

It was a brave spectacle to behold, whom the imperial majesty of Tenochtitlan condescended to accompany his little fleet on such an excursion. The gaily appointed canoes, with their gorgeous canopies of embroidered cotton, and feather-work; the splendid robes and plumes of the king and his attendants; the rich and fanciful attire of the women; the light graceful arrowy motions of the painted skills, as they danced along the waves; together with the wonderful beauty of the lake, and its swimming gardens of flowers, presented a *toute ensemble* more like the fairy pictures of some enchanted sphere, than any thing we can now realize as belonging to this plain, prosaic, matter-of-fact world of ours. On this occasion, it seemed more gay and fairy-like than ever, in contrast, perhaps, with the deep gloom that had settled on the land, pervading every heart, with its sombre shadows. The light pirogues of the natives, flying hither and thither over the glassy waters, on errands of business or of pleasure, arrayed in flowers, or freighted with fruits and vegetables for the grand market of Tenochtitlan, made way, on every side, for the advance of the royal cortege, which, treading the shining avenues between the gaily-colored *chinampas*, that spotted the surface of that beautiful lake, like so many islands of flowers on the bosom of the ocean, danced over the waters to the sound of music, and the merry voices of glad hearts, rejoicing in the sunny smiles that now played on the countenance of the king, as if the clouds that had so long overshadowed it, were never to return. Tecuichpo, restored to more than her wonted gaiety was full of life and animation. Never had she seemed, in the eyes of her doting father, and of the admiring courtiers, half so lovely as at this moment. She was the centre attraction for all eyes. Her resplendent beauty, her fairy-like gracefulness of motion, and the artless simplicity of her manners, won the admiring notice of all. Her gaiety was infectious. Her merry laugh reached, with a sort of electric influence, every heart in that bright company, and compelled even her father to abandon, for the time, his sad and solemn reflections, and give himself up to the spirit of the hour, and the scene.

Guatimozin was there, and exerted all his eloquence to keep up the spirit of the hour, in the hope that Montezuma would put on all the laurels again, and assert the majesty of his insulted crown, and the rights of his house and his people, in despite of omen or legend, and in the face of every foe.

Tecuichpo became more and more animated, till she seemed quite lifted above herself and the world about her. Suddenly rising in the midst, and pointing with great energy of expression, to the royal eagle of Mexico, then sweeping down from his mountain eyrie, to prey upon the ocelot of the distant valley, she exclaimed—

'Tis he! 'Tis he! our imperial bird!
Whom the gods to our aid have sent;
I saw him in my dream, and heard,
As down from his airy flight he bent,
His victor shout, with the dying wail,
Of the coming foe, borne on the gale;
While the air was dark with the gathering throng
Of bold young eaglets, that swept along;
From every cliff, in fierceness and wrath,
To gorge on their prey, in the mountain path.

When she ceased, an echo from a richly cultivated chinampa, which they were then passing, seemed to take up and prolong the strain.

I saw it too, and I heard the scream,
In the midst of my dark and troubled dream;
'Twas a dream of despair for our doomed land,
For his wings were bound by the royal hand;
His talons were wreathed with a golden chain,
He smelt the prey, and he chafed in vain,
For they trampled him down, in their brave career,

While our monarch looked on with unmanly fear,
Till his crown and his sceptre in dust were laid low,
And proud Tenochtitlan had passed to the foe.

The last words of this solemn chant died away on the ear, just as the royal barge rounded the little artificial promontory, which the ingenious Karce had constructed, for the double purpose of an arbor

and look-out, at one of the angles of her chinampa. Leaning over the brow, and supporting herself by the overhanging branch of a luxuriant myrtle, she dropped a wreath of evergreen upon the head of Tecuichpo, and said—

Oh! child of doom,
Thy long sealed destiny is come—
One brief, dark, dreadful night,
Then on those blessed eyes
Another day shall rise,
Fair, glorious, bright,
With an unearthly endless light.
Thou shalt lay down
An earthly crown,
To win a starry sceptre in the skies.

At this moment, signals were heard among the distant hills, which answered and repeated from countless stations along the wild sierras, and reverberated by a thousand echoes as they came, burst upon the valley, like the confused shouts of a mighty host rushing to battle. It fell like a death-knell upon the ear of Montezuma. It announced the arrival, within the mountain wall which encompassed his golden valley, of the dreaded strangers. It heralded their near approach to his capital, and the exposure of all he held dear to their irresistible power—their terrible rapacity. His heart sunk within him. But he had gone too far to retract. It was the act of the gods, not his. Banishing from his mind the impressions of the scenes just passed, he waved his hand to the rowers, and instantly every prow was turned, and the gaily caparisoned, but melancholy, terror-stricken pageant moved rapidly back to the city.

Tenochtitlan was now alive with the bustle of preparation. It was the preparation, not for war, which would far better have suited the multitude both of the chiefs and the people, but for the hospitable reception and entertainment of the strangers. The great imperial palace, which had been the royal residence of the father of Montezuma, was fitted up for their accommodation. With its numberless apartments, its spacious courts, and magnificent gardens, it was sufficient for an army much larger than that of the Castilians, swelled as it was by the company of their Tlascalian allies.

Every room was newly hung with beautifully colored tapestry and furnished with all the conveniences and luxuries of Mexican life. The appointments and provisions were all on a most liberal scale, for the Emperor was as generous and munificent as the golden mountains from which he drew his inexhaustible treasures.

Intending that nothing should be wanting to the graciousness of his submission to this act of constrained courtesy, Montezuma proposed to his brother Cuiclahua, to choose a royal retinue from the flower of the Aztec nobility, to go out to meet the strangers, and bid them welcome, in his name, to his realm and his capital. From this the soul of the proud undaunted soldier revolted, and he entreated so earnestly to be excused from executing a commission, so much at variance with his feelings and his convictions, that the monarch relented, and assigned the mission to Cacama, the young prince of Tezucoc.

Nothing could exceed the gorgeous splendor of the embassy. Borne in a beautiful palanquin, canopied and curtained with the rarest of Mexican feather-work, richly powdered with jewels, and glittering with gold, Cacama, preceded and followed by a long train of noble veterans and youths, all apparelled in the gayest costume of their country, presented himself before the advancing host. His approach, and the errand on which he came, having been announced by a herald, Cortez halted his band, and drew up his forces in the best possible array, to give them a fitting reception. The meeting took place at Ajotzinco, or rather within the borders of the lake Chalco, the first of the bright chain of inland lakes which the Spaniards had seen, and the place where they first saw that species of amphibious architecture, which prevailed so extensively among the Mexicans. When the royal embassy arrived in front of the waiting army, Cacama alighted from his palanquin, while his obsequious officers swept the ground before him, that he might not soil his royal feet, by too rude a contact with the earth. He was a young man of about twenty five years, with a finely countenance, a noble and commanding figure, and an

address and manners that would have done honor to the most courtly knight of Christendom. Stepping forward with a bland and dignified courtesy, he made the customary Mexican salutation to persons of high rank, touching his right hand to the ground, and raising it to his head.

Cortez embraced him as he rose, and the prince, in the name of his royal master, gave the strangers a hearty welcome, assuring them that they should be received with a hospitality, and treated with a respect, becoming the representatives of a great and mighty prince. He then presented Cortez with a number of large and valuable pearls, which act of munificence was immediately returned by the present of a necklace of cut glass, hung over his neck by Cortez. As glass was not known to the Mexicans, it probably had in their eyes the value of the rarest jewels.

This interview being over, the royal envoy hastened back to the capital, while the Castilians and their allies, in the two-fold character of hostile invaders and invited guests, followed his steps by slow, easy and cautious marches. After a few days, during which they passed through large tracts of highly cultivated and fertile ground, and several of the beautiful towns and cities of the plateau, they arrived at Iztapalapan, a place of great beauty and large resources, and the residence of Cuiclahua, the noble brother of Montezuma. At the command of the Emperor, Cuiclahua, as governor of this place, received the strangers with courtesy, and treated them with attention. But it was a cold courtesy, and a constrained attention. With a proud and haughty mein, the brave soldier exhibited to the wondering strangers, all the riches and curiosities of the place, disposing every thing in such a manner as to impress them most powerfully with the immense wealth of the empire, and the irresistible power of the Emperor. He collected around him all the richest and most potent nobles in his neighborhood, and displayed a magnificence of style, and a prodigality of expenditure that was truly princely. The extent and beauty of his gardens, his beautiful aviary, stocked with every variety of the gorgeously plumed birds of that tropical clime, his menagerie, containing a full representation of all the wild races of animals in Anahuac, struck the Spaniards with surprise and admiration; while the architecture of his palaces, and the many refinements of his style of living, gave them the highest ideas of the advanced state of civilization to which the Mexicans had attained.

But, so far from disheartening them in their grand design, all they saw of wealth and splendor in the inferior cities, only served to inflame their desire to see the capital, and learn if any thing more brilliant and wonderful than they had yet seen, could be furnished at the great metropolis. While they were daily more and more convinced of the power and resources of their enemy, and the seeming impossibility of their own enterprise, they were also daily more and more inflamed with the desire and purpose to possess themselves of the incalculable treasures which every where met their eyes. The cold aspect, and lofty bearing of the Prince Cuiclahua, the commander-in-chief of the Mexican armies, and their apparent to his throne, left no doubt that the final struggle for power would be ably and bitterly contested, and that the wealth they so ardently coveted, would be dearly bought. To a heart less bold and self-reliant than that of Cortez, it would have been no enviable position, to be shut up, with his little band of followers, within the gates of a city, commanded by so brave and experienced a soldier, whose personal feelings and views were known to be of the most hostile character. To the iron hearted Castilian, it was but a scene in the progress of his romantic adventure; and the greater the difficulty, the more imminent the peril, the more cordially he trusted to his good genius, or his patron saint, he seems not to have known which to carry him triumphantly through.

They were now but one day's march, and that a short and easy one, from the imperial city. Already they had seen it from a distance, resting or rather riding, on the bosom of the lake, glowing and glittering in the sunbeams, like some resplendent constellation, transferred from the azure above to the azure below. They had seen its noble ally, the metropolis of Tezucoc, shining in rival though unequal splendor, on the opposite shore of the lake, and many other splendid cities, beautiful towns, and lovely hamlets, studding its bright border, in

its entire circuit, like mingled gems and pearls, richly set in the band of the imperial diadem, all reposing under the shadow, and eclipsed by the superior glory, of the capital, the crowning jewel of the Western World. They had seen the *chinampas*, those wandering gardens of verdure and flowers, seeming more like the fairy creations of poetry, than the sober realities of life, and reminding them of those islands of the blest, which they had been told, in their childish days floated about in the ethereal regions above, freighted with blessings for the virtuous, and sometimes stooping so near to earth as to permit the weary and the waiting to escape from their toils and trials here, and find repose in their celestial paradise. They had seen and admired the wonderful works of art, the causeways of vast extent, constructed with scientific accuracy, and of great strength and durability—the canals and aqueducts, and bridges, which would have done honor to the genius and industry of the proudest nation in Europe. It now remained to see the imperial lord of all these wide and luxuriant realms, and to enter as invited guests, into the gates of his royal abode.

INDIAN SUMMER MORNING.

BY PARK BENJAMIN.

A smoke as from a thousand wigwags tells
The Indian Summer; soft and calm the air
Swings like a heavy curtain in the glare
Of the new risen sun, whose fervour quells
The frost of Autumn, by whose wondrous spells
Green woods have been transmuted into red,
Brown, golden tints, as beautiful as shells
Stolen from the ocean's silver-sanded bed.
A languid, dreamy, deep, delicious haze,
Through which the nearest objects mellowed seem,
Hides the blue distance, while the meadows gleam
As if with harvest of the yellow maze.
'Tis the return of Summer, brief and bright,
His last warm sigh and smile of love and light.

AQUATIC SCENERY.

During the hardest of the storm the day before yesterday, (says a New Orleans paper) we took a lounge down to the brink of a deep gully that emptied its torrent of water into the bayou, our attention was attracted to the bottom of the gully, where a drunken loafer was stemming the torrent, holding on to a root fast anchored in the bank. The poor fellow, not knowing any one was near him, was combatting his fate manfully, did in calculating his chances of escape, gave utterance to the following:—

"Haint this an awful situation to be placed in no how? If I was a steamboat, a rail, or a wood pile I'd be better worth fifty cents on the dollar than I'll ever be again. Unless I'm a gone case now, there naint no truth in frenology. I've weighed all the chances now like a general, and find only two that bear in my favor; the first is a skunk hole to crawl into, and the next a special interposition of Providence; and the best chance of the two is so slim if I only had the change, I'd give a premium for the skunk hole—then's my sentiments. If I could be a mink, a rat, or a water snake, for about two minutes, perhaps I would not mount the first stump (other side of the Bio, and flap my wings, and crow over everlasting life scientifically preserved. But what's the use holdin' on this root? there haint no skunk-hole in these diggings; the water is getting taller about a foot, and if my nose was as long as kingdom come, it wouldnt stick out much longer.

Jerry! you're a goner, and your marm don't know your out!—poor woman! wont she cry the glasses out of her spectacles when she hears her darlin' Jerry has got the whole of Buffalo Bio for his coffin? What a pity 'tis some philanthropist, or member of the humane Society never had foresight enough to build a house over this gutter, with a steam engine to keep out the water! If they'd done it in time, they might have had the honor and gratification of saving the life of a feller being; but its all days with you Jerry, and a big harbour to cast anchor in. Its too bad to go on in this orful manner, when they knows I bellers hated water ever since I was big enough to know 'twant whiskey. I feel the root giving way, and since I don't know a prayer, heic's a bit of Watt's Dooxologer, to prove I died a Christian;

"On the bank where drooped the willer,
Long time ago."

Before Jerry got to the conclusion, he was washed into the bayou, within a few feet of a large flat that just started for the steamboat; his eye caught the prospect of deliverance, and he changed the burden of his dirge into a thrilling cry of "Heave to there! passenger overboard, and sinking with a belt full of specie!—the man that saves me makes his fortune!" Jerry was fished ashore by a darkey; and to show his gratitude, invited Quashy to go up to the grocery and licker."

Sherridan once wrote, 'Women govern us, let us try to render them perfect; the more they are enlightened so much the more shall we be. On the cultivation of the minds of women, depends the wisdom of men.' Napoleon said, 'the future destiny of the child is always the work of the mother.'