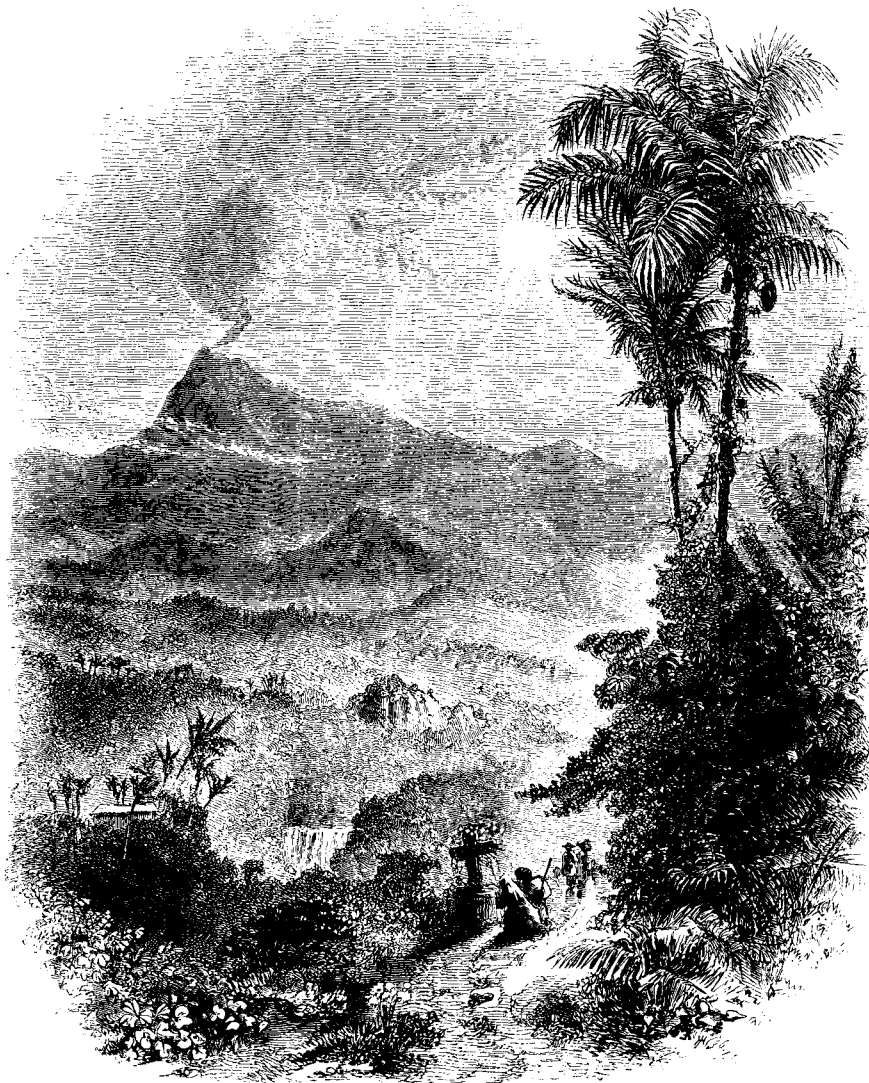


HOLIDAYS IN COSTA RICA.

BY THOMAS FRANCIS MEAGHER.



VOLCANO OF TURRIALBA.

III.—SAN JOSÉ TO CARTAGO.

THE prevailing theme of the day with the Stump as well as the Pulpit—with the Editor as well as the Orator—is the superior civilization of the Nineteenth Century. Of this civilization, the United States, and England especially, are congratulated, from morning till night, on the fact of their being the highest exponents, while the Spanish-American communities are scornfully reproached, or contemptuously condoled with, for being the reverse.

Nor does the Spirit of the Age content itself with this. Acting on the presumption, that every community or nation, failing to come up to the Anglo-Saxon standard of political and social perfection, is gone to perdition unless something vigorous for its salvation is done, the world, nowadays, occasionally hears of cities being bombarded into commercial relations, and people being robbed for the good of their souls.

Were it less arrogant, the Spirit of the Age might be all the better instructed. Better instructed, it might be all the better behaved.

Fully comprehending those Spanish-American communities, it might become impressed with the fact, that there prevails in them a civilization which, in domestic goodness, in intelligence and graciousness, in religious sentiment, sobriety and honest industry, will favorably compare with that which in colder latitudes is so superlatively lauded. More than this. Without admitting the feasibility of there being various forms and phases of civilization—each determined by the character of the people who exhibit it, and of whose special interests, genius and resources, it is the natural development—the Spirit of the Age might be flattered in observing, throughout those disparaged communities, not a few of the customs, the mechanical appliances, the household comforts and political ideas, of which it claims the exclusive paternity. In Costa Rica for instance, as Señor Astaburuaga has written, agriculture has commenced to take that aspect which the best rules of science enable it to attain. The practical notions of cultivation—those prevailing among the Northern nations of Europe—are extending there with the assistance of the best agricultural implements, while those old practices, so detrimental to labor and the saving of time, are fast disappearing.

In less important particulars, also, the Spirit of the Age might be gratified in discovering, in the little Republic I speak of, its tastes, ingenuity, and judgment acknowledged. The lamp-posts of San José have been imported from England. This has already been stated. Germany, besides contributing to Costa Rica the engineering ability which has opened the best of her roads, has suggested to an adventurous Londoner the advantage of having, close to the Capital, a *lager-bier* reservoir of exhaustless capacity. The worms and caldrons of the National Distillery were made in New York, and the President's carriage, if I am not greatly mistaken, first tried its springs on the pavement of Broadway. Nor is France less conspicuously represented in this informal exposition of the artistic skill of the more highly civilized nations. She has introduced her dainty boots there, her smelling-bottles, gloves and *pastilles*, her thin wines, *bonbons* and sun-shades. She has given soldiers and uniforms to the Costa Rican army, and, to the traveling public of the country, the pattern of a *Diligence* which has been expensively copied.

The result is a vehicle, which, were it somewhat less rickety and gaudy, would resemble a Rockaway. Lavishly painted in red, black and yellow, a profusion of old rope, leather aprons, curtains and cushions—the latter all wrinkled and cracked—furnish, inside and out, the amusing contrivance. A mule and two horses—the mule in the middle—tug it along. The driver—a lively young fellow from the ruins of Copan—wears a braided gray jacket, a military sash of red silk, and a Panama hat rather rakishly set.

It was on the back seat of this *diligence* that Don Ramon and Don Francisco set out, one Sunday evening, from San José to the ancient

city of Cartago. The drive was pleasantly exciting all the way through. There was the landscape, both sides of the road. There were the coffee-plantations, all in full blossom, looking as though there had been a fall of snow during the forenoon. There were banana-patches, fields of corn and sugar-cane, church-towers and Indian villages. There was the funeral procession of a child, the little corpse prettily dressed and decked with flowers, violins and flutes preceding it, women strewing the dusty road with violets, lilies and green branches, an old priest, in white embroidered stole and surplice, enveloped in the smoke of swinging censers, with closed eyes and bare head, borne along in a gilt sedan-chair behind the bier, and with his shriveled hand blessing it at times. There were bright green meadows veined with flashing streams—wave-like wooded hills seamed with red cart-roads—steep bridges built of lava-stone, the causeways roofed with burned tiles—bulky farm-houses half-buried in sweet rich foliage—the great lonely mountains of the Central Range dissolving in the mellowed sunlight miles away. Last of all, there was the crazy *diligence* itself, with its ups and downs, its mishaps and catastrophes, and the confusion, the merriment, the fright, the scandal and uproar it caused.

The first hill we came to, delayed it an hour. The mule thought it too much for the horses—the horses thought it too much for the mule. Between the three of them—after a violent wrangle—the report upon progress was dropped. Not an inch would they move. Not an inch—not for all the whipping and swearing the Guatemalan had the hand or the heart to bestow. The passengers had to get out. It came to that. Then it came to their putting a shoulder to the wheel—a frantic proceeding which well-nigh upset and demolished the coach. This difficulty surmounted, however, nothing afterward checked us. Away we went! Smooth or rough—up or down—precipice or plain—mud or boulders—away we went!

Never such cracking and rattling—never such foaming and flashing—never such frenzy was seen. As we tore by, the road, catching the madness, broke into a riot. Old and young women rushed to the door-ways—screamed—convulsively chattered—in spasms, apparently, bade us an eternal farewell. Out from every gateway—out from openings in road-side fences—the scraggiest dogs pounced upon us with the avidity of wolves, and with an insane rapidity pursued us. At one place, a venerable Padre, in his capacious black cloak and convoluted black hat, with a dark-green gingham umbrella under his arm, retreated from the blinding cloud of dust in which we were whirled by, and, with eyes of greenish marble, in blank amazement stared at us, as though we were past redemption. Farther on, the *diligence* cut right through a squadron of mountaineers—scared the wits out of the plump little horses—dispersed them in the strangest pranks over the road—tumbled the riders—snapped the cruppers—in an instant



THE DILIGENCE.

giving rise to a scene of equestrianism, disorder and panic, which it would take the pencil of Rosa Bonheur to describe. In the midst of all this—in the midst of the routed, the flying, the capsize, the stunned, and the sprawling, the fearfulest snorting and the wildest hysterics—the *diligence* topped the hill of Quiricôt; and, with a velocity that made every nerve jump, jingled and thundered down into the valley of Cartago. But, as we swept by the wreck and mischief we had caused, there broke a vision from the earth and clouds.

Reverentially vail your massive head, old Samuel, for the valley of Rasselas, in this, the valley of Cartago, in beauteousness and glory has been surpassed! The Spaniards of the Conquest, as Peter Heylin in his *Mikrokosmos* tells us, called Nicaragua the Paradise of Mohammed. This, indeed, might be called the Arcadia of the Poets.

Immediately below us was a broad lagoon, the waters of which in the receding sunshine seemed to throb, and along the margin of which the white crane—stately, composed, quick-eyed, graceful—stalked in search of food. Beyond the lagoon lay the *potreros* into which the valley is divided—oblong grazing-grounds of astonishing extent—all marked off with fences of coral-bean and wild pine-apple. Beyond the *potreros* were the low mountains of the *Agua Caliente*, so called from the tepid spring, which, a mile and a half from the city, bubbles up and overflows from a

crevice of quartz and oxyhydrate of iron at their foot. The water of this spring is bitter and astringent. Frequent by the distempered aristocracy of the neighborhood, it is found specially efficacious in cases of gout and rheumatism. The mountains of the Candellaria overlook those of the *Agua Caliente*. Beyond the Candellaria, the sapphire peaks of the great Andean chain itself, shadowy and indistinguishable almost, fling off the intercepting clouds, and, without a speck between them and the sun, assert their sovereignty.

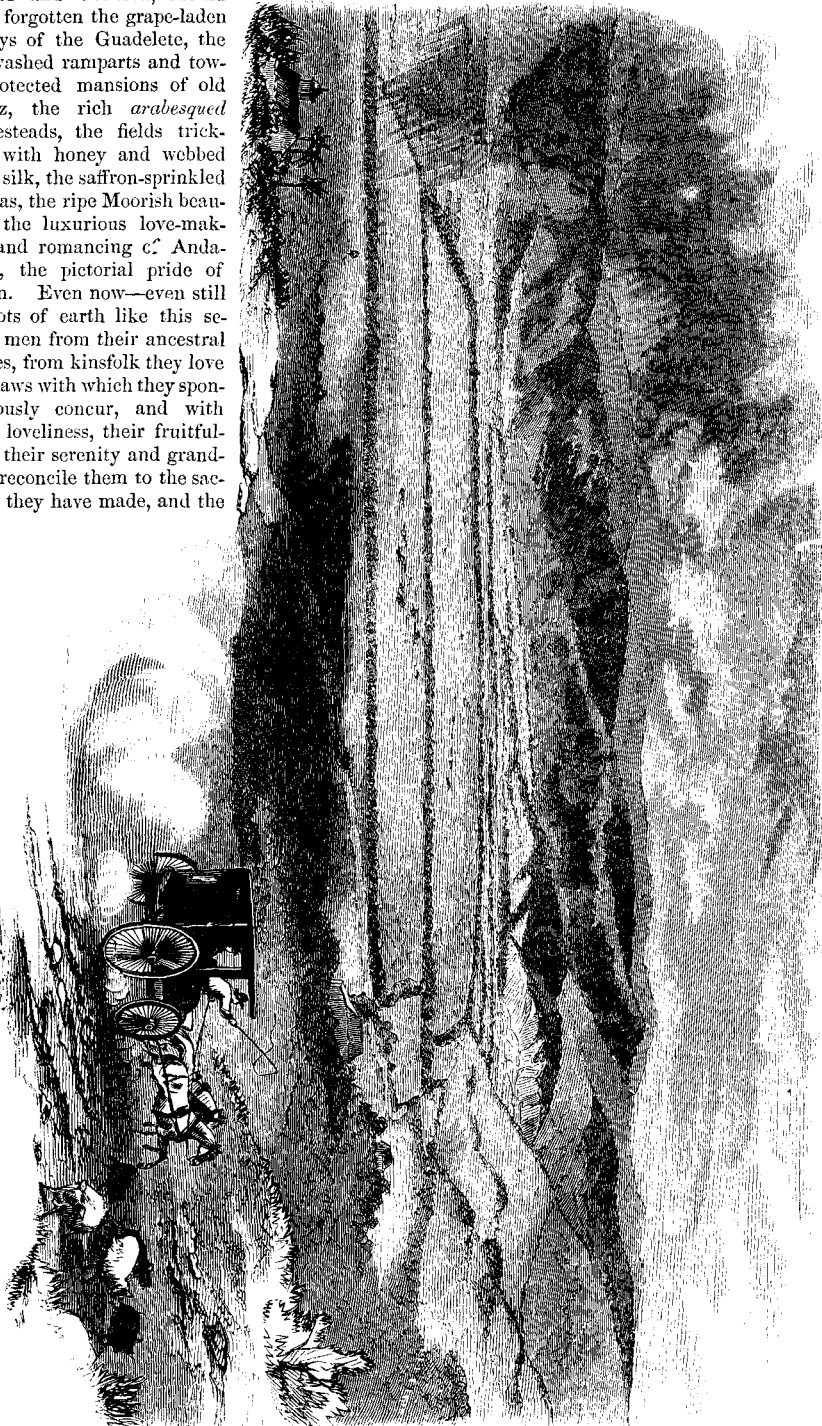
No wonder that in such scenes as this—with verdure so vivid and exuberant at their feet—with streams, so vitalizing and refreshing, breaking the paths their swords laid open—with mountains, the towering types of their ambition, multiplying themselves around them, beyond them, and above them, still, as the adventurers ascended, lifting themselves still higher, and, with the cry of *El Dorado* echoing from every cave and

crag, beckoning them sunward into regions yet more remote—no wonder that in such scenes as this the Crusaders of Castile, the Prætorians of Cortéz and Cordova, should have forgotten the grape-laden valleys of the Guadelete, the sea-washed ramparts and tower-protected mansions of old Cadiz, the rich *arabesque* homesteads, the fields trickling with honey and webbed with silk, the saffron-sprinkled Sierras, the ripe Moorish beauties, the luxurious love-making and romancing of Andalusia, the pictorial pride of Spain. Even now—even still—spots of earth like this seduce men from their ancestral homes, from kinsfolk they love and laws with which they spontaneously concur, and with their loveliness, their fruitfulness, their serenity and grandeur, reconcile them to the sacrifice they have made, and the

isolation to which their foreign tongue and modes of thought for years condemn them.

As for the city of Cartago—the city itself—it

VALLEY OF CARTAGO.



is a dismal wreck. The streets are broader than those of San José, but they are lonelier, drowsier, colder. Scarcely a soul is seen in them any hour of the day. Now and then one meets an Egyptian figure lithely balancing a plenteous *tinaja* on a dauntless head—gliding noiselessly along—but that, for hours perhaps, is the only living object which relieves the sepulchral vacuity of the place. Hurlled about in every direction, monstrous boulders and masses of lava-stone, monuments of the terrible eruptions of the volcano that overlooks it, heighten the forlorn aspect it presents. Upward of three hundred years old, it has seen better days. It was the Royal Capital under the Spanish Crown, and Thomas Gage—a Great Briton who visited Central America in 1636, and who, in the quaint book he published of his travels, describes himself as the first Protestant who ever penetrated these parts—mentions that it had in his time many opulent citizens who traded directly with the Peninsula. The recollection of what it was in those days renders it haughty and sullen. Cartago is, in truth, a stupid aristocrat, out at the elbows and gone to the dogs. How the aristocrat lives, it is difficult to say. Beans and bananas abound in the vicinity, however, and broken-down Swells—Beau Brummell for instance—have been known to indulge in the pleasures of imagination and memory, and luxuriate on a crust in a garret, without a copper to sport with or a shred to their backs.

The Hotel we stopped at epitomized the City. It was comfortless, pretentious, windy, silicious and ruined. Entering by a long narrow passage—arched as well as paved—and mounting a trembling staircase at the back, the interior instantly appalls one with the lines and outlines of a haunted house. A gentleman from Baden-Baden kept it. A deserter from General Walker's *landwehr*, he went by the name of Don Carlos. Don Carlos was as jovial a scape-grace as the most curious student of human vagaries could possibly desire to fall in with. Without a dollar in the world, he started his Hotel, set the cards and dice shuffling and tossing in the bleakest room in it, and so kept the pot boiling, while he himself sank up to his ears, and above them, in debt. With an amazing vitality, the establishment prolonged its existence for weeks upon nothing. It exploded, however, one day we were there. Missing the scape-grace, we asked the Dutch waiter—an emaciated creature with a crutch and an ulcerated leg—where Don Carlos was?

"Ah! he Don Carlos no more," the slender cripple replied. "Dey put him in prison for debt—Hotel gone to de Debil—dere's nuttin to pay."

Don Ramon and Don Francisco thought otherwise—thought there was the Devil to pay—and so, bundling up their papers, soiled linen, pencils and paint-brushes, their note-books, geological specimens and flasks, came to the conclusion it was time to clear out.

But the saddest places have their kindling or their soothing memories—their epic glories—or

those treasured legends, which, as the lingering rays of some expiring lamp, relieve from utter darkness the vestiges of a vanquished power. Cartago in her solitude and indigence is thus adorned. She has the loftier traditions which inflate with pride even an impoverished people. She has those gentler ones, which, flowing from a purer source, keep alive a generous faith, and in their lowliness direct the hearts of the poor to God. Of the latter

The Legend of Our Lady of the Angels

is the one most dear to the people of Cartago. In a paper handed me by the venerable Anselmo Lorenté, the Bishop of San José, the story is thus told:

"In the year of Our Lord, 1643, in a forest close by the ancient city of Cartago, there lived a simple woman, who, once going out to gather fire-wood, found an Image of a Lady on a stone in the neighborhood of her hut. The Image was of stone. This she carried to her hut, and, having placed it in an arch, returned to the forest. A second time she found an Image of a Lady on the stone, in the forest, in the neighborhood of her hut. Supposing there were two of them, she carried this Image, also, to the arch in which she had deposited the first. The good soul was astonished to find the first was gone. But when, for the third time, she approached the stone, and, a third time, found an Image of a Lady, precisely similar to the two she found before, and, having returned to her hut and found neither of those she had placed there in the arch, and the day being far spent, she became alarmed. Running to the Curate, Don Alonzo de Castro y Sandoval, she told him what had happened. This devout priest locked up the Image in a closet—the one that was found the third time—with the view, no doubt, of examining it dispassionately. But the Image instantly disappeared, and, a fourth time, was found on the stone, in the forest, in the neighborhood of the poor woman's hut. Conducted thence in solemn procession to the Parochial Church, it was deposited within the Sanctuary.

"The following day, the Associate Curate, having gone to visit it, found the Tabernacle vacant in which it had been placed. Searching once more for it, they found it, a fifth time, on the stone, in the neighborhood of the poor woman's hut, in the forest close by the city. Finally, a Church was specially built for it, and there it has ever since remained. In 1782, the Illustrious, Esteban Lorenzo de Tristan, Bishop of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, solemnly declared it the Special Patron of Cartago. The Illustrious, Don Augustin de Santa Cruz presented the *pectoral* of rich emeralds which adorns the golden tunic of the Image. Another Bishop consecrated it with Holy Oil, and ordered that it should be touched by none but anointed hands. Last of all, the Church, in which it reposes, was consecrated by the Illustrious, Don Anselmo Lorente, the actual Bishop of the Diocese, and was raised by him to the rank of a Basilica.



CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS.

"These honors have been rendered the Image of Our Lady of the Angels—for so this wonderful Image has been called from time immemorial—in acknowledgment of the repeated miracles it has wrought."

Of those miracles, one of the most memorable was the sudden flight of eight hundred English Buccaneers, under the command of Captain Mansfeldt, or Mansfield, a devoted fellow-plunderer of Morgan, the Incendiary of the Isthmus and the Pirate of Panama, as the popular novelist would style him. These enterprising gentlemen, having landed on the Atlantic coast at Matina, had penetrated as far as Turrialba, when the Sergeant-Major, Don Alonzo de Bonilla, with a *picquet* and the Image of Our Lady of the Angels, marched out from Cartago to meet them. Descending into the valley at the foot of the volcano of the White Tower, they so terrified the Buccaneers, who were encamped there, that the latter at once took to their heels and ships. The rout was ascribed to the presence of the Image in the field, and the anniversary of the day on which it occurred has been ever since observed as a Votive Feast in the ancient city of Cartago.

The Church of Our Lady of the Angels is, far away, the prettiest and stanchest structure in the city. The huge boulders which encom-

pass it, the vermillioned tiles and clusterings of rich foliage out of which it modestly emerges, heighten the effect of the Doric *façade*, the massive square tower with its tiara of gleaming bronze, the green zinc roof, the row of alabaster-hued pilasters which flank the great door-way, and the niches, to the right and left of this, which inclose in iron net-work a cohort of winged, frocked, and buskined Angels of boyish stature.

The High Altar of this Church is supremely grand. A lofty Tabernacle of cedar, lavishly gilt, rises over it to the height of thirty feet. Divided into two chambers, the lower one contains the Blessed Sacrament, the upper one the Image of Our Lady of the Angels. The architraves, projecting from the chambers, are supported by golden Cherubim. These figures are three feet high. From the dome, a golden image of the Angel Gabriel ascends, bearing in the left hand a pair of golden scales, and in the right a silver sword. The pillars and cross-beams of the Sanctuary, in the centre of which this superb altar stands, are painted in *arabesque*, and during the month of May, the month we visited it, they are hung with blue and white lace and net-work. The Church is exquisitely clean, and ever fragrant with frankincense and flowers. Señor M. Duran, an eloquent and studious lawyer, a native of New Granada, mentions in an

interesting description he has published of Costa Rica, that there is an enormous box in this Church, in which the people deposit their offerings to the Image. At the end of every six months the box is opened, and the tribute it accumulates during this period, never falls short of \$800. The money, thus collected, is devoted exclusively to the repairs and decorations of the Church.

Dull and desolate as it habitually is, there are two days, out of the seven, when Cartago wakes up. There is Sunday, when the Church-bells prove to distraction the metal they're made of, and the Señoras and Señoritas, with their graceful draperies of black and colored shawls, glide to and from the churches, and the militia of the District parade and drill all the forenoon in the Plaza, and the most reputable people, the Judiciary included, indulge in lotteries, *vingt-un* and draughts, in the widest and longest room of the Hotel, whenever any such institution contributes to the conveniences, the cheap dissipation, and, as in the case of Don Carlos, to the ups and downs, the brandy-smashes and bankruptcies, the convulsions and woes of Cartago. On Sunday evenings, moreover, the Band of the little garrison performs in front of the house in which the Governor of the Province resides. But the Thursdays are livelier, though, in the absence of the Band and the Bells, a native might say they were somewhat less musical. Thursdays are market-days in Cartago.

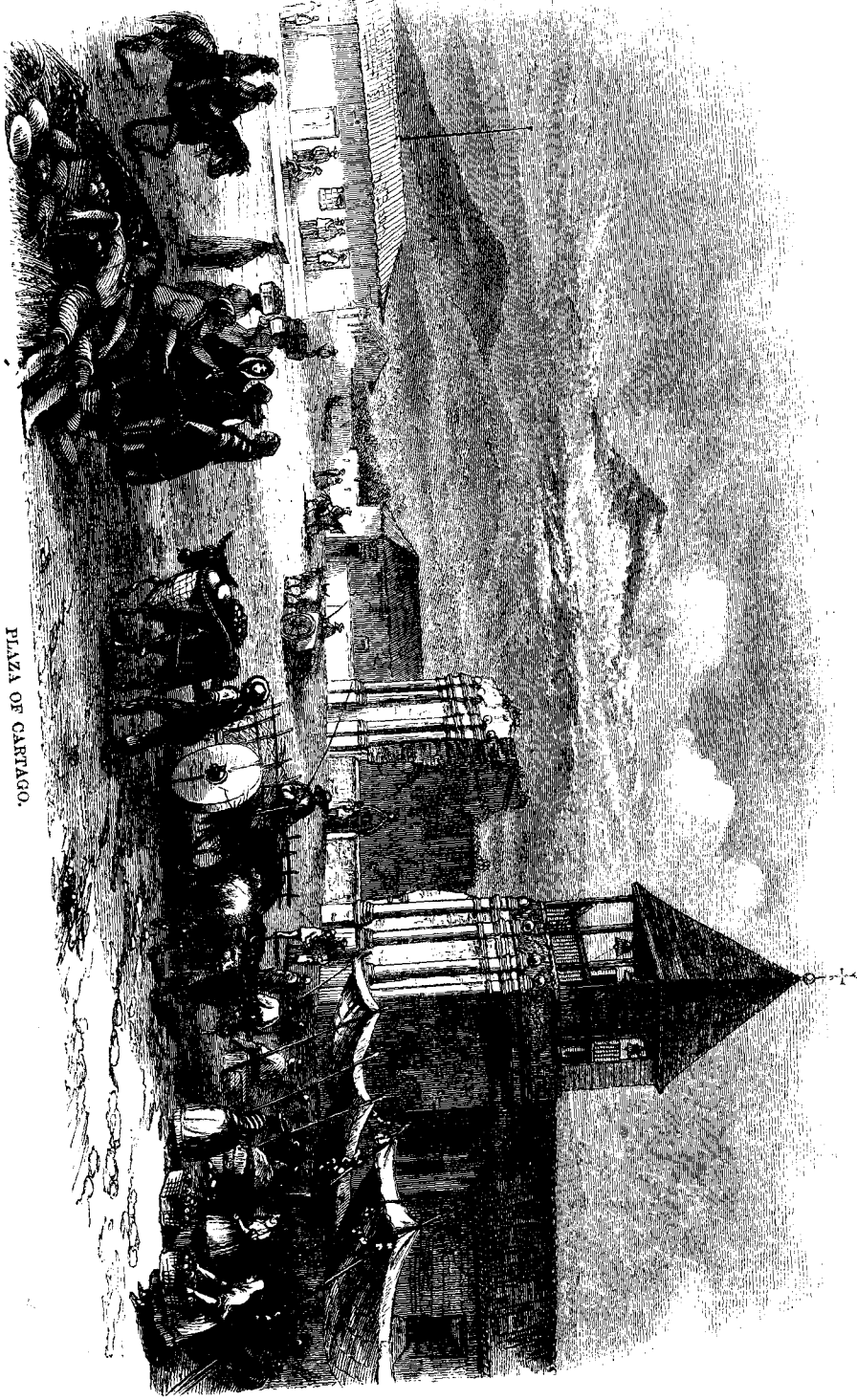
The Plaza—the massive white towers of the Parochial Church on one side—substantial one-storied houses, with projecting roofs and bowed windows, on the other—the *Cuartel* and Governor's Audience-Hall in front, all glistening with whitewash, and close behind them, the volcano of Irazu, the sun flashing from its cloven forehead, and the snowy clouds gathering round it, as the Sicilian flocks crowded to the Cyclops—these are the outlines of the picture. It is a vivid blending of most of the contrasts of Tropical life with the majesty of nature.

The streets leading into the Plaza are thronged—thronged with carts and oxen, with mules and muleteers, with soldiers and wandering minstrels—thronged with booths and beggars, and with cripples who imploringly work out a fortune with their distorted bones. In the Plaza we have innumerable articles for sale, and, pictorially viewed, the gayest of groups. We have rainbow colored silk-woven shawls from Guatemala, blankets, and brigand-like jackets with superfluous bright buttons and fringes. We have the cacao-nut in ox-hide bags, which barelegged sinewy fellows have carried up all the way from Matina, and drinking-cups, carved out of the Calabash-fruit with an exquisite nicety of touch and an elaborate richness of design. At other stalls we have English printed-calicoes, *barèges*, pen-knives, crockery-ware, scissors, smoothing-irons, scythes and razors. From the United States, I'm sorry to say, we have little or nothing. There are, to be sure, some American drillings. But that, for the present, with a few

coils or sticks of Virginia tobacco, is all we have in the market. Cartago herself contributes hats—soft hats made of the fibre of the Century-plant—and gold-work, such as chains and armlets, Love-knots and votive baskets, the latter with the most tempting delicacy constructed and redundant with pearls—roseate, plump, lustrous pearls—from the Gulf of Nicoya. Then, of course, we have oranges, cocoa-nuts, sweet corn, bananas, *zapotes*, sweet lemons and *granadillas*, the most liquid and refreshing of fruits, edible palm-tops, which make the most piquant and delicious of salads, blackberries, the blackest and juiciest that ever purpled one's lips, and potatoes as mealy and toothsome as any Irish mouth could desire.

As for the groups and detached figures—filling up, though dispersed, through the picture—there are Señoras richly dressed, cooling their bare and glossy heads with the airiest sun-shades, accompanied by their *criadas*, who carry on their plump shining arms baskets for the purchases their mistresses make. At times you come across a German housewife, with leg-of-mutton sleeves and Leghorn bonnet. The *mestizas*—the women of the country—in very loose low-necked dresses of white or colored calico, with bare arms and feet, sit behind their *serones* of fruit and vegetables, behind their blocks of cheese and *chancaaca*, the coarse brown sugar of the country, or behind a double row of bottles choked with *guarapo*, the fermented juice of the sugar-cane, and with accents as liquid and refreshing as the *guarapo*, and with a sly gracefulness if the passer-by happens to be a stranger, expatiate upon the merits of their merchandise, and press their varied commodities for sale.

Besides their very loose and low-necked dresses of white or colored calico, these winsome merchants sport the prettiest pert little hats, some made of straw, others of black, brown, or slate-colored felt. Most of them mount cockades of blue or red silk, and all of them fly, as though they were Recruiting-Sergeants, the most bewitching bright ribbons. They are perfect heart-breakers—those pert little hats!—and, to settle the business, the young women of Costa Rica are decidedly handsome. Their figures are full and round, their features regularly cut, their eyebrows richly penciled, and the well-developed head is set upon a neck which displays to the best advantage the pretty string of beads which few of them dispense with. Their complexion, generally speaking, suggests a *conserve* of cream and roses. The pure exhilarating air of the mountains, in the valleys and up the slopes of which two-thirds of the Costa Rican people have their homes, tones down the carnation richness of the Spanish blood, chastens, and with a pearly hue suffuses it. There are, to be sure, some brown, and yellowish, and bronzed, and mottled faces to be met with, and some cases of *goitre*, but not enough to contradict what I've said, and make it the exception instead of the rule. The old women, however, even those approximating the climax of forty—an age, which, in these



PLAZA OF CARTAGO.

more temperate regions of ours serves only to mature the coloring and give dignity to the stature of womanhood—are the reverse of what they were in their youth. They are octogenarians at forty.

To what this premature overcasting of so much beauteousness and light may be owing, I leave the professors of ethnology, as well as the professors of pathology and the chemistry of common life, to determine. For my part, I own up to a vulgar impression, that if there were considerably less vegetables and esculent roots eaten, and considerably more of the poultry, the mutton and good beef of country consumed, the case would be different.

But however that be, it is time for us to wish good-by to the Señoras and the Señoritas, which, be they young or old, blooming or faded, it becomes us respectfully to do. This done, to the barefooted soldiers, with muskets and fixed-bayonets patrolling the market-place, let us give the salute. To the *carteros* and *arrieros*, to the teamsters and mule-drivers, mingling with their mothers, their wives, their pretty daughters and handsome sweet-hearts, let us bid the national *adios—adios Señores!* Last of all, to the venerable Deacon of the Diocese—a very old and feeble man in faded red silk *soutaine*, with a pocket handkerchief of the largest size coiled about his head underneath his umbrageous hat, for the day is hot, though the clouds are mustering fast on Irazu—to the Deacon of the Diocese, as he wheezes along, and with his gold-knobbed stick shuffles through the crowd, receiving as he passes, from bent and uncovered heads, the edifying homage of the young and old, let us, too, with reverence for gray hairs and aged limbs, and for the filial love with which he is entitled the Father of his People, incline the head—and for the scene from which we now depart, heartily let us wish many and many a recurrence, each succeeding one still happier than the one preceding, in the market-place of old Cartago!

We had not been many hours in Costa Rica, before we heard of the volcano of Irazu, and the mischief and terror it had caused. How, in 1723, from the 16th of February until the 14th of March, it had rumbled with the rushing of subterranean rivers, as it were, and had opened its jaws and rolled forth billows of smoke. How the people, on the slopes and in the valleys far below, were stifled with its sulphureous exhalations, and how at night it whirled balls of fire aloft and sheeted the sky with flames, until it grew to be, for miles round, more fiercely bright than ever it was known to have been the hottest day at noon. How at one time, out of the boiling gulf, there rose a vapor, white as cotton and shaped like a bended bow, until, at the height of two lances above the crater, it took the shape of an enormous palm-leaf, which remained suspended in the air while one might say an *Ave Maria*, when it resumed its former shape, and, slowly descending, passed off and disappeared. How the rumblings of the volcano grew louder and louder, until they struck the bewildered ear with

the force of ten thousand forges all at work, and the red-hot boulders and *scoriae* multiplied in volume, tearing asunder the jaws of the furnace as they gushed from them, until, at last, the waters of the rivers, the lakes and streams, were turned into seething mud, and the city of Cartago was strewn with burning dust, and churches and houses, uprooted from the palsied earth, lay scorched and blackened in utter ruin. How all this came to pass, over and over again we were told along the road. And when we got a peep at the Archives of the afflicted city, we found that the popular story was borne out in its minutest particulars by the official report of the Royal Governor, Diego de la Haya, which report bears date the 14th day of March, 1723.

Nor was this the first of the eruptions of Irazu. The voracious abscess has four mouths or craters. Inside one of them are oaks, so old as to lead to the conclusion, that two thousand years have elapsed since it was first opened. This, at all events, is the opinion of Dr. Carl Hoffman, of San José, whom Humboldt quotes in his account and descriptions of the volcanic phenomena of Central America. Another of these craters forms a lake which gives rise to the River Reventazon, the *embouchure* of which, according to Thomas Gage, was a commercial resort in 1636. The earthquakes, caused by the volcano, have been frequent and severe. There was one in 1756. There was another in 1822. Both of them overthrew the city. The last, of any consequence, occurred the 2d of September, 1841, when, according to the dispatch of Telesforo Peralta, the Governor of the Province, to the Supreme Chief of the Republic, fully one-third of the population of Cartago—at that time computed to be something over 17,000 souls—lay buried for hours under the wreck of the city.

“But wonderful to relate,” exclaims Governor Peralta, “only sixteen were killed!”

Wonderful, we admit, but not at all incredible, when we reflect that the houses were only one story high, twelve feet in depth, and built of *adobe*, which doesn't take much to fly into dust.

Every house but one was demolished. Even this was considerably shaken. But it deserves to stand and for generations hold itself erect, for in the court-yard, in its revered and beautiful green age, the Parent Coffee-tree of Costa Rica, of which an outline appeared in the first of these papers, from the pencil of Ramon Paez, still puts forth its snow-white blossoms and soft exquisite perfume.

After the repeated warnings they have had, one would think it was full time for the Cartagenians to “up stakes” and be off. The more so, since that ferocious Cyclops overhead growls every now and then, and, sending forth an occasional puff or two, lets the world know that he is smoking something else besides the Pipe of Peace.

“Nevertheless,” as Señor Peralta writes, “such is the attachment which the people of Cartago have for their own soil, that they bear

with patience all these evils, and, as often as it is thrown down, out of its ruins rebuild their beloved city."

The same is true of the villages and towns at the foot, and up the slopes of Vesuvius. It is specially true of the town of Torre del Greco, the inhabitants of which, in their attachment to the spot, as Mr. Leigh Hunt in a paper on Naples remarks, have always persisted in building their houses above those that have been buried, thus keeping up an obstinate struggle, as it were, with one of the most fearful powers of nature.

"After all we've heard about Irazu," says Don Francisco to Don Ramon, two or three mornings after their drive in the *diligence*, "we must climb the volcano."

"By all means," says Don Ramon, "and the sooner the better, for there's nothing more to be seen in this Deserted Village."

Parenthetically it may be worth while to mention, that, at the moment he spoke, Don Francisco was in the act of copying a proclamation in writing, which he found wafered to the wall of the gambling-saloon, ladies'-parlor and dining-room, of the Hotel mysteriously kept going on nothing by Don Carlos, of Baden-Baden, the deserter and scape-grace. Of that proclamation, the following is a literal translation from the original Spanish:

"I hereby make known to all young men, under age, frequenting this Lottery, without permission of their parents, to abstain from taking part in the game, if they wish to avoid being put to shame.

"(Signed)

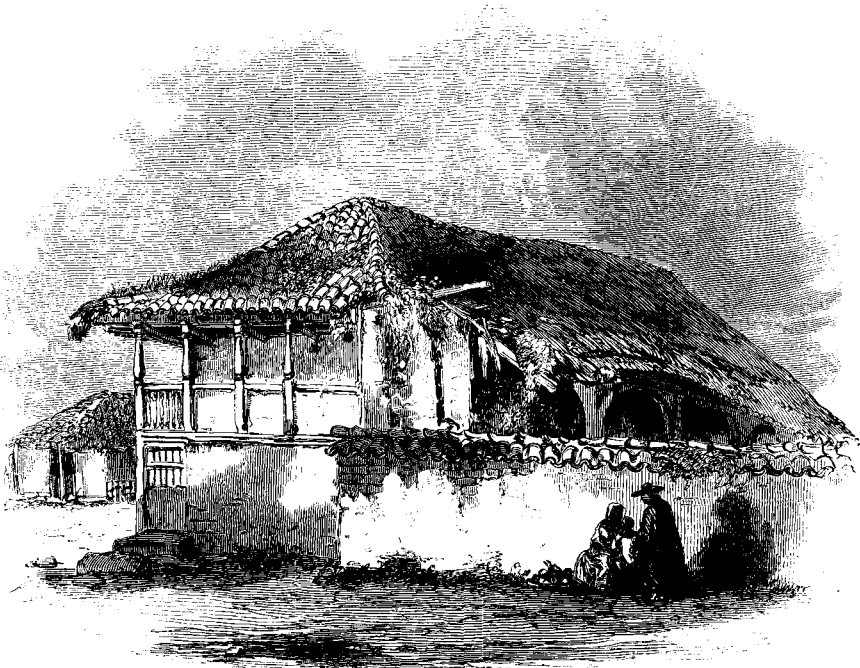
FELIX MATA.

"Governor of the Province of Cartago."

If faces be correct registers of years, I regret to say, that the young men, under age, in and about Cartago, paid little attention to that handwriting on the wall. It appeared to be just as inoperative as the Albany Liquor Law, which, unfolding itself portentously, three years ago, to this day remains a withered leaf in the Statute-book of New York.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon, April the 23d, 1858, that, mounted on two strong knowledgable mules, with the necessary amount of blankets and baskets, we set out from the Hotel de Irazu to the Volcan de Irazu. To our first stopping-place, the road, though rough and broken by huge boulders and fragments of lava-stone, and crisp, quick, bright streams which crossed it, was a gradual ascent. It was an uninteresting country, however, we passed through. There were corn-fields, potato-fields, grazing-grounds, and, here and there, a stunted tree by the road-side, but that was all. Yet it mattered little. For the sky was blue and speckless, and the air was fresh and bracing, and our mules were nimble and spontaneously progressive, and our hearts were light. That especially of Don Ramon was so, for he had that day heard of the uprising of the people of Venezuela, and the recall from banishment of his beloved and aged father, and his old school-fellow participated in his proud joy, and the two, that glorious sweet evening, ascended the volcano of Irazu, as though they themselves were laureled heroes making a triumphal march.

The cattle-farm of Cerado belongs to Nicomi-



REMAINS OF OLD CARTAGO.



ASCENT OF IRAZU.

edes Saëns, a wealthy young Costa Rican, who is at this moment, I believe, completing his education in an Athenian city of the United States. At a height of 1500 feet, it overlooks the dismantled white towers and emerald valley of Cartago. The sea is 7000 feet below. The greater part of it, though nominally a cattle-farm, is under cultivation, and yields the finest potatoes, peaches and quinces, in abundance. From the keen wind which frequently sweeps down from the cone of the volcano, it is sheltered by a broad belt of Alpine oak—*encino* it is called—and the *guarumo*, which closely resembles the Mexican *arbol das las manitas*, the leaf of which, representing the human hand, has been for generations an object of religious veneration with the natives and peasantry of Mexico. This belt is the haunt of tigers, and there are snakes without end or measure there, those especially of the *toboba* species, which, though excessively venomous below, the mountaineers persist in saying are innocuous in these colder regions.

The house itself, like most of the farm-houses of the country, is built of canes and cedar posts, stuccoed outside with mud, and thatched with plantain-leaves and corn-husks. A numerous family occupies it—three daughters, two brothers, a father and mother. One of the daughters is a young widow, whose husband was killed in

the campaign against the Filibusters. Her sisters, Manuela and Rafaela, are modest, pretty, white-skinned, black-eyed girls, blushing, smiling, bright-minded and industrious. Manuela wears a rosary of gold round her little neck. The sons are lithe, picturesquely-featured, unobtrusive, active and hard-working as their sisters are. The mother is gracious, pious, motherly and wrinkled, sedulous in her attentions to strangers, and proud as a Spartan dame of the son who was slain in battle.

The father is a man whom Salvador Rosa should have painted. His name is Benito. Benito is a wiry, tall, hardy fellow, with a long, curved, quick-scenting nose, and round full eyes which roll incessantly, and flash at intervals. Night and day, blazing or freezing, his neck, and arms, and chest

are bare. A loose coarse flannel shirt, striped like the skin of a tiger, a tattered straw-hat, and blue cotton trowsers, one leg of which is tightly rolled up to the knee while the other dangles in fringes, is the only covering he wears. He is the perfection—the Bayard!—of a mountaineer. He knows every rock, every tree, every bird, every root, every beast, every shrub and flower, every reptile, every dead and living thing that Irazu has borne, or still gives birth to. Intelligent in the highest degree, his brain is as quick as his foot, and that has the elasticity of the deer and the glancing speed of the arrow. For years he has tracked the tiger through the oaks that shelter the *potrero* of Cerado, and elsewhere have root in the rude breast of Irazu, and has wet the lava with the blood of the prowler. Hence he is known as the Tiger-Hunter. Far and wide that is his recognized title.

Two o'clock in the morning—having had a cup of delicious chocolate made for us by Manuela and Rafaela, the Rose and Blanche of our wandering story—we left the house at Cerado. A few paces plunged us into the heart of the forest. It was pitch-dark. There was nothing to light us but the lamp of the Tiger-hunter. For an hour and more, it seemed as though we were making our way through a subterranean passage. There was the precarious glimmering

of the blurred lamp—there were the foot-falls of the mules—there was the rustling of the leaves and the crackling of the branches as we brushed or struck against them—there was at times, far apart, the cry or whistle of some solitary bird. Had sheeted skeletons, grinning and glaring, come upon us, we should not have been surprised. Moving up so long through this flickering darkness, we had come to regard ourselves as spectres or outlaws of the earth, and any kindred apparition, instead of striking us with dismay, would have been welcomed with a wild and lawless sympathy. When we least dreamed of it, however, the forest opened—tore asunder as it were—and through the light of the mellowed moon, we looked down toward the valley out of which we had come. Clouds were over it. They were white clouds—clouds of the purest fleece and swan-down one would think—and the light of the mellowed moon, pouring down upon them, made them look like crystal hills veined with gold, rising from an unfathomable lake.

But it was the vision of a moment only. The forest closed upon us as suddenly as it had opened, and there we were, for another hour or more, through the same low, dark, narrow passage as before, stumbling over stones, striking against branches, crouching lest we might be swept off and out of our saddles, coming every now and then to a halt, and leaving the patient mules to their sure instinct. And, finally, the branches growing thicker and spreading themselves lower down—the path narrowing—the bare and brawny roots tripping us up at every step—the stirrup-leathers catching in the thorny undergrowth, the arbutus-briers and yellow-leaved *composita* interwoven with fern and dwarf laurel—forced, at last, to dismount and drag the mules after us—in the end, scaling a perpendicular ladder a thousand feet high, the rungs of which were fallen trees, deep ruts, shelving stones and rocks—there we were, another hour or more, toiling and aching in the dense darkness—Benito, the Tiger-hunter, with his quivering blurred lamp, phantom-like, leading the way.

A second time, suddenly emerging from the forest, in which we left the blackness of the night imprisoned, there broke the light of morning over us on the bleak dumb ridge of Irazu!

Below us were the dismantled white towers and emerald valley of Cartago—below us were the seven hills and gardens of Paraiso—below us were the three rivers, the ancient Indian village, and the sloping forests of Orosi—below us were the mountains of the Agua Caliente and the nobler Candellaria—beyond us, and above, was the supreme Andean Chain itself. But neither dismantled white tower, nor emerald valley, nor river, nor forest, nor ancient Indian village, nor mountain, nor Andean Chain itself was visible. From the silent, cold, desolate height on which we stood, nothing was to be seen but a wilderness of the whitest clouds—nothing was to be seen but an illimitable frozen sea, through which, as the sun ascended, the isolated peaks, and then the surging ridges of

the loftier mountains, one by one, as though they were newly-discovered cliffs and islands, rose up and glittered. And then—as we breathlessly gazed upon it, and our eyes filled up with dazzling tears, and we sank upon the ashes subdued by fatigue, and from sharp cold and overstraining were incapable of speech, and well-nigh were deprived of vision—over this frozen sea there floated an enormous purple cloud streaked with crimson. A dismayed war-ship, it seemed to us, drifting through fields of ice and icebergs into the Antarctic solitudes. After all our climbing—after all our groping in the dark—after all our stumbling over stones and roots—after all our scrambling through thick-set oaks, fern, dwarf-laurel and arbutus-briers—after all our ups and downs, fears and superstitions, pervading shadows and sudden lights, swimming eyes and reeling brains—behold our goal and recompense in the crater of Irazu!

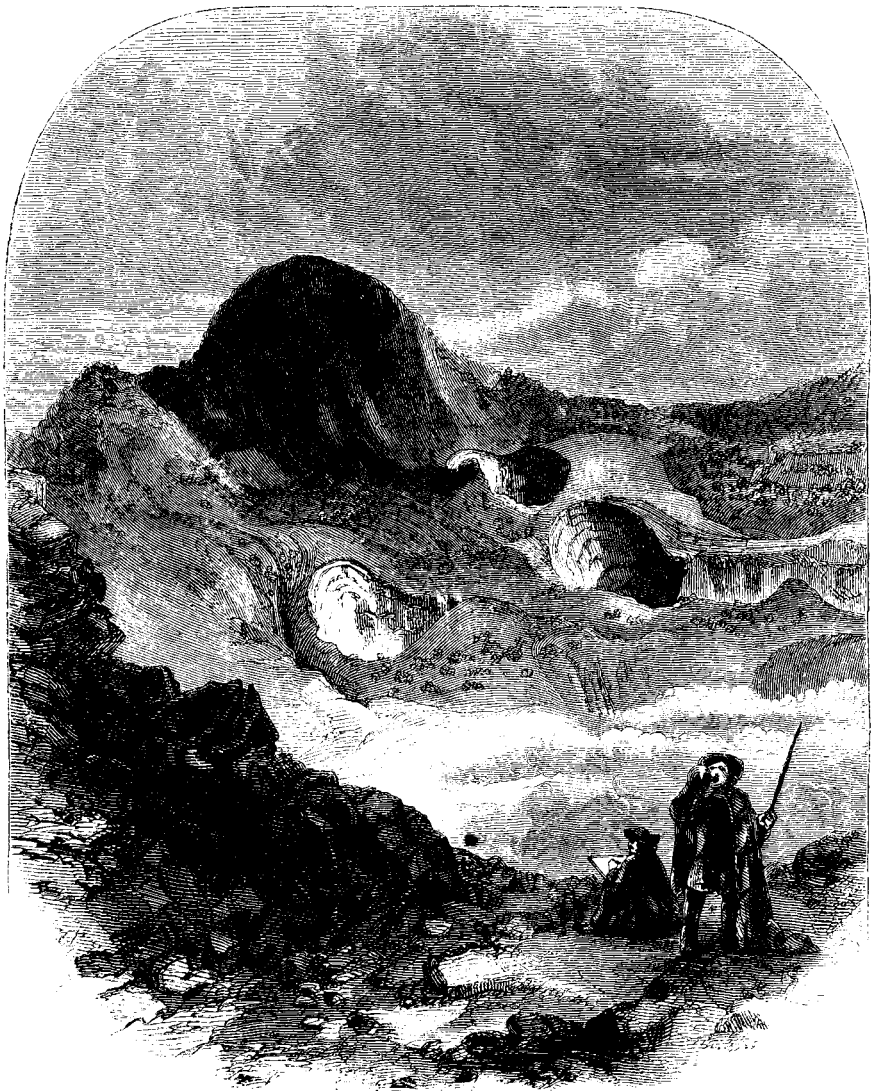
Exhausted with its convulsions, it yawns there calmly, though coldly and dismally, in the pure sweet light of the morning, the Gladiator in Repose!

Standing with folded arms on the brink of that abyss, what is the thought that overwhelms and subjugates the mind? It is that of terrific strength entranced in solitude. Standing there, you feel as though you had been spirited from the living world, and were in the presence of a creation, which, thousands of years ago, had been lost, and which it had been reserved for you to find, or which, glowing for the first time with the breath of the Creator, was not yet perfect, and had still to be divulged.

It grows brighter and warmer, however, and the sensations and fancies the vision first excited, having like a wild throbbing sea gone down, you become reconciled to and familiar with the place—at home, in fact, though frightfully out of the way—and wrapping your blue or red California blanket about you, for there's nothing in this miserable world comparable to it when one's up in the clouds—you commence to take outlines and notes. Don Ramon and Don Francisco, steadying themselves a little, attempted to do so. But, first of all, they found they had to take Something.

What is Something?

It depends on tastes and is controlled by circumstances. Under these conditions, it may be Cogniac, or Monongahela, brown Sherry, Apple-Jack, Jersey-Lightning, Bourbon or Catawba. With us it was old Scotch whisky. And that old Scotch whisky, at that moment, was to us what the *amrita*—the Drink of Immortality administered by the Mystic Sisters—was to the warriors of the Sanscrit Mythology. Invigorated and enlivened by it, what was it we penciled off and noted down? Why this—that we were in the crater of Irazu, which had so horribly disgorged itself in 1723, and had ever since kept grumbling to the disquietude and dismay of thousands—that the crater was an amphitheatre with broken walls, 7500 feet in circumference, throwing up a cone of ashes and *rapilli*,



THE CRATER OF IRAZU.

1000 feet in height—that the floor on which we stood had exploded, or caved in, to the depth of 50 fathoms—that in the lower floor, loose and shelving as it was, there were four openings, out of one of which came puffs of sulphureous smoke—that we had been warned not to descend, for though the descent was easy, the ascent, owing to the shifting lava-sand, was exhausting in the extreme, if it was not fatally impracticable—that in the last eruption, that of 1841, the flood of lava had rushed over a precipice of 2000 feet, had spent itself in the densely-wooded wilderness to the North, and thus spared the city and the valley of Cartago, sprinkling, instead of deluging, the latter in its ravenous ebullition—this is what we penciled off and noted down. Had the

weather been clearer, in one glance we might have seen the two great oceans, the Atlantic and Pacific. This is the crowning recompense of the ascent of Irazu. But John L. Stephens was more fortunate, and he has left us, in his clear and vivid words, the impression of what he saw and felt, when, as we did, he stood on the ridge, and looked out, wide over the remote world, from the crater of Irazu.

The Padre Acuña lives in a little house in the village of Paraiso, six miles from Cartago. Suggestive of supreme felicity and beauty, the name given to this village is gratuitously bestowed. A few tattered huts perched on half a dozen steep hills—the hills scarred by rough streams and knotted with boulders flung about on all sides—

banana-patches and bean-fields—these are the features of this new Eden. One of the most exemplary, the Padre Acuña is, at the same time, one of the most enlightened of the Costa Rican priests. Several years stationed as a Missionary among the Indians in the lower portion of the country—that, immediately back of the Gulf of Dulce—he has become an authority on the aboriginal tribes and vestiges of Costa Rica. For hours, in his cobwebbed cage of a room, we have sat and listened to him, as, seated in an arm-chair scooped out of a huge block of mahogany and draped with a tiger-skin, he discoursed quietly and fluently on this subject, snuffing and smoking all the while. The last visit we paid him, he gave his friends from New York, the exiles of Venezuela and Erin, all the Indian relics he had. These he discovered in what appeared to be a burial-place, a little off the remains of an ancient road, in the neighborhood of Paraiso. Built by the Indians, long before the Spaniards came, this road is supposed to have connected Cartago with the Port of Matina. Twelve yards in breadth, paved with rounded blocks of lava-stone, the causeway is protected on both sides by a sloping wall of the same material, three feet high. So far as it has been traced, it appears to have had no bridges, nor does it take a circuitous route. Whenever a ravine intercepts it, the road descends by a series of well-set massive steps, and in the same way mounts the opposing bank or cliff. It is a broken link, the Padre Acuña says, of a great chain of roads, in use for ages before the Spanish Conquest, which traversed the country from the Nicaraguan to, what is now the New Granadan frontier, and at this point threw off smaller chains to the Atlantic coast. That a populous empire flourished in Costa Rica, in days of which no authentic record, nor a dim tradition even, now exists—that the chief seat or centre of this empire was where the obscure small-poxed village of Terraba now stands, and that the immense plains of Terraba, thickly dotted with *tumuli*, abounding in relics similar to those found in the neighborhood of Paraiso, bear out this surmise—that an empire, of which these memorials have come to light, was pillared, stood erect and crested, among the mountains of Costa Rica—this the Padre Acuña holds to be a fact susceptible of substantial proof, if the country was but partially, even partially, explored.

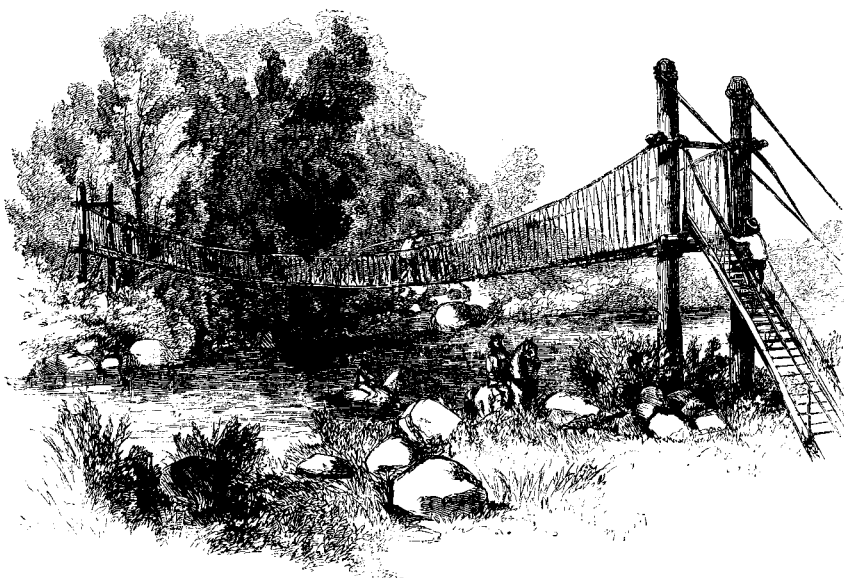
Accompanied by this zealous antiquarian—who, by-the-by, confidentially advised Don Ramon, as a mollifying precaution, not to take off a stitch of his clothes from one end of the week to the other, when the latter with tears in his eyes complained of the ex-

asperation which the fleas of the valley of Cartago inappeasably caused him—the evening after our descent from the crater of Irazu, we set out for the valley of Orosi, in which a remnant of an Indian tribe still flickers.

Exquisitely green and glorious as the valley of Cartago is, the valley of Orosi infinitely surpasses it. Gazing at it from the full bold brow of the *serrito* of Paraiso—looking away down to the white ruins of Ujarras, the oldest footprints of the Spaniard in these solitudes—following, far below, the hurrying waters that pervade the scene with light and music—looking above to the mountains, until the eye ached with their immensity—gazing intently at it all, unconsciously, as though we were in a dream and spell-bound, we descended. Down the steep and winding road, the gentle horses picked their steps with care, as though they knew there were stargazers and wonder-seekers on their backs. Down they paced it, until we woke up and found the commingled waters of three rivers—the Navaro, the Agua Caliente, the Naranjo, or the River of Oranges—rushing at our feet—rushing to the Rio Grande, a broad, swift, lustrous, sea-green stream, flecked with foam, which divides the valley. Escaping from the valley, the Rio Grande loses itself in the Reventazon, one of the wildest and fiercest torrents to which the volcanic heights of this lonesome, glorious region give birth. It is stocked with a delicious fish—the whitest and creamiest fish conceivable. In contradictory recognition of its shrewd sprightliness—for it is to be caught neither by hook nor by crook, neither with fly nor worm—the Indians call it the *bobo*, which means *the stupid fish*. They shoot it with the arrow, as it comes to feed on the tender sweet moss which grows along the water-line of the rocks in the river.



SHOOTING FISH.

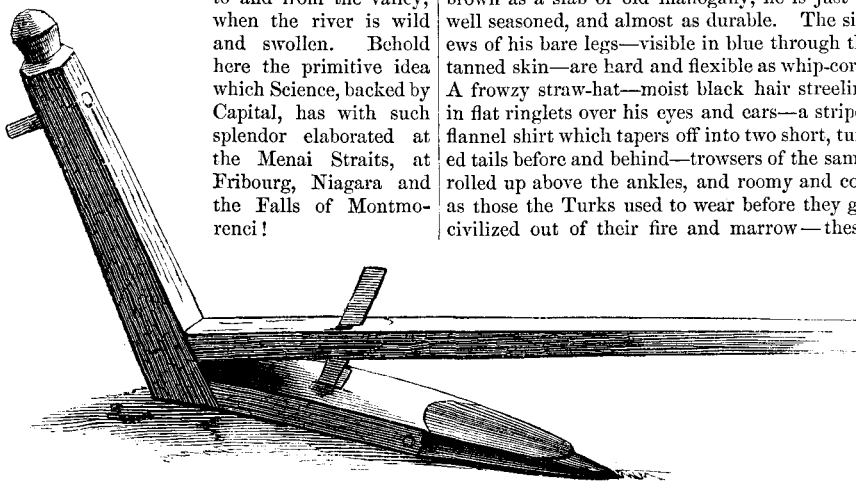


HAMMOCK BRIDGE.

Looking up and out from the trees, covered with gorgeous parasites and festooned with trailing vines, which luxuriantly cooled and perfumed the last few perches of our road to the rivers, we found ourselves in front of a Suspension Bridge which none can cross on horseback. This Suspension Bridge is the work of the Indians of Orosi. It is called the Hammock Bridge. There are four upright posts of the hardest timber—two on each bank of the river, four feet apart—and these rude piers are connected by ropes or chains of iron-wire. Tough and durable as the latter are, the Indians carefully renew them every three years, for it is across this bridge alone they can make their way,

to and from the valley, when the river is wild and swollen. Behold here the primitive idea which Science, backed by Capital, has with such splendor elaborated at the Menai Straits, at Fribourg, Niagara and the Falls of Montmorenci!

With the water up to our saddle-girths, having forded the Naranjo and spurred into a thicket, we suddenly pulled up, for an Indian, the color of new copper, thrusting his shaggy head through a fence of *piti* plant, saluted us warmly. The son of a deceased King, his father was an extensive landed-proprietor in this part of the country, a few years ago, and owned several hundred head of cattle. His offspring is a reduced gentleman, however, and lays claim to a few bananas and sugar-canes only. His name is Pedro. Notwithstanding the two-and-sixty years he has served on earth, Pedro is active. In this respect not one of his brethren, kindred aristocracy or tribe, is comparable to him. As brown as a slab of old mahogany, he is just as well seasoned, and almost as durable. The sinews of his bare legs—visible in blue through the tanned skin—are hard and flexible as whip-cord. A frowzy straw-hat—moist black hair streeling in flat ringlets over his eyes and ears—a striped flannel shirt which tapers off into two short, tufted tails before and behind—trowsers of the same, rolled up above the ankles, and roomy and cool as those the Turks used to wear before they got civilized out of their fire and marrow—these.



PRIMITIVE PLOW.



POUNDING COFFEE.

with a knife like a cimeter, and a calabash slung over his shoulder, whenever he goes on a hunt or a foray, complete the outfit and costume of the Royal vagabond whom the Republican rambles this evening fell in with, and, as their guide, philosopher and friend, shortly enlisted.

The morning this enlistment took place Pedro was outside his hut, pounding a fistful of coffee in a mortar the size of a lime-kiln. It was a wooden mortar, dug out of some monstrous cedar, and the pestle was fully the length, and more than the bulk, of pavior's rammer.

On the wealthier plantations this primitive contrivance, sharing the fate of the patriarchal plow of the country, has been superseded by the daintiest and surest machinery. Imported from England, the names of Messrs. Barnes and Co., graven on plates of polished brass, are household names in the valleys of Cartago and San José, associated as they are with the *elaboracion* of the staple crop of Costa Rica. But Pedro has for antiquity an immutable reverence, and his poverty, disowning these innovations, inspires him with the dignity of labor, while it restricts him to its muscular exploits. We took him for our guide, for his knowledge of the forests and

mountains in the neighborhood of Orosi was keen and serviceable, from the fact that, for little less than half a century, he has hunted the wild hog through them, and from boyhood has lived like a prince on fried bananas and pork.

A dozen huts, built of the flimsiest materials, scattered over the valley, are all that remain of the ancient village or mission of Orosi, besides the Church and an abandoned Convent. These last-mentioned buildings are upward of one hundred and sixty years old. In 1841, while houses and trees were falling all round and in every direction, and the very mountains themselves were rent asunder, the Church and Convent stood firm, the Padre Acuña told us. It was a miraculous exemption. This, at all events, was his conviction, and the exemplary priest avowed it

with a mild solemnity of tone and gesture. A few torn books, lying on a shelf in a mouldy recess, and a wasp's nest of loathsome bulk, in and out of which the plagues incessantly buzzed, were the only objects of interest the Convent contained. The books were in Latin—odd numbers of The Fathers. The Church is very dark, very moist, and smells like an old sepulchre. But it is full of treasures. There are eight silver candlesticks, a lamp containing thirty pounds of silver, and a crucifix of the same, six feet high. There are *reliquaries* inlaid with pearls and rubies, *monstrariums* of gold, illuminated Missals massively clasped with gold and studded with carbuncles; and all these treasures, the Padre Acuña informed us, were safe in the hands of the poor Indians of Orosi. There are, also, within the Sanctuary, three arm-chairs with gilt legs and arms, the backs and bottoms being covered with crimson gilt leather. They are very solid, very quaint, and very rich. The pulpit is in a different style, and would come to the ground under any elocutionist who, framed and fired as the preacher in Hudibras, should denounce the Devil upon it with appropriate zeal.

Their pious guardianship of the treasures of

the little Church was all that we heard to the credit, or in any way interesting, of the Indians of Orosi. We were told they were idle and ignorant to excess. We were told they were meanly cunning, and toward profane things, of every description, were thievishly disposed. The Padre Acuña, and other reliable gentlemen, told us all this. A glance convinced us they were slovenly, ugly, and woeful, did little or nothing for their living, while they knew and cared as much about Costa Rica as they did about Lapland. When, for instance, we asked Pedro, the son of the deceased King, if he remembered the time the Spaniards were there, he opened his mouth, gaped, stared, and scratched his sudoriferous old scone, as though we had propounded him a problem in Euclid.

"What Spaniards?" he laughed out at last.

We endeavored to explain. But Pedro knew nothing about them—not an iota—never knew there had been such people as Spaniards in the country. Now this was rather unpardonable, for the Spaniards "vamosed the ranch" in 1821 only, and Pedro, as I have already divulged, was two-and-sixty years old when the question was put to him.

When I mention they have an *alcalde* of their own, and are exempt from military duty, I mention every thing that concerns, in any noticeable way, the Indians of Orosi; and what I have placed to their account will suffice for all the other Indian tribes and villages within the limits of Costa Rica, the Talamancas and the Guatusos only being excepted.

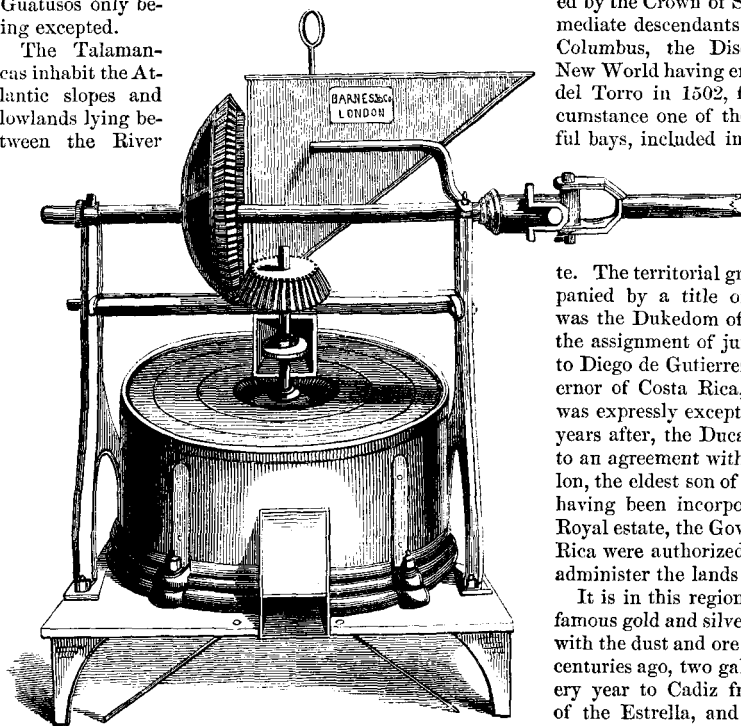
The Talamancas inhabit the Atlantic slopes and lowlands lying between the River

Estrella, flowing into the Boca del Toro, and the River Matina. In the month of August, 1610, stung to the quick by the rapacities and cruelties of the Spaniards, the Talamancas suddenly rose against and massacred the inhabitants of the city of San Jago de Talamanca, which stood on the left bank of the Estrella, pouring melted gold down the throats of those who had rendered themselves most hateful, and in one overwhelming carnage confounding men, women, priests, and children. Partially subdued, in 1660, by Don Rodrigo Maldonado, who fitted out an armed expedition against them and rebuilt the city of San Jago, the Talamancas rose again, in 1707, and again, with knife, and melted gold, and devouring torch, made war against the stranger. It was a war of extermination, and it was complete. The city of San Jago, the castle of San Ildefonso, the gold mines and gold washings of the Estrella, are this day little else than faint traditions. Since 1707, no attempt of any consequence being made to subjugate or in any way control them, the Talamancas, according to the Notes of the Missionaries which appeared, eight years ago, in the *Gaceta Semanario de Costa Rica*, relapsed into Heathenism, and to this hour have lived in a state of savage freedom. Such is the language of the papers referred to. They are represented with a mild disposition, however, and nowise offensive or unfriendly to any strangers who may chance to enter their territory. The region they inhabit is one of high historical interest. It comprehends the lands grant-

ed by the Crown of Spain to the immediate descendants of Christopher Columbus, the Discoverer of the New World having entered the Boca del Torro in 1502, from which circumstance one of the many beautiful bays, included in this unrivaled harbor, has ever since been known as the Bahia del Almirante.

The territorial grant was accompanied by a title of nobility. It was the Dukedom of Veragua. In the assignment of jurisdiction made to Diego de Gutierrez, the first Governor of Costa Rica, the Dukedom was expressly excepted. But a few years after, the Ducal estate, owing to an agreement with Don Luis Colon, the eldest son of the Discoverer, having been incorporated with the Royal estate, the Governors of Costa Rica were authorized to occupy and administer the lands aforesaid.

It is in this region, also, that the famous gold and silver mines—laden with the dust and ore of which, three centuries ago, two galleons sailed every year to Cadiz from the mouth of the Estrella, and the wealth of which acquired for the coast, and



COFFEE-MILL.

eventually for the entire country, the name of Costa Rica—are said to have been situated. After the massacre of 1707, all traces of them were lost however. The impenetrable forest blotted out the footprints of the Spaniards—utterly, and it may be forever, effaced them—and all they know in Costa Rica, and elsewhere, of the wondrous mines of Estrella and Tisingal, is what the popular traditions and the fancies of the Indians furnish.

"The region is barren," writes a Missionary Priest, in 1636, to the College of the Propaganda, "but it can not be doubted that many rich mines exist in it—in particular, we have accounts of a rich silver mine existing in a hill called San Mateo, from which large quantities of ore were taken in the last century—and I have myself been told, by a converted Indian, that the Cabecaras of the present day relate, that, after the massacre of the Spaniards, in 1610, vast quantities of gold were thrown into a lake where they still remain."

Before I left San José, I was informed that a document, throwing considerable light on the whereabouts of these lost treasures, was supposed to have found its way, several years ago, into the archives at Havana, and that President Mora had dispatched a secret agent to hunt it up. Should the document transpire and afford the coveted information, Costa Rica will need no more loans from Chili, the House of Vandebilt, Hamburg, or Peru.

Well worth noticing in a special manner, besides the Talamancas there are, as I have said, the Guatusos of the River Frio, so called from the coldness of its waters. This river, rising in the Northern mountains of Costa Rica, falls into Lake Nicaragua, just opposite Fort San Carlos. To the White race, the valley of the Frio has been, for three hundred years and more, and is to this day, a mystery. Who they are that dwell there—how they dwell—what their blood, religion, tongue and customs are, and whence they came—no one can tell. All we know for certain is, that they seem from the beginning to have sworn that no one, not born of them and among them, shall set foot within their mysterious domain. Fiercely have they repelled and punished those, who, from without, have sought admission. Armed expeditions even—that of 1783, projected by Tristan, Bishop of Nicaragua, and that of 1849, led by Trinidad Salazar of the same Republic—penetrating from the Lake, have been boldly met and driven back. Catholic Missionaries, who peacefully entered, appear to have fared no better. They appear rather to have gone farther and fared worse. They have never been known to come out. The Illustrious, Don Francisco de Paula Garcia Pelaez, alluding to this fact in his "History of Guatemala," writes that "it was as if those mountains were the Gates of Hell from within which there was no redemption." So many good Priests disappeared in this way, the See of Rome, about a century and a half ago, saw fit to forbid the inscrutable region the benefit of clergy. No

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more Priests were permitted to enter it. Mr. Squier inclines to the belief, that the Guatusos are Nahuatl, or people of the true Aztec stock, and that they remain as little known, and as undisturbed to-day, as they were at the period of the Spanish Conquest. The latest information, respecting them, appeared in the *Cronica de Costa Rica*, December the 9th, 1857. It was furnished by an officer in the Costa Rican service.

"Between the peaks of the lofty volcanoes of Miravalles and Orosi, and the River San Carlos, there extends a vast plain inhabited by the Indians, commonly called the Guatusos. It is pretended that this tribe is descended from the Colonists who fled from Esparza, when that city was taken by the Filibusters of antiquity. Such as have chanced to see them, affirm that they are white, bearded, and practiced in a certain system of military discipline. Foreign to Costa Rica, and yet inhabiting one of the richest and most useful zones of its territory, this people greatly piqued our curiosity when we accompanied the expedition against the modern Filibusters on the River San Juan. Twice we accompanied the General up the Rio Frio, with the intention of exploring the territory, but without finding a landing-place. After the termination of the campaign, Colonel Lorenzo Salazar ascended the river, three leagues, in the steamer *Bulwer*, but was compelled by superior orders to return."

The statement, that the Guatusos are white, corresponds with what the Expeditionists of 1783, headed by the Bishop of Nicaragua, who ascended the River Frio for fourteen days, and, at last, came upon three of these Indians in a shady bend of the river, report them to have been, namely, "of good size and white skin."

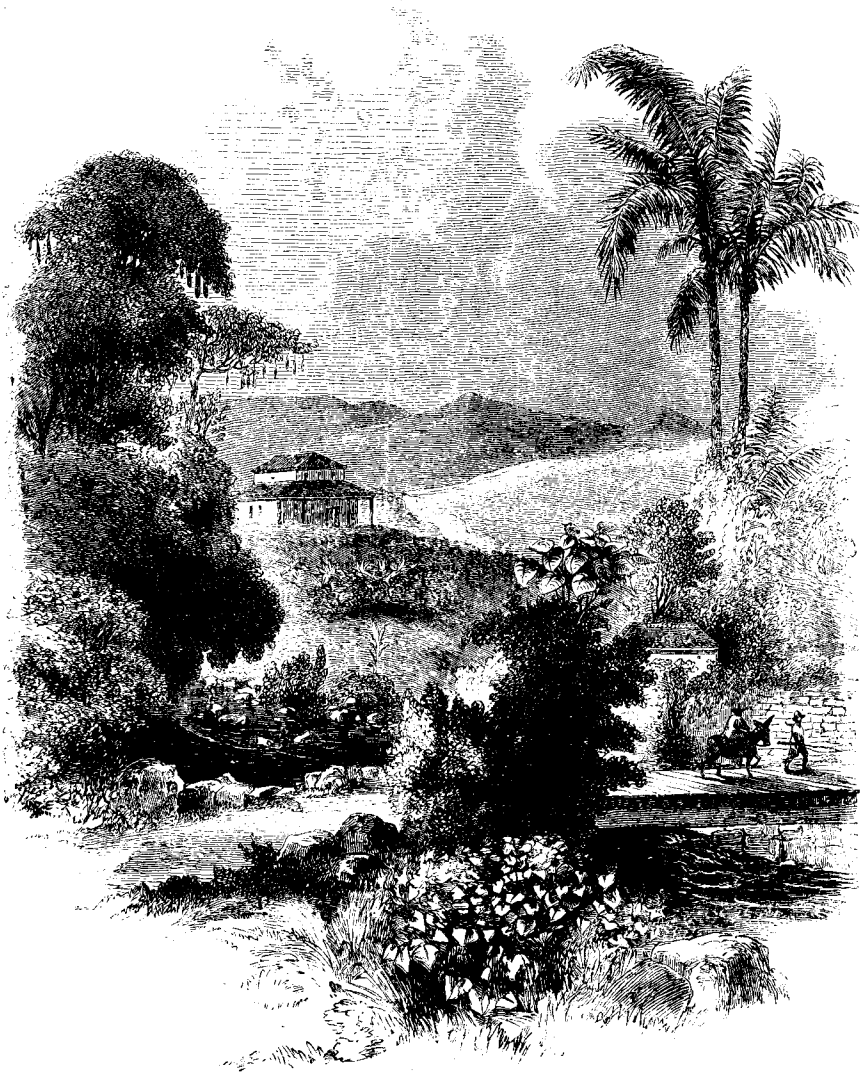
Last of all, it may be interesting to mention, that, the night we were at Esparza, we made the acquaintance of a Lieutenant-Colonel, who accompanied the Costa Rican Division, which, under Colonel George Cauty, descended the mountains to the Northeast, beyond Alajuela, and through the San Carlos entered the San Juan, the time the steamboats, the forts, and every thing else in possession of General Walker's forces, were brilliantly taken. As the rear-guard of this division was passing the forest, between the head-waters of the Frio and those of the San Carlos, it was struck by a shower of arrows from the thickets. The rear-guard replied with musket and Minié balls. There was a piercing shriek from the forest, the branches crackling as though there was something rushing through them. The soldiers advanced in the direction from which the arrows had been winged, and, having cut their way with their *machetas* through the underwood, came upon the body of a beautiful woman, which was almost naked, was perfectly white and exquisitely shaped. She had been mortally wounded. Full and fast the red tide was streaming from her breast, and for the soldiers, who gently lifted her up, she had neither a word nor a glance before her head fell back, and she was dead. The

crackling of the branches still continuing, they listened breathlessly, and looked with the eyes of hawks into the forest. But they had to resume the march. It was fatal to loiter or diverge. And so, burying the beautiful white corpse in the fragrant heart of the forest, they went on, sadly and solemnly impressed with the belief, that there is a mystery in the stern shadows of the volcanoes of Miravalles and Orosi, and in the depths of the valley of those cold waters, which has yet to see the light.

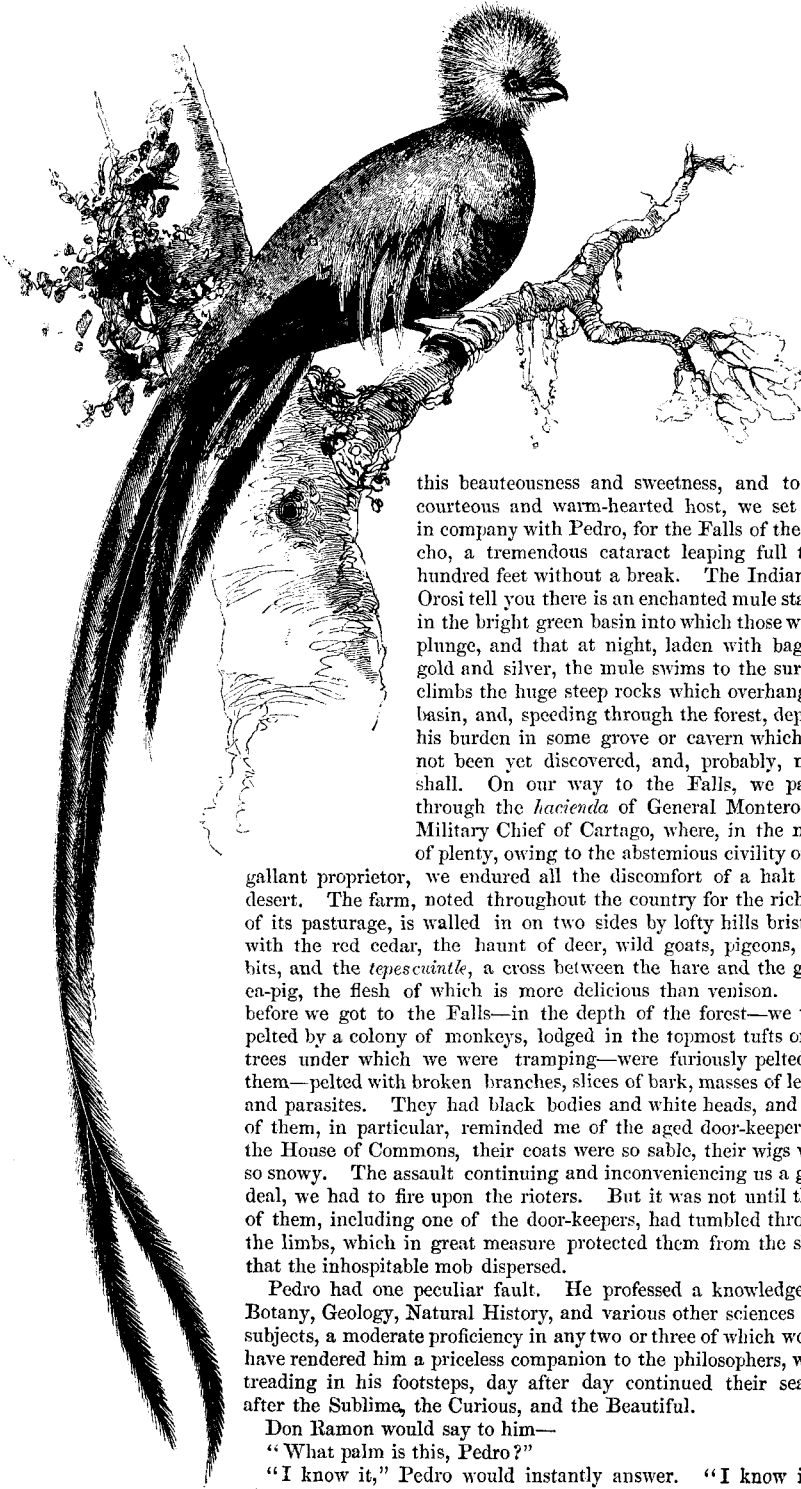
Riding up a gorge, through which the River of Oranges brawls and tumbles, we reached the gate of the *hacienda* of Navaro, just about sundown, the evening of our visit to the valley of Orosi. It is a beauteous English home, deep-set in the heart of the mountains of Costa Rica.

Invited by the owner, Mr. Young Anderson, who kindly accompanied us from Cartago, we dismounted at the gate, and two Indian boys, smeared and sweltering urchins of the tribe of Orosi, led off the horses to the *potrero*. The house stands upon a little hill, round and green as an Irish *rath*, overlooking the commingling waters of the Navaro and the Agua Caliente, and a garden surfeited with pine-apples, sweet lemons, oranges, quinces and mangoes. Snowdrops, dahlias, red lilies, arborescent ferns and the lordliest palms abound there, while, high over all, rises the *tirra*, with its sheathing of silver bark, festooned with the grass-woven nests of the *oropendola*, a bird of subdued but lustrous plumage.

Early next morning, bidding good-by to all



HACIENDA OF NAVARO.



THE QUEZAL.

this beauteousness and sweetness, and to our courteous and warm-hearted host, we set out, in company with Pedro, for the Falls of the Macho, a tremendous cataract leaping full three hundred feet without a break. The Indians of Orosi tell you there is an enchanted mule stabled in the bright green basin into which those waters plunge, and that at night, laden with bags of gold and silver, the mule swims to the surface, climbs the huge steep rocks which overhang the basin, and, speeding through the forest, deposits his burden in some grove or cavern which has not been yet discovered, and, probably, never shall. On our way to the Falls, we passed through the *hacienda* of General Montero, the Military Chief of Cartago, where, in the midst of plenty, owing to the abstemious civility of the

gallant proprietor, we endured all the discomfort of a halt in a desert. The farm, noted throughout the country for the richness of its pasturage, is walled in on two sides by lofty hills bristling with the red cedar, the haunt of deer, wild goats, pigeons, rabbits, and the *tepesquintle*, a cross between the hare and the guinea-pig, the flesh of which is more delicious than venison. Just before we got to the Falls—in the depth of the forest—we were pelted by a colony of monkeys, lodged in the topmost tufts of the trees under which we were tramping—were furiously pelted by them—pelted with broken branches, slices of bark, masses of leaves and parasites. They had black bodies and white heads, and two of them, in particular, reminded me of the aged door-keepers of the House of Commons, their coats were so sable, their wigs were so snowy. The assault continuing and inconveniencing us a good deal, we had to fire upon the rioters. But it was not until three of them, including one of the door-keepers, had tumbled through the limbs, which in great measure protected them from the shot, that the inhospitable mob dispersed.

Pedro had one peculiar fault. He professed a knowledge of Botany, Geology, Natural History, and various other sciences and subjects, a moderate proficiency in any two or three of which would have rendered him a priceless companion to the philosophers, who, treading in his footsteps, day after day continued their search after the Sublime, the Curious, and the Beautiful.

Don Ramon would say to him—

“What palm is this, Pedro?”

“I know it,” Pedro would instantly answer. “I know it—’tis a palm.”

"And this—what bird is this, Pedro?"

"I know it—'tis a bird," the impostor would blandly reply.

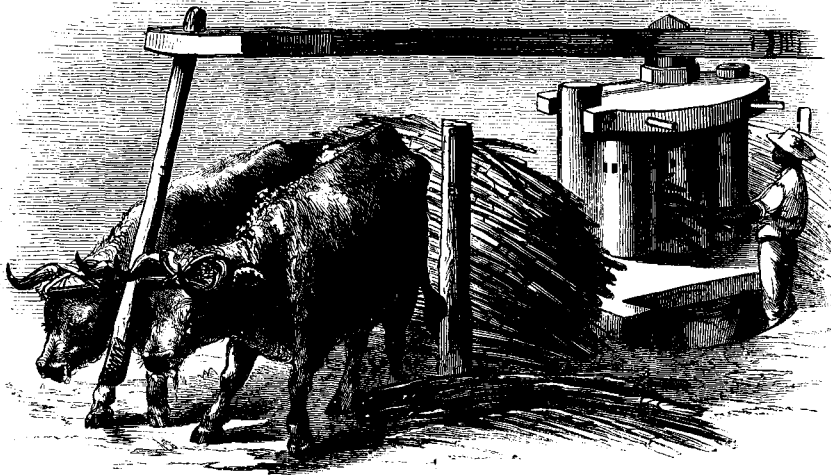
This, at first, was vexatious. But his good-nature soon coaxed us to forgive him, and, in the end, we came to the conclusion that Pedro was perfect. Under his guidance, and with his sure help, we made our way to many a beautiful, lonesome, glorious spot, across the swift cold torrent and the black ravine, along the face of the yielding precipice and up and down the aching mountain, through dense shrubberies and sombre forests. Through forests where the *Quezal*—the bird of white and crimson, of green and golden plumage—the sacred and imperial bird of Mexico, whose slender palm-like feathers, often found four feet in length, none save the Emperors were permitted to wear—like a meteor, colored with the rainbow, flashes through the foliage of the loftiest cedar. Through forests where we sometimes, though at long intervals apart, came across the *mica*, or the whipping-snake, which, when irritated, fixes its head flat upon the ground, and lashes out right and left with its body, blistering one as a bunch of nettles would—or where, at other times, we came across the harmless and beautiful coral-snake, with its black and vermillion scales set in alternate rings—and once were pointed out the *vivora de sangre*, the deadliest of reptiles, the bite of which causes the blood of the victim, be it man or brute, to break forth and exhaust itself to the last drop, in an intense sweat, through every pore.

Crossing the valley of Ujarras, we visited the coffee-plantation of Dr. George Guirey, of Philadelphia, where we met with a cordial hospitality, encountered another colony of monkeys, who furiously evinced on our heads their aversion to foreigners, visited the Falls of the Berbis—grandeur still than those of the Macho, the torrent, leaping from the abrupt ledge above, being but a

misty speck in the chasm, five hundred feet below—and where we ate, drank, talked preposterous politics, shouted the *Marsellaise*, spread ourselves on Manifest Destiny and ox-hides, smoked, drank again, and finally fell off to sleep to the roar of the Reventazon.

Starting from the Doctor's at sunrise, we traveled for miles with Pedro over a narrow quagmire running along the face of the mountains of Cervantes. Gigantic laurels, arborescent ferns, oaks and cedars, wild fig-trees of enormous girth, overspread the soaking path, entangled or towered above it, while, here and there, streams gurgled across it, tumbling into the precipice we overlooked, the profound silence, at times, being broken only by the shrill clarion-notes of the wild turkey, the nervous springing of the deer through the thickets, the booming of the wild peacock, the creaking of the *trapiche*, crushing the sugar-cane in some lonesome clearing in the forest, the cavernous voices of the howling monkeys, or the rumbling of distant thunder. As the day brightened, we entered the sugar-plantation of Naranjo, one of the finest in the country, and breakfasted there on oranges, plucking the fruit from the tree, without dismounting from our mules. This over, away we went, down a break-neck hill, the vegetation growing ranker and the air more sultry, until, at last, looking up from the valley into which we had descended, we beheld the volcano of Turrialba—the volcano of the White Tower—with its vast pillar of smoke and fire, belted with an impervious forest of palm—remote, mysterious, awe-inspiring, inaccessible it is said—looming against the sky!

That volcano is a terror to the people—the burning agony of it is incessant—no human foot has scaled it—none have dared the exploit—and the poor Indian, with his clouded brain growing darker and stormier with the belief, tells you that the Great Fiend dwells there, and that they are



SUGAR-MILL.

lost who venture to ascend. The dense primeval forest, the ravines and chasms, the vast fields of lava, the perpendicular bare smooth rock, springing up several feet from them to the lips of the surging crater—all which are clearly visible from below—these are what to this day have rendered it fearful and inscrutable.

Three weeks after our ride to the valley of Turrialba, I had crossed the Cordilleras, and, having descended the road to La Muelle, and thence floated down the Serapiqui and San Juan in a *bungo* to Greytown, I was on board the *James-town*, U. S. sloop of war, the guest of her genial and accomplished Captain. Don Ramon had returned to Panama by the route we had come.

Looking back toward the mountains, among which we had spent these pleasant Holidays, I saw the volcano of the White Tower, high in the Heavens, burning in the gray light of the dawn, in another world it seemed to me, so remote and isolated was it. That it was unknown as though it belonged in reality to another world, millions of miles away, and that they, who lived nearest to it, were those who most feared to tempt the solitude which invests it, and that it stands there, to this hour, in its unviolated grandeur, exciting, while it repels, the curiosity and hardihood of those who would add it as another trophy to the conquests of Science and the audacity of the Age, I could not help feeling sad and abashed to think. But, when my thoughts reverted to the country of which the Flag, above me, was the glowing type, and when the exploits of her explorers at the same time recurred to me, and her pioneers and fleets crowded upon my vision, the conviction arose within me, that the day will come when the gold of the Estrella shall return to light, and the secrets of the valley of the Frio shall be made known, and Turrialba shall be scaled. In that pillar of smoke by day—in that pillar of flame by night—I read the sublime promise of confirmed liberty to the land, wealth and power, instead of comparative insignificance and humble fortunes, the wilderness a garden, and for mankind, going up there from the ends of the earth to the high places thereof, a purer happiness, a statelier altitude, and a brighter aspect.

Inwardly to behold this vision, and boldly to disclose it, no gift of prophecy, no hazardous philosophy, deducing its predictions from the laws of science or the analysis of human progress, not even that spirit of poetry, which sometimes gives to the illiterate the wisdom of the philosopher and to the profane the infallibility of the prophet, is wanting. From the great Book of Nature, which is open to all, which all can read, and from which the humblest mind seldom fails to derive lessons of high hopefulness and expansive forethought, for the land of the vanished Aztec I predict an unexampled renovation.

A permanent barrier to the encroachments of the two great seas, and gradually rising from their level in a series of ample terraces, each exhibiting its peculiar forms of animal and vegetable life, each its peculiar soil and climate, each its adaptability for some special physical condition,

thus, step by step, developing the whole phenomena of creation, until, as in Costa Rica, at a height varying from three to four and six thousand feet, it rolls off into extensive *plateaus* or table-lands, divided by parallel and intersecting chains of mountains, crowned with fortresses like that of Turrialba, and pouring down, on their errands of health and fruitfulness, waters that never fail, Central America presents, in the language of Señor Astaburuaga, to the lover of nature, to the man of science, to the agriculturist, to those who prefer the pastoral cares, to those who covet the precious metals, to the merchant, the most ambitious and insatiable, as, indeed, to the industrious and adventurous of every denomination, a field of incomparable novelty and exhaustless wealth. In a word, the forests, the rivers, the mines, the valleys with which it abounds—all teeming and overflowing with the treasures of nature—constitute it in itself a New World, which, in the partial obscurity that encompasses it, seems to have been reserved, by a Providence of infinite views, for future generations, and for an exhibition of happiness and glory which shall transcend the fortunes and achievements of this day, justly prized and applauded as they are.

A PICTURE.

UPON her pale cheek, day by day,
No tender rosy blushes play;
The shadows gathered in her hair
Lie soft above her forehead fair—
A frailer shade is she.

No footstep on the stones goes by
But strikes a fire across her eye;
No sudden voice a word can speak
But flashes red light on her cheek—
Such guards her quick thoughts be.

All day she sees the sullen rain
Splash slow against the window-pane,
All night the south wind makes its moan
About her chamber low and lone;
She can not die nor rest.

Like some old saint in cell withdrawn,
In prayer and penance till the dawn,
So her sad soul its vigil holds,
As year on year to life unfolds,
And wears her patient breast.

Not any leech can find a cure
For these slow miseries that endure,
Till heaven before her eyes shall ope—
The golden gate foreseen by hope,
And medicine her heart.

There is no new life for the dead,
No gathering up the tears once shed;
Pray, ye beloved, who pity her,
That God no more that rest defer—
Pray that her soul depart!