

mountainous, the main chain of the Cordillera forms the watershed, and at a mean elevation of 7000 feet runs nearly parallel to the Pacific coast at a distance of about fifty miles from it. The steep slope on the Pacific side is broken by many volcanoes, while towards the Atlantic the land sinks in a gentle incline with subsidiary ranges extending nearly to the water's edge. Of the volcanoes several are active, the most noted is the Fuego (14,070 feet) with its twin sister the Agua, so called because in 1541 a lake, which occupied the centre of the crater, was discharged by a great eruption on to the former capital below and the city now called Ciudad Vieja was completely destroyed by water. Both volcanoes are clothed with dense forests from about 7500 feet to 10,000 feet, above which level there are scattered pines for 1000 feet or more, of which stunted examples are even to be found in the extinct crater of the Agua. Below 7000 feet the forest has been cleared for cultivation, and only parts are now clothed with a dense growth of scrub. The chief rivers are the Usumacinta, which flows into the Gulf of Mexico, and the Motagua and Polochic, which fall into the Bay of Honduras. Those flowing into the Pacific Ocean are short and rapid, as the fall from the Cordillera is very steep.

The so-called 'coast country,' however, extends a long way inland, as during the wet season the torrents which descend from the Cordillera are charged with volcanic sand and disintegrated scorïæ, and when discharged into the ocean they are cast back by the waves and the deposit forms a line of sand-bank. The constant heaping up of this bank often closes the mouths of the smaller streams during the dry season, and when the current is not sufficient to reduce the sand-bar the water expands inside the beach, forming lagoons and marshes along the whole coast. These lagoons are a favourite resort for waders and sea-birds, of which Salvin later obtained a large number, as well as a considerable quantity of fish.

As previously mentioned, Salvin made no less than four expeditions to Guatemala, but I will only describe the physical aspect of the country we travelled over together, alluding, however, to those parts which he visited alone and giving extracts from some of his scattered papers published in 'The Ibis' and other magazines. We landed in September 1861 at Yzabal, on the Golfo Dulce, and after a short stay we proceeded towards the Capital. The neighbourhood of Lake Yzabal is covered with dense forest extending beyond the Mico Mountains, which we crossed into the Motagua Valley in order to reach Quirigua. Here we spent a few days, and then proceeded up the river valley to Zacapa by mule path, the country gradually becoming drier and the vegetation more arid; cacti and thorny shrubs became abundant, taking the place of more luxuriant plants. Indian settlements were found at intervals of every few miles, where the brushwood had been cleared for the cultivation of maize and coffee-trees, which were growing in small patches. Much the same character of dry country prevailed throughout the journey to Guatemala City, which is situated on