

got another splendid view, a slight enlargement, in fact, of the first, from the real pinnacle of Sumate; and there, from one or two fissures which held a scanty soil, I gathered several little stunted plants, which, in small flower-pots, I am about to carry to Mexico.

I have already mentioned, that the summit of Sumate is calculated at 11,000 feet above the level of the sea: that makes about 2,500 feet above Real del Monte: Of these 2,500 feet, the two crowning rocks embrace, I should think, 450 feet; 300 the lower, and 150 the higher. The girth of the latter could not be less than 200 feet.

We returned from Sumate by a still more beautiful road than that which had conducted us to it. There were several openings in the woods, presenting from twenty to a hundred acres of sward or lawn, with here or there a standard tree or a clump, which no scientific gardening could have placed with more symmetrical beauty. We got to Mr. Buchan's at six, and enjoyed the evening over many anecdotes of the day's work and "hair-breadth 'scapes."

LETTER XL.

THE HACIENDA DE REGLA.

Real del Monte, August 1851.

ON Sunday, the 19th, we made no excursion. In the school-room of the "Real," Mr. Buchan reads prayers regularly on the Christian's day of rest; so to this memento of Protestant England we proceeded, about the usual hour of eleven, the ladies in the *caratela*, driven by Mrs. Buchan, and we, the men, jogging along on foot. A respectable *male* congregation was assembled, together with some nice-looking children; but, somewhat to my surprise, no females, except those who came from Mr. Buchan's own house, attended prayers. The fact is, there are very few English females in Real del Monte: and being all married, with families to look after, the head has often to do Sunday-duty for all the household.

Mr. Buchan read the service impressively and

we had very fair singing from an amateur choir. The number of persons present was about sixty; and, I need scarcely add, that the deportment of all was of that grave and decent character which, at home and abroad, so peculiarly marks an English congregation.

We spent the remainder of the day at home quietly, every day more and more delighted with our host and hostess. At night we made our party for the Hacienda and Barranca of Regla, the great excursion of Real del Monte, and which will form my concluding topic of one of the pleasantest weeks I have spent either in Mexico or elsewhere.

We started from Mr. Buchan's (Monday, 20th) about seven in the morning; our party consisting of Miss C—, H—, Mr. G—, and myself, in the carriage, and Mr. Escandon and Captain Gros on horseback.

We passed through the beautiful glen which leads to Velasco, where we observed an enormous amount of different work going simultaneously and energetically forward. Emerging, at this point, from the hilly country, we entered on the plain or valley below; and you cannot imagine

a finer or more English-looking country than that which we traversed. The road, like all the roads made by the company, is as good as the best we have at home; and, although not hemmed in by hedges, a row of fine trees on either side of us, with cultivated fields beyond, and mountains in the distance, formed a very pleasing scene as a whole. In the enjoyment of this picturesque country, we deviated, after a few miles, from our direct line of march, and passed through the Indian village or town called Jautla, where orchards and a luxurious vegetation added a variety to the landscape; and then, advancing another mile or so, we came to San Miguel, a pleasant country-house, belonging to the Regla family. Here we stopped, and were received by Don Ignacio Castelazo, the administrator of the present heirs of the celebrated Count de Regla. We were politely received by Don Ignacio, his wife, and daughter; and, at the same time, he introduced us to a gentleman of some celebrity in Mexico, and of whom we made a pleasant friend, M. Floreci, an Italian marquis, long engaged in mining pursuits, and now connected with the new Real del Monte Company. He

has made two or three fortunes in mining, and lost them, I fancy, by his too ardent and speculative temperament.

The marquis is now erecting buildings, on a large scale, for the purpose of reducing the poorer ores, on an economical principle, invented by and only known to himself. The buildings appeared to me to be of too decorative a style for mere working purposes in Mexico; and, when finished, must cost much more, I should think, than his own estimate of fifty thousand dollars. As he is deeply interested, however, in the success of his novel, and, by all accounts, scientific enterprise, a criticism of his *modus operandi* may fairly be considered as premature. M. Floreci is a gentlemanlike and accomplished person; perfectly acquainted with the English language, and other living idioms, having travelled over and resided in many parts of Europe.

The great attraction here is "el ojo del agua," a splendid spring, which waters a beautiful glen, adjoining the residence and works of the place. Through this valley the rivulet finds its devious way. Its high sloping banks are profusely decked with trees, creepers, air plants, and wild flowers.

The soft murmuring of the waters, as they play among the large stones which are scattered throughout the stream, soothe the ear in the midst of the sylvan scene. We found here the wild grape, and strawberry, the apple and other fruits.

A drive of two miles or less, brought us from San Miguel to the Hacienda de Regla, which forms the most extraordinary mass of buildings I ever saw in my life. I scarcely dare attempt a description of the place, for I fear I never could convey to you any correct idea of what it is—the prison-like castle, with its mining works—a gigantic, strong, irregular pile of household building, over dungeons, vaults, and tunnels, with magazines, spires or turrets, courts, back yards, furnaces, smelting and amalgamation works—all forming a *toute ensemble*, which one must see, and not have described.

Mr. Ward visited Regla. After mentioning the forests and farms which constitute part of the great estate, I might safely say, the principality of Real del Monte, he tells us that it is proposed to introduce English farming into the district. That has been quietly making its way, and is now decidedly on the advance. When I get to England, I

intend to lend a helping hand in so good a cause.

Mr. Ward then says:—“These farms are situated between the Real del Monte and the Hacienda de Regla, which is likewise ceded to the Company. I visited, on the 25th of July, this stupendous monument of the magnificence of the old Mexican miners, which may be regarded, at the same time, as the best proof of the value of their mines. It is situated in a deep ravine, about six leagues to the east of Real del Monte; it not having been found possible to obtain a sufficient command of water at a less distance.

“The *hacienda* is composed of a vast pile of buildings, constructed apparently without plan or regularity, but comprising every thing that a mining establishment can require; immense vaulted rooms for the reception of the ores: twenty-four *arrastres* (crushing mills), worked by horizontal water wheels; a number of furnaces for smelting; and two covered *patios* (courts), each of about 200 feet in length, in which the process of amalgamation was carried on. These are to be replaced by a water wheel (now constructing by the Company), which is thirty-six feet in diameter, and is to put in motion forty-eight stamps.

“The whole *hacienda* is supposed to have cost nearly a million of dollars;* and this I am not inclined to regard as an exaggerated estimate. In 1795, 5000 *cargas* of ore were received there weekly. Yet even this enormous establishment was thought insufficient for the mines; and another *hacienda*, San Antonio, was constructed, at a little distance from Regla, which is likewise a splendid mass of buildings, although not comparable to Regla in size and importance.” So far Mr. Ward; and I may just add that San Antonio has been abandoned, as a mining establishment.

We entered, then, this great citadel-castle by a broad rising causeway; and proceeding up a stair, found ourselves in a long and somewhat dilapidated corridor. We were received by Mr. and Mrs. Bell, the worthy couple who have the charge of the *hacienda*; he being chief smelter of the Company. They have but recently arrived from *Durham*, and having yet their northern accent, their homely dialect sounded oddly to my ears, in a palace which the lords of Regla had

* Captain Lyon says, £500,000 or two millions and a half of dollars; and I certainly think Mr. Ward's estimate is much under the actual cost.

built, little imagining that a plain denizen of Durham, with his tidy English wife, would one day supplant and rule over the vast feudality which they, the lords paramount, had created at the expense of millions of dollars, extracted from the bowels of the earth underneath; and which they compelled, as it were, to afford them the means of accomplishing their gigantic works.

If we had a feudal and lordly building, Mr. and Mrs. Bell certainly gave us a feudal and baronial breakfast. Such another breakfast, for variety and substantiality of viands, saw I never. Beef steaks, chops, pies, stews, roasts, hams, fowls, vegetables, omelettes, eggs, puddings, pancakes, cheese — washed down with claret, sherry, and excellent ale. And *then*, came tea and coffee, with splendid bread and butter, toast and cakes! That *was* a breakfast, of which no Count de Regla need have been ashamed.

From the breakfast table, Mr. Bell conducted us to the great smelting works of Regla, which were at the time in actual operation. The vault or cavity into which a row of huge furnaces disgorged their contents, was about two hundred feet in length, and eighty to a hundred in width,

smoke-dried, black, and rough. The scoria from the ores came out of the furnaces, in soft, ductile cakes; and as they gradually cooled, they were thrown on heaps of now vitrified masses, misshapen and strange in their conformations. To look into the heated furnaces, would have been something terrific to such as had not visited our own manufacturing districts, more particularly those of Staffordshire; and, adding the blackened visages of the workmen, with their long iron implements for handling the glowing materials of their vulcan-like home; the scene was one of almost satanic grandeur. How few consider, and how still fewer know all the intermediate processes, by which metals, extracted from mother earth, come to administer to the wants of a complicated civilisation, from a doubloon down to a pin!

Of the whole process of smelting, I need not here speak; for it is one, the acquaintance with which is open to all, either through actual observation in England, or through popular or scientific publications.

From the *fundicion de metales*, we proceeded, through vaults and tunnels, to the back part of the gigantic *hacienda*, there to have our wondering

eyes directed to a very different, but still more interesting object—the waterfall of Regla. The great castle-house is built on a platform by one side of the river; and on the opposite bank rises a gigantic natural wall or rampart, frowning over the leviathan building itself.

Having viewed the caverns there, and passed through the tunnels of the monster house, we emerged into light, and found that the river flowed through a continuous range of immense basaltic pillars, with great blocks of which the ground was strewed. These had, by time or storm, been detached from the great range; and this terminated with a beautiful fall, the water having scooped out for itself a semicircle of the rocks, over which it plunged into a deep pool beneath. The fall, though imposing in its appearance, is not more than twenty-five or thirty feet in height; but its fine curve adds greatly to its effect and beauty. A daring enthusiast once leapt from the fall to the pool, and was saved. “The basaltic columns,” in Captain Lyon’s words, “are remarkably regular; the left-hand cliff cannot be less than one hundred feet higher than the fall, where the waters are fancifully divided by two

pillars, which appear so much separated from their neighbours, as to lead to a supposition that they will soon be entirely detached and broken. The river flows rapidly over a rugged bed of broken columns, after its escape from the basin, which is almost overshadowed by beautiful trees. The ravine is one of the most beautiful and perfect basins of basalt in the world. The steep banks of the stream, which are composed of the *débris* of the overhanging columnar cliffs, are eminently picturesque; and amid the blocks and broken basaltic pillars are flourishing luxuriant rock plants, unknown to Europeans; while, on the precipice to the left hand climbs an immense plant of the ‘five-leaved vine,’ which fancifully covers the columns to a great extent with its bright scarlet and green leaves.”

So says Captain Lyon, in 1826; and such I found the fall twenty-three years afterwards. I have only to remark farther, that “the two pillars” still stand; and that I saw the most curious object of all, the five-leaved vine, which had spread out into larger dimensions, and which clung to the basaltic pillars with an embrace so close, as to impress one with the idea, that to them alone did

it owe its life, and strength, and beauty. The whole scene assuredly was strikingly grand.

About one o'clock we all (*minus* Miss C—) mounted our horses, and proceeded to view the Barranca, or precipitous ravine which extends for many leagues in the direction of Tampico. In fact, I was told by all that the road hence to the province of Taumalipas and Tampico itself traverses one of the portions of Mexico most remarkable for its fine scenery. This was, indeed, the grandest of all our excursions. In proceeding to the Barranca, we rode for three or four miles over a beautiful table land, skirted on all sides by woods and hills. We then entered the wood which clothes the Barranca itself; and when at last we dismounted, and stood on the edge of the precipice, there lay a scene—far, deep, and perpendicularly below us—which beggars description. It was the narrow but cultivated vale through which flowed the meandering river. We had a bird's-eye view of all its windings; and we were told, that in going to Tampico by this valley, the traveller has to cross the river some thirty or forty times. The high precipitous banks were, as usual, one mass of foliage. The heat in the narrow valley below approaches

to tropical, and many of its productions are of such a clime. On the table land, the temperature approaches nearer to that of the frozen than the torrid zone. We sat on the culminating point of the Barranca, contemplating the lovely scene, which lay some six or seven hundred feet below us. The adventurous Captain Gros gathered flowers for H— from the precipice, a somewhat dangerous piece of gallantry. We then retraced our way to Regla, whence we set off on our return to the "Real." We visited Velasco (where we changed mules, and drank good Mexican ale); and at Sanchez we once more examined its great and well-appointed mining works. At six P.M., we arrived at Real del Monte, delighted with the day we had spent.

On Wednesday, the 22nd, the hum was heard of busy preparations for the grand event, to celebrate which Mr. Escandon had visited Real del Monte—the christening of Mr. and Mrs. Buchan's infant. In the absence of a Protestant clergyman, the curate was to officiate, our own Church accepting the baptism of the Roman Catholic, and *vice-versâ*. A splendid altar, profusely but tastefully adorned, was fitted up in the drawing-room; and Don

Manuel went to Pachuca, thence to escort *el Señor Cura*, whose absence in Mexico had delayed the ceremony.

At five, the company began to arrive; and by six we were all assembled in the drawing-room. At that hour in came the bustling curate, followed by the Prior of the Fernandino Monastery at Pachuca with an attendant friar. The room blazed with the wax candles on and around the altar, shining with gold and silver ornaments, mixed with others of porcelain, and I know not what; while, on either side, it was flanked with splendid flowers and green branches. The room was full—the passage filled with servants, retainers, and spectators; and, amid the congratulations and applause of all, Mr. Escandon standing godfather, little "Catherine" became a member of Mother Church. Don Manuel, after the ceremony, saluted his *comadre*, Mrs. B., and shook hands with his *compadre*; distributed to every one present a "*bolo*," which was a new gold dollar (worth 4s.); and then from the window, he scattered handfuls of *medios* (half-rials, silver, value 3d. each) to the crowd of men, women, boys, and girls, collected together for the scramble. Miss C—

was godmother, and according to etiquette, her "*bolo*" was a new *silver rial*. All friends coming near a *compadre*, on these occasions, are entitled to a "*bolo*;" so that I don't know how many dozens of golden dollars Don Manuel was called on to present.

At 7 p.m., twenty-two of us sat down to a capital dinner. A list of the dishes, as at a Lord Mayor's feast, would do ample justice to the housekeeping of our fair hostess; but, omitting that, I shall confine myself to a list of the company, which, considering we were in Real del Monte, is curious. There were Mr. and Mrs. Buchan, the happy father and mother; the *compadre* and *comadre*; Mr. Brenchley, a discriminating admirer of female excellence; "Don Cruz," so called at the Real, but *Anglice*, Captain Gros; the good-natured engineer, Mr. Arthur; the doctor of the establishment; our curate and the prior; the Marquis Floreci, and Mr. Petrowski, the manager at Sanchez; the *alcalde* or justice of the peace of Real del Monte; Mr. Woodfield, formerly of the *old* Real Company, now a gentleman at large; Mr. Chenowith, *employé*, and his amiable little wife; the judge of the district, and

a cousin of Mr. Escandon, both from Pachuca; Mr. Richard G—, and ourselves. These comprehended individuals born in Spain, Mexico, Peru, Italy, Poland, England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and Smyrna. I have only to add, that the evening was spent in great conviviality, not breaking up till midnight.

The company departed. Mr. G— and I (having to start long before daybreak), took leave of my now dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Buchan, both so justly beloved in their present home. All I could get Mrs. Buchan to charge me with, on my return to England, was, to pay a visit to her father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Auld. H— remained behind me, to enjoy herself for another week, and then to return with Don Manuel.

At half-past four in the morning, Mr. G— and I, accompanied by the judge of Pachuca, set off for that town, where we left him. At six we took our places in the *diligencia*; and, after a melancholy drive, I found myself once more in Mexico, at half-past two P. M.

LETTER XII.

MR. BUCHAN'S REPORT OF REAL DEL MONTE.

[London, 14th August, 1852.]

WHAT I have re-written on Real del Monte, during the present year, led me to request my friend, Mr. Buchan, to furnish me with a report on its actual state and prospects; and, having received it, I think such of my readers as are interested in mining affairs will thank me for inserting that report here. It shews, with much clearness and ability, how mining, the great source of the riches of Mexico, may be carried out, as a safe and profitable investment, instead of being, as it too generally is, a lottery, offering alternate prosperity and loss. I give Mr. Buchan's report *verbatim et literatim*, considering it to be of too great importance to be condensed, and too clear and luminous to be in any way altered.]