

sells, as have before been mentioned for their light apparell; who, with their bravery, and white mantell over them, seem to be, as the Spaniard saith, '*Mosca en leche,*' a flie in milk."* Since these grand old times of trains of slaves, with silk stockings on their black legs, what a falling off to be sure!

* Gage went from Ireland to Spain, and then entered a convent of Dominican monks. He was sent to the Phillipines in 1625; made money, got back to England, abjured the Catholic faith, and obtained the living of Deal in Kent.

LETTER XLVIII.

CHAPULTEPEC—TISAPAN—MAGDALENA.

THE plain of Mexico, as often stated, is, for a great part of the year brown and arid, exposed, uninterruptedly, to the burning rays of a tropical sun. But almost all the rising ground on the opposite side of the city is full of interest and beauty, both from the diversity of fine scenery, its general cultivation, and the good account to which, in many ways and in many places, the natural riches and advantages of the country have been turned.

Several of these places have been particularly mentioned in our preceding pages. Tacubaya, San Augustin de la Cuevas, Guadalupe, the Haciendas de San Mateo and la Lecheria, Cuajamalpa, and the Desert. Some have been touched on incidentally, but one or two which we visited, have scarcely been spoken of at all.

The most remarkable of all the objects around and near Mexico, is Chapultepec. It is only about two miles from the City: it is visited by all comers—it is described by all in the same way; and I can add nothing new to this somewhat hackneyed part of Mexican travel. Chapultepec is a viceregal palace, of immense dimensions, placed on a splendid eminence, where once stood the favourite retreat of Montezuma. The present edifice (never entirely finished) was built by the young Viceroy Galvez, at an expense of three hundred thousand dollars; but the court of Madrid, jealous of the power which a viceroy might exercise, with so dominant a position over the capital, gave it to be understood that the occupation of the new palace would be “a custom more honoured in the breach than the observance.” Now the building is called a military school; and, as far as we could see, the occupation of it was *still* “a custom more honoured,” etc. It had an untenanted and ruinous appearance.

But the gardens and grounds about Chapultepec are well worthy of all the eulogiums bestowed upon them. They do indeed form solemn groves worthy of the memory of Montezuma.

They consist principally of cypresses of an extraordinary size, with a grey and hoary lichen depending a long way down from their branches, which give them the air of giants of ancient and bygone times, beyond the reach of modern description. “The magnificent grove of cypress,” says Ruxton, “outlives all the puny structures of man, and, still in the prime of strength and beauty, looks with contempt on the ruined structures of generation after generation which have passed away.”

The “cypress of Montezuma,” fifty-one feet in circumference, is a tree of the most noble proportions. It meets your eye soon after you enter the grove, and stands alone; but as it looks like three united in one—I agree with Mr. Ward in thinking that the second grand tree, springing from one trunk, is the more striking of the two. As you walk through the long lines of these wonderful productions of nature—where they have stood for half a dozen centuries at least—probably for many more—you are inclined to apostrophise them, in the words of Lady Douglas—“Ye woods and wilds, whose melancholy gloom accords with my soul’s sadness”—and you feel for the time being, shut out from all the vanities and frivolities of life.

Let me shortly conclude, in Mr. Ruxton's words, by saying—that "from the summit of the hill to which a path winds through a labyrinth of shrubs, a fine [indeed it is perhaps the finest] view of the valley and City of Mexico is obtained, and of the surrounding mountains and volcanic peaks."

One of the prettiest outlets from Mexico is by the *garita*, or gate, *de la Piedad*. A beautiful ride from the *garita*, through an avenue of trees, about a mile and a-half in length, leads to the *Capilla de la Piedad*, a picturesque church, and thence you get into the open country. Passing through a small village, called Miscuaque (pronounced Miss Quacky) situated in the midst of small *haciendas*, you come to the handsome village of San Angel, a place of some importance, as resorted to by many fashionable families, "during the season," for health and recreation. Madame C— de la B— resided here for some time, and gives very interesting particulars about it, and its adjoining village Coyohuacan, particularly during Passion Week. San Angel is celebrated, also, for its convent,—a comfortable one, with a large garden surrounded by a high wall.

All sorts of good things, it is said, are to be had in it; and the *padres* are particularly famous for the pears which their garden produces.

We passed through, and made ourselves partially acquainted with San Angel, on two or three occasions, on our way to visit our friend, Mr. L—, at his country house and cotton factory, at Tisapan—a league and half further on. We had, in company with other friends, two or three Mexican breakfasts at Mr. L—'s establishment; and they were quite perfect in their kind.*

Mr. L—'s factory, in its machinery and management, might well vie with many of those in his native land. The machinery is worked by water power, and Mr. L— produces, in much perfection, every kind of *manta*, or unbleached cotton. Whether these factories, of which there are now many, will stand the new impulse of free-trade,—for at present they are highly protected,—is a question which I will not here discuss. It is enough to say that the business is well done, if not cheaply done; and that one could not see, without great regret, the present industrial system in cotton manufactures upset in Mexico.

* See page 149.

Mr. L—'s house, garden, and factory stand in highly-picturesque grounds. The small, but rapid river which affords him his water-power, and which very seldom fails him, turns a wheel of great dimensions. His people earn good wages; and the united kindness and firmness of his character ensures him good and contented operatives. It is something to see a British subject thus established in Mexico, beyond the jurisdiction or protection of the capital. Of course, Mr. L— has had, as a foreigner, his troubles in gaining his dominant position; but now all seems to work smoothly.

The country round about is very picturesque. Mr. L—'s house stands on the verge of the *Pedregal* of which I have spoken; and a fine view of the mountain of Ajusco and the wild country around, is obtained from his *azotea*. Hence Mr. L— pointed out to me the very difficult line of march through this mountainous and rugged country, which the American invading force had chosen as their approach on the capital. Mr. L— himself witnessed all the operations of both parties at this interesting point of the attack.

On the 5th of July, Mr. Mackintosh most kindly made up a party for us to Magdalena and

the Cañada—places of which I find no mention made in any of the Mexican travels which I have read.

The village of Magdalena lies three or four leagues beyond Tisapan; and as the road is of and belonging to the *Pedregal*, the way thence is here and there rugged. We set off, a pleasant party. In a commodious omnibus, drawn by four powerful *frisones*, were Mr. W—, of the United States' Legation, the M. de Raddepont, and myself; on horseback, H—, Mr. Mackintosh, and Messrs. F— and B—.

After passing a *paper-mill* on a large scale, in the course of erection, and in which Mr. M— has an interest, we got to the Magdalena, about eleven A.M.; and here we found the proprietor of the factories—to see which was the main object of our visit—who had come over from his country-house, near San Agustin de las Cuevas, to have his great industrial establishment properly shown to us. It is one of the largest in Mexico, and comprehends not only a first-rate cotton-factory, but manufactures of a very great variety of woollen stuffs.

We were received with all the hospitable kindness and urbanity of manner of which we have seen and experienced so much in Mexico. A truly magnificent *dejeuner à la fourchette* was laid out for us in the great dining-hall, at which we were joined by some friends of the proprietor, while he himself, without participating, moved about in agreeable conversation with every one alternately, only seeing that we all did justice, after our long ride and drive, to the ample board spread before us.

We proceeded to inspect the cotton-factory, which we found in perfect working-order; having all the latest improvements introduced. It employs five or six hundred hands, among whom the greatest order and discipline have been introduced. To give you an idea of what *sort* of people the owner could reclaim and discipline, I must tell you that, desiring us to leave H— behind, he showed us into one room where the roughest preliminary work was going on, and where sat about sixty men, shirtless and bare from the waist upwards. They looked like, and were of, the class *lepero*. "Now," said my informant, "there is not one of these men who

has not a *tajo*, a cut of some kind, in his face or body. They have lived desperate lives: while they remain here, they are perfectly well-conducted operatives." The water-wheel of the Magdalena *fabrica* is the largest in Mexico. To look on the mighty monster turning round, was something wonderful. We went into the vast abyss which contained its body—a splendid work, to which we approached by a fine, wide, inclined plane, solid and paved. Round the wheel ran a platform; and like so many pigmies—little Gullivers before the Brogdignagian queen—we walked round, and admired the vast proportions of this noble specimen of machinery.

The woollen manufactory interested me still more than the cotton, from the great variety of successful experiments which were in process. The dyeing of the wools was excellently done; and some admirable specimens of fine cloths and other woollen fabrics were exhibited to us. Then a neat shop in the village was well furnished with both the woollen and cotton stuffs in all their variety, for the supply of the *paysanos*, the country-people, far and near.

It was a pretty sight—that of all the factory-girls

dispersing through the village when the dinner-bell rang; and of returning from their modest homes to resume their work. Such a sight is, of course, much more striking to an English traveller in a picturesque Mexican village, than in the streets of a manufacturing town of his own country.

The superabundant water-power of the Magdalena is obtained from what is called La Cañada, a far-famed place; which, after concluding with La Magdalena, we proceeded to view.

A short walk brought us to the place, a private property, going by the indefinite name of *El Rancho*, "the Cottage;" for there is only a farmstead on the grounds; but I have seen many fine houses without grounds; although I never yet saw such fine grounds as those of the Cañada without a house. They were formed in a deep ravine; and so far as this was turned into garden and pleasure-walks and grounds, a series of terraces, with a separate walk along each, led you from the *rancho* to the top of the acclivity. Here the scene was very beautiful; and, stretching beyond the cultivated part, the walk went through woods and groves, alternating with openings apparently

made by nature to show her other surrounding works.

At the end of this walk, in all perhaps of a mile and a half, we turned to the left, and were gradually led to the banks of the river, the course of which we had now to follow, as it impetuously forced its way to the great wheel of the Magdalena. It was the very perfection of mountain river scenery; even finer, I think, than that of the "desert," which I have already described.

We returned to the *fabrica*; were again regaled with the best of creature-comforts (particularly with a variety of choice old Spanish and other wines, in which our host was curious, and a connoisseur); and, towards evening, we bade adieu to our kind host, to whom we had been indebted for a day so profitably and so pleasantly spent.

One of the well-known rides from Mexico, is to the village of Los Remedios, about four leagues off, celebrated at once for the splendid view obtained from it, and for the effigy of the Virgin, second only in renown to that of Guadalupe. I can only afford to give a condensed account of it.

The road to Los Remedios leads through the village of Tacuba, which I have not yet

mentioned. It is in a somewhat ruinous state, but remarkable for a very noble church, erected by Cortez, and for a Montezuman cypress, of imposing height. Hence the road to Los Remedios ascends by rugged hills and a difficult way.

La Virgen de los Remedios, was the Spanish Patroness; * her image, brought over by Cortez, having replaced the Indian idols in the great temple of Mexico, after due purification. It is said to have been concealed on the famous and historical "*noche triste*," or sad night, when the Spaniards retreated from Mexico, through Tacuba, to the adjacent heights. It was afterwards found (according to the legend) on a barren mountain, in the heart of a *maguey*, by an Indian. It then received the name "La Virgen de los Remedios," and was reputed to cure many maladies; being more especially famous for putting an end to long droughts. A temple was built on the spot where the image of the virgin was found: the belief in her miraculous powers spread far and wide: gifts of immense value poured in upon her sanctuary:

* Called *La Gachupina*, by the Mexicans; the old Spaniards being designated generally by what is meant as the contemptuous name of *Gachupin*.

and her jewels, and diamonds, and dresses, amounted at last to an almost fabulous value. The image itself, of a foot in length, is a poor and mutilated one; but its value is so great, that it is now generally preserved in the cathedral, and only brought out on great occasions, particularly and especially when a procession to mitigate the evils of a drought takes place; and on some occasions, it is said, the image is let out for processions at a very high price. Removed to the cathedral, the Virgen de los Remedios fulfils her mission in her own temple vicariously; her representative being more brilliant to the eye, but much less costly in its appointments. Her festival is celebrated annually by vast numbers of votaries, almost exclusively leperos and Indians. Thousands attend it; and the scene, as you may imagine, is one of the most original and curious that can be pictured by the mind.

The grand view of the surrounding country is obtained from the top of the steeple; and it embraces, better than from almost any other point, all the striking points and prominent beauties of the panorama, and particularly of the valley of Mexico, which stretches out below.

Near the village, are to be seen the ruins of a noble aqueduct of fifty arches, built by the Spaniards.

Two other shorter excursions than the Remedios are among the pleasant rides from Mexico. One, the *Olivas*, or plantation of Olives, an "hacienda," now deserted, but the grounds of which were beautiful in their day. The other, *Los Morales*, "mulberries," is very prettily situated, and the gardens and grounds are in nice order.

LETTER XLIX.

DE OMNIBUS REBUS.

MEXICO, 30th September, 1849.

THERE is much which is amusing in the streets and out-door population of Mexico. The total absence, however, of well-dressed women, is a great draw-back to the fashionable streets, such as the *Calle de los Plateros* (the Bond Street of Mexico); and while lounging in them, all you are permitted to see of the "*Señoras de tono*," is their shopping. They come in their carriages, stop at the shop doors, proceed from one to another, and in this way carry forward the momentous business of a lady's life. The early morning walk to the *Alameda* is their only indulgence in peripatetics.

The great plaza is the most curious part of the city; the most bustling (except in the vicinity of