

Territory, but of course much smaller in size. They are reached by notched sticks, or monkey ladders, as white people call them here. Sometimes a dozen ladders are needed to reach the highest dwellings, although they will ascend cliffs which, as viewed by a white man from below, would seem impossible of ascent. The Mexican packers in passing through here, and in fact wherever they encounter these timid creatures, seem to take malicious delight in shouting at them in such a way as to arouse their fears, even going so far as to pretend to hurl stones at them. I remember last year when in a canon north of this one my Mexican packer saw two women ascending the mountain side on a dizzy trail, and each with a water jar on her head. He shouted at them to see them run. They acted almost exactly like wild animals, increasing their gait each time that he sent a cry after them at intervals of about a half-minute, and then slowing down between the shouts. This same fellow, however, could not be induced to carry my camera tripod close to the mouth of a cave dwelling, where I wanted to get a photograph, as he was afraid that the occupants might use their bows and arrows if they thought we were trying to force an entrance to their peculiar dwellings.

This arroyo abounds in cave dwellings, there being probably thirty or forty in a distance of fourteen or fifteen miles. A few years ago the main trail which leads from Carichic to the great mining region of Batopilas was diverted from its usual course and made to run through the "Canon of the Churches," since which time there has been a general tendency on the part of the cave and cliff dwellers to desert their subterranean homes and move further off the trail. It may be said,

however, that as many of the interior mines are owned by Americans, Englishmen, and others, their bullion conductors, or those having charge of pack trains carrying silver from the mines to Chihuahua, are of the same nationality, and consequently this pestering and worrying of the natives along the route has largely stopped, and the cave and cliff dwellers here are not so quick to leave their homes as they were formerly when the Mexicans opened a trail near their homes. Some of these cave dwellers where the Arroyo Valley is wide, that is, from twenty to thirty yards, have taken advantage of the little space to cultivate corn, while numberless flocks of goats can be seen grazing on the steep hillsides wherever a blade of grass or a bush of any kind can be found. There live, how-

ever, a few semi-civilized Tarahumaris in the arroyo, as seen by a log cabin here and there, and the larger number of flocks belong to them.

One cave in particular was very singular, its apparent entrance being at the water's edge, where the stream which flows through the canon must have been at least thirty feet wide. One would have thought that the only way for the owner was to swim the river to get into his home, but on closer investigation there was revealed a side entrance worn through the rock, where a person could enter from dry land. A rise of a foot in the river would put the floor of his house under water, and I doubt if it is habitable the year round, for these mountain streams are peculiarly subject to freshets, although they last only two or three days. But

The elements themselves conspired against our progress, for we left Nuevo Laredo at the end of a week's wet weather, and the road—where there was a road—was heavy and muddy, and the arroyos or dry water-courses in many instances had to be forded.

A table-land in this portion of Mexico is a vast, almost unbroken sea of cactus and mesquite. To stray from the beaten path is to become hopelessly lost. In these broad, densely-covered plains, there is little of the larger animal life, but immense quantities of rabbits and birds. At eleven in the forenoon we came upon an immense flock of goats lying in the shade of the bushes at the roadside, an indication of some sort of civilization. At last, with the sun beating down on us pitilessly, worn

out, hungry, thirsty, and half choked with dust, we reached our driver's accustomed halting place.

In this picturesque country, one of the most picturesque objects is the ranch. Oftentimes it is but a thatched roof, supported at a convenient distance from the ground by poles, and with the most meager furniture. Again they are extensive, with outside walls of mesquite branches, mud-plastered, and with every appearance of comfort, surrounded by a high and close wall of mesquite branches. They are never more than one storey high, and always with an earthen floor. The rich, full tones of a grand piano, in perfect tune and well played, coming from one of these ranches was a sufficient surprise during one day's ride in this portion of Mexico, but this was at a ranch of the better class. I have seen others that were the common playing ground of the numerous children, goats, dogs and pigs. At the ranch which was to provide us with rest and refresh-

ment, our host was the typical Mexican, dressed in the heavy sombrero, light shirt, and pantaloons, with the inevitable corn-shuck cigarette, always smoked with a few puffs and replaced with another.

While our host was preparing our meal, he sought to entertain us by furnishing us, what was to me at least, real pleasure, an opportunity to look through a "Travelers' Book."

The Mexican sentiments were patriotic, the English complaining of the want of a good hotel.

I could not refrain from subscribing my testimony to the courtesy of our host, the lovely air and scenery, and went to sleep, only to awaken when our driver came to announce that it was time to start.

R. K. M.



IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING CLIFF AND CAVE DWELLERS ON THE URIQUE TRAIL.

the average cave dweller can usually pick up all his worldly belongings in his two hands and walk off with them at a moment's notice.

Coaching in Mexico.

Riding all forenoon in a rickety, creaking Mexican stage coach, with no companions save four Mexicans, including the driver, in a wild and lonesome table-land in Northwestern Tamaulipas, was perhaps the most lonesome day of my existence. Our progress was slow and tedious, for the Mexican promise of four horses had dwindled down to one pair of diminutive, chafed, collar-galled Mexican mules.