

SAN MIGUEL.

"Ojo Vernal," where, I was informed, the grass was very scanty. I went some distance up the creek at "Tecalote," and encamped in a fine meadow of grass, close to some corn fields. Some of the inhabitants came out, and said that I must not camp there, as my mules would get into their corn fields, but upon my promising to keep good watch over them, they agreed to let me remain.

At this place they have a great many sheep and goats, the latter are kept for their milk. These animals are watched all day by the "pastores," and driven into the "corral" at night.

I here purchased some "miel," or molasses manufactured from corn stalks, this process is very laborious; all night and day one hears the pounding of their mauls, with which they bruise the corn stalks.

In the evening a lad brought me some "melones" and "sandias," musk melons and water melons, but they were so unripe that none of us could eat them. The New Mexicans have a habit of pulling their fruit before it is ripe.

September 25.—The plants that occur are but a repetition of those found in the Raton; the mountains are clad with the pine, the cedar, and the "piñon;" the common thistle occurs in great abundance, and in the corn fields we find the cockle burr, "xanthium strumarium," the sage (salvia azurea,) the sand burr, and various species of the sunflower tribe.

After we had marched six miles, we reached a celebrated spring, "Ojo Vernal." It lies at the foot of a very high bluff with a flat top. The water was indeed delightful, but there was no good grass in the neighborhood.

We stopped here a little while to taste of this delightful spring, and then proceeded seven miles further, to the village of "San Miguel." This town is embosomed by high rocky ridges, that rise up in succession, until lost in aerial mists of distance. In the centre of the town there is a large church, whose front is flanked by square towers, each containing several bells, and crowned with crosses.

On the north side of the town flows the beautiful "Rio Pecos." As I passed the river I noticed the women passing and repassing with immense ollas or jars for carrying water, these they balanced upon their heads, and this custom causes them to walk with great dignity. Many of the young women had their faces hidden under a thick coat of whitewash, and many had bedizened their faces with the juice of the poke berry.

At one place there was a group of women busy washing clothes. They were most of them clad in a single under garment, and waded in and out of the water without regarding the presence of an "Americano."

The river is three feet in depth, and from 16 to 20 in width; there is a rude bridge constructed here for the convenience of foot passengers.

As there were no pasture grounds near the village, I was forced to buy "zacate" for my mules.

September 26.—This morning we passed through the village of

"San Miguel," and thence up the valley of the Pecos. Near the cemetery we noticed a number of tame pigeons; these and chickens were the only fowls that we noticed.

Our road now lay by the foot of a high bluff that raised its crest 600 feet above the valley. Its sides clothed with groves of cedar and piñon. The groves on each side of the road were full of stellar jays, (*Garrulus stelleri*), red shafted flickers, and robins; the woods were vocal with the varied notes of these lively birds.

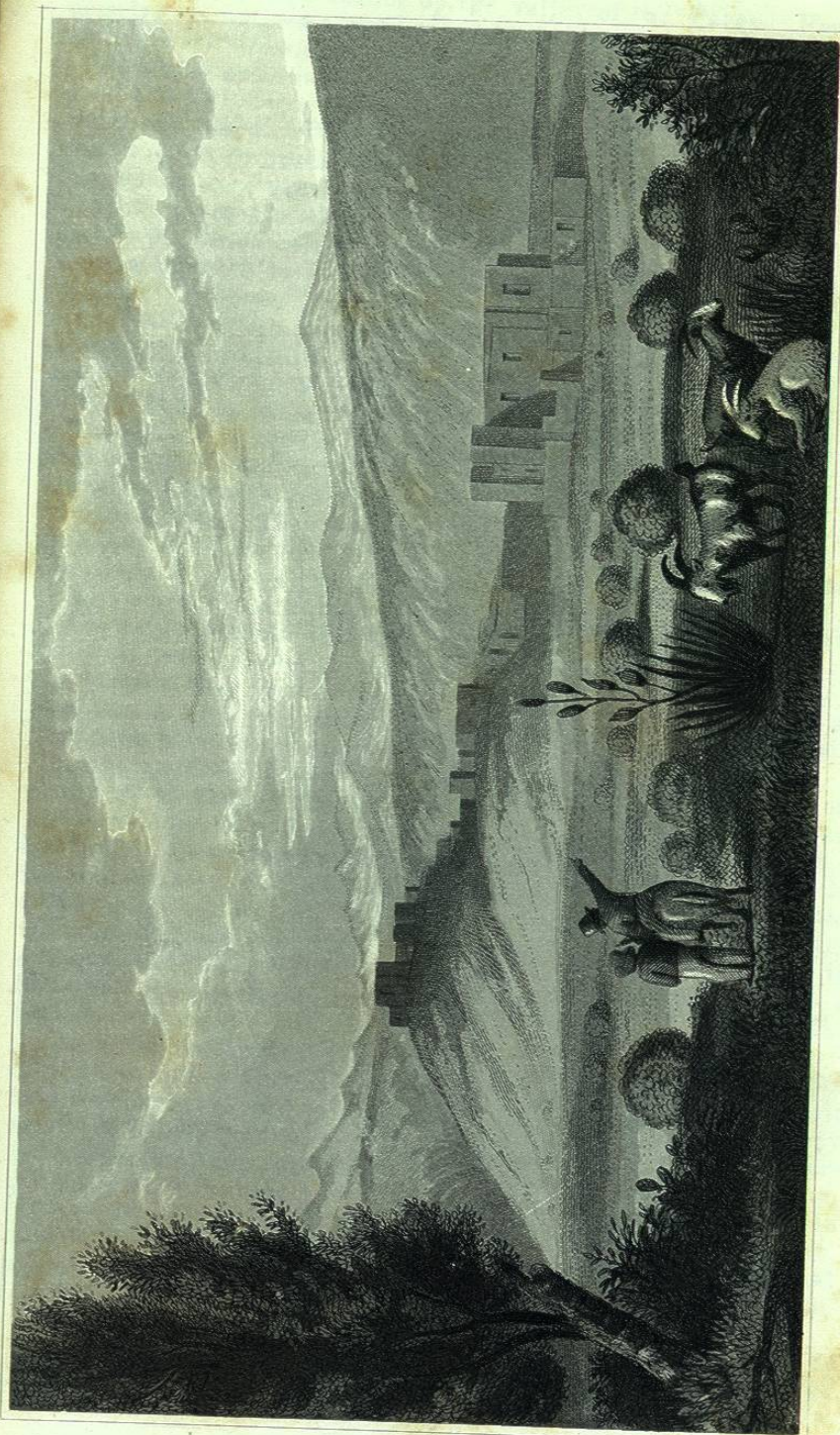
As we journeyed along we were continually seeing most motly groups of human beings; sometimes we met long trains of men and women mounted on mules; the señoras with their heads enveloped in their "rebosas," the men with their pantaloons open at the side from their hip down, thus displaying their ample drawers of white linen, and with their heels armed with immense jingling spurs. Sometimes we met single couples mounted on the same mule. Most of these men were armed with naked swords that lay close against the saddle. At one time we passed a group of Indians; they had pack mules laden with buffalo robes and meat. Their jet black hair was tied up in short stumpy queues with some light colored ribbon. They told me that they were "Teguas" Indians; that they had been far out on the prairies trading with the Camanches, and were now going to sell their robes in Santa Fé.

As we neared the ancient village of Pecos, we crossed the river in the neighborhood of a fine spring, where we found two large trains of wagons; one belonging to Mr. McGoffin, and the other to Mr. Algier; they were repairing wheels, for the dryness of the atmosphere is such that nearly all the wagons that cross the prairies must here have the tires cut.

In the afternoon I went out upon the hills to see the ancient cathedral of Pecos. The old building and the town around it are fast crumbling away under the hand of time. The old church is built in the same style as that of "San Miguel," the ends of the rafters are carved in imitation of a scroll; the ground plan of the edifice is that of a cross. It is situated on a hill not far from the winding course of the river. High ridges of mountains appear to converge until they almost meet behind the town, and through a little gap one catches sight of a magnificent range of distant peaks that seem to mingle with the sky.

The village of Pecos is famed for the residence of a singular race of Indians, about whom many curious legends are told. In their temples they were said to keep an immense serpent, to which they sacrificed human victims. Others say that they worshiped a perpetual fire, that they believed to have been kindled by Montezuma, and that one of the race was yearly appointed to watch this fire. As the severity of their vigils always caused the death of the watchers, in time this tribe became extinct. Again, I have been told that some six or eight of their people were left, and that they took the sacred fire and went to live with the Pueblos of Zuñi.

The scenographical arrangement of the surrounding country is remarkably picturesque; the view of Pecos, as it now lies, without the least addition, would form a beautiful picture, and more than a



RUINS OF PECOS.

picture, for every cloud, every degree that the sun moves, gives such varied effects to the landscape, that one has a thousand pictures; but their effects are so fleeting, that although they last long enough to delight the spectator, it would yet perplex the artist to catch these changes. For my part, I tried, and tried in vain, until at last some large night herons came sweeping over my head, and warned me that the shades of evening were drawing on, when I returned to camp.

September 27.—Santa Fé is now within 29 miles of us, and we at length feel as if we were about to reach the “ultima thule” of our wishes.

Although the road was difficult on account of the high hills and deep defiles over which we would have to pass, yet I determined to enter Santa Fé this day. I proceeded somewhat faster than the wagons, and before long overtook two Spaniards on their way to the same place. As they knew the route perfectly, I accepted their proffered guidance through the short cuts by the cañons in the mountains. At length we reached Armijo’s cañon. Here we found plenty of cool water, where we all dismounted to allow our mules a little rest, when my friends produced from their wallets some sweet “bizcochos,” which they persisted in sharing with me. I by good luck had some buffalo tongue in my pocket, that added not a little to our rural repast. We again mounted, but, before proceeding far, met a man driving a “carreta.” My amigos now signified their intention of stopping some time, and, bidding me “vaya con dios,” I left them and hurried on, for a time following the course of the stream which is a tributary of “Rio de Galisteo.”

I now left the stream and commenced the steep ascent of the mountains, whose sides are overgrown with the pitch pine and the piñon. On the far side of the steep I met Colonel Ruff, of the Missouri volunteers, returning to the United States, and Judge Houghton, one of the judges of the supreme court of New Mexico.

We stopped to exchange what news we had, and then separated, I with a new impulse to move forward, for I learned that Santa Fé was but 12 miles distant. About 5 o’clock I came in sight of a square block of mud buildings one story high. In a little while after, I caught sight of the flag of my country waving proudly over some low flat roofed buildings that lay in the valley. I knew this must be Santa Fé. I hurried on, and was soon seated amongst my friends, who looked upon me as one awakened from the dead.

28th.—I was much surprised with the manners of the Mexicans at a funeral. They marched with great rapidity through the streets near the church, with a band of music. The instruments were principally violins, and these were played furiously, sending forth wild raging music. The corpse, that of a child, was exposed to view, decked with rosettes and flaunting ribands of various brilliant hues, and the mourners talked and laughed gaily, which seemed to me most strange. I was told, too, that the tunes played were the same as those which sounded at the fandangoes.

In the morning I called upon Governor Bent, who, to all the

qualifications necessary to his office, possesses those of a long residence in this country, a constant intercourse with the people, and an intimate knowledge of their language and character.

In the afternoon I strolled through the "plaza," or public square. On the north side is the palace, occupying the whole side of the square. On the remaining sides one finds the stores of the merchants and traders, and in the centre of the square a tall flag staff has been erected, from which the banner of freedom now waves. There all the country people congregate to sell their marketing, and one constantly sees objects to amuse. Trains of "burros" are continually entering the city, laden with kegs of Taos whiskey or immense packs of fodder, melons, wood, or grapes. Our own soldiers, too, are constantly passing and re-passing, or mingling with the motley groups of Mexicans and Pueblo Indians.

The markets have, in addition to the articles already mentioned, great quantities of "Chili colorado," and "verde," "cebollas" or onions, "sandias" or water melons, "huevos" or eggs, "queso" or cheese, and "hojas" or corn husks, neatly tied up in bundles for making the cigarritos, "punche" or tobacco, "uvas" or grapes, and "piñones," nuts of the pine tree, (*pinus monophyllus*.) These last are slightly baked to make them keep, and are brought to market in great quantities. Besides these things, there are many varieties of bread, and several kinds of meat. The Pueblo Indians bring in great quantities of peaches which are here called "duraznos." In the evening I attended a ball, here styled a fandango. The Mexican ladies had laid aside their "rebozas," and were clothed much after the manner of our own females. Stuffs most rich, and skirts of monstrous width or fullness. While sitting down they were wrapped in splendid shawls. These were generally thrown over the head like the reboza. They gazed round the room with great complaisance as they smoked their cigarritos. Waltzing forms the chief part of all their dances. The principal ones are the "cumbe," and the "Italiano." These people have an excellent notion of time, fine voices, and seemed to be enthusiastically fond of music. They are polite to excess, and I hear them often exclaim at what they call rudeness of the Americans, saying "no tienen vergüenza," for a Mexican never even lights his cigarrito without asking your consent, "con su licencia señor."

At this dance I had the pleasure of tasting some of the wine from "El passo del Norte," which in its delicious flavor realized all I had anticipated.

September 29.—As I had found orders from General Kearny, directing the survey of New Mexico, with Lieutenant Peck of the topographical engineers, I set out this morning to visit the gold mines, between thirty and forty miles to the south of Santa Fé. Having made all our preparations yesterday, we were enabled to get off very early this morning. The first nine miles of our road led us through groves of cedar and piñon; at length we got upon the bare valley, where nought is to be seen but the cactus, and a scant growth of grass, and the yucca; and along the road great numbers of horned lizzards. Towards the latter part of the day

we entered a very sandy country; here lay huge masses of sandstone and fragments of immense petrified trees. We soon commenced clambering up the mountain side, and at last reached the "placero" or "real viejo;" here we made diligent inquiry for a Mr. Waters, at whose house we wished to stay, as we understood he was the only American in the village. We found he had gone off on a hunt. We endeavored to get some of the people of the house to admit us, but they did not seem to like our appearance, and refused to let us stay with them. It was now quite late, we were very hungry, and our mules had had nothing to eat since early this morning, and the country around was as sterile a piece of ground as one could wish to see. "Siempre dija la ventura, una puerta abierta." So, after a great deal of persuasion on our part, they put our mules into a corral, and gave them some corn. No fodder was to be had here; in fact, there was scarcely anything to be had in the village. The houses were the most miserable we had yet seen, and the inhabitants the most abject picture of squalid poverty, and yet the streets of the village are indeed paved with gold. All along the bottom of the stream and in the heart of the town you see holes scooped out by the gold diggers. After doing our best to make ourselves agreeable to the people, they consented to let us spend the night in a hovel, next door to a mill, in which a burro was busily at work grinding gold ore. Some Indians now entered the town, with trains of burros loaded with musk melons. As we began to feel the cravings of hunger, we purchased some melons and bread, on which we tried to make our suppers. We got our saddles and saddle blankets, and endeavored to form them into a bed on the earthen floor of our luxurious "posada." At length we received the news that a certain Señor Don Ricardo had arrived, who was an American, so we at once repaired to his house. Conceive our delight in meeting with a countryman, Mr. Richard Dallum, the Alguacil of New Mexico. He immediately invited us to come and stay at his house, and gave us an excellent supper. From the "portal" of his house we noticed holes dug in the sides of a hill of sand in front of us; these were the vestiges of the gold diggers. The mountains of sand were based on masses of granite, specimens of which we collected.

This village contains about 200 inhabitants, who raise great numbers of sheep and goats. In the neighboring valleys they graze 5,000 sheep. Some years ago they raised many more, but the constant depredations of the "Navajoes" have caused a great diminution in their flocks.

September 30.—In company with Mr. Dallum, we started this morning on a tour of exploration. One-fourth of a mile higher up the ravine we entered another little town; our way was on all sides full of holes, and sometimes deep wells that had been sunk in search of the precious metal. We saw many miserable looking wretches, clothed in rags, with an old piece of iron to dig the earth, and some gourds, or horns of the mountain goat, to wash the sand. They sit all day at work, and at evening repair to some

"tienda" or store, where they exchange their gold for bread and meat.

We now reached the house of a Frenchman, who seemed to be most extensively engaged in mining; he had three mills, and one was then at work. This mill, a specimen of all the others, was of rather rude construction; it consisted of a circular pit ten feet in diameter, and about eight inches deep; the sides and bottom lined with flat slabs of stone. In the centre of this pit an axis was erected, from which three beams projected horizontally. To the longest arm a burro was attached, to the two others large blocks of stone were attached with cords, so that their flat surfaces were dragged over the bottom of the pit.

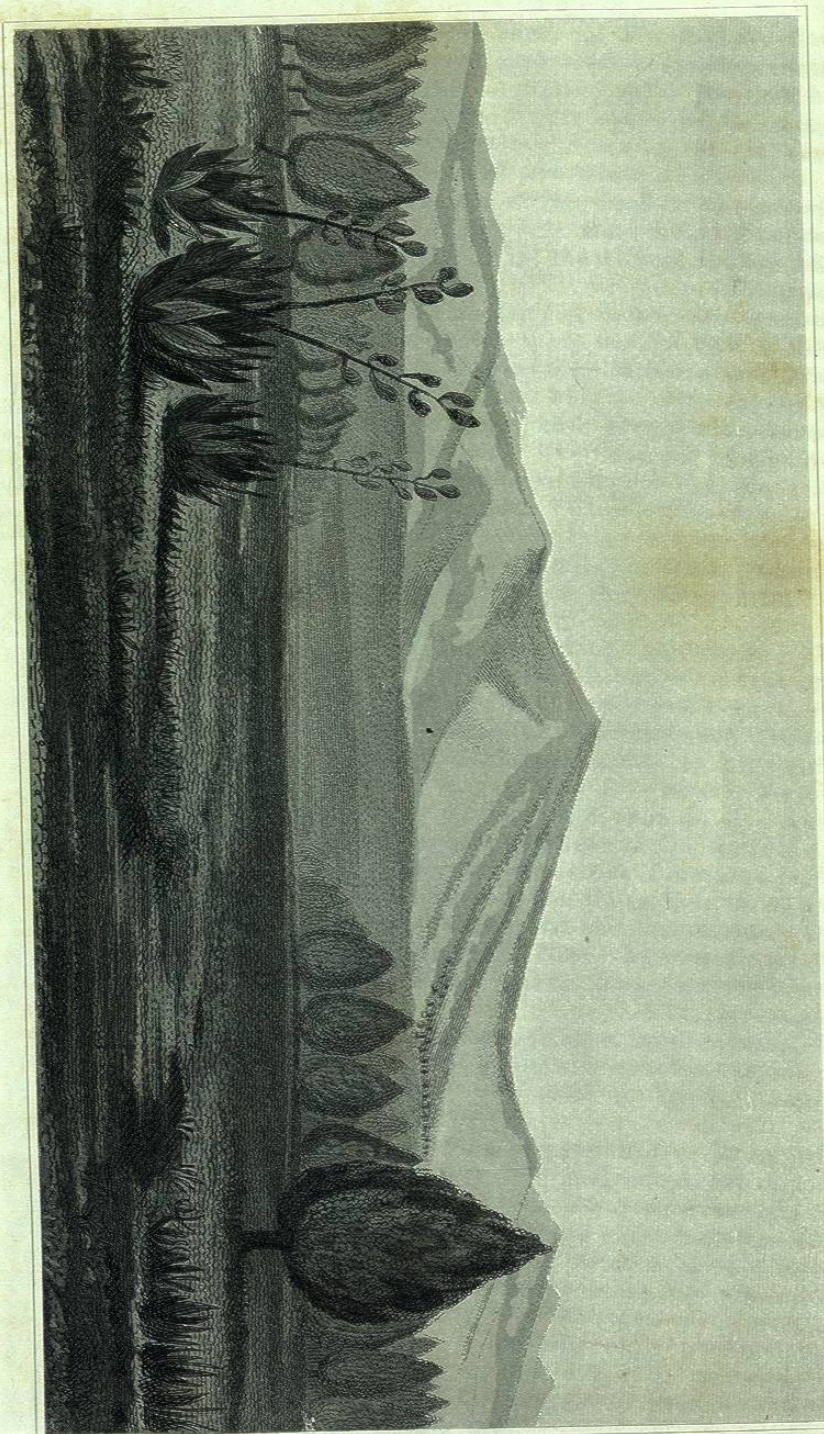
The ore that is here found in quartzose rock is broken into small pieces and thrown into the pit; water is also poured in, and donkey holds his monotonous round; the mixture now attains the consistency of thin mud; a couple of ounces of quick silver are thrown in; this forms an amalgam with the gold, and when the pit is cleared from the water, the amalgam is collected from the crevices between the stone slabs, it is tied up in a piece of rag or buckskin, thrown into a crucible and the mercury sublimed.

Around this mill we found iron ore of remarkable purity, which is dug out with the gold.

The proprietor of this mine very generously gave us as many specimens of the ore as we wished. The gold exists in small particles, visible to the eye, scattered through a quartzose gangue.

We now ascended to the mines. Here we found deep wells; they are ascended and descended by the means of notched pine trees that extend diagonally across. I procured a specimen from a vein that had been just struck. These pieces had a smoky appearance, as if produced by the flame of a candle, but the stain is indelible. The mountain sides were scattered with fragments of granite and rock containing gold. We now returned to the house of our entertainer, who refused to receive any remuneration for the trouble we had caused him, and who gave us many specimens of the ore. Having taken our leave, and inquired our route to the new mine, or "Tuerto," as it is generally called, I suppose from the crooked stream that runs near, we set out on a difficult path across the mountains. We passed up a steep ravine, so steep that the rolling of stones had worked a straight road that looked as if timber had been dragged down the hillside. As our mules climbed up, the loose stones came clattering down. We soon reached the summit; and commenced the descent. Here we saw much dark blue limestone; some, in fact, almost black. On the road we met Señor Don José Chaviz, of Padillas; he was attended by one of his peons, and was going to the same place whither we were bound. We soon entered the valley that separates the two ranges of mountains in which the gold mines are located.

From this place we had a fine view of the mountains, and one is struck with the arrangement of the lines, they being nearly straight, and running up pyramidically, showing the loose sandy nature of the soil. After a ride of eight miles we reached the village of



THE GOLD MOUNTAINS NEAR TUERTO.

Tuerto, and inquired our way to the house of Mr. Richard Campbell, where we were kindly received, and most hospitably treated. He showed us some fine specimens of native gold that had been found in the neighboring valleys, and were scattered through the detritus that is formed by the crumbling down of the auriferous rocks of the mountain. One specimen was worth \$15.

In the evening we visited a town at the base of the principal mountain; here, mingled with the houses, were huge mounds of earth, thrown out from the wells, so that the village looked like a village of gigantic prairie dogs. Nearly all the people there were at their wells, and were drawing up bags of loose sand by means of windlasses. Around little pools, men, women, and children were grouped, intently poring over these bags of loose sand, washing the earth in wooden platters or goat horns. One cannot but feel pity for these miserable wretches, and congratulate himself that he does not possess a gold mine. Even the life of the poor pastores is much preferable to that of these diggers of gold.

Tuerto contains about 250 inhabitants. It is situated on a ravine, that just furnishes sufficient water for this place and the town at the base of the mountains, which is $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant. Some of the people own large flocks of sheep, which they keep in the valley of the Pecos.

In the evening we saw the "villanos" milking their goats. This business requires considerable dexterity, and is not one of the least amusing scenes in New Mexico.

October 1.—We now started to examine the mines of the new placer. Mr. Campbell kindly furnished us mules, in order that ours might have an opportunity to rest and to graze. We first visited a lead mine, situated near the road that runs to St. Antonio; it is in a direction nearly south, situated at the foot of the mountains, and overlaying a bed of fossiliferous limestone. We collected specimens of the lead ore, and the limestone; then, proceeding eastwardly, commenced ascending the mountain. Our course now changed towards the north. Near the summit of the mountain we visited a large copper mine. Mr. Campbell proceeded to enter with great caution, and told us that he feared least some evil disposed Mexicans should be lurking in these caverns, for there were many discontented spirits about the country, trying to revolutionize the people, and some were said to dwell in these mines and caverns.

We found beautiful specimens of ore of copper of various kinds. Mr. Campbell ground up some with the aid of a couple of stones, and after a little washing showed us a great many particles of gold and silver; indeed, the ore was quite rich with these metals. This vein went through a compact limestone that is worn as if a water course once ran through the place now occupied by the ore. The projecting pieces of rock are rounded, and the sides of the passage worn into deep rounded fissures that our host calls pockets; and he tells us that in them the richest ores are found. Around the mouth of the mine we saw pieces of carbonate of lime scattered; it had been dug out with the copper ore.