

upon accompanying me, and could not reconcile herself to the idea of leaving her children for two whole months; our departure was put off from day to day in order to allow time for our little invalid to gather strength. I had not the least doubt of her recovery, and was not at all alarmed at her long confinement. In the month of August, she was able to walk, and in the month of September she was able to ride. I had the pleasure to see her again in the month of October, and she was well and happy. I had the pleasure to see her again in the month of November, and she was well and happy. I had the pleasure to see her again in the month of December, and she was well and happy.

On the morning of the 30 of November, 1826, having taken leave of all our Mexican friends, most of whom predicted that we should not extend our journey North beyond Guanajuato, we hade adieu to San Cosme, and proceeded by the great *Tierra Adentro* road to Huchistlan, where we slept. It was long since the inn there had opened its gates to such a cavalcade as ours; but, had as the accommodations were, we determined always to stop at the Ventas, in lieu of private houses, except in places where we intended to pass some days, on account of

BOOK VI.

MEXICO IN 1827.

SECTION I.

COMMENCEMENT OF JOURNEY TO THE INTERIOR.—STATE OF QUERETARO.—ZELAYA, THE BASIS, OF THE JOURNEY OF THE TWO COMPANIES.—REVENUES AND RESOURCES OF THE STATE.

On the morning of the 30 of November, 1826, having taken leave of all our Mexican friends, most of whom predicted that we should not extend our journey North beyond Guanajuato, we hade adieu to San Cosme, and proceeded by the great *Tierra Adentro* road to Huchistlan, where we slept. It was long since the inn there had opened its gates to such a cavalcade as ours; but, had as the accommodations were, we determined always to stop at the Ventas, in lieu of private houses, except in places where we intended to pass some days, on account of

MEXICO IN 1827.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

BOOK VI.

SECTION I.

COMMENCEMENT OF JOURNEY TO THE INTERIOR.—STATE OF QUERETARO.—ZELAYA, THE BAXIO, GUANAJUATO; MINES OF THE TWO COMPANIES ESTABLISHED THERE.—REVENUES AND RESOURCES OF THE STATE.

ON the morning of the 3d of November, 1826, having taken leave of all our Mexican friends, most of whom predicted that we should not extend our journey North beyond Guanajuato, we bade adieu to San Cosme, and proceeded by the great *Tierra Adentro* road to Huéhuetōcā, where we slept. It was long since the inn there had opened its gates to such a cavalcade as ours; but, bad as the accommodations were, we determined always to stop at the Ventas, in lieu of private houses, except in places where we intended to pass some days, on account of

the inconvenience with which the reception of so numerous a party must have been attended anywhere else. The inns mostly contain four or five small rooms opening into the Patio; but in the Haciendas, where the accommodations consist of one large sala, which is the only spare room, it is impossible to attempt a subdivision of apartments; and although we had provided for desperate cases, by carrying with us a large canvass curtain, so contrived as to be easily suspended across a room, and thus, in fact, to make it two, still the number of females rendered it desirable to have recourse to this expedient as seldom as possible.

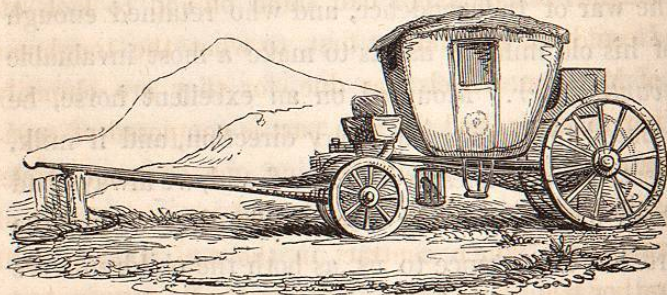
Mrs. Ward was accompanied by two Mexican maids, who, with the children, occupied a large coach, drawn by eight mules, which I purchased for the purpose, of a gentleman recently arrived from Durango. As we shut up house altogether in the Capital, our whole Mexican establishment attended us, although with some changes of character, in order the better to suit them to our purposes upon the road. For instance, one of the footmen acted as postilion, and, with the coachman, took entire charge of the coach; while a lad who had been employed for some time in the kitchen in Mexico, appeared in the double capacity of mule-driver, and cook; in the first of which occupations he displayed such activity, and flew about so rapidly in pursuit of the scattered animals entrusted to his charge, that he soon acquired from his fellow

servants the name of El Cōhēté, (the Rocket,) by which he was ever afterwards distinguished.

In addition to these, we had three other servants for house work upon the road; two Arrieros, with the baggage-mules, and two stable-men to take charge of the horses; and although the number may appear large, yet such were the complicated wants of the party, the various beds to put up, and unmake, and the difficulty in obtaining provisions, that it was all that our united efforts could accomplish to get into marching order at seven o'clock in the morning, before which time we seldom found it possible to set out. One man was generally sent in advance to secure rooms, and to act as purveyor: this duty devolved upon a fine athletic fellow called Hilario, who had served as an artilleryman during the war of Independence, and who retained enough of his old military habits to make a most invaluable *avant-courier*. Mounted on an excellent horse, he scoured the country in every direction, and if milk, meat, or vegetables, were to be found, we always had them for our evening meal. The first was of the greatest importance to us, as both the children were too young to live upon anything else; the eldest being only a year and a half old, and the second, whom her mother was still suckling, hardly five months. As to ourselves, a large box of preserved meats, and our guns, ensured us against starvation; nor did a day pass, I believe, without our having hares, quail, or water-fowl of some kind, to add

to the mutton cutlets, and broth, which the principal towns afforded us.

The party consisted of Mrs. Ward, Mr. Martin, the French Consul General in Mexico, with whom I had been long on terms of intimacy, and whose agreeable society it was delightful to secure, Dr. Wilson, Mr. Carrington, and myself. We were afterwards joined by the messenger to the Mission, Don Rafael Beraza, and formed, with our servants, a squadron of sixteen men, well mounted and armed, with eight baggage-mules, and as many loose horses, which composed the advanced-guard, driven by the Cohete and the muleteers. The great Mexican coach followed, of which, when loaded for the road, the annexed drawing will give a tolerable idea.



The servants rode next, with their sabres, guns, and Lasso's, all dressed in the leather Rānchēro costume; which, in addition to its convenience in other respects, had the recommendation of being the cheapest pos-

sible travelling-dress;* and we ourselves brought up the rear, to pick up stragglers, and to keep the party together. In very bad ground, the order of march was reversed, and we took the lead ourselves, in order to examine the Barrancas, (ravines,) and to ascertain the spot where the carriage could cross with least damage. In this too Hilario was of the greatest use, for he had the eye of a hawk, and having been accustomed to travel with artillery, he had some idea of the powers of wood and iron, and knew that there were some things which it was absolutely impossible for them to bear. His countrymen in general drive over, or through every thing, and look excessively surprised when an unfortunate wheel gives way, (as it usually does,) with a crash, after surviving trials which it would make an English coachmaker's hair stand on end to look at. I could not imagine, at first, to what the toughness of Mexican wheels was due, for they are clumsily put together, and the iron part is composed of separate pieces, instead of forming one compact circle. But then the whole is so bound up with strips of raw hide, which contract in the sun, that it will rather bend than break, and can hardly fall to pieces under any circumstances. It sometimes indeed assumes rather an oval than a circular form, but this fault corrects itself: the projecting parts are

* I paid ten or twelve dollars each for these leather dresses: a cloth coat, or jacket alone would have cost twenty.

worn down by the rough and rocky roads; and as to any little additional motion during the process, it so seldom falls to the lot of a Mexican traveller to glide over the country with the sort of even movement to which Mr. Mac Adam's labours have accustomed people in England, that a few jolts more or less are really not perceptible.

After this description, my readers will not be surprised to hear that none of our party ever entered the coach as long as they were able to sit a horse; and that Mrs. Ward, far from finding it a relief, endeavoured, from the first, to extend her daily rides until she was enabled to perform nearly the whole distance on horseback: which she so far accomplished that she must, I think, have ridden fourteen hundred miles out of the two thousand, to which the aggregate of our journey may have amounted. Between a passo horse and a carriage, on such roads, it is impossible to hesitate, except when the sun is so powerful as to render the protection of a roof desirable, and this, in the winter months, on the Table-land, is not often the case. The dust, which is at times exceedingly distressing when riding, cannot be avoided: it had the effect of making us extend our line of march considerably; and, on a windy day, there was often a space of nearly half a mile between the head and rear of the column: the necessity for this increased as our live-stock augmented, which it did prodigiously upon the road; for when we got into the breeding countries, where

horses and mules were cheap, we made new purchases in order to relieve our tired animals, and entered Mexico on our return with fifty-six beasts of different kinds. We often amused ourselves with fancying the sensation which the appearance of our caravan would have excited in Hyde Park, or Long-champs; where the wild horses and mules, and the servants driving them at a gallop with the lassos whirling round their heads,—the guns, and pistols, canteens, and camp-beds, carga-mules, and coach, in size like a Noah's ark, perambulating, by some accident, the land, instead of the waters, with festoons of Tasajo, (dried strips of beef sold by the yard,) and handkerchiefs full of onions and tortillas attached to different parts of it by the servants,—would have formed a curious contrast to the neat chariot and four, with patent lamps and liveried attendants, in which the preparations for a journey in Europe usually consist. Nor would the night-scenes have appeared less singular, with the packsaddles and horse-accoutrements arranged in rows under the corridor; the arms of the servants suspended near them; the horses picketed around, and the muleteers stretched on the ground by the side of a large fire, cooking their mess for the night in a common kettle, or preparing their beds under the coach, which served as a general place of rendezvous. Chăpîtä, the Indian nurse, used to superintend the culinary operations of this group; and often have I seen her, before daylight, bending over the fire,

and concocting a kettle of Atolli, or Champorada,* with the child slung to her back in the Indian fashion, and exposed to the bracing cold of the morning air, which is not dispelled until the sun gets well above the horizon, at nine or ten o'clock. The little creature seemed to thrive upon this system, and as all was confusion within at that hour, the servants being busy in making up the loads, and her mother occupied with the care of her less healthy sister, we generally let her take her chance.

At nine or ten o'clock, according to the distance, we stopped at some Rancho to breakfast, or sate down wherever there was shade, and pulque, or a little water, to eat the provisions which we had brought with us. Milk we often obtained at this hour, when we laid in the provision for the day, which kept admirably, notwithstanding the sun and the motion of the coach, in bottles filled till they overflowed, and then corked up. I did not find this to be the case with the milk and cream which I had brought with me from England; † for the cases not being quite full, we generally found, on opening them, that their contents had been converted, by the trot of the mules, into butter; in which state, however, they furnished, occasionally, a very agreeable addition to our fare. After breakfast, which lasted but a short time, we proceeded, without farther in-

* A composition prepared with chocolate, maize, and water.

† It is made up in little tin cases hermetically sealed, and is very useful on a voyage.

terruption, to our resting-place, wherever that might be. The mules and horses were then relieved from their loads, and driven to water, and to bathe, where there was any river near, after which they enjoyed their rest and food during the remainder of the day. At four in the morning, the lassoing and saddling began; for as the beasts were all loose in the patio, or in some immense stable, (where stabling was to be procured,) there was no other mode of securing them. This operation, in which my young companion Carington, (who became very expert in the use of his lasso,) generally distinguished himself, occupied a couple of hours, after which the cargoes were assigned to the different mules, the rest of the luggage affixed to the coach, and the whole party gradually put into motion. We lost a great deal of time during the first two or three days, from the want of a systematic mode of proceeding, the servants being new to their work; but as soon as they learned how to distribute it most conveniently, each took his own line; and, as we all assisted in making up the packages, it was curious to see the rapidity with which the rooms reassumed their desolate appearance after being enlivened for a time with a few symptoms of European civilization. I have seen a bed dismounted, rolled up, and transferred to a mule's back in less than five minutes, so that all our little comforts, in fact, created no material delay. There are few ladies, however, who would have had strength and resolution enough to give so good an example in