

were necessary. In this part of Chile there are two passes across the Andes to Mendoza: the one most commonly used—namely, that of Aconcagua or Uspallata—is situated some way to the north; the other, called the Portillo, is to the south, and nearer, but more lofty and dangerous.

March 18th.—We set out for the Portillo pass. Leaving Santiago we crossed the wide burned-up plain on which that city stands, and in the afternoon arrived at the Maypu, one of the principal rivers in Chile. The valley, at the point where it enters the first Cordillera, is bounded on each side by lofty barren mountains; and although not broad, it is very fertile. Numerous cottages were surrounded by vines, and by orchards of apple, nectarine, and peach trees—their boughs breaking with the weight of the beautiful ripe fruit. In the evening we passed the custom-house, where our luggage was examined. The frontier of Chile is better guarded by the Cordillera than by the waters of the sea. There are very few valleys which lead to the central ranges, and the mountains are quite impassable in other parts by beasts of burden. The custom-house officers were very civil, which was perhaps partly owing to the passport which the President of the Republic had given me; but I must express my admiration at the natural politeness of almost every Chileno. In this instance, the contrast with the same class of men in most other countries was strongly marked. I may mention an anecdote with which I was at the time much pleased: we met near Mendoza a little and very fat negress, riding astride on a mule. She had a *goître* so enormous that it was scarcely possible to avoid gazing at her for a moment; but my two companions almost instantly, by way of apology, made the common salute of the country by taking off their hats. Where would one of the lower or higher classes in Europe have shown such feeling politeness to a poor and miserable object of a degraded race?

At night we slept at a cottage. Our manner of travelling was delightfully independent. In the inhabited parts we bought a little firewood, hired pasture for the animals, and