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Mines.] The chief mines of gold are in Veragua and New-Grenada, bordering upon Darien and Terra Firma. Those of silver, which are much more rich, as well as numerous, are found in several parts, particularly in the province of Mexico.

The mines of both kinds are always found in the most barren and mountainous parts of the country ; nature making amends in one respect for defects in another.

Of the gold and silver which the mines of Mexico afford, great things have been said. Those who have inquired most into this subject compute the revenues at twenty-four millions of money ; and this account is probably just, since it is well known that this, with the other Spanish provinces in South-America, supply the whole world with silver.

The Spanish commerce in the article of cocoa is immense. It grows on a tree of a middling size, which bears a pod about the size of a cucumber, containing the cocoa. It is said that a small garden of cocoas produces to the owner twenty thousand crowns a year.

Inhabitants, Character and Government.] The present inhabitants of Mexico may be divided into whites, Indians and negroes. The whites are born in Old-Spain, or they are Creoles, that is, natives of Spanish America. The former are chiefly employed in government and trade, and have nearly the same character with the Spaniards in Europe ; only a larger share of pride ; for they consider themselves as entitled to every high distinction as natives of Europe, and look on the other inhabitants as many degrees beneath them.

The Indians, who, notwithstanding the devastations of the first invaders, remain in great numbers, are become, by continual oppression and indignity, a dejected, timorous, and miserable race of mortals.

The blacks here, like those in other parts of the world, are stubborn, robust and hardy, and as well adapted for the gross and inhuman slavery they endure, as any human beings. This may serve for the general character, not only of the Mexicans, but for the greater part of the Spanish colonies in South-America.

The

The civil government of Mexico is administered by tribunals, called audiences. In these courts the Viceroy of the King of Spain presides. His employment is the greatest trust and power his Catholick Majesty has at his disposal, and is perhaps the richest government entrusted to any subject in the world. The Viceroy continues in office but three years.

The clergy are extremely numerous in Mexico. The priests, monks and nuns of all orders, make a fifth part of the white inhabitants, both here and in other parts of Spanish America.

Chief Towns.] MEXICO, the capital of this place, is situated on a large plain, environed by mountains of such height, that, though within the torrid zone, the temperature of its climate is mild and healthful.

All the buildings are convenient ; and the publick edifices, especially the churches, are magnificent.—The revenue of the grand cathedral amounts to near £.80,000 sterling a year, of which the archbishop has £.15,000, besides vast sums arising from perquisites. The inhabitants are reckoned at 150,000, who draw annually from the mines above ten millions of money, exclusive of the vast sums secreted, and applied to private uses ; yet with these almost incredible treasures, the people may be reckoned poor, as most of them live beyond their fortunes, and commonly terminate a life of profusion in extreme indigence.

ACAPULCO stands on a bay of the South-Sea, about 210 miles southeast of Mexico. In this harbour, which is very commodious, the Manilla galleon takes in at least ten millions of dollars, in return for the goods she brings thither, and for the payment of the Spanish garrisons in the Phillippine isles.

History.] The empire of Mexico was subdued by Cortes, in the year 1521. Montezuma was at that time Emperor of Mexico. In the course of the war, he was treacherously taken by Cortes, and held as a prisoner. During the imprisonment of Montezuma, Cortes and his army had made repeated attacks on his subjects, but without success. Cortes was now deter-
mined,

mined, as his last resource, to try what effect the interposition of Montezuma might have to soothe or overawe his subjects. This unfortunate Prince, at the mercy of the treacherous Spaniards, and reduced to the sad necessity of becoming the instrument of his own disgrace, and of the slavery of his subjects, advanced to the battlements in his royal robes, with all the pomp in which he used to appear on solemn occasions. At sight of their sovereign, whom they had long been accustomed to honour, and almost to revere as a god, the weapons dropped from their hands, every tongue was silent, all bowed their heads, and many prostrated themselves on the ground. Montezuma addressed them with every argument that could mitigate their rage, or persuade them to cease from hostilities. When he ended his discourse, a sullen murmur of disapprobation ran through the croud; to this succeeded reproaches and threats; and their fury rising in a moment, they violently poured in whole flights of arrows, and volleys of stones, upon their unhappy monarch; two of the arrows struck him in the body, which, with the blow of a stone on his temple, put an end to his life. Guatimozin succeeded Montezuma, and maintained a vigorous opposition against the assaults of Cortes. But he, like his predecessor, after a noble defence, was forced to submit. Previous to this, being aware of his impending fate, he had ordered that all his treasures should be thrown into the lake. While a prisoner, on suspicion of his having concealed his treasure, he was put to the torture, which was done by laying him on burning coals; but he bore whatever the refined cruelty of his tormentors could inflict, with the invincible fortitude of an American warrior. One of his chief favourites, his fellow sufferer, being overcome by the violence of the anguish, turned a dejected eye towards his master, which seemed to implore his permission to reveal all that he knew. But the high spirited prince darted on him a look of authority, mingled with scorn, and checked his weakness by asking, "Am I now reposing on a bed of flowers?" Overawed by the reproach, he persevered in dutiful silence,