

TABLE, No. V.

LA CANDELARIA.			
		Dollars.	Reals.
1795.	Produce	258,936	
	Expences	128,384	
	Profits	130,552	
1796.	Produce	359,361	
	Expences	136,279	
	Profits	223,082	
1803.	Produce	225,778	6 $\frac{1}{2}$
	Expences	101,416	1 $\frac{3}{4}$
	Profits	124,362	4 $\frac{3}{4}$
1804.	Produce	260,555	2 $\frac{5}{8}$
	Expences	117,240	0 $\frac{3}{4}$
	Profits	143,315	1 $\frac{1}{8}$

## SECTION IV.

SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS UPON MEXICO AS A MINING COUNTRY; WITH AN INQUIRY AS TO THE PROBABILITY OF HER BEING ENABLED BY HER MINERAL TREASURES TO MULTIPLY HER COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH EUROPE, AND TO ACQUIT THE INTEREST OF WHATEVER LOANS SHE MAY HAVE CONTRACTED THERE.

It is to Baron Humbolt's *Essai Politique* that Europe is indebted for whatever knowledge it now possesses of the peculiarities by which Mexico is distinguished as a Mining country. How little was known before his time may be inferred from the fact, that Robertson, celebrated, as he so justly is, for the diligence and accuracy of his researches, in his view of the Colonial Policy of Spain, confounds, every where, the climate of Mexico with that of Peru and Chilé, and deploras the mortality occasioned amongst the natives, (whom he supposes to have been compelled to work in the mines,) "by the sudden transition from the sultry climate of the valleys, to the chill, penetrating air, peculiar to high land in the torrid zone." I need hardly state that, the idea is a mistaken one; and that however miserable the lot

of those poor wretches may be, whose sufferings, amidst the eternal snows of the Andes, (at Upsallata, and San Pedro Nostoli,) Captain Head so forcibly describes, there is no sort of analogy between their situation, and that of the mining population of New Spain. Compulsory labour has never been known there; and the temperature of Zăcătēcăs and Guă-năjūātō, where the first mines were worked, differs but little from that of Tlăscălă, Chōlūlă, and Tĕnōch-tĭtlān, where the population was found to be most concentrated at the time of the Conquest.

So little, indeed, are the metalliferous ridges, which have been, hitherto, the seat of the great mining operations of the Spaniards, elevated above the level of the Table-land, that, with the exception of Jesus Maria, (North-west of Chihuahua,) I hardly know one mining district, in the vicinity of which the snow remains long on the ground. Real del Monte, and Tlalpujahuā, are certainly not warm; and the first is liable to be occasionally enveloped in clouds, as is the district of El Oro, near Zīmăpān, and many others on the Eastern branch of the Cordillera. But the difference between their level, and that of the Capital, does not exceed 1,500, or 2,000 feet, (as will be seen by a reference to the map of Routes and elevations annexed to this volume,) and the cold felt there by visitors from the warmer districts, is merely relative; the Thermometer seldom falling below 40° of Fahrenheit, except in the nights, which are sometimes severe. This temperature seems

well adapted to the constitution of the Indians, who flock to these mountain districts with their families, on the report of any new discovery, and appear to thrive there as well as upon the Table-land. There are particular tribes of Natives, who have been miners from generation to generation, and who lead a roving life, migrating, with their wives and children, from one district to another, as they are attracted by the fame of superior riches. A mine in Bonanza, in whatever part of the country it may be situated, is sure of a sufficient supply of workmen, because the system of payment by Partido, (a share in the ore raised,) which is usually resorted to upon such occasions, is always preferred to regular wages, however high, for dead works. It was by employing liberally this powerful incitement to exertion, that the Old Spaniards found means to create a population in the most distant and desolate districts, without having recourse to the Mita or Tanda, which, in Peru and Chili, was in such general use; while it is not improbable, that the absence of that system of forced labour, which was adopted South of the Equator, has contributed not a little to encourage that love of mining, which prevails at the present day, amongst the natives of New Spain. Far from looking upon it with dread or repugnance, they regard it as their natural occupation, and appear to feel, in many parts of the country, a sovereign contempt for the agricultural population, which is reduced to vegetate upon a scanty daily pittance, without a

chance of acquiring that sudden wealth, which sometimes falls to a Barretero's lot. In addition to these accidental advantages, the ordinary wages of a miner are high; and although the money which passes through his hands is usually as ill spent, as it is rapidly acquired, still, to ensure the means of indulging in a weekly excess, (the necessity of which seems to be an article of the mining creed in every country,) there are few Indians who will not enter gladly upon a week of labour.

It is not, therefore, to be apprehended, that the late change of institutions in Mexico will occasion any difficulty in finding hands to carry on mining operations there, to whatever extent they may be pushed by the Companies, although there have been great complaints upon the subject, hitherto, in many districts, from the total dispersion of the population during the Civil War. Things revert, however, gradually, to their former state, and that without the necessity of any extraordinary exertion. At Tlālpūjāhūa, for instance, upon the first arrival of the Company, (in 1825,) one hundred and fifty labourers were collected with difficulty. In 1827, from twelve to sixteen hundred persons were in daily employment in the mines, besides from six to seven hundred more, who were occupied in cutting wood, and making charcoal in the neighbouring mountains. At Guanajuato, within one year after the establishment of the Anglo-Mexican and United Mexican Companies, the population increased from thirty to

nearly forty-five thousand. A similar change took place at Zācātēcās, Sōmbrērētē, and Real del Monte. Hundreds of Indians emerged from the fastnesses, in which they had been dragging on a precarious, and almost savage existence, in the midst of every kind of privation, to seek a livelihood by active labour; and this disposition must necessarily increase, as the advantages derived from it become more apparent.

It will not, however, produce its full effect, until the mines begin to yield ores anew, for it is only the really industrious part of the population that has sought employment, hitherto, in the preparatory works; but, from the moment that these are concluded, it is very generally thought that there will be no deficiency of labourers.

I have already pointed out the fact, that the importance of the mines of Mexico consists not merely in the amount of the Mineral treasures which they produce, but in the impulse which is communicated by them to all the other great interests of the State.

In a country, the largest and most fertile portion of which, (the Table-land,) is precluded, by the peculiarity of its position, and by the want of a water-communication with the Coast, from exchanging its produce for that of European industry, the great mass of the population would be reduced to the lowest state of indigence, were it not for the home-market created by the mines. In this respect, the very poverty of the ores of Mexico was an advantage, by increasing enormously the scale upon which

Mining establishments were necessarily formed. We have seen that the Three millions of marcs of silver, to which the average annual produce of the country amounted, were extracted from Ten millions of Quintals of Ore; and I have endeavoured to give, in the second Section, some idea of the process, by which the separation of the Silver from this mass of extraneous substances was effected. The number of men and animals employed in it was immense, and in every place where they were thus congregated, a demand was created for Agricultural produce, which rose, as the importance of the mines increased, and called gradually into existence a cultivation, of which no trace was to be found before. Such has been the progress of civilization, and of Agricultural industry, throughout New Spain. With the exception of the Capital, which, as the seat of Government, derived its importance from other sources, and the towns of La Pueblá, Guädälájärá, Vällädölid, and Öäxácá, which were selected as the seats of the great Episcopal establishments of the country, there is hardly a single town in Mexico, that does not derive its origin, directly or indirectly, from the Mines; while, in like manner, cultivation will be found to extend in a long line from South to North, with occasional inclinations to the East and West, (following always, in its direction, that of Mining discoveries,) the course of which may be easily traced upon the map.

The most fertile portions of the Table-land are,

the Băxīō, which is immediately contiguous to Guän-ājūatō, and comprises a portion of the States of Vāl-lädölid; Guädälájärá, Quērētärō, and Guanajuato: The Valley of Tölūca, and the Southern parts of the State of Valladolid, which supply both the Capital and the Mining districts of Tlälpujähüa, Ēl Örō, Tēmāscältépēc, and Āngāngēō; the plains of Pächücá and Āpām, which extend, on either side, to the foot of the mountains, upon which the mines of Real del Monte and Chico are situated; Ītzmī-quīlpān, which owes its existence to Zīmāpān; Āgüascāliēntēs, by which the great Mining town of Zácātēcás is supplied; a considerable circle in the vicinity of Sōmbrērētē and Frēsñillō; the valley of the Jaral, and the plains about San Luis Pötösī, which town, again, derives its name from the mines of the Cerro de San Pedro, (about four leagues from the gates;) the supposed superiority of which to the famous mines of Pötösī, in Peru, gave rise to the appellation of Pötösī. A little farther North we find the district of Mätēhuālā, which is now a thriving town, with seven thousand inhabitants, created by the discovery of Catorce; while about the same time, (the latter part of the last century,) Durango rose into importance from the impulse given to the surrounding country by the labours of Zāmbrānō, at San Dīmās and Guärīsāmēy. Its population increased in twelve years, from eight to twenty thousand; while whole streets and squares were added to its extent by the munificence of that

fortunate miner. To the extreme North, Santa Eulaliã gave rise to the town of Chihuahua; Bãtõpilas, and El Parrãl, became each the centre of a little circle of cultivation; Jesus Maria is, at the present day, producing a similar effect; Mãpinĩ, Cuẽncãmẽ, and Ìndẽe, (a little more to the Southward,) served to develop the natural fertility of the banks of the river Nãzãs; while in the low hot regions of Sõnõrã and Cĩnãlõã, on the Western Coast, almost every place designated in the map as a town, was originally, (and generally is still,) a Real, or district of mines.

Such was the case with Ælãmõs and Cũlĩacãn, and Cõsãlã and Ël Rõsãrĩõ; and such will be found to be the case with an infinity of other towns and villages scattered over the territory of the Mexican Republic, which, but for the mines, never would have existed at all. When once formed, these establishments, as Humboldt very justly observes, often survived the mines which gave them birth; and turned to agricultural labours, for the supply of other districts, that industry which was at first devoted solely to their own. Some, however, are so unfavourably situated as necessarily to follow the fate of the mines; in which case their population goes to swell that of the nearest district where there is a demand for labour, but might easily be diverted into more distant channels, were the advantages held out sufficiently great to compensate the difficulties of the removal.

An examination into the sources of the wealth of the principal families of the Mexican nobility will confirm what I have stated with regard to the towns, by leading us nearly to the same result. The family of Rẽglã, which now possesses landed property to an immense extent in various parts of the country, purchased the whole of it with the proceeds of the mines of Real del Monte. The Fãgõãgãs owe their present importance to the great Bõnãnzã of the Pãvẽllõn at Sõmbrẽrẽtẽ. The estates of the family of Vĩbãncõ proceeded from the mines of Bõlãñõs. The houses of Vãlẽnciãã, Rũhl, Pẽrẽz, Gãlvẽz, and Õtẽrõ, are all indebted for their possessions to the mines of Valenciana and Villãlpãndõ, at Guãñãjuatõ. The family of Sãrdãnõtã (Los Marqueses de Rayas), takes its rise from the mine of that name. Cãtã and Mẽllãdõ gave to their first proprietor (Don Francisco Matias de Busto) the Marquisate of San Clemente, with immense wealth, a part of which has been transmitted to his descendants. The Canãda of Laborde, at Tlalpujãhua, with the mines of Quẽbrãdĩllã and San Æcãsiõ, at Zãcãtẽcãs, all contributed towards the three fortunes of Laborde. The family of the Õbrẽgõnẽs owes its beautiful estates, (near Leon,) to the mines of La Purisima, and Concepcion, at Catorcẽ; as does the family of Gordoã, the estate of Malpassõ to the mine of La Luz. The son of Zãmbrãñõ, (the discoverer of Guãrĩsãmẽy,) wasted as his rightful property has been, is still in possession of four of the largest estates in

Dürāngö : and Bätöpīlās gave to the Marquis of Büstāmānte, both the means of purchasing his title, for which he paid by a loan of 300,000 dollars, (60,000*l.*) to the Royal Treasury, during the Revolution, and the affluence which he is now enjoying in the Peninsula.

The above is a most imperfect sketch of the origin of the fortunes of the leading families in Mexico. With some few exceptions, such as the Conde de Agrēdā, whose fortune was made by trade, the descendants of Cortes, who received a Royal grant of the Valley of Ōāxācā, (the value of which is now much reduced by the abolition of the Indian Capitation tax,) and the families of some of the Spanish merchants established at Jālāpā and Vērācrūz, it will be found that almost the whole landed property of the country is in the hands of Mining families, and has, in a great measure, been brought into cultivation by the mines. They furnished the means of building the vast Presas de Agua, or Reservoirs, without which agriculture can so seldom be carried on successfully upon the Table-land; and thus rendered productive districts, the fertility of which, had nature not been assisted by art, would never have been developed; while the constant demand, in the Mining towns, for every article of agricultural produce, rendered this mode of investing capital preferable to any other then open to a Native. The Civil War has, indeed, reduced almost to nothing the value of these possessions, and there is little, at pre-

sent, to demonstrate the wealth, to which, under more favourable circumstances, the principal families of the Republic will find themselves restored: but time alone is wanting in order to bring things round to their natural level; the seeds of opulence are there, and, in proportion as the country advances towards a more settled order of things, the period approaches, at which they may be again expected to produce their former fruits.

Melancholy, indeed, would be the fate of Mexico, if the source from which all her riches have hitherto been derived, were, as some suppose, exhausted and dried up! She could not only find no substitute for her mines in her Foreign Trade, of which they furnish the great staple, Silver, but her resources at home would decrease, in exactly the same proportion as her means of supplying her wants from abroad. Her Agriculture would be confined to such a supply of the necessaries of life, as each individual would have it in his power to raise;—Districts, formerly amongst the richest in the known world, would be thrown for ever out of cultivation;—the great Mining towns would become, what they were during the worst years of the Revolution, the picture of desolation; and the country, would be so far thrown back in the career of civilization, that the great majority of its inhabitants would be compelled to revert to a Nomade life, and to seek a precarious subsistence amidst their flocks and herds, like the Gaucho of the Pampas, of whose Indian habits Captain Head

has given us so spirited, and so faithful a picture. I desire no better proof of this than the contrast, which exists, at the present day, in every part of New Spain, between the degraded situation of the husbandman, or small landed proprietor, in any district without an outlet, and that of a proprietor, (however small,) in the vicinity of the mines. The one, is without wants, and almost without an idea of civilized life; clothed in a leather dress, or in the coarsest kind of home-made woollen manufactures;—living in primitive simplicity perhaps, but in primitive ignorance, and brutality too;—sunk in sloth, and incapable of exertion, unless stimulated by some momentary excitement: while the other, acquires wants daily, with the means of gratifying them; and grows industrious, in proportion as the advantages which he derives from the fruits of his labour increase; his mind opens to the advantages of European arts; he seeks for his offspring, at least, that education which had been denied to himself;\* and becomes, gradually, with a taste for the delights of civilization, a more important member, himself, of the civilized world! Who can see this, as I have seen it, without feeling, as I have felt, the importance, not only to Mexico, but to Europe, of a branch of

\* Amongst the young Mexicans who have been sent to England, or the United States, for their education, I could mention several from the Mining districts, as the sons of Don Narciso Anitua, at Sombrerete, and those of the principal Agent of Count Regla, at Real del Monte.

industry capable of producing such beneficial effects? And *alone* capable of producing them: for Mexico, without her mines, (I cannot too often repeat it,) notwithstanding the fertility of her soil, and the vast amount of her former Agricultural produce, can never rise to any importance in the scale of nations. The markets of the Table-land must be *home*-markets, and these the mines alone can supply. On the Coasts, indeed, the productions of the Tropics, which we term Colonial Produce, might serve as an object of barter; but these, supposing their cultivation to be carried to the greatest possible extent, could never cover the demand upon European industry, which the wants of a population of eight millions will, under more favourable circumstances, occasion, as their value must decrease in proportion to the superabundance of the supply, until they reach the point, at which their price, when raised, would cease to repay the cost of raising them. Thus the trade of Mexico would be confined to her Vanilla, and Cochineal, (of which she has a natural monopoly;) while the number of those who consume European Manufactures in the Interior, (which does not yet include one half of the population,) would be reduced probably to one-tenth. Fortunately, there is no reason whatever to apprehend the approach of that scarcity of mineral productions, with which many seem to think that New Spain is menaced. Hitherto, at least, every step that has been taken in exploring the country, has led to fresh indications of