

APPENDIX

TO THE SECOND VOLUME.

A.

PARTICULARS OF A JOURNEY FROM ALTAMIRA TO CATORCE.

ON the 16th of May, 1822, we started from Altamira with fourteen four-wheel carriages, loaded with machinery, parts of a thirty-six inch steam-engine, for the mine of La Concepcion, in the Real de Catorce. Colonel Martinez, as the representative of Messrs. Gordon and Murphy, conducted the party.

We made but little progress the first day, notwithstanding the excellence of the road. At Chocolate, a small Rancho about a league from Altamira, we had the misfortune to break two wheels, and otherwise damage one of the carriages. This accident detained us three days. Having no carpenter or wheelwright with us, our situation was rather an awkward one; we had tools, however, and although I had never used them before in my life, I set to work, and by dint of great exertion, under a burning vertical sun, (the thermometer, from ten o'clock to two, standing as high as 120°), I succeeded in repairing our damages so as to enable us to proceed on the 20th.

The breaking down of the carriages is partly to be ascribed to the bullocks, which were all wild; but principally to the drivers, who were a most uncivilized set of beings. They had resorted to the Coast for the purpose of obtaining a livelihood, and very frequently had recourse to robbery, and murder, in order to effect it.

Colonel Martinez betrayed on every occasion the greatest timidity, and allowed the men to do just as they pleased. When they chose to stop, finding themselves incommoded by the sun, they did so without leave; and for the purpose of securing to

themselves a day or two of rest, they would drive one or two of the carriages into the wood, and break the wheels.

About a league from Chocolate, another of the carriages broke down, and obliged us to halt for the day. We repaired the damage in the evening, however, and were enabled to proceed early the next morning.

We had travelled two leagues, when the drivers of two of the carriages turned out of the road, and wilfully broke two of the wheels. I recommended Martinez to go on with the other carriages, and offered to remain behind myself to repair the two wheels which had been injured: he took my advice, and proceeded on the following morning. As soon as the party had left me, I set about my task, and worked hard all day in the sun, but was not able to complete the wheels. At dusk I saddled my horse and rode up to the carriages: about a mile on the road I found one of them with a wheel off, and had not proceeded much farther before I met with another quite broken down. I came up with the party about two miles distant from the place where I had been working. The next morning I returned to my operations, finished the wheels, and in the afternoon joined the main body with the two carriages that had been left behind. On the 24th, Martinez proceeded with twelve waggons, and left me to refit the two which I found on the road. I completed them in time to join the party in the evening.

We pursued our route in this sort of way until the 28th, and, owing to a want of proper regulations, generally fared very badly; a few ounces of sun-dried beef, some frijoles, and three or four tortillas, constituting our usual allowance. As it had not rained during the preceding year, water was extremely scarce, always bad, and very offensive to the smell.

Arriving on the 28th at the Venta de los Esteros, it was determined that the whole party should rest a day or two.

I was employed, however, in making two small carts, thinking the drivers might be able to manage them better than the waggons. Esteros is situated on the borders of an extensive lake, the alligators in which are large and numerous; accidents are no doubt frequent: I only heard of one, however, which befel a woman, who was washing by the side of the lake; an alligator, leaving the water, seized her by the legs, and carried

her off, the woman's husband looking on without being able to render her the least assistance. Colonel Martinez left Esteros on the 31st May with fourteen carriages; I remained behind with two, the wheels of which wanted repair, and it took me four days to complete them. I was two days without any food beyond what the charity of a traveller passing by afforded me, which consisted of three or four tortillas. On the 5th of June I came up with the other carriages; Martinez having stopped for me at Puerto Chocollo, five leagues from Esteros. The road between Chocollo and Esteros is excellent: about a league from the latter place we entered on a very extensive plain, having all the appearance of being cultivated. We might have almost imagined that we saw the green meadows of England, so high and luxuriant was the grass. Flocks of deer fed by the roadside, and wild turkeys were seen in abundance.

We stopped at Chocollo until the 9th June, and made three more carts, for the purpose of lightening the carriages, hoping by this means to go on faster. The road afterwards became bad, and although not so rugged as to prevent carriages from passing, our drivers were so obstinate and self-willed, that accidents were continually occurring, and three or four days were often consumed without our making any considerable progress.

On the 13th, we were stopped by a river, not on account of its water, which was very little, but by the steepness of its banks and its rocky bed, through which we were obliged to open a road for the carriages to pass. On the 14th we accomplished our task, and, on the 15th, got all the waggons over. We now began to ascend a very steep hill, and stopped about a mile up its side, on a sort of natural terrace, the level of which we found convenient for our carriages. Contrary to our usual custom, we started early on the following morning, and reached the summit of the mountain about four o'clock in the afternoon; where a considerable village, called *Coco*, is situated, the property of a single individual, by name Quintero. This place is twenty-one leagues from Altamira; and from the salubrity of its climate, it affords a safe retreat to the inhabitants of Tampico, Altamira, and other unhealthy towns on the Coast,

who, during the sickly months, resort thither with their families.

We stopped there a week to repair our wheels and carriages, which, on our arrival, were in a most dilapidated condition.

We left *Coco* on the 23rd, descended a hill rather rugged and broken, and again found ourselves on a most beautiful plain, where the oak, the elm, and the palm grew at such regular distances as almost to induce us to believe that they were planted by the hand of man: the verdure, luxuriance, and beauty of the wild plants exceeded any thing that I can describe: deer were seen in most extraordinary abundance, and Nature seemed to have exerted herself in forming for these timid creatures a safe and happy retreat. Our road, which was pretty good, led us for two days through this picturesque and fertile country. On the 25th, we passed through a small Indian village, the resident Missionary of which, together with his flock, treated us with a good deal of civility; we purchased a large stock of fowls and eggs of them: our journey on the following day, was a continual ascent: we halted about five o'clock in the afternoon at the top of a hill, which, on the other side, presented difficulties of no ordinary nature; as it was precipitous in the extreme, and so covered with wood and rocks, that nothing but great perseverance and exertion could have enabled us to descend it.

After having refreshed ourselves, a general muster of the drivers and others belonging to the party took place, when all hands began to hew trees, remove rocks, in a word, to form a road over which the carriages might pass. We worked nearly all night so effectually, that in the morning we were able to set about getting down the carriages. The steepness of the descent rendered bullocks quite useless, and our only plan was to lower the waggons down by means of ropes, which fortunately we had brought with us.

By three o'clock, the whole of the train was safely deposited at the bottom of the hill; and the same afternoon we proceeded on two miles farther, to a Rancho called Alamitas, five leagues from *Coco*, a journey which it took us nearly five days to accomplish.

We stopped a day at Alamitas, to mend a wheel that had been broken in descending the mountain. We travelled on during the whole of the 29th and 30th, without any sort of accident, although our road was excessively rough: we rested on the 1st of July, at a place called Pletil, a small village pleasantly situated on the banks of a river, five leagues from Alamitas. On the 2nd and 3rd, we performed five leagues, but were delayed considerably the next day by a rivulet which crossed our road, having been obliged to level its sides for the purpose of allowing the carriages to proceed; our distance on this account did not amount to a league. On the 5th, however, we made up for the detention, by going four leagues, which brought us to the village of Apanoche. Here we were stopped by a river, which, during the rainy months, is deep, rapid, and altogether impassable; it was now however fordable for horses, but unless some means could be found to render the stream more shallow, the carriages could not go over. I employed twenty Indians to cut down some large trees that were hanging over the river, allowing them to fall in the strongest part of the current, and by throwing stones on the branches we succeeded in forming a partial dam, which greatly reduced the depth and force of the water. The banks of the river being steep, we were obliged again to use our ropes. We employed about fifty Indians, the chief of whom could speak a little Spanish, and served as an interpreter for the rest. On our lowering a carriage into the river, these men, with six yoke of oxen, would draw it as far across as possible; but to ascend the other side, twenty yoke of oxen, and all the Indians were barely sufficient, so steep were the banks. We succeeded however, by dint of hard labour, in getting all the carriages over on the 7th.

On the 8th we resumed our journey, drove on about two leagues, and stopped for the night. The road rather uneven, but very few stones. During the night the Indians carried off eleven of our bullocks; we soon got news of them however, and easily recovered them. On the 9th we had a very rough piece of road to go over, a good deal of which we were obliged to repair before we could proceed; and we stopped at about a league and a half distance from our place of starting in the morning.

On the 10th we arrived at Forlon, rather a populous village, with a small church, the first that we had seen since leaving Altamira.

Forlon is situated on the banks of a river, and is distant from Apanoche about six leagues. We rested a day at this place, and on the 12th drove on about three leagues, and halted for the night on a plain. Our road the next day was tolerably good, which enabled us to accomplish three leagues and a half.

On the 14th, finding ourselves short of water, we dispatched a cart with three barrels to fetch some;—before it returned, (on the 16th,) we were all suffering from excessive thirst; our provisions had also failed us, and we were all on short allowance, but being without water our appetites did not incommode us so much as they otherwise might have done.

On the 17th, we arrived at Croix, a large village in a most miserable state, distant from Forlon fourteen leagues, and not far from Padilla, where Iturbide was shot. Between Croix and Forlon we did not meet with a single habitation; we halted here two days, and repaired some of our damaged wheels, &c. The heat was intolerable during our stay at this place, the thermometer being seen to rise as high as 120°, in the shade.

We left Croix on the 19th, and crossed a river almost immediately after starting; the road was good, and we drove on until one o'clock, when one of the carriages, owing to its having been driven out of the road, came down: nothing but a wheel being broken, I set every thing right again before the cook had got our dinner ready. We here met a coach that had been despatched from Catorce by the Obregones to meet us, and convey us to the Real. At this stage of our journey, however, it was impossible to leave the carriages without doing a manifest injury to the enterprise; and we therefore only detached Mr. Medina to give some account of our proceedings. After dining, mending the broken wheel, and disposing of Medina and the coach, we again began to move on, and found our road so very good that we were enabled to perform five leagues in the course of the day. We halted at the top of a hill of no great height, whence we could discern most distinctly the *Saddle-hill*, near Monterey, which was said to be very little short of *ninety leagues*

distant from us. We had again to make a road by which the carriages might descend,—worked the greatest part of this night, and by nine the next morning had formed a sufficient pass for our train, which at ten o'clock began to proceed.

On arriving at the foot of the hill, the road was found to be excellent, and continued so for four leagues. We started early on the following morning, and accomplished three leagues and a half during the day. We should have gone to Aguayo, but our cattle could take us no farther, although the road was a continued descent. On the 22nd, we started at eight o'clock, found the road rather uneven, and crossed by several rivulets. We broke one of our carriages during the journey, which circumstance detained us a little, but did not prevent us from entering Aguayo at an early hour. *Aguayo*, distant fourteen leagues from Croix, is a large town of some consequence, lying on the eastern side of the *Sierra Madre*; it contains a good many respectable inhabitants.

We met with fruit in abundance at this place, but made a very short stay there, and arrived on the 24th at Las Misiones, a small village about five leagues distant from Aguayo, where we stopped two days, and proceeding on the 27th, travelled two leagues through a thick wood, in which we halted for the night. The next day we stopped at Caballero, a considerable Rancho, or rather a sugar plantation, four leagues from Las Misiones. On the 29th we reached San Pedro, another Rancho, two leagues from the former, and stopped there five days to refit; from Las Misiones to San Pedro the road is generally pretty good; and all the way from Aguayo to the latter place, the soil appeared to be extremely fertile, and cultivation pretty general.

On the 4th of August, we again began to move. On leaving San Pedro, we crossed a river, and drove on over a very tolerable road to Santa Gracia, (three leagues from San Pedro, and fourteen from Aguayo,) where we met with a broad but fordable river, which we crossed on the 6th, and halted on the opposite bank to repair some carriages that were injured. On the 7th, we left Santa Gracia, having previously made every inquiry respecting the road, and ascertained that, as far as Hoyos, we should find it very good. After having proceeded a league, however, we were stopped by an *arroyo*, six or

seven yards deep, which traversed the road: there was no remedy but to form a bridge, which we effected by means of some large trees, which we cut down, and on the following morning, the 8th, drove over without trouble or danger. We proceeded on our journey over a dreadful road, and in the afternoon crossed the River de Bayo, and ascended a steep hill, at the top of which we halted, having accomplished three leagues during the day. Our road the next day lay by the side of the river for some distance; I could not have imagined it possible for carriages to go over such a road: at the worst part of it one of the carriages came down, two of its wheels having been shattered to pieces. Having a bellows with us, we soon built a forge, and began to make the iron work for an extra wheel, which, on the 10th, we completed, together with other work, and on the 11th, continued our journey over the same sort of road, by the river side, and arrived at the Rancho del Carmel, three leagues from Bayo, without accident. The next day we reached a Rancho, not far from Hoyos—the road rather uneven. On the 13th, I went to Hoyos, to look out for some timber to make felloes for wheels, but could not meet with any; I employed, therefore, two carpenters, who accompanied me into the wood, and cut down sufficient to make half a dozen wheels, took a house for a workshop, and in the evening returned to the carriages: the people had been employed all day in repairing the road to bring the carriages into *Hoyos*, which, in the afternoon of the 14th, they all entered.

This place is situated very near the *Sierra Madre*, on the same side as Aguayo; its situation is very low and unhealthy, the fever and ague prevailing throughout the year. Catorce lies about fifty leagues to the west of Hoyos; but it is impossible for a carriage to cross the mountains, where tremendous precipices rise one over the other, to an immense height; and there is not only one ridge, but several, forming a distance of at least fifteen leagues across. We stopped here six days, made five new wheels, and repaired several old ones. There are several gold and silver mines in this neighbourhood, but they have not been worked to any great extent.

We left Hoyos on the 21st, drove on about three leagues,

and halted; the road very tolerable. We started early the next morning, and had gone about a league, when, on descending a steep hill, the bullocks ran away with one of the carriages, and broke one of the large wheels—the nave gave way, which was generally the case. There is no timber sufficiently durable to withstand the dry hot air of the *Tierra Caliente*;—English timber, particularly, begins to crack and fly to pieces immediately. In any future expedition of this kind, I should recommend cast-iron naves for the wheels. We were detained four days making a new wheel, during which time the people were employed in repairing a bad piece of road. On the 26th we began to move on again, and the following day arrived at Sierra Santiago, eight leagues from Hoyos. This place, containing about two thousand inhabitants, is more elevated, and enjoys a more wholesome climate, than any other that we had passed through since leaving Altamira. The woods in its neighbourhood contain a great number of wild bullocks. There are also wild horses, but not so numerous. The next afternoon we drove out of the town, crossed a small river, and halted on the other side. Starting early on the morning of the 29th, we had got on about four leagues over a good road, when the obstinacy of the drivers caused them to turn off into the wood; in consequence of which we broke two wheels, and were again detained four days. We set off again on the 2d of September, and drove three leagues. We were here, from want of pasture, obliged to feed the bullocks on “nopal,” which, being extremely juicy, in places where there was no water, served both for meat and drink. The next day we had driven about two leagues, when the cattle, from want of provender and water, the heat also being excessive, were quite knocked up, and prevented us from proceeding any farther. A cart not arriving, which we had dispatched two days before for water and provisions, subjected us to great inconvenience; we fed the cattle again on nopal. The next morning we yoked our oxen very early, and drove three leagues. Finding no pasture for the bullocks, we continued to feed them on the prickly pear plant, which, if it had borne fruit at the time, might have been the means of appeasing our own hunger and thirst, which now became excessive. We resolved to set off very early the next

morning, and to endeavour to reach Linares, a considerable town, about four leagues off. Accordingly, on the 5th, we were on our road by daybreak, proceeded slowly, and succeeded in reaching Linares with six carriages, twelve of our train remaining behind in different parts of the road, fourteen of our bullocks having died of fatigue, or want of water and food. The road from Santiago to Linares is pretty good, but intersected by rivulets, which every now and then interrupted our progress. We had not seen a single habitation or human being since leaving the former place. The cart we had dispatched for provisions and water arrived on the 6th, also in distress; the three barrels which they had filled with water were given to the bullocks the first two or three days after starting from the watering-place. We stopped three days on the south side of Linares, waiting for some new bullocks to come up, which arrived on the 9th; and on the 10th we drove into the town, which is about the size of Aguayo, containing nearly six thousand inhabitants, and situated on an elevated plain, between two rivers, the one on the north side being the largest. There are some well-built houses there, and the country around for some distance is cultivated. On the 11th we left Linares, and crossed the river on the north side, at a small village (Camacho).

The wheels and bodies of our carriages requiring a general repair, we resolved to stop at Camacho for the purpose. It took us seven days to set every thing to rights. On the 18th we again started, and having proceeded two leagues, were stopped by a bad piece of road, which was impassable, unless provisionally repaired. We commenced operations early, and in the evening of the following day completed the road, yoked the oxen to the carriages, and drove on about a league, where the road again required some repairs. We started, however, on the following morning, and drove two leagues, when, on descending a hill, we broke one of the carriages, which accident detained us the remainder of the day. We reached Buenavista next day, and stopped two days there, to repair some wheels. On the 24th we proceeded on our journey, and having gone a league, were stopped by a rivulet, over which it was necessary to throw a bridge, which we effected during the night, and the