

silver, then preparing to leave Mexico. As my friend was going to Vera Cruz, we immediately determined to proceed together, and engaged a carriage to depart on the 19th instant.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Return from Mexico to Xalappa.

On the 19th July, accompanied by Messrs. Bates and Snyders, I left Mexico in a carriage drawn by eight mules, by the high road for Vera Cruz. We halted for a short time at Ayotla, close to the lake of Chalco, when, parting with my son and Mr. Gillow, who had accompanied us thus far on horseback, we proceeded a few miles farther to a large hacienda, where we proposed to pass the night. On approaching it we were struck with the sound of a large bell, which continued to be rung with great force. Having unloaded our carriage and entered the house, we inquired of the ringer the cause of his continual exertion, when

we were informed that his master was getting in part of his harvest, and being fearful of the approaching rain, he was employed in keeping it off, and that the bell had been blessed for that purpose by a bishop. We smiled, but were soon convinced of its efficacy, as not a drop of rain fell, and we enjoyed the benefit of the ringing in rabbit-shooting among the large Maguey plantations near the house, and in the rich and magnificent prospects which surround the place. When returning we observed two persons arrive on horseback; one of them had a letter for me from Mr. Ruperti of Mexico, which was to recommend and introduce the bearer, Jose Cayetano Ponce de Leon, an Indian from the village of Chiaula near Tezcucó, who wished to accompany me to England as a domestic. He had been informed that I wanted to engage a person of his nation, and had been to his native

place to solicit permission from his parents, and the blessing of the Padre, or priest; which having obtained, together with a good stock of advice respecting his conduct among the people he was about to visit, (whom I believe his friends looked upon in little better light than we do on the Esquimaux,) he courageously set off to join me; and I was glad to accept of his services, as he was the only one who could be persuaded to cross the terrific "Green Waters" to the other side of the world. There was a military post stationed at the hacienda, for the purpose of protecting the roads. We supped with our host, an intelligent old man, who entertained us some time with the history of the revolution, and the severe losses he had in consequence sustained. The next morning we slowly ascended the mountains that enclosed the valley of Tenochtitlan,

and for the last time enjoyed the sublime view over the expanse of its lake; the sun was just rising on the snow-capped summit of the volcano of Popocatepetl, whose crater, 17,875 feet above the level of the sea, appeared to be but at the distance of a few miles. We soon reached the district of Pines and Oaks, passed the fine woods mentioned in our journey from the coast, and about two o'clock reached Rio Frio, and proceeded on the way for St. Martin's; but the fore-part of the carriage having come in contact with a large stone on the road, it broke, and we with some difficulty got the empty vehicle back to the posada, where a person was found to repair it. We were detained till the following day, which afforded me an opportunity of procuring several good birds, among them the crimson-throated humming bird, which I never met

with but in high cold situations, where I several times shot it on the ground, on which the other species seldom if ever alight. We shot here also a curious variety of the golden-winged woodpecker, a fine blue species of motacilla, and two kinds of blue jays, all undescribed. We had some difficulty in procuring shelter for the night, as every part of the house was occupied by a party of military, who were, like ourselves, proceeding to Puebla. Several of the officers joined us in the evening, and partook very willingly of some excellent corned boiled beef, which was a rarity they had not tasted before; it had been furnished us for our journey by the kindness of the celebrated American General Wilkinson. Neither had they any objection to a share of the small stock of sherry we had brought with us. One of them had been in the Peninsular war, had seen a British army,



THE VOLCANIC MOUNTAIN OF POPOCATEPETL. 17876 Feet in height.

and spoke with rapture of the Duke of Wellington; we chatted till a late hour, and parted good friends. The next morning brought us to our old quarters, St. Martin's, just in time to catch a glimpse of a returning procession. In an hour afterwards the town was brilliantly illuminated, and at a little distance appeared in a flame; the whole church, steeple, tower, and battlements, had small fires of candle-wood, and a large one was placed before every house; the air was filled with rockets, and numerous bands of music paraded the streets. The *ensemble* was much grander than our country towns present on similar occasions, the tallow candles of which would make but a sorry figure compared with a thousand piles of flaming candle-wood.

We arrived the next day about noon at Puebla de los Angeles, and drove to the

principal inn, and, having seen our baggage deposited in safety, (which it is quite necessary for every traveller to do,) I immediately called on Don Sebastian Furlong, whose politeness I had occasion to mention on my first visit to this city. He had procured for me some models, executed from life in a very curious manner in cloth, by a lady of the city, whom I had seen but for a few minutes on my former visit; yet on my return she presented me with a portrait of myself, made of cloth, so like as to be instantly recognised. I called on my young friend Don Marianna Call, who, in my absence, had obtained for me a MS. map of the city, and other valuable drawings and papers. This young gentleman speaks the English language, a very rare acquirement in Mexico, and his knowledge of European history and science is equalled by few of his countrymen. We took tea in the

English fashion with the gentleman with whom I resided formerly, who provided us with an excellent carriage and mules for our journey to Xalappa the next morning. It was my wish to have remained here a few days, for the purpose of visiting the Indian city of Tlascalla, distant about eighteen miles, the inhabitants of which are wholly of the original unmixed race, and are said to retain the ancient privilege, granted to them by the conquerors, of enjoying all the customs of their forefathers without innovation, except such as regard religion, the Spaniards having reduced the whole of their subjects, throughout their immense colonies in America, to the profession of the Catholic faith. Unfortunately, the anxiety of my companions to reach the end of their journey prevented me the gratification of seeing these interesting people. We set off early the following

morning. Soon after leaving the city our drivers (the same father and son who had taken us to Mexico) left the high road by a smaller one to the left, which led us over a rich and populous country, through several villages surrounded by plantations and finely cultivated lands; but having regained the highway, and passing many deep ravines and places said to be dangerous from being the resort of robbers, we arrived at Napaluca. Here we spent the night; and, starting early, took some refreshment at Ocho de Agua, and journeying over the arid plain mentioned in p. 73, again witnessed the extraordinary effects of the whirlwind, but not in so great a degree as before, probably owing to the rainy season, in consequence of which much of the ground, then parched up, was now covered with verdant turf, among which we observed a species of ground-

squirrel, very numerous, but so shy, that we could not procure one with the gun; we however killed two vultures and several hawks from the coach window. We halted half an hour at Perote: it appeared to greater advantage than the last time we passed it. Here I procured the skin of a lynx, recently killed in the neighbourhood, where I was told it is not uncommon. We reached the volcanic region of Las Vegas just before the rain set in, where we spent the night, and saw the last plantation of the aloe that produces the pulque; we left this place early, and experienced so much inconvenience from the cold as made it necessary to use our great coats; we began our rapid descent towards the sea, and having crossed the crater of the volcano (see p. 65), a few hours brought us into a warm climate, the vegetation assumed a different character every hour,

and the scenery became the most delightful and romantic that the mind can conceive; we arrived at Xalappa about mid-day, the principal part of this day's journey being on the fine causeway made about twenty years since.