

and scuffling of the crowd, exhibited a dark picture of human nature and a sanguinary people. I owe it to the ladies to say, that in the city they never are present at such scenes. Here they went for no other reason that I could see than because they were away from home, and it was part of the fête. We must make allowances for an education and state of society every way different from our own. They were not wanting in sensibility or refinement; and though they did not turn away with disgust, they seemed to take no interest in the fight, and were not disposed to wait for a second.

Leaving the disgusting scene, we walked around the suburbs, one point of which commands a noble view of the plain and city of Guatemala, with the surrounding mountains, and suggests a wonder, that, amid objects so grand and glorious, men can grow up with tastes so grovelling. Crossing the plaza, we heard music in a large house belonging to a rich muleteer; and, entering, we found a young harpist, and two mendicant friars, with shaved crowns, dressed in white, with long white mantles and hoods, of an order newly revived in Guatemala, and drinking agua ardiente. Mantas and hats were thrown off, tables and seats placed against the wall, and in a few moments my friends were waltzing.

This over, the young men brought out the ladies' mantas, and again we sallied for a walk; but, reaching the plaza, the young men changed their minds, and seating the ladies, to whom I attached myself, in the shade, commenced prisoner's base. All who passed stopped, and the villagers seemed delighted with the gaiety of our party. The players tumbled each other in the dust, to the great amusement of the lookers-on; and this continued till we saw trays coming across the plaza, which was a sign of dinner. This over, and thinking that I had seen enough for one Sunday, I determined to forego the bullfight; and in company with Don Manuel and another prominent member of the Assembly, and his family, I set out on my return to the city. Their mode of travelling was primitive. All were on horseback, he himself with a little son behind him; his daughter alone; his wife on a pillion, with a servant to support her; a servant-maid with a child in her arms, and a servant on the top of the luggage. It was a beautiful afternoon, and the plain of Guatemala, with its green grass and dark mountains, was a lovely scene. As we entered the city we encountered a religious procession, with priests and monks all bearing lighted candles, and preceded by men throwing rockets. We avoided the plaza on account of the soldiers, and in a few minutes I was in my house, alone.

CHAPTER XIII.

EXCURSION TO LA ANTIGUA AND THE PACIFIC OCEAN—SAN LUCAS—MOUNTAIN SCENERY—EL RIO PENSATIVO—LA ANTIGUA—ACCOUNT OF ITS DESTRUCTION—AN OCTOGENARIAN—THE CATHEDRAL—SAN JUAN OBISPO—SANTA MARIA—VOLCANO DE AGUA—ASCENT OF THE MOUNTAIN—THE CRATER—A LOFTY MEETING-PLACE—THE DESCENT—RETURN TO LA ANTIGUA—CULTIVATION OF COCHINEAL—CLASSIC GROUND—CIUDAD VIEJA—ITS FOUNDATION—VISIT FROM INDIANS—DEPARTURE FROM CIUDAD VIEJA—FIRST SIGHT OF THE PACIFIC—ALOTENANGO—VOLCAN DEL FUEGO—ESCUINTLA—SUNSET SCENE—MASAGUA—PORT OF ISTAPA—ARRIVAL AT THE PACIFIC.

On Tuesday, the 17th of December, I set out on an excursion to La Antigua Guatemala and the Pacific Ocean. I was accompanied by a young man who lived opposite, and wished to ascend the Volcano de Agua. I had discharged Augustin, and with great difficulty procured a man who knew the route. Rumaldo had but one fault—he was married: like some other married men, he had a fancy for roving; but his wife set her face against this propensity; she said that I was going to El Mar, the sea, and might carry him off, and she should never see him again, and the affectionate woman wept at the bare idea; but upon my paying the money into her hands before going, she consented. My only luggage was a hammock and pair of sheets, which Rumaldo carried on his mule, and each had a pair of alforjas, or saddle-bags. At the gate we met Don José Vidaurre, whom I had first seen in the president's chair of the Constituent Assembly, and was going to visit his hacienda at the Antigua. Though it was only a journey of five or six hours, Señor Vidaurre, being a very heavy man, had two led horses, one of which he insisted on my mounting; and when I expressed my admiration of the animal, he told me, in the usual phrase of Spanish courtesy, that the horse was mine. It was done in the same spirit in which a Frenchman, who had been entertained hospitably in a country house in England, offered himself to seven of the daughters, merely for the compliment; and my worthy friend would have been very much astonished if I had accepted his offer.

The road to Mixco I have already described. In the village I stopped to see Chico. His hand had been cut off, and he was doing well. Leaving the village, we ascended a steep mountain, from the top of which we had a fine view of the village at its foot, the plain and city of Guatemala, and the Lake of Amatitan, enclosed by a belt of mountains. Descending by a wild and rugged road, we reached a

plain, and saw on the left the village of San Lucas, and on the right, at some distance, San Mateo. We then entered a piece of woodland, and first ascending, then again descended by the precipitous side of a mountain, with a magnificent ravine on our right, to a beautiful stream. At this place mountains rose all around us; but the banks of the stream were covered with delicate flowers, and parrots with gay plumage were perched on the trees and flying over our heads, making, in the midst of gigantic scenery, a fairy spot. The stream passed between two ranges of mountains so close together that there was barely room for a single horsepath by its side. As we continued, the mountains turned to the left, and on the other side of the stream were a few openings, cultivated with cochineal, into the very hollow of the base. Again the road turned, and then ran straight, making a vista of more than a mile between the mountains, at the end of which was the Antigua, standing in a delightful valley, shut in by mountains and hills that always retain their verdure, watered by two rivers that supply numerous fountains, with a climate in which heat or cold never predominates; yet this city, surrounded by more natural beauty than any site I ever saw, has perhaps undergone more calamities than any city that was ever built. We passed the gate, and rode through the suburbs, in the opening of the valley, on one side of which was a new house, that reminded me of an Italian villa, with a large cochineal plantation extending to the base of the mountain. We crossed a stream bearing the poetical name of El Rio Pensativo; on the other side was a fine fountain, and at the corner of the street was the ruined church of San Domingo, a monument of the dreadful earthquakes which had prostrated the old capital, and driven the inhabitants from their homes.

On each side were the ruins of churches, convents, and private residences, large and costly, some lying in masses, some with fronts still standing, richly ornamented with stucco, cracked and yawning, roofless, without doors or windows, and trees growing inside above the walls. Many of the houses have been repaired, the city is repopled, and presents a strange appearance of ruin and recovery. The inhabitants, like the dwellers over the buried Herculaneum, seemed to entertain no fears of renewed disaster. I rode up to the house of Don Miguel Manrique, which was occupied by his family at the time of the destruction of the city, and, after receiving a kind welcome, in company with Señor Vidaurre walked to the plaza. The great volcanoes of Agua and Fuego look down upon it; in the centre is a noble stone fountain, and the buildings which face it, especially the palace of the captain-general, displaying on its front the armorial bearings granted by the

Emperor Charles the Fifth to the loyal and noble city, and surmounted by the Apostle St. James on horseback, armed, and brandishing a sword; and the majestic but roofless and ruined cathedral, 300 feet long, 120 broad, nearly 70 high, and lighted by 50 windows, show at this day that La Antigua was once one of the finest cities of the New World, deserving the proud name which Alvarado gave it, the city of the Knights of St. James.

This was the second capital of Guatemala, founded in 1542 on account of the destruction of the first by a water volcano. Its history is one of uninterrupted disasters. "In 1558 an epidemic disorder, attended with a violent bleeding at the nose, swept away great numbers of people; nor could the faculty devise any method to arrest the progress of the distemper. Many severe shocks of earthquake were felt at different periods; the one in 1565 seriously damaged many of the principal buildings; those of 1575, 76, and 77 were not less ruinous. On the 27th of December, 1581, the population was again alarmed by the volcano, which began to emit fire; and so great was the quantity of ashes thrown out and spread in the air, that the sun was entirely obscured, and artificial light was necessary in the city at mid-day."

"The years 1585 and 1586 were dreadful in the extreme. On January 16th of the former, earthquakes were felt, and they continued through that and the following year so frequently, that not an interval of eight days elapsed during the whole period without a shock more or less violent. Fire issued incessantly, for months together, from the mountain, and greatly increased the general consternation. The greatest damage of this series took place on the 23d of December, 1586, when the major part of the city again became a heap of ruins, burying under them many of the unfortunate inhabitants; the earth shook with such violence that the tops of the high ridges were torn off, and deep chasms formed in various parts of the level ground.

"In 1601 a pestilential distemper carried off great numbers. It raged with so much malignity that three days generally terminated the existence of such as were affected by it."

"On the 18th of February, 1651, about one o'clock in the afternoon, a most extraordinary subterranean noise was heard, followed immediately by three violent shocks, at very short intervals from each other, which threw down many buildings and damaged others; the tiles from the roofs of the houses were dispersed in all directions, like light straws by a gust of wind; the bells of the churches were rung by the vibrations; masses of rock were detached from the mountains; and even the wild beasts were so terrified, that, losing their natural instinct,

they quitted their retreats, and sought shelter in the habitations of men."

"The year 1686 brought with it another dreadful epidemic, which in three months swept away a tenth part of the inhabitants." . . . "From the capital the pestilence spread to the neighbouring villages, and thence to the more remote ones, causing dreadful havoc, particularly among the most robust of the inhabitants."

"The year 1717 was memorable; on the night of August 27th the mountain began to emit flames, attended by a continued subterranean rumbling noise. On the night of the 28th the eruption increased to great violence, and very much alarmed the inhabitants. The images of saints were carried in procession, public prayers were put up, day after day; but the terrifying eruption still continued, and was followed by frequent shocks, at intervals, for more than four months. At last, on the night of September 29th, the fate of Guatemala appeared to be decided, and inevitable destruction seemed to be at hand. Great was the ruin among the public edifices; many of the houses were thrown down, and nearly all that remained were dreadfully injured; but the greatest devastation was seen in the churches."

"The year 1773 was the most melancholy epoch in the annals of this metropolis; it was then destroyed, and, as the capital, rose no more from its ruins." . . . "About four o'clock, on the afternoon of July 29, a tremendous vibration was felt, and shortly after began the dreadful convulsion that decided the fate of the unfortunate city." . . . "On the 7th September there was another, which threw down most of the buildings that were damaged on the 29th of July; and on the 13th December, one still more violent terminated the work of destruction." . . . "The people had not well recovered from the consternation inflicted by the events of the fatal 29th of July, when a meeting was convoked for the purpose of collecting the sense of the inhabitants on the subject of removal." . . . "At this meeting it was determined that all the public authorities should remove provisionally to the little village of La Hermita, until the valleys of Jalapa and Las Vacas could be surveyed, and until the king's pleasure could be ascertained on the subject." . . . "On the 6th of September the governor and all the tribunals withdrew to La Hermita; the surveys of the last-mentioned places being completed, the inhabitants were again convoked, to decide upon the transfer. This congress was held in the temporary capital, and lasted from the 12th to the 16th of January, 1774: the report of the commissioners was read, and, by a plurality of votes, it was resolved to make a formal translation of the city of Guatemala to the Valley of Las Vacas. The king gave his assent to this resolution on the 21st of July, 1775; and,

by a decree of the 21st September following, approved most of the plans that were proposed for carrying the determination into effect; granting very liberally the whole revenue arising from the customs, for the space of ten years, toward the charges of building, &c. In virtue of this decree, the ayuntamiento was in due form established in the new situation on the 1st of January, 1776; and on the 29th of July, 1777, a proclamation was issued in Old Guatemala, commanding the population to remove to the new city within one year, and totally abandon the remains of the old one."

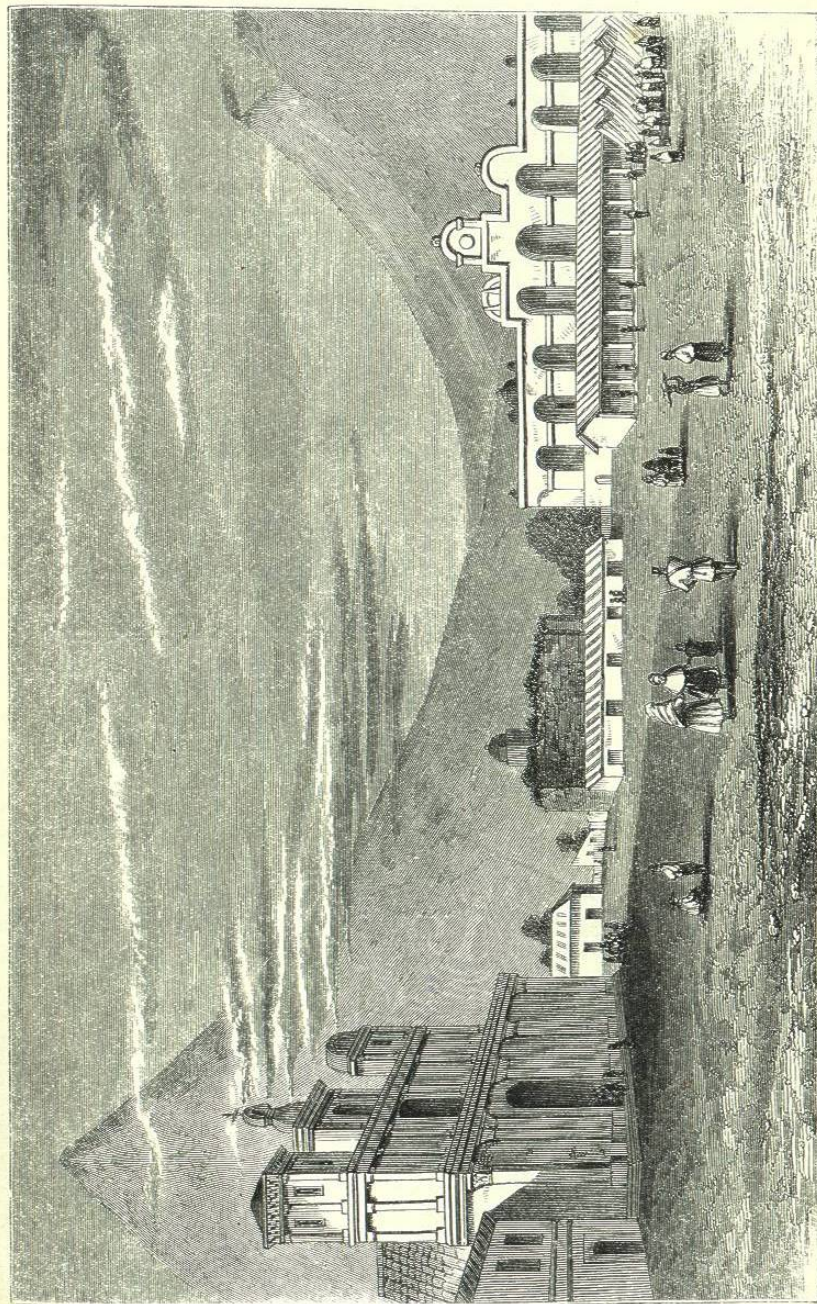
Such is the account given by the historian of Guatemala concerning the destruction of this city; besides which, I saw on the spot Padre Antonio Croquer, an octogenarian, and the oldest canonigo in Guatemala, who was living in the city during the earthquake which completed its destruction. He was still vigorous in frame and intellect, wrote his name with a free hand in my memorandum-book, and had vivid recollections of the splendour of the city in his boyhood, when, as he said, carriages rolled through it as in the streets of Madrid. On the fatal day he was in the Church of San Francisco with two padres, one of whom, at the moment of the shock, took him by the hand and hurried him into the patio; the other was buried under the ruins of the church. He remembered that the tiles flew from the roofs of the houses in every direction; the clouds of dust were suffocating, and the people ran to the fountains to quench their thirst. The fountains were broken, and one man snatched off his hat to dip for water. The archbishop slept that night in his carriage in the plaza. He described to me the ruins of individual buildings, the dead which were dug from under them, and the confusion and terror of the inhabitants; and though his recollections were only those of a boy, he had material enough for hours of conversation.

In company with the cura we visited the interior of the cathedral. The gigantic walls were standing, but roofless; the interior was occupied as a burying-ground, and the graves were shaded by a forest of dahlias and trees 70 or 80 feet high, rising above the walls. The grand altar stood under a cupola supported by 16 columns faced with tortoise-shell, and adorned with bronze medallions of exquisite workmanship. On the cornice were once placed statues of the Virgin and the twelve apostles, in ivory; but all these are gone; and more interesting than the recollections of its ancient splendour or its mournful ruins, was the empty vault where once reposed the ashes of Alvarado the Conqueror.

Toward evening my young companion joined me, and we set out for Santa Maria, an Indian village at two leagues' distance, situated on the

side of the Volcano de Agua, with the intention of ascending the next day to the summit. As we entered the valley, the scene was so beautiful I did not wonder that even earthquakes could not make it desolate. At the distance of a league we reached the village San Juan del Obispo, the church and convent of which are conspicuous from below, and command a magnificent view of the valley and city of the Antigua. At dark we reached the village of Santa Maria, perched at a height of 2,000 feet above the Antigua, and 7,000 feet above the level of the Pacific. The church stands in a noble court with several gates, and before it is a gigantic white cross. We rode up to the convent, which is under the care of the cura of San Juan del Obispo, but it was unoccupied, and there was no one to receive us except a little talkative old man, who had only arrived that morning. Very soon there was an irruption of Indians, with the alcalde and his alguazils, who came to offer their services as guides up the mountain. They were the first Indians I had met who did not speak Spanish, and their eagerness and clamour reminded me of my old friends the Arabs. They represented the ascent as very steep, with dangerous precipices, and the path extremely difficult to find, and said it was necessary for each of us to have sixteen men with ropes to haul us up, and to pay twelve dollars for each man. They seemed a little astonished when I told them that we wanted two men each, and would give them half a dollar apiece, but fell immediately to eight men for each, and a dollar apiece; and, after a noisy wrangling, we picked out six from forty, and they all retired. In a few minutes we heard a violin out of doors, which we thought was in honour of us; but it was for the little old man, who was a titiritero or puppet-player, and intended giving an exhibition that night. The music entered the room, and a man stationed himself at the door to admit visitors. The price of admission was three halfpence, and there were frequent wranglings to have one halfpenny taken off, or two admitted for three halfpence. The high price preventing the entrance of common people, the company was very select, and all sat on the floor. The receipts, as I learned from the doorkeeper, were upward of 2s. 6d. Rumaldo, who was a skilful amateur, led the orchestra, that is, the other fiddler. The puppet was in an adjoining room, and when the door opened disclosed a black chamarro hanging as a curtain, the rising of which discovered the puppet-player sitting at a table with his little figures before him. The sports of the puppets were carried on with ventriloquial conversations, in the midst of which I fell asleep.

We did not get off till seven o'clock the next morning. The day was very unpromising, and the whole mountain was covered with clouds. As yet the side of the volcano was cultivated. In half an hour the



33A. ANTIGUA GUATEMALA.

F. Caterwood