

HIGHLAND MESSENGER.

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Letters to the Editor must come free of postage, or they will receive no attention.

From the Philadelphia North American.
Old King Polk.
Old King Polk had a merry old job,
And a merry old job had he.
He called for Tom Thumb, but he would not come,
So he called for his counsellors three.
And every counsellor had very fine counsel,
And very fine counsel had he.
There sat, old, stout, good, good, good,
There sat, old, stout, good, good, good,
Tweede twee, how they all agreed,
For there's naught so rare as an eagle,
With King Polk and his counsellors three.

Old King Polk had a funny old job,
And a funny old job had he.
He called for Santa Anna, away down in Havana,
And he called for his counsellors three.
And every editor had a fine paper,
And every editor had he.
There sat, old, stout, good, good, good,
There sat, old, stout, good, good, good,
Tweede twee, how they all agreed,
For there's naught so rare as an eagle,
With King Polk and his counsellors three.

Old King Polk had a queer old job,
And a queer old job had he.
He wrote a pass, like a ally,
And he called for his counsellors three.
And every general had a commission,
And every general had he.
There sat, old, stout, good, good, good,
There sat, old, stout, good, good, good,
Tweede twee, how they all agreed,
For there's naught so rare as an eagle,
With King Polk and his counsellors three.

THE MYSTERIOUS PRIEST.
A TRUE, BUT BLOODY STORY RELATIVE TO THE SIEGE OF MONTELEY.
[From *Nada's Monday Times.*]
Between San Juan and Montelej are the towns of San Juan, or, still more properly, places of Calles, Ramos, Maria, and Estancia. They are not important places, but in the line of march, proved highly useful to a three-mile column of soldiers, all of whom were fond of an occasional tortilla, a hamper of pulque, or a cup of new milk, which the women of the villages would convey to them without the knowledge of their lords and masters. In this march I had the honor and pleasure to be included, keeping the most of the time with the twelve hundred Texan cavalry who were with us, but riding out of the column and in all directions, as occasion, opportunity, and inclination dictated. In the early part of the day, myself, Frank Meyer, and a little Frenchman, attempted to find the strategic St. Juan, near Maria. It was a waste of breath, the infantry, and persons who were mounted did not escape a mediocrity of weeping. Frank and myself were well mounted; but, strange to us, our horses became frightened, and, pitching about a little more, than was convenient, seemed as dead and ears. As I jerked to an upright position, and bubbled out a few words, not very indicative of good temper, a fair—but not white—face was thrust into mine, and a musical voice said, in Spanish: "Let me help you to the sword."

The man that spoke was at least six feet high, and had a figure the perfect imperturbability of grace and proportion. He wore the costume of a Mexican priest, and was gentlemanly and intellectual in his language and deportment. Where he had come from, or how he had got among us, was a mystery I could not fathom. He was under process, he said, and was going to Montelej. By the way, if you have never seen the hat of a Mexican priest, you cannot imagine why I leaned the hat back, because the weather was extremely warm, and the way, as dusty as a desert ash-hole. A hat worn by one of this gentry has a rim not over eighteen inches wide, which acts as an umbrella to keep off sun and rain and serves as a daisy for all the atoms that speak a resting place about your head and shoulders.

We had forded the stream, and I had all been on the other side. The priest remained by me, having procured a sleek, strong mule, where, or by what method I did not ask him. He thought I would converse with him, as he pertinaciously rode by my side, and I commenced by saying—

"We are surrounded by mountains; and yet the ground which we now stand upon, and which as present seems like a fruitful and delightful plain, this morning here evidence of being also mountains. We have hardly known the scene."
"Ah!" replied he, in tolerable English, and with a meaning glance, "there are many things deceptive in Mexico. All are but your own imaginations appear so."
"Well," I replied, "as to that, I do not know; but it seems to me that every-thing in this country is opposed to us. As Maria the inhabitants were brutally robbed, whipped, and otherwise maltreated, a day or two since, by Torrejon's troops, and yet they manifested no love for us, regarding the most atrocious robberies for which they had received no dollars for a battle of Mexico."

"I can sell you one for a dollar," said he, drawing his face from beneath his garment. Meyer looked wistfully at the coveted field, and the little Frenchman bought it. I continued as follows—

"These people also tried to assassinate our stragglers, and did murder one."
"Did you see the murderer?" inquired the priest.
"Yes."
"Did he look like me?"
"Yes; you know that I observe, he did, except that his hair was very long, and his beard entirely unshorn."

"Thank Heaven, he escaped!" exclaimed the priest, fervently.
"Why thank Heaven! Are you an enemy so bitter, and here under protection?"
"Alas, senor, he was my brother! I am a native of Maria!"
"Indeed! Where did you learn to speak English?"

"In the city of Mexico, where I served the President while I pursued my studies. There I became acquainted with a gentleman who came from your country in an official capacity, and travelled about the country with him to show him its antiquities. He taught me to speak your language partially. Further intercourse with your people has improved me wonderfully."
"You are—"
"What my countrymen would call a renegade, if they knew me," said he, somewhat bitterly.

"Can we take Montelej?" I inquired abruptly.
"Yes, but you must fight for it. It is strongly fortified and well guarded. Farewell! I will see you again!" Saying which, he urged his mule forward, and I lost sight of him.

Two hours after this, when between Maria and Estancia, a party of us, with privilege, straggled into a house belonging to a large and elegant hacienda, or plantation of sugar and corn—the second crop of the latter of which was in full growth and bearing. There was nothing particular to attract us. The men were off to look at our troops, the women sat. They offered the never-failing tortilla and the milk, of which my comrades availed themselves, while I stood at the door viewing the prospect. It was grand. Peaks of mountains appeared to rise, above me in every direction. The face of the undulating ground spread out before me was smiling in verdure. Beautiful specimens of the romantic mood of nature were numerous—flowers of splendor and variety were fasted about here and there, leading an air of supreme softness to what would otherwise have been a rebuffment of ruggedness, if I may so express myself. As I stood viewing the scene, and listening to the movement of my thoughtless comrades, my eye caught the glimpse of a figure moving through the corn at my left. Had it not been for the change of dress, from a priest to that of a gay farmer, tricked out in bells and ribbons and gaily colored cottons, the mustache and hair, and other details, I could have sworn I saw my Mexican friend who had helped me to ford the St. Juan. He noticed my glance and drew back, as he, thought unobserved, among the corn, and was lost to my sight. I felt uneasy, and at once instinctively guessed that danger and treachery were abroad. Two lines had passed on, and was a quarter of a mile ahead. I entered the house, plucked a blossom from a cactus growing before a window, and considered whether I should speak out, or call off Meyer and communicate with him. I chose the latter course. Frank laughed, and the ladies were entertaining and that if we remained a few minutes longer we could reach the column in less than an hour. We drank three bottles of Muscat, which cost us four dollars and a half. (I wish I had them now!) and twenty minutes after I had warned Meyer, started off, listening to the "Adios" of the girls as long as we were within hearing. We rode until near Estancia, passing several other haciendas, and feasting our eyes with the elegancies of nature, and all in the best of spirits.

"Ma foi!" exclaimed the Frenchman, rising in his stirrups and looking about him, "this is magnifique—this pays! I would like to live here forever."
"So would I," said Meyer. "Talk of the hardships of a soldier's life!" he went on in substance, as in a sort of wine-ecstasy—"this is a glorious being, and I revel in it."
"Just look at that, and push on for the column as fast as you can, or in five minutes your hearts will be hanging on the bushes!" said an old Texan.

We looked, and saw a body of Mexican cavalry bearing across a level plain towards us at full gallop. They were so near that we could hear the words of the leader urging his men to secure us. There was something in the tones of the officer's voice, and in the contour of his frame, that, despite my will, attracted my attention. A dozen against at least two hundred was rather too much odds, and away we went, dashing over everything, regardless of consequences, like so many Gileads. Their infernal "Haloo!" thundered in our ears, and their clarion call that they would slay all the "Hijos de la gran Republica del Norte"—that is, "the

sons of the great republic of the north," were entirely new to me. They uttered a shout, and some one cried, "they are here!" I felt suddenly that he was the man I had recently seen crawling through the corn. He was now a fugitive, and I had no doubt, that he was "abandoning in their favor, and our fate appeared sealed, when in the road brought us to view the rear of our army, the troops, the... about the result of a... We should have been a... a... and drove our... deep, while the... turned and fled, and firing at us... Once more under "condado," or military protection, we shrank our... our... and covered with dust, we...—that is, as quietly as grins and... sharp looks permitted—took our... The Texans could get over having... to run from them they called their... enemies.

"D—n their black-eyed women, their wine, and their infernal... I wish I knew nothing of either!" exclaimed the one who took the unceremonious... most to heart.
"Bless their scenery, their star, and moon light, their clear air with the singular reflection of light it exhibits, and their pretty, generous, heroic women!" exclaimed I, mentally—for had I done so aloud I should have lost friends.
That night we camped about twelve miles from Montelej, or less than five hours' march, at San Francisco. It is a place requiring no description, having the Agave, drange tree, the chapparal, prickly pear, convolvulus, citron, etc., to some extent, in spots where Mexican indolence has permitted the face of the land to show a well-to-do condition, so far as cultivated fruits are concerned.

I was, enthusiastically speaking, a *solito* bivouac. Such a preparation of arms and manding of knapsacks, and so many brave fellows saying—"We shall have a fight to-morrow, Bill, and I die, or you die, or Eliza, or my poor old father, on something of that kind, "so and so." We were to move at sunrise in the morning, and consequently slept pretty much as we could, not making any remarkable preparation. The party with me to the afternoon spread their blankets on the grass and sat down, some to discuss a trifling quantity of contraband drinkables, and three of us to eat a little prize dry ham, which we seasoned with mustard taken from an old powder-horn, black as night. Towards midnight we were all asleep. I slept one hour, about, to be awakened by the Frenchman, who asserted that a Mexican had endeavored to steal his knapsack, and had been otherwise tormenting him like a nightmare.

"Why didn't you shoot him, or call the guard, eh?"
"Sure! When I come wide open awake he gone!"
"Get out, simpleton. You've dreamed what you tell me."
"Ah, ha!" exclaimed he, with a true Gallic shrug, as he rolled over in his blanket again. "I suppose so, for how could the devil come here in our camp?"
And we both returned to the arms of slumber.

Thunder and lightning, what a mosquito! roared a Texas friend next to me, arousing me a second time.
"D—n your mosquitoes!—can't you make less noise?" growled another, and for the third time I dozed.
"Christopher Columbus!" yelled I in less than five minutes, and I sprang bolt upright, "this must have been a gigantic gallinipper, with a crosscut-saw bill!"
Either mosquitoes were unusually large and energetic, or somebody was indulging in camp jokes, I thought, and I lay awake, but perfectly still. Presently I saw a figure feel around a train wagon opposite my feet, and making headway stealthily. It may be rough and leathery or some other officer, I reflected, or it may not. Here goes!—and I caught the figure by the right arm in the twinkling of an eye.

"Que es esto?" (What is the matter?)—asked a voice in a careless tone.
"Who the devil are you, and what are you doing here?" I interrogated angrily.
"Oh!" replied the individual, in the broken but not bad English I had heard the priest make use of—"it is me, I am about my own business."
I was overcome by astonishment. Deducing that I recognized him in the miraculous likeness I had seen of him in different characters.

"That is not wonderful," he replied, with an air of the utmost discomposure; "there are three brothers of us who look alike. One is little better than a... him you saw as an assassin; and another lives on his hacienda near Maria. It might have been him with the soldiers. He does those things sometimes."
I was not satisfied by this explanation; there was evidently something wrong; but the priest was there under the protection of those who knew and would do their duty, so I relinquished my hold, and with a "good night!" retired again to the grass and blanket. Between that time and sunrise nobody complained of "gallinippers."
I saw no more of the priest for some days.

There I was in the city of Montelej—a beautiful city, which on one side (near) is open to a lovely plain, and on the other three bounded by high and sublime mountains, thus needing, as it were, no representation of old Castile. I had been with the Mississippi and

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