

The fruit is gathered with great care, the whole population, old and young, assisting at the harvest, and bringing it down in large baskets to the warehouses in the town. Each orange is then wrapped separately in a dry maize leaf, and they are packed in oblong wooden boxes, four to five hundred in the box. They used to be packed in the large clumsy cases with the bulging tops, so familiar in shops in England in the orange season ; but the orange case has been entirely superseded during the last few years by the smaller box. About half a million such boxes are exported yearly from San Miguel, almost all to London. The prices vary greatly. Oranges of the best quality bring upon the tree eight to fifteen shillings a thousand, according to the state of the market ; and the expenses of gathering, packing, harbor dues, and freight may come to one pound a thousand more ; so that, counting the loss which with so perishable a commodity can not fail to be considerable, each St. Michael's orange of good quality delivered in London costs rather more than a half-penny. The price increases enormously as the season goes on. Several varieties are cultivated, and one variety ripens a comparatively small number of large fruit, without seeds, toward the middle of April, which bring sometimes ten times as much as the finest of the ordinary oranges in the height of the season.

At length, at an elevation of six hundred feet or so, the walls of the quintas were passed, and we emerged into the open country. The island is divided into two somewhat unequal portions, an eastern and a western. To the east we have high volcanic ridges, surrounding the picturesque valley of the Furnas, and stretching, in rugged peaks and precipitous clefts, to the extremity of the island. The western portion culminates in the Caldeira (or crater) of the Sete-Cidades, probably one of the most striking pieces of volcanic scenery to be met with anywhere.

Between the two there is a kind of neck of lower land, beds