de Santa Maria.” It has a beautiful chapel attached to it, where the daily mass is said for the dead, and a large garden filled with flowers. Young trees of different kinds have been planted there, and the sight of the tombs themselves, in their long and melancholy array of black collins, with gold-lettered inscriptions, even while it inspires the saddest ideas, has something soothing in its effect. They are kept in perfect order, and the inscriptions, though not always eloquent, are almost always full of feeling, and sometimes extremely touching. There is one near the entrance, which is pathetic in its native language, and though it loses much in the translation, I shall transcribe it:

“Here lie the beloved remains of Carmen and José Pimentel y Heras. The first died the 11th of June, 1838, aged one year and eleven months; the second on the 5th of September of 1839, in the sixteenth month of his existence; and to their dear memory maternal love dedicates the following:—

“EPITAPH.

“Babes of my love! my Carmen and José!
Sons of your cherished father, Pimentel.
Why have you left your mother’s side? for whom?
What motives have ye had to leave me thus?
But hark! I hear your voice—and breathlessly
I listen. I hear ye say—‘To go to heaven!
Mother! we have left thee to see our God!’
Beloved shades! if this indeed be so,
Then let these bitter tears be turned to joy.
It is not meet that I should mourn for ye,
Since ye have exchanged for my God.
To Him give thanks! and in your holy songs,
Pray that your parents’ fate may be like yours.”

LETTER THE FORTY-FOURTH


31st.

This afternoon the clouds, gathered together in gloomy masses, announced a thunderstorm, and at the same time
a certain degree of agitation apparently pervading the city was suddenly observable from our balconies. Shops were shutting up; people hurrying in all directions, heads at all the windows, and men looking out from the azoteas; but as these symptoms were immediately followed by a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning and splashing rain, we trusted that the cause had been very simple. But these elements of nature are wielded by the Hand that called them forth, and can stay them at His will, and the sun breaking forth smilingly and scattering the clouds, made us feel that the storm had but refreshed the parched earth and cleared the sultry atmosphere. Not so with the storm which has been brooding in the hearts of a handful of ambitious men, and which has burst forth at last, its bolts directed by no wise or merciful power, and by the hands of selfish and designing and short-sighted mortals.

The storm, though short, had not passed away, when news was brought us of a new revolution in Mexico! General Valencia, he who pronounced (but two short months ago!) the high-flown and flattering speech to the president, on receiving the sword of honour, has now pronounced in a very different and much clearer manner. Listen to him now:—

"Soldiers! The despotism of the Mexican government, the innumerable evils which the nation suffers, the unceasing remonstrances which have been made against these evils, and which have met with no attention, have forced us to take a step this evening, which is not one of rebellion, but is the energetic expression of our resolution to sacrifice everything to the common good and interest. The cause which we defend is that of all Mexicans; of the rich as of the poor; of the soldier as of the civilian. We want a country, a government, the felicity of our homes, and respect from without; and we shall obtain all; let us not doubt it. The nation will be moved by our example. The arms which our country has given us for her defence, we shall know how to employ in restoring her honour—an honour which the government has stained by not acknowledging the total absence of morality and energy in the actual authorities. The army which made her independent shall also render her powerful and free. The illustrious General Santa Anna to-day marches to Puebla, at the head of our heroic companions at Vera Cruz, while upon
Queretaro, already united to the valiant General Paredes, the brave General Cortazar now begins his operations.

"In a few days we shall see the other forces of the republic in motion, all co-operating to the same end. The triumph is secure, my friends, and the cause which we proclaim is so noble, that conquerors, we shall be covered with glory; and, happen what may, we shall be honoured by our fellow-citizens."

In this manifesto, which is mere declamation, there is no plan. It appears that no one particularly counted upon General Valencia, and that, whether fearing to be left out in the events which he saw approaching, or apprehensive of being arrested by the government, who suspected him, he has thought it wisest to strike a blow on his own account. Pacheco, who commanded the citadel, together with Generals Lombardini and Sales, who had been ordered out to march with their respective regiments against the pronunciados, are now in the citadel, and in a state of revolt. The two last had but just received money for the payment of their troops on the preceding day.

8 o'clock.—Nothing further, but that the president has sallied forth on horseback from San Agustin; and was received with repeated vizas by the people collected in the square.

1st September.—This revolution is like a game at chess, in which kings, castles, knights, and bishops, are making different moves, while the pawns are looking on or taking no part whatever.

To understand the state of the board, it is necessary to explain the position of the four principal pieces—Santa Anna, Bustamante, Paredes, and Valencia. The first move was made by Paredes, who published his plan, and pronounced on the eighth of August at Guadalajara. About the same time, Don F—— M——, a Spanish broker, who had gone to Manga de Clavo, was sent to Guadalajara, and had a conference with Paredes, the result of which w.s, that the plan of that general was withdrawn, and it was supposed that he and Santa Anna had formed a combination. Shortly after, the Censor of Vera Cruz, a newspaper entirely devoted to Santa Anna, pronounced in favour of the plan of Paredes, and Santa Anna, with a few miserable troops, and a handful of cavalry, arrived at Perote. Here he remains for the present, kept
Appearance of the City

in check by the (government) General Torrejon. Meanwhile Paredes, with about six hundred men, left Guadalajara and marched upon Guanajuato; and there a blow was given to the government party by the defection of General Cortazar, who thought fit thus to show his grateful sense of having just received the rank of general of brigade with the insignia of this new grade, which the president put on with his own hands. Another check to the president. Once begun, defection spread rapidly, and Paredes and Cortazar having advanced upon Queretaro, found that General Juvera, with his garrison, had already pronounced there, at the moment that they were expected in Mexico to assist the government against Valencia. Paredes, Cortazar, and Juvera are now united, and their forces amount to two thousand two hundred men.

Meanwhile General Valencia, pressed to declare his plan, has replied that he awaits the announcement of the intentions of Generals Paredes and Santa Anna; and, for his own part, only desires the dismissal of General Bustamante.

This, then, is the position of the three principal pronounced chiefs, on this second day of September of the year of our Lord 1841. Santa Anna in Perote, hesitating whether to advance or retreat, and, in fact, prevented from doing either by the vicinity of General Torrejon. Paredes in Queretaro, with the other revolted generals. Valencia in the citadel of Mexico with his pronunciados: while Bustamante, with Generals Almonte and Canalizo, the mark against which all these hostile operations are directed, is determined, it is said, to fight to the last.

Mexico looks as if it had got a general holiday. Shops shut up, and all business is at a stand. The people, with the utmost apathy, are collected in groups, talking quietly; the officers are galloping about; generals, in a somewhat party-coloured dress, with large gray hats, striped pantaloons, old coats, and generals’ belts, fine horses, and crimson-coloured velvet saddles. The shopkeepers in the square have been removing their goods and money. An occasional shot is heard, and sometimes a volley, succeeded by a dead silence. The archbishop shows his reverend face now and then upon the opposite balcony of his palace, looks out a little while, and then retires. The chief effect, so far, is universal idleness in man and beast,—the soldiers and their quadrupeds excepted.

The position of the president, however, is not so bad as
at first sight it might appear, or as it will be, if his enemies are permitted to reunite. He has upwards of two thousand men, twelve pieces of ordnance, and, though his infantry are few, and he has little artillery, he has good cavalry. Valencia has twelve hundred men, twenty-six pieces of ordnance, with good infantry, and almost all the artillery. The rebels have possessed themselves of the Acordada, and given liberty to those who were imprisoned for political opinions—a good loophole for the escape of criminals.

Those who understand these matters say that the principal object of the government should be to reduce the rebels to the citadel only, and to occupy all the important points in its neighbourhood, San Diego, San Hipolito, San Fernando, etc.; but as yet this has not been done, and the pronunciados are gradually extending, and taking possession of these points...

3rd.—They are now keeping up a pretty brisk fire between San Agustin and the citadel. This morning the streets were covered with coaches, filled with families leaving the city.

4th.—Things are becoming more complicated. The rebels now occupy San José, Salto de Agua, the college of Vizcaynas (from which all the poor girls and their teachers have fled), Regina, San Juan de la Penitencia, San Diego, and San Fernando—a long line of important points. The president’s line begins at San Francisco, continuing by La Concepcion; but, without a map of the city, you will not understand the position of the two parties. However, every turret and belfry is covered with soldiers, and the streets are blocked up with troops and trenches. From behind these turrets and trenches they fire at each other, scarcely a soldier falling, but numbers of peaceful citizens; shells and bombs falling through the roofs of the houses, and all this for “the public good.”

The war of July had at least a shadow of pretext; it was a war of party, and those who wished to re-establish federalism may have acted with good faith. Now there is neither principle, nor pretext, nor plan, nor the shadow of reason or legality. Disloyalty, hypocrisy, and the most sordid calculation, are all the motives that can be discovered; and those who then affected an ardent desire for the welfare of their country have now thrown aside their masks, and appear in their true colours; and the great
mass of the people, who, thus passive and oppressed, allow their quiet homes to be invaded, are kept in awe neither by the force of arms, nor by the depth of the views of the conspirators, but by a handful of soldiers, who are themselves scarcely aware of their own wishes or intentions, but that they desire power and distinction at any price.

It is said that the federalists are very much elated, hoping for the eventual triumph of their party, particularly in consequence of a proclamation by Valencia, which appeared two days ago, and is called “the plan of the Comicios,” said to be written by General Tomel, who has gone over to the citadel, and who, having a great deal of classical learning, talks in it of the Roman Committees (the Comicios). Since then the revolution has taken the name of liberal, and is supported by men of name, the Pedrazas, Belderas, Riva Palacio, and others, which is of great importance to Valencia, and has given force and consistency to his party. Besides this, the pronunciados have the advantage of a free field from the citadel out to Tacubaya, where it is said that certain rich bankers, who are on their side, are constantly supplying the citadel with cartloads of copper, which they send in from thence. . . .

Meanwhile, we pass our time very quietly. In the morning we generally have visitors very early, discussing the probabilities, and giving us the last reports. Sometimes we venture out when there is no firing, which is much less constant and alarming than it was last year. So far we continue to have visitors in the evening, and Señor B—— and I have been playing duets on the harp and piano, even though Mexico is declared “in a state of siege.” The —— minister, who was here this morning, does, however, strongly recommend us to change our quarters, and to remove to Tacubaya; which will be so troublesome, that we are inclined to delay it until it becomes absolutely necessary. . . .

5th.—We went upon the azotea this afternoon, to have a good view of the city. There were people on almost all the balconies, as on a fête-day. A picturesque group of friars of the order of La Merced, in their white robes, had mounted up on the belfry of their church, and were looking out anxiously. The palace roof next our own had soldiers on it. Everything at that moment was still and tranquil; but the conduct of the people is our constant
source of surprise. Left entirely uncurbed, no one to
direct them, thousands out of employment, many without
bread, they meddle with nothing, do not complain, and
scarcely seem to feel any interest in the result. How
easily might such a people be directed for their good! It
is said that all their apathetic sympathies are in favour of
Bustamante.

Some say that Santa Anna will arrive to-day—some that
the whole affair will be settled by treaty; but neither
reports nor bulletins can be depended on, as scarcely any
one speaks according to his true feelings or belief, but
according to his political party. . . .

It appears that the conduct of congress in this emer-
gency has given little satisfaction. They affect to give a
declaration of the national will, and are as ambiguous as
the Delphic Oracle; and it is said that their half-measures,
and determination not to see that public opinion is against
them, and that a thorough change can alone undermine
this military revolution, will contribute more than any-
thing to its eventual triumph. . . .

The president has made use of the extraordinary powers
which have been granted him by the Poder Conservador
(conservative power, a singular and intermediate authority
introduced into the Mexican constitution), to abolish the
ten per cent. on consumption, and to modify the personal
contribution, reducing it to the richer classes alone. This
concession has apparently produced no effect. It is said
that the government troops continue to desert, convinced
that a revolution in which Santa Anna takes part must
triumph. Four new generals have been made by the
president. . . .

6th.—We went out to Tacubaya, and found it impos-
sible to procure a room there, far less a house. This is
also the case at Guadalupe, San Joaquin, in fact in every
village near Mexico. We are in no particular danger,
unless they were to bombard the palace. There was a
slight shock of an earthquake yesterday.

10th.—On the 7th, the president offered an amnesty to
the pronunciados. Whatever might have been the result,
the evening concluded with a terrible thunderstorm,
mingled with the roaring of cannon, which had a most
lugubrious effect. Many people were killed on the street.
We had gone out in the morning, but met the Ex-Minister
II—a, who strongly advised us to return home directly,
as balls were falling, and accidents happening all round.

Soon after a proclamation was issued by General Valencia, purporting that if the president did not yield, he would bombard the palace; and that if the powder which is kept there were to blow up, it would ruin half the city. This induced us to look at home, for if the palace is bombarded, the Casa de Moneda cannot escape, and if the palace is blown up, the Casa de Moneda will most certainly keep it company. When the proclamation came out in the morning, various were the opinions expressed in consequence. Some believed it to be a mere threat, and others that it would take place at eleven at night.

An old supernumerary soldier who lives here (one of those who was disabled by the last revolution) assured us that we had better leave the house, and as we refused, on the plea of having no safer house to go to, he walked off to the azotea, telling us he would let us know when the first bomb fell on the palace, and that then we must go perforce. In the evening we went downstairs to the large vaulted rooms where they are making cannon balls, and where the vaults are so thick and solid, that it was thought we should be in safety, even if General Valencia really kept his word. We sat up that night till twelve o'clock, listening anxiously, but nothing happened; and now, in consequence of a deputation which has been sent to the citadel by certain foreigners of distinction (though unknown to the government), we are no longer afraid of any sudden assault of this kind, as General Valencia has promised, in consideration of their representations, not to proceed to these last extremities, unless driven to them for his own defence.

In listening to the different opinions which are current, it would seem that Bustamante, Santa Anna, and Valencia are all equally unpopular; and that the true will of the nation, which congress was afraid to express, was first for the immediate convocation of a Constitutional Congress; and secondly, that they should not be governed by Santa Anna, yet that Bustamante should renounce, and a provisional president should be named.

Santa Anna writes, complaining that Bustamante, by assuming extraordinary powers, commanding the army and yet continuing president, is infringing the constitution. But as he is coming on to destroy it entirely, this
Life in Mexico

is being rather particular. It is reported that the typhus fever is in the citadel, but there are many floating rumours which are not to be depended upon. . . . There is evidently a great deal of consternation beginning to be felt amongst the lower classes. Foreigners generally are inclined towards Santa Anna, Mexicans to Bustamante; but all feel the present evils. The lepers seem to swarm in greater numbers than ever, and last evening two small shops were broken into and robbed. In vain the president publishes manifestos that the shops may be opened; they remain carefully shut, all commerce paralyzed, and every one, who has the means to do so, leaving the city.

We hear that the shells from the citadel have destroyed part of the beautiful house belonging to Judge Peña y Peñas, in front of the Alameda.

11th.—We have just received private information from the government, that they will shortly require this house for arms and ammunition and troops; coupled with still more private advice to provide for our safety by leaving it. We shall therefore gladly accept the kind invitation of the F——a family, to remove to their hacienda of San Xavier, about three leagues from this. We had at first declined this invitation, owing to its distance from the city——inconvenient for us, who are only waiting for the first opportunity to leave it; but besides that after the most diligent search in all the surrounding villages, we cannot find a single unoccupied room, we are very glad to spend our remaining days in Mexico with so distinguished a family. I shall therefore write little more at present on the subject of the revolution, which now that we have lived some time in Mexico, and have formed friendships there, fills us with feelings entirely different from those which the last produced; with personal sentiments of regret, private fears, and hopes for the future, and sentiments of evil which owe more than half their sadness to individual feelings.

12th.—We are now in the midst of all the confusion occasioned by another removal; surrounded by trunks and boxes and cargadores, and at the same time by our friends (all those who have not taken flight yet) taking leave of us . . .

A great cannonading took place last night, but without any important result. The soldiers, in the day-time amuse themselves by insulting each other from the roofs of the
We leave Mexico

houses and convents. Yesterday, one of the president’s party singled out a soldier in the citadel, shot him, and then began to dance the Enanos, and in the midst of a step, he was shot, and rolled over, dead. . . .

We shall write again from San Xavier.

LETTER THE FORTY-FIFTH


SAN XAVIER, 16th September.

After a morning of fatigue, confusion, bustle, leave-taking, etc., etc., a coach with four mules, procured with the utmost difficulty, drove up to the door; the coach old and crazy, the mules and harness quite consistent, and the postilions so tipsy that they could hardly keep their seats. But we had no time to be particular, and climbed in amidst bows and hand-shakings, and prophecies of breaking down and of being robbed by a band of forgats headed by a Spaniard, who are said to be scouring the country; who are said to be, for just now, seeing is believing, and few reports are worth attending to. However, we took two servants on horseback, by way of escort, and rattled off, the coach creaking ominously, the postilions swinging from side to side, and our worthy housekeeper, whom we had carried off from the smoking city, screaming out her last orders to the galopina, concerning a certain green parrot which she had left in the charge of that tender-hearted damsel, who, with her rebozo at her eyes, surrounded by directors of the mint, secretaries of legation, soldiers and porters, had enough to do to take charge of herself. The city looked very sad, as we drove through the streets; with closed shops, and barred windows, and cannon planted, and soldiers riding about. At every