

visit was at such a most unfortunate moment; spoke of Mr. De Witt, and the relations of that country with ours, and his regret that our treaty had not been renewed, and that it could not be done now; but these things were not in my mind. Feeling that he must have more important business, I remained but a short time, and returned to the house.

The moon had risen, and I was now extremely anxious to set out, but our plans were entirely deranged. The guide whom we had engaged to conduct us to the Rio Paz was missing, and no other could be found; in fact not a man could be induced, either by promises or threats, to leave the town that night from fear of falling in with the routed troops. Several of the officers took chocolate with us, and at the head of the table sat a priest with a sword by his side. I had breakfasted men who would have been happy to cut their throats, and they were now hiding among the mountains or riding for life. If Carrera came, my new friends would be scattered. They all withdrew early, to sleep under arms in the plaza, and we were left with the widow and her son. A distressing scene followed, of inquiries and forebodings by the widow for her younger son, which the elder could only get rid of by pleading excessive fatigue, and begging to be permitted to go to sleep. It was rather singular, but it had not occurred to us before to inquire about the dead and wounded in the skirmish. There were none of the latter; all who fell were lanced, and the dead were left on the ground. He was in the rear of the Morazan party; the fire was scattering; but on the line by which he entered the town he counted eighteen bodies.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VISIT FROM GENERAL MORAZAN—END OF HIS CAREER—PROCURING A GUIDE—DEPARTURE FOR GUATIMALA—FRIGHT OF THE PEOPLE—THE RIO PAZ—HACIENDA OF PAMITA—A FORTUNATE ESCAPE—HACIENDA OF SAN JOSÉ—AN AWKWARD PREDICAMENT—A KIND HOST—RANCHO OF HOCTILLA—ORATORIO AND LEON—RIO DE LOS ESCLAVOS—THE VILLAGE—APPROACH TO GUATIMALA—ARRIVAL AT GUATIMALA—A SKETCH OF THE WARS—DEFEAT OF MORAZAN—SCENE OF MASSACRE.

IN the morning, to our surprise, we found several shops open, and people in the street, who had been concealed somewhere in the neighbourhood, and returned as soon as they knew of Morazan's entry. The alcalde reappeared, and our guide was found, but he would not go with us, and told the alcalde that he might kill him on the spot; that he would rather die there than by the hands of the Cachurecos.

While I was taking chocolate, General Morazan called upon me. Our conversation was longer and more general. I did not ask him his plans or purposes, but neither he nor his officers exhibited despondency. Once reference was made to the occupation of Santa Anna by General Cascara, and with a spirit that reminded me of Claverhouse in "Old Mortality," he said, "We shall visit that gentleman soon." He spoke without malice or bitterness of the leaders of the Central party, and of Carrera as an ignorant and lawless Indian, from whom the party that was now using him would one day be glad to be protected. He referred, with a smile, to a charge current among the Cachurecos of an effort made by him to have Carrera assassinated, of which a great parade had been made; with details of time and place, and which was generally believed. He had supposed the whole story a fabrication; but accidentally, in retreating from Guatemala, he found himself in the very house where the attempt was said to have been made; and the man of the house told him that Carrera, having offered outrage to a member of his family, he himself had stabbed him, as was supposed mortally; and in order to account for his wounds, and turn away inquiries from the cause, it was fastened upon Morazan, and so flew all through the country. One of his officers accompanied the story with details of the outrage; and I felt very sure that, if Carrera ever fell into his hands, he would shoot him on the spot.

With the opinion that he entertained of Carrera and his soldiers, he of course considered it unsafe for us to go on to Guatemala. But I was exceedingly anxious to set out; and the flush of excitement over, as

the captain's trunks had gone on, he was equally so. Carrera might arrive at any moment, in which case we might again change owners, or, at all events, be the witnesses of a sanguinary battle, for Morazan would defend the frontier town of his own State to the death.

I told General Morazan my wish and purpose, and the difficulty of procuring a guide. He said that an escort of soldiers would expose us to certain danger; even a single soldier, without his musket and cartridge-box (these being the only distinguishing marks of a soldier), might be recognised; but he would send for the alcalde, and procure us some trusty person from the town. I bade him farewell with an interest greater than I had felt for any man in the country. Little did we then know the calamities that were still in store for him; that very night most of his soldiers deserted, having been kept together only by the danger to which they were exposed while in an enemy's country. With the rest he marched to Zonzonate, seized a vessel at the port, manning her with his own men, and sent her to Libertad, the port of San Salvador. He then marched to the capital, where the people, who had for years idolized him in power, turned their backs upon him in misfortune, and received him with open insults in the streets. With many of his officers, who were too deeply compromised to remain, he embarked for Chili. Suffering from confinement on board a small vessel, he stopped in Costa Rica, and asked permission for some of them to land. He did not ask it for himself, for he knew it would be refused. Leaving some of them behind, he went on to join his family in Chili. Amid the fierceness of party spirit it was impossible for a stranger to form a true estimate of the character of a public man. The great outcry against General Morazan was hostility to the church, and forced loans. For his hostility to the church there is the justification, that it is at this day a pall upon the spirit of free institutions, degrading and debasing instead of elevating the Christian character; and for forced loans constant wars may plead. His worst enemies admit that he was exemplary in his private relations, and, what they consider no small praise, that he was not sanguinary. He is now fallen and in exile, probably for ever, under sentence of death if he returns; all the truckling worshippers of a rising sun are blasting his name and memory; but I verily believe—and I know I shall bring down upon me the indignation of the whole Central party by the assertion—I verily believe they have driven from their shores the best man in Central America.*

The population of the town was devoted to General Morazan, and

* General Morazan returned about a year after these occurrences to Costa Rica, was captured, tied to a tree, and shot.—F. C.

an old man brought to us his son, a young man about twenty-two, as a guide; but when he learned that we wanted him to go with us all the way to Rio Paz, he left us, as he said, to procure a horse. We waited nearly an hour, when the old man reappeared with a little boy about ten years old, dressed in a straw hat and shirt, and mounted on a bare-backed horse. The young man had disappeared, and could not be found; in fact, he was afraid to go, and it was thought this little boy would run less risk. I was never much disturbed by general reports of robbers or assassins, but there was palpable danger in meeting any of the routed troops. Desperate by defeat, and assassin-like in disposition; not very amiable to us before; and now, from having seen us lounging about the town at that inauspicious moment, likely to connect us with the movements of Morazan, I believed that if we fell in with them we should be murdered. But, on the other hand, they had not let the grass grow under their feet; had probably been flying all night, in apprehension of pursuit; shunning the main road, had perhaps crossed the Rio Paz, and, once in Guatemala, had dispersed to their own villages; besides which, the rout had been so total that they were probably escaping three or four together, and would be as likely to run from us as we from them. At all events, it was better to go than wait till Carrera came upon the town.

With these calculations and really uncomfortable feelings, we bade farewell to some of the officers who were waiting to see us off, and at nine o'clock set out. Descending from the table-land on which the town is built, we entered an open plain, over which we could see to a great distance, and which would furnish, if necessary, a good field for the evolutions of our cavalry. We passed the Lake of Aguachapa, the beauty of which, under other circumstances, would have attracted our admiration; and as our little guide seemed at fault, we stopped at a hut to inquire the road. The people were afraid to answer any questions. Figoroa's soldiers and Morazan's had passed by, but they did not know it; they could not tell whether any fugitive soldiers had passed, and only knew the road to the Rio Paz. It was easy to see that they thought of nothing else; but they said they were poor people, and at work all the time, and did not know what was going on. In half an hour we met three Indians, with loads of pottery on their backs. The poor fellows pulled off their hats, and trembled when we inquired if there were any routed soldiers on before. It occurred to us that this inquiry would expose us to the suspicion of being officers of Morazan in pursuit, and that if we met any one, we had better ask no questions. Beyond this there were many roads, all of which, the

boy said, led to the Rio Paz; but he had never been there before, and did not know the right one. We followed one which took us into the woods, and soon commenced descending. The road was broken, stony, and very steep; we descended rapidly, and soon it was manifest no horses had passed on this road for a long time before. Trees lay across it so low that we dismounted, and were obliged to slip our high-peaked saddles to pass under them. It was evidently an old cattle-path, now disused even by cattle. We descended some distance farther, and I proposed to return. My only argument was, that it was safer; we knew we were wrong, and might get down so low that our physical strength would not carry us back. The captain said that I had chosen this path; if we had followed his advice, we should have been safe, and now that it was impossible to return. We had an angry quarrel, and, fortunately, in consideration of my having led into the difficulty, I gave way, and very soon we were cheered by hearing below us the rushing of the river. After a most difficult descent, we reached the bank; but here there was no fording-place, and no path on the opposite side.

The river itself was beautiful. The side which we had descended was a high and almost perpendicular mountain, and on both sides trees spread their branches over the water. It was called the River of Peace, but was now the dividing-line of deadly war, the boundary between Guatemala and San Salvador. The inhabitants of the opposite side were in an enemy's country, and the routed troops, both of Morazan and Figoroa, had fled to it for refuge. Riding some distance up the stream, we worked our way across, and on the opposite side found a guacal, or drinking-shell, which had probably been left there by some flying soldier. We drank from it, as if it had been intended for our use, and left it on the bank for the benefit of the next comer.

We were now in the State of Guatemala, on the banks of a wild river, without any visible path; and our situation was rather more precarious than before, for here the routed soldiers would consider themselves safe, and probably many, after a day and night of toil and fighting, would lie down to rest. We were fortunate in regard to a path; for, riding a short distance through the woods, along the bank of the river, we struck one which turned off to the left, and terminated in the camino real, leading from the regular fording-place. Here we dismissed our little guide, and set out on the main road. The face of the country was entirely changed, broken and stony, and we saw no one till we reached the hacienda of Palmita. This, too, seemed desolate. We entered the yard, and did not see a single person till we

pushed open the door of the house. The proprietor was an old gentleman, opposed to Morazan, who sat in the sala with his wife's saddle and his own, and two bundles of bed and bedding packed up on the floor, ready for a start. He seemed to feel that it was too late, and with an air of submission answered our questions, and then asked us how many men we had with us. It was amusing that, while half frightened to death ourselves, we carried terror wherever we went. We relieved him by inquiring about Don Saturnino and our luggage, remounted, and rode on. In an hour we reached the hacienda del Cacao, where Don Saturnino was to sleep. Owing to the position of the ground, we came suddenly upon the front of the house, and saw under the piazza three Cachureco soldiers, eating tortillas. They saw us at the same moment, snatched up their muskets, and ran; but suddenly one stopped, and levelled at us a blunderbuss. The barrel looked as big as a church door, and seemed to cover both the captain and me. We were in awful danger of being shot by mistake, when one of them rushed back, knocked up the blunderbuss, and, crying out, "Amigos, los Ingleses!" gave us a chance to reach them. This amiable and sensible young Cachureco vagabond was one of those who had paid us a visit to beg a breakfast and a medio. Probably there never was a sixpence put out at better interest. He had seen us intimate with Figoroa, and, taught by his betters to believe that General Morazan was a cut-throat and murderer, and not conceiving that we could be safe with him, considered us sharers of the same danger, and inquired how we had escaped. As it turned out, we were extremely happy to meet with these; another party might have received us very differently; and they relieved us in an important point, for they told us that most of the routed soldiers had fled on the Santa Anna road. Don Saturnino had passed the night at this hacienda, and set out very early in the morning. The soldiers returned to finish their meal, and, giving their thanks in payment, set out again with us. They had a good horse which they had stolen on the road, and which they said paid them very well for the expedition, and rode by turns bare-backed. Passing El Cacao, their appearance created a sensation, for they brought the first intelligence of the rout of Figoroa. This was ominous news, for all had considered Morazan completely crushed by his defeat at Guatemala. In his retreat, he had avoided the villages, and they did not know that he had escaped with so strong a force. We endeavoured to procure a guide, but not a man could be induced to leave the village, and we rode on. In a short time it began to rain: the road was very stony, and we crossed a high, bleak volcanic mountain. Late in the afternoon, the captain con-

ceived suspicions of the soldiers, and we rode on very unceremoniously, leaving them behind. About five o'clock, we avoided the road that led to a village, and taking el Camino de los Partidos, which was very rough and stony, soon came to a place where there were branches, and we were at a loss which to take; but the course lay through a broad valley, bounded by two ranges of mountains. We felt sure that our road did not cross either of these ranges, and these were our only guides. A little before dark, we passed beyond the range of mountains, and on our right saw a road leading into the woods, and presently heard the sound of a bell, and saw through the trees a hacienda, to arrive at which we had to go on some distance, and then turn back by a private road. It was situated in a large clearing, with cocina and sheds, and a large sugar-mill. Twenty or thirty workmen, principally Indians, were assembled to give an account of their day's work, and receive orders for the next. Our appearance created a sensation. The proprietors of the hacienda, two brothers, stood in the door while we were talking with the men, and we rode up and asked permission to stop there for the night. The elder assented, but with an embarrassment that showed the state of alarm and suspicion existing in the country. The gentlemen wore the common hacienda dress, and the interior was miserably poor, but had a hammock, and two rude frames with matting over them for beds. There was a small room adjoining, in which was the wife of one of them with a child. The proprietors were men of education and intelligence, thoroughly acquainted with the condition of the country; and we told them what had happened at Aguachapa, and that we were hurrying on to Guatemala. We had supper at a small table, placed between the hammock and one of the beds, consisting of fried eggs, frígoles, and tortillas, as usual without knife, fork, or spoon.

After supper our elder host was called out, but in a few minutes returned, and, closing the door, told us that there was a great excitement among the workmen on our account. They did not believe our story of going to Guatemala, for a woman had seen us come in from the Guatemala road, and they believed that we were officers of Morazan retreating from the attack on Guatemala, and endeavouring to escape into San Salvador. Here was a ground of suspicion we had not anticipated. The gentleman was much agitated; he regretted that he was obliged to violate the laws of hospitality, but said we knew the distracted state of the country, and the frenzy of party spirit. He himself was against Morazan, his men were violent Cachurecos, and at this moment capable of committing any outrage. He had incurred great peril by receiving us for a moment under his roof, and begged

us, both for our own sake and his, to leave his house; adding that, even if we were of those unfortunate men, our horses should be brought up and we should go away unharmed; more he could not promise. Now if we had really been the fugitives he supposed us, we should no doubt have been very thankful for his kindness; but to be turned out by mistake in a dark night, an unknown country, and without any guide, was almost as bad as coming at us with a blunderbuss. Fortunately, he was not a suspicious man; if he had been another Don Gregorio we should have "walked Spanish;" and, more fortunately still, my pertinacity had secured Figoroa's passport; it was the only thing that could have cleared our character. I showed it to him, pointing to the extra flourish which the secretary had made of plenipotentiario, and I believe he was not more astonished at finding who had honoured him by taking possession of his house, than pleased that we were not Morazan's officers. Though an intelligent man, he had passed a retired life on his hacienda. He had heard of such a thing as "a ministro plenipotentiario," but had never seen one. My accoutrements and the eagle on my hat sustained the character, and he called in the major-domo and two leading men on the hacienda, read to them the passport, and explained to them the character of a ministro plenipotentiario, while I sat upon the bed with my coat off and hat on to show the eagle, and the captain suppressed all partialities for Morazan, and talked of my intimacy with Carrera. The people are so suspicious that, having once formed an idea, they do not willingly abandon it, and it was uncertain whether all this would satisfy them; but our host was warm in his efforts, the major-domo was flattered by being made the medium of communicating with the men, and his influence was at stake in satisfying them. It was one of Talleyrand's maxims, never to do to-day what you can put off till to-morrow. On this occasion at least of my diplomatic career I felt the benefit of the old opposite rule. From the moment I saw Figoroa I had an eye only to getting his passport, and did not rest until I had it in my pocket. If we had waited to receive this with his letters, we should now have been in a bad position. If we escaped immediate violence, we should have been taken to the village, shut up in the cabildo, and exposed to all the dangers of an ignorant populace, at that moment excited by learning the success of Morazan and the defeat of Figoroa. In setting out, our idea was that, if taken by the Cachurecos, we should be carried up to Guatemala; but we found that there was no accountability to Guatemala; the people were in a state to act entirely from impulses, and nothing could induce any party of men to set out for Guatemala, or under any circumstances to go farther than from village to village.