

We stayed the ensuing day in Mendoza. The prosperity of the place has much declined of late years. The inhabitants say "it is good to live in, but very bad to grow rich in." The lower orders have the lounging, reckless manners of the Gauchos of the Pampas; and their dress, riding-gear, and habits of life, are nearly the same. To my mind the town had a stupid, forlorn aspect. Neither the boasted alameda, nor the scenery, is at all comparable with that of Santiago; but to those who, coming from Buenos Ayres, have just crossed the unvaried Pampas, the gardens and orchards must appear delightful. Sir F. Head, speaking of the inhabitants, says, "They eat their dinners, and it is so very hot; they go to sleep—and could they do better?" I quite agree with Sir F. Head: the happy doom of the Mendozinos is to eat, sleep, and be idle.

March 29th.—We set out on our return to Chile, by the Uspallata pass situated north of Mendoza. We had to cross a long and most sterile traversia of fifteen leagues. The soil in parts was absolutely bare, in others covered by numberless dwarf cacti, armed with formidable spines, and called by the inhabitants "little lions." There were, also, a few low bushes. Although the plain is nearly three thousand feet above the sea, the sun was very powerful; and the heat, as well as the clouds of impalpable dust, rendered the travelling extremely irksome. Our course during the day lay nearly parallel to the Cordillera, but gradually approaching them. Before sunset we entered one of the wide valleys, or rather bays, which open on the plain: this soon narrowed into a ravine, where a little higher up the house of Villa Vicencio is situated. As we had ridden all day without a drop of water, both our mules and selves were very thirsty, and we looked out anxiously for the stream which flows down this valley. It was curious to observe how gradually the water made its appearance: on the plain the course was quite dry; by degrees it became a little damper; then puddles of water appeared; these soon be-