

were young, and so connected that it seemed a large family party; more than half had been in exile, and if Morazan returned to power they would all be scattered again.

I had been but three days in Guatemala, and already the place was dull. The clouds which hung over the political horizon weighed upon the spirits of the inhabitants, and in the evening I was obliged to shut myself up in my house alone. In the uncertainty which hung over my movements, and to avoid the trouble of housekeeping for perhaps but a few weeks, I dined and supped at the house of the señora—an interesting young widow—who owned mine (her husband had been shot in a private revolution of his own getting up), and lived nearly opposite. The first evening I remained there till nine o'clock; but as I was crossing on my return home, a fierce "Quien vive?"—"Who goes there?" came booming up the street. In the dark I could not see the sentinel, and did not know the password. Fortunately, and what was very unusual, he repeated the challenge two or three times, but so fiercely that the tones of his voice went through me like a musket-ball, and probably in a moment more the ball itself would have followed, but an old lady rushed out of the house I had left, and, with a lantern in her hand, screamed "Patria Libre."

Though silent, I was not idle; and when in a safe place thanked her from across the street, hugging close the inside of my doorway. Since Carrera's entry, he had placed sentinels to preserve the peace of the city, which was very quiet before he came, and his peace-officers kept it in a constant state of alarm. These sentinels were Indians, ignorant, undisciplined, and insolent, and fond of firing their muskets. They were ordered to challenge "Quien vive?" "Who goes there?" "Que gente?" "What people?" "Quel Regimento?" "What regiment?" and then fire. One fellow had already obeyed his orders literally, and, hurrying through the three questions without waiting for answers, fired, and shot a woman. The answers were, "Patria Libre," "Country free;" "Paisano," "Countryman;" and "Paz," "Peace."

This was a subject of annoyance all the time I was in Guatemala. The streets were not lighted; and hearing the challenge, sometimes at the distance of a square, in a ferocious voice, without being able to see the sentinel, I always imagined him with his musket at his shoulder, peering through the darkness to take aim. I felt less safe by reason of my foreign pronunciation; but I never met any one, native or stranger, who was not nervous when within reach of the sentinel's challenge, or who would not go two squares out of the way to avoid it.

## CHAPTER X.

HACIENDA OF NARANJO—LAZOING—DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENCE—FORMULAS—FÊTE OF LA CONCEPCION—TAKING THE BLACK VEIL—A COUNTRYWOMAN—RENOUNCING THE WORLD—FIREWORKS, ETC.—PROCESSION IN HONOUR OF THE VIRGIN—ANOTHER EXHIBITION OF FIREWORKS—A FIERY BULL—INSOLENT SOLDIERY.

THE next day, in company with Mr. Savage, I rode to Naranjo, a small hacienda of the Aycinena family, about seven miles from the city. Beyond the walls all was beautiful, and in the palmy days of Guatemala the Aycinenas rolled to the Naranjo in an enormous carriage, covered with carving and gilding, in the style of the grandees of Spain, which now stands in the court-yard of the family-house as a memorial of better days. We entered by a spacious gate into a road upon their land, undulating and ornamented with trees, and by a large artificial lake, made by damming up several streams. We rode around the borders of the lake, and entered a cattle-yard of considerable extent, in the centre of which, on the side of a declivity, stood the house, a strong stone structure, with a broad piazza in front, and commanding a beautiful view of the volcanoes of the Antigua.

It was the season for marking and numbering the cattle, and two of the Señores Aycinena were at the hacienda to superintend the operations. The cattle had been caught and brought in; but, as I had never seen the process of lazoing, after dinner a hundred head, which had been kept up two days without food, were let loose into a field two or three miles in circumference. Eight men were mounted, with iron spurs three inches long on their naked heels, and each with a lazo in hand, which consisted of an entire cow's hide cut into a single cord about twenty yards long; one end was fastened to the horse's tail, which was first wrapped in leaves to prevent its being lacerated, and the rest was wound into a coil, and held by the rider in his right hand, resting on the pommel of the saddle. The cattle had all dispersed; we placed ourselves on an elevation commanding a partial view of the field, and the riders scattered in search of them. In a little while thirty or forty rushed past, followed by the riders at full speed, and very soon were out of sight. We must either lose the sport or follow; and in one of the doublings, taking particularly good care to avoid the throng of furious cattle and headlong riders, I drew up to the side of two men who were chasing a

single ox, and followed over hill, through bush, brush, and underwood; one rider threw his lazo beautifully over the horns of the ox, and then turned his horse, while the ox bounded to the length of the lazo, and, without shaking horse or rider, pitched headlong to the ground.

At this moment a herd swept by, with the whole company in full pursuit. A large yellow ox separated from the rest, and all followed him. For a mile he kept ahead, doubled, and dodged, but the horsemen crowded him down toward the lake; and, after an ineffectual attempt to bolt, he rushed into the water. Two horsemen followed and drove him out, and gave him a start, but in a few moments the lazo whizzed over his head, and, while horse and rider stood like marble, the ox again came with a plunge to the ground. The riders scattered, and one horse and rider rolled over in such a way that I thought every bone in his body was broken; but the sport was so exciting that I, who at the beginning was particularly careful to keep out of harm's way, felt very much disposed to have my own horse's tail tied up and take a lazo in my hand. The effect of the sport was heightened by the beauty of the scene, with the great volcanoes of Agua and Fuego towering above us, and toward evening throwing a deep shade over the plain. It was nearly dark when we returned to the house. With that refinement of politeness, which I believe is exclusively Spanish, the gentlemen escorted us some distance on our road. At dark we reached Guatemala, and, to our great satisfaction, learned at the gate that the soldiers were confined to their barracks.

The news of my arrest and imprisonment, with great exaggeration of circumstances, had reached Guatemala before me, and I was told that the state government intended making me a communication on the subject. In a few days I received a letter from the Secretary of state, conveying the regrets of the President for the occurrence, and stating that the government had taken the measures which it deemed proper in the premises. As this was very indefinite, and as I bore considerable anger against the parties, and, moreover, as I heard out of doors something about these "measures," and considered it necessary, for the protection of Americans who were or might be in that country, not to suffer an outrage that had become notorious to be treated lightly, I addressed a note to the Secretary, asking specifically whether the officer and alcalde referred to had been punished, and if so, in what way. To this I received for answer that, in the circumstances in which the country was placed by means of an extraordinary popular revolution, and the distrust prevailing in the frontier villages, the local authorities were more suspicious than usual in the matter of passports, and that the outrage, "el atropellamento," which I had

suffered, had its origin in the orders of a military officer, "*un oficial militar*," who suspected that I and my companion were "enemies," and that General Cascara, as soon as he was informed of the circumstances, had removed him from his command; the reply went on to say that the government, much to its regret, from the difficult circumstances in which the country was placed, had not the power to give that security to travellers which it desired, but would issue preventive orders to the local authorities to secure me in my farther travels.

In further communications with the Secretary and the Chief of the state, they confessed their inability to do anything; and being satisfied that they desired it even more than myself, I did not consider it worth while to press the subject; as indeed, in strictness, I had no right to call upon the state government. The general government had not the least particle of power in the state, and I mention the circumstance to show the utter feebleness of the administration, and the wretched condition of the country generally. It troubled me on one account, as it showed the difficulty and danger of prosecuting the travels I had contemplated.

From the moment of my arrival I was struck with the devout character of the city of Guatemala. Every house had its figure of the Virgin, the Saviour, or some tutelary saint, and on the door were billets of paper with prayers. "La verdadera sangre de Cristo, nuestro Redentor, que solo representada en Egipto libro a los Israelitas de un brazo fuerte y poderoso, libre nos de la peste, guerra, y muerte repentina. Amen." "The true blood of Christ our Redeemer, which alone, exhibited in Egypt, freed the Israelites from a strong and powerful arm, deliver us from pestilence, war, and sudden death. Amen."

"O Maria, concebida sin pecado, roga por nosotros, que recurrimos a vos." "O Virgin, conceived without sin, pray for us, that we may have recourse to thee."

"Ave Maria, gracia plena, y la Santissima Trinidad nos favorezca." "Hail Mary, full of grace, and may the Holy Spirit favour us."

"El dulce nombre de Jesus,  
Sea con nosotros. Amen."

On the first Sunday after my arrival was celebrated the fête of La Concepcion, a fête always honoured in the observances of the Catholic Church, and this day more important from the circumstance that a probationer in the convent of La Concepcion intended to take the black veil. At break of day the church bells rang throughout the city, cannon were fired in the plaza, and rockets and fireworks set off at the corners of the

streets. At nine o'clock crowds of people were hurrying to the church of La Concepcion. Before the door, and extending across the streets, were arches decorated with evergreens and flowers. The broad steps of the church were strewed with pine leaves, and on the platform men were firing rockets. The church was one of the handsomest in Guatemala, rich with gold and silver ornaments, pictures, and figures of saints, and adorned with arches and flowers. The Padre Aycinena, the vice-president of the state, and the leading member of the Constituent Assembly, was the preacher of the day, and his high reputation attracted a large concourse of people. The pulpit was at one end of the church, and the great mass of the people were anxious to hear the sermon. This left the other end comparatively vacant, and I placed myself on a step of the nearest altar, directly in front of the grating of the convent. At the close of the sermon there was a discharge of rockets and crackers from the steps of the church, the smoke of which clouded the interior, and the smell of powder was stronger than that of the burning incense. The floor was strewed with pine leaves, and covered with kneeling women, with black mantillas drawn close over the top of the head, and held together under the chin. I never saw a more beautiful spectacle than these rows of kneeling women, with faces pure and lofty in expression, lighted up by the enthusiasm of religion; and among them, fairer than most and lovely as any, was one from my own land; not more than twenty-two, married to a gentleman belonging to one of the first families of Guatemala, once an exile in the United States. In a new land and among a new people, she had embraced a new faith; and, with the enthusiasm of a youthful convert, no lady in Guatemala was more devout, more regular at mass, or more strict in all the discipline of the Catholic Church than the Sister Susannah.

After the fireworks there was a long ceremony at the altar, and then a general rush toward the other extremity of the church. The convent was directly adjoining, and in the partition wall, about six feet from the floor, was a high iron grating, and about four feet beyond it another, at which the nuns attended the services of the church. Above the iron grating was a wooden one, and from this in a few minutes issued a low strain of wild Indian music, and presently a figure in white, with a long white veil, and a candle in her right hand, and both arms extended, walked slowly to within a few feet of the grating, and then as slowly retired. Presently the same low note issued from the grating below, and we saw advancing a procession of white nuns, with long white veils, each holding in her hand a long lighted candle. The music ceased, and a chant arose, so low that it required intent listening to catch the sound. Advancing two and two

with this low chant to within a foot of the grating, the sisters turned off different ways. At the end of the procession were two black nuns, leading between them the probationer, dressed in white, with a white veil and a wreath of roses round her head. The white nuns arranged themselves on each side, their chant ceased, and the voice of the probationer was heard alone, but so faint that it seemed the breathing of a spirit of air. The white nuns strewed flowers before her, and she advanced between the two black ones. Three times she stopped and kneeled, continuing the same low chant, and the last time the white nuns gathered around her, strewing flowers upon her head and in her path. Slowly they led her to the back part of the chapel, and all kneeled before the altar.

At this time a strain of music was heard at the other end of the church; a way was cleared through the crowd, and a procession advanced, consisting of the principal priests, clothed in their richest robes, and headed by the venerable Provisor, an octogenarian with white hair, and tottering on the verge of the grave, as remarkable for the piety of his life as for his venerable appearance. A layman bore on a rich frame a gold crown and sceptre studded with jewels. The procession advanced to a small door on the right of the grating, and the two black nuns and the probationer appeared in the doorway. Some words passed between her and the Provisor, which I understood to be an examination by him whether her proposed abandonment of the world was voluntary or not. This over, the Provisor removed the wreath of roses and the white veil, and put on her head the crown, and in her hand the sceptre. The music sounded loud notes of triumph, and in a few moments she reappeared at the grating with the crown and sceptre, and a dress sparkling with jewels. The sisters embraced her, and again threw roses upon her. It seemed horrible to heap upon her the pomp and pleasures of the world, at the moment when she was about to bid farewell to them for ever. Again she kneeled before the altar; and when she rose, the jewels and precious stones, the rich ornaments with which she was decorated, were taken from her, and she returned to the Provisor, who took away the crown and sceptre, and put on her head the black veil. Again she appeared before the grating; the last, the fatal step was not yet taken; the black veil was not drawn. Again the nuns pressed round, and this time they almost devoured her with kisses.

I knew nothing of her story. I had not heard that the ceremony was to take place till late in the evening before, and I had made up my mind that she was old and ugly; but she was not, nor was she faded and worn with sorrow, the picture of a broken heart; nor yet

a young and beautiful enthusiast; she was not more than twenty-three, and had one of those good faces which, without setting men wild by their beauty, bear the impress of a nature well qualified for the performance of all the duties belonging to daughter, wife, and mother, speaking the kindness and warmth of a woman's heart. It was pale, and she seemed conscious of the important step, and the solemn vows she was taking, and to have no pangs; and yet who can read what is passing in the human breast?

She returned to the Provisor, who drew over her face a black veil; and music rose in bursts of rejoicing, that one who was given to the world to take a share in its burdens had withdrawn herself from it. Immediately commenced the hum of restrained voices; and working my way through the crowd, I joined a party of ladies, one of whom was my fair countrywoman. She was from a small country town in Pennsylvania, and the romance of her feelings toward convents and nuns had not yet worn off. On Carrera's first invasion she had taken refuge in the convent of La Concepcion, and spoke with enthusiasm of the purity and piety of the nuns, describing some as surpassing in all the attributes of woman. She knew particularly the one who had just taken the veil, and told me that in a few days she would appear at the grating of the convent to embrace her friends, and bid them farewell, and promised to take me and procure me a share in the distribution.

During this time rockets were fired from the steps, and in the street, immediately in front, was a frame of fireworks thirty feet high, which the whole crowd waited on the steps and in the street to see set off. Everybody spoke of the absurdity of such an exhibition by daylight, but they said it was the custom. The piece was complicated in its structure, and in the centre was a large box. There was a whizzing of wheels, a great smoke, and occasionally a red flash; and as the extremities burned out, for the finale, with a smart cracking, the box flew open, and when the smoke cleared away, discovered the figure of a little black nun, at which all laughed and went away.

In the afternoon was the procession in honour of the Virgin. Although Guatemala was dull, and, by the convulsions of the times, debarred all kinds of gaiety, religious processions went on as usual, and it would have been an evidence of an expiring state to neglect them. All the streets through which the procession was to pass were strewed with pine leaves, and crossing them were arches decorated with evergreens and flowers; the long balconied windows were ornamented with curtains of crimson silk, and flags with fanciful devices. At the corners of the streets were altars, under arbours of evergreens

as high as the tops of the houses, adorned with pictures and silver ornaments from the churches, and the whole covered with flowers. Rich as the whole of Central America is in natural productions, the valley of Guatemala is distinguished for the beauty and variety of its flowers; and for one day the fields were stripped of their clothing to beautify the city. I have seen great fêtes in Europe, got up with lavish expenditure of money, but never anything so simply beautiful. My stroll through the streets before the procession was the most interesting part of the day. All the inhabitants, in their best dresses, were there: the men standing at the corners, and the women, in black mantillas, seated in long rows on each side; the flags and curtains in the balconied windows, the green of the streets, the profusion of flowers, the vistas through the arches, and the simplicity of manners which permitted ladies of the first class to mingle freely in the crowd, and sit along the street, formed a picture of beauty that even now relieves the stamp of dulness with which Guatemala is impressed upon my mind.

The procession for which all these beautiful preparations were made opened with a single Indian, old, wrinkled, dirty, and ragged, bare-headed, and staggering under the load of an enormous bass-drum, which he carried on his back, seeming as old as the conquest, with every cord and the head on one side broken; another Indian followed in the same ragged costume, with one ponderous drumstick, from time to time striking the old drum. Then came an Indian with a large whistle, corresponding in venerableness of aspect with the drum, on which, from time to time, he gave a fierce blast, and looked around with a comical air of satisfaction for applause. Next followed a little boy about ten years old, wearing a cocked hat, boots above his knees, a drawn sword, and the mask of a hideous African. He was marshalling twenty or thirty persons, not inaptly called the devils, all wearing grotesque and hideous masks, and ragged, fantastic dresses; some with reed whistles, some knocking sticks together; and the principal actors were two pseudo-women, with broad-brimmed European hats, frocks high in the necks, waists across the breast, large boots, and each with an old guitar, waltzing and dancing an occasional fandango. How it happened that these devils, who, of course, excited laughter in the crowd, came to form part of a religious procession, I could not learn. The boys followed them, just as they do the military with us at a review; and, in fact, with the Guatemala boys, there is no good procession without good devils.

Next, and in striking contrast, came four beautiful boys, six or eight years old, dressed in white frocks and pantalettes, with white

gauze veils over wreaths of roses, perfect emblems of purity; then four young priests, bearing golden candlesticks, with wax candles lighted; and then four Indians, carrying on their shoulders the figure of an angel larger than life, with expanded wings made of gauze, puffed out like a cloud, and intended to appear to float in air, but dressed more after the fashion of this world, with the frock rather short, and the *suspenders* of the stockings of pink riband. Then, borne as before, on the shoulders of Indians, larger than life, the figure of Judith, with a drawn sword in one hand, and in the other the gory head of Holofernes. Then another angel, with a cloud of silk over her head, and then the great object of veneration, La Virgen de la Concepcion, on a low hand-barrow, richly decorated with gold and silver, and a profusion of flowers, and protected by a rich silken canopy, upborne on the ends of four gilded poles. Priests followed in their costly dresses, one under a silken canopy, holding up the Host, before the imaginary splendour of which all fell on their knees. The whole concluded with a worse set of devils than those which led the procession, being about 500 of Carrera's soldiers, dirty and ragged, with fanaticism added to their usual expression of ferocity, and carrying their muskets without any order; the officers dressed in any costume they could command; a few, with black hat and silver or gold band, like footmen, carried their heads very high. Many were lame from gunshot wounds badly cured; and a gentleman who was with me pointed out several who were known to have committed assassinations and murders, for which, in a country that had any government, they would have been hung. The city was at their mercy, and Carrera was the only man living who had any control over them.

At the head of the street the procession filed off in the cross streets, and the figure of the Virgin was taken from its place and set up on the altar. The priests kneeled before it and prayed, and the whole crowd fell on their knees. I was at the corner near the altar, which commanded a view of four streets, and rising a little on one knee, saw in all the streets a dense mass of kneeling figures, rich men and beggars, lovely women and stupid-looking Indians, fluttering banners and curtains in balconied windows, and the figures of angels in their light gauze drapery seeming to float in air; while the loud chant of the crowd, swollen by the deep chorus of the soldiers' voices, produced a scene of mingled beauty and deformity at once captivating and repulsive. This over, all rose, the Virgin was replaced on her throne, and the procession again moved. At the next altar I turned aside, and went to the square in front of the Church of San Francisco, the place

fixed for the grand finale of the honours to the Virgin, the exhibition of fireworks!

At dark the procession entered the foot of a street leading to the square. It approached with a loud chant, and at a distance nothing was visible but a long train of burning candles, making the street light as day. The devils were still at its head, and its arrival in the square was announced by a discharge of rockets. In a few minutes the first piece of fireworks was set off from the balustrade of the church; the figures on the roof were lighted by the glare, and, though not built expressly for that purpose, the church answered exceedingly well for the exhibition.

The next piece was on the ground of the square, a national one, and as much a favourite in the exhibition of fireworks as the devils in a religious procession, called the *Toros*, or Bull, being a frame covered with pasteboard, in the form of a bull, covered on the outside with fireworks; into this figure a man thrust his head and shoulders, and, with nothing but his legs visible, rushed into the thickest of the crowd, scattering on all sides streams of fire. I was standing with a party of ladies and several members of the Constituent Assembly, the latter of whom were speaking of an invasion of troops from Quezaltenango, and the sally of Carrera to repel them. As the *toros* came at us, we retreated till we could go no farther; the ladies screamed, and we bravely turned our backs; and holding down our heads, sheltered them from the shower of fire. All said it was dangerous, but it was the custom. There was more cheerfulness and gaiety than I had yet seen in Guatemala, and I felt sorry when the exhibition was over.

Continuing on our way, we passed a guardhouse, where a group of soldiers were lying at full length, so as to make everybody pass off the walk and go round them. Perhaps three or four thousand people, a large portion ladies, were turned off. All felt the insolence of these fellows, and I have no doubt some felt a strong disposition to kick them out of the way; but, though young men enough passed to drive the whole troop out of the city, no complaint was made, and no notice whatever taken of it. In one of the corridors of the plaza another soldier lay on his back crosswise, with his musket by his side, and muttering to everybody that passed, "Tread on me if you dare, and you'll see!" and we all took good care not to tread on him. I returned to my house, to pass the evening in solitude; and it was melancholy to reflect that with the elements of so much happiness, Guatemala was made so miserable.