

practising. There was certainly nothing earthly in the sound, nor yet heavenly; much noise, but little music.

We were up betimes, but were threatened with disappointment in our horses. The kind and attentive Donna Aliza served us with chocolate and toast, and prepared cold tongues, chickens, and ample stores of bread for our use. At last the horses, together with the Indians who were to accompany us, made their appearance, and out of the number, I recognised at least three that belonged to the administrador, as I had been led to believe would be the case the evening before. His good wife ordered us their best saddles, but without the pillions or saddle-cloths.

After an hour's preparation, we took our leave and galloped off, in company with Don Miguel, who proposed to accompany us some six or seven miles, on our way to visit some of his herds, that were then feeding on the prairie. We had not proceeded far before we were overtaken by the person who had them in charge, coming at a furious gallop. He was mounted on the best horse I had seen in the country, and dressed after the Californian fashion, in a dark brown cloth jacket, thickly braided, both before and behind, with slashed sleeves, showing his shirt elegantly embroidered, both on the breast and sleeves; velvet breeches of bright blue, secured around his waist with a red sash, and open at the sides, ornamented with braid and brass bells, in abundance; below the knee he wore leather leggins, fastened with garters, worked in silver, and below these, shoes, over which were fastened large silver spurs, with the heavy rowels of the country; on his head was tied a red bandana handkerchief, and over that a huge broad-brimmed sombrero, with peaked crown, covered with an oil-silk cloth; the whole decorated with cords, aiguillettes, and ribands, with a guard-cord passing under the chin. His horse was equally well caparisoned, the bridle being decked with silver, as were the tips of his large wooden stirrups; with pillions and saddle-cloths in abundance. Few riders had so gay an air, or seemed to have so perfect a command of the animal he rode; and until we arrived at the wood where his Indians were looking out, he was an object of great attraction, assuming all the airs and graces of a person of high rank.

After galloping for several miles, we reached a few trees and bushes, that are designated as the "woods." Near by was a large herd of cattle feeding. The Rancheros we found lying about, in huts of hide, with a fire in front, and the leg-bone of an ox roasting over it; the skulls, bones, and offal, lay about, with hides here and there pegged to the ground.\* Some score of dogs were disputing

\* The hides of the cattle that die, or that are killed for food, are cured in this way.