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FROM MORELIA TO MEXICO CITY ON HORSEBACK.

IT may be only women who sentimentalize over their old clothes, and become clairvoyant at the touch of a shabby garment, long embalmed in that subtle odor which clothing will distill from the place where it has been worn; but, even if it be a purely feminine confession, I am not ashamed to confess that memory was stronger than sight as I put on my old Colorado habit, the morning of our start, and perceived that faint, pungent smell of Indian-tanned leather, tobacco, and the smoke of wood-fires. It was not the half-packed trunks that I saw, or the *maletones*, buckled ready to be slung over the mules' backs, or Ascension sweeping the damp corridor;—it was a low cabin room, with a hammock swung across the chimney corner—the blackened trails of fire-wasted pine-woods, and the long, windy reaches of the valley of the Arkansas—I do not mean the broad, sallow stream which weds the Mississippi in its prosaic middle-age, but the wild, snow-born Arkansas in its infancy, swift as the arrowy speed of a fish through clear water, and so narrow that a horse might leap across.

I put on my old habit with an indulgent eye for its infirmities, and peering into the dim, swinging glass on the dressing-table, powdered my face white as a plaster-cast, as a defense against the sun of Mexico, which the ladies had assured me I would find *muy fuerte*. The ensanguined countenances of the two blonde engineers, who had already tested its power, were sufficient warning of what I might expect. My defensive preparations were completed by a small silk face-mask, to be worn during the heat of the day, when the reflection from the unsheltered roads is scarcely less powerful than the vertical rays of the sun. We rode, a party of four—the two mining engineers, a Mexican colonel of cavalry, and

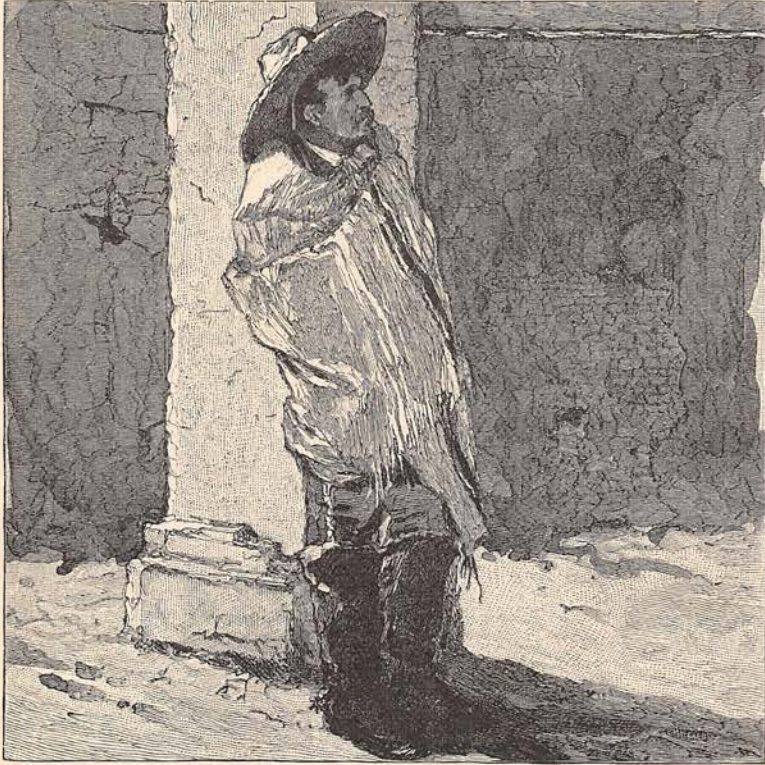
myself. Our friends in Morelia, Michoacan, had given us a magnificent outfit for the journey. We were traveling like persons of consequence,—with a retinue of six mounted men, four pack-animals, and arms and munitions enough to have enabled us to have “cleaned out,” in Western parlance, every little Indian village between Morelia and Mexico City. Nothing, however, could have been more peaceful than our mood as we rode out of the hospitable court of the beautiful Casa G—. We were deeply touched by all the kindness we had received in the city of strangers, and by the breaking of those slight threads of pleasant intercourse, which are so quickly woven even between strangers when they meet on the common ground which exists for all races. The morning sun was already hot in the street, long shadows laced the pavement and followed the languidly moving figures. All the houses where the pretty girls had looked out and fluttered their fingers to us, on our way to the Paseo, were close shuttered, the balconies deserted; only the rows of water-spouts thrust out from the eaves of the flat roofs seemed to stare at us, and flout us with their long shadows, all pointing toward the city gate. So, past the fountain, near the entrance of the aqueduct to the city, where troops of animals are watered at morning and evening, past the Alameda and San Pedro, with its aisles of arching trees, and vistas of checkered shadow, we came to the outer gate. During the first hour of our ride we had the company of Mr. —, chief of the Morelia division of the railroad, to whom we owed many kindnesses. It was his influence which had procured for me the petted saddle-horse of a friend—no “galled jade,” hardened in gait and temper, such as are kept for hire on long journeys, but a neatly made, light-footed

pony, of the red-roan color called in Mexico *rosillo*. I hope my pony's condition, on his return, showed his obliging master that I neither "whipped him, nor slashed him, nor rode him through the mire"—like that naughty lady in the nursery rhyme, who is so justly held up to the children's disapprobation.

I never felt him gather his nimble feet beneath him for one of our long, refreshing cantering in the cool hours of the morning, each untired muscle responsive, each hoof striking true, his lively ears jealously attentive to the

breast of some hovering bird, whose vivid plumage may have furnished the mantles of Montezuma's queens with their gorgeous dyes.

A—— and I riding together, restfully silent, as people are apt to be who have ridden together a good many times before, had always in front of us the figures of the Scotch engineer and the Mexican colonel,—significant figures, if one chose to regard them so,—contrasted as the Knight of the Leopard and Saladin, on their journey across the burning Syrian desert. The bullets in their Winchesters clinked in unison, their shoulders kept the



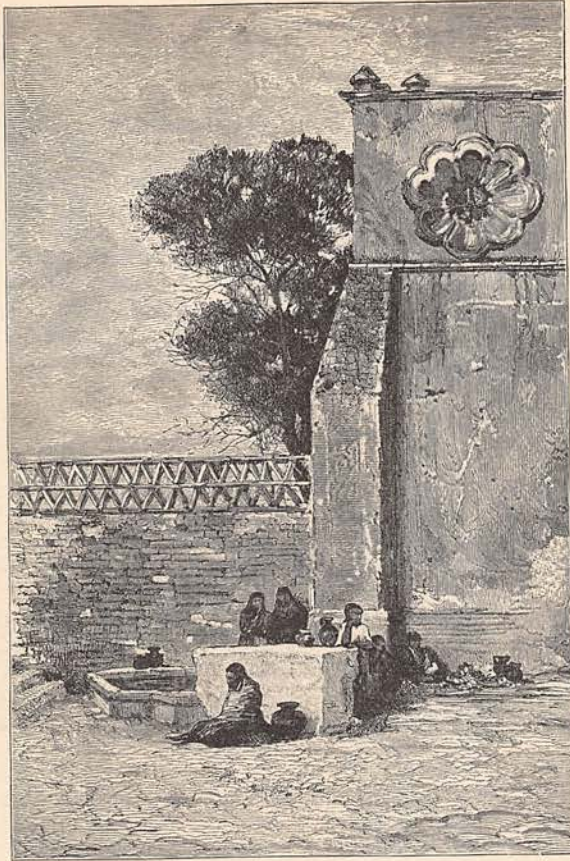
A MEXICAN MAN-SERVANT.

horses behind him, without a tacit repetition of my thanks for my *Rosillo*—the chiefest pleasure of the ride, or rather the pleasure on which all others were dependent!

All the way to Charo,—the Indian village where we were to rest at noon,—the long white road stretched away between the cactus hedges, softened by willows in the wet hollows. The nopal-cactus still bore its incipient blossoms, which the untimely snow had nipped; the organ-cactus sends up from its main stalk long, prickly shoots, like organ-pipes, whose melodies are expressed in color instead of sound, as they chord with the deep blue sky, the yellow climbing-bill, and the

same movement in time to the tread of their horses' feet.

José Maria, the trusted *mozo* of Mr. —, who had lent him to us for the ride, preceded us by some distance, announcing our arrival at the stopping-places, and keeping a wary eye out for suspicious-looking fellow-travelers. Don Pepe, a veteran of the Mexican war, who acted as our commissary in charge of the "outfit," by tacit arrangement rode behind me; the *mozos de camino*, Bonifacio and Augustin, followed, and then came the queer, solemn little pack-train, the two loaded mules, and the led mules, in charge of Rafael and his assistant—a long,



THE FOUNTAIN AT CHARO.

brown stripling, "clothed all in leather," except for his wide cotton under-trowsers, which escaped from the buttonless seams of his leather ones. All leather trowsers in Mexico are buttoned down the outside seam, with very military and ornamental effect. I despair of conveying any idea of Rafael's placid, expressionless progress, sitting bolt upright on his mule, very near its tail, his wide straw hat opposed to the angle of the sun's declination and framing his head in a halo of shadow. The long youth dashed about in pursuit of straying mules or "U-lu-u-u-d" to them, but Rafael's repose was never disturbed. He was the only Mexican we saw who had a distinctly humorous quality. Others were gentle, and tragic, and grotesque, and repulsive, and queer to the verge of extravagance, but Rafael was the only one I ever saw who could inspire a hearty laugh without a latent misery in it. Rafael was our one embodied joke all the days of our ride; in that character alone he would have been worth his services—whatever they may have been. I could never discover that

he did anything except change the angle of his hat with the changing shadows, as if he were some movable species of sun-dial.

At Charo, the houses are built in long, low lines of gray, unstuccoed adobe, and they look as if the top story had been blown off them. The top of the spire seemed also to have been blown off the great church on the hill overlooking the village, or perhaps it had never been put on. The empty bell-chamber was open to the sky, with tufts of grass growing aloft where the bell should have hung. It is a humble little village street, with a fountain, and Biblical-looking women, with Rebecca-at-the-well draperies and jars, coming and going to and from it. José Maria had announced us, and several of these women, brown-cheeked Rebeccas, with long, black braids of hair, were patting and frying tortillas in the dark kitchen, which is separated by a low, deep arch from the dining-room of the inn.

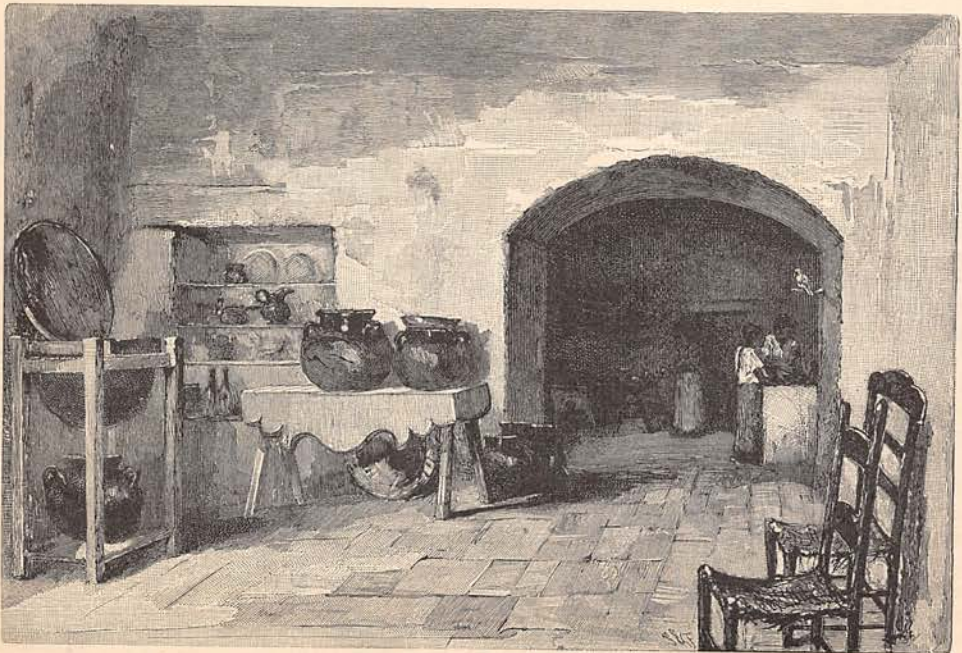
I had time to make a sketch of this room before dinner, but the best part had to be left out—the queer, mongrel dogs and children that filled the clear space before the

arch; they could not have kept still, and the artist could not have drawn them if they had. They were subjects for Velasquez or Fortuny. The cool stone water-filter in the corner of the room dropped its contents, like the sands of an hour-glass, into the great brown *olla* in the wooden frame below. A collection of pottery vessels, as various in sizes and colors as the children, were arranged on the walls—as if they had been humble household gods—above a deep, sunken cupboard like a shrine. We bought a small memento of Charo in the shape of a pottery pitcher, with native decoration on the unglazed clay. Bonifacio, with ill-concealed scorn of our taste, put it for safe keeping in a little bag made of aloefibers, which he swung at the pommel of his saddle.

The *hacienda* of Quieréndero is said to be about twenty-five miles from Morelia. We had been recommended by a letter of introduction to the hospitality of the *administrador*, and we pressed on through the noonday and heat, hoping to arrive in time to rest before dinner. The road, for the greater part of the way, was in broad sunlight. Occasionally we took a short canter under the shelter of a lane of willows by the roadside. We met no travelers except the itinerant Indians. Among these occasionally we observed little signs of consideration on the part of the men toward the women, as in the case of one who had given his broad hat to the woman behind him and himself walked bare-headed,

his coarse thatch of hair shining like shoe-blackening in the sun. The woman bore the sweet burden of womanhood, a sleeping child, hanging heavily in the folds of her *rebozo* and softly swaying with her steps. Beside her walked a straight-backed girl, with that peculiar thick aquiline nose which gives a sensuous kind of pride to the profile of these dull faces. She carried her shoes, of light sheepskin, and a rude guitar, at her back, and looked at us fixedly with her great black eyes, lifting one corner of the blue cotton head-cloth she wore, folded like that of an Italian *contadina*. We arrived at Quieréndero about four o'clock. It presents to the outside only massive stone walls, with gate-ways like those of a fortress. Within are two great courts, surrounded by stone buildings one story in height with tiled roofs,—the outer court, hot, unpaved, unshaded, opening through a stone gate-way, with fine contrasting effect, into the lovely inner *patio*, green-sodded, and planted with young orange-trees—a little heaven of cool refreshment to our road-weariness.

We were received by the *administrador* in the *patio*, and conducted into a large, bare room which might have been the office. There were book-cases nearly filling one end of the room, a low, broad divan across the other end, a commodious writing-desk, and a few light chairs. The glass doors opened on the corridor. Across this space of cool shadow the eye followed the light outward to the sunny, grass-paved *patio*, the young orange-



A MEXICAN KITCHEN.

trees, and the sky of Mexico, of the very tint to have humming-birds and flowers of vivid hue enameled upon it.

After we had been presented to the ladies of the house, we went to our rooms, closed out the afternoon light with the heavy shutters, and slept the sleep of a short summer night. After a long summer day, it was bewildering to find it still the same day when we woke a little after sunset, and went out into the *patio*. At dinner our host placed me, to my great embarrassment, in his own seat at the head of a feudal board, with many faces of retainers seated around it in order of their rank. The engineers were on my left, my host and his wife on my right, and the colonel, their countryman, next the engineers. Our men-servants, Bonifacio and Augustin, served us, together with those of the household. After dinner we returned to the *sala* by way of the corridor, which supplies the place of a hall. A lighted torch burning in the *patio* sent a Christmas glow about on the summer greenery.

That evening at Quieréndero gave a new association to the wistful *grito* of the crickets on a summer night. It was February, but summer nights may come in the dead of winter in Fairyland. We were speaking of the Indian women, who carry their burdens by a strap across the forehead (they are not all princesses in Fairyland). The *señora* with the beautiful Spanish name told us they have no *aspiraciones*, these Indian women of the province with dull faces and heavily molded forms. Life must be very hard for a woman with no "aspirations"—not even an aspiration toward a change in the fashion of her clothes bi-annually, at least. The Indian women weave and wear the garments of their dimmest progenitors, and make their pottery vessels of the same shape of those their greatest-grandmothers bore to the immemorial fountain.

Quieréndero is a private estate, but we were received at half an hour's notice—a party of four, with six servants, twelve horses, and four mules, fed and lodged and charmingly entertained—without making an apparent ripple on the serene current of its activities. Our host did us the honor to rise at daybreak to speed the parting guests. Quieréndero was beautiful in the low morning light. Men and cattle going to their day's work; the patient, homely figures of the laborers, in garments with simple folds, that have been shaped by their attitudes of continuous toil; the long shadows stretching across the carefully tilled land, a record in itself of centuries of labor,—all this reminded me of Millet's solemn epics of the poor.

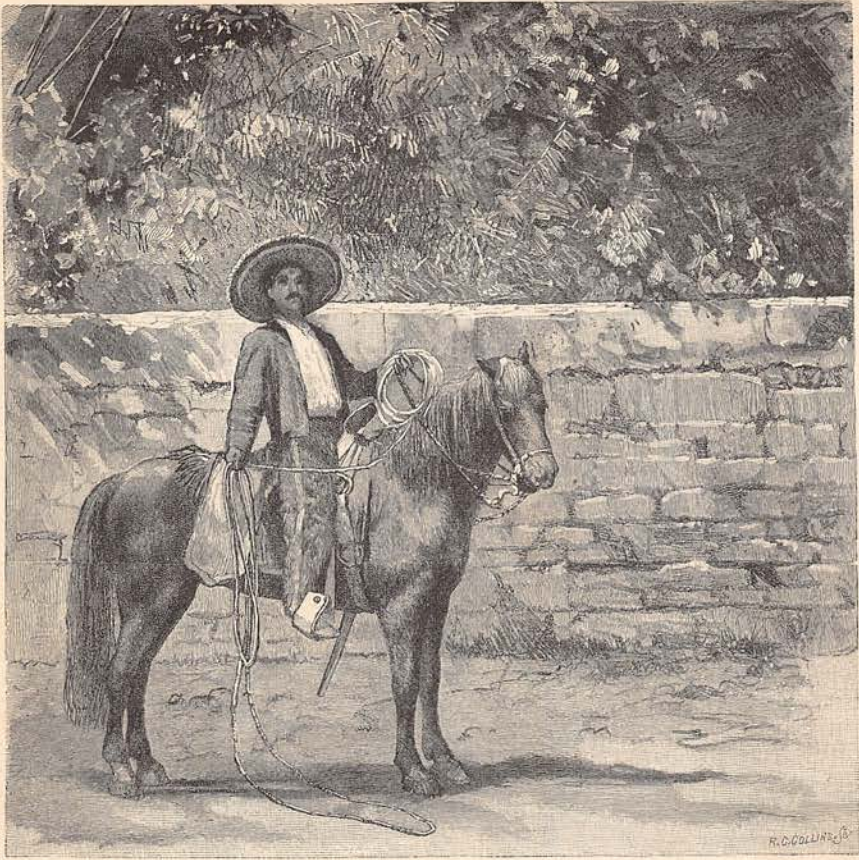
No American who has never been out of

the United States can imagine such a peasantry as this. It is not probable that each individual has suffered the equivalent of that dull sadness which is expressed in the faces of all. It is a sadness which mothers must have given to their children before the conquest of the Toltec by the Aztec, or the Aztec by the Spaniard. Even Humboldt, who was not looking for the sentimental aspects of the Indian tribes of Mexico, speaks of this national sadness. Nor can it be wondered at in a people who had the awful drama of human sacrifices for their amusement during one long, dark epoch, succeeded by the bull-fight and the cock-fight during another. The muscles which encircle the mouth (parenthesis-like), springing from the root of the nostril, have, in the Indian face, that thickened, rigid look which we see in the head of a Medusa, or the tragic mask.

The prosperity of the rich valley culminated long ago in the cities of Acambaro and Zinepecuaro, and their prosperity reached its highest in the great stone cathedrals which tower above the poor streets, like a feudal castle above the village of serfs at its feet. The church's power is broken in Mexico, but thoughtful, patriotic Mexicans appreciate these significant contrasts.

"*Pobre Mejico!*" the Colonel would often exclaim, as we rode through some village of earth-colored adobe huts, with its church of hewn stone overlooking them. "*Muchas iglesias! No escuelas! Todas, todas para los padres! Para la gente—nada!*" (Poor Mexico! Many churches! No schools! All, all for the priests! For the people—nothing!)

Beyond Zinepecuaro, we left the *camino real*, and followed one of those winding trails which are so tempting to a rider. Crossing a bare upland, with little vegetation except the nopal and the wild acacia, the main trail subdivided into many obscure lesser ones, diverging, intersecting, yet following a common impulse eastward, toward the mountains. Here was opportunity for feminine persistence to stray off into tempting but delusive by-ways, admonished by masculine superiority of judgment, and to return after sharp scrambles through thorny acacia-thickets—inwardly discomfited, but outwardly flushed with triumphant achievement. The professional eye detected traces of obsidian outcropping for some distance along these bare ascents, marking the locality of the ancient mine of the Aztecs, from which they obtained this natural bottle-glass for their obsidian implements, their weapons, and the sacrificial knives of the priests. We descended again into a winding defile, a ragged cut through the hill; and here we closed up our straggling ranks. The



A VAQUERO OF QUIERÉNDERO.

Winchesters pressed to the front, for it was an "ugly place." As the shadows shortened, we were steadily climbing toward the divide which separates the great valley of Morelia from that of Maravatio.

All these valleys are lofty table-lands, between the ranges themselves not less than six thousand feet above the sea level. The many trails become one, and that one rises more and more steeply. The nopal and cactus give place, as we climb, to oaks, pines, and firs. We meet the wood-carriers with their donkeys—the latter struggling down the narrow, precipitous trail, each with a long stick of timber lashed on either side, which he must steer as well as drag. The view of the valley, looking back from the highest point of the trail, is very beautiful,—the white cities, the long-walled *haciendas*, the lake of Cuitzeo, green young crops, plains, woodland, and water,—a view to turn one's back on with regret.

The Colonel expressed our common thought as he turned in his saddle for the last look, and said, "*Adios! Morelia y Morelianos, y Morelianas!*"

Whoever has taken long journeys on horseback or by rail must know the effect of the rhythmic movement on one's thoughts—how a phrase or a word or a scrap of melody will repeat itself in time to the jar of the car-wheels or the tread of the horses' feet, until the senses become dulled as by an opiate. For hours of our six days' ride we tramped, and shuffled, and jingled together along the lengthening roads—horses, and saddles, and rifles, and spurs, mules and mule-packs, each contributing its characteristic sound to the dactylic measure of our march. Quieréndero! Quieréndero! had repeated itself in my lulled brain all the sunny leagues of our morning's ride, and now "*Adios Morelia!*" took up the burden and carried it all the rest of the way, in the silences of the ride, to Maravatio.

From the mountain-trail we came out on a noble breadth of table-land, with stalwart oaks and pines journeying across it—pausing on a descent as if in silent amazement at the view, or gathered in the hollows as for consultation, like a band of explorers penetrating an unknown country.



A CHARCOAL CARRIER.

Here we found water and a few moment's rest at a poor Indian's hut, on the shadowless hill. The offered silver piece was declined with a gentle apathy of manner, the soft "*Nada, nada!*" sounding like a reproach in which pride had no part.

Under the stimulus of the brief rest and refreshment we made a burst of speed across the windy slope. There was something inspiring in the way it shouldered up against the sky, like a headland from which one might behold the sea-line rising to meet the eye. Out from that headland one looks down only on the hazy inland sea of valley and plain.

At noon, we rested at Urequio. This place will always be associated with the pretty young Indian girl who made me welcome to the best the poor place could offer in the way of repose and comfort—a cool, dark bed-chamber, windowless, lighted only by the door, the floor clean and sprinkled with sand,

a palm-mat by the bed. The bed itself spotlessly neat, its coarse linen ornamented with the drawn-work in which the Mexican women are so skillful, and above the bed, on the wall, a collection of child-like offerings and a rosary, hung against a square of bright-colored silk, beneath a rude picture of the Virgin.

After Urequio there were leagues of hot sunlight and dogged progress. The Scotch engineer from time to time repeated a line from "*Cicely*":

"Sun in the east in the morning,
Sun in the west at night."

The Colonel derisively apostrophized his black broncho, whom he called "*Napoleon Ter-cero!*" We revived from the "*Uncle Remus*" lore the tale of the race between "*Brer Tarrypin*" and "*Brer Rabbit*," and found that "*Brer Tarrypin's*" warning cry, "*Yere I come*

a-bulgin'," "Yere I come a-bilin'," aptly described our descent, in single and almost perpendicular file, of a precipitous hill, where the loose stones that composed the trail came clattering after us, dislodged by our horses' feet. A—— would have had me dismount and walk down, but the little Rosillo perfectly understood his work; with a firm girth, a loose rein, and his wary feet picking their way with *staccato* precision, I would have trusted him to carry me down a staircase.

While the sun was still high, the shadow of the range sheltered us, stretching before us across the rolling table-land which descends, wave after wave, to the valley of Maravatio. We traveled fast, for the white town was still many leagues away. I recall nothing on our journey more delightful than our gallop across this glorious plain in the broad shadow of the mountain. We crossed the valley, not by the *camino real*, but keeping the trail between the rich *hacienda* lands. Once we came to a stone fence barring our progress, and without a word, all our *mozos* rode forward and attacked it at once, making a breach for me to ride through. I was dismayed at this depredation, but they did not even stop to repair the fence, because of a slight alarm which sent them all clattering to the front again. Three men, well mounted, had ridden down into the gulch just before us, and had not ridden out again; it might be well to investigate their movements. They turned out to be "good men," as the Colonel assured us; and, indeed, the rich valley, dotted with *haciendas*, not three leagues from Maravatio, was hardly a place to expect *ladrones*. It was a good opportunity, however, to test the efficiency of our escort. We rode into Maravatio just on the edge of twilight. José Maria had found rooms for us at the Hotel de la Diligencia—our old quarters. The weariness which had become almost a stupor woke with the aching protest of every muscle as we crawled from our saddles, along the corridor, to our rooms. The men of the party were obliged to keep up a show of cheerfulness, but I, having no dignity of a superior sex to maintain, could repose myself upon my prerogative, and lie down in my dusty habit without a struggle—refusing to stir for supper or any other consideration. At the outset of our journey, when the whole distance had been divided into the number of leagues it would be necessary to make each day, the Colonel had protested that it was "*Muchas leguas para la señora*" (many leagues for the lady); but at this period of the ride the Colonel's favorite witticism was, "*Muchas leguas para los señores, para la señora nada, nada!*" The

engineers gayly took up the phrase, and at all the crucial moments of our ride they sympathized with themselves, as "*Pobres señores! Muchas leguas para los señores!*" It would have ill-become the *señora* to have exalted herself over *los pobres*, considering the odds in her favor. Had she been mounted on one of the leaden-paced, stony-hearted brutes from which the poor gentlemen suffered, she would have rolled out of her saddle in despair, like "the Duchess," at the end of the first day's journey, and meekly resigned herself to be bumped about in the hot, dusty diligence the rest of the way to Mexico. No better horses could be procured for a journey of this kind. "Regular" is the philosophic adjective the Mexicans apply to them. They will make between four and five miles an hour, for many successive days, at a monotonous, dislocating trot, which a Mexican accommodates himself to, as he does to so many other insupportable discomforts, by letting himself "go limber," as the children say.

We were all very stiff the next morning, and I heard the engineers muttering to each other something that sounded very much like "—— same old place!" as they exchanged grimaces from their saddles. It was impossible to say, as to our first canter, whether it was "the pain that is all but a pleasure," or "the pleasure that's all but pain." With the second we began to revive, and, before the sun had dried the dews in the valley, we were lounging along gayly to the familiar tramp and jingle of the road chorus. It is very much to my discredit that I have so few valuable facts to offer about the unique country through which we passed. Perhaps it is to my companions' discredit that they did not tell me facts, or insist on my seeing them; but, on the whole, I cannot but be thankful to them for permitting me to jog on the foot-pathway, protected by feminine in-curiosiveness from the stings of awakening knowledge. The fatigue of the journey was really very great, and I believe the mind instinctively sympathizes with bodily weariness, and closes its outward avenues in a kind of stupor, as the eyelids instinctively shelter the eyes from the too intense glare of the sun. This is my poor excuse for seeing so little of importance on the journey. I remember the shadows that were long in the valleys and short on the ridges we climbed between, the dark faces of our escort, the laughing and talking of the morning hours, the dogged silence at noon, the bursts of speed and gayety as the sun sank low, the lethargic weariness of the "home stretch." We always slept in a valley, at some town or *hacienda*, which looked very near from the summit, and re-

ceded as we approached, it seemed, like a mirage, holding out from the distance a delusive promise of rest. José Maria had ridden ahead with our letters of introduction to the *administrador* of the *hacienda* of Tepitongo, and at two o'clock we rode into its gates.

Tepitongo, with its mansion and *castillo*, or fortress, for refuge and defense in unsettled times, its *corróles*, out-buildings, and dependencies, great and small, forms in itself a village in the solitude of the pastoral plain which surrounds it. At sunset, as we sat in the long colonnade which crosses the end of the mansion facing the road, we saw the arrival of a strange procession of travelers. A troop of about twenty Indians, loaded with *camote* in osier crates, halted in a row, with their faces toward us, their backs to the wall of the *corrál*, rested their packs on the wall, and sank on the ground beneath, each man below his own pack, like trained beasts of burden. Here they lay in motionless attitudes of rest. Only once did they stir. When the *administrador* rode past, with his four-year-old son,—a miniature *caballero* mounted on a pony, with a servant walking at his side,—each silent figure lifted itself from the ground, took off its wide straw hat, and then sank down again. At the hour of *oración*, we heard the voices of the Indian children chanting the vesper service in the chapel. Again there was a stir among the dark figures below the wall, as every one made the sign of the cross, and muttered

a brief prayer. Beyond the *hacienda* walls, the bare plain rose into low hills, and these into a mountain range, above which, in a cloudless sky, the glow of sunset was fading. The wayfarers now rose, and, each resuming his burden and long stick, they trotted off again along the single track that crosses the plain. They were loaded with about seventy-five pounds of *camote* apiece, and we were told they would travel nine miles farther that night.

The *administrador* took us the rounds of the out-buildings before supper, which is served very late in the Mexican household. We were shown the threshing-floor, a stone-paved amphitheater over one hundred feet in diameter, very slightly concave, sinking toward a large circular flat stone in the center. It was surrounded by a circle of low stone buildings, tile-roofed and supported on stone pillars. Here in this peaceful arena, for twenty decades, the crops of the *hacienda* have been flung, to be trampled by the beasts of burden—a bloodless immolation, as grand in its pastoral dignity as the fierce dramas of the gladiators. From the threshing-floor we climbed a stone-paved gang-way, broad enough for ten men to walk up abreast, to the *aventadero*, or winnowing-chamber. The threshed grain is carried in baskets up this incline and emptied on the winnowing-floor—another vast, circular pavement, not of stone, but of large tiles set in mortar. All around this pavement runs a low, broad parapet of stone, pierced with loop-holes for defense (in case



INDIAN CART AND POTTERY OVENS.

the harvesters of Tepitongo should be called to lay aside the sickle for the musket). On the parapet rest the short, heavy stone pillars which support the massive timbers of the tent-shaped roof. Between the roof and the parapet this great circular chamber is open to all the winds of the table-lands. We looked out over the low parapet across the darkening plain. Not even the diligence was in sight on the road, which seemed the only slender clew leading out into the world. Our host of Tepitongo will never know what an entertainment he gave us that night. Before we could call it ended, the moon added the last charm of distinct shadows as she brightened above the low circle of corrugated roofs surrounding the threshing-floor. Now, if a troop of the dark harvesters could come out and perform a slow, symbolic dance in the empty arena, or the white-robed maskers of the Cerealia, wandering with their lighted torches in search of the lost Proserpine!

At supper we sat down to a mediæval board like that of Quieréndero, "with vassals and serfs" around us. We were invited to consider the house and everything in it as our own. Our *mozos* had the freedom of the kitchens and the stables, our host gave up his place at the head of the table, and, in effect, the entire establishment was placed at our disposal, with a courtesy as graceful as it was irresistible.

After supper we walked in the cloistered court—a lovely, secluded precinct, with formal trees planted in open spaces left in the pavement. We were very grateful for this our last moon of Mexico. We left it, when we returned to our winter evenings, and fire, and lamp-light, hanging large and low over the Gulf.

From the *patio* we entered the *sala*—a long, tile-paved room, with a sofa at one end, the place of honor for the lady guest, the members of the family occupying the arm-chairs which are ranged on either side, at right angles with the sofa. It is considered a discourtesy for a guest to sit down in any of the chairs, instead of walking through the room to the sofa. As there were no ladies at Tepitongo, I was obliged to sit alone on the long sofa. The engineers, the Colonel, our host, and another unbidden guest like ourselves, who had found shelter for the night, occupied the arm-chairs.

After awhile, I ventured to ask the *administrador* to take the seat beside me. It may have been an enormity on my part, but at all events our host was too well-bred to exhibit any horror at the situation. The little four-year-old boy whom we had seen on his pony came shyly into the room, and stood by his

father's knee. He was a charming little man, dressed in a suit of leather, with a tiny pair of spurs strapped to his baby shoes; but in spite of his spurs and his horsemanship, he was not unwilling to sit in my lap and be coaxed into friendliness. The lisping Spanish vowels of this little motherless child were exquisite. But there was other "music of the country" in store for us. At the lower end of the room a company of musicians gathered by the light of candles clustered on a table: a striking group, with violins, a violoncello, guitars, a harp—I cannot recall all the instruments, but the music and the scene it would not be easy to forget.

Our day's ride had been much shorter than usual, and we were not too tired to enjoy the picturesque hospitality of Tepitongo. Our host did us the great favor to recommend us by letter to his cousin, the *administrador* of Tepititlan, another estate about forty miles distant from Tepitongo, where we were sure of much better entertainment than at the town of Istlahuaca, where we had expected to stop.

We made a good start from Tepitongo in the early morning. There were long canters across the valley, and climbing of hills as we neared the boundary line between the State of Michoacan and the State of Mexico. Here we passed the troop of Indians with *camote*, resting by the way-side. We left the *camino real*, and crossed, by a trail, the "bad lands" before reaching the *hacienda* of La Jordana. I am not quite certain as to the name of this *hacienda*, but La Jordana is singularly appropriate to its wild cheer.

The sun was still high when we passed through San Felipe, a distractingly picturesque old Indian town, with wonderful stone barns, and churches, and narrow streets. Tepititlan is not to be reached by the main road, and the trail which we followed "up and down, by valley and hill," seemed endless. Ten leagues! Surely it was not less than sixteen! We rode, and we rode, and we *rode*,—as in the stories we tell to the children,—and we kept on riding, across windy valleys, rich in young crops and blossoming peach-trees, up narrow, winding trails, skirted by Spanish bayonet, past little groups of Indian huts—a woman in the door-way of one weaving, on a hand-loom, a strip of woolen cloth for her petticoat.

The Colonel mourned over *los pobres señores*, and the *señora* tried to "brace up" triumphantly, but could only lop about in her saddle, and wonder if those long, low, reddish roofs miles and miles away could be Tepititlan, because, if they were!— Happily, they weren't! Tepititlan was not far distant, and presently, at a turn of the trail, we beheld its sheer gray

walls, sweeping around the crest of a steep hill, bristling with nopal. Tepititlan is a little castle, overlooking the broad valley. We rode below its walls to the gate-way of the outer court, where the brother of the *administrador* met us; the *administrador* himself welcomed us at the gate of the second court.

A timely cup of coffee and an hour or two

autumn in the long, rolling plain over which the low fortress of Tepitongo looks out; and in winter to seek the shelter of the rich valley and the commodious comfort of Quieréndero. Tepititlan has a beautiful church inclosed in her outer court, where we saw an image carved and painted by the Indians, representing the patron saint of the estate as a laborer plowing



A SPANISH CREOLE.

of blissful rest in a dark, cool room prepared us to enjoy, under our host's guidance, the mediæval stateliness of Tepititlan. Of the three beautiful and historic estates, one might say that Quieréndero was the most peaceful and lovely, Tepitongo the most typical and picturesque, and Tepititlan the grandest! And yet each could lay claim to all of these characteristics.

One would like to spend the summer in the windy fastness of Tepititlan, queen of the crops and herds of the valley; the spring and

with a team of oxen, with a long, lance-like goad in his hand, and a nimbus around his head. This image is carried about the fields at the planting season, to bless the coming crop. During the year, offerings of fresh flowers and little sheaves of each new crop are laid before it.

We were shown some very interesting carvings by the Indians of saints' heads, which bore a curiously intimate relation to the Aztec-idol period of their religious art. We visited the milk and cheese rooms, the

granaries and threshing-floor, and the lovely old garden, where pansies were blossoming under the shade of a great pear-tree near the wall. As we returned to the *patio* through the *corral*, a troop of fine young horses were driven in for the night. One of them was admired by the Scotch engineer, and our host assured him that it was *á la disposición de Vd.* (at your disposal). The engineer very naturally left him, with "a thousand thanks," at the disposition of his owner.

I did not feel mediævally inclined that night with regard to supper, and was served by Bonifacio in my room. Bonifacio could be relied upon in any capacity. He could cook and serve a meal, he could saddle our horses and pack our traveling-bags, or make the beds in the great stone bed-chamber assigned us; his hat came off if you looked at him, his comfortable, guttural "*Si, niña,*" was always ready. He slept on the stone floor of the corridor outside of our door, with his *sarape* for a bed, his arm and his great straw hat for a pillow. At a word he was ready to spring up, *cap-à-pie*, in his leather suit, as man-at-arms or lady's maid. In short, he was a *mozo de camino*!

The mistress of Tepititlan came out in the corridor next morning to bid us good-bye. She had been too ill to see us the night before. We had seen the children of the family, all handsome, well-grown, and almost all fair, with bright color.

The hospitality of Tepititlan did not leave us at its gates. The two brothers rode with us across the valley by a trail to the neighboring *hacienda* of Enejeje. As we left the outer gate the *administrador* pointed out to us the *calzada*—a long walk shaded by willows, the promenade, in pleasant weather, for the ladies of the *hacienda*. The next object of interest was a matched herd of magnificent black oxen—a bronzed black which took a rich luster in the sun. The *administrador* pointed them out with pardonable pride.—Our horses had evidently been well cared for at Tepititlan. They were particularly fresh and lively. Even our afternoon gallop before Maravatio was less delightful than that morning ride to Enejeje, across the pastures, along the ditches, between the young, green crops, in the fresh, soft air of a spring morning. The *administrador* showed us the "monuments"—massive gray stone posts—marking the boundaries of the *haciendas*. At Enejeje we rested a short time, walked in the shaded garden, and took a cup of coffee with the lady of the *hacienda*—a pretty little dark-eyed mamma, with a group of dark-eyed little children clinging about her, and looking shyly at the *Americanos*. We left Enejeje, our numbers strengthened by two

more gentlemen—the *administrador* and his nephew, and a servant from the estate. Our horses, fortified by the good cheer of Tepititlan, did their best in the long canters we took across the level stretches beyond Enejeje. During the first three days of our ride, the Rosillo had constantly fretted at the pace, and my arms became very tired from the steady pressure on his bit; but on this, our fourth day, he was perfect. He was ready, but not impatient; he never lost his elasticity of step, and when the moment came to lift the relaxed rein from his neck and let him go, he became an embodied joy, a joy in flight. But these little flights of joy were very hard on the other horses, with heavier saddles, heavier riders, and a Winchester to carry, and we had hard work before us still. The gentlemen bade us good-bye about fifteen miles from Tepititlan, leaving the servant from Enejeje to guide us across the hills, where the trail was blind. We lunched at a very poor wild *hacienda* in another valley, surrounded by dry pasture-lands. The church-bells of Toluca were ringing for vespers as we trailed wearily along the level road, which is so long in reaching it. Twilight was brightening into moonlight. Three mounted men passed us, with a wary exchange of salutations. Something in the Colonel's manner as he looked at these men induced one of the engineers to ask if they were *buenos hombres*. "*Si,*" the Colonel replied; "*buenos hombres, con Winchesters.*" He patted his rifle with a smile. "*Sin Winchesters—quien sabe?*" (They were good fellows, with Winchesters. Without them—who knows?) It was bright moonlight when we rode through the streets of Toluca, and into the court of the Hotel de la Diligencia. A— had been suffering all the afternoon from an acute attack of illness, which made it impossible for us to continue our journey the next day; but early on the following morning we took the road again. From Toluca to Mexico we followed the *camino real*, through the deep dust, during the hot, sunny hours, thankful that we were not imprisoned in the diligence. A traveler had been robbed the day before on the Las Cruces Pass, but, with such an outfit as ours, a whole gang of *ladrones* would have given us "*Buenos dias!*" and passed us amicably by. The view of the valley was again a magnificent surprise. We had it before us all the way down the mountain. The Colonel recalled the glories of ancient Tenochtitlan, and the barbarous murder of the Aztec nobles by Alvarado on the night they were all gathered together at a religious feast. "*Todos, todos, martados en una noche!*" The Colonel spoke no English, and our Spanish

was composed chiefly of adjectives, substantives, and exclamation points.

Our little company disbanded at Tacubaya, the suburban city four miles from Mexico. The horses of the gentlemen were suffering, and we were all quite ready to step out of the middle ages into a comfortable nineteenth-century hack. The servants led the horses into the city, and we rejoiced in the prospect of our carriage. But none was to be found—not one. So we ignominiously jingled into the city in the horse-cars!

Don Pepe had been requested to bring our faithful *mozos* to the hotel the next evening, to receive the usual *pourboire*, and to say good-bye. They were all there except Rafael. When inquiries were made for him, a smile went around, and Bonifacio mildly suggested that Rafael was "*con las mulas*." Bonifacio had broken my pitcher of Charo, to his sorrow and mine, and now produced another as a substitute,—a very good substitute, indeed, which was always to be called Bonifacio's pitcher. After all had gone there came a soft, uncertain tap at the door, and Rafael entered—his placidity exalted into a trance-like blissfulness. His eyes saw nothing; he stretched out his

arms vaguely to embrace those "noble gentlemen," the engineers, who gently evaded him, slipping some money into his hand; then with an unexpected impulse he turned toward me, huskily murmuring, "*Adios, niña!*" Whereupon A—— plucked him between the shoulders by his jacket, and shunted him out of the door. And so the dusky *dramatis personæ* of our ride made their exit, and went their way back into the middle ages. We had ridden about two hundred and fifty miles in six days. This same ride has since been repeatedly made by an English gentleman, traveling with but one servant, in three days!

Our elaborate outfit represented not so much the necessities of the journey, as the magnificent courtesy of our friends in Morelia.

To them also we owed our entertainment at the *haciendas*—those unique feudal communities set in the solitude of a vast country, traversed at present by but one high-road. In another year the railroad will thunder past the gray stone defenses of Tepitongo, and startle the herds grazing in the green levels of Quieréndero. Tepititlan will keep its seclusion on the height, withdrawn above the valley.

A RAMBLE IN OLD PHILADELPHIA.

PHILADELPHIA is, perhaps, of all American cities the most unpromising at first sight to the artist. The narrow, straight streets and the rows after rows of uniform brick houses give a monotonous effect. Except that some streets are lined with shops, while others are monopolized by dwelling-houses, one is very like another. A casual observer might walk along Second street in this city and think that it was now given over entirely to small tradesmen, and that nothing could be more hopelessly commonplace than the cheap shops which extend almost from one end of it to the other. The inquiring pedestrian, however, will discover in it inns which perhaps, like old dowagers, have put on false fronts to conceal the ravages of time; he will dive into courtyards and inn-yards, which one might think had been brought spinning through the air, like the house of Loretto, from an English, Dutch, or Italian town; he will pick out narrow lanes and alleys rich in Revolutionary tradition; in short, he will, if you follow him in his wanderings, make it seem to you as if you had entered into a world of the past, and had lost a century.

It is instinctive in the artist, be he of pencil

or pen, to describe old inns,—possibly for the reason that, as it is the association with humanity which makes ancient houses interesting, inns, as having been more crowded, must be proportionally more attractive. "Do you object to talk about inns?" asks Thackeray in one of his "Roundabout Papers"; "it always seems to me to be very good talk. Walter Scott is full of inns. In 'Don Quixote' and 'Gil Blas' there is plenty of inn-talk. Sterne, Fielding, and Smollett constantly speak about them." This "inn-talk" is especially dear to English authors; for, from Chaucer down to Dickens, there is scarcely a popular writer who has not drawn for us at least one inn, with which we are as familiar as with our own houses.

This thought originated in a visit I paid, one cool November morning, to the Plow Tavern of Second street, Philadelphia. On this street, between Pine and Lombard, there is an old market-place which, like many Philadelphia markets, occupies the center of the street. On Wednesdays and Saturdays it is the scene of great confusion and bustle. Hucksters, and butchers, and fish-merchants carry on an active trade. The street is filled with market-wagons, and the air is alive