

court-yard of the *meson* at three leagues distance, had been totally unconscious of it. These were the first; and glancing over my diary I see notices of daily shocks occurring, at different intervals, for about ten days after our arrival.

According to many who had the means of making the observations; for several entire days, the earth was found to exhibit a tremulous motion, with very short intervals of complete repose.

The strongest shock of which I was myself aware, was felt about eleven A. M. on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, when I was roused from the perusal of a newspaper in the apartments of the American *chargé d'affaires*, by a sensation of confusion and giddiness; and, on raising my eyes, saw the curtains and candelabras in motion. In going to the elevated balcony, the scene presented by the broad and spacious thoroughfare below was one of the most striking I ever saw. There was no terror and no confusion in the street. Each individual of the passing multitude as far as we could see, was on his knees—each in the spot where he had become sensible of the terrible phenomenon—the half-naked Indian beside the veiled *dama*, and the loathsome leper beside the gaudily dressed official. The rider kneeled beside his horse, and the *arriero* among his mules; the carriages had halted, and their gay contents bent in clusters in the centre of the pavement. The bustle of the crowded thoroughfare had become hushed; and nothing was heard but a low murmur of pattered prayers,—while, with a slow, lateral motion from north to south, the

whole city swung like a ship at anchor, for about the space of a minute and a half. When the shock was over, the multitude rose; and each went about his business with a nonchalance which proved how the frequent recurrences of this phenomenon had nerved the public mind. In fact it is seldom that they are of a violence to injure the massive structure of the city; and the alluvial and elastic soil upon which it is based is much in its favour.

Nevertheless many of the churches show how much repeated shocks have injured them; and though the appalling inclination from the perpendicular, noticeable in many towers and façades, is rather attributable to the badness of the foundations,—yet during these days there was enough to make a brave man pause for an instant before passing under certain churches,—such as the *Profesa*, for instance, which looks as if it would fall upon the slightest provocation.

Most of these shocks were very trivial, and scarcely perceptible. The first I have noticed was by far the most serious, and considerably damaged several of the churches and the aqueducts. It began with the usual lateral swing from east to west, and then suddenly took the perpendicular movement, which is always the most dreaded. We found ultimately that it was experienced about the same time at Guadalajara; and very severely at Vera Cruz, and at Acapulco, having thus upheaved and agitated the whole continent, with its enormous pile of mountains, from sea to sea,—a fact which may give you an idea of the great depth

at which the seat of this tremendous power must be situated.

There is however a caprice in the effects produced which it is difficult to explain. The same earthquake which I have thus noticed as so sensibly felt at Mexico, was not observable at Guadalupe, within a mile of the city; while at Tacuba it was yet more severe. It was felt neither at Real del Monte, nor at Regla, while an hacienda situated between those two places was shaken to its foundation. It was rumoured that the hot baths situated on the Peñon, an isolated mass of lava between the city and the lake, had increased in heat since the commencement of the shocks; and further, that Popocatepetl had shown slight signs of combustion; but the most careful observation and attention could detect nothing of the kind from the terraces of the city. Morning after morning I directed my glass to him, but no perceptible vapour dimmed the clear silver outline of his snowy summit. He was at rest, and he may perhaps sleep for ages.

## LETTER VI.

WE had not been many days in the city of Mexico, when we made the discovery, that notwithstanding the excellent letters of introduction with which we had been furnished in Europe and the United States—as far as the *natives* of the country were concerned, we should have to be the contrivers of our own amusements.

It is true, our calls were returned and our cards acknowledged. We exchanged compliments; bartered bows, polite speeches, and grateful acknowledgments, for the boiling-hot, rapturous expressions of ecstasy of our Mexican acquaintances, at the unlooked-for happiness of seeing us in this world. We smiled in delight, in the very extremity of gratitude, at the devotion with which the palaces, the houses, the very lives of our noble male friends, were seemingly placed at our command, without any reserve.

It might have appeared that every other duty or pleasure was to be relinquished for the felicity of cultivating our friendship. We received a thousand compliments, which the gayest of our European admirers had never had the wit to conceive, nor the effrontery to utter. On one or two occasions, we