

had fallen during the night, except in the freshness it had imparted to the luxuriant vegetation of the valley.

Before breakfast I sallied forth for a walk over the town. Cuernavaca lies on a tongue of land jutting out into the lap of the valley. On its western side, a narrow glen has been scooped out by the water which descends from the mountains, and its sides are thickly covered with the richest verdure. To the east, the city again slopes rapidly, and then as rapidly rises. I walked down this valley street past the church built by Cortéz, (an old picturesque edifice, filled with nooks and corners,) where they were chanting a morning mass. In the yard of the Palace, or *Casa Municipal*, at the end of the street, a body of dismounted cavalry soldiers was going through the sword exercise. From this I went to the Plaza in front of it, at present nearly covered with a large wooden amphitheatre, that had been devoted to bull fights during the recent national holidays. Around the edges of this edifice, the Indians and small farmers spread out their mats, covered with fine fruits and vegetables of the *tierra caliente*. I passed up and down a number of the steep and narrow streets, bordered with ranges of one-story houses, open and cool, and fronted usually with balconies and porches screening them from the scorching sun. The softer and gentler appearance of the people, as compared with those of the Valley of Mexico, struck me forcibly. The whole has a Neapolitan air. The gardens are numerous and full of flowers. By the street sides, small canals continually pour along the cool and clear waters from the mountains.

At nine o'clock I returned to breakfast, and found it rather better than our last night's supper. While this meal was preparing, I strolled out into the garden back of the hotel.

The house once belonged to a convent, and was occupied by monks; but many years since it was purchased by a certain Joseph Laborde, who played a bold part in the mine-gambling which once agitated the Mexicans with its speculative excitement.

In 1743, Laborde came, as a poor youth, to Mexico, and by a fortunate venture in the mine of the Cañada del Real de Tapujahua, he gained immense wealth. After building a church in Tasco which cost him near half a million, he was suddenly reduced to the greatest misery, both by unlucky speculations, and the failure of mines from which he had drawn an annual revenue of between two and three hundred thousand marks. The Archbishop, however, permitted him to dispose of a golden *soleil*, enriched with diamonds, which, in his palmy days, he had presented to his church at Tasco; and with the produce of the sale, which amounted to nigh one hundred thousand dollars, he returned once more to Zacatecas. This district was at that period nearly abandoned as a mining country, and produced annually but fifty thousand marks of silver. But Laborde immediately undertook the celebrated mine of Quebradilla, and in working it, lost again, nearly all his capital. Yet was he not to be deterred.

With the scanty remains of his wealth, he persevered in his labors; struck on the *veta grande*, or great vein of La Esperanza, and thereby, a second time, replenished his coffers. From that period, the produce of the mines of Zacatecas rose to near five hundred thousand marks a year, and Laborde, at his death, left three millions of livres. In the meantime, however, he had forced his only daughter into a convent, in order that he might bequeath his immense property unembarrassed to his son; who, in turn, infected like his father with religious bigotry, voluntarily embraced the monastic life, and ended the family's career of avarice and ambition.

During his days of prosperity, Laborde had owned the property on which we are now staying, and embellished it with every adornment that could bring out the beauties of surrounding nature. The dwelling is said to have been magnificent before it was destroyed during the Revolution, but nothing remains now of all the splendor with which the speculator enriched it, except the traces of its beautiful garden. This is situated on the western slope bending toward the glen, and contains near eight acres in its two divisions. These he covered with a succession of gradually descending terraces, filled with the rarest natural and exotic flowers. In the midst of these gardens is still a tank for water-fowl, and over the high western wall rises a mirador or *bellevue*, from which the eye ranges north, south, and west, to the mountains over the plain, which is cut in its centre by the tangled dell.

The northern division of this garden is reached by a flight of steps from the first, and incloses a luxuriant grove of forest trees, broad-leaved plantains, and a few solitary palms waving over all their fan-like branches. In these dense and delicious shades through which the sun, at noon, can scarcely penetrate, a large basin spreads out into a mimic lake. A flight of fifteen steps descend to it from the bank, and were once filled with jars of flowers. In the centre of this sheet two small gardens are still planted, and the flowers bending over their sides and growing to their very edge, seem floating on the waters. At the extreme end of the grounds, a deep summer-house extends nearly the whole width of the field on arches, and its walls are painted in fresco to resemble a beautiful garden filled with flowers and birds of the rarest plumage. Looking at this from the south end of the little lake, the deception is perfect, and you seem beholding the double of the actual prospect, repeated by some witchery of art.

I would gladly have spent the day in this garden, but we had arranged our journey so as to devote a portion of this morning to visit the adjacent hacienda of Temisco, a sugar plantation, owned by the Del Barrios, of Mexico. Accordingly, after breakfast we mounted, and passing down the steep descents to the east, we struck off into the fields in a southwardly direction.

The beautiful suburbs of Cuernavaca are chiefly inhabited by Indians, whose houses are built along the narrow lanes; and in a country where it is a comfort to be all day long in the open air under the shade of trees,

and where you require no covering except to shelter you in sleep and showers, you may readily imagine that the dwellings of the people are exceedingly slight. A few canes stuck on end, and a thatch of cane, complete them.

But the broad-leaved plantain, the thready pride of China, the "feathery palm," bending over them, and matted together by lacing vines and creeping plants covered with blossoms—these form the real dwellings. The whole, in fact, would look like a picture from "Paul and Virginia"—but for the figures! "Unkempt" men, indolent and lounging; begrimed women, surrounded by a set of naked little imps as begrimed as they; and all crawling or rolling over the filth of their earthen floors, or on dirty hides stretched over sticks for a bed. A handful of corn, a bunch of plantains, or a pan of beans picked from the nearest bushes, is their daily food; and here they burrow, like so many animals, from youth to manhood, from manhood to the grave.

After leaving the city, our road lay for some distance along the high table-land, and at length struck into the glen which passes from the west of Cuernavaca, where, for the first time in Mexico, I actually lost the high-road. Imagine the channel of a mountain-stream down the side of an Alleghany mountain, with its stones chafed out of all order, and many of them worn into deep clefts by the continual tread of mules following each other, over one path, for centuries. This was the main turnpike of the country to the port of Acapulco, and several of our party managed to continue on horseback while descending the ravine; but out of respect both for myself and the animal I bestrode, I dismounted, and climbed over the rocks and gullies to the bottom of the glen, where we crossed a swift stream on a bridge. Ascending from this to the ridge on the opposite side, in rather a scrambling manner, we entered the domain of the hacienda* of Temisco, the buildings of which we shortly reached after passing through an Indian village, where most of the laborers on the estate reside.

This is one of the oldest establishments of note in the Republic, and passed, not many years since, into the hands of the present owners for the sum of \$300,000. The houses (consisting of the main dwelling, a large chapel, and all the requisite out-buildings for grinding the cane and refining the sugar,) were erected shortly after the conquest, and their walls bear yet the marks of the bullets with which the refractory owner was assailed during one of the numerous revolts in Mexico. He stood out stoutly against the enemy, and mustering his faithful Indians within the walls of his court-yard, repulsed the insurgents.

* "Hacienda," is the name given to all estates or plantations in contradistinction to "Rancho," a farm.



INDIAN HUT IN THE TIERRA CALIENTE.

The estate spreads over a tract of eleven leagues in length by three in breadth. It employs about two hundred and fifty laborers, at two and a half and three reals per day, who produce about fifty thousand loaves of sugar, of from twenty-two to twenty-four pounds, per annum. It is calculated that the molasses pays all the expenses of the establishment, which amount to near thirty thousand dollars. At the store of the hacienda, (belonging to the proprietor of the estate,) almost the whole of this sum is received back from the Indians, who, I perceived, purchased even their bread. In addition to the revenue from the sugar crop, about eight thousand head of cattle feed on the premises, half of which are the property of its owner, the other half being strays from adjoining haciendas.

We were received by Don Rafael, (one of the brothers del Barrios,) who we unexpectedly met on the estate. He conducted us into a long monastic-looking hall, nearly bare of furniture, yet bearing traces of taste and refinement, in a well-selected library and valuable piano in one corner, while a hammock, suspended from the unplastered rafters, swung across the airy apartment. Here we were most hospitably entertained, and enjoyed a pleasant chat with the owner, in French, Spanish, English and German, all of which languages the worthy gentleman speaks,—having not only travelled in, but dwelt long and *observingly* in every country of Europe. It was strange, in these wild portions of Mexico, in the midst of Indians, to drop thus suddenly and unexpectedly by the side of a well-bred man, dressed in his simple costume of a plain country farmer, who could converse with you in most of the modern tongues, upon all subjects—from the collections of the Pitti Palace and the Vatican, to the breed and education of a game cock!

As we looked over the fields of cane, waving their long, delicate green leaves, in the mid-day sunshine to the south, he pointed out to us the site of an Indian village, at the distance of three leagues, *the inhabitants of which are almost in their native state.* He told us, *that they do not permit the visits of white people; and that, numbering more than three thousand, they come out in delegations to work at the haciendas, being governed at home by their own magistrates, administering their own laws, and employing a Catholic priest, once a year, to shrive them of their sins.* The money they receive in payment of wages, at the haciendas, is taken home and buried; and as they produce the cotton and skins for their dress, and the corn and beans for their food, they purchase nothing at the stores. They form a good and harmless community of people, rarely committing a depredation upon the neighboring farmers, and only occasionally *lassoing* a cow or a bull, which they say they “do not *steal*, but *take* for food.” If they are chased on such occasions, so great is their speed of foot, they are rarely caught even by the swiftest horses; and if their settlement is ever entered by a white, *the transgressor is immediately seized, put under guard in a large hut, and he and his animal are fed and carefully attended to until the follow-*

ing day, when he is dispatched from the village under an escort of Indians, who watch him until far beyond the limits of the primitive settlement.

Du Roslan and myself felt a strong desire (notwithstanding the inhibition,) to visit this original community, as one of the most interesting objects of our journey; but the rest of our party objecting, we were forced to submit to the law of majorities in our wandering tribe.

I observed, that on this hacienda the proprietors have introduced all the improvements in the art of making sugar, and obtained their horizontal rollers and boiling-pans from New-York. How they reached their places over the wretched roads, must ever remain a riddle to others but Mexican teamsters; and yet, after all the immense outlay of capital, in the purchase and improvement of this property, the proprietor complains bitterly, this year, of the difficulty of selling its produce, and the general depression of the times. With roads to transport his crop to market, and with ideas beyond the back of a mule as the only means of transportation, he would not be forced to complain long of stagnant trade and trifling profits. Peace, internal improvement, and native enterprise, unmolested by fiscal legislation, are what Mexico requires; and, until she obtains them, the planter may vainly expend his fortune in mechanical improvements.

We reached Cuernavaca about 3 o'clock, meeting on the way a number of muleteers, and Indians with their wives, returning from market. A gang of thieves, sent under a guard to the town prison, also passed us on the road.

We entered the city, through the delightful suburb of groves. The families of many of the better classes of the inhabitants were sitting under the shade of their porches, and it was impossible to avoid remarking the delicate beauty of the females.

Indolence is said to be the general characteristic of Cuernavaca; and, as in all fine climates, it is fatal to enterprise and industry. The temperature is too high for these virtues. Man wants but shade, shelter, and a gratified appetite, and there is no inducement to make the interior of dwellings either beautiful or attractive. Working in the open air fatigues—reading, within, makes them drowsy. They rise early, because it is too warm to lie in bed; they go to mass, for exercise in the cool and balmy morning air; they go to sleep after their meals, because it is too warm to walk about; and they go to vespers, to pass the time until the hour arrives for another meal, as preparatory to another nap! And thus, between sleep, piety, and victuals, life passes aimlessly enough, in this region of eternal summer.

We lounged for an hour or two in Laborde's beautiful garden, watching the sunset over the western glen, and found it difficult to leave even for the promise of a dinner. While we had been on our morning visit to the hacienda, the diligence arrived from Mexico, and the hungry passengers, who had travelled since three o'clock almost without food, made a deep inroad in the larder. It required some energy to repair this havoc; and as our dinner had been ordered at six o'clock, I took occasion to pay my respects to the cook-maid. With the aid of a little cash and persuasion, I managed to preserve our own stores untouched until we penetrate farther into the country, where, in all likelihood, we will need them more.

After dinner, we took a walk by moonlight through the town. The night was as cloudless and serene, as one of our summer evenings by the sea-shore.

Antonio, the broken-nosed hero, and owner of the cur, proposed that we should go to see a *fandango*, at the house of one of the burghers, who was his friend. He led the way, through several streets, to a neat dwelling in the midst of a garden, where we found a row of elderly ladies strung on high-backed chairs against the wall, while a dozen young and pretty ones (by the light of a couple of starved tallow candles,) received the compliments of as many of the village beaux. Two or three musicians were seated in a corner strumming their *bandalones*, and going through a half hour of preparatory tuning, while the company gathered. At length, when all had assembled, the schoolmaster—a veteran and a bachelor, the briskest and busiest man of the party—constituted himself master of ceremonies for the evening, and insisted on our joining in a *contra dance*, got up expressly for the strangers. Du Roslan and myself joined the dance, on my principle of "taking people as they are, and doing as they do;" besides that I think it always in the worst taste to leave men, no matter how humble or poor they may be, under the impression that you have visited them as curiosities. After footing it through, we handed the servants a couple of dollars to bring in refreshments of "Perfect-love" and "Noyau" for the ladies, and something more likely to be relished by the gentlemen. This we understood was not contrary to the rules of "good society;"—so they sipped and became livelier. A couple took the floor—the lady with *castanets*, and the man chanting an air to the guitar. Another pair followed their example, while the remainder formed a cotillon, to the twang of the rest of the instruments. The Cuernavacans seemed wide awake, for once at least, and we stole off quietly at midnight, in the midst of an uproar of music and merriment.

20th September. At four o'clock, day was just breaking and the moon still shining, when we passed through the suburbs of Cuernavaca. As we reached the highlands of the plateau, where the barranca breaks precipitously, the sun rose. There had been no rain during the night; the sky was perfectly clear, and in the distance lay the mountains of the

southern Sierra, with the morning mists resting like lakes among their folds.

Passing over the declivitous road we had traversed yesterday, we soon struck off to the right, near the hacienda of Temisco, and after crossing a deep ravine, rose to a still higher plateau, where we enjoyed a beautiful view of this splendid estate, with its white walls and chapel tower, buried in the middle of bright green cane-fields, waving with the fresh breeze in the early light.

From this eminence the guide (who was a half-breed Indian and Negro,) pointed out to me a small mountain, at the extremity of the plain in front, on which was situated the Pyramid of Xochicalco—the subject of our day's explorations. The *cerro* appears to rise directly out of the levels between two mountains, and the plain continuing to its very foot, might seemingly be traversed in half an hour. Accordingly, I expressed this opinion to the guide, and put my horse directly in motion for it; but the half-breed turned off to the right. I remonstrated, as the whole plateau appeared to be a perfect prairie, smooth and easily crossed; but he insisted that in the straight forward direction, and, indeed, in all directions, it was cut by one of those vast barrancas, which, worn by the attrition of water for ages, break on you unexpectedly in the most level fields, forcing you frequently to tread back your path, or to go miles around for a suitable crossing. The space in a direct line over these gullies may be no more than fifty yards before you strike the same level on the opposite bank—and yet to reach it, you are compelled to descend hundreds of feet and ascend again, among rocks and herbage, for the distance of a mile. Such was the account of the barrancas, given by our guide, except that he declared the one in front of us to be at present *entirely impassable*. I submitted, therefore, to his advice, and turning off with him to the right, we trotted away at the head of our party, and soon lost sight of our lagging friends.

In a quarter of an hour we reached one of the barrancas of which he had spoken, and it fully justified his description:—a wide, yawning gulf in the midst of the plain, with precipitous sides tangled with rocks and shrubbery.

Although the path was scarcely broad enough for the horse's feet,—with a steep towering on the right, and a precipice of a hundred yards plunging down immediately on his left,—this bold rider never quitted his animal, but pushed right onward. I confess that I paused before I followed.

Two travellers, who passed us half an hour before, had already descended, and were thridding their way on the other side of the glen among the rocks. Instead, however, of taking the side of the opposite steep in a right line with the descent, as they ought to have done, they had followed the downward course of the stream in seeking for an easier rise; and they were forced to halt before a pile of impassable rocks, from which they shouted to our guide for directions.

When I again caught a glimpse of the half-breed, his head was rising and sinking with the motion of his horse, a hundred feet below me, as he slid along the shelving precipices of the barranca. Yet there was no alternative but to follow him; and as my horse was an old roadster in the *tierra caliente*, I resolved not to be outdone, and so, giving him his own time and control of the bridle, I trusted to his sagacity, and put him in the path. Nor had I occasion to regret my confidence in the beast; he did his work bravely, feeling his path, leaning against the upper sides of the dangerous passes, and clambering along with the tenacity of a fly and the activity of a cat. But when we were within fifty feet of the bottom of the ravine, a sharp turn to the right disclosed to me an almost headlong wall of rock for the remaining distance, into which steps had been cut that seemed scarcely passable on foot. I looked about me, and found there was room to dismount. Although I had great confidence in the horse, I confess to more in my own feet; and thus scrambling on ahead, at the length of my *lasso*, I led the animal to the bottom of the dell, through which ran a broad and rapid stream swollen by the recent rains. Here I found the guide waiting for me. We plunged in at once, and partly swimming the horses and partly scrambling over the huge stones that formed the bed of the torrent, we attained the western bank in safety.

Fairly past one difficulty, another confronted us in the ascent of the opposite side, which seemed steeper and more craggy than the other. Determined to try my horse's mettle, I now continued on his back, and prepared him for what he had to expect by leaping a stone-wall at the foot of the declivity. He took at once nimbly to the crags, sprang after the guide from rock to rock and ledge to ledge, almost at a run; neither laid his ears to his neck for a moment, nor faltered for whip, spur, or word of encouragement; and, in half the time occupied in the descent, placed me on the top of the plateau.

But our companions were missing. From our elevated position, we commanded an uninterrupted view over the levels of the opposite prairie, yet they were neither on it, nor winding down the sides of the glen. Mr. Black soon made his appearance, and followed us up the cliffs; but he was not able to account for the rest of the party. In half an hour, however, they appeared near a mile up the barranca fording the river; and as it was evident that they were in the right direction and saw us, we pushed on. Descending another fold of the ravines, and again crossing an arm of the same stream, and zig-zagging another hill to its summit, we found ourselves at last on the table-land without the interruption of more barrancas.

Here we were rejoined by some of the party, who reported one of the mules to be broken down. The other, however, soon reached us, and it was sent back unladen, for the carga of the useless beast that was detained at the foot of the last declivity.

In half an hour we were again in motion, after a fruitless effort to shoot a young buck we had started in a neighboring corn-field. The sun was now intensely hot, and from its influence and the exercise of the morning, I was drenched with perspiration; nor was it disagreeable to find the pores of the skin thus relieved, after a residence of eight months in the Valley of Mexico, where the sensation is scarcely known.

I put up my umbrella to screen myself as much as possible from the direct rays, but the heat was reflected as scorchingly from the naked plain and shrubless hills. Nevertheless, wearied by the fatigue of six hours in the saddle without food, I soon fell into a doze, which lasted until we entered the bare gorge between the hills through which commences the ascent to the ruined pyramid.

Here, among some scanty bushes which afforded shade and shelter, we dismounted to breakfast; but, unluckily, water had been entirely forgotten by our servants; there was not a drop in the gourds or canteens. Our pic-nic feast of sardines, ham, sausage, and corned-beef, consequently but added to a parching thirst, which there was no hope of allaying, but by slow draughts of claret and sherry that had been exposed for hours to a blazing sun on the backs of mules. Nor was this all. Scarcely had we seated ourselves, when clouds of black-flies and mosquitos came down from their nests among the ruins, and I write this memorial of them with hands inflamed by their inexorable stings.

In a bad humor, as you may naturally suppose, for antiquarian researches, I nevertheless mounted my horse as soon as breakfast was over, and ascended the hill with Pedro; while my companions, who had less anxiety about such matters, laid down under an awning of serapes stretched from tree to tree, to finish the nap that had been interrupted at half-past three in the morning.

THE RUINS OF THE PYRAMID OF XOCHICALCO.

At the distance of six leagues from the city of Cuernavaca lies a *cerro*, three hundred feet in height, which, with the ruins that crown it, is known by the name of XOCHICALCO, or "the Hill of Flowers." The base of this eminence is surrounded by the very distinct remains of a deep and wide ditch; its summit is attained by five spiral terraces; the walls that support them are built of stone, joined by cement, and are still quite perfect; and, at regular distances, as if to buttress these terraces, there are remains of bulwarks shaped like the bastions of a fortification. The summit of the hill is a wide esplanade, on the eastern side of which are still perceptible three truncated cones, resembling the *tumuli* found among many similar ruins in Mexico. On the other sides there are also large