Our Mexican Letter.

BY EMMA L. REED.

To the Editor of The Times:

San Nicolas del Oro Estado de Guerro, Mexico, June 1, 1897.—Our much anticipated, long talked of journey over two mountain chains of Mexico, with its real and fancied dangers and hardships, is at last an accomplished fact, and we find ourselves safe and sound, after twelve days of mountain climbing, cozily keeping house in cloudland on the side of one of the giants of the Sierra Madre del Sur.

That we occupied twelve days in making the trip implies a greater distance from the metropolis of Mexico than really exists, as all the members of our party except your correspondent and "el nino grande," as our son is called, had several times made a record of but five days in transit. This last expedition being more in the nature of a pleasure jaunt, time was not an object, and we were also hampered with impediments in the way of baggage, bedding, a tent, servants and many animals.

We left the City of Mexico Thursday morning, May 20th, going by rail to Toluca, a thoroughly Mexican town of considerable size, ten thousand feet above sea level. Here we made a few additional purchases for our outfit which we then had conveyed by tramroad to San Juan de los Huertas, where the iron road found its termination, and where our mountain horses were awaiting us. Our first night was spent here, twelve thousand feet high, close to the snowy crest of Mt. Toluca, in a little Mexican hotel, and from here our horseback journey began, by agreement at five o'clock a. m, but in reality, after the Mexican fashion of procrastination, at two p. m.

Nothing in the way of beautiful mountain scenery and deliciously fresh mountain air could exceed our first days experience. It was the very breath of life that filled our lungs, scented by the flower laden bushes and trees of the mountain forests, with always new and varied "vistas" opening a panorama before us. Our late start was the first of a series of well-laid plans miscarried, and night overtook us at a wretched hamlet, Comunidad, too late to get our tent up and therefore dependent on the rough hospitality of a rock shanty with a mud floor and several millions of fleas to the square inch. But for all its appearance of squalor, a palatable dish of chicken and potatoes was served us, with the never failing tortillos and frijoles. Knives and forks were supplied from our saddle-bags, as among these people tortillos always take the place of these articles of cutlery, and often serve also as plates—so that instead of washing the dinner dishes they are eaten at the last, as dessert.

Our pre-arranged start at five o'clock the following morning resolved itself into nine o'clock, so that after a long hard scramble over rocky trails all day we again failed to make our stopping place, Mason Viego, before darkness overtook us and once more we spent the night with the fleas in the best room of the least forbidding house, in the village. As it was the only room in the house, our hosts gave us the best they had, drove the chickens, dogs and pigs out and themselves slept under the shed.

The third day we did a vast deal of clambering and scrambling down mountain sides, through gorges along the rocky beds of streams, following always a trail so indistinct, rough and precipitous as to make the name of "Camino del rea" (public highway) appear a ghastly joke. Burro pack trains are constantly passing over the trail, and have been for hundreds of years. Where the rock is soft, deep furrows have been worn by the tread of their sharp hoofs, but on the hard strata and on the stones of the creek bottoms only a noticeable smoothness of the rocks indicate the line of travel. Apparently no work has been done to fashion a road except where blasting has been necessary along a precipitous mountain side to secure a shelf wide enough for a horse's foothold.

The danger is on these narrow ledges when mountain torrents have worn gullies across the paths, or loose stones prove treacherous to the foot of the careful beast. Quite as trying to the inexperienced rider are the extremely abrupt declivities down which it seems impossible for horse or rider to get without pitching headlong. More exciting still is it to come suddenly in the narrow mountain path to a huge bowlder across the way, too big for any horse to step over, a solid wall of rock rising on one side, a sheer declivity descending on the other. There is not even room for despair, or the horse, to turn round in, so the courageous beast under you gives a peculiar bumping motion, throws both fore feet high in the air, fastens them on the rock above and, with another powerful muscular spring, he draws his hind feet up and you are on top, much shaken up, holding on to the horse's mane with one hand with a death-like grip, and to the aperture in the rear of the saddle with the other. It is not hard to realize that one's life is in the strength, intelligence and training of his mountain horse. I watched the road for the bleaching bones of man and beast that had not fared as well as we were doing, but in all the journey saw no evidences of tragedy except one poor broken-legged burro abandoned to die by the rocky way.

By night-fall of the third day we had descended several thousand feet from our highest elevation, and were happy to find a comfortable Mexican hotel in Tajupilco, the only town of any size or accommodations in the mountains.

Had we known the misfortune that was here to descend on us, we could not have so enjoyed our roomy apartments, good, clean beds and the tropical fruits with which we gorged ourselves. The daylight that should have found our "arrearos" (burro men) busily employed in loading their animals with our freight, dawned on a quarrel among themselves over the choice between the two roads that led from Tajupilco on to Ajuchitlan. Mr. Reed and our "major domo," Mr. Ivens, finally got them to agree to a choice, and Mr. Reed, Haines and I started on in that direction with our Mozo (servant) for guide, the pack agreeing to make Amatapec by nightfall.

Amatapec as its ending signifies, is on a peak, and we did nearly ten hours climbing to reach it by sun-down. Here we found an Indian village that evidently looked with suspicion on the strange faces of foreigners, and when, drooping with fatigue on the backs of our exhausted horses, we asked for accommodations, we were met with a laconic "no hay comas" (no beds) "no hay comida" (no food) "no hay pastura" (no corn for the horses) "no hay nada" (there is nothing for you.)

The doorway was full of dusky faces looking at us impassively. I slipped down from the saddle and approached the woman of the house saying in an appealing voice. "I am very tired, senora." Immediately she responded, "enter, senorita." Her husband followed us in, seated me on the boards that formed their bed, (there were no chairs) and put a straw mat under my feet while his wife was bringing me a cup of water. Then began great preparations for our comfort, all hands taking hold.

The horses were cared for, neither my husband nor son being allowed to assist. As soon as the pot could boil, coffee and sweetbread were served us, chickens were killed, tortillos made and with frijoles formed a ravishing supper for tired mountain climbers.

At nine o'clock we no longer continued to expect our pack train, and without bedding of any kind we prepared to get through the night as best we could. One of the rough board beds was spread with a straw mat and the only covering of the house, two wool zeraphies, was given to me, while my husband and son shivered until morning, under their waterproof coats.

I wished to divide the zeraphies but our hosts would not permit me, "It is a poor house for the senora, but we are poor," they said in their simple way. They were entertaining the first American woman they had ever seen, and they appeared to divine that I had not been used to sleeping on rough boards. At ten o'clock the next morning our anxious gaze over the mountain was gladdened by the sight of a horseman driving a pack mule laden with our mattresses and blankets. But he was the messenger of the bad news from our manager that the arrearos had after all gone by the other route to Ajuchitlan. Mr. Ivens had declined to allow them to carry our freight and I was waiting at Tajupilco until he could obtain other animals to transport it when he would follow us as quickly as possible.

We then took leave of our hosts, the wife embracing me warmly, to my consternation, and the husband happy in the possession of more Mexican dollars than he had probably seen for some time. We failed to reach a village that night and stopped in an Indian bamboo hut on the side of a barranca. In this lonely hut on the mountain side where we had only a bamboo shed for shelter, we were given a royal supper of chicken, eggs and toasted meal, which we ate by moonlight, sitting on the edge of the horses feed trough.

A rain-storm came up in the night and sprinkled us liberally, but fatigue and sleep conquered the elements and by sun-up we were on our rocky way through the bed of a stream whose sides were overhung with flowering foliage alive with beautiful singing birds.

The second day from this and our seventh day in the saddle found us entering the valley of the Balsas river, in the heat of the tropics, pushing our way through dry thorn trees and ugly cactus to the old Spanish city of Ajuchitlan, at the base of the Sierra Madre del Sur.

EMMA L. REED.

OUR NEW YORK LETTER.

The Invasion of the New Woman—Charitable Baroness de Hirsch and Her Work In the Metropolis.

[Special Correspondence.]

The new woman is getting there with both feet, so to speak, and in this city at least she seems to be determined to invade every field of business and pleasure in which the brute, man, has so far labored under the delusion that he held full sway. Mrs. Ledyard Stevens, who is prominent in the upper social circles of New York, has made one of the most daring inroads upon man's assumed prerogatives by starting a place where the members of the gentler sex may get their shoes shined in the most approved fashion and without undergoing the annoyance of being stared at by thousands of pairs of eyes, as would be the case were the operation to be performed in the public streets.

Mrs. Stevens, who was Miss Elizabeth Winthrop White, daughter of Dr. Octavius White and Elizabeth Chanler, calls her new venture "a bureau of social requirements," adding one more to the novel business ventures of society women.

Other Work of the Bureau.

She offers to supply ideas and original designs for entertainments; to superintend entertainments on established lines, relieving the hostess of all weariness and anxiety; to manage and order luncheons, teas, receptions and other social affairs; to supply means or recipes; to give information on social matters where any knotty point is vexing the uninitiated; to take charge of madam's visiting book; to keep the household accounts, do the marketing or supply a visiting or resident housekeeper; to give suggestions and help in matters of dress, home decoration and shopping; to plan and buy mourning for those in sorrow; to help parents with advice as to schools or charities; to take charge of settling or unsettling the house in fall or spring; to care for lamps and silver, and to supply ladies and children with a pleasant place to have their boots polished.

In all of these departments of usefulness Mrs. Stevens has had her experience, even in the last, for before starting in business she took practical lessons in bootblacking from a professional, although she does not by any means intend to ply the brush herself.

In this wide range of departments Mrs. Stevens feels that her bureau cannot fail to prove a boon to many people. The opening days promised well, for there was a steady run of business.

The pretty "bureau" surroundings would tempt a caller to stay and chat and watch the little bootblack, and the coziness of the whole atmosphere would almost lead to confidential chats.

Charitable Baroness de Hirsch.

Great as was the reputation of the late Baron de Hirsch for lavish philanthropy, it would appear that that of his estimable widow is destined to take rank alongside his as the continuer and completer of many plans for charity which were cherished by the dead multimillionaire. Her recent contribution of $500,000 for the establishment of a home for working girls in this city, to say nothing of other liberal donations to enterprises already in existence, seems to amply bear out that theory. It is currently reported here that this lady will shortly communicate a plan to the proper authorities of New York beside which all previous charitable schemes will pale into insignifiance. It is said that this will not be done, however, until Greater New York shall have become a reality.

With reference to the home for working girls, there has been little delay and the announcement has just been made that the site has already been selected. Five lots have been purchased in Sixty-third street, between Second and Third avenues. The building is to be of brick and stone, five stories high. The total cost is to be $200,000, which will leave a fund of $300,000 for maintenance. The institution will have room for 100 persons. The inmates are to be provided with a good home free of expense, and are to have the advantages of mental, moral and industrial training. It is expected that the building will be ready for occupancy early next year.

Mrs. Sarah Strauss has been elected president of the board of directors. Mrs. Lizette Sterne is vice president and Mrs. Florence C. Sutro secretary and treasurer. The other members of the board are Mrs. Gabrielle Greeley Clendenin, daughter of Horace Greeley; Mrs. Rose Abraham, Mrs. Emma Wasserman, Miss Jennie Ickelheimer, Mrs. Freda Warburg, Mrs. Sarah Goldman, Miss Irene Kohn and Edmund E. Wise.

Cost of Swell New York Dinners.

Some idea may be formed of the cost of a reasonably "swell" dinner in New York city by the amount of the judgment for which Louis Sherry, a caterer, recently entered judgment against Dr. Bissell. The sum in question was $675.85.

Sherry, through his attorney, alleged that on Aug. 6, 1896, he was engaged by the doctor to furnish a banquet for 20 persons, which was served by him at the Horace White college at Elberon, N. Y., and the items footed up to $675.85.

The doctor denies ordering the dinner, and there is some contention that it was a dinner to the directors of the New York and Westchester waterworks, and that a note signed by Duncan F. Cameron, its treasurer, was given for it, but the doctor was sued because Sherry claims it was he who ordered it. The doctor put in no defense, and the judgment was taken by default.

The following items are mentioned in Mr. Sherry's claim: Twenty dinners, $240; 10 boutonnieres, 10 corsages and flowers for tables, $75; music and expenses 10 musicians, $149; 36 quarts champagne, $144; 50 quarts mineral water, $20; 50 perfectos, $12.50; 50 paucelos, $10. JOSEPH RUSSELL.

HARD TO PLEASE.

There recently occurred near Tooting an interesting incident which painfully illustrated the difficulty of pleasing a woman. It should be mentioned that the woman in question, who was young and pretty, was also very wet, and everybody knows that a wet woman is far more exacting and captious than a dry woman. Still, inasmuch as this particular young woman was excessively hard to please when she was thoroughly dry, it may be assumed that her wetness did not make any material change in her character.

Among her lovers are two who have hitherto been popularly regarded as the leaders of the field and on whom the local betting has been very nearly even. One of these two—Mr. Scott—is a young man of the most gentle and amiable disposition, whose constant effort is to please his lady love. The things that young man has bought her, the times that he has taken her to ride, and the money that he has lavished in flowers for her benefit could not be computed without a large consumption of chalk. In point of moral character he has seldom been equaled and never excelled and is especially conspicuous for his extreme and delicate modesty.

Mr. Dobbs, his rival, is in all respects his exact opposite. Mr. Dobbs is addicted to horse racing and other wicked ways, and he has never been known to put himself to the slightest inconvenience or expense in order to gratify the young lady whom he professes to admire. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings—the other evenings of the week being pre-empted by Mr. Scott—he is accustomed to call on Miss Wilson—which, by the way, is the young lady's name—and sit for an hour, with his chair tipped back against the wall, discussing politics with old Mr. Wilson.

In almost every other locality the betting would have been heavily in favor of Mr. Scott, but the people of Tooting, knowing Mr. Dobbs' character, and being persuaded that when he undertakes to do anything the chances are that he will do it at any cost, were rather inclined to back Mr. Dobbs. In fact, for the last six months the betting has several times been 10 to 9 on Dobbs, and on one occasion, when he bought a new pistol on Wednesday morning, so hopeful did his marriage prospects seem to his backers that they offered 8 to 6 on him, with few takers.

It was often remarked that Mr. Scott lacked energy and that when Mr. Dobbs was entirely ready to marry the girl he would kill Mr. Scott, pitch old Mr. Wilson out of the window and carry off his bride to the nearest church.

Then Miss Wilson took part in a picnic excursion, and Messrs. Dobbs and Scott, of course, were also of the party. The entire company, including, say, 30 persons of assorted sexes, were lounging after dinner on the bank of the stream, when Miss Wilson suddenly felt a desire to walk out on a log that projected into the water. Mr. Scott implored her not to do it, and Mr. Dobbs, temporarily removing his pipe from his mouth, remarked, "You'll get pretty wet if you try it."

Nevertheless, the willful beauty persisted in her purpose. She had nearly reached the end of the log when it turned under her, and, with a sharp shriek she fell headforemost into the stream. The water was about 4½ feet deep, with a bottom of soft mud, and into this latter the head of the unfortunate young lady penetrated some distance. Being thus anchored, as it were, her feet waved wildly above the surface and mutely begged for help.

It was an awfully impressive scene, and most of the ladies who were present said that though no one could call them prudish, they must say that Miss Wilson's conduct was shameful.

Mr. Scott and Mr. Dobbs simultaneously rushed to the rescue. The former first reached Miss Wilson's feet, but instead of seizing them and pulling her out stood as though wrapped in profound thought. In another moment Mr. Dobbs was at his side and would have caught the nearest of the waving feet had not Mr. Scott laid his hand on his arm and begged him to reflect.

"It will be," said Mr. Scott, "to the last degree indelicate to pull her out by the feet, and I am sure she would not like it. At any rate, let us ask the gentlemen to withdraw and then leave the ladies to extricate our poor friend."

To this Mr. Dobbs simply made a monosyllabic and theological reply and promptly hauled Miss Wilson out.

When that young lady had been somewhat repaired, her first act was to slap Mr. Dobbs' face and tell him that he was a brute and a coward to insult her by pulling her out by the feet. Mr. Scott, eager to improve the opportunity, hastened to remark that he had warned Mr. Dobbs not to do it and had himself refrained from touching her feet. Another slap and a demand to know if he was really fool enough to be willing to let her drown was the reply which astonished Mr. Scott, after which Miss Wilson burst into tears and called her father to take her home.

Now, here was a young lady who was angry with one man because he had pulled her out of the water and with another because he had not done so. To please such a girl was manifestly an impossibility. Mr. Scott, at all events, gave up the attempt and left town that very afternoon, without saying goodby to Mr. Dobbs, who was waiting at a street crossing to wish him farewell with a meat ax.

A week later Miss Wilson married Mr. Dobbs, and although it has never been learned that he has done anything whatever to please her there is reason to believe that she is very well reconciled to her lot.—Pearson's Weekly.

Blind In Europe.

Naltkenhoff of Geneva says there are 311,000 blind persons in Europe, mostly from fevers, and that 75 per cent would have kept their sight had they been properly treated

YOUTHS' DEPARTMENT.

True Stories of a Little Princess—A Fable of Summer Time—When and Why Thirteen Is Twelve.

The celebration of Queen Victoria's jubilee has brought out many interesting items about her life as a child, and it seems rather surprising to hear that among the duties most carefully impressed upon the future queen of England and empress of India were regular and punctual habits, unfailing courtesy to those of lower station, the necessity of always finishing one thing before she commenced another, and the observance of a strict rule that she must never overrun her allowance.

Perhaps you may not have heard the story that once when she was making purchases at a seaside shop she saw something that she very much wanted as a present for one of her cousins. Her money had all been spent, and so she asked the shopkeeper to put it by for her until quarter day. He, of course, would have sent it home at once, but this would have been breaking rules, so it was duly put by. But the first morning after receiving her allowance the princess and her donkey were round at that shop door soon after 7 o'clock.

Another thing she was taught was to be generous and charitable, but only in so far as this was just. And on one occasion, when she had just purchased something which she wanted very much, on coming out of the shop she saw an old soldier evidently deserving of charity. She had spent all her money and had nothing to give him, but in the emergency ran back to the shopkeeper and asked him if he would kindly take back the article and return the money. This he did, and the whole amount was bestowed on the worn out soldier, much to his joy. Many anecdotes could be given showing the kind heart of the child who was destined one day to occupy so great a position.

Of course, visits were occasionally paid to the houses of some of the English noblemen, and here the princess seems to have had a merry time with the youthful members of these houses. Once she was on a visit to Wentworth, and running out in the garden one morning soon after 7 she was admiring the flowers and making friends with the gardeners.

Starting to run down a grassy slope, wet with the morning dew, an old gardener called out to her, "Take care, missy—it's slape" (slippery).

"What's slape?" said the princess. Before the words were out of her mouth she measured her length on the grass.

"That's slape," dryly said the gardener. "You'll know another time, missy."

A Fable of Summer Time.

A brown and golden bee was buzzing merrily amid a bed of red and white and blue hyacinths, getting honey from each blossom and as happy as the day was long.

"Dear me! I wish you would leave me alone," said a beautiful white double hyacinth pettishly, for she was drowsy and only just awaking. "You make such a humming and you tickle me so."

"It is high time you were awake and opened your blossoms wider," laughed the bee, "and then I could get your honey out better."

"But," said the hyacinth, opening her flowers quite wide, of which the bee immediately took advantage, "what right have you to come and steal my honey when I am hardly awake and as bright dewdrops are sparkling upon me? It is extremely rude to disturb a lady like this. And of what use is my honey to you?"

"I didn't mean to disturb you," said the bee gently. "You see, I get up so early myself. Your honey is of great use to me, and to men and women too. You were not sent into the world to keep all your gifts to yourself."

"Hem!" said the hyacinth. "I don't know. Plenty of men and women do."

"Yes, I know that," said the bee. "'Dogs in the manger' are not scarce, but they won't make others happy, and they cannot be happy themselves. If we have good gifts bestowed on us, it is that we may share them with others and not keep them all to ourselves."

When and Why Thirteen Is Twelve.

Everybody knows that 13 is called a "baker's dozen," but how came the phrase into existence? Well, it seems that once upon a time the baker used to give for nothing to the retail dealer who sold the bread a thirteenth loaf with every 12 loaves that were ordered. How this custom grew up it is hard to tell, except it was to help the shopkeeper to earn his living a trifle easier and to encourage him to take more bread. One explanation has it that the custom dates from the time when heavy penalties were inflicted for short weight, and that the thirteenth loaf was thrown in to make sure the weight was right, but this is perhaps doubtful, for there is a like custom in the publishing trade, in which the bookseller usually gets an extra copy without charge for every 12 books he buys from the publisher. In short, we might just as well talk of 13 being a "publisher's dozen" as a baker's.

Two Little Maids.

There were two little maidens named Folly and Sense
Who were dressed to go out, when the fog grew so dense
That their mother, Dame Wiseacre, said,
"Oh, my dears,
We cannot go shopping unless this fog clears!"

Good Sense was content to stay in with her dolly
(She was always much wiser than little Miss Folly).
Folly murmured and grumbled, then said with a pout,
"Stay in if you like, but I mean to go out!"

So out Folly trotted in spite of her mother,
She so loved her own way that she'd hear of no other;
That the fog was so thick she soon learned to her cost,
And that mother and home and good Sense she had lost.

Yes, Folly was lost, but I've heard people say
That she's often about and in little folks' way.
But she can't find a home! Serve her right if it's true!
For good Sense is much better. Don't you think so too?

PEOPLE OF THE DAY.

Lorrin A. Thurston, who had much to do with drafting the Hawaiian annexation treaty now before the senate, has been an active promoter of the annexation scheme ever since the Kanaka monarchy was overthrown. At the time of the revolution which deposed Queen Liliuokalani, he was one of the leading lawyers in Honolulu and took an active part in the revolt as well as in the organization of the Dole government. He was chairman of the committee which the revolutionists sent to Washington and was premier of the first revolutionary cabinet in 1888. He was also sent as minister to the United States until returned as persona non grata by Secretary Gresham. Mr. Thurston was born in Hawaii and his parents were American missionaries. Three years ago he married Harriet W. Porter of St. Joseph, Mich., whom he met in San Francisco.

LORRIN A. THURSTON.

Minister to Spain.

General Stewart L. Woodford, who as minister to Spain will have his official residence in Madrid for the next few years, is a man who a dozen years ago was very prominent in public life, but who of late has been more engrossed by his extensive business interests. In 1876 General Woodford was a candidate for the vice presidential nomination. He received 66 votes in the convention, but withdrew in favor of Wheeler. General Stewart was born in New York city 62 years ago. He was educated at Columbia college and was a rising young lawyer when the campaign of 1860 opened. He was a delegate to the national Republican convention which nominated Lincoln. In 1862 he entered the Union army as a captain, and after brilliant service resigned his commission in 1865, coming out a colonel with a brevet of brigadier general. In 1866 he was elected lieutenant governor of New York state and was afterward an unsuccessful candidate for governor. He served one term in congress and held several important offices. He has been a successful lawyer for many years and has made a comfortable fortune.

GENERAL STEWART L. WOODFORD.

Bishop Cheney's Revolt.

Bishop Cheney of Chicago, who has lately attracted considerable attention by resigning from the general council of the Reformed Episcopal church because that body voted against the wearing of white surplices in the pulpit, is one of the most distinguished divines in the west. He has been the pastor of a prominent Chicago church for 37 years and has a wide reputation as an eloquent pulpit orator. As Bishop Cheney has a number of followers who are bound to wear the white surplice or none at all, this incident indicates a split in the church. The bishop is quite equal to leading such a movement, for he was one of those who were the leaders in the revolt of 1873, when the Reformed Episcopal church was founded. Bishop Cheney was born in Canandaigua, N. Y., in 1836 and has been in the ministry for 40 years.

BISHOP CHENEY.

An Explanation.

"Doctor," asked the seeker after knowledge of the clergyman, "why do people get on their knees to pray instead of standing?"

"They want to save their soles," replied the clever minister.—Harlem Life.