera in 1833, which committed terrible ravages here, there has been no other epidemic. The smallpox indeed has been very common lately, but it is owing to the carelessness of the common people, or rather to their prejudice against having their children vaccinated.

The nervous complaints of the ladies are an unfailing source of profit to the sons of Galen, for they seem to be incurable. Having no personal experience in these evils, I speak only from what I see in others. It appears to me that the only fault of the climate consists in its being monotonously perfect, which is a great drawback to easy and polite conversation. The evening deluge is but a periodical watering of the earth, from which it rises like Venus from the sea, more lovely and refreshed than ever.

C—n has returned from Toluca, after an absence of eight days. Every one is hurrying to the theatre just now, in spite of the rain, to see some Spaniards, who are performing tours de force there.

16th.—Celebration of the Day of Independence, Anniversary of the "Glorioso Grito de Dolores," of September the 16th, 1810; of the revolution begun thirty years ago, by the curate of the village of Dolores in the province of Gunanajuato. "It is very easy," says Zavala, it is about the most sensible remark, "to put a country into combustion, when it possesses the elements of discord; but the difficulties of its re-organization are infinite."

A speech was made by General Tornez in the Alameda. All the troops were out—plenty of officers, monks, priests, and ladies, in full dress. We did not go to hear the speech, but went to the E—'s house to see the procession, which was very magnificent. The line of carriages was so deep, that I thought we should never arrive. After all was over, we walked in the Alameda, where temporary booths were
erected, and the trees were hung with garlands and flowers. The paseo in the evening was extremely gay; but I cannot say that there appeared to be much enthusiasm or public spirit. They say that the great difficulty experienced by the junta, named on these occasions for the preparation of these festivities, is to collect sufficient funds.

19th.—We went yesterday to San Angelo, one of the prettiest villages in the environs of Mexico, and spent the day at the hacienda of Señor T——e, which is in the neighbourhood. The rain has rendered the roads almost impassable, and the country round Mexico must be more like Cortes’s description of it at this season, than at any other period. One part of the road near the hacienda, which is entirely destroyed, the owner of the house wished to repair; but the Indians, who claim that part of the land, will not permit the innovation, though he offered to throw a bridge over a small stream which passes there, at his own expense.

24th.—We passed a pleasant day at Tacubaya, and dined with Monsieur S——, who gave a fête in consequence of its being his wife’s saint’s day.

27th.—Great fête; being the anniversary of the day on which the army called the trigarante (the three guarantees) entered Mexico with Yturbi.de at their head. The famous plan of Iguala, (so called from having been first published in that city,) was also called the plan of the three guarantees; freedom, union, and religion, which were offered as a security to the Spaniards, against whom so many cruelties had been exercised. We have had ringing of bells and firing all the morning, and in the evening there is to be a bull-fight, followed by the exhibition of the tours de force of these Spaniards, commonly called here “los Hercules,” who have just come to offer us a box in the Plaza.

This plan of the Iguala was certainly the only means by which Spain could have continued to preserve these vast and distant possessions. The treaty of Cordova, which confirmed it, was signed in that city between the Spanish General O’Donoju and Don Agustín Yturbi.de, in August 1821, and consisted of seventeen articles.

By the first, Mexico was to be acknowledged as a free and independent nation, under the title of the Mexican empire.
By the second, its government was to be a constitutional monarchy.

By the third, Ferdinand VII, Catholic King of Spain, was called to the throne of Mexico; and should he renounce or refuse the throne, it was offered to his brother the Infant Don Carlos, and under the same circumstances, to each brother in succession.

By the fourth, the emperor was to fix his court in Mexico, which was to be considered the capital of the empire.

By the fifth, two commissioners named by O'Donoju were to pass over to the Spanish court, to place the copy of the treaty and of the accompanying exposition in his majesty's hands, to serve him as an antecedent, until the Cortes should offer him the crown with all formality; requesting him to inform the Infantes of the order in which they were named; interposing his influence in order that the Emperor of Mexico should be one of his august house, for the interest of both nations, and that the Mexicans might add this link to the chain of friendship which united them with the Spaniards.

By the sixth, a Junta of the first men in Mexico; first by their virtues, position, fortune, etc., was to be named, sufficient in number to ensure success in their resolutions by the union of so much talent and information.

By the seventh, this Junta takes the name of the Administrative Provincial Junta.

By the eighth, O'Donoju was named member of this Junta.

By the ninth, this Junta was to name a president.

By the tenth, it was to inform the public of its installation, and of the motives which had caused it to meet.

By the eleventh, this assembly was to name a regency, composed of three persons, to compose the executive power, and to govern in the name of the monarch, until his arrival.

By the twelfth, the Junta was then to govern conformably to the laws, in everything which did not oppose the plan of Iguala, and till the Cortes had formed the constitution of the state.

By the thirteenth, the regency, as soon as they were named, were to proceed to the convocation of the Cortes, according to the method decreed by the provisional Junta.

By the fourteenth, the executive power was to reside in the regency—the legislative in the Cortes—but until the
reunion of the Cortes, the legislative power was to be exercised by the Junta.

By the fifteenth, all persons belonging to the community, the system of government being changed, or the country passing into the power of another prince, were perfectly at liberty to transport themselves and their fortunes wherever they chose, etc., etc.

By the sixteenth, this does not hold good in regard to the military or public employés disaffected to the Mexican independence; they will leave the empire within the term prescribed by the regency, etc., etc.

By the seventeenth and last, as the occupation of the capital by the peninsula troops is an obstacle to the realization of the treaty, this difficulty must be vanquished; but as the chief of the imperial army desires to bring this about, not by force, but by gentler means, General O'Donoju offers to employ his authority with the troops, that they may leave the capital without any effusion of blood, and by an honourable treaty. This treaty was signed by Yturbi and O'Donoju.

Had this plan of Iguala taken effect, what would have been the result in Mexico?—what its present condition?...

This being Sunday, and a fête-day, a man was murdered close by our door, in a quarrel brought about probably through the influence of pulque, or rather of chinguirite. If they did not so often end in deadly quarrel, there would be nothing so amusing as to watch the Indians gradually becoming a little intoxicated. They are at first so polite—handing the pulque-jar to their fair companions (fair being taken in the general or Pickwickian sense of the word); always taking off their hats to each other, and if they meet a woman, kissing her hand with an humble bow as if she were a duchess;—but these same women are sure to be the cause of a quarrel, and then out come these horrible knives—and then, Adios!

It is impossible to conceive anything more humble and polite than the common country-people. Men and women stop and wish you a good day, the men holding their hats in their hands, and all showing their white teeth, and faces lighted up by careless good-nature. I regret to state, however, that to-day there are a great many women quite as tipsy as the men, returning home after the fête, and increasing the distance to their village, by taking a zigzag direction through the streets. . . .
Señor Cañedo, Secretary of State, has formally announced his intention of resigning. Certainly the situation of premier in Mexico, at this moment, is far from enviable, and the more distinguished and clear-headed the individual, the more plainly he perceives the impossibility of remedying the thickly-gathering evils which crowd the political horizon. “Revolution,” says Señor de ——, “has followed revolution since the Independence; no stable government has yet been established. Had it been so, Mexico would have offered to our eyes a phenomenon unknown until now in the world—that of a people, without previous preparation, passing at once to govern themselves by democratic institutions.”

28th.—We drove out to the Peñón, a natural boiling fountain, where there are baths, which are considered a universal remedy, a pool of Bethesda, but an especial one for rheumatic complaints. The baths are a square of low stone buildings, with a church—each building containing five or six empty rooms, in one of which is a square bath. The idea seems to have been to form a sort of dwelling-house for different families, as each bath has a small kitchen attached to it. Like most great ideas of Spanish days, it is now in a state of perfect desolation, though people still flock there for various complaints. When one goes there to bathe, it is necessary to carry a mattress, to lie down on when you leave the bath, linen, a bottle of cold water, of which there is not a drop in the place, and which is particularly necessary for an invalid in case of faintness—in short everything that you may require. A poor family live there to take charge of the baths, and there is a small tavern where they sell spirits and pulque; and occasionally a padre comes on Sunday to say mass in the old church.

We were amused by meeting there with General —— and his family, who had brought with them a whole coach-load of provisions, besides mattresses, sheets, etc. The road to the Peñón crosses the most dreary plain imaginable. Behind the baths are two volcanic hills; and the view of Mexico and of the great volcanoes from this is magnificent. It is the most solitary of buildings; not a tree to be seen in its environs; these volcanic rocks behind—Mexico fronting it—the great lakes near it—to the right Guadalupe—to the left San Angel, San Agustin, and the mountains which bound the valley. The Indian family
who live there are handsome savages; and the girl who accompanied me at the bath spoke an extraordinary jargon, half Spanish, half Indian, but was a fine specimen of savage good looks. The water is extremely warm, and my curiosity to try its temperature was very soon satisfied.

These boiling springs are said to contain sulphate of lime, carbonic acid, and muriate of soda, and the Indians make salt in their neighbourhood, precisely as they did in the time of Montezuma, with the difference, as Humboldt informs us, that then they used vessels of clay, and now they use copper caldrons. The solitary-looking baths are ornamented with odd-looking heads of cats or monkeys, which grin down upon you with a mixture of the sinister and facetious rather appalling.

The Señora de —— insisted on my partaking of her excellent luncheon after the bath. We could not help thinking, were these baths in the hands of some enterprising and speculative Yankee, what a fortune he would make; how he would build an hotel à la Saratoga, would paper the rooms, and otherwise beautify this uncouth temple of boiling water.

There is an indescribable feeling of solitude in all houses in the environs of Mexico, a vastness, a desolation, such as I never before experienced in the most lonely dwellings in other countries. It is not sad—the sky is too bright, and nature too smiling, and the air we inhale too pure for that. It is a sensation of being entirely out of the world, and alone with a giant nature, surrounded by faint traditions of a bygone race; and the feeling is not diminished, when the silence is broken by the footstep of the passing Indian, the poor and debased descendant of that extraordinary and mysterious people, who came, we know not whence, and whose posterity are now "hewers of wood and drawers of water," on the soil where they once were monarchs.

In Chapultepec especially, near as it is to a large and populous city, the traditions of the past come so strongly upon the mind, that one would rather look for the apparition of a whole band of these inky-haired adder-anointed priests of Montezuma, than expect to meet with the benevolent-looking archbishop, who, in purple robes, occasionally walks under the shade of the majestic cypresses.

All Mexicans at present, men and women, are engaged
in what are called the desagravios, a public penance performed at this season in the churches, during thirty-five days. The women attend church in the morning, no men being permitted to enter, and the men in the evening, when women are not admitted. Both rules are occasionally broken. The penitence of the men is most severe, their sins being no doubt proportionally greater than those of the women; though it is one of the few countries where they suffer for this, or seem to act upon the principle, that "if all men had their deserts, who should escape whipping?"

To-day we attended the morning penitence at six o'clock, in the church of San Francisco; the hardest part of which was their having to kneel for about ten minutes with their arms extended in the form of a cross, uttering groans; a most painful position for any length of time. It is a profane thought, but I dare say so many hundreds of beautifully-formed arms and hands were seldom seen extended at the same moment before. Gloves not being worn in church, and many of the women having short sleeves, they were very much seen.

But the other night I was present at a much stranger scene, at the discipline performed by the men; admission having been procured for us, by certain means, private but powerful. Accordingly, when it was dark, enveloped from head to foot in large cloaks, and without the slightest idea of what it was, we went on foot through the streets to the church of San Agustín. When we arrived, a small side-door apparently opened of itself, and we entered, passing through long vaulted passages, and up steep winding stairs, till we found ourselves in a small railed gallery, looking down directly upon the church. The scene was curious. About one hundred and fifty men, enveloped in cloaks and sarapes, their faces entirely concealed, were assembled in the body of the church. A monk had just mounted the pulpit, and the church was dimly lighted, except where he stood in bold relief, with his gray robes and cowl thrown back, giving a full view of his high bald forehead and expressive face.

His discourse was a rude but very forcible and eloquent description of the torments prepared in hell for impenitent sinners. The effect of the whole was very solemn. It appeared like a preparation for the execution of a multitude of condemned criminals. When the discourse was
finished, they all joined in prayer with much fervour and
enthusiasm, beating their breasts and falling upon their
faces. Then the monk stood up, and in a very distinct
voice, read several passages of scripture descriptive of
the sufferings of Christ. The organ then struck up the
Miserere, and all of a sudden the church was plunged in
profound darkness; all but a sculptured representation of
the Crucifixion, which seemed to hang in the air illumina-
ted. I felt rather frightened, and would have been very
glad to leave the church, but it would have been impossible
in the darkness. Suddenly, a terrible voice in the dark
cried, "My brothers! when Christ was fastened to the
pillar by the Jews, he was scourged!" At these words,
the bright figure disappeared, and the darkness became
total. Suddenly, we heard the sound of hundreds of
scourges descending upon the bare flesh. I cannot con-
ceive anything more horrible. Before ten minutes had
passed, the sound became splashing, from the blood that
was flowing.

I have heard of these penitences in Italian churches,
and also that half of those who go there do not really
scourge themselves; but here where there is such perfect
concealment, there seems no motive for deception. In-
credible as it may seem, this awful penance continued,
without intermission, for half an hour! If they scourged
each other, their energy might be less astonishing.

We could not leave the church, but it was perfectly
sickening; and had I not been able to take hold of the
Señora——'s hand, and feel something human beside me,
I could have fancied myself transported into a congrega-
tion of evil spirits. Now and then, but very seldom, a
suppressed groan was heard, and occasionally the voice
of the monk encouraging them by ejaculations, or by short
passages from Scripture. Sometimes the organ struck
up, and the poor wretches, in a faint voice, tried to join
in the Miserere. The sound of the scourging is indescrib-
able. At the end of half an hour a little bell was rung,
and the voice of the monk was heard, calling upon them
to desist; but such was their enthusiasm, that the horrible
lashing continued louder and fiercer than ever.

In vain he entreated them not to kill themselves; and
assured them that heaven would be satisfied, and that
human nature could not endure beyond a certain point.
No answer, but the loud sound of the scourges, which are
many of them of iron, with sharp points that enter the flesh. At length, as if they were perfectly exhausted, the sound grew fainter, and little by little ceased altogether. We then got up in the dark, and, with great difficulty, groped our way in the pitch darkness through the galleries and down the stairs, till we reached the door, and had the pleasure of feeling the fresh air again. They say that the church-floor is frequently covered with blood after one of these penances, and that a man died the other day in consequence of his wounds.

I then went to the house of the ——— minister, where there was a reunion, and where I found the company comfortably engaged in eating a very famous kind of German salad, composed of herrings, smoked salmon, cold potatoes, and apples; (salmagundi?) and drinking hot punch. After the cold, darkness, and horrors of the church, this formed rather a contrast; and it was some time before I could shake off the disagreeable impression left by the desagradivos, and join in the conversation. . . .

Along with this you will receive some Mexican airs, which I have written by ear from hearing them played, and of some of which I gave you the words in a former letter.
MEXICAN AIRS.

(See Letters 12th and 16th.)

JARAVE PALAMO.

LOST ENANOS.