

Quichés had attained its greatest splendour, and this was contemporaneous with that eventful era in American history, the reign of Montezuma and the invasion of the Spaniards. The kings of Mexico and Quiché acknowledged the ties of relationship, and in a manuscript of sixteen quarto leaves, preserved by the Indians of San Andres Xecul, it is related that when Montezuma was made prisoner, he sent a private ambassador to Kicah Tanub, to inform him that some white men had arrived in his state, and made war upon him with such impetuosity that the whole strength of his people was unable to resist them; that he was himself a prisoner, surrounded by guards; and hearing it was the intention of his invaders to pass on to the kingdom of Quiché, he sent notice of the design, in order that Kicah Tanub might be prepared to oppose them. On receiving this intelligence, the king of Quiché sent for four young diviners, whom he ordered to tell him what would be the result of this invasion. They requested time to give their answers; and, taking their bows, discharged some arrows against a rock; but, seeing that no impression was made upon it, returned very sorrowfully, and told the king there was no way of avoiding the disaster; the white men would certainly conquer them. Kicah, dissatisfied, sent for the priests, desiring to have their opinions on this important subject; and they, from the ominous circumstance of a certain stone, brought by their forefathers from Egypt, having suddenly split into two, predicted the inevitable ruin of the kingdom. At this time he received intelligence of the arrival of the Spaniards on the borders of Soconusco to invade his territory; but, undismayed by the auguries of diviners or priests, he prepared for war. Messages were sent by him to the conquered kings and chiefs under his command, urging them to co-operate for the common defence; but, glad of an opportunity to rebel, Sinacam, the king of Guatemala, declared openly that he was a friend to the Teules, or Gods, as the Spaniards were called by the Indians; and the king of the Zutugiles answered haughtily that he was able to defend his kingdom alone against a more numerous and less famished army than that which was approaching Quiché. Irritation, wounded pride, anxiety, and fatigue, brought on a sickness which carried Tanub off in a few days.

His son Tecum Umam succeeded to his honours and troubles. In a short time intelligence was received that the captain (Alvarado) and his Teules had marched to besiege Xelahun (now Quezaltenango), next to the capital the largest city of Quiché. At that time it had within its walls 80,000 men; but such was the fame of the Spaniards that Tecum Umam determined to go to its assistance. He left the capital, at the threshold of which we stood, borne in his litter on the shoulders

of the principal men of his kingdom, and preceded by the music of flutes, cornets, and drums, and 70,000 men, commanded by his general Ahzob, his lieutenant Ahzumanche, the grand shield-bearer Ahpocob, other officers of dignity with still harder names, and numerous attendants bearing parasols and fans of feathers for the comfort of the royal person. An immense number of Indian carriers followed with baggage and provisions. At the populous city of Totonicapan the army was increased to 90,000 fighting men. At Quezaltenango he was joined by ten more chiefs, well armed and supplied with provisions, displaying all the gorgeous insignia of their rank, and attended by 24,000 soldiers. At the same place he was reinforced by 46,000 more, adorned with plumes of different colours, and with arms of every description, the chiefs decorated with the skins of lions, tigers, and bears, as distinguishing marks of their bravery and warlike prowess. Tecum Umam marshalled under his banners on the plain of Tzaccapa 230,000 warriors, and fortified his camp with a wall of loose stones, enclosing within its circuit several mountains. In the camp were several military machines, formed of beams on rollers, to be moved from place to place. After a series of desperate and bloody battles, the Spaniards routed this immense army, and entered the city of Xelahun. The fugitives rallied outside, and made a last effort to surround and crush the Spaniards. Tecum Umam commanded in person, singled out Alvarado, attacked him three times hand to hand, and wounded his horse; but the last time Alvarado pierced him with a lance, and killed him on the spot. The fury of the Indians increased to madness; in immense masses they rushed upon the Spaniards; and, seizing the tails of the horses, endeavoured by main force to bring horse and rider to the ground; but, at a critical moment, the Spaniards attacked in close column, broke the solid masses of the Quichés, routed the whole army, and slaying an immense number, became completely masters of the field. But few of the 70,000 who marched out from the capital with Tecum Umam ever returned; and, hopeless of being able to resist any longer by force, they had recourse to treachery. At a council of war called at Utatlan by the king, Chinanivalut, son and successor of Tecum Umam, it was determined to send an embassy to Alvarado, with a valuable present of gold, suing for pardon, promising submission, and inviting the Spaniards to the capital. In a few days Alvarado, with his army, in high spirits at the prospect of a termination of this bloody war, encamped upon the plain.

This was the first appearance of strangers at Utatlan, the capital of the great Indian kingdom, the ruins of which were now under our

eyes, once the most populous and opulent city, not only of Quiché, but of the whole kingdom of Guatemala. According to Fuentes, who visited it for the purpose of collecting information, and who gathered his facts partly from the remains and partly from manuscripts, it was surrounded by a deep ravine that formed a natural fossé, leaving only two very narrow roads as entrances, both of which were so well defended by the castle of Resguardo, as to render it impregnable. The centre of the city was occupied by the royal palace, which was surrounded by the houses of the nobility; the extremities were inhabited by the plebeians; and some idea may be formed of its vast population from the fact, before mentioned, that the king drew from it no less than 72,000 fighting men to oppose the Spaniards. It contained many very sumptuous edifices, the most superb of which was a seminary, where between 5,000 and 6,000 children were educated at the charge of the royal treasury. The castle of the Atalaya was a remarkable structure, four stories high, and capable of furnishing quarters for a very strong garrison. The castle of Resguardo was five stories high, extending 180 paces in front, and 230 in depth. The grand alcazar, or palace of the kings of Quiché, surpassed every other edifice; and in the opinion of Torquemada, it could compete in opulence with that of Montezuma in Mexico, or that of the Incas in Cuzco. The front extended 376 geometrical paces from east to west, and it was 728 paces in depth. It was constructed of hewn stones of various colours. There were six principal divisions. The first contained lodgings for a numerous troop of lancers, archers, and other troops, constituting the royal body-guard. The second was assigned to the princes and relations of the king; the third to the monarch himself, containing distinct suites of apartments for the mornings, evenings, and nights. In one of the saloons stood the throne, under four canopies of feathers; and in this portion of the palace were the treasury, tribunals of the judges, armory, aviaries, and menageries. The fourth and fifth divisions were occupied by the queen and royal concubines, with gardens, baths, and places for breeding geese, which were kept to supply feathers for ornaments. The sixth and last division was the residence of the daughters and other females of the blood royal.

Such is the account as derived by the Spanish historians from manuscripts composed by some of the caciques who first acquired the art of writing; and it is related that from Tanub, who conducted them from the old to the new continent, down to Tecum Umam, was a line of twenty monarchs.

Alvarado, on the invitation of the king, entered this city with his

army; but, observing the strength of the place; that it was well walled, and surrounded by a deep ravine, having but two approaches to it, the one by an ascent of twenty-five steps, and the other by a causeway, and both extremely narrow; that the streets were but of trifling breadth, and the houses very lofty; that there were neither women nor children to be seen, and that the Indians seemed agitated, the soldiers began to suspect some deceit. Their apprehensions were soon confirmed by Indian allies of Quezaltenango, who discovered that the people intended that night to fire their capital, and while the flames were rising, to burst upon the Spaniards with large bodies of men concealed in the neighbourhood, and put every one to death. These tidings were found to be in accordance with the movements of the Uatlangs; and on examining the houses, the Spaniards discovered that there were no preparations of provisions to regale them, as had been promised, but everywhere was a quantity of light, dry fuel, and other combustibles. Alvarado called his officers together, and laid before them their perilous situation, and the immediate necessity of withdrawing from the place; and pretending to the king and his caciques that their horses were better in the open fields, the troops were collected, and without any appearance of alarm, marched in good order to the plain. The king, with pretended courtesy, accompanied them, and Alvarado, taking advantage of the opportunity, made him prisoner, and after trial and proof of his treachery, hung him on the spot. But neither the death of Tecum nor the ignominious execution of his son could quell the fierce spirit of the Quichés. A new ebullition of animosity and rage broke forth. A general attack was made upon the Spaniards; but Spanish bravery and discipline increased with danger; and after a dreadful havoc by the artillery and horses, the Indians abandoned a field covered with their dead, and Uatlan, the capital, with the whole kingdom of Quiché, fell into the hands of Alvarado and the Spaniards.

As we stood on the ruined fortress of Resguardo, the great plain, consecrated by the last struggle of a brave people, lay before us grand and beautiful, its bloodstains all washed out, and smiling with fertility, but perfectly desolate. Our guide leaning on his sword in the area beneath was the only person in sight. But very soon Bobon introduced a stranger, who came stumbling along under a red silk umbrella, talking to Bobon, and looking up at us. We recognised him as the cura, and descended to meet him. He laughed to see us grope our way down; by degrees his laugh became infectious, and when we met we all laughed together. All at once he stopped, looked very solemn, pulled off his neckcloth, and wiped the perspiration from his face,

took out a paper of cigars, laughed, thrust them back, pulled out another, as he said, of Habaneras, and asked what was the news from Spain.

Our friend's dress was as unclerical as his manner, viz. a broad-brimmed black glazed hat, an old black coat reaching to his heels, glossy from long use, and pantaloons to match; a striped roundabout, a waistcoat, flannel shirt, and under it a cotton one, perhaps washed when he shaved last, some weeks before. He laughed at our coming to see the ruins, and said that he laughed prodigiously himself when he first saw them. He was from Old Spain; had seen the battle of Trafalgar, looking on from the heights on shore, and laughed whenever he thought of it; the French fleet was blown sky high, and the Spanish went with it; Lord Nelson was killed—all for glory—he could not help laughing. He had left Spain to get rid of wars and revolutions: here we all laughed; sailed with twenty Dominican friars; was fired upon, and chased into Jamaica by a French cruiser: here we laughed again; got an English convoy to Omoa, where he arrived at the breaking out of a revolution; had been all his life in the midst of revolutions, and it was now better than ever. Here we all laughed incontinently. His own laugh was so rich and catching that it was perfectly irresistible. In fact, we were not disposed to resist, and in half an hour we were as intimate as if acquainted for years. The world was our butt, and we laughed at it outrageously. Except the Church, there were few things which the cura did not laugh at; but politics was his favourite subject. He was in favour of Morazan, or Carrera, or el Demonio: "vamos adelante," "go ahead," was his motto; he laugh at them all. If we had parted with him then, we should always have remembered him as the laughing padre; but, on farther acquaintance, we found in him such a vein of strong sense and knowledge, and, retired as he lived, he was so intimately acquainted with the country and all the public men, as a mere looker on his views were so correct and his satire so keen, yet without malice, that we improved his title by calling him the laughing philosopher.

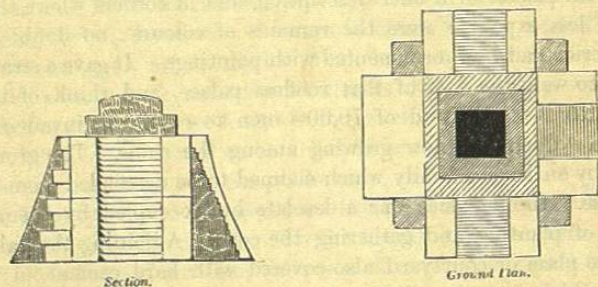
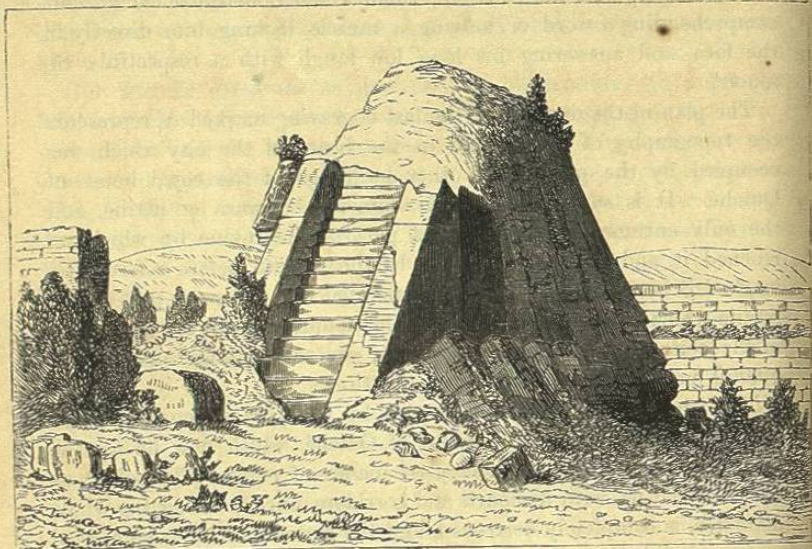
Having finished our observations at this place, stopping to laugh at some new greatness or folly of the world, past, present, or to come, occurred to us, we descended by a narrow path, crossed a ravine, and entered upon the table-land, on which stood the palace and principal part of the city. Mr. Catherwood and I began examining and measuring the ruins, and the padre followed us, talking and laughing all the time; and when we were on some high place, out of his reach, he seated Bobon at the foot, discoursing to him of Alvarado, and Montezuma, and the daughter of the king of Teopan Guatemala, and books

and manuscripts in the convent; to all which Bobon listened without comprehending a word or moving a muscle, looking him directly in the face, and answering his long low laugh with a respectful "Si, señor."

The plan in the division of the last engraving marked A, represents the topography of the ground in the heart of the city which was occupied by the palace and other buildings of the royal house of Quiché. It is surrounded by an immense barranca or ravine, and the only entrance is through that part of the ravine by which we reached it, and which is defended by the fortress before referred to, marked B in the plate. The cura pointed out to us one part of the ravine which, he said, according to old manuscripts formerly existing in the convent, but now carried away, was artificial, and upon which 40,000 men had been employed at one time.

The whole area was once occupied by the palace, seminary, and other buildings of the royal house of Quiché, which now lie for the most part in confused and shapeless masses of ruins. The palace, as the cura told us, with its courts and corridors, once covering the whole diameter, is completely destroyed, and the materials have been carried away to build the present village. In part, however, the floor remains entire, with fragments of the partition walls, so that the plan of the apartments can be distinctly made out. This floor is of a hard cement, which, though year after year washed by the floods of the rainy season, is hard and durable as stone. The inner walls were covered with plaster of a finer description, and in corners where there had been less exposure were the remains of colours; no doubt the whole interior had been ornamented with paintings. It gave a strange sensation to walk the floor of that roofless palace, and think of that king who left it at the head of 70,000 men to repel the invaders of his empire. Corn was now growing among the ruins. The ground was used by an Indian family which claimed to be descended from the royal house. In one place was a desolate hut, occupied by them at the time of planting and gathering the corn. Adjoining the palace was a large plaza or courtyard, also covered with hard cement, in the centre of which were the relics of a fountain.

The most important part remaining of these ruins is that which appears in the engraving, No. 39, and which is called El Sacrificatorio, or the place of sacrifice. It is a quadrangular stone structure, 66 feet on each side at the base, and rising in a pyramidal form to the height, in its present condition, of 33 feet. On three sides there is a range of steps in the middle, each step 17 inches high, and but 8 inches on the upper surface, which makes the range so steep that in descending some



F. Catherwood.

30. VIEW OF THE PLACE OF SACRIFICE IN RUINS AT SANTA CRUZ DEL QUICHÉ

caution is necessary. At the corners are four buttresses of cut stone, diminishing in size from the line of the square, and apparently intended to support the structure. On the side facing the west there are no steps, but the surface is smooth and covered with stucco, grey from long exposure. By breaking a little at the corners we saw that there were different layers of stucco, doubtless put on at different times, and all had been ornamented with painted figures. In one place we made out part of the body of a leopard, well drawn and coloured.

The top of the Sacrificatorio is broken and ruined, but there is no doubt that it once supported an altar for those sacrifices of human victims which struck even the Spaniards with horror. It was barely large enough for the altar and officiating priests, and the idol to whom the sacrifice was offered. The whole was in full view of the people at the foot.

The barbarous ministers carried up the victim entirely naked, pointed out the idol to which the sacrifice was made, that the people might pay their adorations, and then extended him upon the altar. This had a convex surface, and the body of the victim lay arched, with the trunk elevated and the head and feet depressed. Four priests held the legs and arms, and another kept his head firm with a wooden instrument made in the form of a coiled serpent, so that he was prevented from making the least movement. The head priest then approached, and with a knife made of flint cut an aperture in the breast, and tore out the heart, which, yet palpitating, he offered to the sun, and then threw it at the feet of the idol. If the idol was gigantic and hollow, it was usual to introduce the heart of the victim into its mouth with a golden spoon. If the victim was a prisoner of war, as soon as he was sacrificed they cut off the head to preserve the skull, and threw the body down the steps, when it was taken up by the officer or soldier to whom the prisoner had belonged, and carried to his house to be dressed and served up as an entertainment for his friends. If he was not a prisoner of war, but a slave purchased for the sacrifice, the proprietor carried off the body for the same purpose. In recurring to the barbarous scenes of which the spot had been the theatre, it seemed a righteous award that the bloody altar was hurled down, and the race of its ministers destroyed.

It was fortunate for us, in the excited state of the country, that it was not necessary to devote much time to an examination of these ruins. In 1834 a thorough exploration had been made under a commission from the government of Guatemala. Don Miguel Rivera y Maestre, a gentleman distinguished for his scientific and antiquarian

ground. The Indians of Quiché have at all times a bad name; at Guatemala it was always spoken of as an unsafe place to visit; and the padre told us that they looked with distrust upon any stranger coming to the ruins. At that moment they were in a state of universal excitement; and coming close to us, he said that in the village they stood at swords' points with the Mestizoes, ready to cut their throats, and with all his exertions he could barely keep down a general rising and massacre. Even this information he gave us with a laugh. We asked him if he had no fears for himself. He said no; that he was beloved by the Indians; he had passed the great part of his life among them; and as yet the padres were safe: the Indians considered them almost as saints. Here he laughed. Carrera was on their side; but if he turned against them it would be time to fly. This was communicated and received with peals of laughter; and the more serious the subject, the louder was our cachinnation. And all the time the padre made continual reference to books and manuscripts, showing antiquarian studies and profound knowledge.

Under one of the buildings was an opening which the Indians called a cave, and by which they said one could reach Mexico in an hour. I crawled under, and found a pointed-arch roof formed by stones lapping over each other, but was prevented exploring it by want of light, and the padre's crying to me that it was the season of earthquakes; and he laughed more than usual at the hurry with which I came out; but all at once he stopped, and grasping his pantaloons, hopped about, crying, "A snake, a snake!" The guide and Bobon hurried to his relief; and by a simple process, but with great respect, one at work on each side, were in a fair way of securing the intruder; but the padre could not stand still, and with his agitation and restlessness tore loose from their hold, and brought to light a large grasshopper. While Bobon and the guide, without a smile, restored him, and put each button in its place, we finished with a laugh, outrageous to the memory of the departed inhabitants, and to all sentiment connected with the ruins of a great city.

As we returned to the village the padre pointed out on the plain the direction of four roads, which led, and which, according to him, are still open to Mexico, Tecpan Guatemala, Los Altos, and Vera Paz.

CHAPTER XXVII.

INTERIOR OF A CONVENT—ROYAL BIRD OF QUICHÉ—INDIAN LANGUAGES—THE LORD'S PRAYER IN THE QUICHÉ LANGUAGE—NUMERALS IN THE SAME—CHURCH OF QUICHÉ—INDIAN SUPERSTITIONS—ANOTHER LOST CITY—TIERRA DE GUERRA—THE ABORIGINES—THEIR CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY—THEY WERE NEVER CONQUERED—A LIVING CITY—INDIAN TRADITION RESPECTING THIS CITY—PROBABLY HAS NEVER BEEN VISITED BY THE WHITES—PRESENTS A NOBLE FIELD FOR FUTURE ENTERPRISE—DEPARTURE—SAN PEDRO—VIRTUE OF A PASSPORT—A DIFFICULT ASCENT—MOUNTAIN SCENERY—TOTONICAPAN—AN EXCELLENT DINNER—A COUNTRY OF ALOES—"RIVER OF BLOOD"—ARRIVAL AT QUEZALTENANGO.

It was late in the afternoon when we returned to the convent. The good padre regretted not being at home when we arrived, and said that he always locked his room to prevent the women throwing things into confusion. When we entered it was in what he called order, but this order was of a class that beggars description. The room contained a table, chairs, and two settees, but there was not a vacant place even on the table to sit down or to lay a hat upon. Every spot was encumbered with articles, of which four bottles, a cruet of mustard and another of oil, bones, cups, plates, sauce-boat, a large lump of sugar, a paper of salt, minerals and large stones, shells, pieces of pottery, skulls, bones, cheese, books, and manuscripts formed part. On a shelf over his bed were two stuffed *quezales*, the royal bird of Quiché, the most beautiful that flies, so proud of its tail that it builds its nest with two openings, to pass in and out without turning, and whose plumes were not permitted to be used except by the royal family.

Amid this confusion a corner was cleared on the table for dinner. The conversation continued in the same unbroken stream of knowledge, research, sagacity, and satire on his part. Political matters were spoken of in whispers when any servants were in the rooms. A laugh was the comment upon everything, and in the evening we were deep in the mysteries of Indian history.

Besides the Mexican or Aztec language, spoken by the Pipil Indians along the coast of the Pacific, there are twenty-four dialects peculiar to Guatemala. Though sometimes bearing such a strong resemblance in some of their idioms, that the Indians of one tribe can understand each other, in general the padres, after years of residence, can only speak the language of the tribe among which they live. This diversity of languages had seemed to me an insuperable impediment in the way of any thorough investigation and study of Indian history and traditions; but the cura, profound in everything that related to the Indians,