1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 12 — Guatemala

Exported from Wikisource on September 5, 2024

GUATEMALA (sometimes incorrectly written GUATIMALA), a name now restricted to the republic of Guatemala and to its chief city, but formerly given to a captaincy-general of Spanish America, which included the fifteen provinces of Chiapas, Suchitepeques, Escuintla, Sonsonate, San Salvador, Vera Paz and Peten, Chiquimula, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Totonicapam, Quezaltenango, Sololá, Chimaltenango and Sacatepeques,—or, in other words, the whole of Central America (except Panama) and part of Mexico. The name is probably of Aztec origin, and is said by some authorities to mean in its native form Quauhtematlan, "Land of the Eagle," or "Land of Forest"; others, writing it U-ha-tez-ma-la, connect it with the volcano of Agua (*i.e.* "water"), and interpret it as "mountain vomiting water."

The republic of Guatemala is situated between 13° 42′ and 17° 49′ N., and 88° 10′ and 92° 30′ W. (For map, see CENTRAL AMERICA.) Pop. (1903), 1,842,134; area about 48,250 sq. m. Guatemala is bounded on the W. and N. by Mexico, N.E. by British Honduras, E. by the Gulf of Honduras, and the republic of Honduras, S.E. by Salvador and S. by the Pacific

Ocean. The frontier towards Mexico was determined by conventions of the 27th of September 1882, the 17th of October 1883, the 1st of April 1895, and the 8th of May 1899. Starting from the Pacific, it ascends the river Suchiate, then follows an irregular line towards the north-east, till it reaches the parallel of 17° 49′ N., along which it runs to the frontier of British Honduras. This frontier, by the convention of the 9th of July 1893, coincides with the meridian of 89° 20′ W., till it meets the river Sarstoon or Sarstun, which it follows eastwards to the Gulf of Honduras.

Physical Description.—Guatemala is naturally divided into five regions—the lowlands of the Pacific coast, the volcanic mountains of the Sierra Madre, the so-called plateaus immediately north of these, the mountains of the Atlantic versant and the plain of Peten. (1) The coastal plains extend along the entire southern seaboard, with a mean breadth of 50 m., and link together the belts of similar territory in Salvador and the district of Soconusco in Chiapas. Owing to their tropical heat, low elevation above sea-level, and marshy soil, they are thinly peopled, and contain few important towns except the seaports. (2) The precipitous barrier of the Sierra Madre, which closes in the coastal plains on the north, is similarly prolonged into Salvador and Mexico. It is known near Guatemala city as the Sierra de las Nubes, and enters Mexico as the Sierra de Istatan. It forms

the main watershed between the Pacific and Atlantic river systems. Its summit is not a well-defined crest, but is often rounded or flattened into a table-land. The direction of the great volcanic cones, which rise in an irregular line above it, is not identical with the main axis of the Sierra itself, except near the Mexican frontier, but has a more southerly trend, especially towards Salvador; here the base of many of the igneous peaks rests among the southern foothills of the range. It is, however, impossible to subdivide the Sierra Madre into a northern and a volcanic chain; for the volcanoes are isolated by stretches of comparatively low country; at least thirteen considerable streams flow down between them, from the main watershed to the sea. Viewed from the coast, the volcanic cones seem to rise directly from the central heights of the Sierra Madre, above which they tower; but in reality their bases are, as a rule, farther south. East of Tacana, which marks the Mexican frontier, and is variously estimated at 13,976 ft. and 13,090 ft., and if the higher estimate be correct is the loftiest peak in Central America, the principal volcanoes are—Tajamulco or Tajumulco (13,517 ft.); Santa Maria (12,467 ft.), which was in eruption during 1902, after centuries of quiescence, in which its slopes had been overgrown by dense forests; Atitlán (11,719), overlooking the lake of that name; Acatenango (13,615). which shares the claim of Tacana to be the highest mountain of Central America; Fuego (*i.e.* "fire," variously estimated at 12,795 ft. and 12,582 ft.), which received its name from its activity at the time of the Spanish conquest; Agua (*i.e.* "water," 12,139 ft.), so named

in 1541 because it destroyed the former capital of Guatemala with a deluge of water from its flooded crater; and Pacaya (8390), a group of igneous peaks which were in eruption in 1870. (3) The so-called plateaus which extend north of the Sierra Madre are in fact high valleys, rather than table-lands, enclosed by mountains. A better idea of this region is conveyed by the native name Altos, or highlands, although that term includes the northern declivity of the Sierra Madre. The mean elevation is greatest in the west (Altos of Quezaltenango) and least in the east (Altos of Guatemala). A few of the streams of the Pacific slope actually rise in the Altos, and force a way through the Sierra Madre at the bottom of deep ravines. One large river, the Chixoy, escapes northwards towards the Atlantic. (4) The relief of the mountainous country which lies north of the Altos and drains into the Atlantic is varied by innumerable terraces, ridges and underfalls; but its general configuration is admirably compared by E. Reclus with the appearance of "a stormy sea breaking into parallel billows" (*Universal Geography*, ed. E. G. Ravenstein, div. xxxiii., p. 212). The parallel ranges extend east and west with a slight southerly curve towards their centres. A range called the Sierra de Chama, which, however, changes its name frequently from place to place, strikes eastward towards British Honduras, and is connected by low hills with the Cockscomb Mountains; another similar range, the Sierra de Santa Cruz, continues east to Cape Cocoli between the Polochic and the Sarstoon; and a third, the Sierra de las Minas or, in its eastern portion, Sierra del

Mico, stretches between the Polochic and the Motagua. Between Honduras and Guatemala the frontier is formed by the Sierra de Merendon. (5) The great plain of Peten, which comprises about one-third of the whole area of Guatemala, belongs geographically to the Yucatan Peninsula, and consists of level or undulating country, covered with grass or forest. Its population numbers less than two per sq. m., although many districts have a wonderfully fertile soil and abundance of water. The greater part of this region is uncultivated, and only utilized as pasture by the Indians, who form the majority of its inhabitants.

Guatemala is richly watered. On the western side of the sierras the versant is short, and the streams, while very numerous, are consequently small and rapid; but on the eastern side a number of the rivers attain a very considerable development. The Motagua, whose principal head stream is called the Rio Grande, has a course of about 250 m., and is navigable to within 90 m. of the capital, which is situated on one of its confluents, the Rio de las Vacas. It forms a delta on the south of the Gulf of Honduras. Of similar importance is the Polochic, which is about 180 m. in length, and navigable about 20 m. above the river-port of Telemán. Before reaching the Golfo Amatique it passes through the Golfo Dulce, or Izabal Lake, and the Golfete Dulce. A vast number of streams, among which are the Chixoy, the Guadalupe, and the Rio de la Pasion, unite to form the Usumacinta, whose noble current passes along the Mexican frontier, and flowing on through

Chiapas and Tabasco, falls into the Bay of Campeche. The Chiapas follows a similar course.

There are several extensive lakes in Guatemala. The Lake of Peten or Laguna de Flores, in the centre of the department of Peten, is an irregular basin about 27 m. long, with an extreme breadth of 13 m. In an island in the western portion stands Flores, a town well known to American antiquaries for the number of ancient idols which have been recovered from its soil. On the shore of the lake is the stalactite cave of Jobitsinal, of great local celebrity; and in its depths, according to the popular legend, may still be discerned the stone image of a horse that belonged to Cortes. The Golfo Dulce is, as its name implies, a fresh-water lake, although so near the Atlantic. It is about 36 m. long, and would be of considerable value as a harbour if the bar at the mouth of the Rio Dulce did not prevent the upward passage of seafaring vessels. As a contrast the Lake of Atitlán (*q.v.*) is a land-locked basin encompassed with lofty mountains. About 9 m. S. of the capital lies the Lake of Amatitlán (*q.v.*) with the town of the same name. On the borders of Salvador and Guatemala there is the Lake of Guija, about 20 m. long and 12 broad, at a height of 2100 ft. above the sea. It is connected by the river Ostuma with the Lake of Ayarza which lies about 1000 ft. higher at the foot of the Sierra Madre.

The geology, fauna and flora of Guatemala are discussed under CENTRAL AMERICA. The bird-life of the country is

remarkably rich; one bird of magnificent plumage, the quetzal, quijal or quesal (*Trogon resplendens*), has been chosen as the national emblem.

Climate.—The climate is healthy, except on the coasts, where malarial fever is prevalent. The rainy season in the interior lasts from May to October, but on the coast sometimes continues till December. The coldest month is January, and the warmest is May. The average temperatures for these months at places of different altitudes, as given by Dr Karl Sapper, are shown on the following page.

The average rainfall is very heavy, especially on the Atlantic slope, where the prevailing winds are charged with moisture from the Gulf of Mexico or the Caribbean Sea; at Tual, a high station on the Atlantic slope, it reaches 195 in.; in central Guatemala it is only 27 in. Towards the Atlantic rain often occurs in the dry season, and there is a local saying near the Golfo Dulce that “it rains thirteen months in the year.” Fogs are not rare. In Guatemala, as in other parts of Central America (*q.v.*), each of the three climatic zones, cold, temperate and hot (*tierra fria*, *tierra templada*, *tierra caliente*) has its special characteristics, and it is not easy to generalize about the climate of the country as a whole.

Locality.	Altitude (Feet).	Fahrenheit Degrees.	
		January.	May.
Puerto Barrios	6	74	81
Salamá	3020	68	77
Campur	3050	64	73
Chimax	4280	61	68
Guatemala	4870	60	67
Quezaltenango	7710	50	62

Natural Products.—The minerals discovered in Guatemala include gold, silver, lead, tin, copper, mercury, antimony, coal, salt and sulphur; but it is uncertain if many of these exist in quantities sufficient to repay exploitation. Gold is obtained at Las Quebradas near Izabal, silver in the departments of Santa Rosa and Chiquimula, salt in those of Santa Rosa and Alta Vera Paz. During the 17th century gold-washing was carried on by English miners in the Motagua valley, and is said to have yielded rich profits; hence the name of "Gold Coast" was not infrequently given to the Atlantic littoral near the mouth of the Motagua.

The area of forest has only been seriously diminished in the west, and amounted to 2030 sq. m. in 1904. Besides rubber, it yields many valuable dye-woods and cabinet-woods, such as cedar, mahogany and logwood. Fruits, grain and medicinal plants are obtained in great abundance, especially where the soil is largely of volcanic origin, as in the Altos and Sierra Madre. Parts of the Peten district are equally

fertile, maize in this region yielding two hundredfold from unmanured soil. The vegetable products of Guatemala include coffee, cocoa, sugar-cane, bananas, oranges, vanilla, aloes, agave, ipecacuanha, castor-oil, sarsaparilla, cinchona, tobacco, indigo and the wax-plant (*Myrica cerifera*).

Inhabitants.—The inhabitants of Guatemala, who tend to increase rapidly owing to the high birth-rate, low mortality, and low rate of emigration, numbered in 1903 1,842,134, or more than one-third of the entire population of Central America. Fully 60% are pure Indians, and the remainder, classed as *Ladinos* or "Latins" (*i.e.* Spaniards in speech and mode of life), comprise a large majority of half-castes (*mestizos*) and civilized Indians and a smaller proportion of whites. It includes a foreign population of about 12,000 Europeans and North Americans, among them being many Jews from the west of the United States. There are important German agricultural settlements, and many colonists from north Italy who are locally called *Tiroleses*, and despised by the Indians for their industry and thrift. About half the births among the Indians and one-third among the whites are illegitimate.

No part of Central America contains a greater diversity of tribes, and in 1883 Otto Stoll estimated the number of spoken languages as eighteen, although east of the meridian of Lake Amatitlán the native speech has almost entirely disappeared and been replaced by Spanish. The Indians belong chiefly to the Maya stock, which predominates throughout Peten, or to the allied Quiché race which is well represented in the Altos and central districts. The Itzas, Mopans, Lacandons, Chols, Pokonchi and the Pokomans who inhabit the large settlement of Mixco near the capital, all belong to the Maya family; but parts of central and eastern Guatemala are peopled by tribes distinct from the Mayas and not found in Mexico. In the 16th century the Mayas and Quichés had attained a high level of civilization (see CENTRAL AMERICA, *Archaeology*), and at least two of the Guatemalan languages, Quiché and Cakchiquel, possess the rudiments or the relics of a literature. The Quiché *Popol Vuh*, or "Book of History," which was translated into Spanish by the Dominican friar Ximenes, and edited with a French version by Brasseur de Bourbourg, is an important document for students of the local myths. In appearance the various Guatemalan tribes differ very little; in almost

all the characteristic type of Indian is short but muscular, with low forehead, prominent cheek-bones and straight black hair. In character the Indians are, as a rule, peaceable, though conscious of their numerical superiority and at times driven to join in the revolutions which so often disturb the course of local politics; they are often intensely religious, but with a few exceptions are thriftless, indolent and inveterate gamblers. Their *confradias*, or brotherhoods, each with its patron saint and male and female chiefs, exist largely to organize public festivals, and to purchase wooden masks, costumes and decorations for the dances and dramas in which the Indians delight. These dramas, which deal with religious and historical subjects, are of Indian origin, and somewhat resemble the mystery-plays of medieval Europe, a resemblance heightened by the introduction, due to Spanish missionaries, of Christian saints and heroes such as Charlemagne. The Indians are devoted to bull-fighting and cock-fighting. Choral singing is a popular amusement, and is accompanied by the Spanish guitar and native wind-instruments. The Indians have a habit of consuming a yellowish edible earth containing sulphur; on pilgrimages they obtain images moulded

of this earth at the shrines they visit, and eat the images as a prophylactic against disease. Maize, beans and bananas, varied occasionally with dried meat and fresh pork, form their staple diet; drunkenness is common on pay-days and festivals, when large quantities of a fiery brandy called *chicha* are consumed.

Chief Towns.—The capital of the republic, Guatemala or Guatemala la Nueva (pop. 1905 about 97,000) and the cities of Quezaltenango (31,000), Totonicapam (28,000), Coban (25,000), Sololá (17,000), Escuintla (12,000), Huehuetanango (12,000), Amatitlán (10,000) and Atitlán (9000) are described under separate headings. All the chief towns except the seaports are situated within the mountainous region where the climate is temperate. Retalhuleu, among the southern foothills of the Sierra Madre, is one of the centres of coffee production, and is connected by rail with the Pacific port of Champerico, a very unhealthy place in the wet season. Both Retalhuleu and Champerico were, like Quezaltenango, Sololá, and other towns, temporarily ruined by the earthquake of the 18th of April 1902. Santa Cruz Quiché, 25 m. N.E. of Totonicapam, was formerly the capital of the Quiché kings, but has now a Ladino population. Livingston, a seaport at the mouth of the Polochic (here called the Rio Dulce), was founded in 1806, and subsequently named after the author of a code of Guatemalan laws; few vestiges remain of the

Spanish settlement of Sevilla la Nueva, founded in 1844, and of the English colony of Abbotsville, founded in 1825, —both near Livingston. La Libertad, also called by its Indian name of Sacluc, is the principal town of Peten.

Shipping and Communications.—The republic is in regular steam communication on the Atlantic side with New Orleans, New York and Hamburg, by vessels which visit the ports of Barrios (Santo Tomas) and Livingston. On the southern side the ports of San José, Champerico and Ocós are visited by the Pacific mail steamers, by the vessels of a Hamburg company and by those of the South American (Chilean) and the Pacific Steam Navigation Companies. Iztapa, formerly the principal harbour on the south coast, has been almost entirely abandoned since 1853. Gualan, on the Motagua, and Panzos, on the Polochic, are small river-ports. The principal towns are connected by wagon roads, towards the construction and maintenance of which each male inhabitant is required to pay two pesos or give four days' work a year. There are coach routes between the capital and Quezaltenango, but over a great portion of the country transport is still on mule-back. All the railway lines have been built since 1875. The main lines are the Southern, belonging to an American company and running from San José to the capital; the Northern, a government line from the capital to Puerto Barrios, which completes the interoceanic railroad; and the Western, from Champerico to Quezaltenango, belonging to a Guatemalan company, but largely under German management. For local traffic there

are several lines; one from Iztapa, near San José, to Naranjo, and another from Ocós to the western coffee plantations. On the Atlantic slope transport is effected mainly by river tow-boats from Livingston along the Golfo Dulce and other lakes, and the Polochic river as far as Panzos. The narrow-gauge railway that serves the German plantations in the Vera Paz region is largely owned by Germans.

Guatemala joined the Postal Union in 1881; but its postal and telegraphic services have suffered greatly from financial difficulties. The telephonic systems of Guatemala la Nueva, Quezaltenango and other cities are owned by private companies.

Commerce and Industry.—The natural resources of Guatemala are rich but undeveloped; and the capital necessary for their development is not easily obtained in a country where war, revolution and economic crises recur at frequent intervals, where the premium on gold has varied by no less than 500% in a single year, and where many of the wealthiest cities and agricultural districts have been destroyed by earthquake in one day (18th of April 1902). At the beginning of the 19th century, Guatemala had practically no export trade; but between 1825 and 1850 cochineal was largely exported, the centre of production being the Amatitlán district. This industry was ruined by the competition of chemical dyes, and a substitute was found in the cultivation of coffee. Guatemala is surpassed only by

Brazil and the East Indies in the quantity of coffee it exports. The chief plantations are owned and managed by Germans; more than half of the crop is sent to Germany, while three-fifths of the remainder go to the United States and one-fifth to Great Britain. The average yearly product is about 70,000,000 ℔, worth approximately £1,300,000, and subject to an export duty of one gold dollar (4s.) per quintal (101 ℔). Sugar, bananas, tobacco and cocoa are also cultivated; but much of the sugar and bananas, most of the cocoa, and all the tobacco are consumed in the country. During the colonial period, the cocoa of western Guatemala and Soconusco was reserved on account of its fine flavour for the Spanish court. The indigo and cotton plantations yield little profit, owing to foreign competition, and have in most cases been converted to other uses. The cultivation of bananas tends to increase, though more slowly than in other Central American countries. Grain, sweet potatoes and beans are grown for home consumption. Cattle-farming is carried on in the high pasture-lands and the plains of Peten; but the whole number of sheep (77,000 in 1900) and pigs (30,000) in the republic is inferior to the number kept in many single English counties. Much of the wool is sold, like the native cotton, to Indian and Ladino women, who manufacture coarse cloth and linen in their homes.

By the Land Act of 1894 the state domains, except on the coasts and frontiers, were divided into lots for sale. The largest holding tenable by one person under this act was fixed at 50 caballerias, or 5625 acres; the price varies from

£40 to £80 per caballeria of 112½ acres. Free grants of uncultivated land are sometimes made to immigrants (including foreign companies), to persons who undertake to build roads or railways through their allotments, to towns, villages and schools. The condition of the Indians on the plantations is often akin to slavery, owing to the system adopted by some planters of making payments in advance; for the Indians soon spend their earnings, and thus contract debts which can only be repaid by long service.

In addition to the breweries, rum and brandy distilleries, sugar mills and tobacco factories, which are sometimes worked as adjuncts to the plantations, there are many purely urban industries, such as the manufacture of woollen and cotton goods on a large scale, and manufactures of building material and furniture; but these industries are far less important than agriculture.

During the five years 1900 to 1904 inclusive, the average value of Guatemalan imports, which consisted chiefly of textiles, iron and machinery, sacks, provisions, flour, beer, wine and spirits, amounted to £776,000; about one-half came from the United States, and nearly one-fourth from the United Kingdom. The exports during the same period had an average value of £1,528,000, and ranked as follows in order of value: coffee (£1,300,000), timber, hides, rubber, sugar, bananas, cocoa.

Finance.—Within the republic there are six banks of issue, to which the government is deeply indebted. There is practically neither gold nor silver in circulation, and the value of the bank-notes is so fluctuating that trade is seriously hampered. On the 25th of June 1903, the issue of bank-notes without a guarantee was restricted; and thenceforward all banks were compelled to retain gold or silver to the value of 10% of the notes issued in 1904, 20% in 1905 and 30% in 1906. This reform has not, to any appreciable extent, rendered more stable the value of the notes issued. The silver peso, or dollar, of 100 centavas is the monetary unit, weighs 25 grammes .900 fine, and has a nominal value of 4s. Being no longer current it has been replaced by the paper peso. The nickel coins include the real (nominal value 6d.), half-real and quarter-real. The metric system of weights and measures has been adopted, but the old Spanish standards remain in general use.

Of the revenue, about 64% is derived from customs and excise; 9% from property, road, military, slaughter and salt taxes; 1.7% from the gunpowder monopoly; and the remainder from various taxes, stamps, government lands, and postal and telegraph services. The estimated revenue for 1905–1906 was 23,000,000 pesos (about £328,500); the estimated expenditure was 27,317,659 pesos (£390,200), of which £242,800 were allotted to the public debt, £42,000 to internal development and justice, £29,000 to the army and the remainder largely to education. The gold value of the currency peso (75 = £1 in 1903, 70 = £1 in 1904, 58 = £1 in

1905) fluctuates between limits so wide that conversion into sterling (especially for a series of years), with any pretension to accuracy, is impracticable. In 1899 the rate of exchange moved between 710% and 206% premium on gold. According to the official statement, the gold debt, which runs chiefly at 4% and is held in Germany and England, amounted to £1,987,905 on the 1st of January 1905; the currency debt (note issues, internal loans, &c.) amounted to £704,730; total £2,692,635, a decrease since 1900 of about £300,000.

Government.—According to the constitution of December 1879 (modified in 1885, 1887, 1889 and 1903) the legislative power is vested in a national assembly of 69 deputies (1 for every 20,000 inhabitants) chosen for 4 years by direct popular vote, under universal manhood suffrage. The president of the republic is elected in a similar manner, but for 6 years, and he is theoretically not eligible for the following term. He is assisted by 6 ministers, heads of government departments, and by a council of state of 13 members, partly appointed by himself and partly by the national assembly.

Local Government.—Each of the twenty-two departments is administered by an official called a *jefe politico*, or political chief, appointed by the

president, and each is subdivided into municipal districts. These districts are administered by one or more *alcaldes* or mayors, assisted by municipal councils, both alcaldes and councils being chosen by the people.

Justice.—The judicial power is vested in a supreme court, consisting of a chief justice and four associate justices elected by the people; six appeal courts, each with three judges, also elected by the people; and twenty-six courts of first instance, each consisting of one judge appointed by the president and two by the chief justice of the supreme court.

Religion and Instruction.—The prevailing form of religion is the Roman Catholic, but the state recognizes no distinction of creed. The establishment of conventual or monastic institutions is prohibited. Of the population in 1893, 90% could neither read nor write, 2% could only read, and 8% could read and write. Primary instruction is nominally compulsory, and, in government schools, is provided at the cost of the state. In 1903 there were 1064 government primary schools. There are besides about 128 private (occasionally aided) schools of similar character, owners of plantations on which there are

more than ten children being obliged to provide school accommodation. Higher instruction is given in two national institutes at the capital, one for men with 500 pupils and one for women with 300. At Quezaltenango there are two similar institutes, and at Chiquimula there are other two. To each of the six there is a school for teachers attached, and within the republic there are four other schools for teachers. For professional instruction (law, medicine, engineering) there are schools supported by private funds, but aided occasionally by the government. Other educational establishments are a school of art, a national conservatory of music, a commercial college, four trades' schools with more than 600 pupils and a national library. There is a German school, endowed by the German government.

Defence.—For the white and mixed population military service is compulsory; from the eighteenth to the thirtieth year of age in the active army, and from the thirtieth to the fiftieth in the reserve. The effective force of the active army is 56,900, of the reserve 29,400. About 7000 officers and men are kept in regular service. Military training is given in all public and most private schools.

History.—Guatemala was conquered by the Spaniards under Pedro de Alvarado between 1522 and 1524. Up to the years 1837–1839 its history differs only in minor details from that of the neighbouring states of Central America (*q.v.*). The colonial period was marked by the destruction of the ancient Indian civilization, the extermination of many entire tribes, and the enslavement of the survivors, who were exploited to the utmost for the benefit of Spanish officials and adventurers. But although the administration was weak, corrupt and cruel, it succeeded in establishing the Roman Catholic religion, and in introducing the Spanish language among the Indians and Ladinos, who thus obtained a tincture of civilization and ultimately a desire for more liberal institutions. The Central American provinces revolted in 1821, were annexed to the Mexican empire of Iturbide from 1822 to 1823, and united to form a federal republic from 1823 to 1839. In Guatemala the Clerical, Conservative or anti-Federal party was supreme; after a protracted struggle it overthrew the Liberals or Federalists, and declared the country an independent republic, with Rafael Carrera (1814–1865) as president. In 1845 an attempt to restore the

federal union failed; in 1851 Carrera defeated the Federalist forces of Honduras and Salvador at La Arada near Chiquimula, and was recognized as the pacificator of the republic. In 1851 a new constitution was promulgated, and Carrera was appointed president till 1856, a dignity which was in 1854 bestowed upon him for life. His rivalry with Gerardo Barrios (d. 1865), president of Salvador, resulted in open war in 1863. At Coatepeque the Guatemalans suffered a severe defeat, which was followed by a truce. Honduras now joined with Salvador, and Nicaragua and Costa Rica with Guatemala. The contest was finally settled in favour of Carrera, who besieged and occupied San Salvador and made himself dominant also in Honduras and Nicaragua. During the rest of his rule, which lasted till his death in April 1865, he continued to act in concert with the Clerical party, and endeavoured to maintain friendly relations with the European governments. Carrera's successor was General Cerna, who had been recommended by him for election. The Liberal party began to rise in influence about 1870, and in May 1871 Cerna was deposed. The archbishop of Guatemala and the Jesuits were driven into exile as intriguers in the interests of the

Clericals. Pres. Rufino Barrios (1835–1885), elected in 1873, governed the country after the manner of a dictator; he expelled the Jesuits, confiscated their property and disestablished and disendowed the church. But though he encouraged education, promoted railway and other enterprises, and succeeded in settling difficulties as to the Mexican boundary, the general result of his policy was baneful. Conspiracies against him were rife, and in 1884 he narrowly escaped assassination. His ambition was to be the restorer of the federal union of the Central American states, and when his efforts towards this end by peaceful means failed he had recourse to the sword. Counting on the support of Honduras and Salvador, he proclaimed himself, in February 1885, the supreme military chief of Central America, and claimed the command of all the forces within the five states. President Zaldívar, of Salvador, had been his friend, but after the issue of the decree of union he entered into a defensive alliance with Costa Rica and Nicaragua. In March Barrios invaded Salvador, and on the 2nd of April a battle was fought, in which the Guatemalan president was killed. He was succeeded by General Manuel Barillas. No further effort was made to force on the

union, and on the 16th of April the war was formally ended. Peace, however, only provided opportunity for domestic conspiracy, with assassination and revolution in view. In 1892 General José Maria Reina Barrios was elected president, and in 1897 he was re-elected; but on the 8th of February 1898 he was assassinated. Señor Morales, vice-president, succeeded him; but in the same year Don Manuel Estrada Cabrera (b. 1857) was elected president for the term ending 1905. Cabrera promoted education, commerce and the improvement of communications, but his re-election for the term 1905–1911 caused widespread discontent. He was charged with aiming at a dictatorship, with permitting or even encouraging the imprisonment, torture and execution without trial of political opponents, with maladministration of the finances and with aggression against the neighbouring states. A well-armed force, which included a body of adventurers from San Francisco (U.S.A.) was organized by General Barillas, the ex-president, and invaded Guatemala in March 1906 from Mexico, British Honduras and Salvador. Barillas (1845–1907) proclaimed his intention of establishing a silver currency, and gained, to a great extent, the sympathy

of the German and British residents; he had been the sole Guatemalan president who had not sought to prolong his own tenure of office. Ocós was captured by his lieutenant, General Castillo, and the revolution speedily became a war, in which Honduras, Costa Rica and Salvador were openly involved against Guatemala, while Nicaragua was hostile. But Cabrera held his ground, and even gained several indecisive victories. The intervention of President Roosevelt and of President Diaz of Mexico brought about an armistice on the 19th of July, and the so-called "Marblehead Pact" was signed on the following day on board the United States cruiser "Marblehead." Its terms were embodied in a treaty signed (28th of September) by representatives of the four belligerent states, Nicaragua taking no part in the negotiations. The treaty included regulations for the improvement of commerce and navigation in the area affected by the war, and provided for the settlement of subsequent disputes by the arbitration of the United States and Mexico.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.—Besides the works cited under CENTRAL AMERICA see the interesting narrative of Thomas Gage, the English missionary, in Juarros, *Compendio de la historia de Guatemala* (1808–1818, 2 vols.; new ed., 1857), which in

Bailly's English translation (London, 1823) long formed the chief authority. See also C. Juan Anino, *La Republica de Guatemala* (Guatemala, 1894); T. Brigham, *Guatemala, The Land of the Quetzal* (London, 1887); J. M. Caceres, *Geografia de Centro-America* (Paris, 1882); G. Lemale, *Guia geografica de los centros de poblacion de la republica de Guatemala* (Guatemala, 1882); F. A. de Fuentes y Guzman, *Historia de Guatemala o Recordacion Florida* (Madrid, 1882); A. C. and A. P. Maudslay, *A Glimpse at Guatemala, and some Notes on the Ancient Monuments of Central America* (London, 1899); Gustavo Niederlein, *The Republic of Guatemala* (Philadelphia, 1898); Ramon A. Salazar, *Historia del disenvolvimiento intelectual de Guatemala*, vol. i. (Guatemala, 1897); Otto Stoll, *Reisen und Schilderungen aus den Jahren 1878–1883* (Leipzig, 1886); J. Mendez, *Guia del immigrante en la republica de Guatemala* (Guatemala, 1895); Karl Sapper, "Grundzüge der physikalischen Geographie von Guatemala," Ergänzungsheft No. 115, *Petermann's Mitteilungen* (Gotha, 1894); *Anuario de estadistica de la republica de Guatemala* (Guatemala); *Memoria de la Secretaria de Instruccion Publica* (Guatemala, 1899); *Handbook of Guatemala*, revised (Bureau of the American Republics, Washington, 1897); *United States Consular Reports* (Washington); *British Foreign Office Diplomatic and Consular Reports* (London).

About this digital edition

This e-book comes from the online library Wikisource. This multilingual digital library, built by volunteers, is committed to developing a free accessible collection of publications of every kind: novels, poems, magazines, letters...

Wikisource is constantly looking for new members. During the transcription and proofreading of this book, it's possible that we made some errors. You can report them at this page.

The following users contributed to this book:

- DivermanAU
- Slowking4

- Xover
- Bradype
- James500