ground. The Indians of Quiché have at all times a bad name; at Guatimala 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 Mestitzoes, 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 Guatimala, 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 Guatimala. 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,

told us that the Quiché was the parent tongue, and that, by one familiar with it, the others are easily acquired. If this be true, a new and most interesting field of research is opened. During my whole journey, even at Guatimala, I had not been able to procure any grammar of an Indian language, nor any manuscripts. I made several vocabularies, which I have not thought it worth while to publish; but the padre had a book prepared by some of the early fathers for the church service, which he promised to have copied for me and sent to a friend at Guatimala, and from which I copied the Lord's prayer in the Quiché language. It is as follows:—

"Cacahan chicah lae coni Vtzah. Vcahaxtizaxie mayih Bila Chipa ta pa Cani ahauremla Chibantah. Ahuamla Uaxale Chiyala Chiqueeh hauta Vleus quehexi Caban Chicah. Uacamic Chiyala. Chiqueeh hauta. Eihil Caua. Zachala Camac quehexi Cacazachbep qui. Mac Xemocum Chiqueeh: moho Estachcula maxa Copahic Chupamtah Chibal mac xanare Cohcolta la ha Vonohel itgel quehe Chucoe. Amen."

I will add the following numerals, as taken from the same book:—

Hun, *one.*	Uaelahuh, *sixteen.*
Quieb, *two.*	Velahuh, *seventeen.*
Dxib, *three.*	Uapxaelahuh, *eighteen.*
Quieheb, *four.*	Belehalahuh, *nineteen.*
Hoob, *five.*	Huuinac, *twenty.*
Uacacguil, *six.*	Huuinac*hun, twenty-one.*
Veuib, *seven.*	Huuinachlahuh, *thirty.*
Uahxalquib, *eight.*	Cauinae, *forty.*
Beleheb, *nine.*	Lahuh Raxcal, *fifty.*
Lahuh, *ten,*	Oxcal, *sixty.*
Hulahuh, *eleven.*	Lahuh Vhumuch, *seventy.*
Cablahuh, *twelve.*	Humuch, *eighty.*
Dxlahuh, *thirteen.*	Lahuh Rocal, *ninety.*
Cahlahuh, *fourteen.*	Ocal, *a hundred.*
Hoolahuh, *fifteen.*	Otuc Rox Ocob, *a thousand.*

Whether there is any analogy between this language and that of any of the North American tribes, I am not able to say.

For a man who has not reached that period when a few years tell upon his teeth and hair, I know of no place where (if the country becomes quiet) they might be passed with greater interest than at Santa Cruz del Quiché, in studying, by means of their language, the character and traditionary history of the Indians; for here they still exist, in many respects, an unchanged people, cherishing the usages

and customs of their ancestors; and though the grandeur and magnificence of the churches, the pomp and show of religious ceremonies, affect their rude imaginations, the padre told us that in their hearts they were full of superstitions, and still idolaters; had their idols in the mountains and ravines, and in silence and secrecy practised the rites received from their fathers. He was compelled to wink at them; and there was one proof which he saw every day. The church of Quiché stands east and west. On entering it for vespers the Indians always bowed to the west, in reverence to the setting sun. He told us, too, what requires confirmation, and what we were very curious to judge of for ourselves, that in a cave near a neighbouring village were skulls much larger than the natural size, and regarded with superstitious reverence by the Indians. He had seen them, and vouched for their gigantic dimensions. Once he placed a piece of money in the mouth of the cave, and a year afterwards found the money still lying in the same place, while, he said, if it had been left on his table, it would have disappeared with the first Indian who entered.

The padre's whole manner was now changed; his keen satire and his laugh were gone. There was interest enough about the Indians to occupy the mind and excite the imagination of one who laughed at everything else in the world; and his enthusiasm, like his laugh, was infectious. Notwithstanding our haste to reach Palenque, we felt a strong desire to track them in the solitude of their mountains and deep ravines, and watch them in the observance of their idolatrous rites; but the padre did not give us any encouragement. In fact, he opposed our remaining another day, even to visit the cave of skulls. He made no apology for hurrying us away. He lived in unbroken solitude, in a monotonous routine of occupations, and the visit of a stranger was to him an event most welcome; but there was danger in our remaining. The Indians were in an inflammable state; they were already inquiring what we came there for, and he could not answer for our safety. In a few months, perhaps, the excitement might pass away, and then we could return. He loved the subjects we took interest in, and would join us in all our expeditions, and aid us with all his influence.

And the padre's knowledge was not confined to his own immediate neighbourhood. His first curacy was at Coban, in the province of Vera Paz; and he told us that four leagues from that place was another ancient city, as large as Santa Cruz del Quiché, deserted and desolate, and almost as perfect as when abandoned by its inhabitants. He had wandered through its silent streets and over its gigantic buildings, and its palace was as entire as that of Quiché when he first saw

it. This is within 200 miles of Guatimala, and in a district of country not disturbed by war; yet, with all our inquiries, we had heard nothing of it. And now, the information really grieved us. Going to the place would add 800 miles to our journey. Our plans were fixed, our time already limited; and in that wild country and its unsettled state, we had superstitious apprehensions that it was ominous to return. My impression, however, of the existence of such a city is most strong. I do most earnestly hope that some future traveller will visit it. He will not hear of it even at Guatimala, and perhaps will be told that it does not exist. Nevertheless, let him seek for it; and if he do find it, experience sensations which seldom fall to the lot of man.

But the padre told us more; something that increased our excitement to the highest pitch. On the other side of the great traversing range of Cordilleras lies the district of Vera Paz, once called Tierra de Guerra, or land of war, from the warlike character of its aboriginal inhabitants. Three times the Spaniards were driven back in their attempts to conquer it. Las Casas, vicar of the convent of the Dominican order in the city of Guatimala, mourning over the bloodshed caused by what was called converting the Indians to Christianity, wrote a treatise to prove that Divine Providence had instituted the preaching of the Gospel as the only means of conversion to the Christian faith; that war could not with justice be made upon those who had never committed any aggressions against Christians; and that to harass and destroy the Indians was to prevent the accomplishing of this desired object. This doctrine he preached from the pulpit, and enforced in private assemblies. He was laughed at, ridiculed, and sneeringly advised to put his theory in practice. Undisturbed by this mockery, he accepted the proposal, choosing as the field of his operations the unconquerable district called Tierra de Guerra, and made an arrangement that no Spaniards should be permitted to reside in that country for five years. This agreed upon, the Dominicans composed some hymns in the Quiché language, describing the creation of the world, the fall of Adam, the redemption of mankind, and the principal mysteries of the life, passion, and death of our Saviour. These were learned by some Indians who traded with the Quichés, and a principal cacique of the country, afterward called Don Juan, having heard them sung, asked those who had repeated them to explain in detail the meaning of things so new to him. The Indians excused themselves, saying that they could only be explained by the fathers who had taught them. The cacique sent one of his brothers with many presents, to entreat that they would come and make him acquainted with what was contained in the songs of the Indian merchants. A

single Dominican friar returned with the ambassador, and the cacique, having been made to comprehend the mysteries of the new faith, burned his idols and preached Christianity to his own subjects. Las Casas and another associate followed, and, like the apostles of old, without scrip or staff, effected what Spanish arms could not, bringing a portion of the Land of War to the Christian faith. The rest of the Tierra de Guerra never was conquered; and at this day the north-eastern section, bounded by the range of the Cordilleras and the state of Chiapas, is occupied by Candònes or unbaptized Indians, who live as their fathers did, acknowledging no submission to the Spaniards, and the government of Central America does not pretend to exercise any control over them. But the thing that roused us was the assertion by the padre that, four days on the road to Mexico, on the other side of the great sierra, was a living city, large and populous, occupied by Indians, precisely in the same state as before the discovery of America. He had heard of it many years before at the village of Chajul, and was told by the villagers that from the topmost ridge of the sierra this city was distinctly visible. He was then young, and with much labour climbed to the naked summit of the sierra, from which, at a height of 10,000 or 12,000 feet, he looked over an immense plain extending toward Yucatan and the Gulf of Mexico, and saw at a great distance a large city spread over a great space, and with turrets white and glittering in the sun. The traditionary account of the Indians of Chajul is, that no white man has every reached this city; that the inhabitants speak the Maya language, are aware that a race of strangers has conquered the whole country around, and murder any white man who attempts to enter their territory. They have no coin or other circulating medium; no horses, cattle, mules, or other domestic animals except fowls, and the cocks they keep under ground to prevent their crowing being heard.

There was a wild novelty—something that touched the imagination—in every step of our journey in that country; the old padre, in the deep stillness of the dimly-lighted convent, with his long black coat like a robe, and his flashing eye, called up an image of the bold and resolute priests who accompanied the armies of the conquerors; and as he drew a map on the table, and pointed out the sierra to the top of which he had climbed, and the position of the mysterious city, the interest awakened in us was the most thrilling I ever experienced. One look at that city was worth ten years of an every-day life. If he be right, a place is left where Indians and an Indian city exist as Cortez and Alvarado found them; there are living men who can solve the mystery that hangs over the ruined cities of America; perhaps who

can go to Copan and read the inscriptions on its monuments. No subject more exciting and attractive presents itself to my mind, and the deep impression of that night will never be effaced.

Can it be true? Being now in my sober senses, I do verily believe there is much ground to suppose that what the padre told us is authentic. That the region referred to does not acknowledge the government of Guatimala, has never been explored, and that no white man ever pretends to enter it, I am satisfied. From other sources we heard that from that sierra a large *ruined* city was visible, and we were told of another person who had climbed to the top of the sierra, but, on account of the dense cloud resting upon it, had been unable to see anything. At all events, the belief at the village of Chajul is general, and a curiosity is roused that burns to be satisfied. We had a craving desire to reach the mysterious city. No man, even if willing to peril his life, could undertake the enterprise with any hope of success, without hovering for one or two years on the borders of the country, studying the language and character of the adjoining Indians, and making acquaintance with some of the natives. Five hundred men could probably march directly to the city, and the invasion would be more justifiable than any ever made by the Spaniards; but the government is too much occupied with its own wars, and the knowledge could not be procured except at the price of blood. Two young men of good constitution, and who could afford to spare five years, might succeed. If the object of search prove a phantom, in the wild scenes of a new and unexplored country there are other objects of interest; but if real, besides the glorious excitement of such a novelty. they will have something to look back upon through life. As to dangers, these are always magnified, and, in general, peril is discovered soon enough for escape. But in all probability, if any discovery is ever made it will be by the padres. As for ourselves, to attempt it alone, ignorant of the language, and with mozos who were a constant annoyance to us, was out of the question. The most we thought of was a climb to the top of the sierra, thence to look down upon the mysterious city; but we had difficulties enough in the road before us; it would add ten days to a journey already most appalling in prospective; for days the sierra might be covered with clouds; in attempting too much we might lose all; Palenque was our great point, and we determined not to be diverted from the course we had marked out.

The next morning we had one painful moment with the cura, and that was the moment of parting. He was then calm and kind, his irresistible laugh and his enthusiasm all gone. We had one village to pass at which he told us the Indians were bad, for which reason he

gave us a letter to the juez; and in the kindness of his heart insisted on my accepting one of his beautiful quezales.

As this was Holy Week, we had great difficulty in procuring a guide. None of the Indians wished to leave the village, and the alcalde told an alguazil to take a man out of prison. After a parley with the inmates through the grating, one was selected, but kept in confinement till the moment of starting, when the alguazil opened the door and let him out, our roll of luggage was put on his back, and he set off. The battered soldier accompanied us a short distance, and Bobon went before, carrying on a stick the royal bird of Quiché. Crossing the plain and the ravine on which the city stood, we ascended a mountain in the rear, commanding a magnificent view of the plain of Quiché, and descending on the other side, at the distance of two leagues reached the village of San Pedro. A thatched church, with a cross before it, stood near the road, and the huts of the village were a little in the rear. The padre had told us that the Indians of this place were "muy malos," very bad; and as our guide, when he returned, had to be locked up in prison, to avoid the necessity of stopping we tried to induce him to continue; but he dropped his load at the foot of the cross, and ran back in such haste that he left behind his ragged chamar. The juez was a Mestitzo, who sent for the alcalde, and presently that worthy trotted down with six alguazils, marching in single file, all with wands in their hands, and dressed in handsome cloth cloaks, the holiday costume for the Holy Week. We told them that we wanted a guide, and the whole six set off to look for one. In about ten minutes they returned single file, exactly on the same trot as before, and said they could not find any; the whole week was holiday, and no one wanted to leave home. I showed Carrera's passport, and told the juez he must go himself, or send one of his alguazils, and they set off again in pursuit. After waiting a little while, I walked to the top of a hill near by, and saw them all seated below, apparently waiting for us to go. As soon as they saw me they ran back in a body to repeat that they could not find a guide. I offered them double price, but they were immovable; and feeling rather uncertain what turn things might take, I talked largely of Carrera's vengeance, not contenting myself with turning them out of office, but taking off their heads at once. After a few moments' consultation they all rose quietly; one doffed his dignity and dress, the rest rolled up the cargo, and throwing it on his bare back, placed the band across his forehead, and set him off on a run. We followed, the secretary begging me to write to Carrera that it was not through his fault we were kept waiting, and that he would have been my guide himself if I had not found another.

At a short distance another alguazil, by a cross cut, intercepted and relieved the first, and they ran so fast that on the rough road we could not keep up with them.

The road was indeed rough and wild beyond all description; and very soon we reached another immense ravine, descended it, and commenced an ascent on the opposite side, which occupied three hours. Through openings in the woods we looked down precipices 1,000 or 2,000 feet deep, while the mountain side was still higher above us. The whole mountain was clothed with luxuriant vegetation, and though wanting the rocky, savage grandeur of Alpine scenery, at every turn the view was sublime. As we climbed up we met a few Indians who could speak no language but their own, and reaching the top, saw a wretched spectacle of the beings made in God's image. A drunken Indian was lying on the ground, his face cut with a machete, and weltering in his blood; and a drunken woman was crying over him. Our Indians stopped and spoke to them, but we could not understand what they said. At about three o'clock we emerged from the woods, and very soon saw Totonicapan, at a great distance and far below us, on a magnificent plain, with a high table-land behind it, a range of mountains springing from the table, and rising above them the volcano of Quezaltenango. The town was spread over a large space, and the flat roofs of the houses seemed one huge covering, broken only by the steeple of the church. We descended the mountain to the banks of a beautiful stream, along which, Indian women were washing; and following it, entered the town, and rode up to the house of the corregidor, Don José Azmitia. Our luggage had arrived safely, and in a few minutes our men presented themselves to receive us.

Much might be said of Totonicapan as the head of a department, and surrounded by mountains visible on all sides from the plaza; but I stop only to record an event. All along, with the letters to corregidors, the passport of Carrera, and the letter of the archbishop, our road had been a sort of triumphal march; but at this place we dined, *i.e.* we had a dinner. The reader may remember that in Costa Rica I promised to offend but once more by referring to such a circumstance. That time has come, and I should consider myself an ingrate if I omitted to mention it. We were kept waiting perhaps two hours, and we had not eaten anything in more than twelve. We had clambered over terrible mountains; and at six o'clock, on invitation, with hands and faces washed, and in dress-coats, sat down with the corregidor. Courses came regularly and in right succession. Servants were well trained, and our host did the honours as if he was used to the same thing every day. But it was not so with us. Like Rittmaster Dugald

Dalgetty, we ate very fast and very long, on his principle deeming it the duty of every commander of a fortress, on all occasions which offer, to secure as much munition and viveres as their magazines can possibly hold.

We were again on the line of Carrera's operations; the place was alive with apprehensions; white men were trembling for their lives; and I advised our host to leave the country and come to the United States.

The next morning we breakfasted with him, and at eleven o'clock, while a procession was forming in the plaza, we started for Quezaltenango, descended a ravine commanding at every point a beautiful view, ascended a mountain, from which we looked back upon the plain and town of Totonicapan, and on the top entered a magnificent plain, cultivated with corn-fields and dotted with numerous flocks of sheep, the first we had seen in the country; on both sides of the road were hedges of gigantic aloes.* In one place we counted upward of 200 in full bloom. In the middle of the plain, at the distance of two and a half leagues, we crossed on a rude bridge of logs a broad river, memorable for the killed and wounded thrown into it in Alvarado's battle with the Quiché Indians, and called the "River of Blood." Two leagues beyond we came in sight of Quezaltenango, standing at the foot of a great range of mountains, surmounted by a rent volcano constantly emitting smoke, and before it a mountain ridge of lava, which, if it had taken its course toward the city, would have buried it like Herculaneum and Pompeii.

* Agave Americana.