were seen from Pascuaró; and from the hills of Agua Zarca was beheld the birth of this volcanic mountain, the burning offspring of an earthquake, which bursting from the bosom of the earth, changed the whole face of the country for a considerable distance round.

“And now, the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.”

Here the earth returned the salutation, and shook, though it was with fearful mirth, at the birth of the young volcano.

In a letter written at the time of the event to the bishop of Michoacan by the curate of the neighbouring village, he says, that the eruption finished by destroying the hacienda of Jorullo, and killing the trees, which were thrown down and buried in the sand and ashes vomited by the mountain. The fields and roads were, he says, covered with sand, the crops destroyed, and the flocks perishing for want of food, unable to drink the pestilential water of the mountains. The rivulet that ran past his village was swelled to a mighty river, that threatened to inundate it; and he adds, that the houses, churches, and hospitals are ready to fall down from the weight of the sand and the ashes—and that “the very people are so covered with the sand, that they seem to have come out of some sepulchre.” The great eruptions of the volcano continued till the following year, but have gradually become rarer, and at present have ceased.

Having now brought our journey to its furthest limits, I shall conclude this letter.

LETTER THE FIFTIETH


Uruapa, 31st.

The dress of the Indian women of Uruapa is pretty, and they are altogether a much cleaner and better-looking race
than we have yet seen. They wear "naguas," a petticoat of black cotton with a narrow white and blue stripe, made very full, and rather long; over this, a sort of short chemise made of coarse white cotton, and embroidered in different coloured silks. It is called the sutunacua—over all is a black reboso, striped with white and blue, with a handsome silk fringe of the same colours. When they are married, they add a white embroidered veil, and a remarkably pretty coloured mantle the huepilli, which they seem to pronounce guipil. The hair is divided, and falls down behind in two long plaits, fastened at the top by a bow of ribbon and a flower. In this dress there is no alteration from what they wore in former days; saving that the women of a higher class wore a dress of finer cotton with more embroidery, and a loose garment over all, resembling a priest’s surplice, when the weather was cold. Among the men, the introduction of trousers is Spanish—but they still wear the majilati, a broad belt, with the ends tied before and behind, and the tilmatli or tilma as they now call it, a sort of square short cloak, the ends of which are tied across the breast, or over one shoulder. It is on a coarse tilma of this description that the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe was found painted.

Yesterday, being the festival of San Andres, the Indians were all in full costume and procession, and we went into the old church to see them. They were carrying the saint in very fine robes, the women bearing coloured flags and lighted tapers, and the men playing on violins, flutes, and drums. All had garlands of flowers to hang on the altars; and for these lights and ornaments, and silk and tinsel robes, they save up all their money. They were playing a pretty air, but I doubt its being original. It was not melancholy and monotonous, like the generality of Indian music, but had something wild and gay in it; it was probably Spanish. The organ was played by an Indian. After mass we went upstairs to try it, and wondered how, with such miserable means, he had produced anything like music. In the patio, between the curate’s house and the church, are some very brilliant large scarlet flowers, which they call here "flor del pastor," the shepherd’s flower; a beautiful kind of euphorbia; and in other places, "flor de noche buena," the flower of Christmas-eve.

Last evening we walked out in the environs of this
garden of Eden, by the banks of the river Marques, amidst a most extraordinary union of tropical and European vegetation; the hills covered with firs, and the plains with sugar-cane. We walked amongst bananas, shaddock, chimimoyas, and orange-trees, and but a few yards higher up, bending over and almost touching them, were groves of oak and pine. The river pursues its bright unwearied course through this enchanting landscape, now falling in cascades, now winding placidly at the foot of the silent hills and among the dark woods, and in one part forming a most beautiful natural bath, by pouring its waters into an enclosure of large, smooth, flat stones, overshadowed by noble trees.

A number of the old Indian customs are still kept up here, modified by the introduction of Christian doctrines, in their marriages, feasts, burials, and superstitious practices. They also preserve the same simplicity in their dress, united with the same vanity and love of show in their ornaments, which always distinguished them. The poorest Indian woman still wears a necklace of red coral, or a dozen rows of red beads, and their dishes are still the gicalli, or, as they were called by the Spaniards, gicaras, made of a species of gourd, or rather a fruit resembling it, and growing on a low tree, which fruit they cut in two, each one furnishing two dishes; the inside is scooped out, and a durable varnish given it by means of a mineral earth, of different bright colours, generally red. On the outside they paint flowers, and some of them are also gilded. They are extremely pretty, very durable and ingenious. The beautiful colours which they employ in painting these gicaras are composed not only of various mineral productions, but of the wood, leaves, and flowers of certain plants, of whose properties they have no despicable knowledge. Their own dresses, manufactured by themselves of cotton, are extremely pretty, and many of them very fine.

December 1st.—We rode out early this morning, and passing through the lanes bordered with fruit trees, and others covered with blossoms of extraordinary beauty, of whose names I only know the floripundio, ascended into the pine woods, fragrant and gay with wild thyme, and bright flowers; the river falling in small cascades among the rocks. After riding along these heights for about two leagues, we arrived at the edge of a splendid valley of
oaks. Here we were obliged to dismount, and to make our way on foot down the longest, steepest, and most slippery of paths, winding in rapid descent through the woods; with the prospect of being repaid for our toil, by the sight of the celebrated Falls of the Sararaqui. After having descended to the foot of the oak-covered mountain, we came to a great enclosure of lofty rocks, prodigious natural bulwarks, through a great cavern in which the river comes thundering and boiling into the valley, forming the great cascade of the Sararaqui, which in the Tarrascan language means sieve. It is a very fatiguing descent, but it is worth while to make the whole journey from Mexico, to see anything so wildly grand. The falls are from fifty to sixty feet high, and of great volume. The rocks are covered with shrubs and flowers, with small jets of water issuing from every crevice. One lovely flower, that looks as if it were formed of small white and rose-coloured shells, springs out of the stones near the water. There are rattlesnakes among the woods, and wild boars have occasionally been seen. The Señoritas Y—, when children, two or three years ago, wandering among these mountain-paths, saw an immense rattlesnake coiled up, and tempted by its gaudy colours, were about to lift it, when it suddenly wakened from its slumber, uncoiled itself, and swiftly glided up the path before them, its rattles sounding all the way up amongst the hills.

We sat beside the falls for a long while, looking at the boiling, hissing, bubbling, foaming waters, rolling down headlong with such impetuous velocity that one could hardly believe they form part of the same placid stream, which flows so gently between its banks, when no obstacles oppose it; and at all the little silvery threads of water, that formed mimic cascades among the rocks; but at length we were obliged to recommence our toilsome march up the slippery mountain. We were accompanied by several officers—amongst others, by the commandant of Uruapa.

Señor — says that they are at present occupied here at the instigation of a Frenchman, named Genould, in planting a large collection of mulberry-trees, (which prosper wonderfully well in this climate) for the propagation of silkworms. But they have no facilities for transport, and at what market could the silk be sold? There are a thousand improvements wanting here, which would
be more profitable than this speculation. They have sugar, corn, maize, minerals, wood, cotton, water for machinery; every valuable and important produce, all requiring their more immediate attention. We had a pleasant ride home, and when we got back amongst the lanes leading to the village, stopped every moment to admire and wonder at the rare and beautiful blossoms on the trees; and pulled branches of flowers off them, more delicate and lovely than the rarest exotics in an English hothouse.

2nd.—This morning, the weather was damp and rainy, but in the afternoon we took a long walk, and visited several Indian cottages, all clean, and the walls hung with fresh mats, the floors covered with the same; and all with their kitchen utensils of baked earth, neatly hung on the wall, from the largest size in use, to little dishes and jarritos in miniature, which are only placed there for ornament. We also went to purchase gicaras, and to see the operation of making and painting them, which is very curious. The flowers are not painted, but inlaid. We were fortunate in procuring a good supply of the prettiest, which cannot be procured anywhere else. We bought a very pretty sutunacua, and a black reboso. The women were not at all anxious to sell their dresses, as they make them with great trouble, and preserve them with great care.

We had a beautiful walk to the Magdalena, about a mile from the village. Every day we discover new beauties in the environs. And one beauty we saw on entering a small rancho, where they were painting gicaras at a table, while a woman lay in the shaking fever in a bed adjoining, which was quite consistent with the place. This was a lady, the proprietress of a good estate some leagues off, who was seated on her own trunk, outside the door of the rancho. She was a beautiful woman in her prime, the gentlemen said passée, and perhaps at eighteen she may have been more charming still; but now she was a model for a Judith—or rather for a Joan of Arc, even though sitting on her own luggage. She was very fair, with large black eyes, long eyelashes, and a profusion of hair as black as jet. Her teeth were literally dazzling—her lips like the reddest coral—her colour glowing as the down upon a ripe peach. Her figure was tall and full, with small, beautifully-formed hands, and fine arms. She
rose as we came in, and begged us to be seated on a bench near the door; and with the unceremoniousness of travellers who meet in outlandish places, we entered into conversation with her. She told us her name, and her motives for travelling, and gave us an account of an adventure she had had with the robbers, of which she was well fitted to be the heroine. It appears that she was travelling with her two sons, lads of fifteen and sixteen, when they arrived at this rancho to rest for the night; for by this time you will understand that those who travel hereabouts must trust to chance or to hospitality for a night’s lodging. To their surprise, they found the farmers gone, their dogs gone, and the house locked. They had no alternative but to rest as they could, among their luggage and mules, in the yard in front of the house. In the middle of the night they were attacked by robbers. The boys instantly took their guns, and fired, but without effect. Still, in the darkness, the robbers probably imagined that there were more people and more arms, and when she, dragging a loaded musket off one of the horses, prepared to join in the engagement, the cowardly ruffians took flight—a good half dozen before a woman and two boys. She was particularly indignant at the farmers, these “malditos rancheros,” as she called them, who she said had been bribed or frightened into withdrawing their dogs and themselves.

We returned home after a long walk in the dark, and in the midst of all the howling, yelping, snarling, barking dogs, which rushed out as we went by, from every cottage in Uruapa.

After supper they sent for a clever Indian girl, who understands Spanish as well as her native idiom, and who translated various Castilian words for us into the original Tarrascan, which sounds very liquid and harmonious. To-morrow we shall leave Uruapa and this hospitable family, whose kindness and attention to us we never can forget. It seems incredible that we have only known them a few days. We have, however, the hopes of seeing them again as we pass through Valladolid, where they intend removing in a few days.

PASCUARO, 4th December.

We left Uruapa yesterday morning at eleven o’clock, accompanied part of the way by Señor Ysasaga and
another gentleman, amongst whom was Madame Ytur- 
bide’s brother. We are now returning to Morelia, but 
avoided Curr and the rocks, both to save our animals, 
and for the sake of variety. We rode through large 
tracks of land, all belonging to the Indians. The day was 
agreeable and cloudy, and the road, as usual, led us 
through beautiful scenery, monotonous in description, and 
full of variety in fact. Though nearly uninhabited, and 
almost entirely uncultivated, it has pleased nature to 
lavish so much beauty on this part of the country, that 
there is nothing melancholy in its aspect; no feeling of 
dreariness in riding a whole day, league after league, 
without seeing a trace of human life. These forest paths 
always appear as if they must, in time, lead to some 
habitation; the woods, the groves, the clumps of trees, 
seem as if they had been disposed, or at least beautified 
by the hand of art. We cannot look on these smiling and 
flowery valleys, and believe that such lovely scenes are 
always untenanted—that there are no children occasion-
ally picking up these apricots—no village girls to pluck 
these bright, fragrant flowers. We fancy that they are out 
in the fields, and will be there in the evening, and that their 
hamlet is hid behind the slope of the next hill; and it is 
only when we come to some Indian hut, or cluster of poor 
cabins in the wilderness, that we are startled by the 
conviction that this enchanting variety of hill and plain, 
wood and water, is for the most part unseen by human 
eye, and untrod by human footsteps.

We had no further adventure during this day’s journey, 
than buying bread and cheese from sheer hunger, at a 
little wooden tavern by the road-side, whose shelves were 
covered with glittering rows of bottles of brandy and 
mezcal. At some of the Indian huts also we bought 
various branches of platanos, that most useful of fruits, 
and basis of the food of the poor inhabitants of all the 
tropical climates. It has been said that the banana is not 
inigenous in America, and that it was brought over by 
a friar to Santo Domingo. If so, its adopted country 
agrees with it better than its native land; but I believe 
there are many traditions which go to prove that it did 
already exist in this hemisphere before the sixteenth 
century, and that the Spaniards did no more than increase 
the number of the already indigenous species. Its nutri-
tive qualities, and the wonderful facility with which it is
propagated, render it at once the most useful of trees, and the greatest possible incentive to indolence. In less than one year after it is planted the fruit may be gathered and the proprietor has but to cut away the old stems and leave a sucker, which will produce fruit three months after. There are different sorts of bananas, and they are used in different ways; fresh, dried, fried, etc. The dried plantain, a great branch of trade in Michoacan, with its black shrivelled skin and flavour of smoked fish or ham, is exceedingly liked by the natives. It is, of all Mexican articles of food, my peculiar aversion.

About four o'clock we arrived at the small village of Tziracuaratiro, a collection of Indian cottages, with little gardens, surrounded by orange and all manner of fruit trees. As we had still one or two hours of daylight, and this was our next halting-place, we wandered forth on foot to explore the environs, and found a beautiful shady spot, a grassy knoll, sheltered by the surrounding woods, where we sat down to rest and to inhale the balmy air, fragrant with orange-blossoms. We were amused by a sly-looking Indian, of whom C——n asked some questions, and who was exceedingly talkative, giving us an account of his whole ménage, and especially praising beyond measure his own exemplary conduct to his wife, from which I infer that he beats her, as indeed all Indians consider it their particular privilege to do; and an Indian woman who complained to a padre of her husband's neglect, mentioned, as the crowning proof of his utter abandonment of her, that he had not given her a beating for a whole fortnight. Some one asked him if he allowed his wife to govern him. "Oh! no," said he, "that would be the mule leading the arriero!"

There was nothing to be seen in the village, of which it hardly deserves the name, but a good-looking old church, which two old women were sweeping out; but they told us they rarely had mass there, as the padre lived a long way off. The alcalde permitted us and our escort to occupy his house, consisting of three empty rooms with mud floors; and about seven the next morning we were again on horseback, and again en route for Pascuaro; a pretty ride of eleven or twelve leagues. We breakfasted at the village of Ajuna, in a clean hut where they gave us quantities of tortillas and chile, baked by some very handsome tortilleras. A number of women were carrying
about a virgin all covered with flowers, to the sound of a little bell.

It was about four o'clock when we arrived at the hills near Pascuaro. Here we dismounted from our horses, and remained till it was nearly dusk, laying on the grass, and gazing on the lake, as the shadows of evening stole slowly over its silver waters. Little by little the green islands became indistinct; a gray vapour concealed the opposite shores; and like a light breath spread gradually over the mirrored surface of the lake. Then we remounted our horses, and rode down into Pascuaro, where we found the Señora H—a as before, ready to receive us, and where, our mules being disabled, we proposed remaining one or two days.

5th.—We have been spending a quiet day in Pascuaro, and went to mass in the old church, which is handsome and rich in gilding. At the door is printed in large letters—"For the love of God, all good Christians are requested not to spit in this holy place." If we might judge from the observation of one morning, I should say that the better classes in Pascuaro are fairer and have more colour than is general in Mexico; and if this is so, it may be owing partly to the climate being cooler and damper, and partly to their taking more exercise (there being no carriages here), whereas in Mexico no family of any importance can avoid having one.

We were very anxious to see some specimens of that mosaic-work which all ancient writers upon Mexico have celebrated, and which was nowhere brought to such perfection as in Pascuaro. It was made with the most beautiful and delicate feathers, chiefly of the picafloros, the humming-birds, which they called huitzitzilin. But we are told that it is now upwards of twenty years since the last artist in this branch lived in Pascuaro; and though it is imitated by the nuns, the art is no longer in the state of perfection to which it was brought in the days of Cortes. We are told that several persons were employed in each painting, and that it was a work requiring extraordinary patience and nicety, in the blending of the colours, and in the arrangement of the feathers. The sketch of the figure was first made, and the proportions being measured, each artist took charge of one particular part of the figure or of the drapery. When each had finished his share, all the different parts were reunited, to form the picture.
feathers were first taken up with some soft substance with
the utmost care, and fastened with a glutinous matter
upon a piece of stuff; then, the different parts being
reunited, were placed on a plate of copper, and gently
polished, till the surface became quite equal, when they
appeared like the most beautiful paintings, or, according
to these writers, more beautiful from the splendour and
liveliness of the colours, the bright golden, and blue, and
crimson tints, than the paintings which they imitated.
Many were sent to Spain, and to different museums both
in Europe and Mexico; but the art is now nearly lost, nor
does it belong to the present utilitarian age. Our fore-
fathers had more leisure than we, and probably we have
more than our descendants will have, who, for aught we
know, may, by extra high-pressure, be able to

"Put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes."

We, however, saw some few specimens of saints and
angels, very defective in the sketch, but beautiful in the
colouring, and quite sufficient to prove to us that there
was no exaggeration in these accounts.

7th.—We rode yesterday to the shores of the lake,
where we embarked in a long canoe, formed of the hollow
trunk of a tree, and rowed by Indians, a peculiarly ugly
race, with Tartar-looking faces. The lake was very
placid, clear as one vast mirror, and covered with thou-
sands of wild ducks, white egrets, cranes, and herons—
all those waterfowl who seem to whiten their plumage by
constant dipping in pools and marshes and lakes. On
the opposite shore, to the right, lay the city of Tzinzunzan;
and on a beautiful island in the midst of the lake the village
of Janicho, entirely peopled by Indians, who mingle little
with the dwellers on the mainland, and have preserved
their originality more than any we have yet seen. We
were accompanied by the prefect of Pasecuaro, whom the
Indians fear and hate in equal ratio, and who did seem
a sort of Indian Mr. Bumble; and, after a long and plea-
sant row, we landed at the island, where we were received
by the village alcalde, a half-caste Indian, who sported a
pair of bright blue merino pantaloons! I suppose to
distinguish himself from his blanketed brethren. The
island is entirely surrounded by a natural screen of willow-
and ash-trees, and the village consists of a few scattered
houses, with small cultivated patches of ground, the alcalde's house, and an old church.

We walked, or rather climbed, all over the island, which is hilly and rocky, and found several great stones entirely covered with the ancient carving. Moved by curiosity, we entered various caverns where idols have been found, and amongst others one large cave, which we had no sooner groped our way into than I nearly fell down suffocated by the horrible and most pestilential atmosphere. It appears that it is the sleeping-place of all the bats in the island; and heaven forbid that I should ever again enter a bat's bedchamber! I groped my way out again as fast as possible, heedless of idols and all other antiquities, seized a cigarito from the hand of the astonished prefect, who was wisely smoking at the entrance, lighted it, and inhaled the smoke, which seemed more fragrant than violets, after that stifling and most unearthly odour.

The chief food of these islanders, besides the gourds and other vegetables which they cultivate, is the white fish, for which the lake is celebrated; and while we were exploring the island, the Indians set off in their canoes to catch some for us. These were fried at the alcalde's and we made a breakfast upon them which would have rejoiced the heart of an epicure.

We then went to visit the church; and, though the cottages are poor, the church is, as usual, handsome. Amongst other curiosities there is a Virgin, entirely covered with Indian embroidery. The organist's place is hereditary in an Indian family, descending from father to son. The long-haired Indian who played it for us has such a gentle expression and beardless face, that he looks like a very young woman. Some of the Indians here are very rich, and bury their money; and one, called Agustin Campos, who has beautified the church, as we read on an inscription carved on a stone outside, has thirty thousand dollars, is much respected, and has the addition of Don to his name, yet wears a coarse blanket like his fellow-men. We staid some hours on the island, and went into some of the huts, where the women were baking tortillas, one Indian custom, at least, which has descended to these days without variation. They first cook the grain in water with a little lime, and when it is soft peel off the skin; then grind it on a large block of stone, the metate, or, as the Indians (who know best) call it, the metatl. For the
purpose of grinding it, they use a sort of stone roller, with which it is crushed, and rolled into a bowl placed below the stone. They then take some of this paste, and clap it between their hands till they form it into light round cakes, which are afterwards toasted on a smooth plate, called the comalli (comal they call it in Mexico), and which ought to be eaten as hot as possible.

On our return, we had the variety of a slight storm, which ruffled the placid surface of the lake, and caused the rowers to exert all their strength to bring the canoe to port before it should become more violent.

This morning we walked all through Pascuaroo, which can boast of many good houses, a square and portales, and ended by going to visit the convent of Santa Catarina. We saw some of the nuns, who wear white dresses, and, instead of veils, the black Indian reboso. They were common-looking women, and not very amiable in their manners; but we did not go further than the outside entry. On our return we met a remarkable baby in arms, wearing an enormous white satin turban, with a large plume of white feathers on one side, balanced on the other by huge bunches of yellow ribbons and pink roses. It also wore two robes, a short and a long one, both trimmed all round with large plaistings of yellow satin ribbon. It was evidently very much admired as it passed along. To-morrow, our mules having recovered, we set off for Valladolid.

VALLADOLID, 9th.

About half-past seven we left Pascuaroo, which, considering that we had a long day's journey before us, was scarce early enough. We regretted very much taking leave of the Señora H——a, who has been so kind to us, and whom we can certainly never hope to see again. I observe that in these long days' journeys we generally set off in silence, and sometimes ride on for hours without exchanging a word. Towards the middle of the day we grow more talkative, and again towards evening we relapse into quiet. I suppose it is that in the morning we are sleepy, and towards evening begin to grow tired—feeling sociable about nine o'clock, a.m., and not able to talk for a longer period than eight or ten hours. It was about four in the afternoon when we reached Guincho, where we were welcomed by the damsels of the baths, whose father is now still more of an invalid than before. It is a lonely life
that these poor girls lead here, nor should I think their position a very secure one. Their poverty, however, is a safeguard to a certain extent, and there are few robbers in this country in the style of Morales. We were tempted to stop here and take a bath, in consequence of which it was dark when we set off for Morelia. The horses, unable to see, took enormous leaps over every little streamlet and ditch, so that we seemed to be riding a steeple-chase in the dark. Our gowns caught upon the thorny bushes, and our journey might have been traced by the tatters we left behind us. At length we rode the wrong way, up a stony hill, which led us to a wretched little village of about thirty huts, each having ten dogs on an average, according to the laudable custom of the Indians. Out they all rushed simultaneously, yelping like three hundred demons, biting the horses’ feet, and springing round us. Between this canine concert, the kicking of the horses, the roar of a waterfall close beside us, the shouting of people telling us to come back, and the pitch darkness, I thought we should all have gone distracted. We did, however, make our way out from amongst the dogs, re-descended the stony hill, the horses leaping over various streamlets that crossed their path, turned into the right road, and entered the gates of Morelia without further adventure, between nine and ten o’clock.

Morelia, 11th.

We have passed the last few days very agreeably in this beautiful city, seeing everything worthy of notice, and greatly admiring the wide and airy streets, the fine houses, the handsome public buildings, but especially the cathedral, the college, and the churches. It has also a fine square, with broad piazzas occupying three of its sides, while the cathedral bounds it to the east. There is a crowded market in the plaza, and a fine display of fruit and vegetables. The population is said to be a little upwards of fifteen thousand, but one would suppose it to be much greater. Living and house-rent is so cheap here, that a family who could barely exist upon their means in Mexico, may enjoy every luxury in Valladolid. The climate is delightful, and there is something extremely cheerful in the aspect of the city, in which it differs greatly from Toluca. We received visits from various Morelians, amongst others from Don Cayetano Gomez, the proprietor of San Bartolo.
We went one evening to the alameda, a broad, straight walk, paved with flat stones, shaded by fine trees, under which are stone benches, and bounded by a low stone wall. Several ladies were sitting there, whom we joined, and amongst others, a remarkably pretty Poblana, married into the Gomez family. The alameda is crossed by a fine aqueduct of solid masonry, with light and elegant arches. We drove to the paséo, a broad, shady road, where we met but few carriages; and the same evening we went out on foot to enjoy the music of a very good military band, which plays occasionally for the amusement of the citizens. It is not to be supposed that, when Mexico can boast of so little society, there should be much in a provincial town; besides, this city has the pretension of being divided into cliques, and there are "first people," and "second-rate people," and "families in our set," and so on; so that some of the ladies being musicians, one set will get up a concert, another a rival concert, and there not being a sufficient musical society to fill two concerts, both fall to the ground. There is a neat little theatre, but at present no company. Some of the houses are as handsome as any in Mexico, but there is no city which has fallen off so much since the Independence as Morelia, according to the accounts given us by the most respectable persons.

We had a visit from the bishop, Señor Portugal, one of the most distinguished men here, or in fact in the whole republic of Mexico, a man of great learning, gentle and amiable in his manners, and in his life a model of virtue and holiness. He was in the cabinet when Santa Anna was president, concerning which circumstance an amusing story was told us, for the correctness of which I do not vouch, but the narrator, a respectable citizen here, certainly believed it. Señor Portugal had gone, by appointment, to see the president on some important business, and they had but just begun their consultation, when Santa Anna rose and left the room. The minister waited—the president did not return. The time passed on, and still the minister continued expecting him, until at length he inquired of an aide-de-camp in waiting, if he could inform him how soon the president might be expected back. "I hardly know," said the officer, "for his excellency has gone to visit Cola de plata" (silver tail). "And who may Cola de plata be?" said the minister. "A
favourite cock of his excellency's, wounded this morning in a fight which he won, and to whose care he is now personally attending!" The bishop soon after sent in his resignation.

Accompanied by several of our friends, including one of the canons of the cathedral, we visited that splendid building the second day of our arrival. It is still wonderfully rich, notwithstanding that silver to the amount of thirty-two thousand marks has been taken from it during the civil wars. The high altar is dazzling with gold and silver; the railing which leads from it to the choir is of pure silver, with pillars of the same metal; the two pulpits, with their stairs, are also covered with silver; and the general ornaments, though numerous and rich, are disposed with good taste, are kept in order, and have nothing tawdry or loaded in their general effect. The choir itself is extremely beautiful; so also is the carved screen before the organ, the doors of the first being of solid silver, and those of the other of richly-carved wood. There is also an immense silver font, and superb lamps of silver. We particularly admired some fine paintings, chiefly by Cabrera, and especially a Madonna and child, in which there is that most divine expression in the face of the Virgin, the blending of maternal love with awe for the divinity of the child. Four of these paintings, it is said, were sent here by a Spanish king, as far back as Philip II. These four are colossal in size, and are finely painted, but little cared for or appreciated, and placed in a bad light.

We were shown two saints, sent from Rome, loaded with false jewels, but carefully preserved in their respective shrines. All the holy vessels and priests' dresses and jewels were taken out for our inspection. The sacramental custodia cost thirty-two thousand dollars, and the richest of the dresses eight thousand. There is a lamb made of one pearl, the fleece and head of silver; the pearl of great size and value.

We toiled up through winding staircases to the belfry; and it required the beautiful and extensive landscape spread out before us, to compensate us for this most fatiguing ascent. The bells are of copper, and very sonorous. The canonigo pointed out to us all the different sites which had been the scenes of bloody battles during the revolutionary war. The facilities for obtaining provisions,
and the mountainous character of the country, are amongst
the causes that have rendered this province the theatre of
civil war. The padre afterwards took us into a large
apartment, a sort of office, hung round with the portraits
of all the bishops of Michoacan; one bearing so striking
a resemblance to our friend, Don Francisco Tagle, that
we were not surprised to find that it was in fact the
portrait of one of his family, who had occupied the
episcopal see of Michoacan; and below it were the Tagle
arms, referring to some traditionary exploit of their
ancestors. They represent a knight killing a serpent;
and the motto is—"Tagle que la serpiente mató y con la
Princesa casó" (Tagle who killed the serpent, and married
the Princess).

The same evening, we visited a lady who possesses a
most singular and curious collection of works in wax; and
more extraordinary still, they are all her own workman-
ship. Every fruit and every vegetable production is represen-
ted by her with a fidelity, which makes it impossible to
distinguish between her imitations and the works of
nature. Plates with bread, radishes, and fish; dishes of
fowls, and chile, and eggs; baskets full of the most
delicious-looking fruit; lettuces, beans, carrots, tomatoes,
etc.; all are copied with the most extraordinary exactness.
But her figures show much greater talent. There are
groups for which an amateur might offer any price, could
she be prevailed upon to offer these masterpieces for sale.
There is a Poblana peasant on horseback before a ran-
chero, looking back at him with the most coquettish
expression; her dress perfection, from the straw hat that
half shades her features, to the beautiful little ankle and
foot in the white satin shoe, the short embroidered petti-
coat, and the rebozo thrown over one shoulder; a hand-
some Indian, selling pulque and brandy in her little shop,
with every variety of liquor temptingly displayed in rows
of shining bottles, to her customers; the grouping and
colouring perfect, and the whole interior arrangement of
the shop, imitated with the most perfect exactness. There
is also a horrid representation, frightfully correct, of a
dead body in a state of corruption, which it makes one
sick to look at, and which it is inconceivable that any one
can have had pleasure in executing. In short, there is
scarcely anything in nature upon which her talent has not
exercised itself.
Yesterday we visited the Seminario, or college, a fine spacious old building, kept in good repair. The rector conducted us over the whole establishment. There is a small well chosen library, containing all the most classic works in Spanish, German, French, and English; and a larger library, containing Greek and Latin authors, theological works, etc., a large hall, with chemical and other scientific apparatus, and a small chapel where there is a beautiful piece of sculpture in wood: the San Pedro, by a young man, a native of Valladolid, so exquisitely wrought, that one cannot but regret that such a genius should be buried here, should not at least have the advantage of some years' study in Italy, where he might become a second Canova.

One must visit these distant cities, and see these great establishments, to be fully aware of all that the Spaniards bestowed upon their colonies, and also to be convinced of the regret for former times which is felt amongst the most distinguished men of the republic; in fact, by all who are old enough to compare what has been with what is.

I ought not to omit, in talking of the natural productions of Valladolid, to mention that it is famous for fleas. We had been alarmed by the miraculous stories related to us of these vivacious animals, and were rejoiced to find ourselves in a house, from which, by dint of extreme care, they are banished. But in the inns and inferior houses they are said to be a perfect pestilence, sometimes literally walking away with a piece of matting upon the floor, and covering the walls in myriads. The nuns, it is said, are or were in the habit of harnessing them to little carriages, and of showing them off by other ingenious devices.

We rode out in the evening to meet our friends from Uruapa, who were expected to arrive yesterday; I upon a very formidable and handsome cavalry-horse, rather above his work, which some expected to run away, and others to throw me off, and which might have done both, but being a noble creature did neither. We did not meet our friends, who, having been delayed on the road, only arrived this evening. We have therefore decided to remain here till to-morrow afternoon, when we shall continue our journey homewards by San Bartolo.