

profusion of flowers, many of which are most delicately coloured, (particularly the varieties of the *Convolvulus* kind;) while the plumage of the birds, of which, in some places, the woods are full, is hardly less brilliant than the flowers themselves. Flocks of Parrots and Macaws are seen in every direction, with Cardinals, *Cēnsōntlīs*, or mocking-birds, and a thousand others, the names of which, in any language, I cannot pretend to give; Deer too, occasionally bounded across the road; but of the *Jāguārs*, (Mexican Tiger,) and other wild animals, we saw none, although their skins are to be met with in great abundance. Throughout the *Tierra Caliente*, not one hundredth part of the soil has been brought into cultivation; yet in the Indian cottages, many of which I entered, I always found a plentiful supply of Indian Corn, Rice, *Bānānās*, Oranges, and Pine-apples, which, though certainly not equal to those of the Havanna in flavour, seemed to us, when heated with travelling, a most delicious fruit. Of the *Bānānā* I am not an admirer; its taste reminded me of sweet pomatum, and I gave it up after a very short trial. All these fruits are produced, with little or no labour, on a spot of ground in the vicinity of the cottage, which, though apparently too small to support a single individual, is usually sufficient, with the addition of a few Frijoles, (beans,) and a little Chile from the Interior, to provide for the subsistence of the whole family. For this indeed, not much is required.

They seldom partake of animal food: their fowls supply them abundantly with eggs, and enable them, when sent to the market of the nearest town, to purchase a little clothing: this, however, the beauty of the climate, and a sufficiently primitive notion of what decency requires, enable them, in a great measure, to dispense with. If a horse be added to the establishment, which is indispensable where there is any mixture of white blood, the forest furnishes abundant pasturage, and it causes no additional expence. A saddle, and a Machete, a long cut and thrust sword, which is almost always worn, are indeed costly articles; but these are transmitted, as heir-looms in the family, from one generation to another; and the young man who obtains possession of such treasures, during his father's life-time, by any exertions of his own, may be said to have established his independence at once.

Friday the 18th, we quitted the Puente, where our accommodations had been very similar to those which we met with at Santa Fé, as we again bivouacked in front of the house, which was not nearly large enough to contain us. We took a last look before we set out at the bridge, and at the little eminence upon which Victoria had entrenched himself above. It is sufficiently precipitous to render any attempt to carry it by assault extremely difficult; but, as a military position, it is untenable; being liable both to be turned, and to be deprived of water, with which it is supplied from the river

below. Victoria experienced this when attacked by a regular force under Miyares, (as stated in the sketch of the Revolution,) against whom he tried in vain to maintain his ground: but as a strong hold in a Guerrilla war, the possession of Puente del Rey was of importance, by enabling the Insurgents to cut off the ordinary communication with the Capital, and to bid defiance to small detachments of the Royalist Troops. A sketch of the bridge and surrounding rocks will be found in the first Volume, which, though on a small scale, sufficiently indicates both the beauties and the difficulties of the Pass.

The distance from the Puentē to Plan del Rio does not exceed six leagues, but we found, on arriving there, that our carriages were, as usual, so very far behind, that it was useless to attempt the ascent to the Ēncērrō, which commences a little beyond Plan del Rio, without fresh mules. These there was no possibility of obtaining, so that we resolved to halt at once for the day. The luxury of an inn actually built of brick, and subdivided into a number of separate rooms, each with a door opening into the Patio, or Court, and, though without windows, whitewashed, and provided with a small table and a chair, reconciled us to the delay. Such indulgencies were quite unexpected.

There is a fine bridge at the Plan, thrown over a rapid stream, which, in the rainy season, would be impassable without it. It consists of a single arch

of very large dimensions, and, as at Puente del Rey, communicates with a line of causeway, which was formerly a part of the great paved road constructed at the expence of the Merchants of Veracruz. There are nothing but fragments of this road now in existence, one of which extends for about two leagues into the interior from Puente del Rey. The remainder was either broken up by the contending parties during the Civil War, or allowed to go to ruin for want of repairs; a constant necessity for which is created by the impetuosity of the mountain torrents during the rainy season.

The village of Ēl Plān, at the time of our visit, was very healthy, but it is within the range of the Vomito, or Veracruz fever, of which I shall have occasion to speak hereafter, and is consequently by no means a safe residence in the hotter months. From November to April, the only inconvenience to be apprehended are the sand-flies, which are quite insufferable. They are so small that no Musquito-net will exclude them, and bite with such sharpness that a small drop of blood is usually the first indication of their having settled upon the hand or face. Fortunately, they differ from Mosquitos in one respect, as they disappear at sunset, a peculiarity to which travellers are indebted for a chance of sleep, which they could not otherwise enjoy.

On leaving Plan del Rio, (December 19,) the ascent to the Table-land of Mexico may be said to commence. The elevation of the Plan above the

level of the sea is very trifling, but in the six leagues which intervene between it and the Encerro, the height of 3,043 feet is attained, which is sufficient to give an entirely new character to the climate and productions. The air becomes considerably rarefied; the fruits and flowers of the Tierra Caliente disappear; and the Mimosas are replaced by the Mexican Oak; which, in the summer season, must be a welcome sight, as it is supposed to indicate to the traveller his arrival in those more healthy regions, where, if he has not brought infection with him, he has no longer any danger from the Vomito to apprehend. With the exception of this change, for which Humboldt's work had prepared us, we met with little worthy of remark on the road to the Encerrō, where we stopped to breakfast, and to allow time for our carriages to come up. We found great reason to rejoice at not having been tempted to select it for our quarters on the preceding night, as the house was small, and incommodious, combining all the disagreeable smells peculiar to a Spanish-American shop, of which Tāsājō (dried beef,) and garlic are usually the most agreeable, with a great appearance of dirt, which we should have been unable to avoid by sleeping in the open air, as the change of climate was already sufficient to render the shelter of a roof indispensable. As some compensation, the distant view of Ōrīzāvā and Pērōtē, from the door of the inn, was very fine, as was that over the vast

extent of country which we had traversed on our way from the coast.

As soon as our carriages arrived, we proceeded in the direction of Jālāpā, where we understood that some preparations had been made for our reception. After a continued ascent of about two hours, over a rugged and dangerous road, we reached the platform upon which the town stands, and pursued our course along a piece of the old Veracruz causeway, through fields of maize, and gardens, following each other in rapid succession, sometimes surrounded with hedges of the Banana and the Aloe, interspersed with Chīrīmōyās, and a thousand other trees; and at others by a light cane fence, which just enabled us to perceive the variety of the flowers in which the houses were almost buried within. At a little distance from the town we were met by several officers on horseback, who had been deputed to receive us, and by whom we were conducted to a house which had been prepared for us in the principal street, where we found the Governor, with some of the principal members of the Ayuntamiento: a dinner was in readiness, to which we all sate down in great state, with a band of music at the door: servants were placed at our disposal; and a *mayor domo*, or *Maitre d'hotel* was presented to us, who, we were informed, had orders to furnish every thing that we could possibly want during our stay. In short, nothing could be more gratifying than our reception: the streets

were full of people as we passed, and, although the "Vivas" with which they saluted us proved that they had rather an indistinct idea as yet of our real character,* they at least showed that we were hailed as no unwelcome guests.

It was, indeed, a new epoch in the history of America that commenced with our arrival. It was the first step towards that growing intercourse with Europe, the importance of which to them, and to us, will be every day more generally felt; and as such, it justified the enthusiasm with which the resolution of His Majesty's Government was received on both sides of the Atlantic, before the evils, to which an unbridled spirit of speculation gave rise in this country, taught the disappointed to ascribe to this wise policy the misfortunes, which were to be attributed solely to their own folly.

We remained three whole days at Jälāpā, in hourly expectation of the arrival of carriage-mules, which had been sent for to Lă Pūēbla, as it was impossible for us to proceed any farther with those which had brought us with so much difficulty from Veracruz. At last they came, and on the 24th we recommenced our journey. We had had ample opportunity in the mean time to admire both the beauty of the scenery in the environs of Jälāpā, and the hospitality of the Natives. All the Creoles eagerly sought

* Vivan los Embajadores de la Europa! (Long live the Ambassadors of Europe!) was, if I recollect right, the most general cry.

our acquaintance, and omitted nothing that could render our stay agreeable; but of the Old Spanish Veracruz merchants, we did not, I believe, see one. This was bad policy on their part; for although it was natural that they should give up their hold upon the country with reluctance, still, to show it, was only to afford their enemies a pretext for those violent measures, by which their expulsion from the Republic has been since attempted. No one laments this violence more than myself: it is discreditable to Mexico, inasmuch as it is a violation of the public faith, which was pledged to the Spaniards by the Declaration of Iguala, for the security of the persons and property of all such as chose to remain; and it is disadvantageous to the general interests of the State, by draining it of the capital which the civil war has left, and which was barely sufficient in 1827 to give activity to trade: but at the same time justice bids me add that it was hardly possible that any amalgamation of interests, so directly opposed to each other, should permanently take place. Very few of the Spaniards could learn to treat as equals, men, over whom they had so long exercised almost absolute authority; many betrayed this feeling in the most unguarded manner; and their imprudence contributed not a little to increase that irritation, on the part of the Creoles, which had taken but too deep a root during twelve years of civil war. It is lamentable, however, to reflect upon the number of respectable and useful men, who will be involved in

the common ruin. But let me return from this digression.

Of the country about Jälápá it is impossible that any words should convey an adequate idea. It stands in the very centre of some of the finest mountain scenery that the world can boast of. Nothing can be more splendid than the Peak of Őřizāvã, when the veil of clouds, which but too frequently conceals it during the day, yields to the last rays of the glorious setting sun. Such a sunset, and such a mountain, can only be seen beneath the Tropics, where every thing is upon a gigantic scale, and where, from the purity of the atmosphere, even the flood of light from above seems proportioned to the magnitude of the objects upon which it is poured forth.

Őřizāvã is 17,375 feet above the level of the sea: it is connected by a long chain of intervening mountains with the Cõffrẽ de Përõtẽ, (so called from a mass of rock in the shape of a chest, which distinguishes the crest of the mountain,) and the two together form a beautiful termination to the view in the direction of the Table-land. The Coffre is nearly 4,000 feet lower than Őřizāvã, and looks quite diminutive when the Peak is visible at the same time, although when not seen together, the eye rests with satisfaction upon so magnificent an object.

On the sloping ground, which descends from the foot of Őřizāvã to the sea, are situated the towns of Cõrdõvã and Őřizāvã, which are celebrated for the

tobacco and coffee raised in their vicinity. The same district produces the best Vanilla, as well as the Jalap, and Sarsaparilla, which have been mentioned amongst the exports of Veracruz. A few Indian villages are scattered over this rich country, in every part of which but little exertion is required on the part of man in order to draw a subsistence from the exuberant fertility of the soil. Immense forests occupy the intervening spaces, abounding in every variety of timber, but rarely visited, except by the Indians, at the season for collecting the crop of Vanilla: they are watered by the streams which descend from the slope of the Cõrdillãrã, and produce, during the greatest part of the year, the fruits of the Tropics in such profusion, that Victoria subsisted upon them almost entirely, during the eighteen months which he passed there, without seeing a human being. There are many indications of their having possessed a much larger population at the time of the Conquest, as the ruins of towns, and fortifications, have been discovered, which could only have been raised by very numerous Tribes: but, like every thing connected with the Indian race, their history is wrapped in obscurity, and with regard to some, not even a tradition now remains.

Jälápã is indebted to the peculiarity of its position for the extreme softness of its climate. The town stands upon a little platform 4,335 feet above the level of the sea, and would consequently be even more exposed than the Encerro to the North-west

winds, which have the effect of stunting the vegetation both above and below this favoured spot, were it not protected from their violence by an intervening ridge of mountains; while this being exactly the height, at which the clouds suspended over the ocean touch the Cordillera, there is a constant humidity in the atmosphere, which gives a balmy feel to the air, and a delightful freshness to every thing around. After climbing the tedious ascent from Plan del Rio, nearly the whole of which lies through a dreary and monotonous country, the little declivity which forms the last mile and a half of the approach to Jäläpä, seems at all seasons a paradise: but its beauty vanishes the instant that you wander beyond the limits of the enchanted ground. This is more particularly the case on the ascent towards the Tableland, which becomes excessively steep almost immediately after leaving Jäläpä, and continues uninterrupted so as far as Läs Vigäs. The distance between the two points does not exceed eighteen miles, while the difference of elevation amounts to 3,485 feet; we were therefore prepared to expect a great change of temperature, although we were far from calculating upon a transition so sudden and so complete, as that which we experienced.

We left Jäläpä about twelve o'clock on the morning of the 24th of December, with a cloudless sky, and the Thermometer at 70°; but before we got half-way to Läs Vigäs, a Norte came on upon the coast, and in an instant we found ourselves enveloped

in clouds, which, both in appearance and effect, strikingly resembled a November Scotch mist. Our cloaks proved insufficient to keep out the chilling cold; and as to the moisture, we soon found that our only chance was to push rapidly on, wherever the road would admit of it, by which means we contrived to reach our quarters for the night without being entirely wet through. The change in the scenery about us, was, in every respect, equal to that which had taken place in the atmosphere. At a very early period of the day we lost sight of the gardens of Jäläpä; and although hedges planted with Chirimöyäs extended about a league beyond the town, they soon gave place to plants of a hardier growth. These again gradually yielded to the Mexican Oak, and latterly even that to the Fir, which reigned for the last few miles in solitary pre-eminence. The light bamboo cottages of the Indians, which, notwithstanding my objections to them as places of accommodation on the road, were pretty and fantastic, were replaced by buildings of a more solid structure, and consequently better adapted to the climate, but without any pretensions to beauty. I thought them very like the houses in parts of Sweden, and particularly in Dalecarlia, which are composed of unhewn trunks of trees, rudely fastened together, and surrounded with inclosures, twelve feet high, to protect the cattle against the wolves. But still, in the midst of this ungenial scene, there are many features that remind the traveller of the singular

character of the country, through which he is passing. About two leagues from Las Vigas, there is a district covered with vesicular lava: the ground is strewn as far as the eye can reach with masses of black, calcined rock, the appearance of which evidently announces their volcanic origin. In some places these masses are of an enormous size; in others, they look as if they had been pulverized by some gigantic steam-engine; but in all, it seems as if but a few years had elapsed since the eruption which produced them took place, although not even a tradition with regard to its date is now in existence.

We found the Old Veracruz causeway in a sufficiently good state of preservation between Jäläpä and Läs Vigäs, to afford an easy passage even for carriages; the horses and mules, however, suffer exceedingly in the steeper parts of the ascent, from the difficulty of getting a good footing on the hard pavement. After passing through the villages of Lă Crüz dē lă Cüestă, Lă Hōyă, and Săn Mīgüel ăl Söldädö, between which we had been taught to expect some picturesque scenery, which the mist prevented us from perceiving, we reached Las Vigas about dusk, where we found very comfortable quarters prepared for us in the house of the Cura, and obtained a sufficiency of fowls to furnish a tolerable supper. No other meat was to be procured in the village, or bread; but our carriages came up in time to supply us with the last, as well as with some pine-

apples and Chirimoyas, of which a stock had been laid in at Jäläpä. The Chřimōyă is a fruit unknown, I believe, in Europe: in size it is larger than the largest Orange; the rind is green, and full of little inequalities, but the pulp is a beautiful white, of such delicacy that it must be eaten with a spoon, as it assumes a rusty tinge if cut with a knife: the flavour is that of the strawberry, combined with other fruits.

I seldom recollect suffering more from cold than I did at Las Vigas: we probably felt the severity of the weather the more from having been relaxed by a month of unusually hot weather on our passage from Madeira to Veracruz. The inhabitants are but little affected by it; for although the rooms are boarded, and some precautions taken to exclude the air, a fireplace is a thing unknown; and even the Spanish brasero seems not in common use. There was, however, something more than imagination in our chilliness; for at seven the next morning the thermometer was at 41°, (about 30° below the temperature of Jäläpä,) and the ground during the night was covered with a white frost. Our horses, many of which had been bred in the *Tierra Caliente*, suffered even more than ourselves; for although we succeeded in procuring stabling for them, they were perfectly stiff with cold in the morning, and did not recover the full use of their legs until half the day's journey was concluded.

The road from Läs Vigäs to Përötē is very steep