

place runs between the lake of Tezcūco and the range of hills which form the Eastern boundary of the valley: that to the Capital passes near the Southern extremity of the lake, and joins the great La Puebla road about four leagues from the gates of the town. We returned to Mexico by this route after an absence of six days, during which time we had made the tour of the whole valley, with the exception of the portion lying between Chalco and San Agustīn de las Cūevās, which I visited subsequently on my way to and from Cuernāvācā and Cuāutlā.

As the season was advancing, and the heat increasing daily in the *Tierra Caliente*, I resolved not to defer my expedition to that place, and commenced my journey within a very few days after returning from Chāpīngō. The distance from Mexico to Cuernāvācā does not exceed twenty leagues, (fifty miles,) but it is difficult to perform it in a single day on account of the passage of the mountains to the South of the valley, both the ascent and descent being exceedingly rocky and precipitous; I therefore left the Capital on the evening of the 25th of February, and slept at the village of San Agustīn de las Cuevas, about four leagues off, where I was again indebted for lodgings to the hospitality of the Marquis of Vibanco. San Agustīn was formerly the favourite residence of the nobility and great merchants of the Capital, whose houses and gardens formed, by degrees, a village, the appearance of which, in 1803, Humboldt describes as singularly

beautiful. It was abandoned during the Revolution, being exposed to the attacks of Insurgent parties from the mountains, and is now only frequented during the great fair, which is held there annually, in the month of May. The object of this fair being merely amusement, it is attended by every creature in Mexico that can save, beg, or borrow a dollar for the occasion. The houses at San Agustīn are taken many months beforehand, and from three to five hundred dollars rent is frequently paid for the three days. Amongst the ladies it is the etiquette to change their dresses four or five times in the course of the day; once, for the early promenade before breakfast; again for the cockpit, which opens at ten o'clock; a third time for dinner; a fourth for the Calvario, where a circle is usually formed for dancing; and a fifth for the public ball, which commences at eight o'clock, and lasts till twelve. Immense sums of money are won and lost, in the course of the day, by the men, both in betting upon their cocks, and at the Monte tables, one of which is to be found in almost every house. There are silver Montes for the lower classes, but at all the respectable tables nothing but gold is seen, and no smaller stake than a doubloon, (an onza, about 3*l.* 4*s.* English money,) allowed. The bank at these varies from 1,500 to 3,000 doubloons. Fifty or sixty of these, (about 200*l.*) are an ordinary stake upon the turn of a card; but I have seen as many as six hundred and twenty risked and won.

There is no limit whatever to the stake, and unfair play is out of the question, but the chances are so much in favour of the table, that few persons continue winners for any length of time.

During the whole fair the streets and squares of San Agustín are filled, by day and by night, with crowds of people, who sleep *à la belle étoile*, or take shelter under the carriages, with which the Plaza is crowded. Provisions of all kinds are to be found in booths erected for the occasion; horses and mules are picketed in every direction round the town; temporary huts are raised with boughs and mats, and as a profusion of flowers is used in all these structures, nothing can be more variegated than the appearance of this motley scene. In the evening, the cockpit is carpeted, and lighted up with chandeliers; cushions are placed upon the benches, looking-glasses suspended from the wooden pillars, and, as the roof, which is of shingles, is concealed, in part, by a quantity of green boughs, the whole forms a pretty, circular ball-room, in which all the *élite*, and all the refuse, of Mexican society may be seen assembled at the same time. The lower classes, however, are excluded from the centre of the house, into which no one improperly dressed is admitted, and forced to take their seats upon the higher tiers of benches. Here they exercise the usual privilege of the one-shilling gallery, by applauding most vociferously the performances of any lady, whose style of dancing happens to please them, and by calling

occasionally for the *Jārāvě*, the *Pětíněřā*, or other dances of the country, with an exhibition of which they are not unfrequently gratified.

On the 26th of February I left San Āgŭstīn at a very early hour. The ascent commences almost immediately, and is rendered doubly toilsome by the *Ārenāl*, a bed of deep blue sand, that extends over a space of about two leagues, and exhausts both the horses and mules, by the treacherous nature of the footing which it affords them. The road passes by the Village of Ājŭscō, and the Venta del Guārdā, from whence it winds its way through a succession of rocks, and pine-woods, to the Cruz del Mārquēs, a point about 2,360 feet above the level of the Capital. Here the descent to Cŭernāvācā begins and continues uninterruptedly for nearly four leagues to the Pueblo of Jŭchīlāc, where the first indications of an approach to the *Tierra Caliente* appear. These increase rapidly in the direction of Cŭernāvācā, until, in the plains immediately below the town, the climate and the productions of the Coast replace, at once, those of the Table-land.

The transition is the more sudden, because, on the Pacific side, the Valleys are sheltered from the North winds, which have so extraordinary an effect upon the vegetation upon the Eastern slope of the Cordillera. Thus Cŭernāvācā, although 1,093 feet higher than Jālāpā, possesses all the characteristics of the country about Plan del Rio, or Puente del

Rey. The inhabitants have the same dark tint; the sky the same glowing aspect; and although the vomito is unknown, in the rainy season agues prevail, of so violent a nature, as almost to partake of the character of the typhus, and to be hardly less injurious in their effects upon the constitution.

The town of Cuernavaca lies 2,040 feet lower than Mexico, and 4,400 feet below the Cruz del Márquies, which is the highest point of the intervening ridge. It is a place of no great importance in itself, and only derives interest from the richness of the surrounding district. During the two days which I passed there, I visited two of the great Haciendas de Azucar, (Sugar Estates,) mentioned in the first Book, San Gábriël and Ātläcömülcö, the first of which belongs to the family of Yērmö, the second to that of the Duke of Monteleone, the present representative of the house of Cortez. I found in both the same exuberant fertility of soil, the same abundance of water for irrigation, and the same inattention to comfort or cleanliness, in the vicinity of the house, which, in the valleys of Cūāütlä and Cūērnävācä, seldom denotes by its appearance the value of the estate. The average produce of San Gábriël is calculated at forty thousand Arrobas of sugar (each of 25lbs.); that of Ātläcömülcö does not exceed thirty thousand; in addition to which, however, there is a Coffee plantation containing about fifty thousand young plants, which appeared to be in a very thriving state. The distance of these

Haciendas from Cuernavaca varies from two to three leagues. The heat, which I found very oppressive after ten o'clock, prevented me from extending my excursions farther, although the beauty of the country, and the abundance of game, (particularly hares and quails,) would have induced me, at any other time, to prolong my stay.

The valley of Cūērnävācä is separated from that of Cūāütlä by a ridge of elevated ground, commencing a little beyond Ātläcömülcö, and extending about four leagues to the South-east, where it terminates in two singular hills, called Las Tētiläs. From these you descend at once to a lower terrace, which begins at the foot of the ridge, with the village of Yaütēpēc, one of the most beautiful spots that I recollect having ever seen. The riches of the inhabitants consist in the groves of orange-trees, by which their houses are surrounded, and from which both the Capital, and the town of La Puebla, are supplied with this fruit. One of the numerous streams that descend from the Table-land, runs through the Pueblo, dispensing fertility on every side; a little garden is attached to each cottage; and the brilliant whiteness of these dwellings contrasts, in a very pleasing manner, with the dark green of the orange-trees behind, broken at intervals by the bright hue of the fruit. Yaütēpēc is about five leagues from Cuernavaca, and four from Cöcöyöc, a Hacienda belonging to Don Antonio Vēläscö, the father-in-law of General Tērān, who had the good-

ness to allow me to take up my residence there for a few days, as the most convenient spot for visiting both the town of Cūātlā, and the neighbouring estates, for most of which I had letters from General Bravo, and other friends. With the exception of about one league of solid rock, upon which our horses could with difficulty keep their footing, the whole road from Yaütēpēc lay through a richly cultivated country, watered by a hundred rivulets, and studded with Haciendas, the most considerable of which, (Sān Cārlōs,) we visited on our way. Nothing could be finer than the scenery; and the vigorous growth of the canes, though planted much more closely than is usual in the West Indian Islands, attested the richness of the soil, which, without the aid of manure, seldom fails to yield a most abundant crop. Dr. Wilson, a friend by whom I was accompanied upon this occasion, and who, from a long residence in Jamaica, was better qualified than myself to judge of the relative capabilities of the two countries, was much struck with this circumstance, and pointed it out to me as well worthy of attention.

Notwithstanding the heat, by commencing our excursions at a very early hour, we contrived to visit, during the two days that we passed at Cōcōyōc, both the town of Cūātlā Amīlpās, (which I was curious to see from its connexion with the history of the Revolution, and the exploits of Mōrēlōs,) and the Haciendas of Pāntītlān, Cāsāsāno, Sāntā

Īnēs, Cāldērōn, and Cōhāhuīstlā. This was sufficient to give us a very good idea of the mode in which the great sugar plantations of Mexico are conducted, as well as of their extent; but upon both these subjects, all the most essential details will be found in the Third Section of the First Book, and a reference to this will render it superfluous for me to enter here into any farther particulars.

The population of the Valley bears evident traces of a recent mixture of African blood. The colour of the skin is darker, and the lank hair, peculiar to the aborigines, is exchanged for curly, or woolly locks. The men are a fine athletic race, but wild, both in their appearance and habits; they delight in glaring colours, as well as in the noisy music of the negroes, and form, when heated with liquor, and dancing after the labours of the day, a striking contrast to the meek and submissive demeanour of the Indians on the Table-land.

Cūātlā Āmīlpās, which is four leagues from Cōcōyōc, and thirteen from Cūernāvācā, has recovered entirely from the ravages of the first years of the Civil War. The Indian suburb is exceedingly pretty, but the town itself, from the lowness of the houses, which are mostly of Tēpētātē, and the breadth of the streets, seems very little calculated to resist the attack of a regular force. The defence made there by Morelos, with a few hundred men, against the whole Viceregal army, commanded by Cālējā in person, is hardly a greater proof of deter-

mination on his part, than of the want of courage on that of his adversaries.

On the 4th of March, I quitted Cöcöyöc; not without regret, for although the house is bad, nothing can be more striking than the view of Pöpö-cätēpētl from the balcony, where we used to sit, and enjoy the evening breeze, after the fatigue of our morning's ride. A coffee plantation, too, intersected by walks of orange trees, and kept in the nicest order, is always a beautiful object; and to an eye accustomed to the stunted vegetation of the Table-land, the foliage even of the more ordinary trees, in which the *Tierra Caliente* abounds, must always be a relief.

The ascent towards the Capital commences very abruptly. On the outskirts of the Valley of Cūāutla, are two little Ranchos, near which most of the bananas are grown with which the Mexican market is supplied. The change from the cane huts of these Indians, buried amongst the leaves of the Platano Arton, to the Pine forests, that occupy the region immediately above, is extremely sudden. Through these you labour on for about eight leagues, in the course of which two or three uninteresting Pueblos are passed, when you commence a very gradual descent into the valley of Mexico, which we entered to the South of the town of Chalco, where we passed the night. It would not have been impossible to reach the Capital the same evening, as the distance did not exceed nine leagues; but our horses had

been feasting upon the green tops of the sugar cane during their visit to *Tierra Caliente*, and were so weakened by this heating food, that they were quite exhausted before we reached Chālcō, although that town is not more than eleven leagues from Cöcöyöc. We were therefore compelled to give them a night of repose and hard food, after which we reached Mexico at an early hour on the following morning. (March 5.)