congress. *Te Deum* was sung this morning in the cathedral, the archbishop in person receiving the new president. We have just returned from Mexico, where we went in search of apartments, and with great difficulty have found rooms in the hotel of the Calle Vegara; but we shall remain here a day or two longer. There is no great difference in the general appearance of the city, except that the shops are reopened, and that most of the windows are broken. Immediately after the morning ceremony, Santa Anna returned to the archbishop’s palace at Tacubaya; which residence he prefers to the president’s palace in Mexico. His return there, after his triumphant entry into the capital, was very much *en Rio*—a retinue of splendid coaches with fine horses, going at full speed; the general’s carriage drawn by four beautiful white horses—(belonging to Don F—— M——; the very same that were sent to bring us into Mexico) brilliant aides-de-camp, and an immense escort of cavalry. Thus concludes the revolution of 1842, though not its effects.

The new ministry, up to this date, are Señor Gomez Pedraza for Foreign and Home Relations; Castillo, *un petit avocat* from Guadalajara, said to be a furious federalist and Latin scholar, for Public Instruction; General Tornei for War and Marine; and Señor Dufoo for the Treasury. Valencia proposed Paredes for the War Department; but he declined, saying, “No, no, General—I understand you very well. You want to draw me from off my division.”

Those who know Bustamante best, even those who most blame him for indecision and want of energy, agree on one point; that the true motives of his conduct are to be found in his constant and earnest desire to spare human life.

LETTER THE FORTY-SIXTH


8th.

The Revolution has lasted upwards of thirty-five days; and during that time, though I have written of little else,
we have been taking many rides in the environs of this hacienda, some of which were very interesting. We are also making the most of our last few days of Mexican country life. On Thursday we went on horseback with a large party to visit the mill of Santa Mónica, an immense hacienda, which tradition, I know not with what truth, supposes to have been in former days the property of Doña Marina; a gift to her from Cortes. At all events, at a later period it belonged to the Augustine monks, then to a Mexican family, who lost their fortune from neglect or extravagance. It was bought by the present proprietor for a comparatively trifling sum, and produces him an annual rent of thirty-five thousand dollars upon an average. The house is colossal, and not more than one-third of it occupied. The granaries, of solid masonry, contain fourteen thousand loads of corn—they were built about two hundred and fifty years ago. From all the neighbouring haciendas, and even from many distant estates, the corn is sent to this mill, and is here ground, deposited, and sold on account of the owner, a certain portion deducted for the proprietor of Santa Mónica. It seems strange that they should have no windmills here, in a country colonized by Spain, where, according to Cervantes, they were common enough. The house is in a commanding situation, and the views of the mountains, especially from the upper windows, are very grand. In some of the old, unoccupied apartments, are some good copies of old paintings, the copies themselves of ancient date. There is the Angel announcing to Elizabeth the birth of Saint John; a Holy Family, from Murillo; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which is one of the best; particularly the figures in the foreground, of Lot and his family. Lot’s wife stands in the distance, a graceful figure just crystallized, her head turned in the direction of the doomed city. I looked into every dark corner, in hopes of finding some old daub representing Doña Marina, but without success. There is the strangest contrast possible between these half-abandoned palaces, and their actual proprietors. We had beautiful riding-horses belonging to the hacienda, and enjoyed everything but the exceeding heat of the sun, as we galloped home about one o’clock. . . .

As a specimen of rather a remarkable anachronism, we were told that a justice in the village of Tlanapantla,
speaking the other day of General Bustamante, said, “Poor man—he is persecuted by all parties, just as Jesus Christ was by the Jansenists, the Sadducees, and the Holy Fathers of the Church!” What a curious olla podrida the poor man’s brain must be!

In the midst of the revolution, we were amused by a very peaceful sight—all the nurses belonging to the Cuna, or Foundling hospital, coming from the different villages to receive their monthly wages. Amongst the many charitable institutions of Mexico, there appears to me (in spite of the many prejudices existing against such institutions) none more useful than this. These otherwise unfortunate children, the offspring of abject poverty or guilt, are left at the gate of the establishment, where they are received without any questions being asked; and from that moment, they are protected and cared for, by the best and noblest families in the country. The members of the society consist of the first persons in Mexico, male and female. The men furnish the money; the women give their time and attention. There is no fixed number of members, and amongst them are the ladies in whose house we now live. The President is the Dowager Marquesa de Vivanco. When the child has been about a month in the Cuna, it is sent, with an Indian nurse, to one of the villages near Mexico. If sick or feeble it remains in the house, under the more immediate inspection of the society. These nurses have a fiadora, a responsible person, who lives in the village, and answers for their good conduct. Each nurse is paid four dollars per month, a sufficient sum to induce any poor Indian, with a family, to add one to her stock. Each lady of the society has a certain number under her peculiar care, and gives their clothes, which are poor enough, but according to the village fashion. The child thus put out to nurse, is brought back to the Cuna when weaned, and remains under the charge of the society for life; but of the hundreds and tens of hundreds that have passed through their hands, scarcely has one been left to grow up in the Cuna. They are constantly adopted by respectable persons, who, according to their inclination or abilities, bring them up either as favoured servants, or as their own children; and the condition of a “huerto,” an orphan, as a child from the hospital is always called, is perfectly upon a level with that of the most petted child of the
Babies and Nurses

house. The nurses in the Cuna are paid eight dollars per month.

Upwards of a hundred nurses and babies arrived on Sunday, taking up their station on the grass, under the shade of a large ash-tree in the courtyard. The nurses are invariably bronze; the babies generally dark, though there was a sprinkling of fair English or German faces amongst them, with blue eyes and blonde hair, apparently not the growth of Mexican land. Great attention to cleanliness cannot be hoped for from this class, but the babies looked healthy and contented. Each nurse had to present a paper which had been given her for that purpose, containing her own name, the name of the child, and that of the lady under whose particular charge she was. Such as—"Maria Josifa—baby Juanita de los Santos—belonging to the Señora Doña Matilde F——, given on such a day to the charge of Maria Josefa." Constantly the nurse had lost this paper, and impossible for her to remember more than her own name; as to who gave her the baby, or when she got it, was entirely beyond her powers of calculation. However, then stept forward the fiadora Doña Tomas, a sensible-looking village dame, grave and important as became her situation, and gave an account of the nurse and the baby, which being satisfactory, the copper was swept into the nurse's lap, and she and her baby went away contented. It was pleasant to see the kindness of the ladies to these poor women; how they praised the care that had been taken of the babies; admired the strong and healthy ones, which indeed nearly all were; took an interest in those who looked paler, or less robust; and how fond and proud the nurses were of their charges; and how little of a hired, mercenary, hospital feeling existed among them all . . .

A judge in the village, who comes here frequently, a pleasant and well-informed man, amused us this evening by recounting to us how he had once formed a determination to become a monk, through sudden fear. Being sent by government to Toluca, some years ago, to inquire into the private political conduct of a Yorkino, he found that his only means of remaining there unsuspected, and also of obtaining information, was to lodge in the convent of the Carmelite friars. The padres accommodated him with a cell, and assisted him very efficaciously in his researches. But the first night, being alone in his cell, the convent
Life in Mexico

large and dreary, and the wind howling lugubriously over the plains, he was awakened at night by a deep sepulchral voice, apparently close to his ear, tolling forth these words:

"Hermanos, en el sepulcro acaba,
Todo lo que el mundo alaba!"

"My brothers, all must finish in the tomb!
Of all that men extol, this is the doom."

Exceedingly startled, he sprang up, and opened the door of his cell. A dim lamp faintly illuminated the long vaulted galleries, and the monks, like shadows, were gliding to midnight prayer. In the dreariness of the night, with the solemn words sounding in his ear like a warning knell, he came to the satisfactory conclusion that all was vanity, and to the determination that the very next day he would retire from the world, join this holy brotherhood, and bind himself to be a Carmelite friar for life. The day brought counsel, the cheerful sunbeams dispelled the gloom, even within the old convent, and his scruples of conscience melted away.

There are old villages and old churches in this neighbourhood that would delight an antiquary. In the churchyard of the village of San Andrés, is the most beautiful weeping ash I ever saw. We took shelter from the sun yesterday under its gigantic shadow, and lay there as under a green vault. We saw to-day, near another solitary old church, one of the Indian oven-baths, the temezcallis, built of bricks, in which there is neither alteration nor improvement since their first invention, heaven alone knows in what century.

9th.—We rode last evening to another estate belonging to this family, called San Mateo, one of the prettiest places on a small scale we have seen here. The road, or rather path, led us through fields, covered with the greatest profusion of bright yellow sunflowers and scarlet dahlias, so tall that they came up to our horses' ears. The house is built in the cottage style (the first specimen of that style we have seen here), with the piazza in front, large trees shading it, and a beautiful view from the height on which it stands. It has rather an English than a Spanish look. No one lives there but the agent and his wife—and a fierce dog.

11th.—This morning we rose at five, mounted our
The Lecheria

horses, and accompanied by Señor E——, together with the administrador and the old gardener, set off to take our last long ride from San Xavier; for this evening we return to Mexico. The morning was fine and fresh, the very morning for a gallop, and the country looked beautiful. We rode first to the Lecheria, where Generals Bustamante and Paredes had their last eventful conference, having passed on our way various old churches and villages, and another hacienda also belonging to this family, whose estates seem countless. The Lecheria is a large unoccupied house, or occupied only by the administrador and his family. It is a fine building, and its courtyard within is filled with flowers; but having neither garden nor trees near it, seems rather lonely; and must have been startled to find itself the rendezvous of contending chieftains. It is surrounded by fertile and profitable fields of corn and maize. We staid but a short time in the house, and having observed with due respect the chamber where the generals conferred together, remounted our horses and rode on. I have no doubt, by the way, that their meeting was the most amicable imaginable. I never saw a country where opponent parties bear so little real ill-will to each other. It all seems to evaporate in words. I do not believe that there is any real bad feeling subsisting at this moment, even between the two rival generals, Bustamante and Santa Anna. Santa Anna usurped the presidency, partly because he wanted it, and partly because if he had not, some one else would; but I am convinced that if they met by chance in a drawing-room, they would give each other as cordial an abrazo (embrace), Mexican fashion, as if nothing had happened.

Our road led us through a beautiful track of country, all belonging to the Lecheria, through pathways that skirted the fields, where the plough had newly turned up the richest possible soil, and which were bordered by wild flowers and shady trees. For miles our path lay through a thick carpeting of the most beautiful wild flowers imaginable: bright scarlet dahlias, gaudy sunflowers, together with purple and lilac, and pale straw-coloured blossoms, to all which the gardener gave but the general name of mirasoles (sunflower). The purple convolvulus threw its creeping branches on the ground, or along whatever it could embrace; while all these bright flowers, some
growing to a great height, seemed, as we rode by them, to be flaunting past us in their gay colours, like peasants in their holiday dresses. The ground also was enamelled with a little low inquisitive-looking blossom, bright yellow, with a peeping brown eye; and the whole, besides forming the gayest assemblage of colours and groups, gave to the air a delicious fragrance.

But at last we left these fertile grounds, and began to ascend the hills, part of which afford pasture for the flocks, till, still higher up, they become perfectly arid and stony. Here the whole landscape looks bleak and dreary, excepting that the eye can rest upon the distant mountains, of a beautiful blue, like a peep of the promised land from Mount Nebo. After having rode four leagues, the latter part over this sterile ground, affording but an insecure footing for our horses, we descried, low down in a valley, an old sad-looking building, with a ruined mill and some trees. This was the object of our ride; the "molino viejo" (old mill), another hacienda belonging to these rich lady proprietors; and profitable on account of the fine pasture which some of the surrounding hills afford. Nothing could look more solitary. Magdalene might have left her desert, and ended her days there, without materially bettering her situation. The only sign of life is a stream that runs round a very productive small orchard in front of the house, while on a hill behind are a few maguey plants, and on the mirador, in front of the house, some creepers have been trained with a good deal of taste. There are bleak hills in front—hills with a scanty herbage behind it, and everywhere a stillness that makes itself felt: while, strange circumstance in this country! there is not even a church within a league and a half. There has been a chapel in the house, but the gilded paintings are falling from the walls—the altar is broken, and the floor covered with dried corn. The agent's wife, who sits here all alone, must have time to collect her scattered thoughts, and plenty of opportunity for reflection and self-examination. Certain it is, she gave us a very good breakfast, which we attacked like famished pilgrims; and shortly after took our leave.

The heat on the shadeless hills had now become intense. It is only on such occasions that one can fully appreciate the sufferings of Regulus. We returned by the carriage-road, a track between two hills, composed of ruts and
stones, and large holes. On the most barren parts of these hills, there springs a tree which the Indians call guisachel; it resembles the savine, and produces a berry of which ink is made. The road was bordered by bushes, covered with white blossoms, very fragrant. We galloped as fast as our horses would carry us, to escape from the sun; and passed a pretty village on the high road, which is a fine broad causeway in good repair, leading to Guanaxuato. We also passed San Mateo, and then rode over the fields fast home, where we arrived, looking like broiled potatoes.

We had a conversation with —— this morning, on the subject of the "ejercicios," certain religious exercises, to which, in Mexico, men as well as women annually devote a certain number of days, during which they retire from the world to a religious house or convent, set apart for that purpose, of which some receive male and other female devotees. Here they fast and pray and receive religious instruction, and meditate upon religious subjects during the period of their retreat. A respectable merchant, who, in compliance with this custom, lately retired for a few days to one of these religious establishments, wrote, on entering there, to his head clerk, a young man to whom he was much attached, informing him that he had a presentiment that he would not leave the convent alive, but would die by the time his devotional exercises were completed; giving him some good advice as to his future conduct, together with his last instructions as to his own affairs. He ended with these words: "hasta la eternidad!" until eternity! The letter produced a strong effect on the mind of the young man; but still more, when the merchant died at the end of a few days, as he had predicted, and was carried from the convent to his grave.

Mexico, Calle Vergara, 12th.

We reached Mexico last evening, and took up our quarters in an inn or hotel kept by an English woman, and tolerably clean, though of course not very agreeable. A number of prounciado officers are also here—amongst others, General ——, who I hope will be obliged to go soon, that we may have his parlour; a mysterious English couple; a wounded Colonel, an old gentleman, a fixture in the house, etc. There is a table d'hôte, but I believe no ladies dine there. Invitations to take up our quarters in
private houses have been pressed upon us with a kindness and cordiality difficult to resist.

Though politics are the only topic of interest at present, I think you will care little for having an account of the Junta of Representatives, or of the elections, with their chiefly military members. Considering by whom the members are chosen, and the object for which they are elected, the result of their deliberations is, as you may suppose, pretty well known beforehand. Military power is strengthened by every act, and all this power is vested in the commanders-in-chief. New batches of generals are made, in order to reward the late distinguished services of the officers, and colonels by hundreds. Eleven generals were created in the division of Paredes alone. Money has been given to the troops in the palace, with orders to purchase new uniforms, which it is said will be very brilliant. There appears, generally speaking, a good deal of half-smothered discontent, and it is whispered that even the revolutionary bankers are half repentant and look gloomy. The only opposition paper is “Un Periodico Mas;” one more periodical—the others are all ministerial.

In the south there has been some trouble with Generals Bravo and Alvarez, who wish that part of the country to govern itself until the meeting of congress. There was some talk of putting Valencia at the head of the troops which are destined to march against them, but there are now negotiations pending, and it is supposed there will be some agreement made without coming to bloodshed. It is said that orders were sent to General Almonte to leave the republic, and that he answered the despatch with firmness, refusing to acknowledge the authority of Santa Anna. General Bustamante, who is now in Guadalupe, intends to leave the scene of his disasters within a few months. C——n paid him a visit lately, and though scarcely recovered from his fatigues both of body and mind, he appears cheerful and resigned, and with all the tranquillity which can be inspired only by a good conscience, and the conviction of having done his duty to the best of his abilities.

As for us personally, this revolution has been the most inconvenient revolution that ever took place; doing us all manner of mischief; stopping the sale of our furniture, throwing our affairs into confusion; overthrowing all our plans, and probably delaying our departure until December
Abuses in the Name of Liberty

or January. But in these cases, every one must suffer more or less; and meanwhile, we are surrounded by friends and by friendly attentions. It will be impossible for us to leave Mexico without regret. It requires nothing but a settled government to make it one of the first countries in the world. Santa Anna has much in his power. Reste à savoir how he will use that power. Perhaps in these last years of tranquillity, which he has spent on his estate, he may have meditated to some purpose.

It is singular how, in trying to avoid small evils, we plunge into unknown gulfs of misery; and how little we reflect that it might be wiser to

"Bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of."

Every one has heard of the abuses that produced the first revolution in Mexico—of the great inequality of riches, of the degradation of the Indians, of the high prices of foreign goods, of the Inquisition, of the ignorance of the people, the bad state of the colleges, the difficulty of obtaining justice, the influence of the clergy, and the ignorance in which the Mexican youth were purposely kept. Which of these evils has been remedied? Foreign goods are cheaper, and the Inquisition is not; but this last unchristian institution had surely gradually lost its power before the days of the last viceroy?—But in the sacred name of Liberty, every abuse can be tolerated.

"O fatal name, misleader of mankind,
Phantom, too radiant and too much adored!
Deceitful Star, whose beams are bright to blind,
Although their more benignant influence poured
The light of glory on the Switzer's sword,
And hallowed Washington's immortal name.
Liberty! Thou when absent how deplored,
And when received, how wasted, till thy name
Grows tarnished; shall mankind, ne'er cease to work thee shame?

"Not from the blood in fiercest battle shed,
Nor deeds heroical as arm can do,
Is the true strength of manly freedom bred,
Restraining tyranny and licence too,
The madness of the many and the few.
Land, whose new beauties I behold revealed,
Is this not true, and bitter as 'tis true?
The ruined fane, the desolated field,
The ruffian-haunted road, a solemn answer yield.
"Where look the loftiest Cordilleras down
From summits hoary with eternal snow
On Montezuma's venerable town
And storied vale, and Lake of Mexico,
These thoughts the shade of melancholy throw
On all that else were fair, and gay, and grand
As nature in her glory can bestow.
For never yet, though liberal her hand,
So variously hath she adorned, enriched one land.

"What boots it that from where the level deep
Basks in the tropic sun's o'erpow'ring light
To where yon mountains lift their wintry steep,
All climes, all seasons in one land unite?
What boots it that her buried caves are bright
With wealth untold of gold or silver ore?
While, checked by anarchy's perpetual blight,
Industry trembles 'mid her hard-earned store,
While rapine riots near in riches stained with gore?

"O sage regenerators of mankind!
Patriots of nimble tongue and systems crude!
How many regal tyrannies combined,
So many fields of massacre have strewed
As you, and your attendant cut-throat brood?
Man works no miracles; long toil, long thought,
Joined to experience, may achieve much good,
But to create new systems out of nought,
Is fit for Him alone, the universe who wrought.

"But what hath such an hour of such a day
To do with human crimes, or earthly gloom?
Far wiser to enjoy while yet we may,
The mock-bird's song, the orange flower's perfume,
The freshness that the sparkling fountain showers.
Let nations reach their glory or their doom,
Spring will return to dress your orange bowers,
And flowers will still bloom on, and bards will sing of flowers."

21st.—In pursuance of the last-mentioned advice, we have been breakfasting to-day at Tacubaya, with the — minister and his family, and enjoying ourselves there in Madame —'s garden. We have also just returned from the Marquesa de —'s, where we had a pleasant evening, and met General Paredes, whom I like very much; a real soldier, thin, plain, blunt, and all hacked with wounds.

23rd.—C——n has been dining at the — minister's, where he met all the great actors in the present drama, and had an agreeable party. We are now thinking of making our escape from this hotel, and of taking a horseback journey into Michoacan, which shall occupy a month or six weeks. Meantime I am visiting, with the Señorita
Santa Anna and his Suite

—every hospital, jail, college, and madhouse in Mexico!

26th.—To-day they are celebrating their independence. All the bells in all the churches, beginning with the cathedral, are pealing—cannon firing—rockets rushing up into the air—Santa Anna in the Alameda, speechifying—troops galloping—little boys running—Te Deum chanting—crowds of men and women jostling each other—the streets covered with carriages, the balconies covered with people—the Paséo expected to be crowded. I have escaped to a quiet room, where I am trying to find time to make up my letters before the packet goes. I conclude this just as the dictator, with his brilliant staff, has driven off to Tacubaya.

LETTER THE FORTY-SEVENTH


4th November.

A great function was given in the opera in honour of his excellency. The theatre was most brilliantly illuminated with wax lights. Two principal boxes were thrown into one for the president and his suite, and lined with crimson and gold, with draperies of the same. The staircase leading to the second tier where this box was, was lighted by and lined all the way up with rows of footmen in crimson and gold livery. A crowd of gentlemen stood waiting in the lobby for the arrival of the hero of the fête. He came at last in regal state, carriages and outriders at full gallop; himself, staff and suite, in splendid uniform. As he entered, Señor Roca presented him with a libretto of the opera, bound in red and gold. We met the great man en face, and he stopped, and gave us a cordial recognition. Two years have made little change in him in appearance. He retains the same interesting, resigned,