

CHAPTER XXV.

RECEPTION AT THE GOVERNMENT HOUSE—THE CAPTAIN IN TROUBLE—A CHANGE OF CHARACTER—ARRANGEMENTS FOR JOURNEY TO PALENQUE—ARREST OF THE CAPTAIN—HIS RELEASE—DANGERS IN PROSPECT—FEARFUL STATE OF THE COUNTRY—LAST INTERVIEW WITH CARRERA—DEPARTURE FROM GUATIMALA—A DON QUIXOTE—CIUDAD VIEJA—PLAIN OF EL VIEJA—VOLCANOES, PLAINS, AND VILLAGES—SAN ANDRES ISAPA—DANGEROUS ROAD—A MOLINO—JOURNEY CONTINUED—BARRANCAS—TECPAN GUATIMALA—A NOBLE CHURCH—A SACRED STONE—THE ANCIENT CITY—DESCRIPTION OF THE RUINS—A MOLINO—ANOTHER EARTHQUAKE—PATZUM—A RAVINE—FORTIFICATIONS—LOS ALTOS—GODINES—LOSING A GOOD FRIEND—MAGNIFICENT SCENERY—SAN ANTONIO—LAKE OF ATITLAN.

THE next day I called upon the chief of the state. At this time there was no question of presenting credentials, and I was received by him and all gentlemen connected with him without any distrust or suspicion, and more as one identified with them in feelings and interests than as a foreign agent. I had seen more of their country than any one present, and spoke of its extraordinary beauty and fertility, its volcanoes and mountains, the great canal which might make it known to all the civilized world, and its immense resources, if they would let the sword rest and be at peace among themselves. Some of the remarks in these pages will perhaps be considered harsh, and a poor return for the kindness shown to me. My predilections were in favour of the Liberal party, as well because they sustained the Federation as because they gave me a chance for a government; but I have a warm feeling toward many of the leading members of the Central party. If I speak harshly, it is of their public and political character only; and if I have given offence, I regret it.

As I was leaving the Government House a gentleman followed me, and asked me who that captain was that had accompanied me, adding, what surprised me not a little, that the government had advices of his travelling up with me from La Union, his intention to join Morazan's expedition, and his change of purpose in consequence of meeting Morazan defeated on the road; that as yet he was not molested only because he was staying at my house. I was disturbed by this communication. I was open to the imputation of taking advantage of my official character to harbour a partisan. I was the only friend the captain had, and of course determined to stand by him; but he was not only an object of suspicion, but actually known; for much less cause men were imprisoned and shot; in case of any outbreak, my house would not be a protection; it was best to avoid any excitement, and to have an understanding at once. With this view I returned to the chief of the state, and mentioned the circumstances under which

we had travelled together, with the addition that, as to myself, I would have taken a much more questionable companion rather than travel alone; and as to the captain, if he had happened to be thrown ashore on their coast, he would very likely have taken a campaign on their side; that he was not on his way to join the expedition when we met Morazan, and assured him most earnestly that now he understood better the other side of the question, and I would answer for his keeping quiet. Don Rivera Paz, as I felt well assured, was desirous to allay rather than create excitement in the city, received my communication in the best spirit possible, and said the captain had better present himself to the government. I returned to my house, and found the captain alone, already by no means pleased with the turn of his fortunes. My communication did not relieve him, but he accompanied me to the Government House. I could hardly persuade myself that he was the same man whose dashing appearance on the road had often made the women whisper "muy valiente," and whose answer to all intimations of danger was, that a man can only die once. To be sure, the soldiers in the corridor seemed to intimate that they had found him out; the gentlemen in the room surveyed him from head to foot, as if taking notes for an advertisement of his person, and their looks appeared to say they would know him when they met him again. On horseback and with a fair field, the captain would have defied the whole noblesse of Guatemala; but he was completely cowed, spoke only when he was spoken to, and walked out with less effrontery than I supposed possible.

And now I would fain let the reader sit down and enjoy himself quietly in Guatemala, but I cannot. The place did not admit of it. I could not conceal from myself that the Federal Government was broken up; there was not the least prospect of its ever being restored, nor, for a long time to come, of any other being organized in its stead. Under these circumstances I did not consider myself justified in remaining any longer in the country. I was perfectly useless for all the purposes of my mission, and made a formal return to the authorities of Washington, in effect, "after diligent search, no government found."

I was once more my own master, at liberty to go where I pleased, at my own expense, and immediately we commenced making arrangements for our journey to Palenque. We had no time to lose; it was 1,000 miles distant, and the rainy season was approaching, during which part of the road was impassable. There was no one in the city who had ever made the journey. The archbishop, on his exit from Guatemala eight years before, had fled by that road, and since his time

it had not been travelled by any resident of Guatemala; but we learned enough to satisfy us that it would be less difficult to reach Palenque from New York than from where we were. We had many preparations to make, and, from the impossibility of getting servants upon whom we could rely, were obliged to attend to all the details ourselves. The captain was uncertain what to do with himself, and talked of going with us. The next afternoon, as we were returning to the house, we noticed a line of soldiers at the corner of the street. As usual, we gave them the sidewalk, and in crossing I remarked to the captain that they eyed us sharply and spoke to each other. The line extended past my door and up to the corner of the next street. Supposing that they were searching for General Guzman or other officers of General Morazan who were thought to be secreted in the city, and that they would not spare my house, I determined to make no difficulty, and let them search. We went in, and the porter, with great agitation, told us that the soldiers were in pursuit of the captain. He hardly finished when an officer entered to summon the captain before the corregidor. The captain turned as pale as death. I do not mean it as an imputation upon his courage; any other man would have done the same. I was as much alarmed as he, and told him that if he said so I would fasten the doors; but he answered it was of no use; they would break them down; and it was better for him to go with the officers. I followed him to the door, telling him not to make any confessions, not to commit himself, and that I would be with him in a few minutes. I saw at once that the affair was out of the hands of the chief of the state, and had got before an inferior tribunal. Mr. Catherwood and Mr. Savage entered in time to see the captain moving down the street with his escort. Mr. S., who had charge of my house during my absence, and had hoisted the American flag during the attack upon the city, had lived so long in that country, and had beheld so many scenes of horror, that he was not easily disturbed, and knew exactly what to do. He accompanied me to the cabildo, where we found the captain sitting bolt upright within the railing, and the corregidor and his clerk, with pen, ink, and paper, and ominous formality, examining him. His face brightened at sight of the only man in Guatemala who took the least interest in his fate. Fortunately, the corregidor was an acquaintance, who had been pleased with the interest I took in the sword of Alvarado, an interesting relic in his custody, and was one of the many whom I found in that country proud of showing attentions to a foreign agent. I claimed the captain as my travelling companion, said that we had had a rough journey together, and I did not like to lose sight of him. He welcomed me back to Guatemala, and appreciated the peril I must

have encountered in meeting on the road the tyrant Morazan. The captain took advantage of the opportunity to detach himself, without any compunctions, from such dangerous fellowship, and we conversed till it was too dark to write, when I suggested that, as it was dangerous to be out at night, I wished to take the captain home with me, and would be responsible for his forthcoming. He assented with great courtesy, and told the captain to return at nine o'clock the next morning. The captain was immensely relieved; but he had already made up his mind that he had come to Guatemala on a trading expedition, and to make great use of his gold chains.

The next day the examination was resumed. The captain certainly did not commit himself by any confessions; indeed, the revolution in his sentiments was most extraordinary. The Guatemala air was fatal to partialities for Morazan. The examination, by favour of the corregidor, was satisfactory; but the captain was advised to leave the city. In case of any excitement he would be in danger. Carrera was expected from Quezaltenango in a few days, and if he took it up, which he was not unlikely to do, it might be a bad business. The captain did not need any urging. A council was held to determine which way he should go, and the road to the port was the only one open. On a bright morning he pulled off his frockcoat, put on his travelling dress, mounted, and set off for Balize. I watched him as he rode down the street till he was out of sight. Poor captain, where is he now? The next time I saw him was at my own house in New York. He was taken sick at Balize, and got on board a brig bound for Boston, was there at the time of my arrival, and came on to see me; and the last that I saw of him, afraid to return across the country to get the account sales of his ship, he was about to embark for the Isthmus of Panama, cross over, and go up the Pacific. I was knocked about myself in that country, but I think the captain will not soon forget his campaign with Morazan.

In my race from Nicaragua I had cheered myself with the idea that, on reaching Guatemala, all difficulty was over, and that our journey to Palenque would be attended only by the hardships of travelling in a country destitute of accommodations; but, unfortunately, the horizon in that direction was lowering. The whole mass of the Indian population of Los Altos was in a state of excitement, and there were whispers of a general rising and massacre of the whites. General Prem, to whom I have before referred, and his wife, while travelling toward Mexico, had been attacked by a band of assassins; he himself was left on the ground for dead, and his wife murdered, her fingers cut off, and the rings torn from them. Lieutenant Nichols, the aide-de-camp of

Colonel M'Donald, arrived from the Balize with a report that Captain Caddy and Mr. Walker, who had set out for Palenque by the Balize River, had been speared by the Indians; and there was a rumour of some dreadful atrocity committed by Carrera in Quezaltenango, and that he was hurrying back from that place infuriate, with the intention of bringing all the prisoners out into the plaza and shooting them. Every friend in Guatemala, and Mr. Chatfield particularly, urged us not to undertake the journey. We felt that it was a most inauspicious moment, and almost shrunk; I have no hesitation in saying that it was a matter of most serious consideration whether we should not abandon it altogether and return by the way we came; but we had set out with the purpose of going to Palenque, and could not return without seeing it.

Among the petty difficulties of fitting ourselves out I may mention that we wanted four iron chains for trunks, but could only get two, for every blacksmith in the place was making chains for the prisoners. In a week from the time of my arrival everything was ready for our departure. We provided ourselves with all the facilities and safeguards that could be procured. Besides passports, the government furnished us special letters of recommendation to all the corregidores; a flattering notice appeared in the government paper, *El Tiempo*, mentioning my travels through the provinces and my intended route, and recommending me to hospitality; and, upon the strength of the letter of the Archbishop of Baltimore, the venerable Provisor gave me a letter of recommendation to all the curas under his charge. But these were not enough; Carrera's name was worth more than them all, and we waited two days for his return from Quezaltenango. On the 6th of April, early in the morning, he entered the city. At about nine o'clock I called at his house, and was informed that he was in bed, had ridden all night, and would not rise till the afternoon.

I have mentioned that there were rumours in the city of some horrible outrage committed by Carrera at Quezaltenango. He had set out from Guatemala in pursuit of Morazan. Near the Antigua he met one of his own soldiers from Quezaltenango, who reported that there had been a rising in that town, and the garrison were compelled to lay down their arms. Enraged at this intelligence, he abandoned his pursuit of Morazan, and, without even advising the government of his change of plan, marched to Quezaltenango, and among other minor outrages seized eighteen of the municipality, the first men of the state, and without the slightest form of trial shot them in the plaza; and, to heighten the gloom which this news cast over the city, a rumour preceded him that, immediately on his arrival, he intended to order out

all the prisoners and shoot them also. At this time the repressed excitement in the city was fearful. An immense relief was experienced on the repulse of Morazan, but there had been no rejoicing; and again the sword seemed suspended by a single hair.

And here I would remark, as at a place where it has no immediate connexion with what precedes or what follows, and consequently, where no application of it can be made, that some matters of deep personal interest, which illustrate, more than volumes, the dreadful state of the country, I am obliged to withhold altogether, lest, perchance, these pages should find their way to Guatemala and compromise individuals. In my long journey I had had intercourse with men of all parties, and was spoken to freely, and sometimes confidentially. Heretofore, in all the wars and revolutions the whites had the controlling influence, but at this time the Indians were the dominant power. Roused from the sloth of ages, and with muskets in their hands, their gentleness was changed into ferocity; and even among the adherents of the Carrera party there was a fearful apprehension of a war of castes, and a strong desire, on the part of those who could get away, to leave the country. I was consulted by men having houses and large landed estates, but who could only command 2,000 or 3,000 dollars in money, as to their ability to live on that sum in the United States; and individuals holding high offices under the Central party told me that they had their passports from Mexico, and were ready at any moment to fly. There seemed ground for the apprehension that the hour of retributive justice was nigh, and that a spirit was awakened among the Indians to make a bloody offering to the spirits of their fathers, and recover their inheritance. Carrera was the pivot on which this turned. He was talked of as *El Rey de los Indios*, The King of the Indians. He had relieved them from all taxes, and, as they said, supported his army by levying contributions upon the whites. His power by a word to cause the massacre of every white inhabitant, no one doubted. Their security was, as I conceived, that, in the constant action of his short career, he had not had time to form any plans for extended dominion, and knew nothing of the immense country from Texas to Cape Horn, occupied by a race sympathising in hostility to the whites. He was a fanatic, and, to a certain extent, under the dominion of the priests; and his own acuteness told him that he was more powerful with the Indians themselves while supported by the priests and the aristocracy than at the head of the Indians only; but all knew that, in the moment of passion, he forgot entirely the little of plan or policy that ever governed him; and when he returned from Quezaltenango, his hands red with blood, and preceded by the fearful rumour that he intended to bring out 200 or 300 prisoners and shoot

them, the citizens of Guatemala felt that they stood on the brink of a fearful gulf. A leading member of the government, whom I wished to call with me upon him and ask him for his passport, declined doing so, lest, as he said, Carrera should think the government was trying to lead him. Others paid him formal visits of ceremony and congratulation upon his return, and compared notes with each other as to the manner in which they were received. Carrera made no report, official or verbal, of what he had done; and though all were full of it, no one of them dared ask him any questions, or refer to it. They will perhaps pronounce me a calumniator, but even at the hazard of wounding their feelings, I cannot withhold what I believe to be a true picture of the state of the country as it was at that time.

Unable to induce any of the persons I wished, to call with me upon Carrera; afraid, after such a long interval and such exciting scenes as he had been engaged in, that he might not recognise me; and feeling that it was all important not to fail in my application to him, I remembered that in my first interview he had spoken warmly of a doctor who had extracted a ball from his side. This doctor I did not know, but I called upon him, and asked him to accompany me, to which, with great civility, he immediately assented.

It was under these circumstances that I made my last visit to Carrera. He had removed into a much larger house, and his guard was more regular and formal. When I entered, he was standing behind a table on one side of the room, with his wife, and Rivera Paz, and one or two others, examining some large Costa Rica chains; and at the moment he had one in his hands, which had formed part of the contents of those trunks of my friend the captain, and which had often adorned his neck. I think it would have given the captain a spasm if he had known that anything once around his neck was between Carrera's fingers. His wife was a pretty, delicate-looking Mestitzo, not more than twenty, and seemed to have a woman's fondness for chains and gold. Carrera himself looked at them with indifference. My idea at the time was, that these jewels were sent in by the government as a present to his wife, and, through her, to propitiate him; but perhaps I was wrong. The face of Rivera Paz seemed anxious. Carrera had passed through so many terrible scenes since I saw him, that I feared he had forgotten me; but he recognised me in a moment, and made room for me behind the table next to himself. His military coat lay on the table, and he wore the same roundabout jacket,—his face had the same youthfulness, quickness, and intelligence, his voice and manners the same gentleness and seriousness,—and he had again been wounded. I regretted to meet Rivera Paz there; for I thought it

must be mortifying to him, as the head of the government, to see that his passport was not considered a protection without Carrera's indorsement: but I could not stand upon ceremony, and took advantage of Carrera's leaving the table to say to him that I was setting out on a dangerous road, and considered it indispensable to fortify myself with all the security I could get. When Carrera returned, I told him my purpose,—that I had waited only for his return,—showed him the passport of the government, and asked him to put his stamp upon it. Carrera had no delicacy in the matter; and taking the passport out of my hand, threw it on the table, saying he would make me out a new one, and sign it himself. This was more than I expected; but in a quiet way, telling me to "be seated," he sent his wife into another room for the secretary, and told him to make out a passport for the "Consul of the North." He had an indefinite idea that I was a great man in my own country, but he had a very indefinite idea as to where that country was. I was not particular about my title, so that it was big enough; but the North was rather a broad range, and, to prevent mistakes, I gave the secretary my other passport. He took it into another room, and Carrera sat down at the table beside me. He had heard of my having met Morazan on his retreat, and inquired about him, though less anxiously than others; but he spoke more to the purpose,—said that he was making preparations, and in a week he intended to march upon San Salvador with 3,000 men,—adding that if he had had cannon he would have driven Morazan from the plaza very soon. I asked him whether it was true that he and Morazan met personally on the heights of Calvary; and he said that they did—that it was towards the last of the battle, when the latter was retreating. One of Morazan's dismounted troopers tore off his holsters; Morazan fired a pistol at him, and he struck at Morazan with his sword, and cut his saddle. Morazan, he said, had very handsome pistols; and it struck me that he thought if he had killed Morazan, he would have got the pistols. I could not but think of the strange positions into which I was thrown—shaking hands and sitting side by side with men who were thirsting for each other's blood, well received by all, hearing what they said of each other, and in many cases their plans and purposes, as unreservedly as if I was a travelling member of both cabinets. In a few minutes the secretary called him, and he went out and brought back the passport himself, signed with his own hand, the ink still wet. It had taken him longer than it would have done to cut off a head, and he seemed more proud of it. Indeed, it was the only occasion in which I saw him in the slightest elevation of feeling. I made a comment upon the excellence of the

handwriting; and with his good wishes for my safe arrival in the North, and speedy return to Guatemala, I took my leave. Now, I do not believe, if he knew what I say of him, that he would give me a very cordial welcome; but I believe him honest, and if he knew how, and could curb his passions, he would do more good for Central America than any other man in it.

I was now fortified with the best security we could have for our journey. We passed the evening in writing letters and packing up things to be sent home (among which was my diplomatic coat), and on the 7th of April we rose to set out. The first movement was to take down our beds. Every man in that country has a small cot called a *catre*, made to double with a hinge, which may be taken down and wrapped up, with pillows and bedclothes, in an oxhide, to carry on a journey. Our great object was to travel lightly. Every additional mule and servant gave additional trouble, but we could not do with less than a cargo-mule apiece. Each of us had two *petacas*, trunks made of oxhide lined with thin straw matting, having a top like that of a box, secured by a clumsy iron chain with large padlocks, containing, besides other things, a hammock, blanket, one pair of sheets, and pillow, which, with *alforgas* of provisions, made one load apiece. We carried one *catre*, in case of sickness. We had one spare cargo-mule; the grey mule with which I had ascended the volcano of Cartago and my *macho* for Mr. Catherwood and myself, and a horse for relief, in all six animals; and two *mozos*, or men of all work, untried. While in the act of mounting, Don Saturnino Tinoca, my companion from Zonzonate, rode into the yard, to accompany us two days on our journey. We bade farewell to Mr. Savage, my first, last, and best friend, and in a few minutes, with a mingled feeling of regret and satisfaction, left for the last time the barrier of Guatemala.

Don Saturnino was most welcome to our party. His purpose was to visit two brothers of his wife, *curas*, whom he had never seen, and who lived at Santiago Atitan, two or three days' journey distant. His father was the last governor of Nicaragua under the royal rule, with a large estate, which was confiscated at the time of the revolution; he still had a large hacienda there, had brought up a stock of mules to sell at San Salvador, and intended to lay out the proceeds in goods in Guatemala. He was about forty, tall, and as thin as a man could be to have activity and vigour, wore a roundabout jacket and trousers of dark olive cloth, large pistols in his holsters, and a long sword with a leather scabbard, worn at the point, leaving about an inch of the steel naked. He sat his mule as stiff as if he had swallowed his own sword, holding the reins in his right hand, with his left arm crooked from the

elbow, standing out like a pump-handle, the hand dropping from the wrist, and shaking with the movement of the mule. He rode on a Mexican saddle plated with silver, and carried behind a pair of *alforgas* with bread and cheese, and *atole*, a composition of pounded parched corn, cocoa, and sugar, which, mixed with water, was almost his living. His *mozo* was as fat as he was lean, and wore a bell-crowned straw hat, cotton shirt, and drawers reaching down to his knees. Excepting that instead of Rosinante and the ass, the master rode a mule and the servant went afoot, they were a genuine Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, the former of which appellations, very early in our acquaintance, we gave to Don Saturnino.

We set out for Quezaltenango, but intended to turn aside and visit ruins, and that day we went three leagues out of our road to say farewell to our friend Padre Alcantara at Ciudad Vieja.

At five o'clock in the afternoon we reached the convent, where I had the pleasure of meeting again Padre Alcantara, Señor Vidaurre, and Don Pepé, the same party with whom I had passed the day with so much satisfaction before. Mr. Catherwood had in the meantime passed a month at the convent. Padre Alcantara had fled at the approach of the *tyrant* Morazan; Don Pepé had had a shot at him as he was retreating from the Antigua, and the padre had a musket left at night by a flying soldier against the wall of the convent.

The morning opened with troubles. The grey mule was sick. Don Saturnino bled her on both sides of her neck, but the poor animal was not in a condition to be ridden. Shortly afterwards Mr. Catherwood had one of the *mozos* by the throat, but Padre Alcantara patched up a peace. Don Saturnino said that the grey mule would be better for exercise, and for the last time we bade farewell to our kind host.

Don Pepé escorted us, and crossing the plain of El Vieja in the direction in which Alvarado entered it, we ascended a high hill, and turning the summit, through a narrow opening looked down upon a beautiful plain, cultivated like a garden, which opened to the left as we advanced, and ran off to the lake of Duenos, between the two great volcanoes of Fire and Water. Descending to the plain, we entered the village of San Antonio, occupied entirely by Indians. The cura's house stood on an open plaza, with a fine fountain in front, and the huts of the Indians were built with stalks of sugarcane. Early in the occupation of Guatemala, the lands around the capital were partitioned out among certain canonigos, and Indians were allotted to cultivate them. Each village was called by the canonigo's own name. A church was built, and a fine house for himself, and by judicious management the Indians became settled and the artisans for the capital. In the still-