

always a large open space in front, sheltered by the projecting thatch of the house, and furnished sometimes with a rough table and benches. Here would be the women at their work, or the children at play, or sometimes the drovers taking their lunch of tortillas and wine, while their animals munched their mid-day meal hard by. The scenery was often fine. On the third day the fertile soil, watered by many rivers, was exchanged for a sandy plain, broken by a thorny mimosa scattered over the surface. This plain lay between the Cordillera of the Andes and the Coast Range. As the road advanced farther inland, the panorama of the Cordilleras became more and more striking. In the glow of the sunset, the peaks of the abrupt, jagged walls and the volcano-like summits were defined against the sky in all their rugged beauty. There was little here to remind one of the loveliness of the Swiss Alps. With no lower green slopes, no soft pasturage grounds leading gently up to rocky heights, the Andes, at least in this part of their range, rise arid, stern, and bold from base to crest, a fortress wall unbroken by tree or shrub, or verdure of any kind, and relieved only by the rich and varied coloring of the rock.