

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

LONG before the arrival of the squadron in La Paz, the natives of Lower California had been awaiting with the extremest solicitude the negotiations prior to the final ratification of peace. The treaty arrived—their anxiety and doubts were soon over. They learned with amazement, that notwithstanding the positive assurances held out by the United States Government, that “the flag of the United States would for ever wave, and be unalterably planted over the Californias,” and that under no possible contingency could the U. S. ever give up or abandon the possession of the Californias, as conveyed through the official proclamations of the Naval Commanders on the coast, they had been duped, with these texts for their support—to defend our citizens and to fight under our colors, at the loss of standing, property, and life itself, and afterwards were to be taught a commentary upon the good faith of our Government. In the Treaty of Peace, Lower California was not alluded to, nor even protection of the Peninsula glanced at. Thus they reaped the fruits of their too easy credulity, and were about to pay the penalty in again becoming shuffled off to Mexican authority, and suffer the endless private and political persecutions attending their apostasy from the parent stock.

It was assuredly a hard case—for our Government had been

solely to blame. Instead of leaving the Peninsula in a state of neutrality, as it was, in effect, so far removed from the mother country as to be thought unworthy of notice, we busied ourselves fomenting disturbances and planting military posts until the major part of the respectable inhabitants of the territory became compromised, by espousing our quarrel.

All were eager to leave for the upper territory, but an entire emigration was out of the question. Many of the poorer classes, with numerous families, could not forsake their land, or little property, without any certain means for future subsistence; but those who could leave were quickly preparing to avail themselves of the opportunities afforded by our ships of war and transports for a new and distant home.

We remained nearly a month at La Paz. The only incidents worth noticing had been the trivial affair of a volunteer on shore very coolly shooting his wife to death; and a piece of Sam Patchism of one of the ship's boys, who, while climbing up the fore royal-mast head, and within grasp of the truck, became exhausted and fell, pitching heels over head through the air, tossing from brace to brace, until he finally struck the awning, bounded up, and fell again motionless—the stout canvas of the main deck awning having saved him. I was an eye witness to this performance; the next day he was again on his feet, mischievous as ever; but a plunge of near two hundred feet, without serious injury, would not be generally credited.

One morning, the boatswains whistled, the cables rattled, ship unmoored, sails spread; and as we slowly took the direction of the sea, and left the “Ohio” astern, down came, for the third time, our red pennant and up went the blue. We had bid adieu

to Commodores, squadrons, and signals, and were henceforth to cruize in a little fleet of our own.

We were bound on a flying visit to Mazatlan, and, after a tedious passage, on the fifth day, Creston reared his castor above the sea, and the white town and red mountains of the interior became again visible. The hills and plains were looking fresh and green from recent rains, but the town was nearly deserted, and not a vestige of life or bustle was to be seen.

Negrete with his officials were no sooner warm in their nests, when one Palacios collected a number of discontented followers, entered the city, occupied the Cuartel, and summarily ejected Anaya's friends. They declared a more liberal policy than the government party, abolished the alcobola, reduced duties, and agitated a measure of forming Cinaloa as part of a Republic, in conjunction with the States of Jalisco and Sonora. These fragile schemes did not meet the sanction of the reflecting portion of the community, and the foreign merchants were particularly disgusted, fearing, as usual during these pronunciamientos, some forcible extortion from the Palacios, upon refusing to advance money.

Anaya himself, with a small force, and means insufficient to put down the opposing faction, occupied the Presidio. Our old friends welcomed us kindly, and many believed we had returned to re-occupy the town; and even though the different consuls and foreign residents tried their utmost to detain us, it was unavailing, and the day succeeding our arrival the canvas overshadowed the frigate, and we said adieu, for the last time, to Mazatlan.

CHAPTER XXXIX

For twenty days after sailing from the Mexican coast, the steady trade-wind drove the frigate merrily over the blue water, until one evening we found ourselves, with wings furled and anchors down, within shelter of the reefs and hills of the Bay of Hilo.

Near us nestled an enchanting little village, with straw huts and cottages, half hidden beneath a perfect forest of flowers, banana, bread fruit, and coffee trees, with here and there thick clusters of cocoanuts shooting high in the air, like petals from the brilliant parterres at their feet, waving rattling leaves and trunks in a very indolent and graceful style peculiarly their own. Then the deep, velvety verdure around gradually rose in green slopes, and receded far away in the distance, until the scene was closed by the "twin giants of the Pacific," Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa. Nearer, along the fertile shores were white rills leaping into the sea, groups of natives upon the beach, and the little bay alive with slender and reed-like canoes, skimming like a breath over the water, the broad paddles flashing in the sun, tempting tropical fruits, reposing dewily in leafy baskets, the natives themselves gesticulating and chattering with amazing volubility, which added to the bright, fresh, novel, and glorious

scenery of the island, made a pleasing contrast to the parched Sierras and Tierra Caliente of Mexico.

The day subsequent to our arrival chanced to be Sunday, and, soon after breakfast, we pulled on shore. There was no reason for disappointment in a closer view of the village. The richest and densest tropical foliage shaded, and almost impeded the pathways. Native huts, with bleached thatching, and pretty cottages of the missionaries, were peeping from amid the groves. Streams of pure water were murmuring in every direction, and the cool trade-wind was blowing breezily through the branches of the trees. Altogether, the effect was quite exhilarating.

Large numbers of copper-hued natives, dressed in their gayest colors, were waiting to receive us, and, stepping on shore, I resigned myself with great docility to the guidance of a stout person, who, tapping an embroidered crown on the sleeve of his coat, with a short baton, informed me, with an expressive nod, that he was *kaiko*—king's man—in other words, a guardian of the peace.

A few minutes' walk brought us to an immense thatched building, which was the native church. On entering, we were politely shown places, and I was fortunate in getting a seat immediately fronting the preacher, and facing the congregation. There were, at the lowest, a thousand present, ranged on plain wooden benches, all over the vast earth floor of the meeting-house, and crowds more were pouring in from the different doorways: ancient matrons, in dazzling calico frocks, cut very high in the neck, and very low at the heels, unconfined by belt or bodice, wearing coal-scuttle bonnets—sometimes two—toppling very much in front—giving a general idea of having been put on wrong end foremost: young damsels attired in gaily-colored shawls and ribbons, their nether

limbs encased in a superabundance of hose, and strong brogan shoes: venerable, gentlemanly *kanakas*, in tightly-fitting trousers, unconscionably short-waisted coats, with swallow-tails: others again saved from appearing in *puris naturalibus* by the aid of a *tappa*, or flimsy shirt, about the loins. But they were a sober, orderly congregation, and with the exception of a little restlessness amid the juveniles, all listened with marked attention to the discourse of their pastor.

The Reverend Mr. Cohen preached to them, and seemed to adapt the sermon to their comprehension; occasionally, however, interrupted by some elderly person, when any obscure passage was not rendered sufficiently clear, whereupon an explanation always followed, in the most urbane, kindly manner.

The dialect is exquisitely soft and vowelly; and then the frequent repetition of many words, from the want of copiousness, renders it susceptible of being delivered with the most inconceivable rapidity. We had singing at intervals during service by some fifty youths from the Reverend Mr. Lyman's school. I judged it rather discordant, and although the voices were not harsh, nor unmusical, there was yet neither taste nor harmony in their efforts. After church, we visited the comfortable, pleasant residences of the missionaries—they were surrounded by well-cultivated gardens of taro, vegetables, and fruits. The inmates we found pious, sensible, and excellent persons, who had devoted many years among their heathen neighbors in philanthropic diffusions of the Gospel.

We had but a day or two to ramble about the village before an expedition was planned to visit the volcano of Kilauea. We were indebted to the good offices of Mr. Pitman for making all preparations for the journey. Each was provided with a *kanaka*

as a sort of body-servant to take charge of extra luggage and wardrobe, stowed in two huge calabashes, with the half of other shells laid over the round orifices on top, which effectually shielded their contents from the weather: they were then slung by a net work of bark braid to each end of a short pole, like a pair of scales, over the swarthy shoulders of our valets. There were full half-a-dozen more fitted with the like contrivances filled with edibles. All were sent off at daylight, while we remained to a delightful breakfast of fresh water fatted mullets, new eggs, and butter. Horses were then brought forward, and attended by a guide, we moved in direction of the south end of the island. In an hour we had lost sight of the ocean, left the pretty, "dim o'er arching groves" of Hilo, and struck a narrow pathway over smooth undulating masses of vitreous lava, just as it lay cooled from the lips of some remote boiling crater, whose overlapping iron waves had flowed from the regions above, whilst the rankest ferns and vegetation blocked the route, creeping and extending as far as the eye could span up the gradual slopes of the mountains. It was certainly a dull, uninteresting landscape. We pushed our way through these green fibrous barriers, with nothing to diversify the monotony, save the course through a dismal forest of ragged trees, laced and covered with impenetrable thickets of vines and parasitical plants, only relieved by the pale green of the candle nut and mighty leaves of an occasional banana tree; meeting, perhaps, at every dreary league with a filthy, ill-constructed native hut, filled with yet filthier occupants. From nearly every habitation we had a volunteer or two in our train, so that, in the afternoon, when we reached what is called the half-way house, there were enough followers for an Indian army.

Our halting place was a well-built thatched dwelling, planted

on a little mound of lava, and fenced in by a living hedge of *ti*, whose bare stems rose four feet from the ground, and then branched out in spreading leaves, like plumes. Inside the building was a raised platform, running the entire length of the room, resembling the pleasant structures used as beds by soldiers in guard-rooms. Clean mats and pillows were strewn upon it, and the remaining space of the apartment was plentifully provided with tables, chairs, and crockery; the whole being especially *tabooed*, and guarded by a native chief for the accommodation of tourists. It was situated in the midst of a little hamlet of huts, and on leaving the precincts of our domicile, to take a general survey of the country, we found ourselves stormed, as it were, by troops of tawny kanakas, and loosely-attired *wyheenees*—young ladies,—who had called to have a chat with the *houri-man-a-vars*. They were quite sociable, squatted beside us on lava ridges, laughed and chatted, took the cigars from our teeth, blew a whiff themselves, passed them around the circle, returning them again to the original puffers, which being interspersed with pokes and pinches, they made themselves very friendly and at home. Our staid chaplain, too, became well-nigh captivated, before they were made to comprehend that he was a *mikonaree*! then these dusky nymphs became mute as mice, and very demure in his presence.

The rain came on presently, and we sought shelter, took a nap, and at sunset sat down to dinner. Apart from sundry palatable dishes prepared by our own major-domo, there was a *luau* turkey, after the Sandwich mode of cooking, which, as I witnessed, I shall here take the liberty of describing the process.

It was a large gobbler, who, upon being knocked down by a billet of wood, was stripped of his plumes, cleaned, dressed, and stuffed with a green, cabbage-looking vegetable, called *luau*; then care-

fully swathed like a mummy in damp banana leaves, he was laid on a native oven of red-hot stones, all covered thickly over with more leaves, until there was not a chink or cranny for the escape of heat or steam. How long he remained undergoing this operation I do not exactly remember, but on sitting down to table, he was ushered in, on a huge platter, in his green winding-sheets, and after removing the outer coatings, he presented a whitish, parboiled appearance, half-drowned in a pulpy mass of *luau*, and fell to pieces at the first touch: he was steamed to death. I experimented on him, and truthfully declare he had not a taste of the turkey flavor, and we thought it the worst possible use he could have been put to; albeit the vegetable was delicious, and made amends for the tasteless gobbler.

Early the next morning we arose, breakfasted and mounted; the route was over the same swelling hillocks and mounds of lava, the view bounded far and near by the same dense growth of ferns, and a dull, unbroken solitude reigned around—uninterrupted by chirping of birds, or even the wheetling of lizards or crickets. Slowly we ambled along—the weather was lowering and gloomy; there was not a trickling rill of water, nothing but dull sky above, and lava, always lava below!

My horse, too, was a monster of his species—never shall I forget that brute; had he been provided with a cocoanut column on each leg, by way of stilts, he could not have come down harder—ugh! at every other step on coming to some narrow crevice of the rocks, he would raise his fore hoofs, and let himself fall, at it were, with a jar that made my jaws rattle like cracking walnuts with my teeth; it makes me shudder even at this late day to think of it. I tried to coax him into a gallop with lash, spur and pen-knife, that he might break his neck, and gratify my

revenge! but no! it was his maiden visit to the crater, and so far as a letter of future recommendation, he was resolved never to go again.

We journeyed on during seven tedious hours—the great dome-like mountain of Mauna Loa appearing even to recede as we approached—its smooth, oval base and sides sloping so easily from the frosted summit as to induce the belief of the practicability of a coach and horses going up, without let or hindrance. Almost imperceptibly we had attained an elevation of four thousand feet, when we came upon a broad plain, extending nearly twenty miles to the base and flanks of Mauna Loa. Shortly after, a few light wreaths of steam were blown from the rocky crevices around, and in a moment we stood on the brink of Kilauea!

“For certain on the brink
I found me of the lamentable vale
The dread abyss that joins a thundrous sound.”

We were on the rim of a mighty, depressed circus, walled about without a break, by precipitous masses of brown and reddish basaltic rocks, and looking down hundreds of feet, aye, more than a thousand! we beheld with a bird's-eye glance, a vast frozen black lake, once a huge sea of fire—now a congealed surface of lava, where you may place Paris, reserve a nook for New York, and not be pushed for space either!

After infinite toil and peril, we clambered down the steep face of the wall by a broken pathway, and with some misgivings, planted our feet on the crunched, crowded and broken slabs of lava, with the ashes *crickling* beneath the tread, very like crisp snow, and all closely resembling a frozen estuary, where the tide had fallen and left the ice very much shattered and uneven. Yet there was no danger—walk miles and miles in every direction—

take care you don't step into those unfathomable cracks and splits, for the longest and strongest arm ever moulded could not save you from this the pit of Pluto!

Three miles from the point of descent, near the opposite shore of the gulf, is still another large and deep crater, which probably plays the safety-valve to the whole island. It is generally in a state of great bubble and contention, but now was quiet, and only favored us occasionally with a few uneasy sputterings, as if the vestal devil below wished to have it understood, that he had not entirely gone out or shut up the shop, but was more busily occupied poking the fires of Hecla or Stromboli.

My companions were hunting over the broken slabs of vitreous lava for bits of specimens, of a sort of glassy fibre, called Pele's hair, after the heathenish superintendent of the realms: I was seated on a frowning black ledge, near unto what resembled a long range of four story granite warehouses, the day following a conflagration—resting my wearied limbs and determining mentally in which direction I should run to escape, in case the black, frothy cauldron should happen to boil over, or how I should feel boiling in it; when my reverie was disturbed by a Caliban of the calibashes, the color of a burnt brick, who was capering around in a pair of primitive pattens, formed of rushes bound to his feet, as if the lava was warmer and sharper than agreeable: pointing with his chin to the mouth of the breathing crater, *aramai*, said he,—come here—beckoning me to approach nearer, to make an impression with a dollar in the molten mass, at the risk of my coins and singed fingers. “*Aramai* yourself, with that kettle of cold water,” quoth I, quaffing a sip to his infernal majesty's health and spirits. “I didn't come all the way here to see simmering lava, and get my nose and toes scorched for the trouble;

believe me, fiery Pluto! those pleasurable sensations I've enjoyed many a time and oft, years ago; but could you give us a downright good ague with an earthquake, by way of a novelty, I should consider my education completed, and make no further call upon your generosity.” Notwithstanding my invocation, the mountain remained firm and apathetic, and becoming heartily disgusted, I forthwith turned my back on Kilauea.

Our guide on this volcanic excursion rejoiced in the epithet of Barnes, and I beg leave to endorse him for any other tourist. Mr. B., in our ignorance, assured us that gentlemen ever indulged in strong waters before descending, after inspecting the crater, “sweetening the very edge of doom,” as it were, and also upon mounting upward; suggesting that the guide was treated in like manner, and as an invariable rule, all ullages were confided to his care. Mr. B. also gratified us with many remarkable narratives concerning the native population.

We had a dreadfully fatiguing ascent to the upper regions, somewhat alleviated by the kind services of the calibash men, who butted us up the most difficult steeps with their heads, when, after gasping an hour from exhaustion, our appetites returned with renewed vigor, and we made another meal on *luau* turkeys. We were, moreover, comfortably housed, and fortunately, for towards nightfall, the wind arose from the great Mauna Loa and drove the light chilling rain in loud gusts and moanings over the plain. During the night we heard the muttering throes of the volcano, and at intervals in the darkness, a bright sheet of fire would leap up from the black abyss, so intensely vivid as to paint a brilliant *flame-bow* in the thick mist that crept along the crater's sides. There was a perfume of sulphur and nitre, that seemed to spring from the very floor of our habitation, but far too fagged

out to heed it, we were soon wrapt in forgetfulness, or what was better, good warm cloaks and serapas.

The day broke cold and stormy, so we huddled on flannel shirts, and paid a hasty visit to some enormous sulphur banks that were steaming actively near the verge of the crater. Beautifully colored crystals were profusely found on the fissures of wide steam cracks and yawning chasms; then there were fearful dark holes, like chimneys, as indeed they were, evolving strong puffs of sulphur, that kept flurrying and eddying around, and when a whiff chanced to take one in the nose or mouth, it quite gave a choking taste of Uncle Nicholas's abode.

We regarded the whole affair as a special providence intended for the Hawaiians, who are all, more or less—men, women and children—afflicted with the itch, and if they could only be induced to give the steam a fair trial, there could be no skepticism upon the beneficial results that would ensue.

This was all there was to be seen or wondered at—returning to the straw hut, we ate more *luau* turkeys—sent *kanakas* and calibashes ahead, and then got on the beasts once more on our return route. We shortly bid adieu to the drizzling rain hanging above Kilauea, for a clearer atmosphere. The same night we had more turkeys and more sleep at the half-way house, and the following evening reached Hilo.

CHAPTER XL.

DURING the fortnight of our stay in the bay of Hilo, we had opportunities of observing a fair sample of island life. It is a place less visited than others of the Hawaiian group, and as a consequence, the natives have lost nothing from a less constant association with more civilized nations.

They still preserve, in a certain degree, old habits and heathenish customs, though very much modified by the benevolent efforts of their missionary pastors; yet there are many deeply rooted and immoral practices, which the good teachers find a Herculean labor to eradicate. Nevertheless, it must strike a stranger with surprise to find all these demi-barbarians have been taught to read and write—exceedingly well too—indeed the clean, well-defined caligraphy of the Hilo nymphs will compare with that of the most fashionable style of the art in young ladies' seminaries at home—they pay a strict outward observance to the Sabbath, have a general knowledge of the Scriptures, and many of the youth, a tolerable share of education.

The huts in the vicinity of towns and settlements are more comfortable and habitable than in the days of Cook and Vancouver, partaking somewhat in build, to the steep angular Dutch roof, but constructed of poles and thatch, without windows, and with only a single entrance. Great quantities of clean, well-made mats are piled about the floors, which are couches for eating or sleeping;