

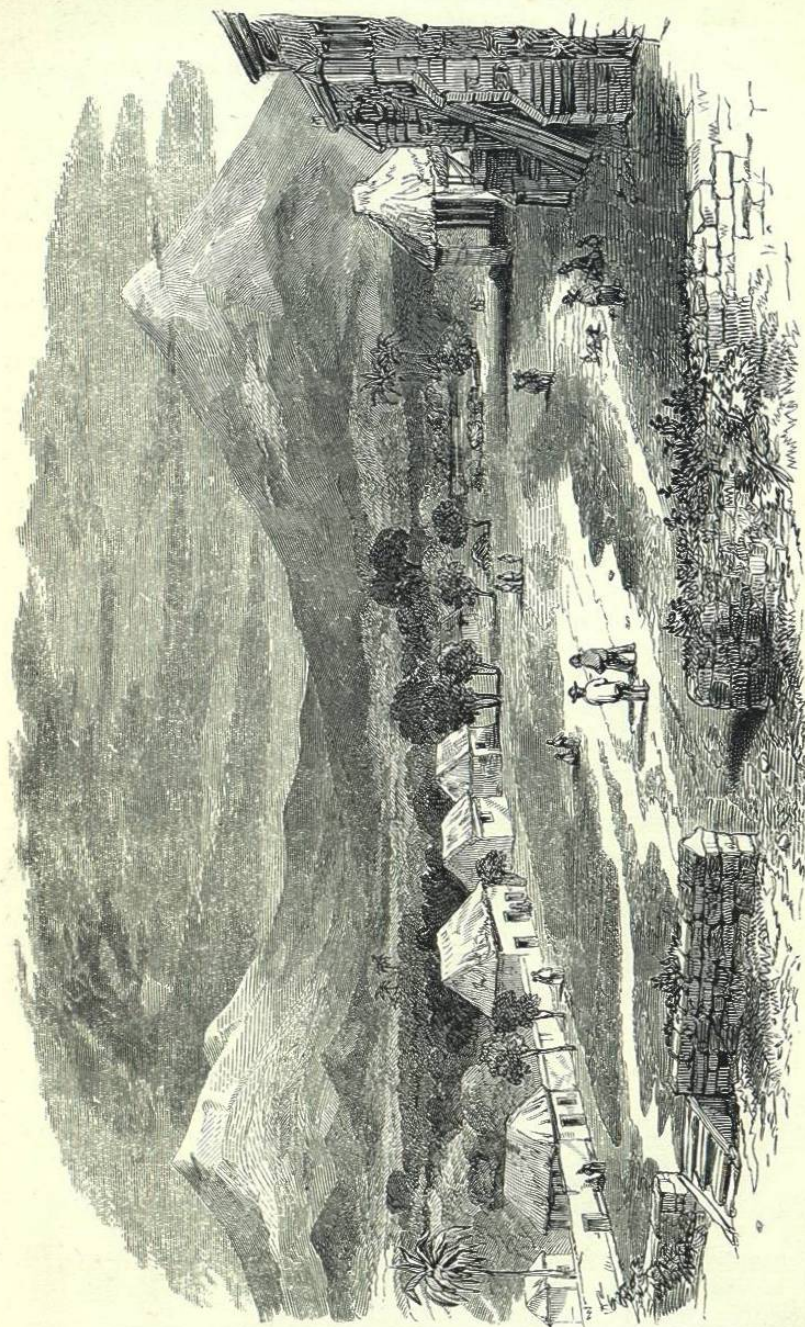
CHAPTER XIV.

THE RETURN—HUNT FOR A MULE—OVERO—MASAGUA—ESCUINTLA—FALLS OF SAN PEDRO MARTYR—MICHATOYAL RIVER—VILLAGE OF SAN PEDRO—A MAJOR-DOMO—SAN CRISTOVAL—AMATITAN—A ROVING AMERICAN—ENTRY INTO GUATIMALA—LETTER FROM MR. CATHERWOOD—CHRISTMAS EVE—ARRIVAL OF MR. CATHERWOOD—PLAZA DE TOROS—A BULLFIGHT—THE THEATRE—OFFICIAL BUSINESS—THE ARISTOCRACY OF GUATIMALA—STATE OF THE COUNTRY—NEW YEAR'S DAY—FEROCITY OF PARTY.

At three o'clock Rumaldo woke me to set out on my return. The moonbeams were glancing over the water, and the canoe was ready. I bade farewell to my host as he lay in his hammock, and crossed the river. Here I found an unexpected difficulty. My spare mule had broken her halter, and was nowhere to be seen. We beat about among the woods till daylight, and concluding that she must have taken the only path open, and set out for home on her own account, we saddled and rode on to Overo, a distance of twenty miles. But no stray mule had passed the hacienda, and I stopped and sent Rumaldo back to the port.

Very soon I became tired of waiting at the miserable hacienda, saddled my mule, and started alone. The road was so shaded that I did not stop for the noonday heat. For twenty-one miles further the road was perfectly desolate, the only sound being occasionally the crash of a falling tree. At the village of Masagua I rode up to a house, at which I saw a woman under the shed, and, unsaddling my mule, got her to send a man out to cut sacate, and to make me some chocolate. I was so pleased with my independence that I almost resolved to travel altogether by myself, without servant or change of apparel. In half an hour I resumed my journey. Towards evening I met drunken Indians coming out from Escuintla, and, looking forward, saw towering to the skies the two volcanoes of Fire and Water, and the intervening country glowing in the bright colours of the setting sun. Some time after dark I rode up to the house of the corregidor, having performed in the two days 110 miles. Unfortunately, there was no sacate for my mule. This article is brought into the towns by the Indians daily, and every person buys just enough for the night, and no more. There was not a spare lock of grass in the place. With a servant of the corregidor's I made an exploring expedition through the town, and by an affecting appeal to an old woman, enforced by treble price, bought from under their very noses the portion of two mules, and left them supperless.

I waited till two o'clock the next day for Rumaldo and the mule, and, after a vain endeavour to procure a guide to the falls of San Pedro Martyr, set out alone direct for Guatemala. At the distance of two leagues, ascending a steep hill, I passed a trapiche or sugar-mill, in a magnificent situation, commanding a full view of the plain I had



38. ESCUINTLA.

F. Catherwood.

crossed and the ocean beyond. Two oxen were grinding sugar-cane, and under a shed was a large boiling caldron for making panela, a brown sugar, in lumps of about two pounds each, an enormous quantity of which is consumed in the country. Here the humour seized me to make some inquiries about the falls of San Pedro Martyr. A man out at elbows, and every other mentionable and unmentionable part of his body, glad to get rid of regular work, offered to conduct me. I had passed, a league back, the place where I ought to have turned off; and proceeding onward to the village of San Pedro, he turned off to the right, and went back almost in the same direction by a narrow path descending through thick woods choked with bushes, and in a ravine reached the Michatoyal River, which I had crossed at Istapa. It was narrow and rapid, breaking wildly over a stony bed, with a high mountain on the opposite side. Following it, we reached the cataract, consisting of four streams separated by granite rock, partly concealed by bushes, and precipitated from a height of about 200 feet, forming with the wild scenery around a striking and romantic view. A little below it were a sugar-mill worked by water, and an uncommonly fine hacienda, which commanded a view of the falls, and at which I was very much disposed to pass the night. The major-domo, a black man, was somewhat surprised at my visit; but when he learned that I did not come to see the mill, but only the falls, he seemed to suspect that I was no better than I should be; and when I asked him if I could reach San Cristoval before dark, he answered that I could if I started immediately. This was not exactly an invitation to stay, and I left him. It shows the want of curiosity and indolence of the people, that, though these falls are but a pleasant afternoon's ride from Escuintla, which for two months is thronged with visitors from Guatemala, nobody ever visits them.

Hurrying back by the same wild path, we reached the main road, and, as it was late, I hired my guide to go on with me to San Cristoval. We passed through the village of San Pedro, which was a collection of miserable huts, with an estanco or place for the sale of agua ardiente, and thronged with half-intoxicated Indians. As we advanced, clouds began to gather around the mountains, and there was every appearance of heavy rain. I had no cloak or greatecoat, and, being particularly apprehensive of fevers and rheumatism, after riding about a mile, I returned to San Pedro. The most respectable citizens of the place were reeling round the estanco, and urged me stop; but my guide said they were a bad set, and advised me to return and pass the night at the sugar-mill. Presuming that he knew the people of whom he spoke better than I did, I was no way inclined to disregard his caution. It was after dark when we reached the trapiche; some of the workmen

were sitting around a fire smoking; others were lying asleep under a shed, and I had but to

"Look around and choose *my* ground,
And take *my* rest."

I inquired for the major-domo, and was escorted to a mud house, where in the dark I heard a harsh voice, and presently by the light of a pine stick, saw an old and forbidding face corresponding, and by its side that of a young woman, so soft and sweet that it seemed to appear expressly for the sake of contrast; and these two were one. I was disposed to pity her; but the old major-domo was a noble fellow in heart, and she managed him so beautifully that he never suspected it. He was about going to bed, but sent men out to cut sacate, and both he and his wife were pleased that accident had brought me to their hut. The workmen sympathised in their humour, and we sat for two hours around a large table under the shed, with two candles sticking up in their own tallow. They could not comprehend that I had been to the top of the Volcano de Agua, and then ridden down to the coast merely to see the Pacific. A fine, open-faced young man had a great desire to travel, only he did not like to go away from home. I offered to take him with me and give him good wages. The subject was discussed aloud. It was an awful thing to go away from home, and among strangers, where no one would care for him. His house was the outside of the major-domo's hut, but his home was in the hearts of his friends, and perhaps some of them would be dead before he returned. The wife of the major-domo seemed a good spirit in tempering the hearts and conduct of these wild and half-naked men. I promised to give him money to pay his expenses home when he should wish to return, and he agreed to go with me. At three o'clock the old major-domo was shouting in my ears. I was not familiar with my own name with the don prefixed, and thought he had "waked up the wrong passenger." The courage of the young man who wished to travel failed him, and he did not make his appearance; in the expectation of his going my guide did not come, and I set out alone. Before daylight I passed for the third time through the village of San Pedro, and a little beyond overtook a bundle on horseback, which proved to be a boy and a woman, with one poncha over both.

The River Michatoyal was foaming and breaking in a long succession of rapids on our right, and we rode on together to San Cristoval. I rode up to the convent, pounced upon the cura at the witching hour of breakfast, mounted again, and rode around the base of the Volcano de Agua, with its cultivated fields and belt of forest and verdure to the top. Opposite was another volcano, its sides covered with immense forests. Between the two I passed a single

trapiche belonging to a convent of Dominican friars, traversed a large and beautiful valley, passed hot springs, smoking for more than a mile along the road, and entered among the nopals or cochineal plantations of Amatitan. On both sides were high clay fences, and the nopals were more extensive than those of the Antigua, and more valuable, as, though only twenty-five miles from it, the climate is so different that they produce two crops in each season.

The road lay across a plain, with a high, precipitous, and verdant wall on the left. At a distance of a league we ascended a steep hill to the table-land of Guatemala. I regret that I cannot communicate to the reader the highest pleasure of my journey in Central America, that derived from the extraordinary beauty of scenery constantly changing. At the time I thought this the most delightful ride I had had in the country. On the way I overtook a man and his wife on horseback, he with a game-cock under his arm, and she with a guitar; a little boy was hidden away among bedding on a luggage-mule, and four lads were with them on foot, each with a game-cock wrapped in matting, with the head and tail only visible. They were going to Guatemala to pass the Christmas holydays, and with this respectable party I entered the gate of the city, on the eighth day after my departure. I found a letter from Mr. Catherwood, dated at Esquipulas, informing me that he had been robbed by his servant, taken ill, had left the ruins, gone to Don Gregorio's, and was then on his journey to Guatemala. My messenger had passed through Copan, and gone on he did not know where. I was in great distress, and resolved, after a day's rest, to set off in search of him.

I dressed myself and went to a party at Señor Zebadua's, formerly minister to England, where I surprised the Guatemaltecos by the tour I had made, and particularly by having come alone from Istapa. Here I met Mr. Chatfield, her Britannic majesty's consul-general, and Mr. Skinner, who had arrived during my absence. It was Christmas Eve, the night of El Nacimiento, or birth of Christ. At one end of the sala was a raised platform, with a green floor, and decorated with branches of pine and cypress, having birds sitting upon them, and looking-glass, and sandpaper, and figures of men and animals, representing a rural scene, with an arbour, and a wax doll in a cradle; in short, the grotto of Bethlehem and the infant Saviour. Always, at this season of the year, every house in Guatemala has its Nacimiento, according to the wealth and taste of the proprietor, and in time of peace the figure of the Saviour is adorned with family jewels, pearls, and precious stones, and at night every house is open, and the citizens, without acquaintance or invitation, or distinction of rank or persons, go from house to house visiting; and the week of El Nacimiento is

the gayest in the year ; but unfortunately, at this time it was observed only in form ; the state of the city was too uncertain to permit general opening of houses and running in the streets at night. Carrera's soldiers might enter.

The party was small, but consisted of the élite of Guatemala, and commenced with supper, after which followed dancing, and, I am obliged to add, smoking. The room was badly lighted, and the company, from the precarious state of the country, not gay ; but the dancing was kept up till twelve o'clock, when the ladies put on their mantillas, and we all went to the Cathedral, where were to be performed the imposing ceremonies of the Christmas Eve. The floor of the church was crowded with citizens, and a large concourse from the villages around. Mr. Savage accompanied me home, and we did not get to bed till three o'clock in the morning.

The bells had done ringing, and Christmas mass had been said in all the churches before I awoke. In the afternoon was the first bull-fight of the season. My friend Vidaurre had called for me, and I was in the act of going to the Plaza de Toros, when there was a loud knock at the puerta cochera, and in rode Mr. Catherwood, armed to the teeth, pale and thin, most happy at reaching Guatemala, but not half so happy as I was to see him. He was in advance of his luggage, but I dressed him up and carried him immediately to the Plaza de Toros.

It stands near the church of El Calvario, at the end of the Calle Real, in shape and form like the Roman amphitheatre, about 350 feet long, and 250 broad, capable of containing, as we supposed, about 8,000 people, at least one-fourth of the population of Guatemala, and was then crowded with spectators of both sexes and all classes, the best and the vilest in the city, but all conducting themselves with perfect propriety. We recognised several parties ; in fact, the greater part of our Guatemala acquaintances were present.

The seats commenced about 10 feet above the area, with a corridor and open wooden fence in front to protect the spectators, astride which sat Carrera's disorderly soldiers to keep order. At one end, underneath the corridor, was a large door, through which the bull was to be let in. At the other end, separated by a partition from the part occupied by the rest of the spectators, was a large box, empty, formerly intended for the captain general and other principal officers of government, and now reserved for Carrera. Underneath was a military band, composed mostly of Indians. Notwithstanding the collection of people, and the expectation of an animating sport, there was no clapping or stamping, or other expression of impatience and anxiety for the performance to begin. At length Carrera entered the captain general's box, dressed in a badly-fitting blue military frock-coat,

embroidered with gold, and attended by Monte Rosa and other officers, richly dressed, the alcalde and members of the municipality. All eyes were turned towards him, as when a king or emperor enters his box at the theatre in Europe. A year before he was hunted among the mountains, under a reward for his body, "dead or alive," and nine-tenths of those who now looked upon him would then have shut the city against him as a robber, murderer and outcast.

Soon after the picadores entered, eight in number, mounted, and each carrying a lance and a red poncha ; they galloped round the area, and stopped with their lances opposite the door at which the bull was to enter. The door was pulled open by a padre, a great cattle-proprietor, who owned the bulls of the day, and the animal rushed out into the area, kicking up his heels as if in play, but at sight of the line of horsemen and lances turned about and ran back quicker than he entered. The padre's bull was an ox, and, like a sensible beast, would rather run than fight ; but the door was closed upon him, and perforce he ran round the area, looking up to the spectators for mercy, and below for an outlet of escape. The horsemen followed, "prodding" him with their lances ; and all around the area, men and boys on the fence threw barbed darts with ignited fireworks attached, which, sticking in his flesh and exploding on every part of his body, irritated him, and sometimes made him turn on his pursuers. The picadores led him on by flaring ponchas before him, and as he pressed them, the skill of the picadore consisted in throwing the poncha over his horns so as to blind him, and then fixing in his neck, just behind his jaw, a sort of balloon of fireworks ; when this was done successfully it created shouts of applause. The government, in an excess of humanity, had forbidden the killing of bulls, and restricted the fight to worrying and torturing. Consequently, it was entirely different from the bullfight in Spain, and wanted even the exciting interest of a fierce struggle for life, and the chance of the picadore being gored to death or tossed over among the spectators. But, watching the earnest gaze of thousands, it was easy to imagine the intense excitement in a martial age, when gladiators fought in the arena before the nobility and beauty of Rome. One poor ox, after being tired out, was allowed to withdraw. Others followed, and went through the same round. All the padre's bulls were oxen. Sometimes a picadore on foot was chased to the fence under a general laugh of the spectators. After the last ox had run his rounds, the picadores withdrew, and men and boys jumped over into the arena in such numbers that they fairly hustled the ox. The noise and confusion, the flaring of coloured ponchas, the running and tumbling, attacking and retreating, and clouds of dust, made this the most stirring scene of any ; but altogether it was a

puerile exhibition, and the better classes regarded it merely as an occasion for meeting acquaintance.

In the evening we went to the theatre, which opened for the first time. A large building had been commenced in the city, but in one of the revolutions it had been demolished, and the work was abandoned. The performance was in the courtyard of a house. The stage was erected across one of the corners; the patio was the pit, and the corridor was divided by temporary partitions into boxes; the audience sent beforehand, or servants brought with them, their own seats. We had invitations to the box of Señor Vidaurre. Carrera was there, sitting on a bench a little elevated against the wall of the house, and at the right hand of Rivera Paz, the chief of the state. Some of his officers were with him in their showy uniforms, but he had laid his aside, and had on his black bombazet jacket and pantaloons, and was very unpretending in his deportment. The first piece was Saide, a tragedy. The company consisted entirely of Guatemaltecos, and their performance was very good. There was no change of scenery; when the curtain fell, all lighted cigars, ladies included, and, fortunately, there was an open court yard for the escape of the smoke. When the performance was over, the boxes waited till the pit was emptied. Special care had been taken in placing sentinels, and all went home quietly.

During the week there was an attempt at gaiety, but all was more or less blended with religious solemnities. One was that of the Novena, or term of nine days' praying to the Virgin. One lady, who was distinguished for the observance of this term, had an altar built across the whole end of the sala, with three steps, decorated with flowers, and a platform adorned with looking-glasses, pictures, and figures, in the centre of which was an image of the Virgin richly dressed, the whole ornamented in a way impossible for me to describe, but that may be imagined in a place where natural flowers are in the greatest profusion, and artificial ones made more perfect than in Europe, and where the ladies have extraordinary taste in the disposition of them. When I entered the gentlemen were in an ante-room, with hats, canes, and small swords; and in the sala the ladies, with female servants cleanly dressed, were on their knees praying; in front of the fairy altar was one who seemed a fairy herself; and while her lips moved, her bright eye was roving, and she looked more worthy of being kneeled to than the pretty image before her, and as if she thought so too.

In regard to my official business I was perfectly at a loss what to do. In Guatemala all were on one side; all said that there was no Federal Government; and Mr. Chatfield, the British consul-general, whose opinion I respected more, concurred, and had published a circular, denying its existence. But the Federal Government claimed to be in

existence; and the bare suggestion of General Morazan's marching against Guatemala excited consternation. Several times there were rumours to that effect, and one that he had actually determined to do so; that not a single priest would be spared, and that the streets would run with blood. The boldest partisans trembled for their lives. Morazan had never been beaten; Carrera had always run before him; they had no faith in his being able to defend them, and could not defend themselves. At all events, I had as yet heard only one side, and did not consider myself justified in assuming that there was no government. I was bound to make "diligent search," and then I might return, in legal phrase, "cepi corpus," or "non est inventus," according to circumstances.

For this purpose I determined to go to San Salvador, which was formerly, and still claimed to be, the capital of the Confederation and the seat of the Federal Government, or, rather, to Cojutepeque, to which place the government had been then lately transferred, on account of earthquakes at San Salvador. This project was not without its difficulties. One Rascon, with an insurgent and predatory band, occupied an intervening district of country, acknowledging neither party, and fighting under his own flag. Mr. Chatfield and Mr. Skinner had come by sea, a circuitous route, to avoid him, and Captain de Nouvelle, master of a French ship lying at the port of San Salvador, arrived in Guatemala almost on a run, having ridden sixty miles the last day over a mountainous country, who reported horrible atrocities, and three men murdered near San Vicente, on their way to the fair at Esquipulas, and their faces so disfigured that they could not be recognised. Immediately on his arrival, he sent a courier to order his ship up to Istapa, merely to take him back, and save him from returning by land. I had signified my intention to the state government, which was dissatisfied with my going to San Salvador at all, but offered me an escort of soldiers, suggesting, however, that if we met any of Morazan's, there would certainly be a fight. This was not at all pleasant. I was loth to travel a third time the road to Istapa, but, under the circumstances, accepted Captain de Nouvelle's invitation to take a passage in his ship.

Meanwhile I passed my time in social visiting. In our own city the aristocracy is called by the diplomatic corps at Washington the aristocracy of streets. In Guatemala it is the aristocracy of houses, as certain families live in the houses built by their fathers at the foundation of the city, and they are really aristocratic old mansions. These families, by reason of certain monopolies of importation, acquired under the Spanish dominion immense wealth and rank as "merchant princes." Still they were excluded from all offices and all part in the

government. At the time of the revolution one of these families was noble, with the rank of marquisate, and its head tore off the insignia of his rank, and joined the revolutionary party. Next in position to the officers of the crown, they thought that, emancipated from the yoke of Spain, they would have the government in their own hands; and so they had, but it was only for a short time. The principles of equal rights began to be understood, and they were put aside. For ten years they had been in obscurity, but accidentally they were again in power, and at the time of my visit ruled in social as well as political life. I do not wish to speak harshly of them, for they were the only people who constituted society; my intercourse was almost exclusively with them; my fair countrywoman was one of them; I am indebted to them for much kindness; and, besides, they are personally amiable; but I speak of them as public men. I did not sympathise with them in politics.

To me the position of the country seemed most critical, and from a cause which in all Spanish America had never operated before. At the time of the first invasion a few hundred Spaniards, by superior bravery and skill, and with more formidable arms, had conquered the whole Indian population. Naturally peaceable, and kept without arms, the conquered people had remained quiet and submissive during the three centuries of Spanish dominion. In the civil wars following the independence they had borne but a subordinate part; and down to the time of Carrera's rising they were entirely ignorant of their own physical strength. But this fearful discovery had now been made. The Indians constituted three-fourths of the inhabitants of Guatemala; were the hereditary owners of the soil; for the first time since they fell under the dominion of the whites, were organized and armed under a chief of their own, who chose for the moment to sustain the Central party. I did not sympathise with that party, for I believed that in their hatred of the Liberals they were courting a third power that might destroy them both; consorting with a wild animal which might at any moment turn and rend them in pieces. I believed that they were playing upon the ignorance and prejudices of the Indians, and, through the priests, upon their religious fanaticism; amusing them with fêtes and Church ceremonies, persuading them that the Liberals aimed at a demolition of churches, destruction of the priests, and hurrying back the country into darkness; and in the general heaving of the elements there was not a man of nerve enough among them, with the influence of name and station, to rally round him the strong and honest men of the country, reorganize the shattered republic, and save them from the disgrace and danger of truckling to an ignorant uneducated Indian boy.

Such were my sentiments; of course I avoided expressing them; but because I did not denounce their opponents, some looked coldly upon me. With them political differences severed all ties. Our worst party abuse is moderate and mild compared with the terms in which they speak of each other. We seldom do more than call men ignorant, incompetent, dishonest, dishonourable, false, corrupt, subverters of the Constitution, and bought with British gold; there a political opponent is a robber, an assassin; it is praise to admit that he is not a bloodthirsty cut-throat. We complain that our ears are constantly offended, and our passions roused by angry political discussions. There it would have been delightful to hear a good, honest, hot, and angry political dispute. I travelled in every State, and I never heard one; for I never met two men together who differed in political opinions. Defeated partisans are shot, banished, run away, or get a moral lockjaw, and never dare express their opinions before one of the dominant party.* We have just passed through a violent political struggle; twenty millions of people have been divided almost man to man, friend against friend, neighbour against neighbour, brother against brother, and son against father; besides honest differences of opinion, ambition, want, and lust of power and office have roused passions sometimes to fierceness. Two millions of men highly excited have spoken out their thoughts and sentiments fearlessly and openly. They have all been counted, and the first rule in arithmetic has decided between them; and the defeated party are still permitted to live in the country; their wives and children are spared; nay, more, they may grumble in the streets, and hang out their banners of defiance, of continued and determined opposition: and, more than all, the pillars of the republic are not shaken! Among a million of disappointed men, never, with all the infirmities of human passion, has one breathed resistance to the Constitution and laws. The world has never presented such a spectacle, such a proof of the capacity of the people for self-government. Long may it continue! May the tongue wither that dares preach resistance to the ballot-boxes; and may the moral influence of our example reach our distracted sister republics, staying the sword of persecution in the hands of victors, and crushing the spirit of revolution in a defeated party.

January 1, 1840.—This day, so full of home associations—snow, and red noses, and blue lips out of doors, and blazing fires, and beautiful faces within—opened in Guatemala like a morning in spring. The sun seemed rejoicing in the beauty of the land it shone upon. The flowers were blooming in the courtyards, and the mountains, visible above the tops of the houses, were smiling in verdure. The

* This was written in 1840.

bells of thirty-eight churches and convents proclaimed the coming of another year. The shops were shut as on a Sunday; there was no market in the plaza. Gentlemen well dressed, and ladies in black mantas, were crossing it to attend grand mass in the Cathedral. Mozart's music swelled through the aisles. A priest in a strange tongue proclaimed morality, religion, and love of country. The floor of the church was thronged with whites, Mestizoes, and Indians. On a high bench opposite the pulpit sat the chief of the state, and by his side Carrera, again dressed in his rich uniform. I leaned against a pillar opposite, and watched his face; and if I read him right, he had forgotten war and the stains of blood upon his hands, and his very soul was filled with fanatic enthusiasm; exactly as the priests would have him. I did verily believe that he was honest in his impulses, and would do right if he knew how. They who undertake to guide him have a fearful responsibility. The service ended, a way was cleared through the crowd. Carrera, accompanied by the priests and the chief of the state, awkward in his movements, with his eyes fixed on the ground, or with furtive glances, as if ill at ease in being an object of so much attention, walked down the aisle. A thousand ferocious-looking soldiers were drawn up before the door. A wild burst of music greeted him, and the faces of the men glowed with devotion to their chief. A broad banner was unfurled, with stripes of black and red, a device of a death's head and legs in the centre, and on one side the words "Viva la religion!" and on the other, "Paz o muerte a los Liberales!" Carrera placed himself at their head, and with Rivera Paz by his side, and the fearful banner floating in the air, and wild and thrilling music, and the stillness of death around, they escorted the chief of the state to his house. How different from New Year's Day at home!

Fanatic as I knew the people to be in religion, and violent in political animosities, I did not believe that such an outrage would be countenanced as flaunting in the plaza of the capital a banner linking together the support of religion and the death or submission of the Liberal party. Afterwards, in a conversation with the chief of the state, I referred to this banner. He had not noticed it, but thought that the last clause was "*Paz o muerte a los qui no lo quieron,*" "to those who do not wish it." This does not alter its atrocious character, and only adds to fanaticism what it takes from party spirit. I think, however, that I am right; for on the return of the soldiers to the plaza, Mr. C. and I followed it, till, as we thought, the standard-bearer contracted its folds expressly to hide it, and some of the officers looked at us so suspiciously that we withdrew.

CHAPTER XV.

HUNT FOR A GOVERNMENT—DIPLOMATIC DIFFICULTIES—DEPARTURE FROM GUATIMALA—LAKE OF AMATITAN—ATTACK OF FEVER AND AGUE—OVERO—ISTAPA—A FRENCH MERCHANT SHIP—PORT OF ACAJUJTLA—ILLNESS—ZONONATE—THE GOVERNMENT FOUND—VISIT TO THE VOLCANO OF IZALCO—COURSE OF THE ERUPTIONS—DESCENT FROM THE VOLCANO.

On Sunday, the fifth of January, I rose to set out in search of a government. Don Manuel Pavon, with his usual kindness, brought me a packet of letters of introduction to his friends in San Salvador. Mr. Catherwood intended to accompany me to the Pacific. We had not packed up, the muleteer had not made his appearance, and my passport had not been sent. Captain de Nouvelle waited till nine o'clock, and then went on in advance. In the midst of my confusion I received a visit from a distinguished ecclesiastic. The reverend prelate was surprised at my setting out on that day. I was about pleading my necessities as an excuse for travelling on the sabbath; but he relieved me by adding that there was to be a dinner-party, a bull-fight, and a play, and he wondered that I could resist such temptations. At eleven o'clock the muleteer came, with his mules, his wife, and a ragged little son; but owing to various delays we did not get off until the afternoon, and late as it was, diverged from the regular road for the purpose of passing by the Lake of Amatitan, but it was dark when we reached the top of the high range of mountains which bounds that beautiful water.

Looking down, it seemed like a gathering of fog in the bottom of a deep valley. The descent was by a rough zigzag path on the side of the mountain, very steep, and, in the extreme darkness, difficult and dangerous. We felt happy when we reached the bank of the lake, though still a little above it. The mountains rose round it like a wall, and east over it a gloom deeper than the shade of night. We rode for some distance with the lake on our left, and a high and perpendicular mountain-side on our right. A cold wind had succeeded the intense heat of the day, and when we reached Amatitan I was perfectly chilled. We found the captain in the house he had indicated. It was nine o'clock, and, not having touched anything since seven in the morning, we were prepared to do justice to the supper he had provided for us.

To avoid the steep descent to the lake with the cargo-mules, our muleteer had picked up a guide for us on the road, and gone on himself direct; but, to our surprise, he had not yet arrived. While at supper