

for a considerable space around. Instead of its being a festival, it turned out to be the general washing-day of the village; and the long lines, trees, bushes, &c., were all hung with the many-coloured garments, which, with the crowds of men, women, and children, and some cattle, seen moving to and fro, or gathered in small groups, gave the whole quite a pleasing effect. I was told that the pueblo of San Jose had a larger number of inhabitants than any other in Upper California; but as we rode into it, it seemed almost deserted, and I would willingly have gone back and amused myself with the scene on the green, if Don Miguel had not represented to me, that his standing would be very much affected if we did not at once proceed to the alcalde's. We accordingly rode up to his house, a very pretty two-storied edifice, of a light-cream colour, in the centre of the main street, and directly opposite a new church that they are erecting. The alcalde gave us a cordial reception. His first appearance was that of a French pastry-cook, with his white cap and apron. He was a short, dapper, rosy-cheeked man, by birth a Frenchman, but had been now twenty years settled in the pueblo; was married, and had eleven children, who looked as healthy and as dirty as one would wish to see them. The moment he understood who his visitors were, he did us the honour to doff his white cap and apron; and shortly after appeared in a round-about, very much ornamented with braid, &c. The only name I heard him called by, was Don Pedro. He spoke his native language imperfectly, using a great many Spanish words with it, and told me that he had nearly forgotten it. From him I learned that the pueblo contained six hundred inhabitants, about forty of whom were whites. He described himself as the "sous-préfet," and said that he administered justice, inflicted punishment, and had the ability to make the inhabitants happy, as he thought they should be. On my asking, by what laws he administered justice, his answer was,—by what he thought right. He had very little trouble, except guarding against the attacks of the Indians and preventing them from stealing horses, of which he had great fears; he had, therefore, provided for the safety of his own by keeping them in a small shed attached to his house, and within a locked gate.

He considered the pueblo as in danger of attacks from the Indians, who were now in great numbers within striking distance, and had become very troublesome of late in driving off horses, of which they had lost three or four hundred, and he said that pursuit was impossible, as they now had no troops. I was not satisfied that the alcalde was the bravest man in the world, or that he thought much of the interests of those over whom he had sway. Don Miguel gave him the character of being a good customer, and generally punctual in his payments. He