

rather unwilling to pursue our journey on foot, we were altogether at a loss upon what course to determine. Whilst we thus hesitated, the Alcalde suggested that if we would condescend to ride upon asses, he thought he could obtain a sufficient number for our party; a proposal with which we gladly closed, prudently determining that any mode of being carried was better than walking. Leaving the arrangement of this affair, therefore, to our obliging friend, we retired to rest upon clean comfortable mattresses spread for us on the floor; and on waking in the morning, we found that he had not been negligent in the charge assigned to him. Our party consisted of five officers, with five servants, for whose accommodation we found ten asses at the door, each attended by its driver, who wielded a long pole tipped with an iron spike, for the purpose of goading the animal whenever it should become lazy.

It was not without a good deal of laughing that the cavalcade, after bidding adieu to the hospitable Mayor, began to move forward. Our asses, of no larger size than ordinary English donkeys, were uncapparisoned, at least with bridles; and the saddles were neither more nor less than the pack-saddles upon which goods are transported to market. For our own comfort, therefore, we were obliged to sit *à la femelle*, and having no command over the heads of our steeds, we were content to be guided by the hallooing and punching of the drivers. In spite, however, of these inconveniences, if so they may be called, I shall never cease to congratulate myself on having been of the party, because the ride proved to be one of the most agreeable I remember at any time to have taken.

The road from Villa Franca to Ponto del Gada quits the water's edge, and turns, for a little way, inland, carrying you through a region as romantic and beautiful as can well be imagined. There are here no level plains, no smooth paths over which a landau or tilbury might glide, but, on the contrary, a rugged and stony track, sometimes leading down the face of steep hills, sometimes scaling heights which at the distance of a mile appear to be almost perpendicular, and sometimes winding along the side of a cliff, and by the edge of a fearful precipice. Except when you reach the summit of a mountain, the road is in general shaded by the richest underwood, hanging over it from above;