

nagement, very materially to affect their own prospects of success, I am still inclined to believe that, if the system hitherto pursued be adhered to, the present year, (1828,) will place the result of the enterprise beyond all doubt.

On the 27th of July I returned from Real del Monte to the Capital, where I arrived after an absence of sixteen days. My party had been unusually numerous, Mr. Ball, Dr. Wilson, and Mr. Carrington, having all accompanied me upon this tour, which was not accomplished without a number of little vicissitudes. There was not a single person in Mexico able to give us a correct idea either of the distance, or of the route to Zimāpān, and it was in consequence of this want of information that we found ourselves involved, the second day, in the fatiguing journey to Itzmīquīlpān, which the heat and drought together rendered almost insupportable. From the Hacienda de San Pedro to the river below the town, (a distance of twelve leagues,) we did not cross a single stream of water. One of Mr. Ball's horses, (which left Mexico too fat for travelling) sickened and died in consequence; and one of mine, towards the latter part of the day, was affected by the sun in a very extraordinary manner. He became perfectly mad, and rushed with the utmost fury not only upon the persons who approached him, but upon his companions, amongst whom we tried to drive him loose before us. As a last resource we were forced to lasso him with two lassos,

and thus to drag him along between two other horses. Even in this state the utmost caution was requisite; for, in the steeper parts of the road, where the ropes were necessarily relaxed, he endeavoured to throw himself over the precipices, and in more than one instance very nearly succeeded. On reaching Itzmīquīlpān, he was bled almost to exhaustion, and finally recovered, although weak and unserviceable for many weeks.

It was nearly nine in the evening when we entered Itzmīquīlpān, in consequence of the delay which this accident occasioned; and we must have gone supperless to bed, as all the shops were closed, had we not been provided with a case of preserved meat, which furnished us with an excellent meal. There is no country in which the advantage of provisions in this shape is so frequently experienced as in Mexico. They keep for any length of time without being affected by the heat; and, as the cases are made of solid block-tin, they support the motion of the mule without injuring. When opened, a three-pound case, with an allowance of bread, a few potatoes, if they are to be procured, and charcoal enough to make the canteen kettle boil for a quarter of an hour, furnishes a supper for six or eight people; and the certainty of this is duly appreciated after a ride of fifty miles beneath a vertical sun.

It happened to be the fête of the Patron Saint of the town on the night of our arrival, and nothing

could be more curious than the appearance of the principal street, which was lighted up, in honour of the occasion, with a number of large paper lanterns, covered with the figures of Saints and Angels, most brilliantly coloured, and suspended by ropes at equal distances from each other. They were all waving gently in the wind, and the streets were crowded with people, either seated quietly before their own doors, or flocking in from the neighbouring villages; the whole population of which was attracted by the unusual sight. The temperature of Itzmiquilpan is much milder than that of Mexico, the town being situated 1,205 feet below the level of the Capital. Zimápān, which is 1,680 feet lower than Mexico, from its extremely sheltered position, approaches more to the atmosphere of *Tierra Caliente*. The intervening ridge of mountains is nearly 9,000 feet in height.

From Zimápān to San José del Oro, there is an ascent of 3,477 feet; and from thence to the little Hacienda of the Encarnacion, where we passed the night after visiting the Iron mines, you rise about 1,000 feet more. In the neighbourhood of Zimapan the mountains have been entirely stripped of their timber, with that wasteful and improvident spirit, which characterised the proceedings of the old Mexican miners wherever the Mining laws were not most strictly enforced. Not a tree is now to be found within seven leagues of the town, although, from its situation in the centre of the great chain of

the Sierra Madre, there can be no doubt that the site which it now occupies was formerly part of the vast forest, which commences about four leagues below San José del Oro.

When once you reach this point, nothing can be more magnificent than the scenery; woods follow woods in endless succession, and wherever there is a break in the mountains, the eye wanders over a wilderness of timber of the most luxuriant growth. With the exception of a few huts in the neighbourhood of San José, and the German amalgamation works at the Encarnacion, there is not a vestige of the hand of man throughout the whole district. The village which formerly existed near San José has disappeared, and the clearings, which afforded a subsistence to the miners, are overgrown with brushwood. Great, indeed, will be the transition, in the course a few years, if the Iron mines are brought into activity, and an European establishment formed, with all the din of restless activity, where nature now reigns in solitude and silence.

From the extreme badness of the roads between Zimapan and the Encarnacion, we did not attempt to take up beds or provisions. Mr. Spangenberg undertook to procure us a sheep upon the spot, with abundance of tortillas, and we trusted to cloaks and a buffalo's skin for a bed. The house was extremely small, and the family of the proprietor large, for it consisted of a wife and four daughters, besides two or three sons. The last were disposed

of in the stables, in order to make room for us; but I believe that not less than fourteen persons took up their quarters in the sala, stretched in a double tier upon the floor, with their feet meeting in the centre. Nothing but the extreme coldness of the air at such a height preserved us from suffocation, for the columns of mist which were driven occasionally past the house, rendered it impossible to leave either door or windows open. It was curious to observe the rapidity with which these clouds came sweeping down from the higher ridges, enveloping us suddenly in a cold, chilling vapour, accompanied by a strong current of air, and to feel the contrast between the temperature of the region subject to their influence, and the glowing sky of Zimāpān, which opened upon us after about three hours of an almost precipitous descent.

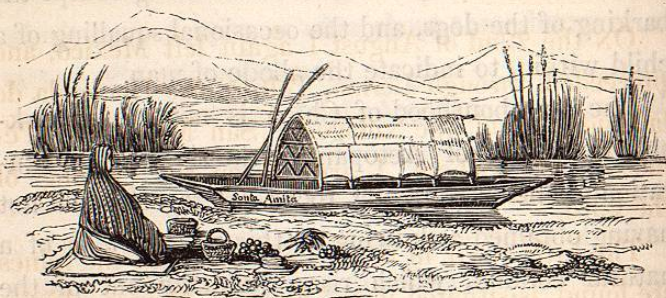
Between Zimāpān and Āctōpān there is little worthy of remark, with the exception of a dangerous pass which terminates the ascent from the village of Yolo to the Valley of Actopan, the level of which is 320 feet below that of the Capital. At the very summit of the hill which leads to this valley, there is a sheet of smooth and solid rock, which it is impossible to avoid, from the precipitous nature of the road, and which, with shod horses, is almost impassable. We dismounted, and took every precaution in order to assist ours in crossing it; but notwithstanding this, three of them were very seriously injured in the attempt.

On reaching the Table-land beyond this ridge, the singular mountain called Los Organos de Actopan, is immediately in sight, and continues so for several leagues. It rises 2,426 feet above the level of the plain, and resembles the spires of a cathedral, or the twisted growth of a large species of cactus (whence the name is taken) in its appearance. This cactus runs up in columns to a great height, and is much used by the Indians for enclosures. On the road from Real del Monte to Mexico, there is one village, every house in which is so completely fenced in by it, that nothing else is visible. You pass through avenues of cactus, which constitute the streets, and as none of these habitations communicate with the road by a door in front, there is nothing except the barking of the dogs, and the occasional squalling of a child within, to indicate the abode of man.

The neighbourhood of Chicō is not less remarkable than that of Actōpān for the singular configuration of the surrounding rocks. I regret much not having obtained a drawing of this wild spot, or of a natural column, which rises suddenly out of the ground in the middle of the forest between Chico and Real del Monte, and towers up at once to the height of near 200 feet. The Barranca of Regla, too, with the beautiful waterfall a little above the Hacienda, and the row of basaltic columns which support the ledge of rock from which the stream descends, is a magnificent subject for the pencil, and one to which no drawing that I have yet seen does

justice. But I was not accompanied upon any of my first journeys by Mrs. Ward, and was consequently unable to ascertain whether her efforts would have been attended with more success.

After our return from the Interior, it was my intention to have visited Real del Monte again; but it was so late in the season before we quitted Mexico, and the vomito was already so prevalent upon the Coast, that we did not think it prudent to allow the beauties of the scenery to tempt us into a delay, the risk of which every day tended to increase.



SECTION VI.

VISIT TO THE MINES OF TEMASCALTEPEC, AN-GANGEO, TIALPUJAHUA, AND EL RANCHO DEL ORO.

ON the 22nd of August I again left Mexico, and proceeded, through Lerma, Toluca, the Hacienda de la Huerta, and the village of San Miguel, to Tē-māscāltēpēc, where I arrived on the evening of the 23rd.

The little town, in the vicinity of which the mines are found, is situated in the State of Mexico, thirty-two leagues to the South-west of the Capital, on the declivity of the Cordillera towards the Pacific, into which some of the rivers, that rise in the neighbourhood of Tē-māscāltēpēc, actually flow. The mines of this district enjoyed formerly a great reputation for the richness of their ores; (the finest specimen in the King of Spain's collection was brought from the mine of San José;) but, as the works increased in