

by swellings on the back, brought on by sudden exposure to the wet night-air.

Both Mr. Martin and I were much pleased by our intercourse with the Governor, who showed every disposition to give us information upon all subjects connected with the resources of the State, and was evidently gratified by our curiosity. He is a native of Catorce, where he has a share in several mines, and is moreover the proprietor of a large Hacienda, (Los Charcos,) with a fortune of 200,000 dollars, acquired entirely by his own exertions. A part of this fortune he has devoted to the public service, by advancing the money required for the establishment of the Tobacco fabrica, (which, in 1826, produced 5,000 dollars monthly, and gave employment to two hundred poor people,) and by becoming a large subscriber to the College recently opened at San Luis Potosi, where instruction is given, free from all expence, to poor students, in Latin, Jurisprudence, Theology, and Constitutional rights.

This institution was founded by a voluntary subscription, for which, in six weeks, 42,000 dollars were collected. It contained fifty-six scholars, besides eighteen pensioners, the sons of respectable families, whose parents were able to contribute one hundred and forty dollars yearly towards the expences of the establishment; and its flourishing state may be regarded as a proof both of the existence of more public spirit than travellers usually give the Mexicans credit for, and of a desire to improve,

which must, in a little time, produce the most beneficial effects.

Nov. 26.—From San Luis to Bocas, twelve leagues.

The Hacienda of Bocas is one of "Cria y labor," (an estate both for breeding, and tillage.) It belongs, with the adjoining Hacienda of Cruces, to an *Obra pia*, or charitable institution, under the direction of the Conde del Peñasco. Bocas contains fourteen "Sitios;" Cruces thirty, on which there are 70,000 sheep, besides horses and mules. Bocas possesses no water for irrigation, and consequently does not reckon upon more than one good year in twenty for maize: in this, the ratio of increase amounts to four hundred, and four hundred and fifty for one. Of the intervening crops, some are lost, but the price of maize seldom exceeds eight reals the fanega, and is often as low as four.

The Hacienda is situated upon a little eminence, in an opening of the hills, which extend across the plain on each side. A river runs at the foot of this ridge; and upon another eminence immediately opposite the house, there is a church, connected with it by a road and an avenue of trees.

The country between San Luis and Bocas is a plain, intersected at intervals by mountain ridges of no considerable height. The road, in the dry season, is good; but when we passed, it was so much injured by the rains, that we were ten hours in performing the twelve leagues.

Nov. 27.—We left Bōcās early, and proceeded

across a country alternately composed of sand and stones, covered with dwarf mimosas, the cactus, and the aloe, to La Hédjōndă, a village seven leagues from Bōcăs, where we breakfasted. From thence to El Vēnădō, another large Pueblo, which we reached at five in the evening, after ten hours travelling, there was not a single object of any interest, with the exception of the hares and rabbits, the number of which was really curious. The inhabitants of El Vēnădō were all in the church upon our arrival, listening to the discourse of a Padre Misionero, whose powerful voice was heard in every corner of the Plaza, rising and falling with that peculiar monotony by which monkish oratory is generally distinguished. We took possession of the empty inn, and, finding the mistress very troublesome upon her return from chapel, we fairly ejected her from her own premises, and secured ourselves from interruption by closing the doors until the following morning, when the payment of her bill without dispute, for the use of her house and stables, reconciled her to her temporary banishment. Sleep, however, or quiet, was out of the question, for every room in the house, and every building near it, were occupied by game-cocks, bred for the Catorce market, and just at that time in training for the great cock-fights in which the miners indulge during the Christmas holidays. About two in the morning, the noise made by these creatures became quite intolerable; and at six, we

were happy to escape from it by commencing our journey.

Nov. 28.—We had a very long day before us, as it was our intention to sleep at the Hacienda of Guădălūpě Cărnăcărō, eleven leagues from Cătōrcě, and eighteen from El Vēnădō. Fortunately the road was good, particularly the latter part, which leads from the Real de Chărcăs, (a town with about 5,000 inhabitants, six leagues from El Vēnădō,) to the Hacienda, where we arrived before dusk. On the way we passed the Governor's Hacienda of Los Chărcos, surrounded by enclosures six or seven leagues in extent, walled in for "Ganado menor," sheep and goats;) but the country was dreary and deserted, without water or cultivation. At Guădălūpě, maize cost thirty reals the fanega, (seven dollars and a half the Carga;) and we paid two dollars for permission to water our animals at the "Tanque" belonging to the estate.

Nov. 29.—From Guădălūpě to Cătōrcě, eleven leagues. During the whole of the way we left the metalliferous mountains of Cătōrcě, (running nearly due North and South,) to the East, and drew nearer by degrees to the Cañada, or opening, through which we were to ascend to the town. The name, (La Cañada de los Catorce,) is supposed to have been derived from the death of fourteen Spanish soldiers, who are said to have been killed there by a tribe of Indios Bravos, (unsubdued Indians,) by whom the

mountains were inhabited before the discovery of the mines.

Nothing can be more bleak and dreary than the appearance of the whole Cordillera of Catorce: a few narrow mule-paths, or the white bed of a torrent indistinctly traced upon the surface, alone break the monotonous colouring of the mass; and the town, though placed at an immense height, is invisible from below, being completely hidden by the brow of the mountain: not a tree, not a blade of grass is to be seen in its vicinity; yet fifty years ago the whole district was covered with forests, which might have lasted for centuries, had not the improvident and wasteful spirit of the first adventurers wantonly destroyed these treasures, which to their descendants would have proved invaluable. Whole woods were burnt in order to clear the ground, and the larger timber required for the mines is now brought from a distance of twenty-two leagues.

At the Cañada, where we arrived about two o'clock, the carriage was entirely unloaded, and its contents transferred to a number of asses, which we hired to convey them to the town. Mr. Macartney, the managing agent of the Catorce Company, had the goodness to take charge of the eldest little girl, with a horse perfectly accustomed to the roads; while Mrs. Ward, with the baby in her arms, was seated in a silla de manos, (a sort of sedan-chair, open before,) belonging to the Obregones, which was carried by four Indians. The ascent commences



Drawn by M^{rs} H. G. Ward

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J. Clark, Sculp.

THE ASCENT TO CATORCE.

immediately upon leaving the Cañada, where there are a few Haciendas de beneficio, and two solitary trees; and continues without interruption until the very summit of the mountain is gained, about 1,600 feet above the level of the plain. The path is very narrow and rocky, without any sort of parapet on the side of the precipice; and as in many places there is hardly room for two persons to pass without touching, accidents frequently occur, particularly at the hours when the mules and asses are descending from the mines with ores for the Haciendas in the Cañada below. With an excellent horse it took me exactly one hour and ten minutes to reach the Campo Santo, from whence you first obtain a view of the town; and the rest of the party were much longer, particularly the Mexican maids, whose fears prevented them from riding, and who toiled up the whole way on foot. On reaching the highest ridge, you see Catorce immediately below you, in a sort of hollow, beyond which again the mountain rises precipitately above a thousand feet, the course of the Veta Madre, or great Mother vein, being distinctly designated upon it by the buildings annexed to the mines. The situation of the town itself is very singular, as it is intersected by vast ravines, which occasion no little irregularity in the buildings, (many of the houses having one story on one side and two or three on the other,) and surrounded by masses of rock, amongst which the working classes seek a refuge from the inclemency of the

weather. The view of the lights belonging to these hovels at night, scattered over the dark sides of the mountain, sometimes peeping forth from a barranca, and at others shining bright upon a little platform, so elevated and inaccessible that you can hardly suppose it to be the abode of any human being, is exceedingly singular. Catorce, however, notwithstanding the difficulties of the approach, is abundantly supplied with provisions; meat, fowls, fruit, and all other necessaries being brought from the *Tierra Caliente* to the East, as well as from the Table-land; and the competition in the market is so great, that maize, which, during the scarce season of 1826, had often been worth two and a half and three dollars in the plains below, had been sold constantly in the town at two dollars the fanega.

We were lodged in a house belonging to the Catorce Company, situated in the principal street, (*La calle del Comercio*;) where we met with a most hospitable reception from Mr. Macartney: the house was exceedingly small, but we were infinitely more comfortable in it than we should have been in more spacious quarters, both from his kindness, and because we possessed the advantage of a fireplace, which the severity of the cold rendered a most valuable acquisition. The height of the town of Catorce above the level of the sea, according to the measures taken by Captain Wylde, and given to me by Colonel Grasses, is only 7,760 feet, or 292 feet higher than Mexico; but a difference of four and a half

degrees of latitude makes this elevation much more sensibly felt; and in the winter there are few colder spots than the summit of the Sierra of Catorce. The mine of La Purisima is 390 feet higher than the town, and the Cerro de la Leona 1,110 feet; but the whole range is exposed almost equally to the cold winds from the north and north-west, which sweep across it at times with incredible violence. To the east there is no protection, as the descent towards the coast commences almost immediately; and to the west, between Catorce and that branch of the Sierra Madre upon which the mineral deposits of Zacatecas, Fresnillo, and Sombrerete are situated, there is not a single intervening ridge.

I have heard doubts expressed with regard to the accuracy of the measurements by which the height of Catorce has been ascertained; and from the numberless accidents to which a barometer is exposed, it is certainly possible that Captain Wylde may have been deceived in the result of his observations. Most people are of opinion that the elevation exceeds considerably the 7,760 feet at which he has rated it, and they justify this belief in the following manner. On leaving the valley of Mexico there is an immediate descent of 767 feet into the valley of Tula, and this continues to increase as you advance from Arroyo Sarco towards the Băxiō, Zělāyă being 1,138 feet, and Salamanca 1,707 feet below the level of the Capital. Guănăjūatō rises again, and is only 633 feet lower than Mexico; and although from Mărfil