

fortunately found an excellent Venta, about four o'clock, and waited with great anxiety for the appearance of the coach, which was expected to arrive before ten. Midnight came, but nothing was heard of it; and at three in the morning Mrs. Ward became so uneasy for want of her child, which was still at the breast, that I resolved to go myself in search of it on horseback. I accordingly set off with one servant, well armed, (for our host had been alarming us with stories of robbers,) and after a gallop of twenty miles I found our unfortunate coach just where we had left it on the preceding morning. The wheel sent from San Juan did not fit the axle, and they had been forced to carry the old wheel to a Hacienda about five leagues off, where there was a carpenter's shop, in order to get it repaired. As there was little hope that this would be speedily effected, I took the youngest child from its nurse, and making a sort of scarf with a Tapalo, or long Indian shawl that she lent me, I deposited in it my little charge, and having secured it still farther with a silk sash, I put my horse into a gentle canter, and took once more the road to the town. The child was a good deal astonished at first with the novelty of its situation, but the motion put it to sleep, and, with an occasional squall or two, we reached San Juan in perfect safety about nine o'clock, after a ride rather longer than it often falls to the lot of a little creature of five months old to undertake. The carriage did not come in till two in the afternoon, the poor mules being quite

exhausted after passing thirty hours without food or water. The servants fortunately had provisions with them, and procured some milk from a man who was conveying an ass-load of it to a neighbouring Rancho.

We did not leave San Juan till the morning of the 8th. The vicinity of the town abounds in gardens and fruit-trees, which gave a cheerful air to the scene when viewed from the top of a steep descent on the Mexico side, called La Bājādā de Sān Juan: it consists of about two leagues of abominable road, covered with loose rocks and stones, and sufficiently dangerous, even on horseback, to make me feel uneasy when coming down it in the morning with the child in my arms. After crossing a river, which runs to the North of the town, (from whence the name, *Del Rio*,) although not laid down in any map, we breakfasted at the Hacienda de Saūs, three and a half leagues from San Juan, where all the abundance of the Baxio seemed to commence. We found, in a poor little Rancho, provisions of all kinds; milk and eggs, excellent bread, tortillas of course, with chile for those who liked it, and large plates of frijoles, a sort of black bean, of which the Mexicans make an extremely palatable dish. In an enclosure opposite the Hacienda I found hares in abundance: they got up two at a time in every direction under my feet, and I might have shot fifty, had I wanted them, with as much ease as I did five.

From Saus the character of the country improved at every step; cultivation increased rapidly: we saw vast plains of maize and little groups of Indian huts at each turn in the road. After passing the Hacienda del Căzădērō, a valuable estate belonging to Don Pedro Ācēvēdō, we crossed a Pēdrēgāl, or stony tract, of about two leagues in extent, and afterwards pursued our course through a succession of immense Pōtrērōs,* until we came in sight of Quērētārō, of which there is a beautiful view from an opening between two hills. The first appearance of the aqueduct, by which the town is supplied with water from a spring in the mountains, at a distance of nearly three leagues, is very picturesque. Its arches are lofty, light, and bold, and its vast extent gives it an air of great magnificence as it stretches across the plain.

Quērētārō is the capital of the State of that name, the territories of which were formerly comprehended in the neighbouring "Intendancies" of Mexīcō, Lă Pūēblă, and Guănjūatō. They are now divided into the six "Pärtidōs," or districts, of Āmēālcō, Cădēreită, Săn Jūān dēl Rīō, Săn Pedrō Tōlīmān, Qūerētārō, and Xălpān, which contain in all a population of about 200,000 souls. The Constitution of the State is a copy in miniature of that of the Federation, from which it has taken all

* A Pōtrērō means strictly an enclosure for "Potros" (young horses,) but is applied generally to enclosures for any kind of cattle.

the mechanism of government, and all the religious intolerance. The inhabitants, with the exception of those of the capital, are mostly employed in agriculture. The district of Cădēreită, however, contains the mines of El Dōctōr, Măcōnī, and San Crīstōvāl; and the Government entertains so high an opinion of their future importance, that a contract has been concluded with the Anglo-Mexican Company for the establishment of a Mint, on very favourable terms. The State abounds in Haciendas, both of cattle and sheep, (Gănădō Măyōr, y Mēnōr,) and of wheat, (trigo,) maize, (maiz,) and beans, (frījōlēs.) The population of the Capital, by the last census, appears to be 32,000; but the town is supposed to contain at least 40,000 inhabitants. During the Revolution, 90,000 souls were often assembled in it, the proprietors of the neighbouring Haciendas being frequently compelled to take refuge there with their families, and farming servants, while their property was laid waste by the contending parties.

Quērētārō is divided into five parishes, or Cūrātōs, four in the body of the town, and one, (San Sebastian,) in the suburbs, being separated from the rest by a little dirty stream, which is dignified with the title of El Rio, the river. Some of the Churches are fine, particularly that of Guădălūpě; as are the Convents of San Frănciscō, and Săntă Clără, the last of which contains a population of two hundred and fifty females, composed of seventy nuns

and as many young ladies sent there for their education, with lay-sisters and attendants. It is an immense building, and is said to resemble a little town in the interior, with streets and Plazas regularly laid out; but this we had no opportunity of observing ourselves, as not even Mexicans are allowed to enter the walls.

We were much struck with the busy look of Quērētārō, which has quite the air of a manufacturing district. More than half the houses contain shops, and the whole population is engaged either in small trades, or in the wool manufactories, which are still very numerous. They are divided into two classes, Obrāgēs, and Trāpīchēs. The first comprise all the establishments that can employ from ten to thirty looms; the last, those in which only one or two are in activity. In both, coarse cloths, Tāpālōs and Māngās of different patterns and sizes are manufactured, part of which are retailed upon the spot in the great Plaza, where a market is held every evening by torchlight, and part sent to the Capital, or other great towns of the Federation. The demand for these manufactures has decreased very much since the ports were opened to European imports; indeed the woollen trade is now principally kept up by a Government contract for supplying the army with clothing; which has afforded a temporary relief to one part of the population by imposing a general tax upon the remainder. The price paid for scarlet, green, and yellow cloths

of the very coarsest texture, varies from twenty-four reals (twelve shillings) to eighteen reals (nine shillings), and fifteen reals (seven and sixpence) per vara, according to the colour; and there is no doubt that they might be obtained of a better quality at a much lower price from abroad. The wool used is brought principally from *Tierra Adentro* (the Northern States), San Luis Pōtōsī, and Zācātēcās: its price varies from sixteen to twenty-four reals the Arroba (of twenty-five pounds), including carriage, (about five pence three farthings, or three pence three farthings English money per pound;) but the wool most esteemed is the produce of the State itself (called Lana de Chínchōrrō). It acquires its value not from any superiority in the breed of the Quērētārō sheep, but from the circumstance of the flocks being so much smaller than those of the North that they can be better attended to, fed in richer pastures, and kept more clear from Ābrōjōs, and other thorns, which deteriorate the fleece. This wool sells for three dollars and a half per Arroba (thirty reals), and is expected to rise in value. In 1824 the wool of San Luis was only worth fourteen reals.

I was promised by the Governor of the State, Don San José Mārīnā, who is himself proprietor of the large Hacienda of Mīrāndā, a return of the amount of wool consumed in all the Obrages of Queretaro during a period of five years before and after the Revolution; but this document never reached me, and I am consequently unable to state

the extent of the change which the new system has undoubtedly produced. Agriculture, at the period of my visit, was only beginning to recover from the effects of the Civil War: the crop of maize had been lost in consequence of the extreme dryness of the season, and the price had risen from two to five dollars per carga (of 300 lbs.) In abundant years it is seldom worth more than twelve reals per fanega. There were, however, no apprehensions of a scarcity, as 300,000 fanegas were known to be on hand within the territories of the State.

We passed the whole of the 9th of November at Quērētārō, in order to visit the Governor and some of the principal merchants, for whom we had letters. In the evening we went to the Căñadă, or great ravine, about two leagues from the town, which, like the Bărranca of Rēglă, sinks suddenly below the level of the Table-land, and assumes, in the course of a few hundred yards, all the appearances of *Tierra Caliente*. It is inhabited by a race of Indians who have resided there since the Conquest; and abounds in gardens and magnificent trees, with some hot baths, which are said to possess great medicinal virtues.

We left Quērētārō on the 10th of November, and breakfasted at a Rancho, called El Păsēō, about six leagues from the gates. From thence to Zělāyă it is four leagues. At a little distance from the town we crossed a magnificent bridge over the river Laxa, which, in the rainy season, forms an impetuous

stream. When we saw it, its waters were very low; it joins the great river of Lerma, or Santiago, near Sălămăncă, in conjunction with which it pursues its course towards the Pacific.

Zělāyă, by the census of 1825, contains only 9,571 inhabitants; the streets are drawn, as usual, at right angles, and the houses in the centre of the town are well built; the suburbs are poor and miserable; but the great Plaza, one side of which is occupied by the church of El Carmen, and the other by the convent of San Francisco, is really fine, and does credit to the taste of the architect (a native Mexican) by whom it was designed.

The Băxīō, so celebrated in Mexico, both as the seat of the great agricultural riches of the country, and the scene of the most cruel ravages of the Civil War, commences between Quērētārō, and Zělāyă. I saw it under great disadvantages, for the country was parched up by long continued drought, and it is probably owing to this that it was so far from answering my expectations. I had pictured to myself a succession of Haciendas, abundantly supplied with water for irrigation, and consequently smiling with verdure; and I was not a little disappointed at finding that the masses of cultivation, however considerable in their aggregate, were still lost in the immensity of the surrounding space; and that the country wore the same dull livery of dust which gives so monotonous a character to the scenery throughout the Table-land. Between

each Hacienda there was a large tract of ground covered with Mimosas, and abounding in hares, but without any symptoms of the labour of the agriculturist having been ever employed upon it. I was assured, however, that a great part of this land had only been thrown out of cultivation since the Revolution, when the failure of the mines at Guānājuato deprived the farmers of their market.

11th. From Zēlāyā to Irāpūātō, the distance is fourteen leagues. We breakfasted at El Rancho de los Huāgēs, about six leagues from Zēlāyā, and reached Sālāmāncā at three in the afternoon. The town, like most of the smaller towns in the Bāxīō, is half in ruins, but the situation is pretty, and the ground about it rich. A violent storm came on shortly after we had quitted Salamanca, and converted, in a moment, the fine loam over which we were passing, into a mass of mud, through which we ploughed our way with great difficulty. We did not reach Irāpūātō till half-past eight o'clock, although the distance from Salamanca does not exceed five leagues. Our beds had fortunately been kept tolerably dry by their oil-skin covers, but we were glad to take refuge in them immediately, as the Meson afforded no facilities for drying, or even changing our wet clothes, the rooms being entirely lumbered up with the saddles, and other packages which we were forced to shelter there from the rain.

The town of Irāpūātō contains, according to the census of 1825, 16,054 inhabitants; by that of

1823, the number appeared to be 21,030. Some of the public buildings are fine, particularly the convent of Nuns, called de la Enseñanza. There are a few cotton-spinners and weavers, but the bulk of the population consists of "Lābrādōrēs," (agriculturists,) who reside in the town, and have estates near. Of these there are 971 "Vecinos," (heads of families.)

Salamanca contains 485 "Lābrādōrēs," and 1,091 "Artesanos," on a population of 15,053 souls. In the district of Irāpūātō there are thirty Haciendas de Campo and sixteen Ranchos; in that of Salamanca, twenty-nine Haciendas and sixty-nine Ranchos; many of which, however, are very small. From Zēlāyā there are no similar returns.

12th Nov. From Irāpūātō to Gūanājuātō eleven leagues.

We commenced our journey late, having been assured that the distance did not exceed seven leagues. After breakfasting at the Rancho of La Cālērā, we reached Būrrās, a village belonging to the Marquis of Rāyās, seven leagues from Irapuato, and found, to our great surprise, that we had still four leagues to go. The situation of Būrrās is extremely picturesque. In the middle of a country almost desert, you come suddenly upon the borders of a Bārrāncā, the whole of which is a mass of verdure. Vegetation follows the course of a small stream that runs down the centre of the ravine, and extends for some distance on either side. The effect

reminded me of some of the drawings in Denham's African travels, where a little spot, with something like water and freshness, is represented in the midst of a scene of desolation.

The country between Būrrās and Guānājūato is uninteresting, and of the town itself nothing is seen until you reach the Gate of Mārfil, where you enter the suburb of that name. The houses follow for nearly a league the direction of a Cañada, or ravine, on each side of which there is a long line of Haciendas de Plata, (amalgamation works,) intermixed with houses, varying in height and shape according to the nature of the ground. On one side there is a raised trottoir for foot passengers; but coaches, and animals of all kinds, proceed up the bed of the river, down which, in the rainy season, a torrent occasionally flows with dangerous impetuosity.

Few years pass without some accident occurring; yet no part of the immense mineral wealth that Guanajuato has produced, was ever devoted to the improvement of the present entrance to the town, and you cross the torrent thirty times between the gate and the principal street.

We were met at some distance from Marfil by Mr. Williamson and Mr. Jones, the Directors of the works of the Anglo-Mexican Mining Association, who kindly undertook to lodge our whole party in a house belonging to the Company, where we were happy to find ourselves restored to the luxuries of space and cleanliness, after having been so long re-

duced to the confined and dirty rooms of the Ventas upon the road.

As it is not the object of this work to give a geological description of the Mining Districts, I shall beg to refer my readers to the Baron Humboldt's scientific researches for any information that they desire upon this point; and merely state here a few facts, without a knowledge of which, any account of the operations of the Companies established in Guānājūato must prove unintelligible.

The Veta Madre, or great Mother Vein of Guanajuato, has produced, since the year 1766, (before which time I have no returns,) 225,935,736 dollars.* It is composed of several parallel veins, running in the direction of N. W. and S. E., and varying in width, where they combine into one mass, from five to eighty varas. The miners distinguish the three principal branches of the Vein by designating them as El Cuerpo Alto, El Medio, and El Baxo; and it is observed, that the points where the three Cuerpos have been found to approach each other most nearly, and to be richest in silver, correspond with the valleys that intersect the direction of the Vein, in which the rich mines of Sērēnā, Rāyās, and Cātā, are situated. The town has been entirely created by the mines, and is very irregularly built; the houses and streets being distributed rather according to the vacancies left by the surrounding

* This is the amount given by Humboldt's Tables of Produce, in conjunction with the returns from 1804 to the present day.

mountains, than by any rules of art. This is particularly the case with the amalgamation works, one of which sometimes occupies a whole ravine, the spaces above, on either side, being crowded with miners' huts. The streets are full of ascents and descents, many of which are so steep as to render the use of four mules in the carriages of the more wealthy inhabitants almost universal. The churches, and some of the houses, are fine, and the *Álhōndīgā*, a large square building used as a public granary, forms a remarkable object, and is visible from every side.

The mines are scattered in different directions round the town; and in the vicinity of some of them, little "Pueblos" have been formed, which may be considered as the suburbs of *Guānājuātō*. This is the case with *Vālencīāna*, (where the population formerly amounted to 7,000 souls,) and *Rāyās*; and, in a less degree, with *Sērēnā*, and *Villālpāndō*. The Haciendas are mostly close to *Guānājuātō*, and though now in ruins, their number and extent attest both the former importance of the mines, and the opulence of the *Rescatadores*, (amalgamators,) by whom these expensive buildings were raised. Few or none of them possessed a sufficiency of water to work their machinery, for which purpose mules were employed; and fourteen thousand of these animals were in daily use before the Revolution. The *Rescatadores* purchased their ores at the mouth of the shaft, relying entirely upon their own powers of

estimating by the eye the value of the montones exposed for sale, in such a manner as not to make a disadvantageous bargain. In this science they attained great perfection; for more fortunes were made in *Guānājuātō* by Amalgamation works, than by the miners themselves; while the extent to which the system was carried afforded to the successful adventurer the means of realizing instantly to almost any amount. During the great Bonanza of the *Valenciana* mine, sales were effected to the amount of eighty thousand dollars in one day; and it is to this facility in obtaining supplies, that the rapid progress of the works in that mine, after its first discovery, may be ascribed. Had it been necessary to erect private amalgamation works, in order to turn his new-born riches to account, many years must have elapsed before the first Count *Valenciana* could have derived any advantage from his labours; for when fortune began to smile upon them, the man, who was destined in a few years to rank as one of the richest individuals in the world, did not possess a single dollar.

The system of "Rescatadores" still exists at *Guānājuātō*, but upon a very small scale; most of the capitals formerly employed in this way having been lost, or withdrawn, during the Revolution. The sales at the mines, in 1826, seldom exceeded 1,500, or 2,000 dollars in the week. The Foreign Companies wish to unite the profits of the amalgamator with those of the miner, and have consequently