

mountains. There is no gradation of depth from its shores, and the bottom has not been found with a line of 300 fathoms. It receives several rivers, and all the waters that descend from the mountains, but there is no known channel by which this great body is carried off. The only fish caught in it are crabs, and a species of small fish about the size of the little finger. These are in such countless myriads that the inhabitants of the surrounding ten villages carry on a considerable fishing for them."

At that hour of the day, as we understood to be the case always at that season of the year, heavy clouds were hanging over the mountains and volcanoes, and the lake was violently agitated by a strong south-west wind; as our guide said, "la laguna es muy brava." Santiago Atitlan was nearly opposite, at a distance of seven or eight leagues, and in following the irregular and mountainous border of the lake, from the point where Don Saturnino left us, we doubted whether he could reach it that night. It was much farther off than we supposed, and with the lake in such a state of agitation, and subject, as our guide told us, at all times to violent gusts of wind, we had but little inclination to cross it in a canoe. It would have been magnificent to see there a tropical storm, to hear the thunder roll among the mountains, and see the lightnings flash down into the lake. We sat on the shore till the sun disappeared behind the mountains at the head of the lake. Mingled with our contemplations of it were thoughts of other and far distant scenes, and at dark we returned to the convent.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

LAKE OF ATITLAN—CONJECTURES AS TO ITS ORIGIN, ETC.—A SAIL ON THE LAKE—A DANGEROUS SITUATION—A LOFTY MOUNTAIN RANGE—ASCENT OF THE MOUNTAINS—COMMANDING VIEW—BEAUTIFUL PLAIN—AN ELEVATED VILLAGE—RIDE ALONG THE LAKE—SOLOLA—VISIT TO SANTA CRUZ DEL QUICHÉ—SCENERY ON THE ROAD—BARRANCAS—SAN THOMAS—WHIPPING POSTS—PLAIN OF QUICHÉ—THE VILLAGE—RUINS OF QUICHÉ—ITS HISTORY—DESOLATE SCENE—A FACETIOUS CURA—DESCRIPTION OF THE RUINS—PLAN—THE ROYAL PALACE—THE PLACE OF SACRIFICE—AN IMAGE—TWO HEADS, ETC.—DESTRUCTION OF THE PALACE RECENT—AN ARCH.

EARLY in the morning we again went down to the lake. Not a vapour was on the water, and the top of every volcano was clear of clouds. We looked over to Santiago Atitlan, but there was no indication of a canoe coming for us. We whiled away the time in shooting wild ducks, but could only get two ashore, which we afterward found of excellent flavour. According to the account given by Juarros, the water of this lake is so cold that in a few minutes it benumbs and swells the limbs of all who bathe in it. But it looked so inviting that we determined to risk it, and were not benumbed, nor were our limbs swollen. The inhabitants, we were told, bathed in it constantly; and Mr. C. remained a long time in the water, supported by his life-preserver, and without taking any exercise, and was not conscious of extreme coldness. In the utter ignorance that exists in regard to the geography and geology of that country, it may be that the account of its fathomless depth, and the absence of any visible outlet, is as unfounded as that of the coldness of its waters.

While we were dressing, Juan, one of our mozos, found a canoe along the shore. It was an oblong "dug-out," awkward and rickety, and intended for only one person; but the lake was so smooth that a plank seemed sufficient. We got in, and Juan pushed off, and paddled out. As we moved away the mountainous borders of the lake rose grandly before us; and I had just called Mr. C.'s attention to a cascade opening upon us from the great height of perhaps 3,000 or 4,000 feet, when we were struck by a flaw, which turned the canoe, and drove us out into the lake. The canoe was overloaded, and Juan was an unskilful paddler. For several minutes he pulled, with every sinew stretched, but could barely keep her head straight. Mr. C. was in the stern, I on my knees in the bottom of the canoe. The loss of a stroke, or a tottering movement in changing places might swamp her; and if we let her go she would be driven out into the lake, and cast ashore, if



at all, twenty or thirty miles distant, whence we should have to scramble back over mountains; and there was a worse danger than this, for in the afternoon the wind always came from the other side, and might drive us back again into the middle of the lake. We saw the people on the shore looking at us, and growing smaller every moment, but they could not help us. In all our difficulties we had none that came upon us so suddenly and unexpectedly, or that seemed more threatening. It was hardly ten minutes since we were standing quietly on the beach, and if the wind had continued five minutes longer, I do not know what would have become of us; but, most fortunately, it lulled. Juan's strength revived; with a great effort he brought us under cover of the high headland beyond which the wind first struck us, and in a few minutes we reached the shore.

We had had enough of the lake; time was precious, and we determined to set out after dinner and ride four leagues to Solola. We took another mozo, whom the padre recommended as a bobon, or great fool. The first two were at swords' points, and with such a trio there was not much danger of combination. In loading the mules they fell to quarrelling, Bobon taking his share. Ever since we left, Don Saturnino had superintended this operation, and without him everything went wrong. One mule slipped part of its load in the courtyard, and we made but a sorry party for the long journey we had before us. From the village our road lay toward the lake, to the point of the opposite mountain, which shut in the plain of Panajachel. Here we began to ascend. For a while the path commanded a view of the village and plain; but by degrees we diverged from it, and after an hour's ascent came out upon the lake, rode a short distance upon the brink, with another immense mountain range before us, and breaking over the top the cataract which I had seen from the canoe. Very soon we commenced ascending; the path ran zig-zag, commanding alternately a view of the plain and of the lake. The ascent was terrible for loaded mules, being in some places steps cut in the stone like a regular staircase. Every time we came upon the lake there was a different view. At 4 o'clock, looking back over the high ranges of mountains we had crossed, we saw the great volcanoes of Agua and Fuego. Six volcanoes were in sight at once, four of them above 10,000, and two nearly 15,000 feet high. Looking down upon the lake we saw a canoe, so small as to present a mere speck on the water, and, as we supposed, it was sent for us by our friend Don Saturnino. Four days afterwards, after diverging and returning to the main road, I found a letter from him, directed to "El Ministro de Nueva York," stating that he found the road so terrible that night overtook him, and he was

obliged to stop three leagues short of Atitlan. On arriving at that place he learned that *the* canoe was on his side of the lake, but the boatmen would not cross till the afternoon wind sprang up. The letter was written after the return of the canoe, and sent by courier two days' journey, begging us to return, and offering as a bribe a noble mule, which, in our bantering on the road, he affirmed was better than my macho. Twice the mule-track led us almost within the fall of cataracts, and the last time we came upon the lake we looked down upon a plain even more beautiful than that of Panajachel. Directly under us, at an immense distance below, but itself elevated 1,500 or 2,000 feet, was a village, with its church conspicuous, and it seemed as if we could throw a stone down upon its roof. From the moment this lake first opened upon us until we left it, our ride along it presented a greater combination of beauties than any locality I ever saw. The last ascent occupied an hour and three-quarters. As old travellers, we would have avoided it if there had been any other road; but, once over, we would not have missed it for the world. Very soon we saw Solola. In the suburbs drunken Indians stood in a line, and took off their old petates (straw hats) with both hands. It was Sunday, and the bells of the church were ringing for vespers, rockets were firing, and a procession, headed by violins, was parading round the plaza the figure of a saint on horseback, dressed like a harlequin. Opposite the cabildo the alcalde, with a crowd of Mestizoes, was fighting cocks.

It was our purpose at this place to send our luggage on by the main road to Totonicapan, one day's journey beyond, while we struck off at an angle and visited the ruins of Santa Cruz del Quiché. The Indians of that place, even in the most quiet times, bore a very bad name, and we were afraid of hearing such an account of them as would make it impossible to go there. Carrera had left a garrison of soldiers in Solola, and we called upon the commandant, a gentlemanly man, suspected of disaffection to Carrera's government, and therefore particularly desirous to pay respect to his passport, who told me that there had been less excitement at that place than in some of the other villages, and promised to send the luggage on under safe escort to the corregidor of Totonicapan, and give us a letter to his commissionado in Santa Cruz del Quiché.

On our return we learned that a lady had sent for us. Her house was on the corner of the plaza. She was a chapetone from Old Spain, which country she had left with her husband thirty years before, on account of wars. At the time of Carrera's last invasion her son was alcalde-mayor, and fled. If he had been taken he would have been shot. The wife of her son was with her. They had not heard from



him, but he had fled toward Mexico, and they supposed him to be in the frontier town, and wished us to carry letters to him, and to inform him of their condition. Their house had been plundered, and they were in great distress. It was another of the instances we were constantly meeting of the effects of civil war. They insisted on our remaining at the house all night, which, besides that they were interesting, we were not loth to do on our own account. The place was several thousand feet higher than where we slept the night before, and the temperature cold and wintry by comparison. Hammocks, our only beds, were not used at all. There were not even supporters in the cabildo to hang them on. The next morning the mules were all drawn up by the cold, their coats were rough, and my poor horse was so chilled that he could hardly move. In coming in he had attracted attention, and the alcalde wanted to buy him. In the morning he told me that, being used to a hot climate, the horse could not bear the journey across the Cordilleras, which was confirmed by several disinterested persons to whom he appealed. I almost suspected him of having done the horse some injury, so as to make me leave him behind. However, by moving him in the sun his limbs relaxed, and we sent him off with the men and luggage, and the promised escort, to Totonicapan, recommended to the corregidor.

At a quarter before nine we left Solola, and at twelve o'clock met some Indians, who told us that Santo Thomas was three leagues distant, and five minutes afterwards we saw the town apparently not more than a mile off; but we were arrested by another immense ravine. The descent was by a winding zigzag path, part of the way with high walls on either side, so steep that we were obliged to dismount and walk all the way, hurried on by our own impetus and the mules crowding upon us from behind. At the foot of the ravine was a beautiful stream, at which, choked with dust and perspiration, we stopped to drink. We mounted to ford the stream, and almost immediately dismounted again to ascend the opposite side of the ravine. This was even more difficult than the descent, and when we reached the top it seemed a good three leagues. We passed on the right another awful barranca, broken off from the table-land, and riding close along its edge, looked down into an abyss of 2,000 or 3,000 feet, and very soon reached Santo Thomas. A crowd of Indians was gathered in the plaza, well dressed in brown cloth, and with long black hair, without hats. The entire population was Indian. There was not a single white man in the place, no one who could speak Spanish, except an old Mestizo, who was the secretary of the alcalde. We rode up to the cabildo, and tied our mules before the prison door.

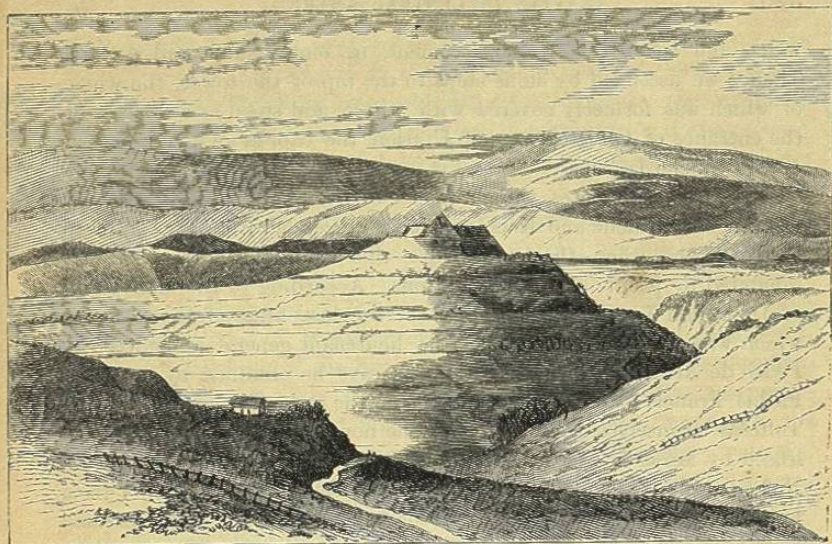
Groups of villanous faces were fixed in the bars of the windows. We called for the alcalde, presented Carrera's passport, and demanded sacate, eggs, and frigoles, for ourselves, and a guide to Quiché. While these were got, the alcalde, and as many alguazils as could find a place, seated themselves silently on a bench occupied by us. In front was a new whipping-post. There was not a word spoken; but a man was brought up before it, his feet and wrists tied together, and he was drawn up by a rope which passed through a groove at the top of the post. His back was naked, and an alguazil stood on his left with a heavy cowhide whip. Every stroke made a blue streak, rising into a ridge, from which the blood started and trickled down his back. The poor fellow screamed in agony. After him a boy was stretched up in the same way. At the first lash, with a dreadful scream, he jerked his feet out of the ropes, and seemed to fly up to the top of the post. He was brought back and secured, and whipped till the alcalde was satisfied. This was one of the reforms instituted by the Central government of Guatemala. The Liberal party had abolished this remnant of barbarity; but within the last month, at the wish of the Indians themselves, and in pursuance of the general plan to restore old usages and customs, new whipping posts had been erected in all the villages. Not one of the brutal beings around seemed to have the least feeling for the victims. Among the amateurs were several criminals, whom we had noticed walking in chains about the plaza, and among them a man and woman in rags, bareheaded, with long hair streaming over their eyes, chained together by the hand and foot, with strong bars between them to keep them out of each other's reach. They were husband and wife, who had shocked the moral sense of the community by not living together. The punishment seemed the very refinement of cruelty, but while it lasted it was an effectual way of preventing a repetition of the offence.

At half-past three, with an alguazil running before us and Bobon trotting behind, we set out again, and crossed a gently-rolling plain, with a distant side-hill on the left, handsomely wooded, and reminding us of scenes at home, except that on the left was another immense barranca, with large trees, whose tops were 2,000 feet below us. Leaving a village on the right, we passed a small lake, crossed a ravine, and rose to the plain of Quiché. At a distance on the left were the ruins of the old city, the once large and opulent capital of Utatlan, the court of the native kings of Quiché, and the most sumptuous discovered by the Spaniards in this part of America. It was a site worthy to be the abode of a race of kings. We passed between two small lakes, rode into the village, passed on, as usual, to the convent, which

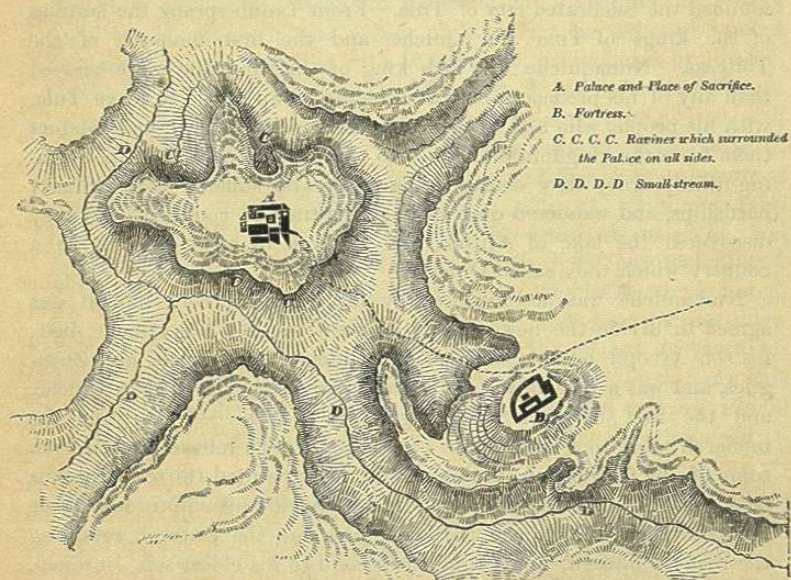


stood beside the church, and stopped at the foot of a high flight of stone steps. An old Indian on the platform told us to walk in, and we spurred our mules up the steps, rode through the corridor into a large apartment, and sent the mules down another flight of steps into a yard enclosed by a high stone fence. The convent was the first erected in the country by the Dominican friars, and dated from the time of Alvarado. It was built entirely of stone, with massive walls, and corridors, pavements, and courtyard strong enough for a fortress; but most of the apartments were desolate or filled with rubbish; one was used for sacate, another for corn, and another fitted up as a roosting-place for fowls. The padre had gone to another village, his own apartments were locked, and we were shown into one adjoining, about thirty feet square, and nearly as high, with stone floor and walls, and without a single article in it except a shattered and weather-beaten soldier in one corner, returning from campaigns in Mexico. As we had brought with us nothing but our ponchas, and the nights in that region were very cold, we were unwilling to risk sleeping on the stone floor, and with the padre's Indian servant went to the alcalde, who, on the strength of Carrera's passport, gave us the audience-room of the cabildo, which had at one end a raised platform with a railing, a table, and two long benches with high backs. Adjoining was the prison, being merely an enclosure of four high stone walls, without any roof, and filled with more than the usual number of criminals, some of whom, as we looked through the gratings, we saw lying on the ground with only a few rags of covering, shivering in the cold. The alcalde provided us with supper, and promised to procure us a guide to the ruins.

Early in the morning, with a Mestizo armed with a long basket-hilted sword, who advised us to carry our weapons, as the people were not to be trusted, we set out for the ruins. At a short distance we passed another immense barranca, down which, but a few nights before, an Indian, chased by alguazils, either fell or threw himself off into the abyss, 1,500 feet deep, and was dashed to pieces. At about a mile from the village we came to a range of elevations, extending to a great distance, and connected by a ditch, which had evidently formed the line of fortifications of the ruined city. They consisted of the remains of stone buildings, probably towers, the stones well cut and laid together, and the mass of rubbish around abounded in flint arrow-heads. Within this line was an elevation, which grew more imposing as we approached, square, with terraces, and having in the centre a tower, in all 120 feet high. We ascended by steps to three ranges of terrace, and on the top entered an area enclosed by stone



Distant view of the Ruins.



- A. Palace and Place of Sacrifice.
- B. Fortress.
- C. C. C. C. Ravines which surrounded the Palace on all sides.
- D. D. D. D. Small stream.

F. Catherwood

38. SANTA CRUZ DEL QUICHÉ.



walls, and covered with hard cement, in many places still perfect. Thence we ascended by stone steps to the top of the tower, the whole of which was formerly covered with stucco, and stood as a fortress at the entrance of the great city of Utatlan, the capital of the kingdom of the Quiché Indians.

According to Fuentes, the chronicler of the kingdom of Guatemala, the kings of Quiché and Kachiquel were descended from the Toltecans Indians, who, when they came into this country, found it already inhabited by people of different nations. According to the manuscript of Don Juan Torres, the grandson of the last king of the Quichés, which was in the possession of the lieutenant-general appointed by Pedro de Alvarado, and which Fuentes says he obtained by means of Father Francis Vasques, the historian of the order of San Francis, the Toltecas themselves descended from the house of Israel, who were released by Moses from the tyranny of Pharaoh, and after crossing the Red Sea, fell into idolatry. To avoid the reproofs of Moses, or from fear of his inflicting upon them some chastisement, they separated from him and his brethren, and under the guidance of Tanub, their chief, passed from one continent to the other, to a place which they called the seven caverns, a part of the kingdom of Mexico, where they founded the celebrated city of Tula. From Tanub sprang the families of the kings of Tula and Quiché, and the first monarch of the Toltecas. Nimaquiché, the fifth king of that line, and more beloved than any of his predecessors, was directed by an oracle to leave Tula, with his people, who had by this time multiplied greatly, and conduct them from the kingdom of Mexico to that of Guatemala. In performing this journey they consumed many years, suffered extraordinary hardships, and wandered over an immense tract of country, until they discovered the lake of Atitlan, and resolved to settle near it in a country which they called Quiché.

Nimaquiché was accompanied by his three brothers, and it was agreed to divide the new country between them. Nimaquiché died; his son Axcopil became chief of the Quichés, Kachiquels, and Zutugiles, and was at the head of his nation when they settled in Quiché, and the first monarch who reigned in Utatlan. Under him the monarchy rose to a high degree of splendour. To relieve himself from some of the fatigues of administration, he appointed thirteen captains or governors, and at a very advanced age divided his empire into three kingdoms, viz. the Quiché, the Kachiquel, and the Zutugil, retaining the first for himself, and giving the second to his eldest son, Jintemal, and the third to his youngest son, Aexigual. This division was made on a day when three suns were visible at the same time, which extra-

ordinary circumstance, says the manuscript, has induced some persons to believe that it was made on the day of our Saviour's birth. There were seventeen Toltécan kings who reigned in Utatlan, the capital of Quiché, whose names have come down to posterity, but they are so hard to write out that I will take it for granted the reader is familiar with them.

Their history, like that of man in other parts of the world, is one of war and bloodshed. Before the death of Axcopil his sons were at war, which, however, was settled by his mediation, and for two reigns peace existed. In the reign of Balam Acan, the next king of Quiché, while living on terms of great intimacy and friendship with his cousin Zutugilebpop, king of the Zutugiles, the latter abused his generosity, and ran away with his daughter Ixconsocil; and at the same time Iloacab, his relative and favourite, ran away with Eeselixpua, the niece of the king. The rape of Helen did not produce more wars and bloodshed than the carrying off of these two young ladies with unpronounceable names. Balam Acan was naturally a mild man, but the abduction of his daughter was an affront not to be pardoned. With 80,000 veterans, himself in the centre squadron, adorned with three diadems and other regal ornaments, carried in a rich chair of state, splendidly ornamented with gold, emeralds, and other precious stones, upon the shoulders of the nobles of his court, he marched against Zutugilebpop, who met him with 60,000 men, commanded by Iloacab, his chief general and accomplice. The most bloody battle ever fought in the country took place; the field was so deeply inundated with blood that not a blade of grass could be seen. Victory long remained undecided, and at length Iloacab was killed, and Balam Acan remained master of the field. But the campaign did not terminate here. Balam Acan, with 30,000 veterans under his personal command, and two other bodies of 30,000 each, again met Zutugilebpop with 40,000 of his own warriors, and 40,000 auxiliaries. The latter was defeated, and escaped at night. Balam Acan pursued and overtook him; but while his bearers were hastening with him to the thickest of the fight, they lost their footing, and precipitated him to the earth. At this moment Zutugilebpop was advancing with a chosen body of 10,000 lancers. Balam Acan was slain, and 14,000 Indians were left dead on the field.

The war was prosecuted by the successor of Balam, and Zutugilebpop sustained such severe reverses that he fell into a despondency and died. The war was continued down to the time of Kicah Tanub, who, after a sanguinary struggle, reduced the Zutugiles and Kachiquels to subjection to the kings of Quiché. At this time the kingdom of the