

vial soil is very considerable, and cotton, wheat, barley, rye, Indian corn, indeed, every production, both of more temperate climates and of Europe, is produced in equal abundance and perfection. The prairies, in their natural state, afford a constant supply of excellent pasture. The banks of the San Marcos were selected by the Spaniards as excelling in fertility, for the establishment of a colony, projected in 1804; and those of the Colorado and Nueces are also spoken of in very high terms by all who have visited them. In the North-western-most part of the mountainous district of San Saba, the ground is in general rocky and sterile. Towards the east there are also extensive hills, covered with fir-trees. This land is poor, but would evidently produce wine, since the vine grows there spontaneously, and in great abundance. There are three sorts, two of which are small and sour, but the grape of the other, although the skin is thick, is large and sweet. The valley of the Red River is stated, by the numerous North American settlers, to contain some millions of acres, exceeding in fertility even the celebrated Mississippi bottom, the valley of the Roanoke, or, indeed, any lands to be found in the United States. They have styled it the "Garden of the West," and the cotton which it already produces, far excels the Alabama, Tennessee, or, indeed, any, excepting that of the Sea Islands. I here ought to remark, that growing cotton possesses one great advantage. Children, so young as to be unable to engage in any other occupation, can be employed in picking cotton, and at the age of nine or ten, probably do fully as much as grown up persons. Every species of grain thrives admirably in this fertile tract, and it is thought that the ribbed sugar-cane, lately introduced from the Phillippines, and which arrives at maturity a month sooner than the common sort, would answer well there. In the valleys is found the red, or pencil cedar of the largest growth, also a great quantity of the Bois d'arc, of which the Indians make their bows. It is of a beautiful yellow colour, susceptible of the highest polish, not heavy, but exceedingly tough and elastic. In addition to these, trees of all the varieties which flourish in the United States are to be met with; white, red, dwarf, or scrub, and post oaks; (of the former of which staves are made; while the latter is so strong, hard,

and tough, that it is frequently employed in lieu of iron to make the screws of the cotton presses;) together with iron-wood, hicory, and many other woods admirably adapted for the lathe. The sugar-maple is also very valuable: an auger-hole being bored in its trunk in the spring of the year, a small spout is inserted, and the liquor, which is subsequently evaporated to a consistency, is caught in a vessel. A single tree has been known to yield one hundred and fifty pounds of sugar; the average daily produce being from three to four or six pounds. I found its flavour very pleasant, but do not think it is nearly so sweet as the common sugar. Humboldt's prediction, that carriages would pass from Washington to the city of Mexico, has been verified. North Americans have, in their convenient and light Dearborne, or Jersey waggons, repeatedly passed into the Interior of Mexico from the United States. Roads are very easily made through Texas, as the country is either flat or gently undulating. To clear away the wood costs little trouble; and although the rivers are numerous, being generally narrow and deep, they oppose no obstacles but such as can be easily surmounted. The fact that Mr. Couci, an enterprising Frenchman, with about forty others, nearly all his countrymen, passed through Texas with several large waggons laden with goods, in June 1826, is the best proof of the facility with which every difficulty such as those which are usually met with in a new country, is here overcome. The Dearborne, or Jersey waggon, just mentioned, is admirably calculated for journeys through countries where rivers or other natural impediments may render it necessary that each part be speedily reduced to a small size or weight, so as to be rendered portable. It is taken to pieces with the greatest ease, and a raft formed of a few trunks, or the larger branches of trees, then suffices to convey it across the rivers, or the whole is progressively passed by hand over any other obstacle.

Those who have been settled in Texas a few months, really enjoy more comforts (and these, in addition to the opportunity of realizing a handsome property,) than any peasantry with which I am acquainted. One act of liberality and hospitality which is constantly practised by all his neighbours towards a new comer, whose character is found unexceptionable, would do

honour to the most highly civilized people. They all assemble at the spot which he has fixed upon for his residence, with their axes and draught-oxen, fell the timber, and build for him his log-hut. This generally consists of three apartments, one for sleeping, another for eating, both closed in all round, while in the centre, which is left open on both sides, he keeps his saddles and tools, and takes his meals during the hot weather. The kitchen (also a log-hut) is usually separated from the house, as is also the smoke-house, where his meat is smoked and kept. The log-hut is by no means an inconvenient residence; indeed, some of them are roomy, neat, and durable, very strong, and well calculated to afford protection from every inclemency of the weather.

The wild animals to be met with in Texas, are the buffalo, or bison, known in this country as the *bonassus*, which enters Texas, from the North, in vast herds during the winter; the panther, leopard, bear, otter, beaver, antelope, deer, racoon, black fox, &c. Turkeys abound: there are two species of the partridge: swans often arrive in great numbers, together with immense flocks of wild ducks and geese. The flesh of the buffalo, especially its hump, is excellent, and generally prized far above beef; the bear's ham is also considered a great delicacy. But by far the most interesting animal is the wild horse. From Barbary, the Arab, transplanted into Spain, passed from thence to the New World, and turned loose by the first European settlers, it has peopled the rich plains of Texas with droves innumerable. The *mestang*, or wild horse, is not often large or heavy, but shows blood; it is well made, hardy, active, and, if caught young, very docile, although whenever an opportunity offers, apt to rejoin its wild brethren. The piebald, light brown, chesnut, and dun colours prevail. Their defect is the tenderness of the hoof, which is too frequently to be met with amongst them, as bred on soft ground; whereas, throughout Mexico, those which are reared on a hard rocky soil, have a solidity of hoof which renders shoes unnecessary, even to the fore feet; the hind feet are seldom shod. The mode of catching them is similar to that by which wild elephants are caught in India. A space sufficiently large to contain a drove is inclosed with stakes, trunks, and branches of trees; the entrance

is narrow, but gradually widens outwards, and a herd is driven, or decoyed into it by a horse taught for the purpose. I have seen instances of attachment on the part of a young colt thus caught to a careful master, far stronger than any that I ever before witnessed in a horse.

Of the many tribes of Indians, who either occupy fixed habitations, or wander over certain districts of this vast country, the Comanches are by far the most numerous. Their principal occupation is the chase of the buffalo, which they follow to the north during the summer, over the vast plains which lie between the head-waters of the Red River, the Arkansas, the Bravo del Norte, and the Missouri. In the winter, when the snow compels the innumerable herds of these animals to seek a milder climate, the Indians deposit the skins which they have obtained amongst the mountains of San Saba, and pursue the buffalos to the frontiers of Cohahuila. At this period they have not unfrequently stolen across the River Bravo del Norte, killed the herdsmen, and carried off the cattle from different parts of the adjacent districts. They have also occasionally ventured to attack the Haciendas and hamlets, carrying off the inhabitants, some of whom have been sold, as is currently reported throughout Cohahuila, as slaves, on the borders of the United States. The main cause of these atrocities is the iniquitous traffic carried on with some of the borderers, inhabitants of the State of Louisiana and its vicinity, who encourage these Indians, and purchase from them the fruits of their robberies. They also render them more dangerous enemies by supplying them with fire-arms and ammunition. The establishment of a Mexican Consul at Natchitoches, will, however, serve as a check to this evil; and whenever a properly regulated population is settled at Peccan point and its vicinity, through which all the communications with the Comanches now pass, it will be put an end to altogether.

These expeditions are almost invariably undertaken at the change of the moon, when the darkness of the nights aids the surprise, or facilitates the retreat; while the subsequent full moon enables the Indians to drive off the cattle and horses, which are the principal object of their incursions. The Spanish Government considered these evils of far less magnitude than the effects which were likely to be produced, were such steps

taken to suppress them as would throw too much light on the state of these vast territories. Measures sufficiently energetic have, however, been adopted during the last two years; and having spent some time, in 1825, in the immediate vicinity of the scene of the devastations formerly committed, I am convinced that it will be found no difficult task to repress them for ever.

Indeed, the chief of the many tribes who solicited lands for their settlement in the western part of Texas, stated to the Mexican Government, that his warriors were prepared, under a Mexican leader, to attack and drive the Comanches into the Great Desert (Bolson de Mapimi), or to reduce them to subjection, on condition that a proportion of the territory which they occupy should be given to the victors. Nor can I doubt their success, since the rifle, and some little knowledge in the art of war, acquired during their struggles with the North Americans, would far outmatch the bow, and wholly undirected courage of the Comanches.

If a wandering tribe can be said to have a residence, that of the Comanches is the mountainous district of San Saba, which they cross both in the spring and autumn, and where they deposit their families occasionally during their long expeditions. These Indians generally kill the buffalo with their bow and arrow, their horses being trained to carry them close to it, and on its right side. Sometimes they pursue, and with a sharp iron (crescent-shaped), passing its left flank, sever the hamstring of the right leg, when the animal falls away from the horse: they sometimes also shoot it with the rifle. The scent of the buffalo is however so acute, that it can be only approached from the leeward side: it is timid until wounded, but then its impetuosity is irresistible, and its attacks are repeated until it falls. Being both active, and from its vast bulk very powerful, the charge of an old bull is described as tremendous. The long shaggy hair which covers its head and breast, gives it a terrific appearance, as it rushes headlong at whatever it perceives, (often the smoke of the rifle,) blowing and snorting with astonishing loudness. Should it discover and throw down its antagonist, it gores and tramples upon him until (if desperately wounded) it falls dead by his side. The

horns of the buffalo are short, but very sharp pointed, although thick at the base. Being very hard and black, they are highly prized for cups and other purposes. Its flesh, when fat, is excellent, especially the hump: the skins, covered with an excessively thick hair, nearly approaching to wool, are much used in the Northern parts of the United States, more especially as a wrapper when travelling in the sledges or sleighs, over the ice or snow. The Indians give a softness and pliability to these skins greater than that of the buck, or even doe-skin of Europe. The following is, I believe, the process adopted:—after tanning with sumach and bark, the skin is stretched over a hole in the earth, and smoked: the brains of the animal and alum are also rubbed into it. It is subsequently painted in cheques, diamonds, and similar figures, the colours being very durable.

Until the year 1823, excepting the wild Indian tribes, there were no inhabitants except at the town of San Antonio de Bexar, and in its immediate neighbourhood; at the fort of the Bahia del Espiritu Santo, and in the environs of Nacogdoch. The whole number hardly amounted to three thousand souls. Many small grants had been made to individuals of lands near the rivers Sabina, Nechas, and Angulino, but nearly all of them remained untenanted. The first persons who ever took efficacious measures to carry into effect extensive schemes of colonization in Texas on their own private account, were Mr. Austin, an inhabitant of Louisiana, and Colonel Milam. The former, after traversing this vast country near the coast, fixed on the spot between the rivers Brazos and Colorado, where he obtained a very extensive grant from the Spanish Government. Embarrassments, owing to the failure of a large proportion of the banks of the Western States, together with the Revolution, prevented his reaping the fruits of his exertions. His eldest son, Stephen Fuller Austin, succeeded to the claims and to the indefatigable and enterprising spirit of his father, who died about the year 1820 or 1821. In 1823, he obtained from the first Independent Congress the recognition of the grant; and though inundations, which there was no reason to anticipate, have twice done serious injury to the infant colony, he has the merit of having succeeded in peopling a wilderness, and pro-

viding a number of industrious families with an ample subsistence, as well as with the means of acquiring not only comforts, but wealth. The settlers on his lands are all North Americans; nevertheless, it is but justice to state, that in the late business, when a few of their countrymen proclaimed Texas independent of Mexico, (the Fredonia scheme,) his and their conduct proved their fidelity to the Government of their adopted country; Austin, at the head of all who were capable of bearing arms, having offered to take them up in defence of the legitimate Government. This colony is in the neighbourhood of some small tribes of Indians, whose pilferings it has been often necessary to chastise. Colonel Benjamin Milam, endowed by nature with a strength of mind and spirit of enterprise almost peculiar to the inhabitants of the Western States of America, associated with the Indian tribes in order to explore the more Southern parts of this extensive country. He subsequently engaged in the war which gave Independence to Mexico; and his courage, activity, zeal, and love of freedom, caused his rapid advancement. Finding that the lands on the South-west bank of the Red River were, in every respect, by far the most valuable in Texas, indeed, as he and all those who have examined them declare, far superior to those of any part of the United States which they have visited, he determined on settling there. Being, however, unable to obtain a grant in that quarter, he succeeded in his application for one on the river San Marcos, precisely at the spot where it was formerly intended by the Spanish Government to establish a colony.

The Colony here alluded to was to have consisted of about 3000 persons, and was placed under the direction of a very intelligent officer, General Grimarest. It was on the point of sailing from Cadiz, when the capture of the four Spanish frigates took place, in 1804; and the subsequent hostilities rendered the scheme impracticable. The lands destined for its reception, which are the richest, and most advantageously situated in all Texas, are now granted to settlers, principally from the United States; the only persons who have examined the country, or indeed, it may almost be said, ever visited it, except momentarily. So very considerable a proportion of the population of the adjacent districts has flowed into Texas from

the United States, that there are now at least ten times as many inhabitants as there were only four years ago: indeed, from the neighbouring territory, (Arkansas) alone, as one of its most respectable land proprietors assured me, 16,000 out of 46,000 persons have quitted it in order to establish themselves there. Along a very considerable part of the road, that leads from Natchitoches to San Antonio de Bexar, better lodging and provision are obtained in greater abundance, and at a lower price, than on many of the principal roads in Spain. The hospitality of all is most meritorious, and the usual price of each meal, (which consists almost invariably of pork, eggs, bacon, butter, maize cakes hot, coffee, and sometimes venison and other meats,) is only one shilling (two reals). This country might easily absorb the whole of the surplus population of Great Britain, a nucleus being formed by the settlement of about one hundred industrious agriculturists, who, after the first year, might supply grain for at least ten times their own number: cattle, and more especially pigs, will increase most rapidly, almost without any care or trouble, in the woods. Thus each successive year would, by affording increased sustenance, allow the number of settlers to be tripled, at the least.

Nature has evidently given to Texas commercial advantages, which she has denied to almost every other part of Mexico; indeed few countries, if any one, are more favourably situated for carrying on an extensive and lucrative foreign and domestic traffic. The principal export doubtless will be cotton, which grows in the greatest abundance, and is in quality inferior only to that of the Sea Islands. As the capital employed in raising it is very inconsiderable, the Texas colonist will be able to undersell every competitor in foreign markets. His healthy lands, cultivated by free and cheap labour, cost him comparatively nothing; whilst the North American and West Indian require an interest on a large sum employed in the purchase of property and slaves, subject to many contingencies. Pot and pearl ashes will be obtained in clearing the lands. Texas will supply the West India Islands with timber, salted provisions, flour, and whatever else they now require from the United States, at least equal in quality, and at a lower price than they can be obtained from thence; mules and horses will also

be exported to Cuba, and the Antilles. The Southern parts of the United States are already supplied from thence, and from Cohahuila with both; but more especially the former, which are sometimes embarked at the Brazos de Santiago, close to the mouth of the river Bravo del Norte, but more generally conveyed by land. It is thought that Texas may prove well suited for the growth of the Merino wool, both on account of the climate, and the extent of uncultivated land, over which they may be allowed to graze at liberty. The North Americans have exported wool from Cohahuila, but I have been informed, that although the staple is long, it is by no means fine, and there is a burr in it, which it requires much trouble to extract. The latter disadvantage will not be met with in Texas, except possibly amongst the mountains of San Saba; for I have observed throughout Mexico, that wherever the land is arid, burrs and thorny plants of every description abound, although wherever water is abundant, they are scarcely to be found. Swamps, stagnant water, and a rank vegetation, together with the disorders arising from marsh-miasmata, render a large proportion of the Southern parts of the United States little better than a sickly desert. A circumstance that I have no where else observed increases the inundations, which are the real causes of these evils, to a very great extent. The ground is so level, that not only do the more considerable rivers overflow, but by their reflux into the smaller tributary streams, produce the same effect on both sides to a very considerable distance. This I remarked more particularly when ascending the Red River: a current from the Mississippi ran up it, not much less than one hundred miles. Nearly all the rivers of Texas, on the other hand, are "encaisses," and except near their mouths, seldom, if ever, produce inundations prejudicial either to property or health. Nevertheless, during the rainy season there is a sufficient rise in the rivers of Texas to render even the smaller branches navigable, and afford opportunities of conveying the produce of the Interior by water-carriage to the coast. Texas is bounded on the Western side by the arid mountains of San Saba and by elevated plains, which serve only to afford pasture to the buffaloes and other wild animals, (the Bolson de Mapimi.) On the South side lie Cohahuila, New

Leon, Tamaulipas, and San Luis Potosi, which, although in parts exceedingly fertile, contain large tracts of land in which the sterility of the soil and the want of water will always reduce the population to a very limited number. Consequently it may, in a great measure, be considered as an Oasis, and must always have considerable influence upon the destiny of the circumjacent districts.

## C.

## NOTES ON THE STATE OF SONORA AND CINALOA.

THE river Cañas, the mouth of which lies in latitude 23 North, is the Southern boundary of Cínalōā, and separates it from the territories of Jāliscō or Guādālājārā. After crossing the frontier, the first town of importance is Rōsārīō, (about twenty-four leagues from the river,) which is handsome, and contains six thousand inhabitants. It took its first rise from the discovery of a famous mine of the same name, which is not only one of the oldest in the Republic, but has produced immense quantities of silver, and has been worked to almost the same extent as the Valenciana, at Guanajuato. Unfortunately, water got into this mine some years ago, which the owners are unable to drain, from the manner in which the shafts are sunk; there being three shafts, one below the other, at different levels, instead of one perpendicular shaft extending to the lowest levels. They succeed, however, in keeping about one hundred and sixty yards clear of water, and still extract silver from the upper works with some profit. Since the opening of the port of Mazatlan, Rosario has become a place of great commercial importance, being the depôt of merchandize for that port, as Tepic is for that of San Blas. The merchants from various parts of Cinaloa, now resort to it in order to purchase their stocks, and dispose of their produce: I saw upwards of two hundred bars of silver, and a considerable quantity of gold, in bars and grains, (some of from ten to twenty ounces,) in one house, belonging to Ignacio Fletes and Robert Wyley, (the former a native of the State, and the latter a Scotchman,) who carry on a very extensive business, and have vessels constantly trading between India, China, and Mazatlan. Besides

these, there are many other considerable merchants. Rosario is likewise the residence of the Commissary-General of the State, and other public authorities: the streets are narrow, but well paved, and the houses built principally of stone, which gives the town a very airy appearance. It is, however, hotter than any place that I have visited, being built in a ravine, and very confined. Below the town there is a stream which falls into the Pacific a few leagues below. It is navigable for canoes, by which people frequently go to Mazatlan, the distance by water being short. There is a considerable trade carried on from Rosario with Durango, and latterly with Guadalupe, the Indiamen preferring Mazatlan to San Blas as a port. Mr. Wyley is the only Englishman established there, and is much beloved by the natives. There are several foreigners who occasionally visit the place, but the residents are principally established in the Presidio of Mazatlan, which may be termed the half-way house between Rosario and the Coast. I should not do justice to the character of the natives, if I omitted to state the manner in which we were treated by them. The Commissary-General, Don Miguel Riesgo, and Mr. Fletes, had both of them, (hearing of our intended visit to the State,) provided apartments in their houses for our reception; but as our party was numerous, we declined accepting them, and procured an empty house for ourselves. Mr. Fletes, however, finding that it was our intention to proceed to the upper part of the Province, (about four hundred leagues,) on horseback, proposed that we should accept a passage in a schooner which he had in Mazatlan ready to sail to Guaymas, and dispatched an express that night to stop the vessel, and to have her provisioned for our whole party, which consisted of Don Pedro Escalante, Lieutenant-Colonel Parres, Lieutenant Hardy, R.N., myself, and five servants. It was in vain that we refused to accept the offer, and equally so to induce him to accept of any return. The vessel was detained, a bull killed, wine, brandy, tea, sugar, and fruits put on board, and instructions given to the agent of the house in Mazatlan to receive us, and make us as comfortable as possible until we sailed, while men were sent with us to the Coast to bring back our horses and mules, and to take charge of them until our return.

From Rosario to Mazatlan, the distance is twenty-five leagues: there is nothing worthy of attention upon the road, except the Presidio of Mazatlan, which is a large square, surrounded by merchants' houses, and about thirty or forty Indian dwellings. It is the residence of the Collector of the Customs, and his attendant officers, as well as of the Commandant of Cinaloa. The climate and water are very good, the Presidio being considerably elevated above the port, from which it is distant nine leagues. There were several English residents in 1826, the principal of whom were a Mr. Hoskins and a Mr. Short.

The port of Mazatlan is by no means a safe one, having many dangerous shoals and islands at the entrance. There were, however, two East India merchantmen in it when we arrived, with several small schooners, which trade along the coast, and a brig bound to the Sandwich Islands. One of the India ships was the *Merope*, Captain Parkins, who treated us with much politeness; the other belonged to Fletes and Co., commanded by Captain Wyley. The town, which is a miserable place, consists of about one hundred houses, or huts; built of poles, and sticks, plaited and tied together, and covered with plantain leaves and dried grass: it forms a half circle round a small bay, about one mile above where the vessels lie. It has no fortifications or defence, except the shoals and rocks, with which nature has provided it. The morning that we went on board the schooner to go to sea, one of the boat's crew put his hand down on a shoal and brought up an oyster, out of which we took five small pearls of a very good colour and shape.

We sailed from Mazatlan on the morning of the 22d January, and arrived at Guaymas on the evening of the 6th February, after a very tedious passage, with continued head-winds, and calms. This voyage is generally performed in eight days. While sailing up the Gulf, we had to cross continually in beating from one side to the other; and had a fine opportunity of seeing nearly the whole of the California coast, and its islands, which are very bold and romantic. Mr. Hardy had the best charts he could procure, but we made some very considerable corrections in the situation of many of the islands, which, however, would be of little importance to the navigator on account

of the height and boldness of the coast. On the Sonora side the water is very shallow, and the land cannot be approached by any vessel of great draught of water within several leagues. We had no means of ascertaining the elevation of the ridge of mountains on the California coast, but they may fairly be reckoned at from two thousand five hundred to four thousand feet, being much higher in some parts than others. They rise majestically from the water's edge in a very abrupt manner, and their summits display a thousand heads or peaks of very singular forms, and in some places complete table-lands, with fine slopes. In the morning, when the first beams of the sun glance on these mountains, they produce a magnificent effect, and in the evening after sunset, their rugged gloomy appearance is terrific. I doubt whether in any part they are passable even for a man on foot betwixt Cape Palmo and Loreto. There is a harbour above the island of Santa Cruz, which, I am told, is capable of receiving vessels of any draught of water, and is perfectly sheltered from all winds. I have likewise been informed, that a brig might enter the mouth of the river Mayo, the boundary of Sonora and Cinaloa, which is a very important point, being close to the celebrated mining district of Los Alamos, and the town of El Fuerte, the seat of the State Congress. The port of Loreto is surrounded by a fertile district, whose inhabitants possess large herds of cattle, and make excellent cheese and butter; they likewise grow good grapes, and very fine olives. It was the first settlement up the Gulf, and has been rendered famous by its pearl-fishery, which has produced some splendid fortunes. In the Gulf there are many whales of various kinds; large sharks too abound, to the great danger of the pearl fishermen, who always go down armed with a long knife. The manta, or blanket-fish, is also a very formidable enemy; it has two fins which appear like the arms of a man, and with which it seizes its prey. The shores of Sonora likewise abound in sea-wolves, but I do not know that they are sought after.

Guaymas is situated in latitude 27.40. North. It is an excellent harbour, secured from all winds by the elevated hills which surround the bay, and by Bird Island, which lies in the en-

trance: between it and the main land there is a narrow channel of deep water. Guaymas is undoubtedly the best port in the Republic, and is capable of holding two hundred vessels. When we arrived, there were only one brig and some small schooners in the harbour; but the Collector of the Port told me that, in 1824, he had seen there, at one time, twenty-eight vessels of different sizes.

The town of Guaymas is small, and contains about two thousand inhabitants and three hundred houses, chiefly built of mud-bricks, and thatched. They are now building a number of good houses, in a modern style, but only one story high. The trade of this place is carried on in small vessels from Acapulco, San Blas, and Mazatlan: it consists in manufactured goods, brandy, paper, refined-sugar, cocoa, coffee, tea, &c. &c.; the returns are wheat, flour, corn, beef, copper, silver, gold, hides, furs, &c. &c. Guaymas is naturally so strong a position, that it might, with little expense, be rendered impregnable, being completely closed in on all sides by the hills. The heat in summer is insupportable, but not unwholesome: most of the inhabitants have houses about two leagues to the eastward, on an elevated plain. This is called the Rancho of Guaymas; it is larger and better built than the town itself, and has gardens and good water. In the port there is no fresh water; it is supplied from a well three miles off. There are only two Englishmen in Guaymas, and one Spaniard. The Government has a small garrison of about thirty men, commanded by a Captain Commandant. The inhabitants are very hospitable to strangers, very lively in their dispositions, fond of the guitar, dancing, and singing.

At Guaymas we procured horses and mules, and pursued our journey to the Interior, after laying in a stock of provisions and water for two days.\* The first day we arrived at a small rancho, or farm, called Cieniguilla, fifteen leagues, where we slept, and the next day made the rancho of Santa Cruz, (fifteen leagues;) having passed through a country with little to

\* In the months of March, April, May, and June, there is no water on this road for man or beast.

interest the traveller, except the goodness of the road. On the third day we entered Petic, about ten o'clock p. m. six leagues.

The country through which we had travelled\* was almost a dead flat, and at this season of the year not a blade of grass was to be seen, or a leaf on the trees: in fact, there are only two kinds of trees in the whole district; one of which is common to all the Internal provinces, bearing a leaf like the locust, but much smaller, and full of prickles: the other is a tree which I have never seen in any other part of Mexico, with a light green stem; its leaf, or blossom, from the dryness of the season, I could not ascertain. The most surprising thing to the European traveller, is to see so much cattle, and game so very fat, in a country where it would appear that they had nothing to eat or drink. At a distance from the roads, there are, probably, streams issuing from the mountains, which water some small valleys, or ravines, but lose themselves subsequently in the sandy plains, as is commonly the case in this State, even with considerable rivers. In the mornings and evenings we saw abundance of hares and deer, which allow you to approach near enough to shoot them. The soil appears to be a light clay of various colours, but generally grey, intermixed with sand. A few leagues to the right and left, are ridges of mountains, not of a considerable height, of reddish and grey hues, full of strata, running east and west. On the road you frequently cross a stratum, of from three to four hundred yards in breadth, of a whitish light marl. There are others of a deep red, and some with a mixture of pebbles, with metallic spots and veins. In many places you find white stone, similar in every respect to the carbonate of lime, which is found in the silver minerals in this state. In one ridge of mountains near Petic, I observed an immense stratum of a shining black substance, which resembled coal, but I could not go out of my way so far to examine it; above and below there appeared to be a grey substance, rather of a lilac hue:

\* This country bears a great resemblance to that part of Texas which lies between La Bahia de Espiritu Santo, in Texas, and Laredo on the Rio Grande del Norte.

the rest of the hill was of a dirty blueish tinge. About one mile before you enter Petic, there is a small Indian town, of the Seres tribe, four hundred in number. These Indians were formerly very numerous, and occupied all the country between Petic and the coast; they were by far the most cruel of all the Northern Indians, but from their wars with the Tiburones and the troops of the Presidios, they have been almost exterminated. I was told they used to form ambuscades near the road from Guaymas, and to shoot the unwary traveller as he passed with poisoned arrows; they never spared a captive, but always put him to death. They were, however, not less cowardly than cruel, and if a person detected one of them with his bow drawn, he would immediately retreat and look out for another position, from whence he could strike his blow unseen.

Petic is a city with eight thousand inhabitants, situated in a plain near the confluence of the rivers Dolores and Sonora, which rivers, singular as the fact may appear, are entirely lost in the deep sands below Petic, and have no entrance into the Gulf unless by some subterraneous channel. The town is very singularly built, for there is no appearance of a street, the houses being scattered in every direction, with as little attempt at order as if they had been blown together in a storm. In the centre is a large square, with the church on one side, and some good houses on the others; indeed there are many excellent houses in Petic, particularly a new one built by an old Spaniard, by name Monteverde, which is like a palace, and is adorned with a great number of paintings and prints; it is in a style superior to any thing that I had met with since I left Guadalupe. On the east side of the town is a very high hill, of a kind of lime-stone, the height may be two hundred and fifty feet, very difficult of access; near the summit, if you strike the rock with a small stone or piece of iron or wood, it will ring like a bell so loud as to be heard over the town, from which singularity it is called La Campana.

Petic is the depôt of commerce for the whole of Upper Sonora and the port of Guaymas, from which place all the imported goods are brought, and exchanged for the produce of the Interior. The merchants are very rich, the neighbourhood is fertile and well cultivated, and affords abundance of the neces-



saries, and many of the luxuries of life. The vine thrives well, and the inhabitants make from it a white wine little inferior to Sherry in flavour, and which would be equally good with age. The brandy which they distil from the grape is excellent. In Petic you begin to meet with that fine beef, for which Sonora is so justly celebrated; it is so cheap that a full-grown fat bull is sold for from four to six dollars; they seldom kill cows for food, but leave them to breed, and when they are old feed them for the fat, to make soap and candles, and the hide. The wheat of Sonora is excellent, and affords the best bread in the Republic; the people here do not, as in the neighbourhood of Mexico, eat tortillas of maize, but make them of wheat, prepared in a similar manner. Vegetables of every kind are plentiful, and there is a good supply of fish, so that a family of five or six persons may live comfortably in Petic on about six dollars per week. The character of the natives is very lively, and assimilates to that of all the Internal provinces, whose inhabitants are generally descended from Biscayans and Catalonians. Their diversions are music, dancing, and singing; cock-fighting and bull-baiting; the latter is falling into disuse. The favourite dances are the jarave, boleros, and the waltz, in which they introduce very fantastical figures, and pretty simple songs. All classes are passionately fond of cards, and will play at Monte, Lottery, Vingt et un, and other similar games, for six or eight hours at a time. These amusements are general throughout the state, and the subject of their conversations. Every man has his favourite riding horse, which he takes as much care of as of any member of the family, and is always speaking of their good qualities and exploits.\*

From Petic our road lay westward, a little inclining to the north. We left it on the 17th February, and arrived early at a fine Hacienda, or estate called La Labor, the owner of which was an old Spaniard, but married to the daughter of the former proprietor. This was the neatest place that I met with in Sonora. While dinner was preparing, the owner took us to view the grounds and gardens, which were very extensive, and laid out in the English style. The house was new, of red-brick, and

\* In Petic there are three Englishmen, two Americans, and eight Spaniards, all Biscayans, except one Catalan.

strongly resembled the very large comfortable farms in some parts of England. He told us that his lands were so productive that he had reaped 240 fanegas of corn for one fanega sown. In the preceding year, he had expended 15,000 dollars in cutting a canal from the river, by which means he could irrigate so considerable a quantity of land, that he expected to realize that sum annually. At dinner the lady appeared, and took the head of the table, which was served on silver plate, with a profusion of excellent things. We had the best of wines; old Catalonian brandy, &c. after which coffee and choice liqueurs were presented to us. Every thing was of a piece in this comfortable establishment, for the beds with which they provided us were most luxurious. In the morning we took leave, and arrived at San Miguel de Horcasitas to breakfast, fourteen leagues from Petic, after passing through a fine country on a good road.

San Miguel was formerly a town of great consequence, and the residence of the principal families in the State. The Custom-house was kept there before the building of Petic; it was likewise the residence of the Captain-General of the Province, and the gayest town in the North. It is prettily situated on an eminence above the river Dolores, which overflows and fertilizes a fine valley to the north of the town, divided amongst a number of Indian families, who derive from it a comfortable subsistence. The families of note still remaining there are the Escobosas, Aguilars, Guitierrez, and Rodriguez. There are now two churches, and about two thousand five hundred souls. To the north of this town are immense ridges of mountains scarcely accessible, full of rich minerals of gold, silver, and copper. A friend of mine, Mr. Loisa, a merchant of Petic, has an estate about eight leagues from San Miguel, to the eastward, on which he has a mine of copper, which he works himself. The making it into bars costs four dollars per quintal, which sold for fourteen dollars when delivered in Guaymas; and as Mr. Loisa's own mules carried down the copper, and returned loaded with merchandize, the freight was of little importance. He made about twenty cwt. per week; the copper of Sonora contains much gold, for which reason the Chinese give a great price for it, being well acquainted with the art of separating the two metals.

Below San Miguel there are some fine estates, with mills to grind flour, worked by the water from the river, conveyed through canals, in order to give the necessary fall.

It may be well to mention, that although there are no inns in the towns, or indeed in the State, strangers, without any letters of introduction, are sure to be well received, and treated with attention during their stay. We had letters to the principal people in every place, and Mr. Escalante, my companion, was himself a native of Upper Sonora, and related to most of the oldest families in the country, so that we considered ourselves at home wherever we went. Our horses had been left at Mazatlan, and we had travelled from Guaymas with hired horses and mules, which we had engaged to send back from San Miguel.

The gentleman, at whose house we stayed in San Miguel, Don Victor Aguilar, has a fine Hacienda, about six leagues from the town, to which he sent for horses and mules, to convey ourselves and our luggage to our next friend's house at Babiadora, a distance of twenty-eight leagues: his wife and daughters busied themselves in putting up provisions and wine for the road, (for, in Sonora, one travels with a complete larder on a mule's back,) and when we attempted to make some return for this supply of mules and provisions, Don Victor told us they did not do things in that way in his country, where it afforded them infinite pleasure to welcome strangers, particularly foreigners who did their State the honour of a visit, and that the longer we stayed with them the greater would be their satisfaction. All being ready, after a good breakfast, we set out, and about five o'clock in the evening, arrived at a pretty town called Ures, (twelve leagues,) when the Alcalde gave us the ruins of a convent to sleep in. Ures is a very pretty town, the streets open and regular; in the centre there is a large square, with a church very substantially built of stone, and an extensive convent, built by the Jesuits, now in ruins. The town is situated on the southern bank of the river Sonora, which overflows and fertilizes a very extensive valley of uncommonly rich land, considered as the most productive district in the State. To the South of Ures there are vast plains, which extend to the Coast. To the north and east the country becomes mountainous; the ridges generally running from north to south, divided by the rivers Dolores,

Sonora, and Barispe, until beyond that river you commence ascending the great chain, or Cordillera, called by the Mexicans Sierra Madre, or Mother-mountains. Ures being sheltered from the north and east winds, is never cold, but in the summer is excessively hot, as it receives the full power of the south breezes, which come over the sandy plains of Cinaloa, and cause much more heat than the rays of the sun; for the hot air penetrates into every corner of the houses. After an early supper, Escalante and myself visited a church that we had noticed, as we passed, with a building attached to it, which we found was a Hospicio, or receptacle for aged and infirm friars. In this we saw the only friar now remaining in the State, who very politely invited us into his room, which was neatly fitted up. This old man, who told us that he was upwards of ninety years of age, was tall and upright, with white hair and beard, and wore upon the whole a very venerable appearance. He related to us many of the most remarkable incidents of his life, which had been spent from his youth in the northern parts of the Province amongst the Missions. He recollected the expulsion of the Jesuits upwards of seventy years ago, and declared that if they had not been driven from Sonora, it would have been one of the richest and most powerful States in the Republic; as a proof of which, he referred us to the numberless establishments which they had formed, and to others in a half finished state, which the eye meets in every direction, but which, unfortunately, from an entire want of knowledge of the arts and sciences, and the little attention that Government has paid to these people, have all been neglected, and suffered to decay. This old friar was a very interesting person. He had been well educated, (indeed most of the Missionaries who were sent into these parts were men of ability and enterprise,) and seemed to have a more perfect knowledge of the character of the people than any man that I ever met with. He stated them to be brave, active, and industrious, possessing uncommon natural abilities, and generous to a fault. They are void of that gross superstition and prejudice, which exist in many parts of the Mexican States, and make no distinction between a Catholic and a good man of any other creed. The old man told us that he could still read very small print without the aid of glasses; I

should like to have spent a day with this living chronicle of olden times, but our plans did not admit of it.

Our next day's journey lay through a very romantic ravine in the mountains, along the banks of the river Sonora, which winds in a very crooked manner between two ridges. We crossed the bed no less than two hundred times in the course of the day; it is from this stream that so much gold has been extracted, the rains washing it from the mountains, which rise on each side almost perpendicularly, and depositing the small flakes of gold in the sands. No doubt great quantities might be taken out by intelligent people, as it is natural that the larger grains should bury themselves at some depth, and the natives never think of looking below a foot deep in the sand. The ridge on the left of this ravine is full of mineral veins, all of which contain more or less gold; and as gold in grains is generally discovered on or near the surface, it is very probable that in the shelves and interstices of these mountains, a large quantity of this precious metal is deposited by those tremendous periodical rains, which continue from June to September.

About two o'clock in the day we quitted this canāda, and entered upon the estate of Concepcion, the property of a Bustamante, and well watered by the river Sonora. At four o'clock we arrived at Babiadora, and went to the house of an old friend, Don Santiago Dóminguez Escolasa, curate of Babiadora and Conche, and member of the State Congress. In this day's journey we passed several farms in openings in the glen, with some good mills for grinding wheat, and a few small arastres, or mills, in which the Indians separate the metal which they pick up. I observed, that what they had been working last were gold minerals.

Babiadora is a town of three thousand inhabitants, more than three-fourths of whom are Indians of the Opatá tribe. There is nothing particular in the place itself, for, like all the towns in this country, it has a very large square in the centre, and a neat little church. The Opatas are the most civilized of all the Indian nations; they live in thirteen towns,\* and are

\* The population of each of these towns includes those Indians who live in huts, or small ranchos, in the vicinity, and who regularly attend on Sundays in the Plaza.

very industrious people, of a darkish brown colour. Their dress is similar to that of the Indians of Mexico, which is a white cotton jacket, loose, but closed up all round: short pantaloons of the same, with shoes open on one side and projecting round the ankle. They seldom go barefooted; every man has a blanket, and every woman a long scarf: they are good carpenters, masons, shoemakers, and house-painters; and manufacture blankets, shawls, coarse cotton, saddles, pack-saddles, bridles, &c. with considerable quantities of soap. The Opatas are most useful citizens, and have, on many occasions, proved their loyalty to the Mexican Government, by assisting the Whites in repelling the attacks of the Apaches, and other nations. This tribe alone has the privilege of bearing fire-arms; and at this day they are formed into militia companies in several towns, particularly in Oposura, where some of them are incorporated with the Whites, and form companies of two hundred men, well armed and trained. They are very brave, good warriors, and a terror to the others; their chief is a fine stout man, named Salvador: he holds the rank of general, and receives from the Supreme Government in Mexico fifty dollars per month. He is generally respected by the inhabitants, and implicitly obeyed by the tribe.

Babiadora is situated on a Table-land, about one mile from the river Sonora, elevated one hundred and fifty feet above the valley, over which it commands an extensive and pleasing view. The vale of Sonora extends from this town about twelve leagues north, and is considered one of the most fertile and productive districts in the State. It contains the towns of Conche and Sonora, besides a number of Haciendas and farms, and a considerable population.

In the neighbourhood of Babiadora there are many silver mines, most of which contain a greater or less proportion of gold. The principal are Dolores and San Antonio, to the south-west of the town, Cerro Gordo to the south-east, and Cobriza on the Cerro de San Felipe, in the valley above.

The mine named Cerro Gordo, is situated about four leagues south-east of Babiadora, on a very high hill, and appears to have been one of considerable interest, from the great quantity of refuse minerals thrown out on its sides. The quantity of