

Panorama

BETTY ANN MILLS

The sights we saw ranged from vast stretches of beautifully colored deserts to lofty mountain peaks. As we drove along, the houses became fewer and more scattered. We noticed that they were no longer large frame houses or even small frame houses; they were rather little and constructed of sun-dried mud bricks, or adobe, as the material was called. The appearance of these earthen-colored buildings was accompanied by the disappearance of the trees and shrubs. The grass-covered plains, also, gave way to a different landscape. Instead of the rolling plains of pasture, vast, sand-covered acres stretched out to meet the sky. The rose, purple, and blues of the sand matched the sky-painting of the sun.

After we passed through this color-washed region, the land began to change again. At first small foothills took shape

in the distance. Then mountains towered beyond them. In the distance, upon the sides of the mountains, a gray haze hung around the blue-green trees that covered the lower slopes of the mountains. This mass of green foliage and wisps of gray gauze clung in peace to the mountains, and narrow, sharp-curved roads circled them. At one side of the road the steep incline rose. From the other, a long fall awaited the venturesome traveler who should come too near the edge. Up the first side the trees climbed until they came to soil that no longer nourished their luxuriant growth, and they became fewer and turned to scrawny little shrubs. Below, the tall spikes reached up to spear the sky. The road twisted on and began its slow descent. Back through the beautiful trees it wound, up and down the foothills, and out upon the plains again.