that look like flowering myrtles, by the time we reached
the hacienda of Señor Neri del Barrio, whose family is
amongst the most distinguished of the old Spanish
Mexican stock. We stopped to take a tumbler of milk
fresh from the cow; declined an invitation to go in, as
we were anxious to finish our journey while it was cool;
and after a hard ride galloped into the courtyard of Atla-
camulco, which seemed like returning home. We spent
a pleasant, idle day, lying down and reading while the
sun was high, and in the evening sauntering about under
the orange-trees. We concluded with a hot bath.
7th.—Before continuing our journey, we determined to
spend one more day here, which was fortunate, as we
received a large packet of letters from home, forwarded
to this place, and we have been reading them, stretched
under the shade of a natural bower formed by orange-
boughs, near a clear, cold tank of water in the garden.
To-morrow we shall set off betimes for the hacienda of
Cocoyoc, the property of Don Juan Goriva, with whom
C——n was acquainted in Mexico. After visiting that
and some other of the principal estates, we shall continue
our ride to Puebla, and as we shall pass a few days there,
hope to have leisure to write again from that city.

LETTER THE THIRTY-FOURTH

Ride by Starlight—Fear of Robbers—Tropical Wild Flowers—Stout
Escort—Huitziltepec—Hacienda of Cocoyoc—A Fire—Three Thou-
sand Orange-trees—Coffee Mills, etc.—Variety of Tropical Fruits
—Prodigality of Nature—Casasano—Celebrated Reservoir—Ride
to Santa Clara—A Philosopher—A Scorpion—Leave Santa Clara
—Dangerous Barranca—Colon—Agreeable House—Civil Adminis-
trador—San Nicolas—Solitude—Franciscan Friar—Rainy Morn-
ing—Pink Turban—Arrival at Mixco—Cypress—Department of
Puebla—Volcanoes—Dona Marina—Verses—Popocatepetl—Cho-
lula—Great Pyramid—Arrival at Puebla.

On the 9th of February we took leave of Atlacamulco
and the hospitable administrador, and our party being
diminished by the absence of Don Pedro, who was obliged
to go to Mexico, we set off as usual by starlight, being
warned of various bad bits on the road, where the ladies
at least were advised to dismount. The country was
wild and pretty, mountainous and stony. When the light
came in we separated and galloped about in all directions.
The air was cool and laden with sweetness. We came, however, to a pretty lane, where those of our escort who were in front stopped, and those who were behind rode up and begged us to keep close together, as for many leagues the country was haunted by robbers. Guns and pistols being looked to, we rode on in serried ranks, expecting every moment to hear a bullet whizz over our heads.

Here were the most beautiful wild flowers we have yet seen; some purple, white, and rose-colour in one blossom; probably the flower called ocelojo-chill, or viper's head, others bright scarlet, others red, with white and yellow stripes, and with an Indian name, signifying the tiger's flower; some had rose-coloured blossoms, others were of the purest white.

We came at last to a road over a mountain, about as bad as anything we had yet seen. Our train of horses and mules, and men in their Mexican dresses, looked very picturesque winding up and down these steep crags; and here again, forgetful of robbers, each one wandered according to his own fancy, some riding forward, and others lingering behind to pull branches of these beautiful wild blossoms. The horses' heads were covered with flowers of every colour, so that they looked like victims adorned for sacrifice. C——n indulged his botanical and geological propensities, occasionally to the great detriment of his companions, as we were anxious to arrive at some resting-place before the sun became insupportable. As for the robbers, these gentlemen, who always keep a sharp look-out, and rarely endanger their precious persons without some sufficient motive, and who, moreover, seem to have some magical power of seeing through stone walls and into portmanteaus, were no doubt aware that our luggage would neither have replenished their own nor their ladies' wardrobes, and calculated that people who travel for pleasure are not likely to carry any great quantity of superfluous coin. Besides this, they are much more afraid of these honest, stout, well-armed farm servants, who are a fine race of men, than even soldiers.

We arrived about six o'clock at the village of Hautepec, remarkable for its fine old church and lofty trees, especially for one magnificent wide-spread ash-tree in the churchyard. There were also many of those pretty trees with the silvery bark, which always look as if the moon
were shining on them. The road began to improve, but the sun became very oppressive about nine o'clock, when we arrived at a pretty village, which had a large church and a _venta_ (tavern), where we stopped to refresh ourselves with water and some very well-baked small cakes. The village was so pretty that we had some thoughts of remaining there till the evening, but as Don Juan assured us that one hour's good gallop would carry us to Cocoyoc, the hacienda of Don Juan Gorivar, we determined to continue. We had a dreadful ride in the hot sun, till we arrived at a pretty Indian village on the estate, and shortly after entered the courtyard of the great hacienda of Cocoyoc, where we were most hospitably welcomed by the proprietor and his family.

We were very tired owing to the extreme heat, and white with dust. A fresh toilet, cold water, an hour's rest, and an excellent breakfast, did wonders for us. Soon after our arrival, the sugar-house, or rather the cane rubbish, took fire, and the great bell swung heavily to and fro, summoning the workmen to assist in getting it under. It was not extinguished for some time, and the building is so near the house, that the family were a little alarmed. We stood on the balcony, which commands a beautiful view of Popocatepetl, watching the blaze. After a hard battle between fire and water, water carried the day.

In the evening we drove to the orange grove, where three thousand lofty trees are ranged in avenues, literally bending under the weight of their golden fruit and snowy blossom. I never saw a more beautiful sight. Each tree is perfect, and lofty as a forest tree. The ground under their broad shadows is strewn with thousands of oranges, dropping in their ripeness, and covered with the white, fragrant blossoms. The place is lovely, and everywhere traversed by streams of the purest water. We ate a disgraceful number of oranges, limes, guayavas, and all manner of fruits, and even tasted the sweet beans of the coffee-plants.

We spent the next morning in visiting the coffee-mills, the great brandy-works, sugar-houses, etc., all which are in the highest order; and in strolling through the orange groves, and admiring the curious and beautiful flowers, and walking among orchards of loaded fruit-trees—the calabash, papaw, mango, tamarind, citron—also mameys,
chirimoyas, custard apples, and all the family of the zapotes, white, black, yellow, and chico; cayotes, coconas, cacahuates, aguacates, etc., etc., etc., a list without an end.

Besides these are an infinity of trees covered with the brightest blossoms; one, with large scarlet flowers, most gorgeous in their colouring, and one whose blossoms are so like large pink silk tassels, that if hung to the cushions of a sofa, you could not discover them to be flowers. What prodigality of nature in these regions! With what a lavish hand she flings beauty and luxury to her tropical children!

In the evening we drove to Casasano, an hacienda about three leagues from Cocoyoc, and passed by several other fine estates, amongst others, the hacienda of Calderon. Casasano is an immense old house, very dull-looking, the road to which lies through a fine park for cattle, dotted with great old trees, but of which the grass is very much burnt up. Each hacienda has a large chapel attached to it, at which all the workmen and villagers in the environs attend mass; a padre coming from a distance on Sundays and fête-days. Frequently there is one attached to the establishment. We went to see the celebrated water-tank of Casasano, the largest and most beautiful reservoir in this part of the country; the water so pure, that though upwards of thirty feet deep, every blade of grass at the bottom is visible. Even a pin, dropped upon the stones below, is seen shining quite distinctly. A stone wall, level with the water, thirty feet high, encloses it, on which I ventured to walk all round the tank, which is of an oval form, with the assistance of our host, going one by one. A fall would be sufficiently awkward, involving drowning on one side and breaking your neck on the other. The water is beautiful—a perfect mirror, with long green feathery plants at the bottom.

The next morning we took leave of our friends at three o’clock, and set off for Santa Clara, the hacienda of Don Eusebio Garcia. Señor Goriva made me a present of a very good horse, and our ride that day was delightful, though the roads led over the most terrible barrancas. For nine long leagues, we did nothing but ford rivers and climb steep hills, those who were pretty well mounted beating up the tired cavalry. But during the first hours of our ride, the air was so fresh among the hills, that
even when the sun was high, we suffered little from the heat; and the beautiful and varied views we met at every turn were full of interest.

Santa Clara is a striking, imposing mass of building, beautifully situated at the foot of three bold, high rocks, with a remarkably handsome church attached to it. The family were from home, and the agent was a philosopher, living upon herb-tea, quite above the common affairs of life. It is a fine hacienda, and very productive, but sad and solitary in the extreme, and as K—— and I walked about in the courtyard after supper, where we had listened to frightful stories of robbers and robberies, we felt rather uncomfortably dreary, and anxious to change our quarters. We visited the sugar-works, which are like all others, the chapel, which is very fine, and the shop where they sell spirituous liquors and calzones.

The hills looked gray and solemn. The sun sank gloomy behind them, his colour a turbid red. So much had been said about robbers, that we were not sure how our next day's journey might terminate. The administrador's own servant had turned out to be the captain of a band! whom the robbers, from some mysterious motive, had murdered a few days before.

As we intended to rise before dawn, we went to bed early, about nine o'clock, and were just in the act of extinguishing a melancholy-looking candle, when we were startled by the sight of an alacrán on the wall. A man six feet high came at our call. He looked at the scorpion, shook his head, and ran out. He came back in a little while with another large man, he with a great shoe in his hand, and his friend with a long pole. While they were both hesitating how to kill it, Don Juan came in, and did the deed. We had a melancholy night after this, afraid of everything, with a long unsnuffed candle illuminating the darkness of our large and lonely chamber.

The next morning, the 11th of February, before sunrise, we took our leave, in the darkness, of Santa Clara and the philosopher. The morning, wonderful to relate, was windy, and almost cold. The roads were frightful, and we hailed the first gray streak that appeared in the eastern sky, announcing the dawn, which might enable us at least to see our perils. Fortunately it was bright daylight when we found ourselves crossing a barranca, so dangerous, that after following for some time the
precipitous course of the mountain path, we thought it advisable to get off our horses, who were pawing the slippery rock, without being able to find any rest for the soles of their feet. We had a good deal of difficulty in getting along ourselves on foot among the loose, sharp stones, and the horses, between sliding and stumbling, were a long while in accomplishing the descent. After climbing up the barranca, one of them ran off along the edge of the cliff, as if he were determined to cut the whole concern, and we wasted some time in catching him.

It was the afternoon when we rode through the lanes of a large Indian village, and shortly after arrived at Colon, an hacienda belonging to Don Antonio Orias. He was from home, but the good reception of the honest administrador, the nice, clean, cheerful house, with its pretty painted chairs, good beds, the excellent breakfasts and dinners, and the good will visible in the whole establishment, delighted us very much, and decided us to pitch our tent here for a day or two. Some Spaniards, hearing of C—n’s arrival, rode over from a distance to see him, and dined with us. There was a capital housekeeper, famous for her excellent cakes and preserves. We had also the refreshment of a warm bath, and felt ourselves as much at home as if we had been in our own house.

The next morning we rode through the great sugar-cane fields to the hacienda of San Nicolas, one of the finest estates in the republic, eighteen leagues long and five wide, belonging to Señor Zamora, in right of his wife. It is a productive place, but a singularly dreary residence. We walked out to see all the works, which are on a great scale, and breakfasted with the proprietor, who was there alone. We amused ourselves by seeing the workmen receive their weekly pay (this being Saturday), and at the mountains of copper piled up on tables in front of the house. There is a feeling of vastness, of solitude, and of dreariness in some of these great haciendas, which is oppressive. Especially about noon, when everything is still, and there is no sound except the incessant buzz of myriads of insects, I can imagine it like what the world must have been before man was created.

Colon, which is not so large as San Nicolas, has a greater air of life about it; and in fact we liked it so well, that, as —— observed, we seemed inclined to consider it,
not as a colon, but a full stop. You must not expect more vivacious puns in tierra caliente. We rode back from San Nicolas in the afternoon, accompanied by the proprietor, and had some thoughts of going to Mutamoros in the evening, to see the "Barber of Seville" performed by a strolling company in the open air, under a tree! admission twenty-five cents. However, we ended by remaining where we were, and spent the evening in walking about through the village, surrounded by barking dogs, the greatest nuisance in these places, and pulling wild flowers, and gathering castor-oil nuts from the trees. A begging Franciscan friar, from the convent of San Fernando, arrived for his yearly supply of sugar which he begs from the different haciendas, for his convent, a tribute which is never refused.

We left our hospitable entertainer the next morning, with the addition of sundry baskets of cake and fruit from the housekeeper. As we were setting off, I asked the administrador if there were any barrancas on this road. "No," said he, "but I have sent a basketful with one of the boys, as they are very refreshing." I made no remark, concluding that I should find out his meaning in the course of the journey, but keeping a sharp look-out on the mysterious mozo, who was added to our train. When the light became stronger, I perceived that he carried under his sarape a large basket of fine naranjas (oranges), which no doubt the honest administrador thought I was inquiring after. It rained, when we left Colon, a thick misty drizzle, and the difference of the temperature gave us notice that we were passing out of tierra caliente. The road was so straight and uninteresting, though the surrounding country was fertile, that a few barrancas would really have been enlivening.

At Colon we took leave of our conductor, Don Juan, who returned to Atlacamulco, and got a new director of our forces, a handsome man, yelept Don Francisco, who had been a Spanish soldier. We had an uncomfortable ride in a high wind and hard rain, the roads good, but devoid of interest, so that we were glad when we learnt that Atlisco, a town where we were to pass the night, was not far off. Within a mile or two of the city we were met by a tall man on horseback, with a pink turban, and a wild, swarthy face, who looked like an Abencerrage, and who came with the compliments of his master, a
Spanish gentleman, to say that a house had been prepared for us in the town.

Atlisco is a large town, with a high mountain behind it, crowned by a white chapel, a magnificent church at the base; the whole city full of fine churches and convents, with a plaza and many good houses. The numerous pipes, pointed all along from the roofs, have a very threatening and warlike effect; one seems to ride up the principal street under a strong fire. We found that Don Fernando——, pink turban’s master, not considering his own house good enough, had, on hearing of our expected arrival, hired another, and furnished part of it for us! This is the sort of wholesale hospitality one meets with in this country. Our room looked out upon an old Carmelite monastery, where C——, having a recommendation to the prior, paid a visit, and found one or two good paintings. Here also we saw the famous cypress mentioned by Humboldt, which is seventy-three feet in circumference. The next morning we set out with an escort of seven mozos, headed by Don Francisco, and all well armed, for the road from Atlisco to Puebla is the robbers’ highway, par excellence.

This valley of Atlisco, as indeed the whole department of Puebla, is noted for its fertility, and its abundant crops of maguey, wheat, maize, frijoles, garbanzos, barley, and other vegetables, as well as for the fineness of its fruits, its chirimoyas, etc. There is a Spanish proverb which says,

"Si a morar en Indias fuere,
Que sea donde los volcanes vieren."

"If you go to live in the Indias, let it be within sight of the volcanoes;" for it appears that all the lands surrounding the different volcanoes are fertile, and enjoy a pleasant climate. The great Cordilleras of Anahuac cross this territory, and amongst these are the Mountain of the Malinchi, Ixtacihuatl, Popocatepetl, and the Peak of Orizava. The Malinchi, a corruption by the Spaniards of the Indian name Malintzin, signifying Doña María or Marina, is supposed to be called after Cortes’s Indian Egeria, the first Christian woman of the Mexican empire.

Though given to Cortes by the Tabascan Indians, it seems clear that she was of noble birth, and that her father was the lord of many cities. It is pretended that she fell into a tributary situation, through the treachery
of her mother, who remarried after the death of her first husband, and who, bestowing all her affection on the son born of this second marriage, determined, in concert with her husband, that all their wealth should pass to him. It happened, in furtherance of their views, that the daughter of one of their slaves died, upon which they gave out that they had lost their own daughter, affected to mourn for her, and, at the same time, privately sold her, after the fashion of Joseph's brethren, to some merchants of Gicalanco, who in their turn disposed of her to their neighbours, the Tabascans, who presented her to Cortes. That she was beautiful and of great talent, versed in different dialects, the devoted friend of the Spaniards, and serving as their interpreter in their negotiations with the various Indian tribes, there seems no doubt. She accompanied Cortes in all his expeditions—he followed her advice; and in the whole history of the conquest, Doña Marina (the name given to the beautiful slave at her Christian baptism) played an important part. Her son, Martín Cortes, a knight of the order of Santiago, was put to the torture in the time of Philip II., on some unfounded suspicion of rebellion. It is said that when Cortes, accompanied by Doña Marina, went to Honduras, she met her guilty relatives, who, bathed in tears, threw themselves at her feet, fearful lest she might avenge herself of their cruel treatment; but that she calmed their fears, and received them with much kindness. The name of her birthplace was Paimala, a village in the province of Cuatzacualco. After the conquest, she was married to a Spaniard, named Juan de Jaramillo.

But I have wandered a long way from the Sierra Malinche. The two great volcanoes, but especially Popocatepetl, the highest mountain in New Spain, seem to follow the traveller like his guardian spirit, wherever he goes. Orizava, which forms a boundary between the departments of Puebla and Vera Cruz, is said to be the most beautiful of mountains on a near approach, as it is the most magnificent at a distance; for while its summit is crowned with snow, its central part is girded by thick forests of cedar and pine, and its base is adorned with woods and sloping fields covered with flocks, and dotted with white ranchos and small scattered villages; forming the most agreeable and varied landscape imaginable. Intzaccihuatl means white woman; Popocatepetl the
mountain that throws out smoke. They are thus celebrated by the poet Heredia:

Nieve eterna corona las cabezas
De Ixtaccihuatl purísimo, Orizaba
Y Popocatepetl; sin que el invierno
Toque jamás con destructora mano
Los campos fertílísimos de heno
Los mira el indio en purpara ligera
Yoró teñirse, rellejando el brillo
Del sol en Occidente, que sereno
En yelo eterno y perennial verdeura
A torrentes versió su luz dorada,
Y vió a naturaleza conmovida
Con su dulce calor, hervir en vida.

TRANSLATION.

Eternal snow crowns the majestic heads
Of Orizaba, Popocatepetl,
And of Ixtaccihuatl the most pure.
Never does winter with destructive hand
Lay waste the fertile fields where from afar
The Indian views them bathed in purple light
And dyed in gold, reflecting the last rays
Of the bright sun, which, sinking in the west,
Poured forth his flood of golden light, serene
Midst ice eternal, and perennial green;
And saw all nature warming into life,
Moved by the gentle radiance of his fires.

The morning was really cold, and when we first set out, Popocatepetl was rolled up in a mantle of clouds. The road led us very near him. The wind was very piercing, and K—— was mounted on a curate's pony, evidently accustomed to short distances and easy travelling. We had been told that it was "muy propio para Señora," very much suited to a lady, an encomium always passed upon the oldest, most stupid, and most obstinate quadruped that the haciendas can boast. We overtook and passed a party of cavalry, guarding some prisoners, whom they were conducting to Puebla.

As the sun rose, all eyes were turned with amazement and admiration to the great volcano. The clouds parted in the middle, and rolled off in great volumes, like a curtain withdrawn from a high altar. The snowy top and sides of the mountain appeared, shining in the bright sun, like a grand dome of the purest white marble. But it cannot be described. I thought of Sinai, of Moses on the
Great Pyramid

Mount, when the glory of the Lord was passing by; of the mountain of the Transfiguration, something too intolerably bright and magnificent for mortal eye to look upon and live. We rode slowly, and in speechless wonder, till the sun, which had crowned the mountain like a glory, rose slowly from its radiant brow, and we were reminded that it was time to ride forwards.

We were not far from the ancient city of Cholula, lying on a great plain at a short distance from the mountains, and glittering in the sunbeams, as if it still were the city of predilection as in former days, when it was the sacred city, "the Rome of Apanuac." It is still a large town, with a spacious square and many churches, and the ruins of its great pyramid still attest its former grandeur; but of the forty thousand houses and four hundred churches mentioned by Cortes, there are no traces. The base of this pyramid, which at a distance looks like a conical mountain, is said by Humboldt to be larger than that of any discovered in the old continent, being double that of Cheops. It is made of layers of bricks mixed with coats of clay and contains four stories. In the midst of the principal platform, where the Indians worshipped Quetzalcoatl, the god of the air (according to some the patriarch Noah, and according to others the apostle Saint Thomas! for doctors differ), rises a church dedicated to the Virgen de los Remedios, surrounded by cypresses, from which there is one of the most beautiful views in the world. From this pyramid, and it is not the least interesting circumstance connected with it, Humboldt made many of his valuable astronomical observations.

The treachery of the people and priests of Cholula, who, after welcoming Cortes and the Spaniards, formed a plan for exterminating them all, which was discovered by Doña Marina, through the medium of a lady of the city, was visited by him with the most signal vengeance. The slaughter was dreadful; the streets were covered with dead bodies, and houses and temples were burnt to the ground. This great temple was afterwards purified by his orders, and the standard of the cross solemnly planted in the midst. Cholula, not being on the direct road to Puebla, is little visited, and as for us our time was now so limited, that we were obliged to content ourselves with a mere passing observation of the pyramid, and then to hurry forward to Puebla.
We entered that city to the number of eighteen persons, eighteen horses, and several mules, and passed some people near the gates who were carrying blue-eyed angels to the chosen city, and who nearly let them drop, in astonishment, on seeing such a cavalcade. We were very cold, and felt very tired as we rode into the courtyard of the hotel, yet rather chagrined to think that the remainder of our journey was now to be performed in a diligence. Having brought my story up to civilized life, and it being late, I conclude.

LETTER THE THIRTY-FIFTH


PUEBLA.

You will be surprised when I tell you that, notwithstanding our fatigue, we went to the theatre the evening we arrived, and sat through a long and tragical performance, in the box of Don A—o H—o, one of the richest citizens of Puebla, who, hearing of our arrival, instantly came to invite us to his house, where he assured us rooms were prepared for our reception. But being no longer in savage parts, where it is necessary to throw yourself on the hospitality of strangers or to sleep in the open air, we declined his kind offer, and remained in the inn, which is very tolerable, though we do not see it now en beau as we did last year, when we were expected there. The theatre is clean and neat, but dull, and we were much more looked at than the actors, for few foreigners (ladies especially) remain here for any length of time, and their appearance is somewhat of a novelty. Our toilet occasioned us no small difficulty, now that we were again in polished cities, for you may imagine the condition of our trunks, which two mules had galloped with over ninety leagues of plain and mountain, and which had been opened every night. Such torn gowns, crushed collars, ruined pèlerines! One carpet bag had burst and discharged its contents of combs,