LETTER THE FORTY-FIRST

Bonnets—Dinner—Evening Ball—Mingling of Classes—Copper Tables—Dresses and Decorations—Indian Bankers, Male and Female—Decorum—Habit—Holders of Banks—Female Gambler—Robbery—Anecdote—Bet—Casa de Moneda—Leave San Angel—
Celebration—Address—Cross and Diploma—Reply—Presentation of a Sword—Discourses and Addresses—Reflections.

10th June.

One year since I last wrote of San Agustín! An entire year has fled swiftly away on rushing pinions, to add its unit to the rolling century. And again, on a bright morn-
ing in June, we set off for the hospitable San Antonio, where we were invited to breakfast and to pass the night on the second day of the fête. We found a very brilliant party assembled; the family with all its branches, the Ex-
Minister Cuevas, with his handsome sister-in-law, La Güera Rodríguez, with one of her beautiful grand-
daughters (daughter of the Marquis of G——e), now making her first appearance in Mexico, and various other agreeable people. The first day of the fête, a rumour was afloat that an attack was to be made on the banks by the federal party; that they expected to procure the sinews of war to the extent of a million of dollars, and then intended to raise a grito in Mexico, taking advantage of the temporary absence of the president and his officers. The plan seemed rather feasible, and the report, true or false, was current yesterday; but if there was any truth in it, the discovery has been made in time, for nothing has occurred. San Agustín appeared even gayer and more crowded than it was last year. We spent the day at the E——s, and went with them to a box in the plaza to see the cock-fight, which I had no particular pleasure, I must confess, in witnessing again, but went for the sake of those who had not seen it before. The general coup d'œil was exceeding gay, and the improvement in the dress of the ladies since last year very striking. There were neither diamonds nor pearls among the most fashion-
able. The bonnets were chiefly Parisian, as were many of the gowns. One box looked a veritable parterre of flowers. The ladies of our party wore dresses and bonnets
as simple, fresh, and elegant as could be seen in any part of the world. A young and titled heiress, newly arrived from her distant estates, wore pink satin with a white hat and feathers, and we observed, that according to the ancient San Agustin fashion, she changed her dress four or five times a day. But the ladies may dress and may smile, and may look their very best; they are little thought of this day, in comparison with the one all-powerful, all-pervading object. It is even whispered that one cause of the more than usual crowd at San Agustin this year, is that many failures are expected in mercantile houses, and that the heads of these houses or their agents are here on the desperate hope of retrieving their falling fortunes.

A good deal of play on a small scale goes on in the private houses, among those who do not take much part in the regular gambling; but all are interested more or less; even strangers, even ladies, even ourselves. Occasional news is brought in, and received with deep interest of the state of the banks, of the losses or gains of the different individuals, or of the result of the vacas, (a sort of general purse into which each puts in two or three ounces,) by different stragglers from the gambling-houses, who have themselves only ventured a few ounces, and who prefer the society of ladies to that of the Monte players. These are generally foreigners, and chiefly English.

We found the road to the Calveria, where, as usual, there was a ball in the afternoon, blocked up with carriages, and the hill itself covered with gay figures; who were dancing as well as the tremendous crowd would permit. This was really tolerably republican. The women generally were dressed as the better classes of Mexicans used to be, years ago, and not so many years neither (and as many in the country, still are) in blonde dresses, with very short petticoats, open silk stockings and white satin shoes; and such a collection of queer bonnets has probably never been seen since the days when les Anglaises pour rien first set foot on Gallic shores. Some were like small steeples, others resembled helmets, some were like sugar-loaves, and most seemed to have been set on, for convenience-sake, all the way out. Amidst these there was a good sprinkling of pretty Herbaults and Paris dresses, but they belonged to the more fashionable classes. The scene was amusing from its variety, but we
did not remain long, as it threatened rain. As we looked back, the crowd on the hill presented the appearance of a bed of butterflies dancing with black ants.

We returned to the ——'s to dinner, which was very handsome, and entirely French. There were about twenty-eight persons at table, some of them looked as if they had rather lost than otherwise. After dinner—music and conversation on the events and probabilities of the day, till it was time to dress for the ball at the Plaza. We, however, preferred going to a box, which saves the trouble of dressing, besides being "de mucho tomo," very fashionable; but when we arrived, not a box was to be had, the crowd was so great, and there were so many people of tomo, besides ourselves, who had preferred doing the same thing; so we were obliged to content ourselves with retreating to a third row of benches on the floor, after persuading at least a dozen of very good-natured women to turn out, in order to let us in. We were afterwards joined by the —— Minister and his wife. The ball looked very gay, and was prodigiously crowded, and exceedingly amusing.

There were people of all classes; modistes and carpenters, shop-boys, tailors, hatters, and hosiers, mingled with all the haut ton of Mexico. Every shop-boy considered himself entitled to dance with every lady, and no lady considered herself as having a right to refuse him, and then to dance with another person. The Señora de ——, a most high-bred and dignified person, danced with a stable-boy in a jacket and without gloves, and he appeared particularly gratified at the extraordinary opportunity thus afforded him of holding her white gloves in his brown paws. These fellows naturally select the first ladies as their partners, and, strange as it may seem, there is nothing in their behaviour that the most fastidious can complain of. They are perfectly polite, quiet, and well conducted; and what is more remarkable, go through a quadrille as well as their neighbours. The ball was quietness itself, until near the end, when the wind-instruments were suddenly seized with a fit of economy, the time they were paid for having probably expired, and stopped short in the midst of a waltz; upon which the gentlemen waltzers shouted "Viento! Viento!" at the full extent of their voices, clapping their hands, refusing to dance, and entirely drowning the sound of some little jingling guitars,
which were patiently twanging on, until the hired sons of Aëolus had to resume their labours.

There were some pretty faces among the secondary class of small shopkeepers; but their beauty is not striking, and takes a long time to discover; especially fagotées as they are in their overloaded dresses. Amongst the handsomest of the higher classes, were the Señora C——s, and a daughter of the Marquis G——c.

On the third night of the fête, C——n and I having left the ball-room, about ten o'clock, walked out in the direction of the copper-tables which filled the middle of the square, and were covered with awnings. It is a sight that, once seen, can never be forgotten. Nothing but the pencil of Hogarth, or the pen of Boz, could do justice to the various groups there assembled. It was a gambling fête champêtre, conducted on the most liberal scale.

On each table were great mountains of copper, with an occasional sprinkling of silver. There was a profusion of evergreens, small tin lamps dripping with oil, and sloping tallow candles shedding grease upon the board. Little ragged boys, acting as waiters, were busily engaged in handing round pulque and chia in cracked tumblers. There was, moreover, an agreeable tinkling produced from several guitars, and even the bankers condescended to amuse their guests with soothing strains. The general dress of the company consisted of a single blanket, gracefully disposed in folds about the person; so as to show various glimpses of a bronze skin. To this some added a pair of Mexican pantaloons, and some a shirt of a doubtful colour. There were many with large hats, most of which had crowns or parts of crowns, but all affording free entrance to the fresh air. Generally speaking, however, the head was uncovered, or covered only with its native thatching of long, bushy, tangled black hair.

This might be out of compliment to the ladies, of whom there were several, and who ought in politeness to have been mentioned first. Nothing could be simpler than their costume, consisting of a very dirty and extremely torn chemise, with short sleeves, a shorter petticoat, and a pair of shoes, generally of dirty satin: also a reboso, and the long hair hanging down as Eve's golden locks may have done in Paradise. "They call this place a Paradise," a Spanish soldier wrote to his father; "and so I think it is, it is so full of Adams."
There was neither fighting, nor swearing, nor high words. I doubt whether there be as much decorum at Crockford’s; indeed, they were scrupulously polite to each other. At one table, the banker was an enormously fat gentleman, one half of whose head was bound up with a dirty white handkerchief, over which a torn piece of hat was stuck, very much to one side. He had a most roguish eye, and a smile of inviting benignity on his dirty countenance. In one hand he held and tinkel’d a guitar, while he most ingeniously swept in the copper with the other. By his side sat two wretched-looking women, with long matted hair, their elbows on the table, and their great eyes fixed upon the game with an expression of the most intense anxiety. At another, the banker was a pretty little Indian woman, rather clean, comparatively speaking, and who appeared to be doing business smartly. A man stood near her, leaning against one of the poles that supported the awning, who attracted all our attention. He was enveloped in a torn blanket, his head uncovered, and his feet bare, and was glaring upon the table with his great dark, haggard-looking eyes, his brown face livid, and his expression bordering on despair. It needed no one to tell us that on the table was his last stake. What will such a man do but go upon the road?

I have heard it mentioned as a strong circumstance in favour of the Mexican character, that there is neither noise nor disturbance in these reunions; none of that uproar and violence that there would be in an English mob, for example. The fact is certain, but the inference is doubtful. These people are degraded, and accustomed to endure. They are gentle and cunning, and their passions are not easily roused, at least to open display; but once awakened, it is neither to uproar that these passions will be excited, nor by fair fight that they will be assuaged. In England, a boxing-match decides a dispute amongst the lower orders; in Mexico, a knife; and a broken head is easier mended than a cut throat. Despair must find vent in some way; and secret murder, or midnight robbery, are the fatal consequences of this very calmness of countenance, which is but a mask of Nature’s own giving to her Indian offspring.

Another reason for this tranquillity is the habit of gambling, in which they have indulged from childhood, and which has taught them that neither high words nor
violence will restore a single dollar once fairly lost; and in point of fairness, everything is carried on with the strictest honour, as among gamblers of high degree.

While "high life below stairs" is thus enticing, and these people are courting fortune in the fresh air, the gentlemanly gamblers are seated before the green cloth-covered tables, with the gravity befitting so many cabinet councils; but without their mystery, for doors and windows are thrown open, and both ladies and gentlemen may pass in and out, and look on at the game, if they please. The heaps of ounces look temptingly, and make it appear a true El Dorado. Nor is there any lack of creature-comforts to refresh the flagging spirits. There are supper-spread tables, covered with savoury meats to appease their hunger, and with generous wines to gladden their hearts; and the gentlemen who surrounded that board seemed to be playing, instead of Monte, an excellent knife and fork.

You must not suppose that those who hold gaming-tables are the less considered on that account; on the contrary, as the banks generally win, they are amongst the richest, and, consequently, the most respected men in Mexico. These bankers are frequently Spaniards, who have found gambling the readiest stepping-stone to fortune. Señor — explained to me one plan of those who hold the banks, a sort of hedging, by which it is next to impossible that they can lose. For example, one of these gentlemen proposes to his friends to take a share in a vaca, each contributing a few ounces. Having collected several hundred ounces, they go to play at his bank. If they win, he receives his share, of course; and if they lose his bank wins the whole. It is proceeding upon the principle of "Heads I win, tails you lose."

At the tables, few words are spoken. The heaps of gold change masters; but the masters do not change countenance. I saw but one person who looked a little out of humour, and he was a foreigner. The rich man adds to his store, and the poor man becomes a beggar. He is ruined, but "makes no sign."

The ladies who have collected ounces and made purses, send their friends and admirers to the tables to try their luck for them; and in some of the inferior houses, the Señoritas of a lower class occasionally try their fortune for themselves. I saw one of these, who had probably lost, by no means "taking it coolly." She looked like an
overcharged thunder-cloud; but whether she broke forth in anger or in tears, thunder or rain, we did not stay to see.

In short, it is an all-pervading mania, and as man is "a bundle of habits," the most moral persons in this country (always excepting one or two ladies who express their opinions strongly against it) see nothing in it to condemn, and are surprised at the effect it produces on a stranger; and, indeed, after a few years' residence here, a foreigner almost becomes reconciled to these abuses, by the veil of decorum with which they are covered.

We returned to San Antonio by the brightest possible moonlight, and in perfect safety, it being on the high-road to Mexico, and therefore guarded by soldiers. We heard the next morning, that a nephew of General B—s, who had ventured upon going by a cross-road to his house, at Mizquaque, has been attacked and robbed of his winnings, besides being severely wounded. This being the natural consequence, the morale to the story can excite no surprise. The robbers who, in hopes of plunder, flocked down at the time of the fête, like sopilotes seeking carrion, hide themselves among the barren rocks of the Pedregal, and render all cross-roads insecure, except with a very strong escort.

An anecdote was related to us this morning, by a member of the cabinet, a striking one amongst the innumerable instances of fortune's caprices. A very rich Spaniard, proprietor of several haciendas, attended the fête at San Agustin, and having won three thousand ounces, ordered the money to be carried in sacks to his carriage, and prepared to return to Mexico along with his wife. His carriage was just setting off, when a friend of his came out of an adjoining house, and requested him to stay to breakfast, to which he agreed. After breakfast, there being a monte table in the house, at which some of his acquaintances were playing, he put down two ounces, and lost. He continued playing and losing, until he had lost his three thousand ounces, which were sent for and transferred to the winners. He still continued playing with a terrible infatuation, till he had lost his whole fortune. He went on blindly, staking one hacienda after another, and property of all sorts, until the sun, which had risen upon him a rich and prosperous man, set, leaving him a beggar! It is said that he bore this
extraordinary and sudden reverse with the utmost equa
nimity. He left a son, whom we have seen at San
Agustin, where he earns his livelihood as croupier at the
gambling-tables.

29th.—No particular occurrence has taken place since
the fête; a visit from the new Secretary of Legation and
the Attaché, a diplomatic dinner at the — minister’s,
much going and coming and writing on the subject of a
house in Mexico, a correspondence concerning the sale of
our furniture, mules, etc., etc., a good deal of interest
excited by a bet between two English gentlemen, as to
whether it were possible for one of them to ride from
Mexico to San Angel in twenty minutes, which feat he
performed, starting from the gate called “El Niño Per-
dido,” and reaching the old church of San Angel within
the given time; these I think are the most remarkable
circumstances that have taken place. We are now in
treaty for the furnished apartments of the director of the
Casa de Moneda (the mint), a great building next the
palace, from which upwards of one thousand three hundred
millions of coined gold and silver have issued since the
beginning of the sixteenth century. The house is a palace
in extent and solidity; and the residence of the director
is very spacious and handsome, besides having the great
advantage of being furnished. We expect to return to
Mexico in a few days.

CASA DE MONEDA, 6th July.

Here we are, re-established in Mexico, for a short time
at least, and not without difficulty has it been accom-
plished. We left the country with some regret, as this
is the pleasantest time of the year for being there, and
everything was looking green and beautiful. We came
in, ourselves, in a loaded carriage, and in advance, four-
teen asses loaded with boxes, four Indians with ditto, and
two enormous loaded carts, one drawn by four, and
another by eight mules. We were a regular caravan, as
our friend the alcalde called us. Imagine the days of
packing and unpacking consequent thereupon! . . .

On the 1st of July, the victory gained by the govern-
ment over the federalist party was celebrated with great
crét. The president was presented with a diamond cross,
valued at six thousand dollars, and General Valencia with
a splendid jewel-hilted sword of great value. "Yesterday
morning," says the newspaper of the day, "a general pealing of the bells and the usual salutes announced to the capital that it was a day of rewards and of universal joy. At twelve o’clock, his Excellency the President of the Republic went to the palace, to fulfill the formality of closing the sessions, and to receive from the hands of the President of the Chamber of Deputies, the diploma and cross of honour mentioned in the decrees of the second of March and second of May of this year. An immense multitude occupied the galleries; and the President, Don J. M. Maria Bravo, addressed his Excellency General Bustamante, in the following speech:

"Citizen General, and illustrious President:—Nations never forget the distinguished services that are done to them, nor fail to reward those heroic actions performed for the common good. Sooner or later they show themselves grateful, and reward as they ought their good and valiant servants. The Mexican nation has not forgotten yours, and its congress has ever borne in mind those which you performed for it at that happy period when the unfortunate hero of Iguala, causing the voice of freedom to resound to the remotest lands of the Mexican territory, gave a terrible lesson to those who wish to subdue weak nations, with no other title than that of strength. You were one of the first and most valiant chiefs, who, placed by his side, assisted in this important and happy work; you it was who showed to the tyrant in the fields of Juchi, Aztcapozalco and others, that the sword of the Mexicans once unsheathed for liberty and justice, fights without softening or breaking; and knows how to triumph over its enemies, even when superior forces oppose it; you it was, in short, who with intrepid valour co-operated in re-establishing a liberty which, torn from the ancient children of the soil, was converted by their oppressors into a hard and shameful tyranny. History has already consecrated her pages to you: she will record to posterity your heroic deeds, and congress has already busied itself in rewarding such interesting services.

"If some Mexicans, erring in their opinions, by a fatality in this country, have disowned them, making an attempt against your personal liberty, notwithstanding the dignity of the first magistrate; trampling upon laws and overturning order; they have at length been obliged to respect you; and your valour, firmness, and decision, have made
them preserve the consideration due to an ancient chief of our independence, and to a first magistrate who has known how to set an example of subordination to the laws, and to give with dignity lessons of valour and of honourable conduct.

"A diploma and a cross are the rewards which the sovereign congress has decreed for these services and merits. Do not regard in the one the effaceable characters in which it is written, nor be dazzled by the brilliance of the other. See in both a proof of your country's gratitude, and engraving it in your soul, continue to give testimonies to your country that she is the first object of your care; that your watchings, fatigues, and labours are dedicated only to procure for her those benefits which may bring about the durable and solid peace that she so much desires, and for which you would, if necessary, sacrifice yourself on her altars.

"Do not forget that to-day she shows herself grateful, and that this is the day decreed by the august national representative body, to put you in possession of the title and insignia which manifests her gratitude. I, in the name of the congress, congratulate you on this fortunate event, and having the honour to fulfil the desire of the sovereign power, place in your hands this diploma of deserving reward from your country, and give you possession of this cross."

His Excellency having received the diploma and cross above mentioned, with his native modesty replied thus:

"In hearing, by the organ of the august national representation, the great encomiums with which it favours me, putting me at the same time in possession of these precious gifts, my soul overflows with ineffable pleasure, and is overwhelmed with the deepest gratitude. My satisfaction and my glory are immense. What could I have done, that thus the generous hand of the representatives of the Mexican people should load me with honours? Have my trifling services been able to fix the attention of the country, on whose altars have been sacrificed so many and such illustrious heroes of liberty? My glory would have been yet greater, had I, like them, descended to the sepulchre, when the sun of victory brightened the existence of this sovereign and independent nation, to the glory of the universe.

"The honours which I receive to-day are certainly great;
but I should have preferred them before the never-sufficiently mourned catastrophe of the immortal Yturbié. Let us throw a thick veil over so irreparable a loss. It is true that, surviving such great misfortunes, I have been enabled to consecrate my existence and my vigilance to the peace, order, and felicity of this beloved country. But how difficult is the conduct of those who govern in the midst of the conflict of civil dissensions! In these, my conscience has chosen, and my resolution has never vacillated between ignominy and honour. Do I, on this account, deserve the national gratitude and munificence manifested by such distinguished rewards? I return for them to the representatives of the nation my frankest gratitude; fixing my mind only on the grandeur and benevolence of the sovereign power which rewards me in the sacred name of the country. I shall preserve till death these precious objects which render my name illustrious as a soldier and as a supreme magistrate. They will stimulate me more and more every day to all kinds of sacrifices, even to the giving up my life should it be necessary; that I may not be unworthy of the favourable conception and of the recompence with which the worthy representatives of so magnanimous a nation have to-day honoured me. Receive, gentlemen, this frank manifestation of my sentiments, and of my fervent vows for the felicity of the republic, with the most sincere protestations of my eternal gratitude."

"The liveliest emotions of satisfaction" (I still quote from the Diario) "followed this expressive discourse. Joy was painted on every countenance. The frank satisfaction which every one felt gave to this act a solemnity which words are incapable of describing. His Excellency, accompanied by the corporations and by a brilliant and numerous concourse, then passed to the hall of the court-martial, to put in possession of his Excellency General D. Gabriel Valencia the sword of honour which the august national representation had granted him, for his loyal and valiant conduct in the affair of July of 1840. His Excellency the President began this ceremony by expressing his sentiments to his Excellency the Gefe de la plana mayor (head of the staff), in these terms:

"Citizen General:—In this day, the most flattering of my life, in which the august representatives of the nation have just put me in possession of the rewards granted
to my small services, I fulfil the law which imposes upon me the grateful task of presenting you with the sword of honour, with which their munificence has also chosen to remunerate yours.

"Receive it as the distinguished reward of your loyalty, and of the valour with which you fought at that memorable period, from the 15th to the 26th of July, defending with bravery the constitution and supreme powers of the Republic. I congratulate myself with you, not doubting that you will always employ the edge of this steel in defence of the honour, of the sacred rights, and of the laws of this country. Yes, general, of this beloved country, to whom we owe all kinds of sacrifices; yes, of this beloved mother, who now more than ever reclaims the fraternal union of all her children, to conquer the internal and external enemies who oppose her felicity and aggrandizement, let us pledge ourselves to correspond thankfully to the generosity with which the representatives of the nation have rewarded us, and let us march united in the same path which honour and duty traced out for us, in that day of honourable memory for the defenders of the laws. Eternal praise to the brave soldiers and citizens who co-operated with us in the establishment of order!"

To which General Valencia replied:—"That a correspondent reward should follow an heroic action, nothing more natural; but to remunerate a service which does not go beyond the sphere of ordinary things, such as mine in the affair of the 15th to the 26th of July of 1840, by such a noble distinction as the sword of honour with which your Excellency has deigned to gird me, in the name of the National Congress, of this the magnanimity of the sovereignty is alone capable; and so it is that I remain annihilated by a present worthy of the ages of the Roman Senate and Republic. What did I do, your Excellency, in those days, that any one of my countrymen would not have done better? Nothing, sir; so that, in receiving this sword of honour, my confusion equals my doubt as to my place in the gratitude of the congress which has given it to me, of your Excellency who has deigned to present it to me, and of my worthy countrymen who bestowed it that I might wear it.

"In this condition, your Excellency, of content and satisfaction, I can say no more, but that I hope your Excellency will manifest to congress my eternal gratitude;
that your Excellency will receive my noble acknowledgments, and my companions the assurance that every time I put it on I shall remember the names of all and each of them who accompanied me on the 15th of July of 1840, together with the pleasure that to them I owe so great a mark of respect."

Amongst the congratulations given to the president, the following "congratulation from his Excellency General Valencia to his Excellency the President, on his receiving the decoration of the cross of honour from congress," is very remarkable. "God said, the first day of the creation of the world, when it was in a state of chaos, 'Let there be light, and there was light.' And God saw his work and pronounced it good! With how much more reason ought the garrison of Mexico to do so every day in which, by any action, the 15th of July 1840 is celebrated—in which, by their strength and heroic valour, that passage of Genesis was politically repeated in this capital. Society arose in chaos. Its president is taken. Authorities no longer exist, and those who ought to save them are converted into their oppressors. 'God said let there be light, and there was light!' The honourable troops, reunited in the citadel, in the midst of chaos, said 'Let order be re-established—let the supreme magistrate be set at liberty, and let things resume their proper march.' Order was re-established, your Excellency was set free, and the political body followed the regular path, without which no society exists. So it is that those worthy troops who thus said, thus undertook, and thus accomplished, now also resemble the Creator of the world (hoy también se asememejan al Criador del mundo) in his content, when satisfied with his work.

"The cross which has been worthily placed on your Excellency's breast this day, reflects in such a singular manner upon the hearts of the valiant men of that period (reflecta de un modo tan singular sobre los corazones de los valientes de aquella época), that their souls are expanded in contemplating it, by the honour which results to them from it.

"May your Excellency be happy one and a thousand times, with such a noble and worthy decoration. Let your Excellency receive in it the sincere congratulations of the garrison of Mexico, which figures in each stone of this cross, like the stars in the firmament."
"This ceremony being concluded, the two rewarded generals presented themselves on the principal balcony of the palace, in front of which passed the brilliant column of honour; at its head marched the commandant-general, Don Valentin Canalizo; and the brilliancy, neatness, and elegance, which all the corps of the garrison displayed, is above all praise. When the regiment had passed, a sumptuous entertainment was served in one of the halls of the Minister of War, in which elegance, good taste, and propriety, rivalled one another; while repeated toasts showed the most sincere joy, united with the most patriotic and fraternal sentiments. Rain having begun to fall at about three in the afternoon, the paseó was on this account not so crowded as might have been expected; nevertheless, the military bands were present, and at six in the evening their Excellencies Generals Bustamante and Valencia having presented themselves there, were received with vivas and universal joy.

"At night the chiefs and officers of the plana mayor gave a ball in the college of the Minería; and the theatre of New Mexico dedicated its entertainment to his Excellency the President. Nothing disturbed the joy of this day; one sentiment alone of union and cheerfulness overflowed in the capital, proving to those illustrious generals the unanimous applause with which Mexicans see their country reward the distinguished services of their children, who are so deserving of their love and gratitude."

Notwithstanding the ineffable joy which, according to the Diario, is generally felt on this occasion, there are many who doubt the policy of this celebration, at a time when the troops are unpaid—when the soldiers, wounded at the last pronunciamiento, are refused their pensions, while the widows and orphans of others are vainly suing for assistance. "At the best," say those who cavil on the subject, "it was a civil war—a war between brothers—a subject of regret and not of glory—of sadness and not of jubilee." As for General Valencia's congratulation to the president, in which he compares the "honourable troops" to the Supreme Being, the re-establishment of order in Mexico to the creation of the world from chaos, it is chiefly incomprehensible. Perhaps he is carried away by his joy and gratitude, and personal affection for Bustamante—perhaps he has taken a leaf from a translation of Bombastes Furioso.
Life in Mexico

One thing is certain: the whole affair had a brilliant appearance; and the handsome carriages, fine horses, gaily-dressed officers and soldiers, together with the military music and the crowds of people collected, produced an imposing effect.

LETTER THE FORTY-SECOND


13th July.

We little expected to be still here at the opening of the new Italian opera, and had consequently given up our box. Señor Roca, who went to Italy to bring out the requisites, has arrived at the end of a wonderfully short period, with the singers, male and female, the new dresses, decorations, etc.; and the first opera, Lucia de Lammermoor, was given last week. The theatre is the former Teatro des Gallos, an octagonal circus, which has been fitted up as elegantly as circumstances would permit, and as the transition from the crowing of cocks to the soft notes of Giulietta rendered necessary. The prima donna assoluta is the Signora Anaide Castellan de Giampietro, born in Paris, bred in Milan. The prima donna soprano is the Signora de Ricci; and the second donna is called Branzanti. The first tenor is Signor Giampietro, husband to the prima donna; and the second tenor is the Signor Alberti Bozetti. The first bass is Signor Tomassi, and the buffo bass Signor Spontini. They have been so much proné, and public expectation has been so much excited, that we supposed it probable that the first evening at least would be a failure to a certain extent. Besides, the Mexican audience, if not very experienced, is decidedly musical; and they have already had a pretty good opera here, have heard Madame Albini, la Cesari, Garcia (the father of Malibran) and the beaux restes of Galli; therefore can compare.

The first evening, the Castellan made her appearance