

SECTION III.

SECOND VISIT TO MEXICO IN 1825.—STATE OF LA PUEBLA.—DESCRIPTION OF HUEHUETOCA, AND TEZCUCO.—ROUTE TO CUAUTLA AMILPAS.

I PASSED the whole of the Summer and Autumn of 1824 in England, but in December I received orders to prepare immediately for my return to Mexico, where I had the honour of being entrusted, subsequently, in conjunction with Mr. Morier, with the negotiation of the Treaty, which it was the intention of His Majesty's Government to conclude with New Spain, in common with the other South American States.

On the 8th of January, 1825, I left London, and on the 18th, after being detained some days at Devonport by contrary winds, we embarked on board His Majesty's ship *Egeria*, commanded by Captain Roberts, and commenced, for the second time, a voyage, which a few years will, I suppose,

render so ordinary a transaction that it will be little more thought of than the passage from Dover to Calais. Our party was an uncomfortably large one, considering the size of the vessel, as, in addition to Mrs. Ward, Mr. Ball, and Dr. Wilson, who, with myself, formed the Mexican passengers, there were Colonel Campbell and two other gentlemen belonging to the Mission in Columbia, whom the *Egeria* was directed to land at Carthagena, on their way to Bögötā. It was only by dint of great good humour, and kindness on the part of Captain Roberts, and a spirit of mutual accommodation amongst all the other members of the party, that we were enabled to stow ourselves away at all, and when we got into the warmer latitudes, we suffered not a little from the effects of being so crowded.

We had some very bad weather on first sailing, but left it behind us, with the Bay of Biscay, and reached Madeira on the eighth morning after our departure from Devonport. There we remained only twenty-four hours. From Funchal we had a run of twenty-one days to Barbadoes, where there is little novelty, or beauty to describe; for although the grove of Cocoa-nuts on the beach is rather picturesque, the effect is destroyed, on approaching the town, by the intermixture of the very worst style of English houses, with the productions of a climate, to which they are particularly ill adapted. Nothing can be more uncomfortable, on a sultry day, than the small boarded rooms, sash windows, and narrow

passages, into which an abode of this kind is divided; yet both at Gibraltar, and in the West Indies, we seem to have preferred this system of wholesale architectural transplantation to the adoption of the corridors and verandas of our French and Spanish neighbours. In the country residences of the Planters, more taste is shown, and a better idea of comfort entertained; but in the town, there is nothing but the black population, and a glowing sky, to denote that one is separated from England by 37 degrees of latitude, and some thousand miles of sea.

Five days' sail carried us from Barbadoes to Carthagena, the hottest, dullest, dryest, and most dreary place that I have almost ever seen. Yet, it is said not to be unhealthy, and, though much frequented by Foreigners, there have hitherto been but few instances of the Vomito, so prevalent at Veracruz. The disorder which proved so fatal to the Scylla, in 1826, (she lost at Carthagena her captain, two-thirds of the officers, and almost all the crew,) is supposed to have originated on board, as it has been ascertained that there was no sickness in the town at the time. This exemption from disease is probably owing to the extreme dryness of the atmosphere, as compared with the Mexican coast. When we were at Carthagena, it was said not to have rained for two whole years, and the marshes in the vicinity of the town were nearly dry. Colonel Campbell took leave of us here to commence his voyage up the Magdalena. From his

description of the heat, the privations, and the annoyances from insects of all kinds, which must be endured during the six weeks' confinement on board one of the long river-boats, in which the voyage to Honda is performed, before you commence the ascent to Bögötā, it seems evident that a new æra in Diplomacy must be dated from the opening of our communications with the New World. It was, hitherto, thought rather an easy, luxurious sort of *métier*; but a Diplomatist in America requires stamina as well as head, and must have a talent for undergoing a good deal of very rough work, as well as for managing a delicate negotiation. Colonel Campbell was blessed with a frame of iron, and performed, for the second time, in perfect safety, what many would have found an arduous task; but one of the gentlemen who accompanied him, (Mr. Wood,) has since died a victim to the climate, on a journey to Quitō, from Güyāquil, at which place he resided as Consul for about a year.

From Carthagena we made no land until we saw the Island of Pines, (off the coast of Cuba,) Captain Roberts having kept to the Southward of the Pedro shoals in order to avoid Port Royal. Few ships sailing under Admiralty Orders like coming too near to an Admiral's Flag, particularly on a rich and unhealthy station, where there is a possibility of being detained, and a certainty of being obliged to pay tithes upon whatever freight may be procured for Europe. On the 5th of March we made Cape

San Antonio, from which point there are two modes of steering for Veracruz. The first is to run up as high as 24 North latitude, by which means all the shoals and rocks that we are yet acquainted with, between the Island of Cuba and the Mainland, are left to the Southward; and the second, to keep within the shoals, and close along shore, passing between the Bank of Sisal and the town, with the coast of Yücātān constantly in view, from about 88 to near 91 of West longitude. In steering the first course, it requires a slant of wind from the North to reach Veracruz, and this it would be in vain to look for between the months of May and October; but at all other times, in as far as a landsman may presume to give an opinion upon such a subject, I should think it by far the safest line to take, on account of the extreme shallowness of the water near the coast of Yücātān, and the very inaccurate manner in which the reefs between Campeche and Veracruz are laid down. On the 6th of March, (in West longitude 88,) we had soundings in $2\frac{3}{4}$ fathoms, and on the night of the 8th, we were very near terminating our voyage at some distance from the place of our original destination. We had lost sight of land for upwards of twenty-four hours, and were running down, in the direction of Veracruz, with a beautiful breeze of about eight knots, when one of the leadsmen, whom Captain Roberts had taken the precaution of keeping in the chains, with orders to continue soundings every quarter of an

hour, suddenly obtained soundings in eight fathoms; the next cast of the lead gave seven fathoms; the third six; and although all hands were turned up to put the ship about, if she had not obeyed the helm instantly, we should none of us, in all probability, ever have seen land again. There was a good deal of sea running, and the Egeria was an old vessel, so that if she had struck, she must have gone to pieces. It has been since ascertained that there is only one fathom of water upon the centre of this dangerous shoal, with which the Spaniards themselves were long unacquainted. I was told at Veracruz that its discovery was supposed to account for the disappearance of a number of small vessels engaged in the Campeche Trade, which had been lost, without any thing being ever heard of them afterwards. It lies in Latitude 19.35, Longitude 92.32, Las Arcas, (as laid down in our charts,) bearing North 36.15, East 40 miles.

On the 11th of March we reached Veracruz without any farther interruption. The news of the projected Treaty had been received two days before, by the Jamaica Mail, and nothing, certainly, could exceed the enthusiasm excited in every part of the country by the intelligence of a resolution on the part of His Majesty's Government, which was naturally regarded as the definitive recognition of Mexican Independence. From Veracruz to the Capital, but one feeling was displayed; and in every village through which we passed, we received proofs of its

sincerity; for the wishes of the Government were seconded by the inhabitants, who vied with each other in loading us with marks of attention and kindness.

From the moment that we approached the shores of Veracruz, an astonishing difference became visible in the state and appearance of every thing around us. The Castle was, indeed, still held by a Spanish garrison, and the harbour closed, in consequence, to Foreign vessels, but the firing had long ceased, the siege being converted into a blockade, in which a number of Mexican schooners and gun-boats were employed, while the Castle was occasionally supplied with fresh provisions by the Spanish flotilla from the Havana. The Island of Sacrificios, where we again anchored, and which I had left, a year before, a barren and desolate spot, upon which Sir John Phillimore used to turn out the bullocks bought for his ship's company, had been converted into a regular fortification, under which the Mexican gun-boats sought protection on the approach of the Spanish fleet. Mōcāmbō too had assumed a formidable appearance. In both places the Independent flag was flying, and at the anchorage ground there were more merchant vessels of different countries assembled, than had entered the Ports of Mexico in the whole year of 1823. On the morning of our landing, nothing could be prettier than this scene, the ships being all dressed in their colours, and the

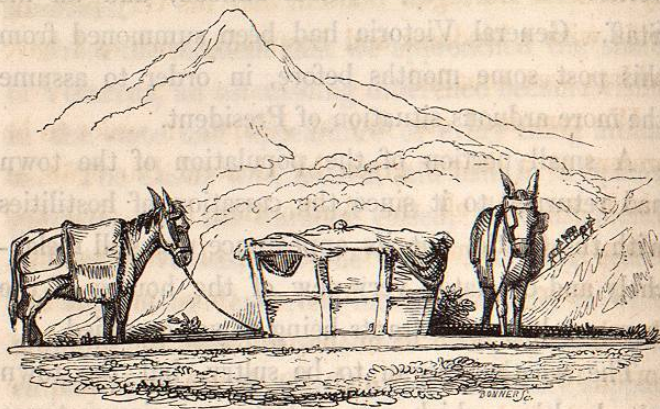
batteries from the shore and the Island answering each other with alternate guns, as we rowed in to the pier-head, where we were received by the Governor of Veracruz, General Rincon, and all his Staff. General Victoria had been summoned from this post some months before, in order to assume the more arduous situation of President.

A small portion of the population of the town had returned to it since the cessation of hostilities with the Castle, but its appearance was still melancholy and desolate; very few of the houses of the more wealthy inhabitants being as yet occupied.

The weather began to be sultry, but the town was healthy, which was a fortunate circumstance for us, as we were forced to remain there two whole days, before we could get our baggage disembarked, and complete our preparations for commencing our journey to the Capital.

I had taken every precaution, however, to have things made up into proper sizes for carriage by mules, before we left England; and by this means, as we had no large chests to cut up, and their contents to distribute into two or three others, (which was the case, in more than one instance, on our first voyage,) we were enabled to get into marching order in less time than could have been expected from the largeness of the party, and the quantity of baggage which the prospect of a long residence had rendered necessary.

Mrs. Ward performed the journey in a litter, a description of which the accompanying sketch will render unnecessary.



It is by no means an uncomfortable conveyance in a wild country, particularly where riding, or the violent motion of a carriage over roads intersected by gullies, and covered with fragments of rock, must have proved dangerous; as in Mrs. Ward's case, who was at that time so near her first confinement, that she was hardly expected to reach the capital in safety. All the rest of the party rode. At the Mānāntiāl, we were met by an officer, whom General Bārrāgān, the Governor of the State of Veracruz, had sent to receive us, with a whole cargo of wine, porter, and refreshments of every kind. At Puente del Rey, where we slept the first night, we found a most abundant supper in waiting, and lodgings prepared for us in the only brick house in the place, which had been built since my first visit. At Plan

del Rio similar attentions were shown; and at Jālāpā, where we were most luxuriously lodged in the house of Madame Santa Ana, we were welcomed by General Bārrāgān himself, and his very pleasing wife, with a kindness and hospitality such as I have seldom seen equalled.

We remained one day at Jālāpā, in order to be present at a dinner given by General Bārrāgān, at which we met all the Authorities, both civil and military, and almost every person of respectability, in or near the town. Most of those present had already called upon us in the course of the morning, during the whole of which the house in which we lodged had been literally crowded with visitors. Nothing could be more pleasing to an Englishman than the feelings evinced upon this occasion. Toasts were given, and verses recited in commemoration of the connexion about to be established between the two countries; and although many of the golden visions which were then entertained, have not yet been realised, enough has been gained by Mexico, and by England, to demonstrate the advantages which both may derive from this connexion, in proportion as each becomes better acquainted with the wants and capabilities of the other.

The scene altogether was one of general—of national excitement; and I shall always look back to it with pleasure, as one most gratifying to me, because most honourable to my country.

On the 18th we left Jalapa, still the guests of

the State of Veracruz, to whose hospitality we were indebted for excellent lodgings both at Lās Vigās, and at Tēpēyāgūalcō, with which we were provided by orders of the Governor. At Nōpālūcā, where we slept on the 20th, we found that similar precautions had been taken by the authorities of Lā Puēblā, in whose territories we then were; and when we reached the Capital of that State, on the 21st, after a most excellent dinner, which we found waiting for us on the road at Āmōzōqūe, we were lodged by the Governor, Don José Maria Cāldērōn, in his own house, where, notwithstanding the largeness of our party, he insisted upon accommodating us all.

Lā Puēblā was formerly a town inferior only to the Capital in extent and population. It contains at present about 50,000 inhabitants, and is an important place, as being the seat both of the richest Bishoprick in the country, and of the most extensive manufactures of cotton, earthenware, and wool. The streets, like those of Mexico, are rectangular, spacious, and airy. The houses low, but roomy, and the apartments mostly paved with porcelain, and adorned with Fresco paintings on the stuccoed walls. The country around is rich, but naked, being totally devoid of trees, with the exception of the Pīnāl, a pine forest, (as the name implies,) which extends from within a league and a half of Nōpālūcā, to about five leagues from the gates of La Puebla, where cultivation re-commences. The whole dis-

tance is about twelve leagues. The road through the Pīnāl is extremely bad, and dangerous in unsettled times, the forest being the favourite haunt of banditti, who sometimes assemble there in considerable numbers for a *coup de main*; but our escort was too strong for us to feel any apprehensions of an attack.

We remained during the whole of the 22nd at La Puebla, as the Governor, whose hospitality and friendly disposition towards every Englishman of respectability who visits the town, I have ever found the same, would not hear of our passing a shorter time with him, than we had done at Jālāpā with General Bārrāgān. The delay afforded us an opportunity of seeing the Cathedral, a magnificent building, in the construction of which the Angels themselves are said to have taken a very active part. It is regarded by the Indians, and by a large proportion of the female Spanish population, as a well-authenticated fact, that during the time that the walls of the edifice were constructing, two messengers from heaven descended every night, and added to their height exactly as much as had been raised, by the united efforts of the labourers, during the day. With such assistance the work advanced at a prodigious rate, and was brought to a conclusion in a much shorter space of time than could have been effected by human exertions alone. It is in grateful commemoration of this event that the name of the town, "La Puebla de los Angeles," was assumed; and

as all the details of it are recorded with singular care in the convents, which have since been built upon this favoured spot, there is little danger of their not being handed down to posterity, in all the purity in which they are now preserved.

But whether of divine or human origin, the Cathedral is a very fine building, and the riches of the interior are worthy of a country that has produced, during the last two centuries, nearly two-thirds of the whole of the silver raised annually in the world. The lofty candlesticks, the balustrade, the lamps, and all the ornaments of the principal altar, are of massive silver; and the effect produced by such magnificence, in conjunction with the beauty of the columns of native marble by which the roof is supported, is very striking. We were not, however, allowed to admire them long in peace, for, notwithstanding the presence of Madame Căldărôn, and two or three aides-de-camp of the Governor, the curiosity excited by the first appearance of an English woman was so ungovernable, that the great market-place, through which the carriage had passed, transferred in a moment by far the largest portion of its inmates to the Cathedral, where the crowd soon became so great, that, although no incivility was intended, it was quite impossible for us to remain. La Puebla contained, at that time, a Lazzaroni population nearly as numerous as that of the Capital; a naked and offensive race, whom you cannot approach without pollution, or even behold without disgust.

I do not know any thing in nature more hideous than an old Indian woman, with all the deformities of her person displayed, as they usually are, by a dress which hardly covers a tenth part of her body; and in La Puebla, in consequence of the numerous convents in which alms were distributed, these objects were particularly numerous. We were too happy to escape by a different door from that by which we had entered, and to take refuge in the carriage.

We left La Puebla on the 22d of March, and slept at Săn Mărtin, taking the road through Chōlulă to that place, in order to obtain a better view of the old Mexican Tēcălli, or Pyramid, of which Humboldt's work contains so detailed a description. The base of this Pyramid comprises a square of about 1773 feet; the height is 54 metres, or 177 feet. It is truncated, and, on the spacious platform in which it terminates, the Conquerors have erected a Chapel, as if to mark the substitution of another creed, and another race, for the nation by whose united exertions this stupendous monument must have been raised. The whole mass is formed of alternate layers of unburnt bricks and clay, and is now overgrown with thick shrubs, amongst which clouds of Tortolas, (a small wood pigeon,) are found. Its structure is said by Baron Humboldt to present a curious analogy with that of the Temple of Belus at Babylon, and of the Pyramids of Egypt.

Its object was undoubtedly religious, but as its construction is ascribed to the Toltecs, a nation