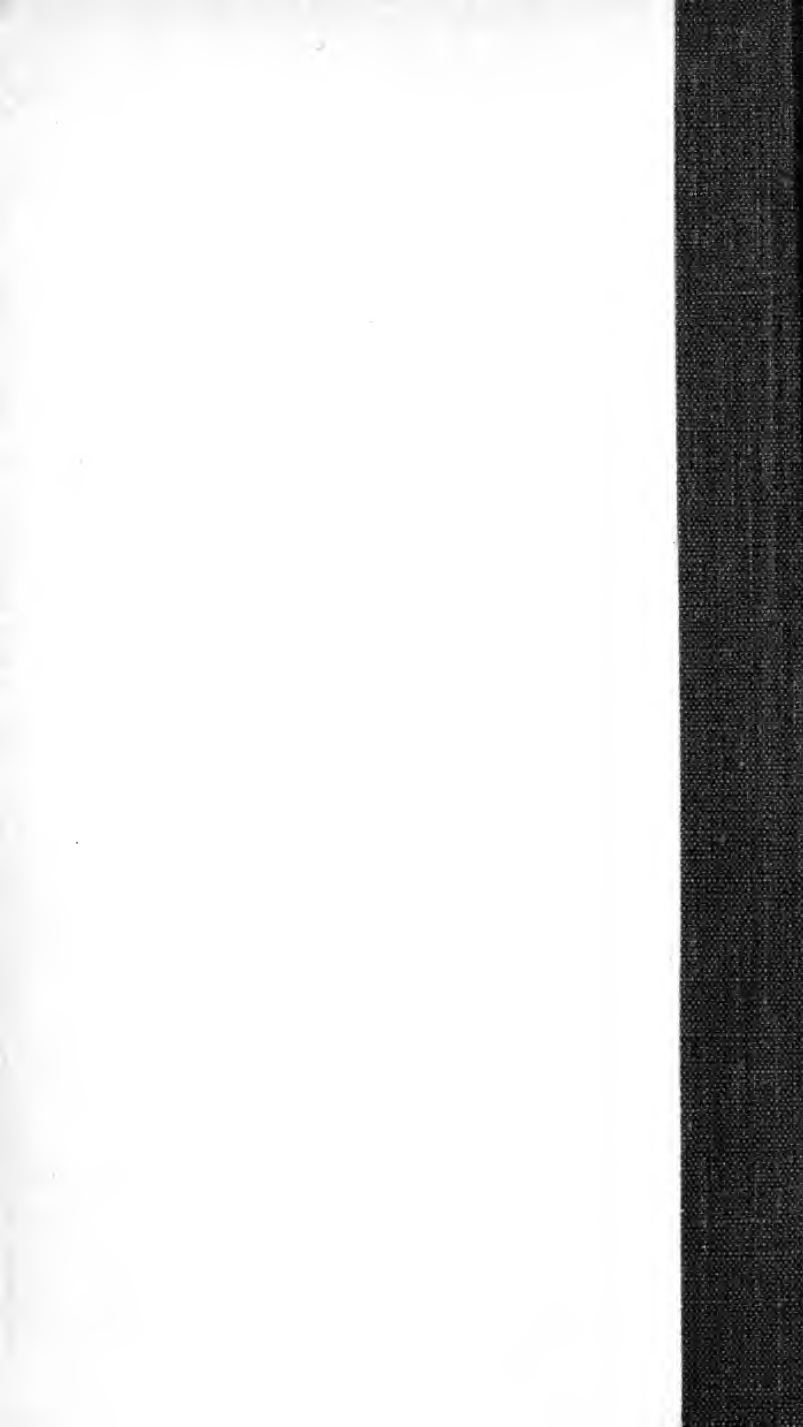


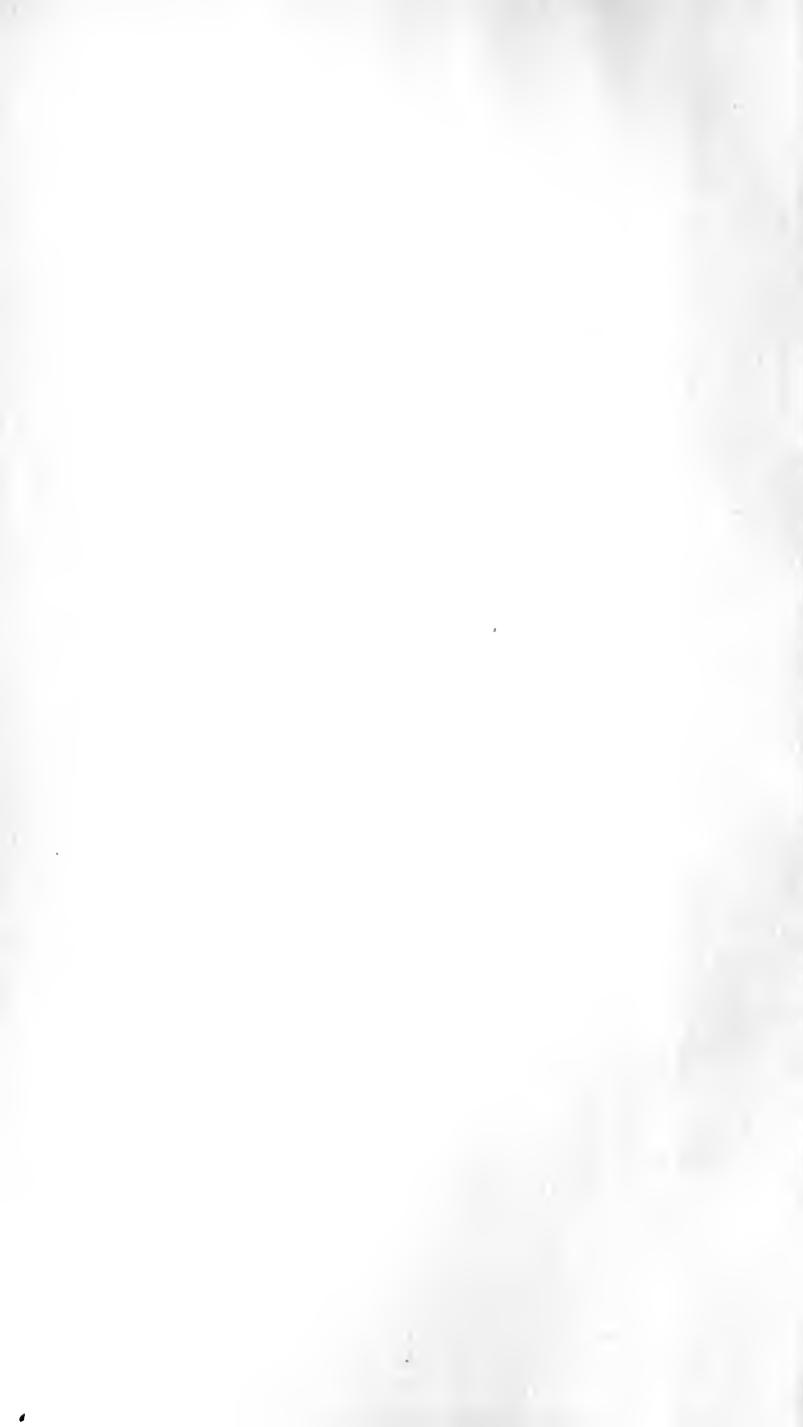


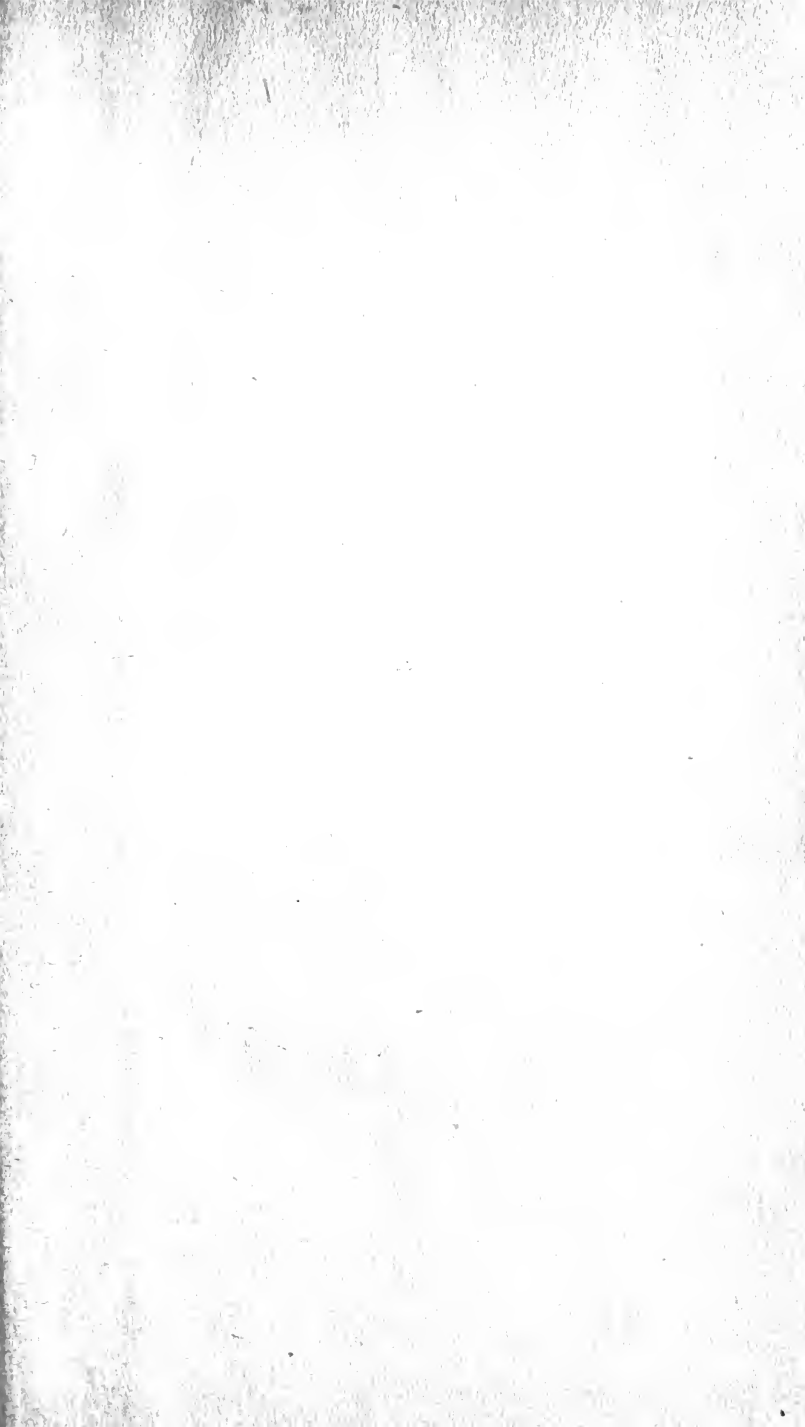
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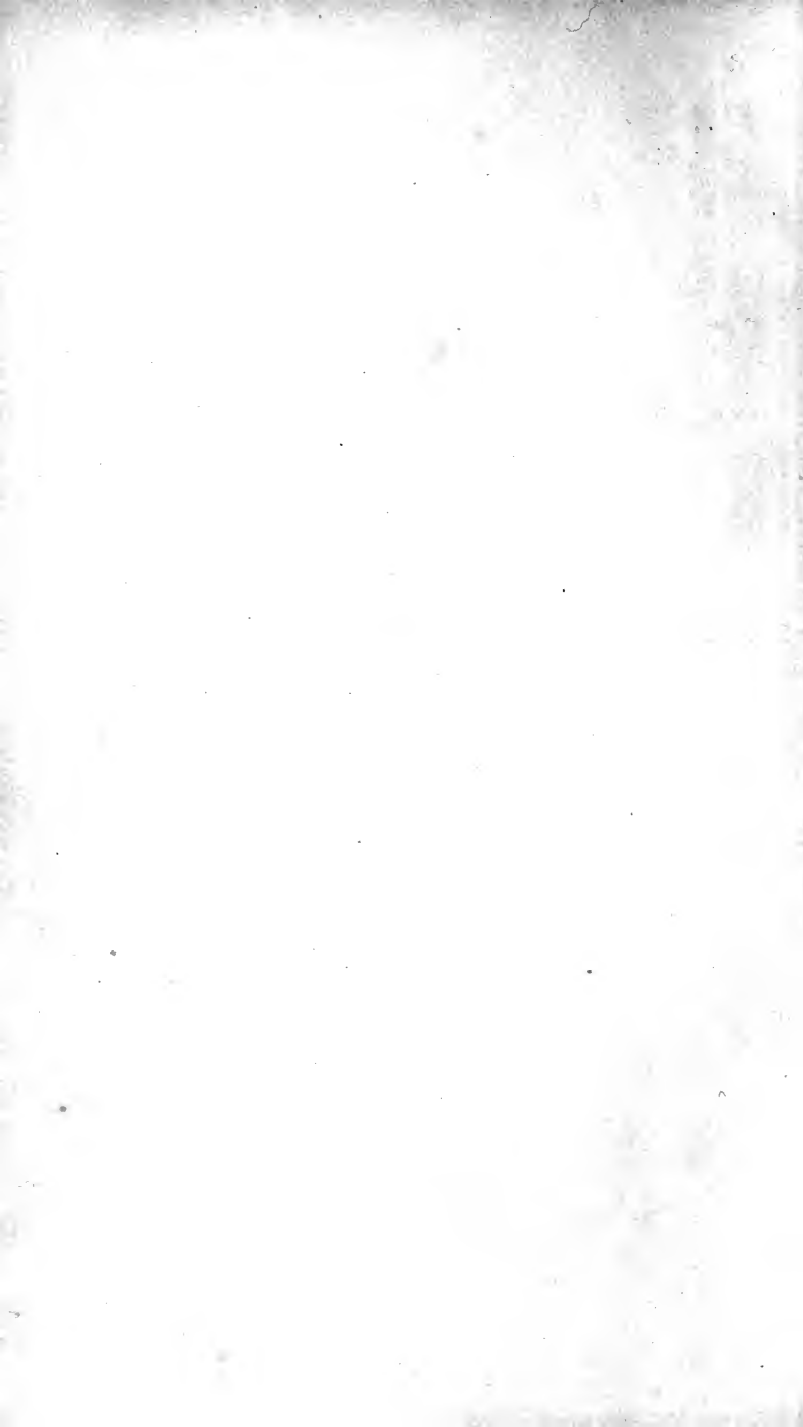




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LETTERS ON PARAGUAY.

VOLUME II.









PROCESS OF PREPARING THE VERBA

# LETTERS ON PARAGUAY:

COMPRISING

AN ACCOUNT OF A FOUR YEARS' RESIDENCE IN  
THAT REPUBLIC,

UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF

## THE DICTATOR FRANCIA.

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BY

J. P. AND W. P. ROBERTSON.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:  
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1838.

438190  
23.8.75

LONDON:  
Printed by WILLIAM CLOWES and SONS,  
Stamford Street.

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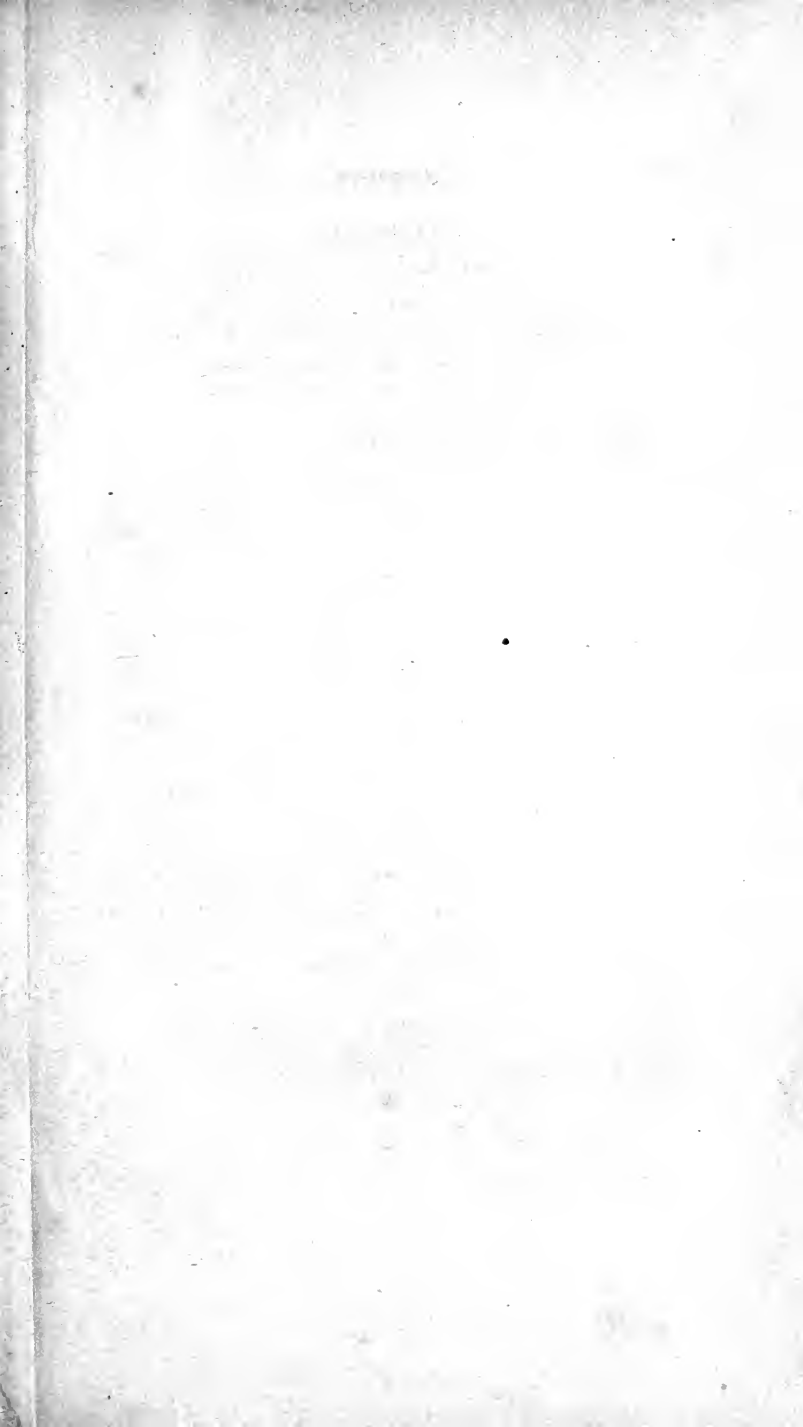
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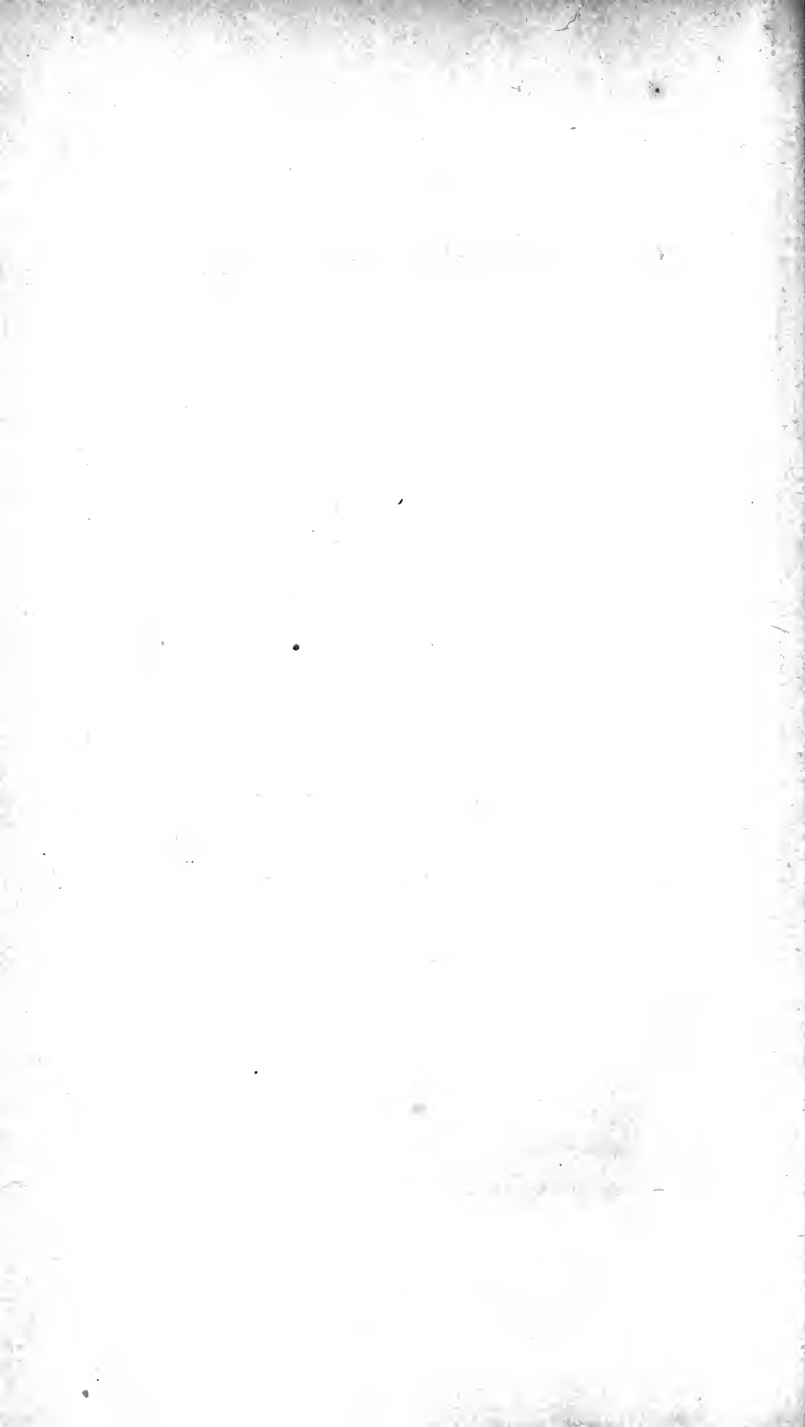
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# LETTERS ON PARAGUAY.

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## LETTER XXIX.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Commissions for Paraguay—Carriage equipment—and travelling  
—Arrival at San Lorenzo—A serious alarm—General San  
Martin—Battle of San Lorenzo.

*London, 1838.*

AFTER spending a month in Buenos Ayres, and making arrangements there for more extended operations to Paraguay, I prepared to return to that country. I had in the meantime, however, a great many commissions to execute for my friends. Don Gregorio, first on the list of these, wanted a cocked-hat, a capote, or cloak, a dress sword, and half a-dozen pair of silk stockings. Don Fulgencio Yegros, the president of the junta, wanted abundance of gold lace, a pair of epaulettes, and an English saddle. General Cavalero wanted a white hat, and a military coat, cut to measure by a Buenos Ayres tailor. Doctor Mora wanted a number of law books; and Doctor Bargas a new pig-tail, and an embroidered waist-

coat. Even Doctor Francia wanted a telescope, an air-pump, and an electrifying machine. The wives and comadres of all these wanted things innumerable: fashionable dresses, shawls, shoes, and blonde. I have heard of a person who on receiving numerous commissions of a similar kind, took them all to the azotea, or flat roof of his house, on a windy day. On the papers which came "accompanied by a remittance," he placed the ounces of gold sent for the purchases required. These commissions being proof against the wind, remained in their places, and were executed. The others, which were unaccompanied by the necessary means for purchase, were left to the mercy of the elements, and of course blown away. But in my case, I had received from my Paraguay friends so many substantial favours, that I exposed their orders to no such test. I labelled them all, and executed them most punctually. My apartments were lumbered with bandboxes, and deal boxes; with parcels, packages, and bales of every size and shape: so that when I was about to start, the difficulty was to contrive how I should carry them over the Pampas. This difficulty, together with a latent de-

sire for a more comfortable conveyance to Santa Fé, than that on horseback, suggested the idea of a carriage. I have already described to you the two other modes of travelling to Paraguay, viz., by the river, and on horseback; and I shall now shortly depict to you the more comfortable one than either, that of making the journey in a four-wheeled conveyance of one's own.

Early in the morning of the day appointed for setting off, there was drawn up to the door a vehicle which had all the appearance of a moving wigwam, or hide hut. It was an old-fashioned, high-roofed, lumbering Spanish carriage, covered over with untanned hide, except at the two little apertures, called windows. There was ample room in it for stowage; and as I knew there were no hotels on the road, everything which could conduce to comfort was (nautically speaking) stowed away in the ample lockers. To provide for the wants of a carriage journey across the Pampas, not much less preparation is required than for a voyage by sea. Hams, tongues, champagne, port, claret, cold fowls, cheese, pickles, and brandy, were all put up as necessary provision for the road. A *batterie de cuisine*

was accommodated on the cumbrous vehicle; and then, into a large sort of hide bag, swung underneath it, were put many of the commissions and presents I had for Paraguay. Others were packed on the top of the coach, and some dangled by its side. Even thus, we were not so lumbered as those conveyances which, though so fearfully overladen in this country, are, with no small latitude of jockey phraseology, called light stage coaches. If it be recollected, however, that in my coach I was to travel over a vast plain, on which were neither roads nor bridges; that I was to be dragged through pantanos (or quagmires), and almost literally to sail over rivers, it will not be considered that it was too lightly laden.

After the wheelers had been placed in the carriage, under the guidance of a coachman\*, up came four ill-clad Gaucho postilions, each on his horse, with no other apparatus, in the shape of harness, than a laso. This was attached by one end to the girth of his saddle, and hooked

\* The *cochero*, as he is called, is the chief postilion. He manages the two wheelers, while four postilions under his orders ride the other four horses used.



on at another to the pole of the carriage. The heads of the two horses between the wheelers and the leaders were at least ten feet from those of the former; while the heads of the latter stretched away fifteen feet beyond those of the pair behind them. Altogether, the heads of the leaders were forty feet from the hind wheels of the vehicle. Preposterous as this mode of travelling may appear, we soon experienced the benefit of it; for scarcely had we reached the outskirts of the town, when we came to one of those fearful bogs, or pantanos. They are masses of thick mud from three to three and a half feet deep, and from thirty to fifty feet across. The leaders plunged into the bog; then followed the second pair; and both these being at the other side of it, and consequently upon firm ground, before the carriage entered the quagmire, they had gained a footing on which to put forward their strength. Under the lash and spur, and cheered on by the shouting of the postilions, the horses dragged us triumphantly through the pantano. Had the harness been shorter, we must have remained a fixture in the mire. It was in this way that we successfully crossed all the bogs,

marshes, and rivulets which intervene between Buenos Ayres and Santa Fé. When no such obstructions occurred, we crossed the plain at a hand-gallop, and at the rate of twelve miles an hour. Many of the horses which drew us along had never been in harness before; and dire was the plunging to which they had often recourse, before they would proceed with so strange and unaccustomed a drag as our lumbering coach. But I never, in one instance, saw the postilion mastered by the horse. After a struggle of longer or shorter duration, the latter was invariably obliged to give in and proceed. He then galloped, for five or six miles, at such speed, and in such a fright and fume, that his courage was damped, and he proceeded to the end of the stage at his rider's own pace. He was then considered as broken in for future post travelling. In this way I proceeded, making the carriage at once my dining, sleeping, and dressing room. With the appurtenances which I carried de cuisine, and a servant who acted as cook, I found the journey much more tolerable than any I had hitherto made. At the different post-houses at which we stopped to change, I got

plenty of game. The partridge, large and small, was abundant, generally not more than a few hundred yards from the door.

On the evening of the fifth day, we reached the post-house of San Lorenzo, distant about two leagues from a monastery of that name, built on the banks of the Paraná, which are there prodigiously high and precipitous. Here we were informed that orders had been received to allow no passengers to proceed beyond that point, not only because it was unsafe from the proximity of the enemy, but because the horses were all required to be kept at the government's disposal, and ready at a moment's warning, either to be driven into the interior, or used on active service. I had feared some such interruption all the way, for we knew that the Marinos were in considerable force in the river *somewhere*; and when I remembered my delinquency in breaking their blockade, I was anxious to fall into the hands of any party rather than theirs. But here we were, and there was no moving either backward or forward. All I could get the postmaster to agree to was, that if the Marinos should make a descent upon the coast, I should have two horses

for myself and servant, and be at liberty to migrate with his family into the interior, where they knew the enemy could not follow them. In that direction, however, they assured me the danger arising from the Indians was as great as any to be apprehended from the Marinos; so that Scylla and Charybdis lay fairly within my view. I had now seen sufficient of South America, however, not to be dismayed by prospective dangers. Before undressing for bed I made my bargain with the postmaster, and when it was closed I retired to the carriage, which I converted into my abode for the night, and soon fell fast asleep.

Not many hours afterwards, I was awakened out of my sound repose by the trampling of horses, clanking of sabres, and rough accents of military command all around the post-house. I saw dimly developed, in the midst of the dark night, the swarthy countenances of two very rough-looking troopers, at each window of the carriage. I made no doubt I was in the hands of the Marinos. "Who is here?" authoritatively said one of them. "A traveller," I replied,—not choosing at once to mark myself out as a vic-

tim by confessing that I was an Englishman. "Make haste," said the same voice, "and come out." At this moment, there came up to the window a person whose features I could not in the dark recognise, but whose voice I was sure I knew, as he said to the men "Don't be rude; it is no enemy, but only, as the post-master informs me, an English gentleman travelling to Paraguay." The men retired, and the officer came close up to the window. Dimly as I could then discern his fine prominent features, yet combining the outlines of them with his voice, I said, "Surely you are Colonel \* San Martin, and if it be so, behold here is your friend Mr. Robertson." The recognition was instant, mutual, and cordial; and he got a hearty laugh, when I described to him the fright into which I had been thrown, by taking his troops for a body of Marinos. The colonel then informed me the government had got positive information that it was the intention of the Spanish Marine force to land that very morning; to pillage the adjoining country; and especially to sack the Monastery of San

\* San Martin, at that time, was only colonel.

Lorenzo. He added, that, to prevent this, he had been detached with one hundred and fifty granaderos à cavallo, or mounted grenadiers of his own regiment: that he had ridden (travelling chiefly by night, in order to elude observation) in three nights from Buenos Ayres. He said he was sure the Marinos knew nothing of his approach; and that within a very few hours he expected to come in contact with them. "They have double our numbers," added the gallant colonel; "but I don't think, for all that, they will have the best of the day."

"I am sure they will not," said I; and forthwith alighting, I began, with the servant, to grope about for wine, wherewith to refresh my most welcome guests. San Martin had given orders that all the lights at the post-house should be extinguished, to prevent the chance of the Marines observing them, and so getting information that an enemy was near. We managed, however, very well, to drink our wine in the dark, and it was literally a stirrup-glass; for every man of the little band stood by the side of his already-saddled horse, and prepared to proceed, at the word of command, to the hoped-for scene of

action. I had no difficulty in persuading the general to allow me to accompany him to the monastery. "Only mind," said he, "that it is neither your duty nor your business *to fight*. I will give you a good horse, and if you see the day going against us, be off at your speed. You know sailors are no horsemen." To this admonition I promised obedience; and, accepting his proffered tender of an excellent horse, and duly appreciating his consideration in regard to me, I rode by the side of San Martin, as he moved onward at the head of his men in dark and silent phalanx.

Just before the dawn of day began to peep, we reached, by a gateway on that side of the building which looked from the river, the monastery of San Lorenzo. It was interposed between the Paraná and the Buenos Ayres troops, and screened all their movements from the view of the enemy. The three sides of the convent that were visible from the river appeared to be deserted; the windows were all shut, and everything was just in the state in which the affrighted monks, in their precipitate retreat a few days before, might be supposed to have left it. It was behind the

fourth side, and through the gate leading from it into the quadrangle and cloisters, that the preparations were made for the work of death. Through this gate San Martin silently marched his men ; and when he had drawn them up in two squadrons inside of the square, they reminded me, as the rays of morning scarcely yet reached the gloomy cloisters among which they stood, of the band of Grecians shut up in the womb of the wooden horse so fatal to the fortunes of Troy.

The gate was shut, that no chance passer-by might see what was going on within. Colonel San Martin, accompanied by two or three of his officers and myself, ascended the turret of the monastery, and by the aid of a night glass, through a small postern window, endeavoured to make out the force and movements of the enemy.

Every moment gave clearer evidence of his intention to land ; and as soon as it was broad daylight, we discerned him busy embarking his men in boats from the seven vessels of which his force was composed. We could distinctly count about three hundred and twenty sailors and marines



land at the foot of the cliff, and prepare to march up the long winding path, which afforded the only communication between the monastery and the river. It was evident, from the careless way in which the enemy marched up the road, that he was unaware of any preparations made to receive him; but San Martin and his officers descended from the turret, and having made all ready for an encounter, took their respective posts in the court below. The men were then marched out of the quadrangle, and stationed, entirely unperceived, each squadron behind one of the wings of the building.

San Martin came once more up to the tower; and, stopping scarcely a moment, ran down again, after saying to me, "Now, in two minutes more, we shall be upon them, sword in hand." It was a moment of intense anxiety to me. San Martin had given orders to his men not to fire a shot. The enemy seemed under my feet, certainly not more than a hundred yards off. His colours were gaily flying, his drums and fifes were playing a march of quick time; when, in an instant, and at full speed, the two squadrons of horse debouched from behind the convent, and flanking the enemy

on each wing, commenced with their glittering sabres a slaughter which was instantaneous and frightful. San Martin's troops only received one volley, but that a very random one, from the enemy; for, close to him as the cavalry were, only five men of them fell in the onset upon the marines. All the rest was rout, havoc, and dismay among that devoted body. Pursuit, slaughter, triumph followed the assault of the troops of Buenos Ayres. The fate of the battle, even to an untutored eye like mine, was not for three minutes doubtful. The charge of the two squadrons instantly broke the enemy's ranks, and from that moment the gleaming sabres performed the work of death so rapidly, that in a quarter of an hour the ground was strewed with the wounded and the slain.

One little troop of Spaniards had hurried to the nearest point of the towering cliff; and there, seeing in close pursuit of them a dozen of San Martin's grenadiers, precipitated themselves over the Barranca, and were dashed to pieces at the bottom. It was in vain that the officer in charge of the party called out to them to surrender, and they should be spared. Their panic had com-

pletely superseded the use of their reason ; and, instead of surrendering as prisoners of war, they took the frightful leap which hurried them into another world, and gave their dead bodies to be food for the vultures on that day.

Of the whole body of men which landed, not above fifty escaped to their vessels. The others were all either killed or wounded, while San Martin lost only eight men in the encounter.

A nervous excitement, arising out of the painful novelty of the scene, soon became my predominant feeling ; and I was very glad to quit the still reeking field of action. I begged of San Martin, therefore, to take my wine and provisions for the benefit of the wounded men of both parties ; and, bidding him a hearty adieu, I quitted the scene of action, with regret for the slaughter, but admiration of his coolness and intrepidity.

This battle (if battle it can be called) was, in its consequences, of great benefit to all those who were connected with Paraguay ; for the Marinos took their departure from the River Paraná, and were never afterwards able to enter it for the purpose of committing hostilities.

Having already gone into full details, as well

about Santa Fé, the Baxada, Goya, Corrientes, Estancias, &c. &c., as about the journey from the former place to Assumption, I shall simply say, that I once more reached that capital, in a month after the battle of San Lorenzo.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XXX.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Return to Assumption—Francia's Ascendancy—Arrest and Banishment of Don Gregorio—The Compadre's Departure—Reception of the Buenos Ayres' Envoy—Francia's Intrigues—The Congress of Paraguay—An Indian Deputy—Dissolution of Congress—Francia is elected First Consul—Anecdotes of Francia—His change of Manners—The Spaniards are prohibited from marrying white Women—The Consul's Mode of equipping his Troops.

*London, 1838.*

ON my return to Assumption in 1813, though I had been absent not quite six months, I found the Government of Yegros tottering to its fall. The star of Francia was so high in the ascendant, that everybody was now openly paying court to him, pretty much in the fashion in which, under similar circumstances, the same thing is done everywhere else. For myself, I delivered all my presents, and refused any remuneration for them; I entirely eschewed politics; neither much congratulated Francia on his prospects, nor condoled with Yegros on his; but I remained, with

both, on the good old terms of easy and occasional intercourse. I hoped, in this way, to maintain my character for neutrality; and to shelter myself, in the privacy of my own concerns, from the storm that was overhanging the political horizon.

It happened about this time, that an Envoy of the name of Don Nicolas Herrera was despatched from Buenos Ayres, to endeavour to arrange a treaty of amity and commerce with Paraguay. This was the signal for Francia's being recalled to power. No one thought that the affairs of the country were safe in other hands than his, nor that anybody but he had sufficient political sagacity to frame a treaty with a foreign state. Buenos Ayres, in consequence of the odium artfully excited against it by Francia, began to be considered not only as a foreign power, but as one of which the policy was at direct variance with the best interests of Paraguay. Mora, one of the members of the junta, was civilly dismissed; while a less enviable fate overtook my poor friend, Don Gregorio. He was arrested, and ordered to quit the country in eight days. He was too clever and popular to be longer tolerated in the same

place with the haughty doctor. Francia filled up the vacancies thus created in the junta, by becoming himself at once a member of it, and its assessor; with power, as everybody at the time understood, and very soon afterwards saw, to do just what he pleased.

The first ominous instance of the chilling authority which he had almost imperceptibly acquired, was exemplified by the treatment of Don Gregorio, the universal compadre, the zealous friend, the powerful patron, of almost all the principal people of Assumption. They one and all deserted him; not, certainly, because in his misfortune they esteemed him less, but because they esteemed their own safety more. Such were the fears which they had already begun to entertain of the ruthless and jealous temper of the restored member of the junta, Francia.

Confiding, however, in my privilege of neutrality; feeling grateful for the many favours I had received at the hands of the proscribed man; struck by seeing, for the first time in my life, from so close a view, the idol of yesterday become the cast-away of to-day; convinced, moreover, that Francia could have no fears of any political

intrigue on my part, I waited on him; and, so far to his honour at this incipient point of his career, I have to record an instance of permitted intercession, which was never, even indirectly, tolerated in the latter part of his cruel reign.

Having detailed to him my motives for desiring to be permitted to visit Don Gregorio during the eight days of his confinement, and to minister as well to his present comforts as to his wants for his voyage, Francia gave me permission to do both. The sentinels who guarded his prisoner were ordered to allow me ingress to him. I then told Dr. Francia, that I presumed I might be permitted to console Don Gregorio by being allowed to become the medium of communication between him and his *comadres*. Smiling at the allusion, Francia said to me — “ Mr. Robertson, do what you please in the way of go-between in this case. Don Gregorio has too many *comadres*, and pays too much attention to them, ever to be a formidable rival of mine: besides, he is a Cordovez, and a charlatan; and the Paraguayans hate both. I think it proper to send him out of the way, because he had the impudence, on my leaving the government, to take the assessorship



of it, knowing that I both hated and despised him. But go, in the meantime, and do what you will. Only let him beware how he ever again sets foot in Paraguay, even to revisit his comadres."

There was a sarcastic sneer upon Francia's countenance as he uttered these words. It not only spoke volumes, to me, of his inflexible character, but made me take the first opportunity I had of imploring Don Gregorio not to put it to the test. I found my poor friend utterly cast down, and all but inconsolable, till I delivered to him the more pleasing portions of Francia's speech. It is unnecessary to say how my visits, when Cerda had, and could have, no other companion, alleviated his solitude; and it is altogether impossible to tell how the many kind notes, and the presents which I brought from his comadres, lighted up his eye, and cheered him under the grief of his approaching exile.

At length he embarked with everything he could possibly desire; but notwithstanding this, his sighs and sorrow prevailed, till, as he moved down the stream, from the place in which all the tender chords of his heart had vibrated for many years to the sympathies of hundreds around him,

the kind and expatriated compadre and assessor gave vent to his grief in an unrestrained flood of tears.

Having now evidently determined to get rid of all competitors for power, and the epoch approaching for the decision of the questions which the Buenos Ayres' Envoy was to open, Francia made all affected haste to call a Congress of Deputies, which, from the different sections of Paraguay, should assemble within three months at Assumption.

In the meantime arrives Mr. Herrera, the Buenos Ayres' ambassador. He is lodged in the old custom-house, at once under the surveillance and stewardship of the collector of customs. He remains a week there, dining by himself, before he has an interview with a single member of the government; suspicion and vigilance attend his every step; he hears vague rumours of danger to his person, and sees indubitable indications of the folly of hoping for any alliance with a country over which, even now, Francia exercised so potent a sway.

All these results had been silently and cautiously wrought out by that man's hidden and

unwearied intrigue, or by his uncompromising declarations to his creatures, that *so he would have it*. He imbued the lower classes (of which seven-eighths of the deputies to Congress were to be composed) with a suspicion, deep and strong, that the only object of Buenos Ayres in sending an ambassador to Paraguay was that of subjecting it to her own ambitious views, and of embroiling it in her own revolutionary principles, for the promotion of her own treacherous ends.

The time intermediate between the issuing of the writs for election of the deputies to Congress, and of their meeting in the capital, Francia successfully employed in encouraging and increasing the enmity of his countrymen to Buenos Ayres. He gained over to his interest the officers in command of the troops, and made himself personally and familiarly acquainted with the humblest deputy that came into town. The wily doctor flattered the vanity, and stimulated the cupidity of them all. The Indian alcalde, the small farmer, the cattle-grazier, the petty shop-keeper, the more wealthy merchant, and the substantial hacendado, all became his prey. By large and undefined promises of protection and encourage-

ment to the order of men to which they respectively belonged; by one delay after another, never appearing to originate with Francia, he fostered the ambition of aspirants to power, and protracted the meeting of Congress for two months beyond the appointed time. All this took place after every deputy had arrived in Assumption. Francia had thus an opportunity, not only of increasing adherents, fortifying converts, and deciding waverers, but of entailing upon the impoverished deputies such inconvenience and expense, as needed scarcely the aid of the Consul's suggestions to determine them to come to a final settlement of all their business, on the first day of the meeting of the Congress.

Such a motley group of national representatives was never, perhaps, before assembled to deliberate, or rather to decide without deliberation, on the fate of a nation.

Here was a "tápe\*" Indian alcalde, with an antiquated three-cornered cocked hat, and an old

\* The Indian called "tápe" is one who, with others of his tribe, has been located, under Spanish dominion, in some wretched village of mud huts, with the privilege of appointing their own local magistrates, under the superintendency of a couple of friars.

red or brown wig that had been worn under the said hat from its earliest days. The latter, too, was rather brown, but so well adorned with ribands, red, blue, yellow, pink, that not much of the real colour was discernible. Black velvet breeches, open at the knees, with silver buttons in long and close array, and a finely embroidered pair of drawers hanging out under them, like the ruffles of a gentleman's shirt from under his coat-sleeves, were supported by a red sash tied round the waist. To correspond with this, the alcalde had garters of the same hue tied in visible display round discoloured silk stockings; and large silver shoe-buckles completed this part of his attire.

His horse was caparisoned in a fashion no less unique. The ribands upon his tail, mane, ears, and pendent from the peaks of an antiquated court-saddle, covered with what had once been red or blue velvet, streamed in variegated luxuriance from each and every point.

Mounted upon a charger thus adorned and trained to dance, the Indian alcalde with a brass, and sometimes gold-headed cane, emblematic of his civic authority, would ever and anon set forth

to parade the streets, pending the obstacles and delay which preceded the actual meeting of the Congress. His horse, attended by two pages, one on either side of the now mounted deputy, and both as much in want of the mere decencies of dress as their master abounded in the superfluity of it, began a little preliminary dance; while the musicians, no better arrayed than the pages, essayed to play the overture of a tune to which the procession was to move on. The alcalde's friends and dependents kept assembling on horseback during this overture; and with such remnants of court finery as they could borrow from the priest, or gather from the *debris* of their chief's decorations,—an odd bit of riband, parts of the alcalde's Sunday-suit, a red handkerchief bought expressly for the occasion, a small hat, and a poncho, did a follower of the first rank fall into the procession. The gradations of importance of those who followed him were easily to be inferred by persons skilled in Indian costume, from the gradual diminution as you descended the scale of rank of some courtly badge or ornamental device.

Thus escorted, the deputy moved on, till he

came in front of the Government House, where Caraî Francia was. Increasing there the rigidity of his upright posture on horseback, with his eyes immoveably fixed on his horse's ears, he gave the Caraî a horse-dance, a calabash-tune, and finally made his reverential act of obeisance. All this he performed on horseback, and then took his departure in the same dancing, though slow and measured, solemnity of state, in which he had arrived in front of the Consul's window. Processions of this kind, some of a better, but none of a less grotesque class, as you advanced from the Indian deputy to the more considerable landholder, crowded the streets during the time that elapsed between the assembling of the deputies and the actual meeting of the Congress.

It may be conceived with what anxious desire this meeting was expected by the members elect, all more or less encumbered with attendants, away from their families, and short of money, house-room, and provisions. When at last the day of meeting was by Francia permitted to arrive, that which every one had anticipated took place. In a few hours after Congress met, the day's deliberations were closed by a rejection of all pro-

posals for an amicable intercourse with Buenos Ayres. Then, one of Francia's colleagues in the government, Cavallero, was dismissed, and Francia was elected First Consul, with Yegros (a mere cipher), as second, for one year. This was in 1814; and the burlesque of national representation being performed, the Buenos Ayres deputy left Assumption in fear and trembling the next day; the congregational body dissolved itself; and curates, country-gentlemen, Yerba collectors, wood-cutters, Indian alcaldes, shop-keepers, lawyers, traders, all joyfully resigned their legislative functions. Every man arose and saddling his beast, took his way to his respective home.

From this moment Francia became *de facto* the absolute and undisputed despot. Yet did he not institute his system of terror all at once. It was by gradual process and slow degrees that his heart got chilled, and that his measures, first characterised by callousness, became at length stained with blood. As he advanced to the plenitude of his power, and as his fear of impunity diminished, his character, naturally stern, waxed ferocious. No "compunctious



visitings of nature" stopped the cruelty of his course ; till, step by step, he reduced unhappy Paraguay to the state of desolation and slavery under which it now groans.

The following anecdotes will tend to show what was the *basis* of Francia's character ; and subsequent records will elucidate how easily stern integrity may turn to sullen despotism ; inflexible determination be warped to unrelenting barbarity.

It has been already observed that Francia's reputation, as a lawyer, was not only unsullied by venality, but conspicuous for rectitude.

He had a friend in Assumption of the name of Domingo Rodriguez. This man had cast a covetous eye upon Naboth's vineyard, and this Naboth, of whom Francia was the open enemy, was called Estanislao Machain. Never doubting that the young doctor, like other lawyers, would undertake his unrighteous cause, Rodriguez opened up to him his case, and requested, with a handsome retainer, his advocacy of it. Francia saw at once that his friend's pretensions were founded in fraud and injustice ; and he not only refused to act as his counsel, but plainly

told him that much as he hated his antagonist Machain, yet if he (Rodriguez) persisted in his iniquitous suit, that antagonist should have his (Francia's) most zealous support. But covetousness, as Ahab's story shows us, is not so easily driven from its pretensions ; and in spite of Francia's warning, Rodriguez persisted. As he was a potent man, in point of fortune, all was going against Machain and his devoted vineyard.

At this stage of the question, Francia wrapped himself up one night in his cloak, and walked to the house of his inveterate enemy, Machain. The slave who opened the door, knowing that his master and the doctor, like the houses of Montagu and Capulet, were smoke in each other's eyes, refused the lawyer admittance, and ran to inform his master of the strange and unexpected visit. Machain, no less struck by the circumstance than his slave, for some time hesitated ; but at length determined to admit Francia. In walked the silent doctor to Machain's chamber. All the papers connected with the law-plea,—voluminous enough I have been assured,—were outspread upon the defendant's escritoire.

“ Machain,” said the lawyer, addressing him,

“ you know I am your enemy. But I know that my friend Rodriguez meditates, and will certainly, unless I interfere, carry against you an act of gross and lawless aggression ; I have come to offer my services in your defence.”

The astonished Machain could scarcely credit his senses ; but poured forth the ebullition of his gratitude in terms of thankful acquiescence.

The first “ escrito,” or writing, sent in by Francia to the Juez de Alzada, or Judge of the Court of Appeal, confounded the adverse advocates, and staggered the judge, who was in their interest. “ My friend,” said the judge to the leading counsel, “ I cannot go forward in this matter, unless you bribe Dr. Francia to be silent.” “ I will try,” replied the advocate, and he went to Naboth’s counsel with a hundred doubloons (about three hundred and fifty guineas), which he offered him as a bribe to let the cause take its iniquitous course. Considering, too, that his best introduction would be a hint that this douceur was offered with the judge’s concurrence, the knavish lawyer hinted to the upright one that such was the fact.

“ Salga V.,” said Francia, “ con sus viles pen-

samientos, y vilisimo oro de mi casa." "Out with your vile insinuations, and dross of gold from my house."

Off marched the venal drudge of the unjust judge ; and in a moment, putting on his capoté, the offended advocate went to the residence of the Juez de Alzada. Shortly relating what had passed between himself and the myrmidon,—“Sir,” continued Francia, “you are a disgrace to law, and a blot upon justice. You are, moreover, completely in my power ; and unless tomorrow I have a decision in favour of my client, I will make your seat upon the bench too hot for you, and the insignia of your judicial office shall become the emblems of your shame.”

The morrow *did* bring a decision in favour of Francia's client. Naboth retained his vineyard ; the judge lost his reputation ; and the young doctor's fame extended far and wide.

Alas ! that an action so magnanimous in itself should be blighted by the record which historical truth exacts,—that no sooner had Francia vindicated the law and justice of his enemy's case, than old antipathy revived ; and one of the many victims, at a subsequent period, of the Dictator's

displeasure, was the very Machain whom he had so nobly served.

On occasion of the installation of the junta which superseded, in Paraguay, the authority of Spain, the question was agitated by a number of the first citizens convened for the purpose in the Government House, as to whether the government of the country should be carried on in the name of Ferdinand VII. Francia, whose mind was made up that it should *not*, entered the hall of deliberation at the warmest period of the debate. Walking up to the table, and taking his place beside several government functionaries, he calmly laid a pair of loaded pistols before him, and said, "These are the arguments which I bring against the supremacy of Fernando Septimo." From so daring and practical an argument there was no appeal; and Francia thus, as it were, at the cannon's mouth, forced his countrymen into the first direct declaration in South America, of absolute independence of Old Spain.

No sooner, by the tumultuous and unanimous voice of Congress, was Francia seated in the first Consular chair, than his air gradually gathered

more of austerity; his measures were more divested of conciliation; his address became more abrupt, his tone more imperative; and it was evident to me, as well as to many others, that he was already beginning to lift the mask which he had too long reluctantly allowed to cover his ambitious projects and designs. One ominous feature of despotism now began to display itself in Paraguay: every man feared to open his lips to another on politics. Among the first of Francia's legislative enactments was one of singular degradation to the old Spaniards.

There had been some vague rumours, when the Consul was living in retirement, that he was less inimical to the Spaniards than was generally supposed. These rumours were circulated by his political opponents; and in order, not only to silence them on this subject, but to teach the Spaniards how little reason they had to congratulate themselves on the report, maliciously spread, that he was their friend, he decreed that within the territory of Paraguay they should not be allowed to contract marriage, except with negresses and mulattoes. If bitterly to mortify the proud natives of Old Spain, men who had

hitherto looked down upon the best American blood as only uncontaminated in so far as it was mixed with their own, were Francia's aim, as doubtless it was, the plan he selected was most effectual. The decree (or bando), published by sound of drum and fife, came upon them like a thunder-clap; but although they felt so keenly this attempt to degrade them, they were forced to restrain every expression of indignation or even of chagrin. Nor were the white and pure-blooded ladies of Assumption less mortified than the Spaniards: for not only were many marriages with them on the tapis, but it had ever been considered by the highest-bred damsels of the place a much greater honour to be wedded to a Galician shop-keeper, than to a Paraguay gentleman.

Meantime my intercourse with the Consul not only continued, but increased. I had frequent citations to attend him at the Government House, or, as it was officially styled, Palace. Our interviews were always in the evening, and were sometimes protracted till eleven o'clock. Francia's greatest pleasure consisted in talking about the "War Department;" and he would go into the most absurd minutiae with a positively childish

delight. On one occasion the gunsmith came in with three or four old muskets repaired. Francia held them up one by one to his shoulder, and pointing them, as in the act of firing, drew the trigger. When the flint struck good fire, the Consul was charmed, and said to me, "What do you think, Mr. Robertson, will my muskets carry a ball to the heart of my enemies?"

Next, the master tailor presented himself with a tight fit for a grenadier recruit. The man for whom the coat was made being ordered in, and stripped to try it on, got at length, after some awkward attempts, his arms into it. The fit was not a very soldier-like one in my eyes; for I thought the high waist, and the short—the very short—tails of Francia's grenadier coat rather uncouth. Still it was a fit, according to the *Consul's* fancy, and he praised the tailor, and told the soldier to mind how he ever got a stain, or "mancha," upon it. Nodding to me, he then said in French, "C'est un calembourg, Monsieur Robertson, qu'ils ne comprennent pas."

Last of all, came in two sturdy mulattoes, one with a grenadier's bearskin cap, and another



with brown belts and cartouche box. They were all fitted on the martyr of a soldier, into whose hands, finally, Francia put one of the muskets. He then said, "There, Mr. Robertson, this is the style in which every one of my grenadiers shall be equipped." Such exhibitions as these were of frequent recurrence, and they always elicited glee and good humour from Francia. His grenadier company was his great hobby; and I never saw a little girl dress out her doll with more self-importance and delight than did Francia, with his own hands, dress and fit out each individual grenadier of his guard.

When done with such puerile manœuvres, he forthwith invited me to be reseated; and he would then resume his natural character. I was, generally speaking, a listener to the subjects which the Consul chose to propound. Nor was I sorry to be this; for my object was rather to unravel his character, and obtain information, than to lose my opportunities of doing both, by speaking myself. On one of these occasions, however, I initiated a subject of my own, in which I not only felt a great interest, but on

which I knew no one was so capable of giving me ample and correct information as himself. That was the subject of the Jesuits; and in my next letter I shall introduce you to the society of those celebrated men.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XXXI.

To J—— G——, Esq.

## THE JESUITS.

Sketch of their History—Their Traffic—Policy—Principles—Cause of their downfall—Expulsion—Francia's opinion on the subject—Their wealth—Illustrated by a Statistical Table of the Establishment of San Ignacio Mini—Comments on this wealth—Francia's offer of Letters Introductory to the Governors of Misiones—Remarks.

*London, 1838.*

“SEÑOR CONSUL,” I said, “from all that I have heard, and read, the Jesuits seem to have originated, as well as given practical effect to a system of government, political and ecclesiastical, in Paraguay, such as never had a parallel. I know that nobody is so well qualified as your Excellency to clear up a subject which, to some people, is enveloped in mystery, and to most is one of conjecture or speculation. The accounts given to us of the Jesuits are very contradictory. Some

laud them to the skies; others load them with vituperation: some ascribe their actions to principles almost angelical; while others are scarcely content to classify them as the offspring of angels, indeed, but of fallen ones. If your Excellency would do me the favour of entering a little into the philosophy and truth of the case, you would greatly oblige me."

The Consul was not a partisan of the Jesuits; and this accounted to me for the tinge of partiality, and sometimes of asperity which coloured many of his remarks, and more or less pervaded his whole account of them. I shall give you, together with the substance of what he told me at various interviews, the information I have collected from some other sources, as well as from personal observation, on occasion of a visit I made to the Misiones. The Consul represented the Jesuits as "unos pillos ladinos,"—that is, "refined rogues." Their founder, Ignatius Loyola, he said, was one of the most bold and astute men that ever breathed. Francia represented the apostolic see as ever ready to lend a willing ear to projects of clerical aggrandizement; and certainly none that had ever been presented

to its attention was so specious, or sustained by such ability as that of Loyola. He began by persuading the pope, that if certain clerical privileges and exemptions were conceded, he (Loyola) would institute a society, which should surpass all its predecessors in evangelizing the heathen; in bringing them into the fold of Christ, and under the temporal dominion of the pope. What Loyola promised, he performed. Numbers of his emissaries were dispersed over Europe, Asia, and Africa, and their success in propagating the gospel was considered miraculous. The company of the Jesuits was in 1540 organised into a religious body, or society, by formal authority of the pope; and the first members of it that came to America crossed the Atlantic in 1549 with the Portuguese expedition, which under the command of Don Tomas de Soza, Governor of Brazil, landed in that year at Bahia de todos los Santos. This was called then the province of Santa Cruz, but it is now designated that of Bahia. There the viceroy shortly afterwards laid the foundation of the town of this name, which became thenceforward the residence of his Excellency, and of an archbishop. From this point

the Jesuits penetrated a considerable way into the interior, and after a few years more, many of them crossed from the Island of St. Catherine, on the Brazil coast, in south latitude 23°, till they came to the banks of the Paraná. In the mean time they had fallen in with many tribes of wandering but peaceful Guaranis, to whom they began to preach. They set themselves up as the descendants of St. Thomas, whom they represented as the immediate apostle of the Son of God. They said that, by his authority, they were delegated with a message of eternal peace and happiness to the Indian race. These fraudulently-pious men so rang in the ears of their early converts the story of St. Thomas, that, in passing from one tribe to another, they soon propagated the imposture, till, in a few years, they were enabled to put forth *as a tradition which they had received from the Indians themselves*, the fact that St. Thomas actually *had* landed in America. He evangelized it, they said, not many years after the apostles had been indued with power from on high at Jerusalem. The credulous and ignorant Indians not only promulgated the story, but were proud of it; until at length

it was given out, as a matter of uninterrupted tradition from father to son, that the apostle St. Thomas had landed on the coast of Brazil, travelled through the desert, with a cross in his hand, and left, as he proceeded, upon the very rocks, the indelible marks of his large naked footsteps. It was thus that he was said to have perpetuated the glorious memory of his journey from the coast of Brazil to the River Paraná; thence to the Paraguay; and finally over the Great Chaco, and the whole of Peru.

But the Jesuits did not stop here. They practised on their credulous converts by telling them that the unwieldy cross which their fathers had seen in the hands of the apostle was hidden by the unconverted Indians, or gentiles, in a lake near Chuquisaca; was there discovered, and thence rescued, at a distance of fifteen centuries of time, by the curate of the place, Padre Sarmiento.

This historical anecdote is related by Don Pedro Alvear, one of the Commissioners of His Catholic Majesty for adjusting the boundary lines between Spanish America and Brazil. The account is taken from a manuscript of his in the

possession of Sir Woodbine Parish. The Commissioner is in many points a very respectable and accurate historian ; but the facility with which he has lent himself to record the pious fictions of the Jesuits may tend to show the hold they had upon the respect and confidence of even the first men in the country. Alvear seriously resolves the problem of the long immersion, without injury, of the miraculous cross, by assuring the reader that it was made of holy wood. He also informs him that many and stupendous miracles have been performed by means of it.

The footing which, by pious fraud, the Jesuits thus obtained in the country, they made good, by a combination of wisdom and worldly tactics seldom united. They worked so effectually, that in about fifty years from the time of the landing of their first stragglers on the coast of Brazil, they had not only erected colleges and "casas de residencia" (habitations for themselves), at most of the principal Spanish stations in South America, but had fortified themselves by thirty establishments of their own, containing 100,000 inhabitants on the banks of the Paraná and Uruguay. Their vast estates constituted the finest part of



the territory of the whole of this section of South America. From this centre of operations, they extended their influence far and wide. Their "casa de temporalidades" (or buildings for their offices and warehouses), occupied, in Buenos Ayres, together with their college and other buildings, a whole quadra (one hundred and forty-four yards square) of land. So fearful were those cautious and prudent men of anything—even of the lightning of heaven—touching their "temporalidades" (goods and chattels), that the whole of their offices and warehouses were made bomb-proof. They were secured by massive iron gratings; and built in a style of solidity, capaciousness, and splendour, to which there was no parallel in the country.

I once occupied a wing of this "temporalidades" building for twelve months. While I lived there, in 1811, the town of Buenos Ayres was bombarded by the Spanish marines from Montevideo; and as the bombs and shells fell fast and thick in all parts of the town, many of the people, and especially of my own friends, sought shelter under the bomb-proof roofs of the former abode of the Jesuits. There they slept

for three or four successive nights ; and so secure did they feel in the strongly-vaulted apartments, that they danced and made gay, while the marines, from their shipping in the inner roads, were throwing their shot and shells into the town.

The traffic of the Jesuits with Buenos Ayres, Assumption, and Corrientes was very great. Affecting to govern all their establishments on the principle of a community of goods, and having persuaded the Indians that they participated equally with their pastors in the advantages derived from their labour in common, the Jesuits made subservient to their own aggrandizement the toil of a hundred thousand Indian slaves. They instructed them in agriculture, and in the mechanical arts ; they made of them soldiers and sailors ; and they taught them to herd cattle, prepare yerba, and manufacture sugar and cigars. But while the churches and *casas de residencia* were built with elaborate splendour, the Indian architect and mason occupied mud hovels. While the *padres* had all the conveniences, and even luxuries, that could be furnished by the carpenter and upholsterer ; and while the churches exhi-

bited fine specimens of architecture, carving, and embroidery, the Indian workman had scarce a table and a chair, very seldom a bed, and never any other hanging or coverlet in his hovel than a coarse poncho. The Indians *made* shoes, but the padres alone *wore* them; and exported the surplus. Plenty of sugar, maté, cigars, sweetmeats, and Indian corn, were annually sent to Buenos Ayres; but the poor Indian could with difficulty get a meagre supply of salt to his yucca root, and to his occasional meal of beef. The soldiers were without pay, and the sailors without reward. The barks constructed by one class of missionary subjects were first employed in carrying away the articles produced by the sweat of the brow of another, and then in bringing back, as a return, finery for the churches, and luxuries for the padres and their friends. It is true that the Indian was fed and clothed out of the common stock of produce; but so scantily and disproportionately, that while his earnings might amount to a hundred dollars (twenty pounds) a-year, his food and raiment never cost one-half of the sum. He was allowed two days in the week, latterly three, on which to cultivate a small

patch of ground for himself: but whatever this produced went in diminution of the supplies issued to him from the public stores. So that, after all, it came to the same thing. The "community" (that is of the padres) was still the gainer by the personal labour of the Indian. Public expenditure was diminished by his individual labour on his own account; and while the padres claimed and received great credit for this liberal extension of time to the Indian for his own benefit, they knew that their practical sophistry went still in support of their fundamental principle—aggrandizement of the body.

It is from innumerable acts of this kind—specious ostensibly, but altogether cunning and selfish in reality—that the phrase "Jesuitical fellow" has become a designation of no very honourable import.

The downfall of the Jesuits is traceable to the combination of priestly influence and of political power which they possessed. So long as they confined themselves to the care of their flocks, and while their political situation was feeble, or precarious, they went on and prospered: but when they had made those flocks subservient to their aggran-

dizement, and from year to year, by papal bulls and royal concessions, had isolated and withdrawn themselves from under the control at once of diocesans, viceroys, and governors, they got into a false position, and paved the way for their own overthrow. They pestered the Court of Madrid with their intrigues, and embarrassed the local governments of America by their insubordination; till by command of King Charles, his minister the Count of Aranda transmitted to the viceroy, Bucareli, positive orders for their expulsion from every one of their settlements in South America. Simultaneously — on one and the same day—the different and distant bodies of Jesuits were seized, hurried off to Buenos Ayres, and shortly afterwards sent to Spain. Their property was confiscated by the Government; their authority was vested in the civil and military power of the country; and though the establishments of Misiones have, through corruption and misgovernment, been gradually falling to decay, and are now, some of them, in ruins, yet Francia was of opinion, and so were many others, that it was for the good of the country that the Jesuits had been expelled.

As for the property possessed by the Jesuits, great as it was, it has, I am convinced, always been underrated; and for this reason: that those who have made estimates of it have never taken into account *the value of the Indians*. But in them consisted the chief wealth, and from their labour was derived, it may be said, the sum total of the revenue of the Misiones establishments. To overlook this point is to misconceive the whole matter.

There were a hundred thousand Indian inhabitants in Misiones, including men, women, and children; and I value them at forty pounds\* a-head, on this principle: that supposing only thirty thousand of these to be working men, and that they earned only twenty pounds a-year, of which ten went for their own subsistence and clothing, and ten to the "community" of the Jesuits, these men earned, by the labour of their slaves, 300,000*l.* per annum; that is, the clear gain arising from the labour of thirty thousand working men at 10*l.* each, 300,000*l.* Now if you

\* These calculations were originally made in dollars; but, for the clearer understanding of them by the English reader, I put them down in pounds sterling, calculating five dollars to the pound.

take the whole Indian population at a hundred thousand, and value them, as property, at 40% a-head, this will give a sum of 4,000,000%. An interest of 300,000% upon this amounts only to seven and a half per cent.: which, in that country, is a *low* interest. The fact is, however, that the Jesuits got a great deal more, when all their mercantile profits, arising from the labours of the Indian, are taken into account: but allowing the statement to stand simply thus, the following may be taken as a correct, and by no means exaggerated estimate of the wealth of the Jesuitical body in the towns of Misiones.

There were thirty of these towns. Some of them were on the eastern, some on the western banks of the Paraná. Of the Misiones, Candelaria was the capital; but if we take the establishment of San Ignacio Miní, in the territory of Entrerios, and in latitude south,  $27^{\circ} 15'$ , as an average of them, both in regard to population and other property, by finding the value of that establishment, and by multiplying the result by thirty, we shall come to as near a demonstration as figures can afford of the value of the whole Misiones, at the time of the expulsion of the

Jesuits\*. On this principle, the following calculation will be found very accurate.

VALUE OF THE MISSIONARY ESTABLISHMENT OF  
SAN IGNACIO MINI.

3500 Indians at . . .	£40 a-head	£140,000
5000 head of horned cattle . . .	8s. ,, .	2,000
1600 horses . . . . .	4s. ,, .	320
2000 mares . . . . .	2s. ,, .	200
700 mules . . . . .	8s. ,, .	280
500 asses . . . . .	4s. ,, .	100
5000 sheep . . . . .	2s. ,, .	500
Buildings,—that is, the church, and casa de residencia . . . . .		20,000
Territory, four leagues square, or sixteen leagues, at £40 . . . . .		640
Church ornaments and plate . . . . .		24,000
So that the value of this mision, or esta- blishment, was . . . . .		<u>188,040</u>
Let us, then, multiply this by 30; and what will be the result? Why . . .		<u>£5,641,200</u>

More than five million and a-half of our money; which was truly the capital possessed by the

\* See, at the end of the volume, a statistical, tabular account of the whole thirty establishments. This account was drawn up officially by order of the viceroy Bucareli, at the time of the expulsion of the Jesuits from Entrerios, Paraguay, and other places, in 1767.



Jesuits in Misiones alone; to say nothing of the value of their sumptuous *casas de temporalidades* and churches in every town of America. Now this was certainly too great a capital for any body of men to possess in that comparatively poor country, especially as the influence arising from it was increased by religious awe, political importance, and the means of physical resistance.

Considering that the most wealthy merchants in Assumption were not in possession of more than seven or eight thousand pounds; the shopkeepers not of more than four or five, nor the landed proprietors of more than three or four: seeing, that all these, bent upon their own individual aggrandisement, were incapable of being associated, as a body, for any purpose of national resistance, especially at the expense of their own fortunes; and not only so, but that a large portion of them were absolutely in league with the Jesuits; it must be confessed that the latter had a good deal more than their due share of influence in the country.

Every year was adding new proselytes to their sect, and fresh adherents to their party: so that what by their wealth, their religious and political

sway, and their growing interest with private individuals, the measure of the expulsion of the followers of Loyola, if at first it appear to have been harsh, will not perhaps be found, upon reflection, to have been either uncalled for, or premature. There are still some lingering adherents and partisans of theirs in Paraguay; and these are looking for the advent of the padres, as the Jews for that of the Messiah.

Having signified to the first Consul my desire to pay a visit to the fast-decaying establishments of the Jesuits, he said he should be happy to give me letters to the governors of those which were under the jurisdiction of Paraguay; and through them, he informed me, I should find easy access to all the information I might wish to acquire.

I thanked his Excellency for such of the preceding information as I had obtained from him, and also for his offer of letters introductory.

In one or two subsequent letters, I shall endeavour to give you such details as will perhaps elucidate and confirm the preceding more general sketch.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

## LETTER XXXII.

To J—— G——, Esq.

## THE JESUITS.

Difficulties which they had to encounter—the Paulistas or Mamelukes—Establishment of the Colonies of Our Lady of Loreto, and of St. Ignatius—Their Abandonment and Destruction—Perilous Adventures of the Colonists—Their re-establishment on the River Ybiquí, in Misiones properly so called.

*London, 1838.*

IN my two last letters I have endeavoured to sketch to you, but in general terms, the origin, rise, and downfall of the Jesuits. In this, and two or three subsequent ones, I shall enter a little more into details illustrative of what has been already said.

I shall point out to you some of the difficulties with which the early Jesuits had to contend, and show their address in overcoming them. I shall treat of their mode of governing the Indians; of

the manner in which the governors were expelled from their possessions ; and of the state in which they left them. I shall endeavour to trace the causes of the decay into which they subsequently fell ; and relating shortly what I myself saw on my visit to them, I shall conclude by a brief account of the nearly total annihilation into which they have since fallen.

In prominent connexion with the difficulties opposed to the establishment of the first Jesuits who landed in South America, were the hostile and ferocious inroads made upon their infant colonies by the Portuguese settlers in the province of St. Paul, of which the capital bears the same name. The foundation of this town was laid about the year 1554 ; it is situated twelve leagues inland of the seaport of San Vicente, in lat.  $25^{\circ} 30'$  south, and in longitude  $46^{\circ} 30'$  west. From the accession to its inhabitants of freebooters and marauders of the worst description from Portugal, and of pirates fitted out from Holland, the town of St. Paul soon became a terrible scourge to all the surrounding country.

The inhabitants, from being called Paulistas, in consequence of the name which they had given

to the capital of their colony, came ere long to be styled "Mamelukes," as designating the people most dreaded, from national associations, by both Spaniards and Portuguese. By fire and sword, lust, sacrilege, and robbery, the Paulistas carried devastation in their train, and spread terror and dismay wherever they came. Their first inroads were made upon the defenceless Guarani Indians. The able-bodied among these were dragged from their homes to cultivate the fields of the Mamelukes; the wives and daughters of the aborigines were appropriated to the invaders; while the aged, infirm, and children were invariably put to the sword.

During these excesses the Jesuits came to the country; and while some established small colonies of Indians in Brazil, the greater number crossed over to the banks of the Paraná and Uruguay.

The unheard-of barbarities of the Mamelukes soon depopulated the surrounding country of those tribes of Indians which had continued in their aboriginal state, and had not united together for mutual protection under the colonial system of the Jesuits. No doubt the mildness of the

government and character of these, as compared with the ferocious practices of the Paulistas, were, in the first instance, very instrumental in bringing over to the followers of Loyola the otherwise incredible numbers of Guaraní Indians that sought shelter under their wing.

Enraged by the abstraction from their clutches of the Indians, not less than excited by a thirst for plunder, the Mamelukes invaded the missionary establishments in Brazil, and not only sacked the infant towns, and carried off the inhabitants, but in the end literally uprooted the numerous colonies established there, and killed or expelled the Jesuits who had founded them.

Having done this, their predatory and savage habits led them next to make incursions upon a province called La Guayra, then belonging to Spain, situated on the banks of the Paraná, and colonized chiefly by numerous missionaries at the head of their respective reducciones or establishments of Guaraní Indians. What the Paulistas had done to the Portuguese settlements in the province of St. Paul, and elsewhere, they proceeded to do to the Spanish ones in La Guayra. They ruined them one after another ; carried off

the able-bodied Indians ; murdered the aged and the children ; plundered the property ; burnt the houses ; and once more killed or dispersed the Jesuits. All these facts, and many more, are minutely detailed by the Commissioner Albear, in his very interesting report, drawn up in his official capacity, and entitled “ Historical and Geographical Account of the Province of Misiones \*.”

The same person makes the following statement:—“ About this time (1630) the Paulistas sold in the slave-market of Rio de Janeiro sixty thousand Indian slaves, according to the official report addressed to His Catholic Majesty by Don Estevan Davila, who touched at that port on his way to be installed in the government of Buenos Ayres in 1637.”

This account of the Paulistas was necessary, in order to your understanding the difficulties, generally, with which the Jesuits who first migrated to South America had to contend ; but I have given it also, that you may the better comprehend the specific nature of the extremities to

\* This report, in manuscript, is in the possession of Sir Woodbine Parish.

which they were sometimes reduced, in order to escape the barbarous and unmitigable hostility of their enemies the Paulistas.

I select, by way of illustration, one instance, out of many.

In 1610, the two first missionary settlements in la Guayra were established; one on the river Pirapó (a branch of the Paraná), and the other at the distance of a few leagues. The name of the first was Nuestra Señora de Loreto, and of the second San Ygnacio Mini. They were superintended by two of the company's most able and zealous servants, Padre Antonio Ruiz de Montaya, and Padre Cataldino, who both crossed the country from Assumption, to take charge of the infant colonies. They so increased in population and importance as soon to become the nucleus, around which most of the neighbouring tribes of heretofore unsubdued Indians gathered. Not only so, but those two towns became places of refuge for the tapé Indians that fled from the other reducciones of the Jesuits in La Guayra, as they were one after another destroyed by the Paulistas. At length the townships of Loreto and San Ygnacio were the only two left, with a



population of twelve thousand Indians, under the superintendence of seven Jesuits, of whom the chief was Padre Montaya. The Paulistas, therefore, strained every nerve, and put in action every resource, for the destruction of these two last, most important, and now devoted establishments. The Jesuits, finding that resistance would be impossible, determined on retreat. This retreat, which, under ordinary circumstances, common prudence and sober calculation would have pronounced utterly impracticable, was, under the apprehension of imminent destruction as the only alternative, prepared for by the men who conducted it with an alacrity which did honour to their courage, and a prudence characteristic of their coolness and *prévoyance*. They were surrounded by enemies,—the Paulistas on one hand, and many yet unsubdued tribes of Indians on the other. They were watched, intrigued against, and at length attacked, even by the Spanish colonists on the west side of the Paraná, who, jealous of so large a population abandoning the country, did everything in their power to prevent it.

Yet in the midst of all these surrounding ob-

stacles and dangers, the Jesuits constructed seven hundred balsas\* ; they gathered up their goods and chattels ; they embarked their penates, closed their temples, and brought away the dead bodies of three martyrs of their fraternity. They then saw safely on board their flock of twelve thousand Indians ; and last of all, taking ship themselves, they launched into the stream of the Paraná. They had sailed but a very short time before the Paulistas entered, and the towns were reduced to ashes.

The object of the Jesuits was to sail down that river, and, uniting themselves with the Misiones established in Entrerios and Paraná, to preserve their colony, and lay the foundations of two towns of the names of those which, after residing in them twenty years, they had been so reluctantly, but so imperiously forced to abandon.

Having defeated or eluded their enemies, they reached, in a few days, what appeared a greater

\* The balsa is a vessel constructed by the junction of two canoes. This is effected by means of strong bamboo canes, about six feet in length, overlaying and fastened to both canoes, so as to form what answers all the purposes of a deck ; while the canoes may be considered as the hull of the vessel.

obstacle on the part of nature to their progress, than any that could be offered by man. That was the Salto Grande, or Great Cataract of the Paraná, which I have described in a former letter. It extends a distance of from fifteen to eighteen leagues, rolling down its torrent with headlong impetuosity, dashing its spray to a great height, perforating the rocks, and roaring with a noise resembling that of thunder.

The navigation of it could only have been dreamed of by men in despair. Yet the Jesuits made the attempt. They launched three hundred of their empty balsas upon it, in the hope that some of them might escape the fury of the torrent, and that thus their colony, proceeding by land, might find some of their little ships at the other end of the cataract.

They were not slipped two minutes from their moorings, before every one of them, in the presence, and to the dismay of the migratory band, was dashed to a thousand pieces.

The colony was now constrained to abandon the other four hundred balsas ; to take each man his bundle on his shoulder and his staff in his hand ; while the women bearing their helpless

children on their backs, and the Jesuits leading the van, the whole company set their faces to the arduous task of penetrating the almost impenetrable woods, of fording the rivulets, of clearing away the thorns and briars, of climbing and descending the hills ; till at length, after a perilous and laborious journey of eight days, they got to the foot of the cataract. Here they were obliged to encamp in the open air for several weeks, in order to construct new balsas. They lived upon such fruits and roots as they could find in the woods, and upon such birds and animals as they could reach with their arrows, till once more embarking, and the navigation being now no longer obstructed by any impediment, the Jesuits and their flock reached, about June 1632, the promised land for which they had been so long making. Here, on a fertile territory laved by the river Ybiquí (a branch of the Paraná) they once more built the towns of their favourite saints, Our Lady of Loreto, and Ignatius.

They were then embodied as part of the great family already established in the Misiones properly so called ; and the Guayra emigrants

formed two of the thirty establishments from which the successors of those Jesuits who conducted this expedition were eventually expelled.

Many more hardships were encountered by the Jesuits, and several lives lost, in their journeys across the Great Chaco, and in their efforts to form establishments in other places. But what I have said shall suffice in illustration of the first point of which I promised, at the commencement of my letter, to treat: viz., the difficulties with which the early Jesuits had to contend, their fortitude in meeting, and their address in overcoming them.

In my next letter I shall treat of the mode in which the Jesuits governed their Indian subjects.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XXXIII.

To J — G —, Esq.

## THE JESUITS.

Their Mode of Government—Its first Principle—Second Principle — Details — Details by Doblas—Third Principle of Government—Community of Goods—Observations by Doblas on this subject.

*London, 1838.*

THE form of government instituted by the Jesuits was as unique, as it was admirably contrived to promote the ends they had in view. That those ends were the complete subjugation of the Indians, by peaceable means, and the rendering of them subservient to the temporal aggrandizement of the adherents of Loyola, I think the following facts will pretty clearly show. That, together with exaction of their labour, religion was inculcated, order maintained, and a knowledge of the mechanical arts promoted among the Indians, although very true, is nothing to

the point. These facts show, indeed, the wisdom of the Jesuits, since, without some such foundation, no rulers can expect to reap much benefit from the exertions of their subjects. The Jesuits, in establishing a good form of government, sought the benefit and advancement of their own order; and, in moderation, that was a legitimate aim. But the real question before us is not this: it is, did they benefit the *Indian*? Did they raise him progressively in the scale of society? Was the condition of the last colonists better than that of the first converts? I fear a negative must be given to all these queries; and if we consider, in reference to the last, that the Indians were a hundred and fifty years under the exclusive and absolute sway of the Jesuits, without the advance of a step in the acquisition of either knowledge or property, we must surely conclude that there could not have been those pious and zealous endeavours to ameliorate *their* condition (I mean that of the Indians), of which we have heard so much.

The fundamental principle in government of the Jesuits was, that they were a body distinct from either the civil or ecclesiastical powers of

the community at large. They professed, indeed, allegiance, and offered homage to the king; but, *de facto*, they would not allow their institutions, laws, or practical government, to be interfered with, either by him, by his deputy the viceroy, or by the bishop.

To take so high a standing, and to carry their pretensions into operation with so high a hand, required, of course, long perseverance, unceasing and united effort, together with unwearied applications for new privileges, and the constant extension and abuse of them, in practice, when obtained. Nor would these systematic plans have succeeded as they did, unless aided by the great distance at which the Jesuits were from the source of both regal and papal authority; nor unless, in addition to this, the politico-religious body had been gradually rising to such wealth by its traffic, and to such power from the number and blind submission of its subjects, as to make itself always respected, and often feared by the surrounding governments of the country.

Of any other such *imperium in imperio* I never heard.



The next remarkable feature in the government of the Jesuits was the strict, the complete subordination in which each inferior of the order lived to his superior. Not less remarkable was the absolute sway exercised by the head of the body over every member of it. The obedience of the members of our physical frame to our volition, is the only simile by which I can illustrate the subordination of the Jesuits to their superior or chief.

The company had one such superior who presided over the whole of the Misiones. His residence was at Candelaria, as being a central point, from which he could readily visit the other establishments around him. This superior had two vice-superiors, or lieutenants, who lived, one on the banks of the Paraná, and the other on those of the Uruguay. They assisted the superior in the administration of the affairs of the various reducciones, but in complete subordination to him. In addition to these functionaries, who conducted the more important business of the community, each town had its own curate in particular, assisted by another priest, and sometimes by two, according to its extent and population.

The affairs, spiritual and temporal, of each town were entirely committed to the care of its respective curates. Of these, one ministered at the altar, and taught scanty elements of reading and writing to the neophytes. The other superintended the agricultural department, the herding of the cattle, and the men engaged in the mechanical arts, of which he was also the teacher.

The civil government and police of the Indians was vested nominally in themselves, but really in the curate. They had their mayor, judges, and aldermen, or officers nearly corresponding to these; but without the approbation of the curate, or paî, as they called him, not one single thing could be done. The court of common council (so to speak) met every day; gave in their report to the omnipotent paî; and receiving his instructions as to what they should do, proceeded to give them rigid fulfilment.

On this subject Doblás says — “ One of the greatest points \* with the curates, perhaps *the*

\* “ Memoria sobre las Misiones,” published at Buenos Ayres in November, 1836, by Don Pedro de Angelis. Don Gonzalo de Doblás was appointed by the Viceroy Vertiz governor of the province of Concepcion, in Misiones, in 1781. This was only four-

greatest, was to keep up a perfect equality among all the Indians, as well in matters of dress, as in a regular attendance at work: so that the lord and lady mayoress were required to be the first at the spot selected for that day's labour, and were there joined by the other workmen:—so it was with the aldermen and their wives. Not one of them was allowed to wear shoes, nor any distinctive badge of clothing; not even to vary the general mode of wearing what they had. All were put upon a footing of strict equality. The only distinction conceded to the lord mayor and aldermen was a permission, on days of public festivity, to carry their black wands, and to dress in suits kept by the padres under lock and key, expressly for such occasions, and for them only. The caciques were generally the most miserable of the whole community, and very rare it was to

teen years after the expulsion of the Jesuits; so that the governor had the best opportunity of obtaining correct information. The acuteness of his mind, the simplicity of his narrative, and the impartiality of his judgment, all render him, in my opinion, one of the best authorities, and most entertaining writers on Misiones. The narrative of what he observed is lamentably correct and amusing; but his well-intentioned suggestions for amelioration were speculative and impracticable.

find one of them that could read. They never gave them any public office, or, if they did, it was on occasions few and far between. It came to be known, at the time of the expulsion of the Jesuits, that in the thirty townships there were only found three cacique mayors. No doubt the fathers feared that if they added to the veneration entertained by the people for their caciques that which would be connected by the conferring on them of honourable offices, they might aspire to more authority than was at that time altogether convenient."

Doblas addresses his 'Historical Memoir' to his friend Don Feliz Azára; and, in prosecution of his remarks, goes on to say,—

"Now you see, my friend, that however excellent a *régime* this might be, if practised by a master towards his pupils, or by a father towards his children in their nonage, it could never train or form a people to anything like knowledge or liberty. And yet these it has always been the desire of his majesty to promote. But the practice was as I have recorded it; and the consequences have been such as were to be expected. These consequences could be hidden neither from

the curates nor their superiors; but their private interests occupied the place of first importance in all they ever did; and thus they adopted a method of their own, the grand object of which was to keep the Indians aloof from everything that could tend to rescue them from ignorance and degradation.

“ When men acted upon this *régime*, and upon these principles of political economy, it cannot be matter of surprise, that in the course of a hundred and fifty years, which it is since these establishments were formed, such immense wealth should have been found, as well in the churches, as in that fund called ‘ the fund of the community.’ For my part, I am not astonished at this, when I consider the vast fertility of this province; the complete subjugation of the Indians; that they were absolutely shut out from all intercourse with the Spaniards; and that, knowing no other authority than that of the Jesuits, they became mere tools in their hands.”

But perhaps the most characteristic trait of the Jesuitical form of government was that by which it is known as having been one of a “ community of goods.” Bad as this system is generally

allowed to be, even when fairly administered,—that is, when an equal proportion of the produce of the community is distributed to every individual of it,—how great an *imposture*, as well as fallacy, must not the system involve, when, with the name, merely, of “community of goods,” the thousands of labourers get barely what is sufficient for scanty clothing and coarse food, while their small number of lords and masters absorb the whole surplus for their own benefit, and that of the society with which they are connected. In using the word “society” here, I do not mean the society of the Jesuits, as connected with the Indians, still less as embodying them as a part and portion of such society; I speak of it as the society or “community” of the Jesuitical priesthood alone. Out of the whole produce of the “community’s” labour, the Jesuit allowed the Indian, as I have said, scanty clothing, coarse food, a mud hovel for shelter, and nothing more.

But if *this* constitute community of goods, and if there be anything meritorious in that system, then the West India planter is as meritorious a man, and carries out the principle as far, as the Jesuit did; for the planter, no less than the priest,

*must* allow his community of slaves the necessaries of life; otherwise they perish, and he is ruined.

On the principle of the system, as well as on the working of it, Doblas makes the following just, and almost pathetic remarks. He is writing of a period fourteen years subsequent to that of the expulsion of the Jesuits; but at a time when all their principles, and as nearly as possible their form of government, were preserved, though of course not nearly so well administered as by them.

He had been speaking before of the forced marriages which the Jesuits were ever making among the Indians, seldom leaving the parties to choose for themselves, and producing thus the natural consequence of indifference between man and wife.

“The same indifference,” says Doblas to Azara, “that husbands display towards their wives, wives towards their husbands, both towards their children, and these towards their parents, the Indians show respecting any property they have acquired, or may acquire. This is only a weight and embarrassment to them, nor can in any way be rendered useful. Suppose an Indian, not

spell-bound by the impressions made on his countrymen, as a result of their training and education ; suppose such an Indian to be of an active, laborious disposition ; suppose that, stimulated by a spirit of industry, as well as by the advantages accorded to him by his township of a free grant of arable land, and of bullocks with which to plough it, he desires, by working on the days allowed him by ‘ the community ’ for this purpose, to make the fertility of the soil subservient to the amelioration of his condition in life. Well, he ploughs up and prepares a large space of land, and sows it with such seeds as he knows will yield him the largest return of produce. The year is propitious ; and in due season, after much personal labour and pains,—because he has not been able to hire the labourers of ‘ the community ’ to assist him ;—because his wife, being also employed by ‘ the community,’ cannot help him ;—and because he himself is obliged to labour the half of his time for ‘ the community ;’—yet, in due season, he reaps a crop three or four times greater than he requires for the maintenance, during the whole year, of his own person and family.

“ Now, what is he to do with the *surplus* of



this crop? Sell it to others? Who *are* these others? The other Indians of his own town, or of other towns. And these, what are *they* to give him in exchange for his produce? They have nothing of their own, except some grain or vegetables of precisely the same kind of which the industrious Indian has already too much. He cannot export his produce from the province, either because he has not the means, or because the expense of doing so would exceed the return.

“ Seeing now the failure he has made the first year, but yet unwilling to live in idleness, the Indian, instead of sowing grain, determines the second year to plant cotton, sugar-cane, and tobacco,—because he knows that cotton, honey, sugar, and tobacco are all articles of commerce. He puts in execution his design, and sees his crops all thriving. The cotton-plant and sugar-cane yield no produce, or very little, the first year; and for the tobacco, it is necessary, from the moment it begins to ripen till it is completely seasoned, and made ready for sale, not to leave it for an instant. But our industrious and enterprising Indian must at this very time give his labour to ‘the community;’ so that the tobacco which he

gathered in on the days appropriated to his own labour, is lost during those on which he must serve the padres; and, in the end, he collects nothing, or, if he does get a little, it is of bad quality. On the following year, when he had expected to reap some benefit from his cotton and sugar-cane plantations, he is sent off as a herd to the estancias, as a peon to the yerba-plantations, or as something else to some other place, on which he is constrained to remain for some time. His whole labour has been in vain: he goes,—he must go,—wherever he is commanded; and all on which he had placed his hope is abandoned, and all on which he had set his heart is lost.

“Cattle the Indian can neither possess nor breed; because, in consequence of his continually-required services to ‘the community,’ he cannot herd them, and because all the other Indians, being subject to similar regulations, he can hire no man as a substitute.” What a picture this! and what a pity ’tis, ’tis true!

*Au reste*, the Jesuits amused the Indians by granting to them occasional festive and holidays, on which there was abundance of feasting and display: mass was regularly said, and young and

old obliged to attend it. There was an hospital for the sick, a school in which were taught the elements of reading; and there were regular hours devoted to prayer, singing, and the practice of church music. A considerable number of Indians were taught the use of the sword and of the musket; and, as far as discipline goes, their discipline as slaves superseded all necessity for their discipline as soldiers, except as regards platoon exercise and military evolution\*.

Such was the mode of government of the Jesuits.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

\* The following is a translation of a curious passage from Doblas:—

“ Ut audivissem (Doblas loquitur), horis diversis noctu, tympanum pulsari, et precipuè ad aurorem exorientem, inquisivi quorum hic sonatus? Dixerunt mihi semper consuetum esse totam gentem crebro suscitare secundum quietum: hujus usus originem cognoscere volens, respondérunt, propter notam indolem desidiosam Indiorum, qui, laborè quotidiano defessi, initi sunt lechum et dormiti per noctem totam, hoc modo officiis conjugalibus non functis; Jesuitas mandaverant ut, nonnullis horis noctû, tympanum pulsatum esset, in hunc modum incitare maritos.”

## LETTER XXXIV.

To J—— G——, Esq.

## THE JESUITS—MANNER OF THEIR EXPULSION.

Letter of Charles III. to Pope Clement XIII.—The Pope's Reply—Advice of the King's Council—Clement XIII. reprobates, Clement XIV. approves, the conduct of the Spanish King—Count Aranda's Instructions to the Viceroy Bucareli—Bucareli's Measures—Result of them.

*London, 1838.*

THINGS being in the state already described, as regards the Jesuits and their establishments, Charles III., on the 27th of February, 1767, issued a royal decree, banishing the Jesuits from all his dominions; and on the 31st of March of the same year, like the lady who, having asked the Spectator whether she should marry or not, told him in a postscript that she had determined to do so, his majesty addressed the following letter to Pope Clement XIII., soliciting his benediction on the deed already done. We have extracted this from a collection of Spanish manu-

scripts, hitherto unpublished, in the possession of Sir Woodbine Parish\*.

*Letter written to Pope Clement XIII. by his Majesty Charles III., on occasion of the total expulsion of the Jesuits from his kingdoms.*

“ MOST HOLY FATHER,

“ Your holiness is well aware that the first duty of a sovereign is to watch over the peace and preservation of his state, and to provide for the good government and internal tranquillity of his subjects. In compliance with this principle, I have been under the imperious necessity of resolving upon the immediate expulsion of all the Jesuits who were established in my kingdoms and dominions, and to send them to the state of the church, under the immediate, wise, and holy direction of your most holy beatitude, most worthy father and master of all the faithful.

“ I should fall under the obloquy of throwing a heavy charge upon the apostolic privy council, by obliging it to exhaust its treasures in the supporting of those poor Jesuits who happen to have

\* We have elsewhere acknowledged our obligations to this gentleman for the access we have had to his collection of manuscripts and printed works relative to South America.

been born my vassals, had I not made previous provision, as I have, for the payment to each individual of a sum sufficient to maintain him for life.

“ On such understanding, I pray your holiness to view this my determination simply as an indispensable step of political economy, taken only after mature examination, and the most profound reflection.

“ Doing me the justice to believe this (as I pray you will), your holiness will assuredly grant your holy and apostolic benediction on this measure, as well as on all my actions, which have for their object, in the same way, the promotion of the honour and glory of God.

(Signed) “YO EL REY\*.”

In reply to this communication, his holiness addressed, on the 16th of February, 1767, a brief to Charles III.; but though it commenced thus, “To our dearest son in Jesus Christ, health and apostolic benediction,” it was full, not only of remonstrance against the measure adopted, and of vindication of the Jesuits, but of what

\* Literally translated, “I THE KING;” such being the sign manual of the kings of Spain.

might be called condemnation of the king and of his ordinance. "Is it," he exclaims, "the Catholic Charles III., whom we so much love, that is to fill to the brim the cup of our bitter afflictions; to overwhelm our unhappy old age with grief and tears; and finally to precipitate us into the tomb?" In another place the pope writes thus: "We say it in the presence of God and man, that the body, the institution, the spirit of the company of Jesus is absolutely innocent; and not only innocent, but that it is pious, it is useful, it is holy; and all this whether considered with reference to its laws, to its maxims, or to its objects. Those who have attempted to detract from its merits, have only called down upon their lies and contradictions the contempt and detestation of all good and impartial men."

Notwithstanding this remonstrance, the papal brief, having been sent to the extraordinary council of his majesty, for their opinion upon it, was rather roughly handled by that august body. In their reply to Charles III., they state, "That, in the first place, the brief is wanting in that spirit of courtesy and moderation due to the king of Spain and of the Indies;" and they contend that

“ to enter into controversy upon the merits of the case, would be to incur the most grievous inconvenience of compromising the sovereign prerogative of his majesty, who is to God alone responsible for his actions.” The pope is treated by the council extraordinary with very little ceremony ; and so far from agreeing in opinion with him about the Jesuits, they are loaded with vituperation throughout.

“ Padre Luis de Molina,” says the council, “ altered the theological doctrines. Padre Juan Aldiuno carried his scepticism so far as to doubt the authenticity of the sacred writings. In China and in Malabar they have rendered compatible the worship at once of God and mammon. They have lent a deaf ear to pontifical decisions. In Japan they have persecuted the very bishops, and other religious orders, in a manner so scandalous, that it can never be blotted from the memory of man ; while in Europe they have been the focus and *point d'appui* of tumults, rebellions, and regicides. These deeds, notorious to the whole world, have been overlooked in the pontifical brief.

“ His majesty cannot be surprised at the



pope's intercession for the Jesuits, because it is well known to the king, not only what powerful influence they have at the court of Rome, but that they are under the declared protection of the Cardinal Torregiani, secretary of state to his holiness, as well as confidential intimate and countryman of his confessor and director, the general of the company, Lorenzo Ricci."

So much, and much more, says the council respecting the Jesuits; but I content myself with one farther extract, having more immediate reference to their doings in Paraguay.

"It is proven against them" (the document states), "by the undeniable testimony of their own papers, that in Paraguay they took the field, with organized armies, to oppose themselves to the crown; and now, at this very time, have they not been, in Spain, endeavouring to change the whole government, to modify it according to their own pleasure; and to promulgate and put in practice doctrines the most horrible?"

The extraordinary council concludes by humbly recommending his majesty to give a decided negative to the appeal of the pope in favour of the Jesuits, and recommends "that he do neither

enter into farther correspondence, admit negotiation, nor in any other way lend his royal ear to any application whatever on their behalf."

This document is dated 30th April, 1767, and signed by the Count of Aranda, and other members of the council. The king followed their advice. Clement XIII. died without sanctioning the expulsion; but on the 12th of September, 1773, six years afterwards, his successor, Clement XIV., not only ratified the measure, but issued a very long and complex brief, consisting of forty-one articles, in which he set forth all his reasons for approving of the royal edict, exonerated the king, and in no indirect terms insinuated many and weighty charges against the Jesuitical body.

But to return to the mode of the expulsion of the Jesuits from Paraguay. Very shortly after the date of the royal decree to this effect (that is, on the 1st of March, 1767), the Count of Aranda, then minister of state of Charles III., despatched a ship of war, called the Prince, to the River Plate, with peremptory orders to the viceroy of that day, Bucareli, to take immediate and executive measures for the simultaneously seizing of

the Jesuits in their various strongholds, especially in Misiones, and for the shipping of them off to Europe.

Bucareli received this order on the 7th of June, 1767. So quickly, so effectually, and yet so silently, did he plan his measures, that he found, by transmitting, on the instant, secret and sealed despatches to all the governors, cabildos, and other functionaries within the viceroyalty, he could fix on the 21st of July following as the day on which those despatches were to be opened, and on the 22nd as that on which the respective orders contained in them all were to be simultaneously executed. These orders were to the effect that every Jesuit should be seized and sent to Buenos Ayres.

Speaking of the anxiety under which he laboured; of the many calculations it was necessary to make; and of the many measures and precautions it was needful to adopt, in order to give effect to the royal decree, Bucareli thus writes from Buenos Ayres on the 6th of September, 1767, to the Count of Aranda.

“ With these and other cares pressing upon me, I revolved in my mind the means of carrying

into execution the royal ordinance. I had to anticipate all its consequences upon five hundred Jesuits distributed over a distance of more than seven hundred leagues; possessed of twelve colleges; of one house of residence; of more than fifty estancias, and places where they were building, which are so many more colleges, and settlements made up of a vast number of servants and slaves; of thirty towns of Guaraní Indians, with more than a hundred thousand inhabitants; and of twelve thousand Abipones, Macobies, Lules, and various other nations of Chiquitos; not to speak of many more, of whom, on the Jesuitical principle of keeping the Indians from all intercourse with the Spaniards, we know nothing."

In another part of his letter, Bucareli says, "The largest college, viz., that of Cordova, is generally reputed as the head of the powerful empire of the Jesuits. Empire it may truly be called; because, counting Indians, slaves, and other servants, they have, in this vast country, more vassals than the king."

So well concerted were the plans of Bucareli, that on the 21st of July his sealed despatches were opened at every point where there was an

establishment of the holy fathers; and on the 22nd they were pounced upon, generally at midnight, by the civil and military authorities. They were sent off, early in the morning, to Buenos Ayres, as a point of general rendezvous. In a few months most of them were shipped off for Spain, —“*remitted,*” as Bucareli expresses it, by forties, fifties, and a hundred at a time, to be, by the king of Spain, sent to Italy, as a present to Pope Clement XIII.

Their goods and chattels; their houses and churches; their land and cattle; their silver and gold; their subjects and slaves; all, all were inventoried and taken possession of by the crown. A government, the most extraordinary that ever existed; a community that had gone on increasing and gathering strength, and wealth, and power, for more than a hundred and fifty years, was overthrown in a single night. This, too, at a moment when each individual was aspiring to advancement; when the whole body was lording it over the whole country; and when every member of it thought the house of the Jesuits built upon a rock. Who, that should have told those men, when they lay down to rest on the night of

22nd of June, 1767, that, next morning, before the crowing of the cock, their houses should be left desolate, their persons imprisoned, and their worldly possessions given to the winds ;—who, that should have told them this, would not have been pronounced insane ?

Yet so it was :—with all their wisdom, caution, calculation, strength, wealth, and double-dealing, the Jesuits were out-jesuited at last. The Count of Aranda and Bucareli were too much for them ; they checkmated the followers of Loyola at the moment these had calculated that a few moves more would enable them to give checkmate to the minister's and the viceroy's king.

You have already seen what different opinions were entertained of the Jesuits, by the parties which espoused, and by those that deprecated their principles.

The following curious specimens of Indian epistolary composition (extracted from manuscripts already referred to) will place the species of intrigue and double-dealing that were at work on both sides, in a still more striking point of view.

Instigated by the *Jesuits*, you will see how

solemn a protest was entered by the Indians against the expulsion of the holy fathers: moved by the *court party*, you will perceive how the Tâpés lauded the viceroy, the bishop, and the king, for so enlightened and benevolent a measure as that of the expulsion of the members of the Loyola school.

First comes the letter of remonstrance *against* the step: then follows that in *approval* of it. The former is couched in the terms of which a literal translation is herewith given. It is addressed to the governor of the missionary town of Saint Luis, and runs thus:—

“The Lord bless your lordship. We, the members of the court of lord mayor and aldermen, as well as all the caciques and Indians, male and female, the flock of the town of Saint Luis, send greeting. Your lordship is our true and real father. The lord mayor, Santiago Pindó, and Don Pantaleon Cayuarí, in their great love, have written to us to send them some birds. As regards winged birds, which we are requested to send to the king, we are profoundly sorry that we possess them not; for they have their habitation in the woods which God provided for them.

They fly from our approach, and it is a most difficult matter to comply with the request that has been made. Nevertheless, we are ever the vassals of God and of the king, and are ready to yield obedience to the pleasure and commands of his ministers. Have we not given repeated proofs of this? Have we not thrice gone to Colonia, lent our services there, and worked hard in order to pay tribute? But now we are constrained to pray God that a better bird than any of the woods,—that is, the Holy Ghost,—may enlighten the king, and that the Holy Guardian Angel may preserve him.

“ Thus, then, confiding in your lordship, most honourable lord governor,—in you who are our true father,—with tears in our eyes we implore that the sons of Saint Ignatius, the holy fathers of the company of Jesus, may for ever abide among us. This favour it is our urgent request that you ask for us at the hands of the king, and for the love of God.

“ The whole town, men, women, and children with tears in their eyes, join us in our prayer. In an especial manner, we poor souls desire to be delivered from the dominion of priests and friars.



We love them not. The apostle Saint Thomas, the minister of God, warned our ancestors, in these very regions, against them. Priests and friars care not for us. How much otherwise is it with the sons of Saint Ignatius! From the very first they have taken a holy interest in our sires, instructing and baptizing them, and presenting them as an offering to God and to the king. Again, therefore, we repeat, that priests and friars we will not receive, and cannot, on any consideration, love. The fathers of the company of Jesus know how to bear with our weaknesses; and under their care we are at peace with God and with the king. Grant us our request; listen, O lord governor, to our prayer, and let it be graciously answered. We will, if you do, give a larger tribute of yerba caamini.

“Remember, we beseech your lordship, that we are not slaves. Our solemn declaration is, that we like not the ways of the Spaniards. They are beings who look to their own interest alone; neither will one of them assist another in his work, nor relieve him in time of need. This truth we frankly state to your lordship, in the hope that we may benefit by the communication. Should

it be otherwise, this town, as well as all the rest, will be lost in the end. In spite of your lordship, of our king, and of our God, hell will receive us at last; and then what consolation shall we have at the hour of our death? Our children are dispersed in the woods, as well as settled in the towns; and if they behold not the sons of Saint Ignatius, they will wander about as marauders, and make desolate the face of the land.

“ Saint Joaquim, Saint Estanislus, Saint Ferdinand, and the town of Timbó, are already ruined, as we well enough know, and faithfully tell your lordship.

“ Adieu, then, to us, the mayoralty court! How shall we restore to the king the towns in that state in which they once were?

“ Now, then, our good lord the governor, let our petition be granted, and God bless and prosper you many years. This is the express representation of us the inhabitants of the town of Saint Luis, 28th of February, 1768, in the name of your humble children of the whole town.

“ I, Christoval Chora, Lord Mayor.

“ I, Chrisanto Nerando, Judge of the First Court.

“ I, Eustaquio Arapatî, Judge of the Second Court.

“ I, Pasqual Pindó, Ensign Royal.

“ I, Hermanegildo Curissi, senior Alderman.

“ I, Antonio Marangna, second Alderman.

“ I, Don Bonifacio Agriará, third Alderman.

“ I, Don Christoval Acatú, fourth Alderman.

“ I, Borja Yrabuyé, the Sheriff.

“ I, Christoval Yabí, first Judge of the Holy Brotherhood.

“ I, Ignacio Yeguacá, second Judge of the Brotherhood.

“ I, Luis Atí, Secretary of the Court, in the name of forty-one caciques.”

So much for the Indian production in *favour* of the Jesuits, prompted, no doubt, every word, by the Jesuits themselves.

Now for the counter production, prompted not less certainly by Bucareli and *his* adherents. It is addressed by the Indians to Charles III., and forwarded by the viceroy, under the following note, to the Count of Aranda.

“ Most excellent and dear Sir,

“ The judges and caciques of the thirty towns situated between the famous rivers Uruguay and

Paraná, have made a request, which I have granted, to write a letter to our lord the king. They have also petitioned me to present it to his majesty, through the hands of your excellency, which I now do, after having had it translated by one of the best interpreters of the Guarani language, in which it was originally written. I request, accordingly, that your excellency, should you see no objection to this course, will place the document in the hands of his majesty, our lord.

“ God preserve your excellency, &c.

“ BUCARELI.”

To this note Bucareli received from the Count of Aranda the following reply.

“ To his excellency Don Francisco Bucareli.

“ Together with the letter of your excellency of the 27th of March of this year, I have received the dispatch which you inclose from the caciques and civil functionaries of the towns situated between the rivers Uruguay and Paraná; and I have placed it in the royal hands of his majesty.

“ I beg to intimate, that if your excellency should not receive a reply by this conveyance, an

answer will be transmitted by the first vessel following for your port; and that such opportunity for writing cannot be distant.

“That God may preserve your excellency for many years, is the prayer of

“The Count of Aranda.

“*Madrid, September 9th, 1768.*”

The letter of the Indians, so opportunely transmitted, and so graciously received, runs thus, and it might be headed,

BUCARELI, PLAINTIFF, VERSUS THE JESUITS, DEFENDANTS.

“TO OUR GOOD KING CHARLES THE THIRD.

“We give thanks to God, and may He grant to your majesty perfect health, pleasure, and contentment. May He, by His power, long preserve the life of your majesty for the protection of us, your poor vassals, in all our necessities and wants. We, the thirty judges and thirty caciques of the towns of Misiones, desire to appear before you full of confidence, and to prostrate ourselves at your majesty's feet, praying that God may have you in His holy keeping, for the fulfilment of all

the pleasure of your majesty. With our whole heart do we spread this letter out before your royal throne. We have already seen enough to assure us, good king, that the Lord, in His mercy, has enlightened you as to our pitiable condition, and moved you to relieve us from the arduous life to which we were doomed.

“ As we would receive the person of your majesty, so have we, with the greatest delight, received the priests and friars whom you have appointed to rule over us. Many and repeated thanks do we give your majesty for having sent such a personage to govern us as his excellency the captain-general Don Francisco de Paulo Bucareli. Through his love of God and of your majesty, the viceroy has given ample fulfilment to all our most earnest desires. With pity has he looked upon our poverty, and done all he could for its alleviation. His kindness has been made manifest to the whole world: he has clothed us with garments, behaved to us, and invited us to his board, as if we were gentlemen. He has gratified the highest aspirations of our hearts. We have received this saint, the creature of your majesty, as at the hands of God. On the 4th of

November, the day of Saint Charles, we had high mass celebrated for your majesty, by the lord bishop, in the cathedral. We there ranked, with indescribable exultation, as the intimate companions of his excellency the viceroy; and when the holy mass was over, we were conducted to the palace. There we were seated at the dinner-table, as equals with our good lord the bishop, with his excellency the viceroy, and with many other gentlemen of note, and dignitaries of the church.

“ All this has his excellency the viceroy done, even while representing the sacred person of your majesty. With his own hands he helped us, and, by his condescension, filled our hearts with joy.

“ We have received him, accordingly, as we would the sacred person of your majesty. For the consolation of your poor vassals, we have escorted him through all the towns of the Misiones. Your majesty, our good king, we do not see; but we look upon your viceroy as your representative; and we do honour to his pleasure as such. To him, in person, and in the name of your majesty, it is that we trust for the arrangement of all our differences, and for the rescuing of us from that miserable state of bondage in which,

like the vilest of slaves, we have been so long held.

“For your majesty’s enactment, making our children eligible to the priesthood, we feel most grateful. We will assuredly learn the Spanish language; and when, by the blessing of God, we have acquired a thorough knowledge of it, we will solicit an interview with your majesty; whom God have in His gracious keeping many years.”

Signed by the Indian authorities, as in the preceding letter, with the addition of the caciques.

You may not be able to trace in the two specimens of Indian composition here given, the consistency of the colonists of Misiones; but you can scarcely fail to detect the absolute state of servility to which they had been reduced.

Poor and wretched Indians! such has been their fate over the whole of not only South, but North America. The English can lay no better claim to good treatment of the aborigines, than either the Spaniards or Portuguese. Humanity seems to have been the pretext, slavery or extermination the practice, of Europeans towards the



defenceless owners of the soil of America. The conduct of the invaders of the New World is a deep stain on the character of the Old. "Out" — may we say with Lady Macbeth, to the blood-stain upon her hand — "out, damned spot!" but spots like these, alas! will never out.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XXXV.

To J—— G——, Esq.

## THE JESUITS.

State in which they left the Misiones—Causes of the Decay of Misiones—1st, Corruption—2nd, Mal-administration—Comparison between the Government of the Jesuits and that of Spain—Statistical Table—Mal-administration—Remarks of Doblás on this—Reflections—Concluding Extract from Doblás.

*London, 1838.*

By the official table at the end of the volume, it appears that the Jesuits possessed in their Misiones of Entrerios and Paraguay, thirty towns, containing

21,036 families,  
 88,864 inhabitants,  
 724,903 head of tame cattle,  
 46,936 oxen,  
 34,725 horses,  
 64,353 mares,

13,905 mules,  
7,505 asses,  
230,384 sheep,  
and 592 goats.

But this, as you have seen by the extract from Bucareli's report to the Count of Aranda, was but a small portion of their aggregate wealth: for they were spread over the whole of South America, and had colleges, temporalidades, or warehouses, houses of residence, lands, slaves, Indian subjects, richly endowed and adorned churches, together with a paramount influence, the result of all this wealth, wherever they were established. For the poorest and most isolated of their establishments was never considered by the people as one single possession, but as one of a great whole; and thus, wherever a priest of the Order went, he was considered and treated as a representative of the mass of his brethren, and way was immediately made for him to exercise as much authority as any of his colleagues could practise at Cordova or in Misiones. A great part of the wealth of the Jesuits consisted in the gold and silver ornaments of their churches. To the shrine of Santa Rosa (the patroness Saint

of the Indies) in the Misiones town of that name were brought offerings of the precious metals, and jewels in such abundance, that their value was computed at one time at three hundred thousand pounds. Santa Rosa was a sort of South American Mecca, to which the faithful made pilgrimages, and where they got a respite for their souls from purgatory, at the expense of sometimes half their fortunes.

As to the causes of the decay into which the Misiones fell so shortly after the banishment of the Jesuits, they are various. But they may be resolved into these two,—corruption, and mal-administration. Many have taken occasion to infer, from the prosperous state in which the Misiones were under the Jesuitical *régime*, as compared with the decay into which they sunk under their subsequent governors, that therefore the system of government of the Jesuits must have been excellent. No inference, however, could be more fallacious.

That the adherents of Loyola managed their colonies better than those who followed them, there is, there cannot be, a shadow of doubt. But after what has been said, it will scarcely

be thought that, because there was a still lower abyss to which the Indians might be sunk than that in which they had worked under the Jesuits, these were therefore patriotic governors. As well might it be said that the system of Old Spain in Paraguay was good, because that of the ruthless Dictator has been tenfold worse. This is not the proper view of the case.

The system of the Jesuits was excellent for the promotion of their own ambitious views; it was baneful as far as the Indian was concerned. The system of the governors, lay and clerical, who superseded the Jesuits, was not only unavailable for their own aggrandizement, but it was execrable as regarded the Indian. When, in speaking of the system of the last governors, I say it was unavailable for their own aggrandizement, I mean to say, *generally* and *permanently*: for, on the first ousting of the Loyola body, the corrupt subordinates charged with its execution ran in upon the spoil, and recklessly plundered whatever they could. The plate of the churches went; then the cattle went; then the merchandise in the stores went: so that those first successors of the Jesuits *did* enrich themselves.

But each follower of those first found less of the spoil: the cattle were going, or gone; the Indians were deserting; the governor could only get a small salary with his government; and in twenty years from the time of the expulsion of the Jesuits, the least enviable of governments was one in Misiones.

*Permanently*, then, the governors of Misiones who succeeded the Jesuits, while they benefited not themselves, rendered galling, through mal-administration, that yoke of the poor Indian which had sat lightly on him under the Jesuits. Thus it ever was with the aborigines of South America. However much any party of Europeans might be gainers, the wretched natives were always sure to be losers.

To give you an idea of the rapid rate at which spoliation, robbery, and mal-administration, together, must have proceeded, even during the first four years after the expulsion of the Jesuits, I extract the following official table from a preliminary discourse on the work already referred to of Doblas, by Don Pedro de Angelis\* :—

\* This accomplished writer, whose friendship I had the pleasure of enjoying in Buenos Ayres, has there published, in Spanish,

*Statement of the number of Cattle in Misiones in 1768, and of that found in 1772, showing the deficiency.*

	Tame Cattle.	Oxen.	Horses.	Mares.	Colts.	Mules.	Asses.	Sheep.
1768	743,608	44,114	31,603	64,352	3256	12,705	7469	225,486
1772	158,659	25,498	18,149	34,605	4619	8,145	5192	93,739
Deficit.	584,909	18,621	13,454	29,747		4,560	2277	131,747

Having thus spoken of the corruption which pervaded the Spanish government of the ex-Jesuit colonies, I shall now shortly advert to that mal-administration which was the result more immediately of ignorance, and of attempts to do what it was not in the nature of things should be done. The Buenos Ayres government assumed it to be necessary, that the system of the Jesuits with the Indians should be followed up, even under the change of administrators which must necessarily take place. In this supposition they were right; for the Indians were not in a position

a voluminous, but highly interesting compilation of rare and manuscript works illustrative of the history of the united provinces of Rio de la Plata. Mr. Angelis' own preliminary discourses, eloquently written, are the most agreeable parts of his elaborate work.—W. P. R.

to undergo any sudden transition from the state of pupilage in which they had been kept for one hundred and fifty years. But when the government of Buenos Ayres went on to assume that it *could* follow up the system of the Jesuits, here it was entirely wrong ; and upon this rock of error split all its schemes for preserving the Misiones from present decay and ultimate ruin.

Instead of the one superior Jesuit, who had governed with absolute sway all the Misiones, a governor and three lieutenants under him were appointed. Instead of the two curates appropriated by the Jesuits for the *entire* government of each town, two curates were appointed for spiritual concerns, and a temporal administrator to manage the worldly possessions of the colony. Great was the difficulty of making the Indians understand how any mere layman should have authority over them. They were continually appealing from him to the curates. These encouraged this spirit of adherence to their order, the better to sustain their own authority, and augment their own gains. Hence, perpetual intrigues and hostilities between the lay administrator and the clerical functionaries.



On this subject, Doblás says—" At length the Indians were made to understand that it was only on matters connected with their salvation they were to listen attentively to the curates ; but on everything else to their lay administrator only. This put no end, however, to the dissensions between administrator and curates ; because, as they both lived in the same house, and, as regards their functions, were, to a certain extent, dependent on each other, they never were agreed as to what was the true balance of power.

" The curates wanted the Indians to attend mass, and the counting of their beads, every day, and at whatever hour the priests might choose. This was often purposely made a very inconvenient hour. Hereupon the laymen interposed to prevent compliance, sometimes with reason, and sometimes without it. The result was, that the curate ordered the Indians that obeyed the administrator to be flogged, and the administrator awarded stripes to those who obeyed the curate. Both chastisements fell upon the miserable Indians, without farther delinquency on their part, than that of not knowing exactly

which party to obey, or of obeying the party they liked best.

“Not even the mayor and aldermen escape this cruel species of torture. They are often bastinadoed by order of both curates and lay administrator, without knowing to which of them it is their duty to adhere.

“From petty jealousies and personal feuds, inflammatory discords are every day kindled into a flame. As the town is obliged to support the curates, and as all provisions are under the control of the administrator, this person, when at war, as he almost invariably is, with the curates, takes advantage of this control to avenge himself. He makes them wait; he gives them the worst of every thing; doles out to them the most scanty supply; and aggravates the hardship by the infliction of innumerable petty grievances. The curates, it is true, have not always justice on *their* side; for they often exact rations so superabundant, that they not only maintain with them a number of servants, but six or eight adherents.

“As in the towns there are no master-trades-

men to work for those who will buy what they make; and as not even a peon can be hired without previous appeal to the administrator, because all are subject to the law of community of goods; as the Indians do not understand what it is to sell the produce of their labour, and there is thus no way of being supplied with many actual necessities, the practice observed is this: if any functionary wants a pair of shoes, he calls in the shoemaker, gives him the leather, and says to him, 'make me a pair of shoes.' He makes and brings them. If they give him anything, he takes it, and if not, he goes his way without making any demand. It is the same in everything else. If the curate employs the shoemaker, being on bad terms with the administrator, the moment the latter knows what the shoemaker is about, off he dispatches him to work for 'the community,' in order to retard, or altogether frustrate, the work for the curate. The curate gets to know this: he bristles with ire; and the result of the whole matter is, that the Indian shoemaker has to pay the penalty of stripes from the curate, because forced by the administrator to abandon his last."

Who, upon evidence such as this, can withhold his pity and his sympathy from the unhappy Tâpé Indians? The policy of the Jesuits, in the first place, for their own selfish and ambitious views, reduces the Indians to a state of listless apathy and imbecility, and keeps them in that state for a century and a half: so that when Loyola's dynasty comes to a close, the cupidity, the ignorance, and the vindictive feelings of the new governors, add to degradation, cruelty, and lay the foundation of the last and melancholy state of the long-suffering and enduring aborigines,—rapid extermination.

This undeniable result clearly proves that the system of conversion adopted and upheld by the Jesuits in Paraguay was essentially unsound. That system consisted not in gradually raising the benighted neophytes to the same point of civilization which their teachers had reached,—it merely went the length of making them *mèchanical instruments of gain* to the brotherhood. Their only praise is, that they met the docility of the Indian with gentleness of treatment. But however lofty might be their pretensions to exemplary sanctity, and Christian-like love, their

shortcoming in the golden principle of "Do as you would be done by," was so palpable and so systematic, that while those pretensions must be given to the winds, the impartial historian of their career is bound to show forth their Indian policy in its naked state, unadorned by the meretricious ornaments in which it has always been clothed by the followers of Loyola and their numerous partisans.

At the same time, all that has been said against that body, is quite compatible (and, alas! that it should be so) with their well-earned, their undeniable reputation for wisdom, prudence, political sagacity, fortitude, patience, and perseverance.

One more extract from Doblás shall suffice to complete this part of my subject, on which I think I have said enough to give you a tolerably correct estimate of the state in which the Misiones were left by the Jesuits, and that into which, after their expulsion, they presently fell. I hope I have also succeeded in laying open to you a few of the *causes* of this latter calamity.

"If the Indians," says Doblás, "view with indifference any property of their own, that which

belongs to 'the community' they behold with abhorrence. The time, consequently, during which they are employed in the production of such property, they would as willingly spend in the galleys. The habits to which they have been trained, their great submission and humility, and the constant fear of the whip, are alone sufficient to bend them to their hard task. But even thus, it is with the greatest difficulty they can be collected, and driven to their work. For every operation, it is necessary to name an overseer. There are overseers of the weavers, of the carpenters, of the smiths, of the cooks, of the sextons, of the butchers, and of every branch, in short, of occupation. The same system is necessary in the working of the fields. Now, as all are Indians, it is necessary to place over those first overseers, others to watch over them. This second class of overseers is generally taken from among the judges and aldermen; and there is as little confidence placed in them as in those they are appointed to superintend; so that, over all, it is necessary to appoint as overseer in chief, the mayor. But even the mayor, as well as all the others, in order that any work

may be done, must be watched by the administrator; and when the most is got that under this complicated system of vigilance can be obtained, it is not one-fourth of what the men could naturally do."

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XXXVI.

To J—— G——, Esq.

## THE JESUITS.

Journey to Misiones—Paï Montiel, the hospitable Curate—His Parishioners—The two Caciques—Towns on the route—Distance of the Journey—My reception on the road—State of the Towns, generally—Candelaria, the Capital of Misiones—Return to Assumption—Subsequent Ruin of Misiones.

*London, 1838.*

RESOLVED myself to explore the region of Misiones, of which I had heard so much, I borrowed from a Paraguayan gentleman of the old school his crazy lumbering carriage, on which I had first set my eyes at the feast of Ytapuá. The blacksmith and cartwright did their best to make it hold together; but they would never have succeeded, unless the peons had come to their assistance with wet hide, and bound the carriage with it from head to foot: so that when the hide



dried, the vehicle seemed as if in a strait jacket. I was furnished with letters introductory, from the Consul, and from several other friends to every body of any note in the part of the country which it was my intention to visit. Off we started pretty much in the style in which I had left Buenos Ayres; with this difference, however, that three peons drove before us a relay of thirty horses, as there are no post-houses at which to change in the route to Misiones. We had also, instead of our tattered Pampa postilion, Doméque's coachman of state, with his old orange-coloured coat, cocked hat, and high boots. That nothing might be wanting to command respect on the road, I had, as outrider, my black man, with his blue coat and red facings; and in order to pave my way to the good graces of the governors and curates, I carried a plentiful supply of porter, wine, and spirits.

The first Indian town on the road to Misiones is Yaguarón, about twelve leagues from Assumption; but I had agreed to halt on the day of my starting at the house of a very particular friend, the curate of Ypané, distant only six leagues from the capital. His name was Paî

Montiel ; and on his countenance was depicted as pleasing a combination as I ever saw of candour, simplicity, benevolence, and sly humour. The Paï was beloved by his flock, as well as by his friends ; his habits were primitive ; and even in that hospitable country his hospitality made itself remarkable. It was so open-handed and abundant, that the poor Paï was in continual difficulties. In combination with his pastoral charge, Paï Montiel superintended, on his own estate, an extensive farming establishment. He grew the sugar-cane, and had a mill for grinding it ; yucca-root, Indian-corn, cotton and tobacco arose in great abundance around his house ; he baked his own bread, and collected his own wild honey. From his own cotton he made the clothing of his own household ; he reared his own pigs and poultry, killed his own game, made his own cheese and butter ; and was very celebrated for his chipá.\* He had ample paddocks for his horses ; a great many servants who served him for nothing ; cows in abundance to supply his dairy ; and oxen many, with which to plough his

\* A very palatable bread, especially when just taken from the oven, made from the Indian corn.

rich lands. Yet withal this Paï Montiel was poor. His rural munificence knew no bounds ; so that what with charity to his parishioners, entertainments to the rich, and presents to everybody, the generous curate could seldom make both ends meet.

On the morning on which I drove up to his primitive, but capacious abode, I saw at a glance that no ordinary preparations had been made for the festivities of the day. Doctor Bargas and the prior of the convent of St. Domingo accompanied me thus far on my journey ; and we found, on arrival at Paï Montiel's, that the governor of the district, two neighbouring friars, two Indian caciques from the town of Ytapé, on the river Tibequarí Miní, and two hacendados, had been invited to meet us. The guests most honourable to Paï Montiel were two decayed Spaniards, to whom (though he detested their politics) he had opened his own house as a home ; and whom he fed, clothed, and supplied with money, without either fee or reward.

Though we arrived before twelve o'clock, all the preparations were made for dinner. The country houses in Paraguay are not only built

with a spacious corridor, which runs the whole length of the front, but there is in the centre of this corridor a yet more spacious recess, under the roof of which the family may be said entirely to live. It is breakfast-room, dining-room, drawing-room, siesta-room, supper-room, and in not a few instances, bed-room too. It is always the coolest part of the house; and during summer, it is the only cool part. Here, covers were laid for fourteen; six or eight Tapé Indians male and female, were in attendance; and the whole company, when relieved of the incumbrance of upper garments and cravats, sat down to a repast, which lasted nearly three hours. That of the curate of Luxan was not to be compared to it, any more than that of Candioti. It was, though on a smaller scale, more like that of Ytapuá. But lest, were I to go into details, I might incur the imputation of detaining you too frequently in the way of mere description, over the good things of the table, I shall content myself with saying that the most exuberant abundance of viands, served in the most savoury sauces, furnished out our repast. Then followed the dessert, consisting of cream, wild honey, pastry,

new made cheese, pines, and every other tropical fruit, all placed, or rather heaped on the table together. Then came the water for ablution; then the cigars; then the table was cleared; promptly a dozen hammocks were slung in the corridor and in the recess; and the whole company betook themselves to that siesta, for which heat and repletion together had so well prepared them.

In the evening, the recess and corridor were lit up with variegated lamps; and the parishioners of Paî Montiel assembled to dance, play the guitar, and sing. The prior of St. Domingo had lent his band; Paî Montiel went about, like the good genius of the place: and anything more refreshing, more delightful, than the footing on which he was with the humblest of his flock, or than the good-natured and unfeigned attention which he showed them, I never witnessed. He overcame all their scruples to eat and drink, and to take some little present; while his benevolent countenance, his twinkling, cheerful eye, and his ever passing of a joke, or paying of a compliment, suited to the circumstances of the persons of his simple congregation, as he blended with

them, and encouraged them to hilarity, were altogether charming.

At midnight, the villagers, each little troop headed by their respective guitarero, retired singing and dancing to their huts and cottages; and the next morning, with the benediction of our munificent host, we started for Yaguarón. The two Indian caciques had been invited by Paî Montiel expressly for the purpose of conducting us as far as their own town of Ytapé; and they rode before us, accordingly, in the capacity of outriders. Acquainted with all the woods, and with the best passes of the rivers which intersected our path, the caciques not only pioneered us along in good style, but they helped the peons to keep together the horses of our relay, which had a continual tendency to run into the woods and disperse. Passing through the small Indian towns of Yaguarón and Embitinú, we halted for the day at Ytapé. The roads from Assumption to this place are sometimes so heavy with sand, and sometimes so marshy, that it was with difficulty we accomplished our journey of seventeen leagues in ten hours' hard driving, not including stoppages. We were

received, as usual, by the curates; and a crowd of poor and tattered Indians welcomed us next morning on our arrival. There was nothing worthy of remark in this town: it was a mere collection of mud-hovels, built on the green sward, with a little whitewashed church in the midst of them. The curate had the religious government of the community; and our two cacique outriders, with four more of their countrymen, coming to us in state, presented themselves with black rods in their hands, and were introduced by the curates as the municipal body of Ytapé. I received them with all due honours, plentifully regaled them, and shortly afterwards continued my journey. The country, as we travelled along, was beautiful; but it did not vary in any of its features and characteristics from that which I have already described on my first entering Paraguay. On the third day, passing through Cazapá, another Indian town, we came to halt, for the evening, at Yutí, on the river Tibiquarí Guazú, having travelled this day also a distance of seventeen leagues. We crossed the river the next morning in a balsa. On the fourth evening of our journey we came to

the town of Jesus, the first of the late missionary establishments on our route, and distant sixteen leagues from the Tibiquarí. From hence, on the following day, we reached Ytapuá, another town of the Jesuits on the banks of the Paraná, and ten leagues in advance of the establishment of Jesus. Here we were informed that the balsa which was wont to be stationed there for the conveyance across the Paraná of carriages, had been destroyed; and that there was now so little traffic between Paraguay and Candelaria, the capital of Misiones, that it had never been thought necessary to construct another balsa. Ytapuá is situated on the north bank of the Paraná, in Paraguay properly so called. Candelaria stands on the south bank of that river, nearly opposite to Ytapuá, in the territory of Entrerios, and was still considered, at the time of which I write, the capital of all the Misiones settlements.

Anxious to push on to this place, to the governor and curates of which I was particularly recommended, I left the carriage at Ytapuá; and, embarking in a canoe, was soon paddled across the stream by half-a-dozen Indians. The Paraná is here about a mile and a quarter broad,



calm, pellucid, and richly wooded on both banks. I reached the governor's house at noon on the sixth day after having left Assumption. The following is a statement of my rate of travelling, and shows the distance between that capital and Candelaria.

1st day,	from Assumption to Ypané .	6 leagues
2nd	„ Ypané to Ytapé .	17 „
3rd	„ Ytapé to Yutí .	17 „
4th	„ Yutí to the town of Jesus	16 „
5th	„ Jesus to Ytapuá .	10 „
6th	„ Ytapuá to Candelaria .	3 „
	In all . . .	69 leagues.

In a straight line the distance is only fifty-six leagues. Throughout the whole journey, I was treated not only with the utmost hospitality, but with a deference and respect, with which I could have willingly dispensed. The natives, however, of that part of the country, from high to low, had been taught to look up with such awe to any European, travelling in the way in which I did,—especially as it was public functionaries of some note alone who had been in the habit of

doing so,—that it would have been no easy task to disturb their associations in my case. I bore my honours as meekly as I could, because I knew I was not entitled to them; and I bore them patiently, because the notion which the people had erroneously formed of my dignity made them exert themselves the more to let me see whatever was to be seen. Not a town did I stop at for the night, without being waited upon by the lord mayor (and sometimes even the lady mayoress) and aldermen. They had nothing to distinguish them from their barefooted and ponchoed fellow citizens, but their wands of office and some tawdry piece of finery which they would have been better without, except that it pleased them.—Some wore ribbons round their hats, in the style in which recruits are equipped before they join their regiment: others had on a bad fit of a serjeant's coat, terribly the worse for wear. I generally managed to relax the respectful rigidity with which the body corporate appeared before me, by making them drink a few glasses of brandy, and smoke cigars. I had also presents to distribute among them,—

knives, buttons, small looking-glasses, &c., of which they are passionately fond, and by the donation of which I made many friends.

Sad, cheerless, desolate, was the appearance of both themselves and their towns. Every thing was falling to decay,—the church, the college, the huts. Many of the latter were in ruins; the men stood listless at their doors; weeds and briars were everywhere springing up; the population was dwindling away daily; and it was with difficulty the two curates in each town could scrape together enough, from the labour of the whole community, scantily to feed, and badly to clothe, the members of it.

But I proceed to give you a little more particular description of the town of Candelaria, the seat of the governor-general, and the capital of the Entrerios Misiones. From that you will be enabled to infer what must have been the state of all the rest. It was certainly, in no case better; in many instances, it was a great deal worse.

Candelaria, under the Jesuits, had three thousand and sixty-four inhabitants; they were now diminished to seven hundred. It had a splendid

church richly ornamented, a capacious college, large gardens, and extensive chacaras, or cultivated grounds, around it. The church was now in a state of dilapidation; the rain was pouring in through many apertures of the roof; the walls were bare; and even the altar was uncovered by a cloth. Not having been whitewashed for years, the walls were not only bare, but black. From the damp parts of them, at not very distant intervals, there oozed out a green mould, forming a soil, from which depended nettles and other noxious weeds. The college was pretty much in the same state; and what had once been a brick-laid patio, or quadrangle, was so completely covered with grass and weeds, that no trace of the original foundation was discoverable. As for the unweeded garden, "things rank and gross in nature possessed it merely." Every fruit-tree had been hewed down for firewood. Of the original huts and cottages, scarcely a third of their number was standing; and of those that did remain, there was no line so little observable as the perpendicular. They were awry, some leaning to one side, some inclining to another; and all indicating a speedy intention of laying their bones and dust in the lap

of mother earth, and by the side of the tenements that had already mouldered to decay.

The form of the towns of the Jesuits (I speak of their time) was invariably the same. The church and college formed one side of a large square, of which the three other sides were made up of Indian huts, having corridors in front to shelter them from the sun and rain. From the corners of those squares diverged, as usual, at right angles, and all built after one fashion, streets of other huts, which, though whitewashed outside, were yet, from the habits of the Indians, very filthy within. Around the town were chacaras, or grounds inclosed for cultivation; and in these did the Indians work, one part of the week for "the community," the other for themselves. All the trades were carried on in the college. It was a large and long building, having two quadrangles, one on the right wing, and another on the left. From these there were separate entrances to a vast number of rooms. Here was the carpenter at work, there the shoemaker, and again the weaver, maker of beads, silversmith, &c. Many rooms were appropriated to the storing of produce, as

well as of the returns for it received from Buenos Ayres; and all was under the lock and key of the two curates of the company of Jesus. Behind this college, a capacious corridor extended along the whole line of the building, looking upon the extensive and well-stocked garden, which, walled completely round, ran a considerable way back. It supplied the padres with fruit and vegetables in the greatest abundance.

But now, none of these things were to be seen. With all their hospitality, the governor and curates, even aided by the temporal administrador, could only spread before me beef, poultry, cabbage, and Indian corn.

What was wanting in delicacies, however, was made up for by every possible civility and kindness. I was waited upon, as usual, by the cabildo, and on the following day, which was a holiday, there were processions of dancing-horses, tilts, and tournaments, according to the Indian fashion. There were bull-fights, sham fights among the Tapés themselves, and feats of horsemanship of marvellous dexterity and address. In the afternoon, an image of the Virgin Mary, to which the

Indians paid devout adoration, was carried round the square ; and at nightfall some rockets were let off in honour of the saint.

With great reluctance the Indians proceeded to their tasks in the fields next morning. They could not be collected before nine o'clock ; and they returned at eleven to eat a scanty dinner of yucca-root, and sleep a long siesta of three hours. Again they went to the fields for a couple of hours ; and, coming home, lounged away the rest of the evening in apathy and listlessness.

As I was beginning to catch the contagion myself, I made my preparations to return next morning. I rejoined the carriage at Ytapuá ; and in six days, with my cortége, being always escorted from town to town by two Indians, I got back to Assumption. I was pleased that I had explored the country of the Misiones ; and almost regretted, upon the face of its dreariness, depopulation, and decay, that the Jesuits were not still its masters. There was, at any rate, in *their* time, industry, increase of population, and of wealth ; comparative comfort to the Indian, and the appearance of a cultivated country,—cultivated on bad principles, it is true,—but still, *cul-*

*tivated.* There was discipline, regularity, order, and subordination. All these had vanished at the time of my visit; and certain it is, that however blameable in its motives and principles was the government of the Jesuits, the government which followed, without one redeeming good quality, had many vices and defects from which the other was exempt.

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Since the state of things described in this letter existed, the Misiones have been falling, from year to year, into a state of deeper and deeper ruin; till there now remains scarcely a trace or vestige of what they were. The wars of Artigas desolated them; the policy of Paraguay has nearly annihilated them. From a hundred thousand inhabitants, the population has dwindled down to eight thousand; the public buildings are now not only dilapidated, but ruined; and the scattered Indians are almost as much at a loss for subsistence, as when they wandered in the woods. Their towns have been repeatedly burnt and sacked during the revolution; and their cattle, horses, sheep, and bullocks have all



been destroyed or carried away. The natives of Misiones themselves have been pressed into the armies of the revolutionary chiefs, and the wives and children often left to perish.

Every vestige of property and of cultivation has been swept away; and the ruin of the Indians, like the fall of the Jesuits, though not quite so sudden, has been equally complete: it has been incalculably more calamitous.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

## LETTER XXXVII.

To J—— G——, Esq.

## THE YERBALES, OR WOODS OF THE PARAGUAY TEA.

Their Local—Men who worked in them—The Woods, Marshes, &c.—Villa Real—Equipment for the Woods—Our Journey—Discovery of a Yerbál—Colonial Preparations—The Tatabúa—The Barbacúa—Delivery of the Yerba—The Packing—Process of collecting the Yerba—Patience and Laboriousness of the Peons—Return to Assumption—Nature and Results of the Operations in the Yerbales.

*London, 1838.*

I HAVE given you, in my last few letters, together with an account of the Jesuits and of their establishments, a sketch of my tour to the Misiones. I now proceed to give you, but in shorter compass, a statement of what I observed on an excursion, which immediately followed the other, to the famous yerbales, or woods of the Paraguay tea. This formed so extensive a branch of the commerce of the country, that, like a little China,

Paraguay may be said to have supplied the whole southern part of the New World with the refreshing beverage. The accounts I had heard of the mode of its preparation, and of the hardships and privations of those employed to procure it, stimulated me to what was considered a rather arduous task, that of visiting the montes, or woods of the yerba-tree. These were situated chiefly in the country adjacent to a small, miserable town called Villa Real, about a hundred and fifty miles higher up the river Paraguay than Assumption. There being no land communication between the two places, but a most incommodious and dangerous one, I determined to face the attacks of the mosquitos, and to put my patience to the trial of stemming the rapid current, rather than run the risk of having a rencontre with a tiger, or of being swamped in a marsh.

I was invited by one of the great master yerba manufacturers to sail with him in his smack to Villa Real, and to accompany him by land from thence to the scene of his operations in the woods. Before I describe this, I will give you some account of the men,—masters and labourers,—by whom the traffic was carried

on. It was one of so arduous a nature, that, though very lucrative, it was generally conducted either by young beginners in the world, or by low men, who, like miners, having got entangled in a system of gambling, alternately made and lost fortunes; were always poor; and finally died in the yerbales. Exceptions to this rule there were; but very few. Like their masters, the peons were almost invariably gamblers too. They were, therefore, no sooner out of the woods, than they were obliged to return to them.

When a master-workman, or *abilitado*, wanted to go to the "beneficios," or places where the yerba-tree is found and prepared, he applied to some merchant in Assumption, from whom he got what was called an "abilitacion." This was a loan, in goods and money, of a capital of two, three, or four thousand dollars, as the case might be. The amount was to be repaid by the *abilitado* to the merchant within a specified time, and in yerba at a stipulated price.

Hiring, then, twenty or thirty, sometimes forty or fifty peons, the master provided himself with the things he knew they would most require in the woods;—axes, knives, ponchos, tobacco, spi-

rits, caps, cotton cloth, coarse handkerchiefs, packs of cards, &c. As the merchant in Assumption had advanced money to the master, so the master was obliged to do the same to his servants; and they generally all entered the woods largely in his debt. He had charged them double for everything; and before they began to work, they found their wages forestalled for two or three months.

So impenetrable and overrun with brushwood are these forests in many places, and so tenanted in all by reptiles and insects of the most tormenting and often venomous description, that the only animals capable of being driven through them are bulls, which are necessary for the maintenance of the colony of yerba-makers, and mules, which are not less necessary for the conveyance out of the woods of the tea, after it is manufactured and packed.

With Miguel Carbonell, then, (a very coarse Catalán,) who had spent a long life alternately on the river and in the woods, I sailed from Assumption still farther up the stream; and we arrived at Villa Real, in lat.  $23^{\circ} 20'$  south, on the tenth day of our mosquito martyrdom on the

Paraguay. We were now on the borders of a territory inhabited by the Mbayá and Guaycurú Indians. The latter is the fiercest of all the unsubdued tribes in that quarter.

In two days after our arrival, we left Villa Real; and never was I more thankful than when we did; for if the pains and penalties of purgatory be at all equal to those of that place, there certainly cannot be much to fear beyond it. The heat, the effluvia, the filth, the mosquitos, the lizards, the serpents, the toads, the centipedes, the binchucas, the bats, the naked inhabitants, the wretched huts, the squalid poverty,—all rendered my residence there, for two days, not only painful, but loathsome in the highest degree.

Our cavalcade, as we departed, was rather a grotesque one. Mounted upon forty mules rode as many peons, with no covering but a shirt, a pair of drawers, a girdle round their waist, and a red cap on their head. Some of the mules were saddled, some not: before us went a dozen sumpter mules, laden with barrels of spirits, tobacco, and other merchandize. Half-a-dozen of the peons, a little way a-head, drove upwards of a hundred

bulls, bellowing under the smart inflicted by stinging insects; while the Catalán, a capatáz, or overseer, and myself brought up the rear. Our legs were cased in raw hide, to defend us at once from the thorns of the underwood and from the bites of the mosquitos. Our faces, with the same object, were vizored in tanned sheepskin, and our hands were fitted with gloves of the same material.

The peons, it appeared to me, had their own hides so tanned and hardened, as to require no better protection from the insects; for the most I saw them occasionally do, though completely exposed, was to give a little clap with their hand on their face, to warn off a mosquito, or other venomous gnat, which, had it fastened on me, would have left a blister for a week.

With great difficulty we accomplished, the first day, seven leagues; and we bivouacked for the night by a rivulet, on a little open space of green sward. Here, by lighting immense fires, we contrived to keep off the insects; and it was curious to see with what sagacity both bulls and mules kept within the sphere of the rarefied atmosphere, and thus avoided, in some de-

gree, as well as ourselves, the all but insupportable attacks of the stinging and poisonous tenants of the air.

At dawn of day we moved our camp, and proceeded through such obstacles as I will not venture to describe, because I could scarcely, without incurring the penalty of having attributed to me the exaggerations of a traveller, call upon you to believe them.

On the fourth day, however, we emerged from the tangled, thorny woods and endless marshes, into a beautiful country, richly adorned with all the finest specimens of Paraguay scenery; and on the fifth day we came to a point of the northern bank of the Ypané Guasú, about twenty leagues from its junction with the Paraná, and thirty from Villa Real. Here a shout from the overseer and peons proclaimed that they had come upon a yerbal, or forest of the yerba-tree. We were in the midst of an extensive valley, well irrigated, and closely shut in, on all sides, by wood of every description, from the shrub and the orange-tree, to the most gigantic timber of the forest. This was in the morning; and half-an-hour afterwards the cavalcade halted by a small



stream. The most active preparations were instantly made for a permanent settlement; by which I mean an intended sojourn on that spot for six months.

The sumpter mules were unloaded, the saddled ones unsaddled; they and the bulls were driven to pasture by six or eight peons; while twenty of the remaining servants set, with all haste, about cutting strong stakes with which to form the pens for the cattle. Half-a-dozen peons soaked a number of hides with which to fasten those stakes; while one part of the remainder slaughtered a bull, and another part kindled fires, for the purpose at once of roasting the beef and of keeping off the insects. These operations commenced about ten o'clock in the morning. By sunset the bulls were safely pent up in one corral, and the mules in another. Beside this, a high stage was erected, like that described at the cottage of Leonardo Vera; and before ten o'clock at night the whole colony of yerba manufacturers, the master, the overseer, and myself, were asleep, in mid-air, aloof from all attacks at once of reptiles and of insects. The fires were left blazing to keep off the yagüars; and for the

first time since we left Villa Real, I enjoyed a night's sound and undisturbed repose.

At dawn of day the peons were again at work. Here one little band was constructing for our habitation a long line of wigwams, and overlaying them with the broad leaves of the palm-tree and of the banana. There, other sets were making preparations for the manufacturing and storing of the yerba.

These preparations consisted, first, in the construction of the *tatacúa*.

This was a small space of ground, about six feet square, of which the soil was beaten down with heavy mallets, till it became a hard and consistent foundation. At the four corners of this space, and at right angles, were driven in four very strong stakes, while upon the surface of it were laid large logs of wood. This was the place at which the leaves and small sprigs of the yerba tree, when brought from the woods, were first scorched, fire being set to the logs of wood within it. By the side of the *tatacúa* was spread an ample square net of hide-work, of which, after the scorched leaves were laid upon it, a peon gathered up the four corners, and proceeded with

his burthen on his shoulder to the *second* place constructed, viz., the *barbacúa*.

This was an arch of considerable span, and of which the support consisted of three strong trestles. The centre trestle formed the highest part of the arch. Over this superstructure were laid cross bars strongly nailed to stakes on either side of the central supports, and so formed the roof of the arch. The leaves being separated, after the *tatacúa* process, from the grosser boughs of the yerba-tree, were laid on this roof, under which a large fire was kindled. Of this fire the flames ascended and still farther scorched the leaves of the yerba. The two peons beneath the arch with long poles, took care, as far as they could, that no ignition should take place; and, in order to extinguish this when it did occur, another peon was stationed at the top of the arch. Along both sides of this there were two deal planks; and, with a long stick in his hand, the peon ran along these planks, and instantly extinguished any incipient sparks of fire that appeared.

When the yerba was thoroughly scorched, the fire was swept from under the *barbacúa*, or arch; the ground was then swept, and pounded with

heavy mallets, into the hardest and smoothest substance. The scorched leaves and very small twigs were then thrown down from the roof of the arch, and by means of a rude wooden mill, ground to powder.

The yerba, or tea, was now ready for use; and being conveyed to a large shed, previously erected for the purpose, was there received, weighed, and stored by the overseer. The peons worked in couples, except that they hired a third peon, and paid him accordingly, to aid them in superintending the operations of the *barbacúa*. These two peons got a receipt for every portion of tea which they delivered to the overseer; and they were paid for it at the end of their stipulated sojourn in the woods, at the rate of two rials, or a shilling, for the arrobe of twenty-five pounds.

The next and last process, and the most laborious of all, was that of *packing* the tea. This was done by first sewing together, in a square form, the half of a bull's hide, which being still damp, was fastened by two of its corners to two strong trestles driven far into the ground. The packer, then, with an enormous stick made of

the heaviest wood, and having a huge block at one end, and a pyramidal piece to give it a greater impulse, at the other, pressed, by repeated effort, the yerba into the hide sack, till he got it full to the brim. It then contained from two hundred to two hundred and twenty pounds, and being sewed up, and left to tighten over the contents as the hide dried, it formed, at the end of a couple of days by exposure to the sun, a substance as hard as stone, and almost as weighty and impervious too.

The whole process of the yerba manufacture is pretty accurately delineated in the annexed engraving.

I have hitherto described only the process of making ready the yerba for use.

If you will accompany me to the woods, you shall see how it is collected.

After all the preparations which I have detailed were completed (and it required only three days to finish them), the peons sallied forth from the yerba colony by couples. I accompanied two of the stoutest and best of them. They had with them no other weapon than a small axe; no other clothing than a girdle round their waist, and a red

cap on their head ; no other provision than a cigar, and a cow's horn filled with water ; and they were animated by no other hope or desire, that I could perceive, than those of soon discovering a part of the wood thickly studded with the yerba-tree. They also desired to find it as near as possible to the colonial encampment, in order that the labour of carrying the rough branches to the scene of operations might be as much as possible diminished.

We had scarcely skirted for a quarter of a mile the woods which shut in the valley where we were bivouacked, when we came upon numerous clumps of the yerba-tree. It was of all sizes, from that of the shrub to that of the full-grown orange-tree ; the leaves of it were very like those of that beautiful production. The smaller the plant, the better is the tea which is taken from it considered to be. To work with their hatchets went the peons ; and in less than a couple of hours they had gathered a mountain of branches, and piled them up in the form of a haystack. Both of them then filled their large ponchos with the coveted article of commerce in its raw state ; and they marched off with their respective loads,

staggering under them pretty much in the way in which you see a wheat or turnip-cart tottering under its burthen in this country, or in that in which I had seen my friends the ants nodding toward their pyramids under their voluminous burthens. Having deposited their first load within the precincts of the colony, the peons returned for a second, and so on till they had cleared away the whole mass of branches and of leaves cut and collected during that day. When I returned to the colony, I found the peons coming by two and two, from every part of the valley, all laden in the same way. There were twenty *tatacúas*, twenty *barbacúas*, and twenty piles of the yerba cut and ready for manufacture. Two days after that, the whole colony was in a blaze. *Tatacúas* and *barbacúas* were enveloped in smoke; on the third day, all was stowed away in the shed; and on the fourth, the peons again went out to procure more of the boughs and leaves. During the eight days that I witnessed these operations, I was profoundly struck with the patient and laborious perseverance of the workmen. Then, for their abstemiousness, it was, if possible, still more striking. Beef dried in the sun, and a

few water-melons, constituted their whole fare, with, at the close of day, a cigar and a glass of spirits. Neither the perpendicular rays of the sun, nor the everlasting attacks of insects and reptiles, had the power of producing an intermission of labour, or of damping merriment after the toils of the day were brought to a close. Prepared by fatigue for a sound rest, they all mounted the stage to sleep; and the sighs of the evening breeze wafting away the last strains of the guitar, and the last sounds of vocal melody, left the whole company in a state of profound repose.

After spending eight days in this incipient colony I was provided with a canoe, in which, avoiding a second visit to Villa Real, I was paddled down the Ypané Guasú, and passing the village of Belen, I reached in three days the capital of Assumption.

I have already endeavoured to give you an idea of the manner in which the yerba labourers *work*. I shall now give you a notion of what they gain, and of how they enjoy themselves.

Suppose a peon to go into the yerbáles or woods, for six months. It is calculated, and,



from what I saw, correctly, that in this time he may produce eight arrobes, or two hundred pounds of yerba a day.

This, at the rate of two rials, or a shil-

ling for each arrobe, would make his

wages per day, eight shillings; and

this, for six months' work, at six

days in the week, would produce to

the labourer a sum of . . . £ s.

57 12

But he has run in debt to his

master before he entered the

woods, the sum of . . . £12 0

He has spent *in* the woods as

much . . . . . 12 0

And for neither sum has he got

half its value: yet he is thus

indebted . . . . . ——— 24 0

Like sailors when they come off a long

voyage, therefore, the yerba peon re-

turns home with . . . . . 33 12

Of this sum he spends in silver

ornaments for his horse . . . 12 0

In personal decoration . . . . . 5 0

And in gambling, the balance . . . 16 12

————— £33 12

In a month he resells his horse-furniture and personal apparel; in a fortnight after that he is left without a farthing; and in a week more he is to be found again naked in the yerbales.

*Mutatis mutandis*, it is the same with his master. The peon's ruin is measured by tens; that of his master by hundreds and thousands. Both are slaves; slaves alike of their vanity and their passions. Having for a season gratified these, they are both alike content to return to the arduous task of working in the yerbales, and of providing, by fresh sacrifices and fresh labour, for the renewed gratification of those habits which temporary indulgence, so far from having subdued, has only fostered into more inveterate propensities.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

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## LETTER XXXVIII.

To J—— G——, Esq.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE LETTERS OF W. P. R.

Departure for South America—Sailing from England in time of War—Arrival at Madeira—Description of the Island and Capital—Mr. Bellringer—Burriqueiros—Vicinity of Funchal—The Vineyards.

*London, 1838.*

IN the course of the preceding letters you have had such ample details regarding Francia and the Jesuits, so many views exhibited to you of Paraguay, the Misiones, and the Yerbáles, that I think I may safely venture, as a second and a secondary writer on these subjects, to shift the scene for a moment,—to give you breathing time ere I transport myself to the city of Assumption.

While following up my career at home, I received letters from my brother, pressing me to join him in Paraguay. His previous accounts of that country, and of the facility with which a

“fortune” might be made in it, together with the grandeur which is attached, in every young Scotchman’s mind, to the idea of “going abroad,” made me prepare with great alacrity to quit my native soil. We pride ourselves very much on strong national feelings,—on our deeply-rooted *amor patriæ* ; but somehow or other these feelings are never allowed to restrain our desire of travelling out of Scotland as soon as we can. What is more strange, they are seldom strong enough to induce us to return to our native country after we have once fairly left it. I fear our love of country is something like our education in Scotland—rather metaphysical.

Be that as it may, I bade a kind farewell to my Home in August, 1813. Before setting off, I made a parting visit to many old haunts in the vicinity of Edinburgh. I took a last look of all the curious streets, closes, and wynds of the old town. I went up the Calton Hill, to view the noble scenery which stretches all around it ; I descended from the Castle to Holyrood, walked over the King’s Park, ascended, for the last time, Arthur’s Seat, and skirted the brow of Salisbury Craigs. I visited

Duddingstone, "Jock's Lodge," and Portobello ; and I devoted one entire day to Lasswade, and thence, by the banks of the Esk, to Dalkeith. Here, at the grammar-school, or, as we called it, the *high school*, I had been educated, and spent my earlier years. Our old teacher (Mr. Bell), a celebrated man in his day, was still at his post. He was the beau-ideal of a country schoolmaster—Goldsmith's own ; and I now could look on him with all the reverence, unmixed with any of the fear which he commanded in our boyish days. From the school I proceeded to the "Duke's Park," the noble grounds of the Duke of Buccleuch. I lingered over every well-known path, and over each individual beauty of the scene: the bridge,—the fall of the Esk,—the grotto,—the hermitage,—the deep shrubberies, and the smooth lawns,—the palace and its paintings,—the fine old trees in the Park, and that wonder of our early years, "the hanging leaves ;"—all were retraced : and from so many objects which had been the source of such unalloyed pleasure to me, I parted with the reluctant regret which we experience on separating from friends to whom we feel we may never again be restored.

In those days steam was not. We then thought we had reached the acmé of perfection when we launched a fine *Berwick smack*. By such a conveyance I was carried from Leith to London in eight days. So much has the *morale* of travelling been improved since then, that I have a distinct recollection of all the cabin passengers being engaged one morning in a battle of pillows—the ladies against the gentlemen; and the pillows flying like so many bombs from one sleeping-cabin to the other.

The younger travellers of the present generation, nurtured and going forth in peace, have little idea of the stir and animation which attended a sailing from England during the last war. Now, a single ship takes her quiet departure from the docks of London or Liverpool, and however long her passage may be, no “hair-breadth ‘scapes” are ever dreamed of. Then, the general rendezvous was Portsmouth: mighty fleets of merchantmen were gathered under the wings of British men-of-war; signals were to be answered; guns were to be attended to; and, in short, a high note of preparation was sounded, ere, in those warlike times, any of the king’s subjects were allowed to cross the Atlantic.

I thus sailed from Portsmouth on the 23rd August, 1813, in a beautiful ship called the *Marianne*, and in a fleet of about eighty merchantmen, bound for different parts of the New World, under convoy of two fine frigates. On the signal being given to get under way, all was bustle on shore, all animation afloat. Every vessel loosed her sails, and the two frigates, sailing gallantly out under easy canvass, headed their numerous convoy, as they swept out to sea amid the acclamations of congregated thousands, who witnessed our departure from the shore.

In sailing under convoy when the fleet is numerous, the monotony of a long voyage is broken in upon by a great variety of incident, and by a continual observation and speculation upon the movements of the floating community around you. But it has this terrible drawback, that the progress of the finest ship is brought down to a level with that of the dullest sailers in the fleet. Our frigates were sometimes scudding under bare poles, while the heavy clumps of our convoy, crowding all sail, were unable to keep company. Then comes the signal to lie-to; and those vessels which have distinguished themselves by their

sailing qualities are ordered to take one of the wretched laggards-behind in tow,—a task which was often assigned to the *Marianne*, one of the finest ships in the convoy.

We had, notwithstanding, a fine run to Madeira, where a still more magnificent sight than the sailing of our convoy from Portsmouth presented itself to our view. Nearly two hundred sail of merchantmen, and about twenty men-of-war—line-of-battle ships and frigates,—lay in the bay of Funchal; and when our own convoy sailed towards the mass, and gradually mixed itself up with it, the effect was really grand.

Then the scenery of the island, under the shelter of which we came to anchor! The bases of the mountains are lashed by the surf of the sea: Funchal, being hemmed in by the waves, is pressed into the adjoining ravines, or runs its narrow streets right up the acclivities. The ascent of the hill is steep and rugged,—craggy rocks and bold precipices everywhere frown over the city and the bay. Yet with these features are mixed up others of a softer description,—verdure, trees, vineyards, and mountain rills; while the whole face of the precipitous



ascent, rising from Funchal to the church of Nossa Senhora do Monte, 2000 feet above the level of the sea, is dotted with whitewashed cottages and pretty villas, which at the distance look as if they were pendent in the air, and altogether inaccessible to the footsteps of man.

I think I may begin my "personal narrative" from Funchal. You may conceive the scene of confusion which its narrow streets (little better than lanes) presented to us, when you consider they were in the possession of the out-pourings of twenty British ships of war, and of two hundred and fifty to three hundred English merchantmen. As far as the moving population went, the place had all the appearance of a dirty third or fourth rate English sea-port town. Post captains, skippers, passengers, midshipmen, and tars, thronged in every direction. There was not even standing room in any one of the filthy little inns or gin-shops of which Funchal could alone boast. Lodgings were all let; a bed was not to be had for love nor money. For a bottle of porter half-a-crown was asked. It was the close of August, and the heat in the pent-up streets was truly frightful. Like hundreds of others, we knew

nobody ; no house of entertainment was open to us, even with money in our purses. We wandered up and down the streets (my two fellow-passengers and myself), half baked, half-roasted : and whereas we had anticipated a week's delightful residence at the beautiful island of Madeira, the less flattering prospect began to dawn upon our unwilling minds, of being obliged to languish out the seven days under an awning on board of the Marianne. We might thus view, but could not enter, the Hesperides which lay before us.

I must here inform you that while I waited the gathering of the convoy at Portsmouth, I scraped acquaintance with a gentleman who bore the singular name of Bellringer. We were at the same hotel, dined once or twice, and walked out on the ramparts together. We were both of the convoy swarm, whose " aims were various as the roads they took ;" too various by much to admit of your asking any one you fell in with, " whither bound ?"

Now as my fellow-passengers and myself were taking our last stroll down the principal street of Funchal,—tired, jaded, heated, and perfectly sick

of our occupation,—my eye caught the name in large letters, over a large warehouse, of “Bellringer.” While admiring the “curious coincidence,” the identical Mr. Bellringer came to the door, and immediately recognized his Portsmouth coffee-house acquaintance. He had landed, like ourselves, that morning: his establishment, a large and flourishing one, was at Madeira; and he immediately professed his desire to do whatever he could to render my short stay in the island agreeable to me.

He ushered us all three up to a large, airy, and handsome saloon on the first floor, the ground floor, as in all the other principal houses in Funchal, being appropriated to business. The most delicious grapes, the finest oranges, the best wines, were placed before us. What a contrast to our despairing stroll in the streets! Mr. Bellringer’s own house was full of visitors; but he procured us the very best accommodation with a respectable private family. The inmates were agreeable North Americans; and of the great heterogeneous mass of visitants thrown so suddenly on Funchal, I do not think a single individual was

more comfortably lodged and cared for than were the passengers of the Marianne.

Madeira, as we *now* had an opportunity of seeing it, broke in upon our delighted vision as a terrestrial paradise. A more charming climate (when you begin to rise above Funchal), or a more truly enchanting and varied piece of scenery, I do not believe is anywhere to be found.

We spent all our time in making excursions to the most interesting points of the island situated around the town of Funchal. We breakfasted every morning with our host and his nice family ; after which, a basket of provisions being provided, burriqueiros and ponies were ordered to the door. The former are your conductors or runners ; and one scarcely knows which most to admire, the agility of these, or the strength and sure-footedness of their little horses. They climb the steeps, descend the ravines, thread the broken rocks, and canter along the here and there unbroken surface of the road, all with equal facility and safety. But go as fast as you will, you can never outrun your burriqueiro. With staff in hand, he is ever skipping at your side or before you :

the sun may be roasting, the mountain road may be nearly perpendicular, it seems all pastime to the merry burriqueiro, it seems literally impossible to fatigue him.

Wherever you go, the vineyard and the cottage, the handsome villa and the beautiful grounds, are thickly set together. Then you come upon rocks and rills, and the bolder and more sterile but picturesque scenery of nature, contrasting finely with the cultivated fields, the verdant table-lands, the lofty trees, and the wild shrubs and evergreens; which, with the fuchsia, the myrtle, and the geranium, are scattered about in the utmost profusion and beauty, and in all the richness of a tropical vegetation.

The vine here, as in other wine-producing countries, is trained low, and planted in large fields: many of the cottages attached to these vineyards we found on the sides of the roads made on the acclivities of the hills. Every such cottage has behind the door a pipe of *vin du pays*, a light beverage, which you drink in jars. During the heat of the day, when toiling up such steepes as those which lead to the Mount Church, and other surrounding places, we found the draught

very refreshing. We varied our excursion every day, visiting all the places most remarkable for the beauty of their scenery. Towards afternoon, we looked for the umbrageous tree, the smooth sward, and the clear purling rill; there we had our little pic-nic, and rested from the agreeable labours of the day. We refreshed our ever-contented and laughing burriqueiros, we pastured our ponies; and returning slowly in the cool of the evening, we rejoined the agreeable society of the family for whose acquaintance we were indebted to my worthy friend Mr. Bellingr.

When the agency of steam shall become powerful enough to wing you to Madeira in so many hours, and bring you back again in so many more, I advise you by all means to make a trip there in the month of September.

Yours, &c.

W. P. R.

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## LETTER XXXIX.

To J—— G——, Esq.

A calm at Sea—Rio de Janeiro—The Commodore leaves the Convoy to its Fate—Race for Buenos Ayres—Rats on board of Ship—Striking upon rocks—Exertion at the Pumps—Cutting away of the Masts—The wreck is seen by Pharisees and Levites; but passed by without relief—Relieved at length by a Jew—Mr. Jacob, the Good Samaritan.

*London, 1838.*

CAPTAIN DICKSON, who led and commanded our convoy, had not been to sea for ten years; and to this cause was traced by many in the fleet the sufferings we underwent by being becalmed for three wearisome weeks on the line.

Certain it is, we got into an African bight, and out of it we could not contrive to move. One day the sun shot his vertical rays on our heads, or at least on our awnings; another we crept a mile to the south of him; a third we lagged a mile to the north: throughout the thermometer stood at about ninety-five of Fahrenheit; and the

most serious apprehensions were entertained at last for the health of the numerous ships' crews, who languished out their existence on salt pork and short allowance of water under this oppressive heat. At the end of the three weeks we fell in with the long-desired, almost despaired of, breeze, and after a most uncomfortable passage of ninety days we, about the 20th of November, reached Rio de Janeiro.

Of this city, and of its splendid and unrivalled bay, the account given in some of the early letters of these volumes shall suffice. Having introductions to Rio, I was not reduced, in the still hotter streets than those of Funchal, to the dilemma from which Mr. Bellringer relieved me. I spent a fortnight with a kind and hospitable friend \*, and in that time had an opportunity of seeing all the united grandeur and beauty of the surrounding scenes. The features which nature here assumes, may perhaps (with the exception of the distant view of the Organ mountains) be more properly classed with the beautiful than with the grand: but it is the vast scale on which these

\* Mr. David Stevenson, who is still a resident of Rio, and I believe has not left it for twenty-six or twenty-seven years.



beauties are harmoniously blended and gracefully grouped together which renders the scene one of both pleasing and imposing interest.

A fortnight of Rio towards the beginning of December is quite enough even for the most ardent admirer of the picturesque. The heat in the city is intolerable. The mosquitos plague you to death. Above all, in my case, the hateful scenes which I was, on this my first visit to a slave country, forced to witness of cruelty to the unhappy negro, created in me an utter disgust of the place. Such was the profound impression made on my feelings in that early part of my career, by the stroke of the lash and the shriek of the victim, which ever and anon fell on my unwilling ear, that to this day I fancy I can hear the appalling sound as distinctly as I did twenty-five years ago.

Those persons in England who still maintain that slavery is by no means so bad a condition for the negro, as pretended philanthropists have asserted, can never have been transported at the age of 20 years from the humane and happy land in which they live, to a country where the slave is coerced into blind and brute obedience, through

the repetition of agonizing wounds inflicted on his uncovered body, by a heartless, relentless, often vindictive executioner.

And let it not be said that that which took place at Rio was not to be seen in our own settlements. It is a too melancholy and too well-authenticated fact that the Portuguese, the English, and the Dutch are all nearly alike notorious for their rigid and unrelenting character, when converted into owners of slaves. I do not speak of those who have merely domestic slaves, (though in many cases this class is badly enough treated,) but of the proprietors of estates worked by slaves; of the man who has these unhappy wretches by droves, and first brings them down to the level of the beasts of the field, and then uses them as badly as the worst used of the brute creation. In many cases he does this, it is true, through the agency of another; but is he therefore the less amenable to the laws of humanity for the suffering which in any case is reserved for the tortured slave?

From the time we touched at Madeira, we had gone on dropping portions of our convoy, bound for intermediate ports; so that when we sailed at

last from Rio, our number was reduced to about ten or a dozen vessels. The commander of the frigate which accompanied us, seeing no danger in these distant latitudes to be apprehended from privateers, left us, when within two days' sail of Cape Saint Mary, whence each merchant-ship made the best of its way for the River Plate.

We were left exposed to the contingency, after a four months' passage, of being taken by an American privateer, and sent as prisoners of war on another three months' voyage to the United States. The bare possibility of such a thing augmented our fears every hour; and you can scarcely have an idea of the nervousness with which we watched, and looked, and strained our eyes for "strange sails" under the American flag.

Our fears, however, proved to be groundless, and all the vessels reached the mouth of the Plate about the same time. Here a race for Buenos Ayres commenced; and away went the Marianne,—with an ignorant skipper, a dark night, and a dangerous navigation,—in the hope of taking the lead of all the other vessels.

Now you must know that before we left Lon-

don, *rats* had got into our ship; and during the passage they, week by week, gave increasing indications of their prolific nature. They multiplied rapidly upon us; and, as their numbers augmented, they grew bolder and bolder. At last we were obliged, during the night, to have *cudgels* by the side of our berths, in order, when at roost, to dispute, *vi et armis*, the possession of our mattresses with these daring invaders of our repose.

Our water had not been looked to before leaving Rio; and when too late to remedy the evil, we found the contents of the three or four pipes we had on board with a very fetid smell. To lessen the effluvia, the bungs were taken out during the day, and replaced during the night, lest the rats should take possession of our butts as well as of our beds.

At twelve o'clock, then, on the dark night on which we were running up the river, my fellow-passenger and I "turned in," each with our respective stick, to wage the accustomed war with our hostile intruders, which now sturdily, and by half-dozens at a time, asserted their right to share our beds. I lay down flattering myself

that my sea troubles were drawing to a close; that a new and more interesting scene was about to open upon me; and that it would cause to fade away before it the ennui engendered by four mortal months at sea, cooped up with uncongenial souls, and exposed to the caprice and petty tyranny of a vulgar, and would-be domineering skipper.

Towards two o'clock I was exerting in the dark all my now well-tried skill to maintain my little fortress (*i. e.* my berth) against a vigorous assault of my besiegers the rats; when rut, rut, rut, went the keel of the ship, scraping against some other substance; then bump we went upon a ledge of rocks, and there we stuck hard and fast! The very rats were frightened with the shock, and scampered off; while my phlegmatic companion, slowly sitting up in his berth, deliberately but with great emphasis said, "Thank heaven, the rats will all be drowned."

We hurriedly dressed and went on deck, where immediately on the vessel's striking, all had become confusion and noise. There stood our gallant ship, immoveable, hemmed in among the rocks; and one of these under-water enemies of

safe navigation had pierced her through and through. The water thus finding free ingress, the ship began rapidly to fill. The night was dark as pitch,—a storm was gathering,—and neither master nor mate, nor man on board had the remotest idea of where we were.

The weather was insufferably close and sultry, with luckily an almost imperceptible breeze. All hands, passengers included, were called to the pumps, and with unceasing exertion did we ply them. The first effect of this, in an atmosphere which carried the thermometer to eighty, was to create an intense thirst. The very sight of even the brackish, almost briny fluid we were pumping up, increased our desire to drink. We had just two butts of water left. One was tapped; and faugh! it filled the air with a pestilential smell: the other,—more horrible than the first! The bungs had been left out,—the rats had got in; several of their bodies lay at the bottom; their hairs thickened the water; and the taste—the sickening taste of it—I will not attempt to describe.

But what will stand against a raging thirst? Buckets were placed at the top of the companion-

ladder; a man was stationed there to make and deal out grog, a mixture of indifferent rum with this horrible stygian water. At first we pressed our nostrils as we drank; but as our thirst increased, and as the perspiration made its way from every pore of our bodies, we quaffed the poisonous stuff as if it had been nectar, instead of a mixture of rats, rum, and putrid water.

The morrow dawned, and showed us the beach at a distance of seven or eight miles. The clouds began to dissipate, and the sun to cast his burning rays upon us. Had a pampero come on instead, as it threatened, we had been all dead men. But our state was critical enough without that. The water gained fast upon us; we fired minute-guns, and hoisted a flag of distress; they were of no avail to us. Still we continued working at the pumps, though too evidently to no purpose; and at length, the vessel beginning to fall very much over, the fatal order was given to cut away the mainmast.

There are few things more affecting than the cutting away of the masts of a ship at sea. Hark! the carpenter's sturdy arm lays in the first heavy blow of his axe at the root of the tall

mainmast. It is like the first solemn toll of the bell announcing death. The carpenter's mate gives the next stroke, and then comes a regular succession of thick and fast falling blows, hacking and hewing at the trunk. A creaking, a crazing is heard; till at length, with an impetuous and crashing noise, down comes the gallant mast, and prone over the side of the ship it stretches its stately length. Fallen from its high estate, it lies a useless and a floating wreck upon the waters. Havoc seems to have stalked from stem to stern, and gloomy Desolation sits at the helm, exulting over the completion of her work.

Clinging by the side of the ship, now almost completely heeled over, we stood around in mournful silence during the death-like operation. The master of the vessel, barbarous though he had shown himself as a man, and ignorant as a sailor, claimed our compassion in this his extremity; for he wept during the whole process of cutting away the mast. All were more or less affected, and little wonder; the whole ship presented an appearance which no one could well contemplate without very painful emotions.

Pretty early in the morning we dispatched off



our largest boat, with our mate and four of our crew, for the shore, to reconnoitre, and they took some valuable property with them. At midday there was still no appearance of their return; and we began to get uneasy, as well for their safety as for our own, should a pampero compel us to land.

To our great relief, however, as we commenced cutting away our mast, a sail hove in sight, one of our convoy bound for Buenos Ayres. Our distress signal was flying; our minute-guns announced our danger; and we doubted not we should be relieved.

We were, however, mistaken. The people on board saw us, and passed by on the other side. Another vessel came still closer to us, again we hoped, and again were disappointed. Yet a third past, almost within hail of us. Our mast was by this time cut away, and seemed to call for mercy. In vain: they, too, looked upon our wounds, and passed by on the other side.

The day was drawing to a close; and giving up all hope now of relief from the companions of our convoy, we began, although our boat had not returned, to look to a disembarkation on the wild

shore before us. We were again fearful of being overtaken by the desolating pampero. At this juncture another vessel came up, but at a wide distance from our position. In this case we indignantly resolved not even to fire a gun. Yet, by and by, we discovered that the vessel had come to anchor; and next, to our no small joy, we saw a boat hoisted out, and, well manned, proceeding to our wreck of a ship, once the finest of the convoy.

And, behold! he who relieved us—was a JEW. I wish I could record his name in a less obscure corner than this letter affords: it was Mr. Jacob, the owner of the ship Quebec, who, having himself seen our flag of distress, hastened in his boat to our relief. He told us that we were wrecked off “Punta de Piedras,” or the Rocky Point; that he thought part of the cargo might yet be saved, and that for this purpose he would give whatever assistance he could. He added, that it would give him the greatest pleasure to carry the passengers in his own vessel to Buenos Ayres.

Our boat had now returned from the shore, and brought the welcome intelligence that one

of the commandants of that part of the country had engaged to protect whatever portion of the cargo we could land ; and in the event of a pampero's rendering an abandonment of the vessel necessary, he offered to send the master and crew overland to Buenos Ayres.

Mr. Jacob therefore left one of his boats to assist in landing cargo, and taking the two other passengers and myself, with all our luggage and personal property, on board of his ship, he entertained us most hospitably, carried us in safety to our friends, and peremptorily refused any, the slightest remuneration for all that he had done. " He had only," he said, " performed a simple duty ; and what he had done for us, he knew a Christian, under similar circumstances, would do for him." We had had painful reason to doubt the universality of this christian-like doctrine. We were forced to confess that we had met with " the priest" and " the Levite," but constrained to acknowledge, as we were delighted to proclaim, that in Mr. Jacob alone had we witnessed the bright conduct of " the good Samaritan."

I will not conclude without stating that our friend Mr. Jacob did, though unsought for, meet

with his reward at Buenos Ayres. The story, of course, was immediately made public. Mr. Jacob was kindly received and entertained by all the English residents; and a cargo, at a handsome freight, was provided for his vessel, before the same was done for any other of the convoy in which we came\*.

A week afterwards the Marianne went to pieces, and nearly all her cargo, of the value of fifty thousand pounds, was lost.

I must not omit to mention the tragical and singular end of the rats. As the water rapidly filled the hold and the cabin of the ship, the affrighted vermin were chased from their various holes and hiding-places, till, at last, with one simultaneous rush from below, they swarmed upon the deck, and precipitated themselves on all sides, into the river. They swam about us in hundreds, as long as their strength permitted

\* One of the most active in showing his sense of Mr. Jacob's disinterested conduct was Thomas Fair, Esq., now of Coldstream, to whom I myself went recommended. Be it permitted to me to add, of one whose uninterrupted friendship my brother and myself have enjoyed for upwards of twenty-five years, that no British resident in South America ever lived there more universally respected and esteemed than Mr. Fair.

them. They gradually, however, disappeared, and, one and all, sunk into that watery grave to which my fellow-passenger had so prophetically consigned them.

Yours, &c.

W. P. R.

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## LETTER XL.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Dismemberment of the Provinces of Rio de la Plata—General Artigas—Journey to Santa Fé—The Major of Blandengues—Thistles—Journey continued—Arrival at Santa Fé—Artigueños—Smoking—More of Candiotti.

*London, 1838.*

AFTER the details which have already been given, I do not think it necessary to detain you at this time in Buenos Ayres. My object, on arrival there, was to proceed forthwith to Paraguay; and, notwithstanding the disturbed and unsettled state of much of the intermediate country, I determined to take my journey to the land of the Jesuits. The nature and extent of the disturbances, however, to which I allude, I will first shortly sketch to you.

The dismemberment of the provinces of Rio de la Plata as constituted by Old Spain, began

with Paraguay. But that territory could at no time be said to have formed a portion of the "United Provinces," as created by the patriots. It never gave in its adhesion to them, but established, on the ruins of the power of Spain, an independent government of its own.

The first great intestine feud was raised by General Artigas, the most extraordinary man, after Francia, that figures in the annals of the republic of the river Plate.

Artigas came of a respectable family; but was, in his habits, only a better sort of Gaucho, of the Banda Oriental. He was wholly uneducated, and, if I mistake not, learned only at a late period of his life, to read and write. But he was bold, sagacious, daring, restless, and unprincipled. In all athletic exercises, and in every Gaucho acquirement, he stood unrivalled, and commanded at once the fear and the admiration of the surrounding country population. He acquired an immense influence over the Gauchos; and his turbulent spirit, disdaining the peaceful labours of the field, drew about him a number of the most desperate and resolute of those men, of whom he assumed the lead, and

in command of whom he took to the trade of a contrabandista, or smuggler.

He would march with his band by the most rugged roads, and through apparently impenetrable woods, into the adjoining territory of Brazil, and thence bring his contraband goods and stolen herds, to dispose of them in the Banda Oriental. This was under the rule of Old Spain. Every effort of the Governor of Montevideo to put the bold smuggler and his band down, was not only unavailing, but always ended in the defeat of the forces sent against him. The country even then belonged to Artigas. He would meet, engage, and rout the king's troops; till at length, his very name carried terror with it. But he was a strict disciplinarian; respected the property of those who did not interfere with him, and only attacked those who presumed, or dared to throw impediments in the way of his illegal traffic. He was the Robin Hood of South America.

The governor of Montevideo finding Artigas's power constantly on the increase, at length sought his friendship in the king's name. Artigas, tired of his marauding life, listened to the



overtures made to him. A treaty was formed ; and, as a consequence of it, he rode into Montevideo with the king's commission of Captain of Blandengues, or mounted militia of the country. His band of contrabandistas became his soldiers ; and he thenceforward kept the whole country districts of the province in an order and tranquillity which they had seldom before enjoyed.

In this situation did the revolution in Buenos Ayres find Artigas ; and in 1811 or 1812, he deserted from the king's service in the Banda Oriental, and joined the patriots. He was considered to be a great accession to the cause ; and when Montevideo in 1813 was besieged by a Buenos Ayres force, under the command of General Alvear, Artigas served under him with the rank of Colonel.

A new and wider field now opened itself up to the view of this ambitious and unprincipled chief. His haughty and overbearing spirit could no longer brook an inferior command under a Buenos Ayres General, and in the face of his own *paysanos*, on whom, since the King of Spain's authority was disputed, he began to look as his own legitimate subjects. Besides, the more po-

lished and civilized of the Buenos Ayres chiefs looked down upon him as on a semi-barbarian, and treated him without the respect which he considered due to his rank. So he hated them all. He tampered with the troops under his command. They were all Orientales\*, and adhered to him to a man. He laid his plan with his usual sagacity: he silently abandoned the siege during a dark night, with his eight hundred men; and when it was reported to General Alvear in the morning, Artigas was many leagues off with what he now called "his army." This was at the close of 1813.

As Artigas advanced upwards in the direction of Entrerios, the whole Gaucho population flocked to his standard. At first he only called on Buenos Ayres to give the country a change of government. He averred that the executive was corrupt, the commanders of the patria forces imbecile. But the general government, looking on Artigas as a traitor to the cause, detached a body of troops from the siege against him, under General Quintana, who, on coming up with the

\* Natives of the province of Montevideo, called the *Banda Oriental*, or East Side (of the Plata).

deserters, attacked them, and was defeated by Artigas.

A force of five hundred men under the Baron Holdenberg, a German, in the service of the Republic, also crossed from Santa Fé to the Bajada, and marched against the quondam contrabandista, now the Lord Protector Artigas. His force had already swelled to between two and three thousand men; and on learning this, as well as the defeat of Quintana, the Baron retreated towards the Bajada. But that point had in the interim been occupied by twelve hundred of Artigas's troops, and this force having attacked and defeated Holdenberg, he capitulated, and delivered up himself and all his men as prisoners of war.

Such was the state of affairs shortly after I arrived in Buenos Ayres. General Alvear continued the siege of Montevideo, while Captain Brown (since Admiral Brown, renowned during the Brazil war), blockaded the port. Don Gervasio de Posadas, an old gentleman of great respectability and good family, was then Director of the united provinces.

After a month's agreeable residence in Buenos

Ayres, and when I was turning my thoughts to the best mode of proceeding to my ulterior destination of Paraguay, Don Luis Aldao, the hospitable nephew of Candiotti, arrived from Santa Fé. He proposed returning very shortly, and I gladly accepted his offer to take me under his wing.

For a "chapetòn," one little better than a "maturango," (such were the contemptuous names by which the true Gaucho designated the European who attempted to mount a horse),—the task I undertook was an arduous one. Don Luis was one of the most accomplished "Gentlemen Gauchos" of his day, and one of the hardest riders on the road. The season was the commencement of February, when the burning sun has scorched and withered up every vestige of vegetation.

However, I resolved to try, and off we set. Never did I see on horseback a finer or more graceful-looking young man than the nephew of Candiotti. His figure was tall and slender, and being a major in a Blandenque or yeomanry corps, he dressed *à la militaire*. His eye was large, dark, and penetrating; his forehead high, his skin,

though tanned, was clear, and his cheek lightly flushed; his features were handsome and intelligent, wearing withal a serious air, approaching to sadness, which was somewhat at variance with his real character. I may here remark, that many of the young South Americans with whom I got acquainted, were fond of play, and I often used to think that the anxiety attendant on that pursuit, gradually gave a sombre and pensive cast to their countenance.

We set off, well accoutred, well attended, and well mounted, on the morning of the 11th of February. After emerging from the quinta and chacara-grounds, some six leagues from the capital, we came upon the cardales, or "*thistleries*," which, at the time I speak of, reached to Arroyo del Medio, the boundary of the province of Buenos Ayres. Since then they have gone on extending their dominions on all sides; and they seem destined to become at last the great vegetable usurpers of the whole Pampas.

When I left Scotland I thought I had left the country, par excellence, of thistles behind me. I now found that those of my native land, as compared with the "*thistleries*" of the Pampas,

were as a few scattered Lilliputians to the serried ranks of the Brobdignagians. From one post-house to another, a lane was cut out through these huge thistle-fields, which hemmed you in on either side as completely as if you were riding between walls fifty feet high: you saw as little in the one case as you would in the other. The cattle find *shade* in these cardales, and are often lost among them for days: they afford a good shelter for highwaymen, and, when at their highest growth, they are a favourite resort for gentlemen of the road. They tower above your head, and in many cases hide the post-house from your view, till you come close upon the door. In short, Pampa thistles, like all things else in South America, are on a large scale\*.

There is as regular a thistle-harvest as of any

\* A worthy citizen of London, in a large company, some years ago, asked one of our old South American friends, the late General Paroissien, what sort of a country South America was? The question was a wide one. "Sir," said the General, "everything in South America is on a grand scale. Their mountains are stupendous,—their rivers are immense,—their plains are interminable,—their forests have no end,—their trees are gigantic,—their miles are thrice the length of ours,—and then"—(here the General took a doubloon, a gold coin the size of a dollar, out of his pocket, and laid it on the table)—"look at their guineas." The *quod erat demonstrandum* was irresistible.

other crop; they are ripe for cutting about the close of February. They are hewn down, made up in great bundles, and carried away in waggons to the nearest towns, to be used as fuel, principally by bakers for their ovens.

The first day we got over twenty-three leagues (we started late in the day), and sore and stiff I was: the second day twenty-six leagues; sorer: the third day my sufferings came to a climax, for after doing twenty-nine leagues, we had to perform five more in the dark, at a trot; and the horses being unaccustomed to this pace, my already unhappy body was shaken to atoms; every bone in it seemed to me to be removed from its place, with every jog which the horse gave me. We travelled from five in the morning till near eleven at night.

On the fourth and last day, I expected not to be able to proceed on with Don Luis; yet strange to say, I got up perfectly well, without an ache. We did the remaining thirty-three leagues with ease, and thus accomplished the whole, one hundred and sixteen, in little more than three days and a half.

The kindness of Señor Aldao during the whole journey was quite extraordinary. He was constantly at my side; procured any little comforts (they were not many) which the road afforded; selected and himself tried my horse at every post-house, to see that he had easy paces; gave his whole assiduous attention to my every want; and endeavoured, in short, by all possible means, to diminish the fatigue of our rapid and trying journey. He had, in the highest degree, what is a characteristic of the South Americans at large—kindness and hospitality to strangers, joined to well-bred and even graceful manners, in rendering to them their services.

I was too intent on getting to our journey's end, to make many remarks on the country through which we passed. You already know, however, how little of an interesting kind it offers to the eye of a traveller. I was chiefly struck with the beauty of the situation of the little town in the territory of Buenos Ayres, called San Nicolas de los Arroyos. It stands on a fine sloping bank of the Paraná, and, as its name imports, the rivulets which on every side of the town flow into the



parent-stream, and almost encircle it in their course, give the place a highly picturesque appearance.

We went directly to Aldao's house on our arrival at Santa Fé; but the following morning I took up my abode with the only English resident in the town, an old and intimate friend of my brother\*.

I found I was completely fixed at Santa Fé, without any certainty as to when I could pursue my route to Paraguay. The Artigueños (so Artigas's troops and followers were called) had complete possession of the whole eastern side of the La Plata and the Paraná, from the outskirts of Montevideo up to Corrientes. The most frightful disorder and anarchy prevailed throughout his vast dominions. The name of Artigueño, in fact, was held to be equivalent to that of robber, as well as of murderer; and any idea of travelling one hundred and sixty leagues through a country in possession of these marauders was not to be dreamt of. The *pasos precisos*, or

\* Mr. John Postlethwaite, a truly estimable man, but now, alas! no more. He resided for upwards of twenty years in South America, and died at sea, on his return to his native country.

narrow gorges of the river, where the channel was hemmed closely in between an island and the main land of Entrerios, were all kept by armed Artigueño forces, so that vessels could not pass upwards without extreme danger ; and as the Paraná in its periodical swelling caused a turbulent and rapid current, no canoe could with any safety attempt the long voyage between Santa Fé and Assumption.

So I set myself down quietly for the present with Mr. Postlethwaite in Santa Fé. I began here assiduously to cultivate the *speaking* of the Spanish language grammatically ; and spent, for this purpose, my whole time in the society of the natives. By their kind assistance, I was able, at the end of six weeks, to speak, though not correctly, yet with sufficient fluency to enable me to carry on conversation without embarrassment. At Buenos Ayres, in two months, by mixing chiefly with English society, I had made no progress whatever in the Spanish.

The day after our arrival Aldao was laid up with a bilious attack, in consequence of the raging heat of the sun during the whole of our gallop from Buenos Ayres. I called in the evening and

found the family, with the exception of Aldao himself, entertaining their visitors, and holding their tertulia in the patio; most of the ladies smoking their hideous-looking cigars. At the feet of each lady (not, however, including the young unmarried ones), sat a *mulatilla*, a female mulatto slave, nine or ten years of age, with a large roll of Paraguay tobacco, and from this the mistresses themselves made their immense cigars on their own laps. The gentlemen were served with small cigars by the lady of the house; and, in addition, we had abundance of maté, fruit, panales, wine, and water deliciously cool; it was drawn from the *algivé*, a great and deep tank or reservoir, with which the front patio of the best class of houses is furnished.

Towards ten o'clock, and when the moon threw her soft but clear light into the patio, from a cloudless sky,—“a majestic roof, fretted with golden fire,”—Don Francisco Candiotti, the patriarch of Santa Fé, rode into the centre of our coterie. He was dressed pretty much in the style described in the first volume of these letters, with the difference, however, of a very handsome *nightcap*, which he wore instead of a hat. From

his right wrist, and slung by a short leather thong, depended a costly *rebenque*, or short hunting-whip, the handle of which was of massive and beautifully-chased silver. He would not alight, but, bringing his right leg over the peak of his saddle, taking his *rebenque* in his hand, patting his boots with the thong,—and, leaning on the neck of his horse, as he smoked his cigar the while,—there he sat, quite *à son aise*, from ten till midnight, the most jocose and garrulous of the company.

He was pleased to compliment me on my performance of the journey ; and, indeed, it appeared that I could not have brought a better recommendation to his good graces than the certificate of a hard gallop. He was full of sly and sarcastic remarks on the renowned Gaucho, his nephew, in consequence of the indisposition he suffered ; which, though arising from bile, the uncle contrived to make the tertulianos believe was the effect of *lastimadura*, or saddle sickness.

Yours, &c.

W. P. R.

## LETTER XLI.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Detention at Santa Fé—The Indians and their Caciques—Plague of Locusts—Scarcity—A Price set upon the head of Artigas—Dinner given by the Governor—The Biscachas—Departure for Assumption.

*London, 1838.*

Six weeks was I detained in Santa Fé, during most of which time an embargo was laid both on vessels and individuals wishing to proceed “aguas arriba,” or up the river. Such were the fears entertained of Artigas and his myrmidons. The town of Santa Fé was governed by a Buenos Ayres general, and garrisoned by Buenos Ayres troops; for the Santa Féinos themselves were suspected of a leaning to Artigas. The fact is, that the Buenos Ayres officers generally treated the provincials as inferiors, and hence grew up a dislike, almost a hatred, of the Porteños.

Santa Fé was an entre-depôt for Paraguayan and other produce bound for Cordova and Peru ; and these latter countries she supplied with vast herds of mules, which were chiefly reared on Entrerios' estancias : so that the present non-intercourse with the opposite and higher regions of the country, pressed with peculiar severity on the trade of Santa Fé. Three other local evils,—the Indians, a plague of locusts, and a great drought,—augmented the sufferings of that province.

The Indians of the Gran Chaco, during my stay at Santa Fé, were committing great ravages on the surrounding country ; and, all the troops being engaged in other quarters, the savages met with so little resistance, that they sometimes approached within six or eight leagues of the town. They drove away the cattle, burnt the houses, often murdered the men, and always made captives of the females at the estancias which they attacked. At last a force was sent out against them, and then the Indians proposed a peace. The Santa Fécinos were too weak to refuse it, even while they dreaded the treachery of the barbarians. A great " palaver " was held ; a treaty was framed ; and

all the principal caciques came to the city to have the peace ratified.

About fifteen of these caciques rode into town, and very much excited my curiosity. They were a fine set of men, tall, well made, and of a dark copper-colour. They were mounted on beautiful horses, gaudily caparisoned; and their own persons were adorned, after a barbarous fashion, with a profusion of morris-bells, beads, and short silver tubes, laid in rows and devices over their ponchos and mantles. Their uncouth caps were stuck full of many-coloured feathers: they were scantily clothed in dyed and party-striped cotton-manufactures of their own; and some of them wore silver ornaments bored through their lips and ears. Their weapons were old swords, clubs, and bows and arrows.

The ratification of the treaty was proclaimed by repeated discharges of artillery, which greatly pleased the barbarians; and copious draughts of aguardiente administered to them at the same time, pleased them still more. They swung on their horses, raised horrid yells, or, dismounting, they half-danced, half staggered on the ground. This was done in procession through

the town during the forenoon. In the afternoon they joined their forces, lying ten leagues off; and the conclusion was, that as these now "friendly" Indians returned to their *tolderias*, or encampment of wigwams, they committed every kind of outrage, and carried off whatever they could rob on their line of march.

I need not describe to you what has been so often described by others,—a plague of locusts. I should have to darken the air, and obscure the sun with them, just as other travellers have done before me; and I could only tell you that the locusts of Santa Fé, like the locusts of Egypt and of other countries, eat up everything that is green, and leave fields and orchards, gardens and orange-groves, bare, and brown, and fruitless. Their hosts seem to be divided into great armies, one of which lights on some particular spot, and in an incredibly short space of time, strips it of every vestige of vegetation. The poor people, as they see some such army approaching, sally out with drums, brass pans, rattles, and every other conceivable thing with which they can make a noise. The din of these they increase with discordant yells and cries; and in this way they often pre-



vent the attack of the assailants. But what is thus spared to-day, is devoured to-morrow; and the grim aspect of Desolation alone, which they themselves have created, can effectually drive the locusts from the scene of their devastating work.

Such desolation gloomily brooded over Santa Fé before I left it; and a drought of several weeks having destroyed many flocks and herds, and driven others to seek pasture in more distant lands, a scarcity, approaching to famine, in the town was the last result. It was with difficulty we got beef or poultry to purchase, and anything green was not to be had.

Some old women, who lived near to us, having a pretty good stock of poultry, and finding their value every day to advance, refused to sell at any price, hoping to reap at last a golden harvest from their hens. This so provoked our next-door neighbours (two Paraguayans), that they had recourse to the following curious, though not honest device, to supply themselves now and then with a dinner. During siesta hours, when not a soul stirs abroad, these gentlemen would sally forth with a quantity of Indian corn, and begin-

ning to throw it down before a half-famished hen, they laid a train to their own door, and into their patio. The hen, unconscious of its fate, would follow, picking up the grain, till thus lured into the patio, it was there beheaded, to serve for next day's dinner. The astonished and now frightened old women, finding their poultry thus mysteriously to disappear, came to terms, and the ensnaring system was discontinued.

My great desire to get to Assumption, and the monotonous inactivity of my life in Santa Fé, began, after a month, to render my residence there irksome and tedious. Yet the affairs of the Banda Oriental looked every day worse. Such was the exasperation of feeling at Buenos Ayres against Artigas, that a proclamation was issued offering six thousand dollars, or twelve hundred pounds, for his head ; a proceeding which had the natural effect of incensing the Protector and all his followers in the highest degree. The reward was proclaimed with beat of drum by a notary, acting as herald, in the public places of Santa Fé ; but there the measure was generally and justly condemned, as at once impolitic and impotent. By showing the vindictive feelings of the Por-

teños, it only increased the popularity of the Protector.

The governor of Santa Fé, who had kept the port closed during the whole course of my stay, at length agreed to relax his order in favour of a Paraguay brigantine, on condition of the consignees giving bond, under heavy penalty, that the vessel should touch at no port in possession of Artigas, or of those recognising his authority. There was, indeed, no danger of infringement; for the master and his crew were too much afraid of the Artigueños to place themselves voluntarily in the power of such marauders. I, of course, determined to take my passage in this brigantine to Assumption.

A short time before we were ready to depart, the governor invited Mr. Postlethwaite and myself to a grand dinner; and many of the fashionables of Santa Fé were asked to meet us.

About thirty to forty guests sat down at table, in the large ill-furnished dining-room of the government-house. We had military men, lawyers, a padre or two, doctors and merchants, with several of their cara sposas, and as many of their daughters. Don Francisco Candiotti was a distin-

guished personage at this *convite*, or banquet, and his nephew Aldao ranked among the merchants. Notwithstanding the general scarcity which prevailed, good things of every kind were placed in abundance on the table. Famines and scarcities keep low company; and never, as far as I have seen, are admitted to the presence of governors, or heads of either states or provinces.

Three things very particularly carried away my attention at the dinner:—first, the extremely free nature (to use the very gentlest expression) of the conversation which was adopted with the ladies, young and old: it was such as to make me, with my unsophisticated English feelings about me, blush at every turn, although such modesty, whenever it was observed, caused a hearty laugh.

The next thing that surprised and pleased me, was the great facility which all the gentlemen present possessed in producing improvisatore verses. Almost all their toasts were thus given, and with a readiness, a precision, and often an elegance, which quite astonished me. I found the talent afterwards to be general throughout South America, as it is, I believe, in Italy and Spain.

The third South American custom (and this one confounded me), was that of the guests pelting each other at table with *pelotitas*, or bread-balls, of the size of a pea. They threw them off with the middle finger and thumb, with generally unerring aim, and in such prodigious numbers, that the floor was literally *invisible* in many parts of the room. All at table, without a single exception, mixed in the fun, and with increasing eagerness as it advanced. I have very often since seen the same thing, but never to such an extraordinary extent as at the governor of Santa Fé's table\*.

A great quantity of wine was drunk during the dinner, which, with the dessert and the battle of the *pelotitas*, lasted from three till seven o'clock. All this time the ladies remained in the dining-room. A great deal of what we now term skylarking took place,—romping and other freaks; till at

\* This custom I have seen degenerate into ill-mannered fights when whole loaves have been thrown with violence by one at another. In one case a candlestick was made a missile of. But it is due to the South Americans to say, that this abuse of their not very polished, but innocent and well-intended custom, was introduced by some of the young and riotous Englishmen who first went among them.

last some of the most excited with wine proceeded to acts of indecorum, which, even in that latitudinarian country, could not be tolerated. We therefore moved to the salon, where an excellent band of military music was placed. Dancing was kept up till twelve o'clock; and that, though just the hour at which our dancing begins, is a very late one for the Santa Féinos at which to close the hilarity of their day.

Towards the middle of March the river had risen to a very great height, and advantage was taken of the unusual swelling, to annihilate many colonies which had encroached very much on the neighbourhood of Santa Fé. These were *biscacheras*, or burrows of the biscacha, a destructive and altogether useless animal. It has something of the conformation of the rabbit, but is larger and much coarser. A great number of canals were dug from the banks of the river leading to the beds of *biscacheras* which were spread around. The water being let in upon them, the *biscachas* were either drowned in their burrows, or, being forced out, were killed by large groups of peons and boys collected with staves and other weapons for the purpose.

I have here given you such little details of my long stay in Santa Fé as I have thought worthy of remark. A few days after the governor's dinner, notice was given me that the brigantine of Cañiza was ready to sail for Assumption.

Yours, &c.

W. P. R.

## LETTER XLII.

To J—— G——, Esq.

## VOYAGE AGUAS ARRIBA.

Departure for Assumption—Hurricane in the Paraná—Mode of Navigation against the Stream—Discomforts of it—Carneando, or procuring of Beef—Mosquitos—Winds—The Vaqueano, or Pilot.

*London, 1838.*

You have had a full account of a voyage “aguas abaxo,” or down the river; but one “aguas arriba,” or up the river, is a different affair, in my opinion, and I think you will come to the same conclusion before I have finished my description of it.

The vessel in which I was about to sail was called *Nuestra Señora del Carmen*, and her owner was a Paraguayan, resident in Assumption. The master or *patròn* was an old Spaniard, and the vaqueano, or pilot, as is invariably the case, was a native of Paraguay. The crew was divided into sailors and peons. The former were the higher class, and received the better pay. They performed the duty properly belonging to sailors,



and were some of them old Spaniards, some creoles ; they were eight in number. The peons were all Paraguayans, an amphibious race, neither wholly seamen, nor wholly landmen, but partaking of both. Twelve fine fellows they were, and their duties will be detailed as we go along.

On the 23rd of March, our brigantine was towed to near the mouth of the branch of the Salado on which Santa Fé stands, and there she lay hidden among the trees. It was arranged that the passengers were to join her, as soon as a south wind should set in, and with this we were to pass the Bajada during the night. In the same way, the *patròn* proposed to clear all the *pasos precisos* \*, of which I have already spoken.

The south wind set in on the 25th, and on that day eleven passengers, beside myself, bade adieu to Santa Fé. Among the number were the two hen-decoyers. We were paddled out to the ship in canoes ; and as soon as night set in, we hoisted our sails, and stood over for the channel of the Paraná. Aided by the darkness and by the increasing breeze, we passed the Bajada in safety.

The wind during the night began to abate,

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and by ten o'clock next morning it was scarcely sufficient to enable us to stem the current. The dark and lowering sky gave evidence of a coming storm. The thunder rolling heavily at first in the distance, became louder and more distinct; and the lightning, which began by casting its faint reflections on the far horizon, illuminated by degrees the masses of clouds which hung heavily above us and around us.

At length the whole fury of the storm broke suddenly over our heads. One great gleam of lightning, accompanied, not followed, by a clap of thunder loud enough to waken the dead, made us all start; and these were instantly followed by a hurricane so terrific, that ere we could take shelter against it, or prepare for it, every stitch of canvass we had set was blown to atoms. Our ship was hurried up against an island, our bowsprit tearing and crashing the boughs of trees which opposed its progress. Now the lightning was almost one continued flash, and the thunder rolled and cracked and pealed about us in a way to astonish even the Paraguayan crew and passengers, though so much accustomed to tropical storms of this kind. The hurricane was of

short duration. It was succeeded by a rain quite in keeping with the other features of the storm. It poured down an almost unbroken sheet of water; and so it continued unabated for an hour, the thunder and lightning accompanying it with the same intensity throughout. The storm in fact lasted all day, with now rain, now heavy squalls, and the electric fluid always. Of the danger which it brought with it we were made sensible by seeing, very near to where we lay, one tree completely cleft, and two or three more scorched by the lightning.

The storm subsided, but our sails had been blown to tatters; and, no such visitation as a hurricane having been anticipated, there was on board of "Nuestra Señora del Carmen," no spare sails. What were we to do? the remnants which had been blown hither and thither about the island were carefully collected; and, setting all his men to work, on these "shreds and patches," the patròn contrived to remake a small main-sail and a top-sail. With these we were to make our way against 800 miles of current, three knots per hour strong. This canvass, with a good breeze; and *without* a current, might have carried us at

the rate of five knots; deducting therefore three for the current, we had the comfortable prospect, with a fair wind, of making a progress of two miles per hour.

With a *fair* wind,—that was the rub. We were to advance two miles an hour with a fair wind; but where were the fair winds to be had? The prevailing ones were from the north; those from the south, which we wanted, were few and far between: so that the patròn answered our regrets about the sails by saying, if we would give him fair winds, we should not have cause to complain of his want of canvass.

I soon found by sad experience indeed that scarcity of sails was a minor evil on our voyage “aguas arriba.” The everlasting north winds, *barraduras*, windings of the river, and fears of the enemy, would all have combined, without any scarcity of canvass, to make our passage a dismally long one.

When the weather was calm, our peons betook themselves to our two canoes, and warped our vessel up in this way. One canoe went a-head first, with a coil of rope, which was let out as the canoe advanced; and the end of this rope being made

fast to a tree, the vessel was hauled up. Meantime the second canoe went a-head from the tree, and made fast another coil; so that the two canoes, working alternately, kept the vessel always on the move. By this operation we sometimes made six miles in a day, never more; and when the north wind was strong, even the warping was laid aside, and we were tied to a tree. Sometimes, too, we had a wide crossing to make, over which our warping tackle would not reach, and then again we were—tied to a tree.

We were thus “tied up” sometimes for eight days together: then would come the long-looked-for south wind; and after we had enjoyed it perhaps for a day,—sometimes only for a few hours,—our dreams of advancement were put an end to by a *barradura*, or getting on a sand-bank.

In going up the river, the vessel is never unloaded, to lighten her, as in coming down. If we cannot “back out,” or edge off the bank, soundings are taken, and the vessel is *lifted* out of her *barradura*. This is effected by fixing two long, and very strong, logs of wood on either side of the vessel, the end which projects from

the water being forked. They are called horcones, or trestles. On these a purchase is obtained by means of blocks and ropes attached to them, and thus the vessel is hoisted up between the horcones. It is a laborious and often a most tedious operation, perhaps of a whole day; and as the wind sometimes dies away in the mean time, we leave the bank, and again—tie to a tree.

The most provoking of all our detentions were those caused by windings of the river. These are so completely circular at some places, that a fair wind at one part of them becomes quite a foul one at another. Then we must warp; then the warping is a slow, a very slow, operation; then before we get round to the right point, the wind has shifted to the wrong point, and then—we tie to a tree.

A difficulty, not general to the upward navigation, but arising out of particular circumstances, attended us. Those points which we thought might be watched by the Artigueños, we could only pass in the dark. If we came near one of these *pasos precisos* in the morning, we

were obliged to hide till night—tied to a tree ; and if the wind shifted, why—till another south wind came—we continued to be tied to a tree.

Such were some of the difficulties I found in making a voyage *aguas arriba*. The retardation of our voyage I considered the greatest evil, but it was by no means the only one.

The cabin of our brigantine—filthy and uncomfortable—was about twelve feet by eight ; and into it were crammed twelve passengers. We had barely standing-room when we were all in it together. During the whole of the passage it was not free from the smell of stale tobacco-smoke ; for, with twelve men from a land of that herb,—having fifteen hours of idleness to get rid of every day,—you may imagine how they fumi-gated the ship.

Very little *stock*, with the exception of my own, had been put on board the *Carmen*, either by her patròn or by her passengers. Mine very soon disappeared. For the crew, ship's provision was *salt*, and for the passengers salt and *galleta*,—a harder sea-biscuit than any my teeth had ever come in contact with : the principal

subsistence of both crew and passengers was to be procured on the voyage.

Our vaqueano knew every estancia along the whole line of river border we had to traverse, as well as he knew his own house. In ordinary times every one of these estancias might be visited, and ample supplies of beef procured; but now politics were mixed up with the question of supplies; the vaqueano was obliged cautiously to pick out those estancias least likely to have any connexion with the Artigueños; and to such only the canoes were sent to *carnear*.

To *carnear*, or "to procure beef," is this. The two canoes, with four peons in each of them, proceed to an estancia, and the leader of the expedition makes a bargain for the oxen he wants. In ordinary seasons a couple of animals only are taken at a time; but we made our voyage in extraordinary times, so we wanted extraordinary supplies. Our men generally bargained for five or six head. These were brought and delivered to them alive in the corral. Our river gauchos, assisted by the people of the estancia, then slaughtered the animals, flead them, cut them



up, and carried the whole to their canoes. They became our butchers; and right glad we were when we could employ them in this capacity.

It was a feast and a fast with us alternately throughout. The fears entertained of the Artigueños ran through the whole ship; and it was hunger alone which ever forced the river-butchers off to carnear. They were generally a whole day over the operation; and I cannot describe to you the intense anxiety with which their return was looked for. We were constantly in the alarm of seeing the canoes return full of armed Artigueños; and instead of fat ribs of beef, we were terrified with the thought of being obliged to look upon gleaming sabres, or to listen to the sound of bullets whizzing about our ears.

When the canoe did return with the veritable ribs of beef, great was our contentment, and instantaneous were the preparations made to satisfy our craving hunger\*. The day following that on which we had sent to carnear, was also one of

\* The quantity of beef which on such occasions the *crew* consumed was monstrous and incredible. I must beg leave to shun the predicament into which a statement of the number of pounds eaten by each man would bring my character for veracity.

fresh beef "à discrétion," but by the third day it came to us in the shape of *charquè*,—the beef cut into thin layers and strips, and dried over ropes in the sun, pretty much as our laundresses dry clothes in this country; only the shirts, handkerchiefs, and petticoats were all beef.

As we drew to a close of this *charquè*, it was dry, ill-flavoured, and unpalatable—sometimes not eatable: and then was to be enacted over again, the interlude of our hopes and our fears and our anxieties, attendant on the motions of our river-butchers.

These trips kept us alive on various occasions in every sense of the word; and at other times we were kept very much on the *qui vive* by enemies, to me more terrible than the *Artiguènos*; for, after all, I saw nothing of the latter, and the others were my constant assailants. I mean the mosquitos. This buzzing insect is bad enough anywhere; but on a South American river, during a close, and sultry, and breezeless night, the mosquito is a demon which torments you with indefatigable assiduity. In such case, in such a place, I have found nothing impervious to the mosquito. Line yourself with "æ*s triplex*"

and he will get at you,—sting you,—sing at your ear,—sting you again,—blister you,—and in short do all that lies in his power to drive you mad.

On the Paraná the north wind brings the mosquito; the south wind (being cold) drives it away. The former was our sirocco. It would go on gradually increasing in force and in *heat*, till at last it appeared to be the hot blast of a furnace. Then comes the storm from the opposite and surcharged point of the heavens, followed by the pampero, which, with its cold blast from the frigid zone of the south pole, clears the atmosphere, and gives renewed life to animal creation.

We used to watch the coming of the pampero with intense anxiety. No wonder; for it was to relieve us from a long and total stoppage of our voyage, to scatter the hosts of hungry mosquitos which assailed us, and to infuse into us a hope of at last reaching Assumption.

On such occasions commenced the arduous duties of our old vaqueano. He was then the all-important man on board. As soon as we began to make way with the breeze, he would seat himself on the bowsprit, and there, fixed and

immoveable as a rock, he would remain as long as the south wind lasted. He had two of his peons on either side of the vessel taking soundings with long tacuaras, or bamboo canes. His orders to them were given, and his inquiries of them made in the Guaraní language. His sustenance as he thus fulfilled the duty of pilot, consisted almost entirely of *mâté* and cigars. Not only during the day, but through the live-long night, he kept his vision strained on the face of the waters, and by the colour of the surface and the ripple upon it, he guided the vessel, even in utter darkness. He looked like the wizard of the river, scanning his own element, and steering us by some necromantic art through all the intricacies of the winding current. The sandbanks of this great river are constantly shifting, and all the skill of the vaqueano is called into play to ascertain, as he goes along, the movements which have taken place, so as to direct the vessel into the channels which have been opened up anew.

I have known our vaqueano to be thus seated and thus watching the waters, without any inter-

mission, as far as I could learn, for three days and three nights consecutively. That was the longest period to which a south wind ever extended with us.

Yours, &c.

W. P. R.

## LETTER XLIII.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Scenery of the Paraná—Camelotes, or Floating Islands—Landing on the Banks—The Crew of the Brigantine—Amusements—Tigers—A domestic Tragedy—A long Passage—Leaving the Brigantine—Landing at Corrientes—A Perplexity—A fortunate Rencontre—M. Perichon's Household.

London, 1838.

THE *désagremens* of our voyage, like those of the voyage of life, were many: but as in this latter our pains and our sorrows are sprinkled throughout with pleasures, so during our partial sojourn on the waters of the Paraná, we were not left without an occasional solace during the many weary days which we spent on board of Nuestra Señora del Carmen.

The Paraná is one continued line of beautiful scenery from its source to its mouth. From Santa Fé to Corrientes, the part of it which at this time I traversed, the most striking feature of that scenery is decidedly the *islands* of the

river. They are really innumerable. During the whole of our voyage, I cannot recollect one place where we had the Gran Chaco on one side, and Entrerios or Corrientes on the other, with a clear stream between. All the way up we found islands of every form and size interposing themselves between the two river borders. There is not only a succession of these islands, but they lie abreast of each other; some in long narrow strips, running parallel with two or three others of smaller dimensions, and some commencing opposite the middle of a succeeding island, and terminating opposite the centre of another. Thus we were always hemmed in by an endless and intricate chain of islands and islets; the channel sometimes finding its devious way through their windings, sometimes going to the west, and anon returning to the east side of the river.

The islands are diversified, verdant, umbrageous, beautiful. The trees on them are generally small, but almost all evergreens; the flowering shrubs and wild flowers luxuriate in every corner; while the endless variety of creepers, or more properly of climbers, ascending to the tops of the larger trees, and thence gracefully

throwing out their flowers, which remain pendent in the air, contribute greatly to the beauty of their water-girt abodes. I found many varieties, also, of the air-plant, at once the most delicate and fragrant of the floral tribe.

Most of the islands are very low, and many of the smaller ones marshy. With very few exceptions, they are inundated during the height of the periodical rise of the river. This of course renders them uninhabitable by man, but they are the abode of all the wild animals and of the various feathered tribes peculiar to the country. The tiger (or ounce), the lion (the puma), the caymàn, a great variety of the monkey race, with squirrels, and other small animals, are to be found in abundance in these islands; while all the birds, mentioned in a former letter, common to this country and to Paraguay, everywhere met my view as we sailed along, and more particularly when the channel wound its way through the clustering islands.

When these are laid under water by the swelling of the Paraná, it frequently happens that large portions of the islands get detached from their main body, and float down the river.



The thick and strong interlacing of the roots of the vegetable matter thus detached, keeps the whole bed together; so that the *camelotes* (that is the name given to them) descend the stream for many leagues. Sometimes a tiger or lion, not unfrequently two or three, are on these camelotes when they break off from their parent island; and the animals in such cases seem always terror-stricken on their floating habitation. We saw one tiger thus situated, but at a considerable distance. Although we fired at him he did not move, afraid, seemingly, to leave the spot on which he stood fixed.

It is a historical fact, that many years ago, such a camelote as I now describe, carried three tigers with it down to the vicinity of Montevideo. They entered the town at daybreak. A pulpero, or vender of spirits, happened to have opened his door at this early hour, and to be engaged in some business behind his counter which kept him stooping down for some time. On rising up, one of the tigers which had entered, sprang upon him. I do not recollect if his, or any other life was lost, but several people were lacerated before the three tigers were destroyed.

I used frequently to land both on the larger islands and on the main-land of Entrerios and Corrientes. The fears entertained by my not very courageous fellow-passengers (almost all Paraguayans) of tigers and Artigueños, seldom allowed them to accompany me. The scenery to them was nothing. They were contented to play malilla, sip their maté, and smoke their cigars on board.

Sometimes, when we lay under a cliff, I contrived, with many remonstrances on the part of the patron, to get to the summit; and then I enjoyed, in all its beauty, the noble scenery of the majestic river which flowed at my feet. In such places it was generally a mile and a half to two miles broad.

One of my amusements was to go a-head with the canoes when we were warping the vessel up, and to learn to paddle. It is a delightful exercise: the strength and dexterity and symmetry of action with which the Paraguayans gave impulse to the airy skiff, was only to be seen to be admired.

On one or two occasions I accompanied our carneadores or river-butchers. I saw nothing

where we went but the peaceful occupation of the Estanciero, and I was received where I thus landed, with the characteristic hospitality and welcome of the country. These trips, indeed, convinced me that our dangers were greatly exaggerated.

During the whole of the voyage, under every *contre-temps*, where there was often little to eat, and much hard work to perform, the crew, and particularly the Paraguay peon part of it, was always a contented, happy, and merry set of men. I never heard a grumble nor a complaint from one of them.

When we warped the vessel up, and in this operation we were engaged during half of our voyage, these men would work hard from daylight till sunset, taking only during the day a beef-breakfast, a *déjeuner sans fourchette*. As the sun went down, the brigantine was brought to her tying-place, generally, and wherever it could be so managed, under the shelter of a high barranca, which rendered approach from the land impossible. At the base of these cliffs ran a belt of trees and tangled underwood.

A plank was then placed from the vessel to

the river-bank, and all the crew jumped gaily on shore. Three or four fires were immediately kindled, and they not only served to cook the supper of the crew, but to supply the burning brands, by throwing of which among the bushes and the trees, the prowling tiger was sent back to his lair. By means of the ascending smoke, too, the mosquitos were driven away, and we remained undisputed masters of the field.

It would be difficult for you to imagine anything more picturesque than the scene which on such occasions, and particularly on a fine moonlight night, was presented to my view. The great body of pellucid water gliding silently down with the light of the moon sleeping gently on its unruffled bosom,—the thickly-wooded islands clearly defined around me, but mingling farther off with the water and the banks, and forming in the distance a *chiar'-oscuro*,—the bold and almost projecting cliffs which, hanging over our bark, threw its tall masts into the shade,—the figures of half-clad Paraguayans, as, gathered round the fires, the glare of the flames lent a savage aspect to their swarthy complexions;—formed a *tout ensemble* which might have well

employed the pen of a Byron, or the pencil of a Claude Lorraine.

After the peons had finished their simple supper, which was invariably such beef as we had, roasted at their fires on the river banks, they sang their wild ballads accompanied by the guitar. Some of their airs are full of pathos, and the men often sang agreeably in concert. Their toil, their hard condition in life was forgotten. Their concerts were not brought to a close, on some occasions, before midnight; and then, returning to the vessel, each man laid himself down on the deck wrapped in his poncho, and was soon unconscious whether he slept on a downy bed with damask curtains in a tapestried chamber, or on the hard plank of a brigantine on the river Paraná, and under the wide blue canopy of heaven.

I had a flute and double flageolet with me, with which I was wont to beguile some of the tedious hours of our long passage. I got acquainted, by degrees, with a few of the simple and plaintive native airs of the Paraguayans, and with one or other of those instruments accompanied their voices. As the smooth but mighty

stream in the stilly night, and "in those deep solitudes," silently sped its course past our ship, the effect of the combined music was extremely good.

We very often amused ourselves with our fishing-lines, sometimes with our guns; and what we obtained either from the waters or the woods, served to give some variety to our usual beef dinners.

One night we had a hunt extraordinary. As we lay tied to a tree, and just as we were retiring to rest, an alarm was given. We all ran on deck, and found that a caymàn had got into the canoe, which it completely filled. Axes, pikes, rusty sabres, and guns, were in requisition in a moment, and blows, thick and heavy, soon began to fall on the hide of the caymàn. Many wounds he received. But he moved his huge body by the stern of the canoe into the river, and we lost him. This was the only caymàn I saw.

We were seldom permitted to go far from our vessel, owing to the danger arising from tigers. Along the course of the river's banks we fell in with many little rude crosses, each intended to show that

in its neighbourhood some human victim to the rapaciousness of that savage animal had there perished. One of these simple but affecting memorials, which had not been long erected, commemorated a bereavement which formed quite a domestic tragedy. A young Paraguay lover, having gained the consent of his sweetheart to marry him, determined in the first place to make a voyage to Buenos Ayres and back, that he might the better set up in the world. The brother of his betrothed accompanied him, as a fellow peon. On their return, part of the crew was engaged one evening, in the way I have already described, in cooking their supper on shore, when a half-famished tiger, which had stealthily crept to within three or four yards of the place, sprang into the circle which the men had formed. The young lover was one of them, and on him the tiger seized. The simultaneous cry of the others, the agonizing shriek of the victim, startled in a moment those who were on board. The friend and destined brother-in-law of our unhappy lover was there. He seized a musket,—fired,—and although he had of course taken his aim at the tiger, he shot his friend through the heart.

The sad and only consolation of the unfortunate marksman was that the wounds already inflicted by the tiger must have proved mortal. The death of her lover, detailed in all its horrors, reached the ears of the poor girl in Paraguay. She drooped, grew melancholy, gradually lost her health; and an early death attested the fidelity of her affection for the man who had first won her heart, and who had so tragically preceded her to an unconsecrated grave.

When we had been thirty-two days on board of Nuestra Señora del Carmen, we were just seventy-five leagues from Santa Fé\*, having thus averaged something less than *two leagues and a half a day*. This was on the 26th of April; and that day our peons were sent to car-near, our vessel, as usual on such occasions, lying hidden behind an island. On their return they informed us that they had fallen in with a Paraguay vessel in the main channel, bound for the Bajada; and one of them put a slip of paper into my hands, which he said he had received from a

\* It is a curious fact, that the same distance which occupied us a month and two days, may now be travelled in England in *ten hours*.



passenger on board the vessel which they had spoken.

The writing was in English, and ran thus:—  
“ Mr. Wm. Robertson, I am Andres Gomez Rospigliozi—your servant.”

This laconic epistle was enigmatical enough; and all I could make out of it was, that Don Andres Gomez, my brother's Spanish assistant, already mentioned in these letters, was on board of the vessel spoken with. The only further elucidation of the matter which I could get from the peons was, that Don Andres had affirmed “ que no havia novedad en el rio,”—that all was right in the transit of the river.

I determined, therefore, at all hazards, to leave the brigantine at Corrientes, even if I left it alone. I began to sound my numerous companions as to the disposition of any of them to land with me. Not one of them inclined to do so. In spite of Gomez's encouragement, one and all deprecated my proposal of throwing myself into the lion's jaw; as they considered I should do, if I landed among the Artigueños at Corrientes. It was with the utmost difficulty I prevailed on the patron to promise to put me

on shore. He considered he would be aiding and abetting in my murder, and placing in jeopardy himself, his vessel, his passengers, and crew. He did, however, in the end, consent to land me in the manner in which I am about to detail.

We arrived off Corrientes on the 14th of May, the winds having favoured us more during the latter than the early part of our voyage. The whole distance is about one hundred and eighty leagues, which we thus accomplished in fifty days. The pilot steered our vessel over to the Chaco side during the dusk of the evening, and there she again lay hidden. The wind was neither strong nor favourable enough to enable them to make the travesia, or crossing to the river Paraguay that night, and the patron accordingly determined to wait where he was the better pleasure of Æolus.

At four o'clock on the morning of the 15th, I was on deck with a little valize in my hand, ready to step into our best canoe, manned by six of my concert singers, picked out by myself. All the good-natured peons had pressed their services on me to paddle my canoe on shore. Al-

most all the passengers were up to bid me good-by; they were sipping their maté and smoking their cigars; and some of them showed unfeigned concern for my precarious fate.

It was almost pitch dark, and we had four leagues to paddle across to Corrientes. But my gallant little crew sped the fragile canoe swiftly and silently over the face of the waters. Not a word was spoken. A fear of the Artigueños was in the heart of every one of my men. But they made the port with precision, landed me on the beach at half-past five, still dark, and then, according to the strict orders of the patron, they instantly paddled off again for the vessel.

I stood alone on the beach, with my valize in my hand, somewhat irresolute how to proceed. I was in a country totally unknown to me; I had not a single acquaintance in the town; I was without a passport, so indispensable in those countries; and I had come from the territory of a declared enemy.

However, I knew there was a M. Perichon, the friend and agent of my brother in Corrientes, and to him I determined to address myself as soon as broad daylight should enable

me to find his house. Not having intended to land at Corrientes, I had no letter for him.

At the dawn of day I began to walk slowly from the river-side to the centre of the town. Not a soul was stirring. The whole population seemed to be wrapped in profound repose. I had expected to be challenged by sentinels, if not to be openly attacked by some prowling Artigueño; but no sentinel was to be heard, no Artigueño to be seen.

“Surely,” said I to myself, “if anarchy, rapine, and bloodshed were stalking over the land, as we have been told, people could never sleep so soundly in their beds as they do here.” I still walked on; and turning into a principal street, I at last saw a person standing yawning at his door, in dressing-gown, drawers, and night-cap.

Guess my wonder as I drew near to this individual, to see him first stare me in the face, and then to hear him exclaim with unfeigned astonishment — “Robertson! por amor de Dios, de donde sale V.?” “Where, in the name of wonder, have you come from?”

It was M. Perichon himself, the only man astir, I believe, at that hour, in all Corrientes.

That I should have thus happened to light upon him was fortunate enough. He mistook me (as many others had done) for my brother; and as I went up to him, courteously bowing, he stared still more, and began, I believe, to fancy that he had got up in a dream. The true state of the case, however, soon flashed upon him. He welcomed me with the greatest cordiality; ushered me into his house, and then called loudly to his wife in her bed-room, "Pastora! Pastora! Get up! get up! here is Don Guillermo, the brother of Don Juan, dropped, I believe, from the moon!"

You have seen the flooding of some principal street in a city after a heavy pour of rain during a summer thunder-storm: where first one over-charged aqueduct throws in its waters, and then another still stronger swells the main canal; till at length the increasing and impetuous stream rushes down the street and collects itself into one vast pool at some central point of the town.

In such wise did the household of the worthy Perichon pour gradually into the sala in which we were seated. First, the tide set in with Doña Pastora, his wife, only half-dressed, full of

wonder at the apparition, and overflowing with her Guarani exclamations of "Guàh! Bà-èh! Bà-èh picò!" Then sailed in her pretty unmarried sister, her hair in papillotes, and her slender form in a morning wrapper; and she held up her hands in admiration on seeing "the picture of Don Juan." Next, the current was swelled by the "Ama de llaves," or housekeeper, a fat old lady of colour, with a maté for Don Guillermo. After her trundled a little urchin in his night-shirt, rubbing his half-opened eyes; and so, one after another, brother-in-law, children, slaves, and relatives, came sweeping into the common centre, overwhelming me with the rapid course of their exclamations, questions, congratulations, and welcomes.

Having got thus unexpectedly into such good quarters, and among so many warm, though newly found friends, I shall detail my further proceedings in my next letter.

Yours, &c.

W. P. R.

## LETTER XLIV.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Political News—Leaving Corrientes—Its Hospitality—Paso del Rey—Scenery of the Paso—Geronimo's Fears—Artigueños—The Guard-House—Crossing the Paraná—Real Danger—Lost in a Wood—Tigers—The Curate of Neembucú—Nightmare.

*London, 1838.*

I SAT down to an early, but sumptuous and abundant breakfast, with the hospitable Perichon and his large family. As I recounted to him all the fears and alarms under which we had skulked from Santa Fé to Corrientes, he often interrupted me with *carcajadas de risa*—*guffies* of laughter. He assured me that all these alarms had been groundless; that the navigation of the Paraná was uninterrupted and free from all danger; that the brigantine might have put into Corrientes and obtained supplies without the slightest chance of interruption to her voy-

age ; and that the whole country was in quiet possession of Artigas. " Since you left Santa Fé," added Perichon, " your friend Candiotti has acted as a mediator with that chief on the part of Buenos Ayres, and has brought about an amicable adjustment between the Protector and the Central Government of the united provinces. How long the treaty may last, is another affair." Perichon confessed at the same time, that though the towns were quiet under Artigas's governors, the country was in many places disturbed and distracted by armed Artigueños, whose lawless aggressions it was found impossible altogether to repress.

Perichon also informed me that " Andres Gomez, my servant," had left Corrientes on the 21st of April, one of the chief objects of his mission being to assist me in getting to Paraguay : and that he had arrived on the 28th at the Bajada, thus performing, in seven days, a voyage *downwards*, which it had taken us fifty days to accomplish *upwards*.

I had left the brigantine, resolved, if possible, to set forward that very day for Paraguay ; and to this resolution I adhered in spite of all the



pressing remonstrances of Perichon and of his kind household. I resisted even the persuasive looks of the pretty sister-in-law, whose papillotes were now exchanged for dark ringlets, and who assured me there was to be a delightful tertulia at the governor's that very evening, where, of course, I should be expected.

After breakfast I waited with Perichon on the governor, Colonel Mendez, and was kindly received by him. He expressed his regret that I could not attend his tertulia; ordered a special passport to be made out for me; and he offered me, though I declined to accept the favor, two of his own guard as far as the Paso del Rey, the limit of his province. This Mendez was one of the most respectable of Artigas's officers; and I received many kindnesses at his hands at a subsequent period, when Corrientes became our head-quarters.

M. Perichon procured everything necessary for my journey to Paraguay; a recado, and all its accompaniments; a poncho, straw hat, huge spurs, a pair of pistols, two chifles, or large horns, filled with brandy; *wallets*, which were stuffed with good things by Mde. Perichon; the

best post-horses, and a trusty guide, called Geronimo, who was to accompany me as far as Neembucú.

I found the governor and several gentlemen of Corrientes had been invited by Perichon to meet me at dinner. We sat down to it at one o'clock, and a very convivial meeting we had. The honest, good-natured face of Governor Mendez dissipated all my Artigueño antipathies; and I filled a bumper with the general applause of the company, to a perpetual alliance between the Protector Artigas and the government of Buenos Ayres.

When my guide *Don Geronimo* arrived with the horses, he came into the dining-room, and made one of the party, apparently as a matter of course. I found the people of the interior to be altogether divested of the pride of grades. In the present instance, to judge from the intercourse at table, it would have been difficult for you to say which was the governor of the province, and which the guide of the casual traveller.

It was near four o'clock ere we started; and then it was with so many hearty adieus, and so

many kind expressions of regret, that you might have fancied I had been born and bred a Correntino, instead of being, as I was, an acquaintance of only a few hours.

The Paso del Rey, or King's Ferry, is the point at which the traveller crosses the Paraná, which here divides Paraguay from the province of Corrientes. From the town of this name the Paso is distant seven leagues, and I was extremely anxious to cross that evening, feeling very little desire to pass the night on the side guarded by the Artigueños. The country is sometimes open, and sometimes scattered with small trees of natural growth, mostly of the mimosa tribe. As you rejoin the banks of the Paraná, however, the plantations get thicker, and you end at last in deep, and in many places, impervious woods.

After a hard gallop, and on emerging from one of these woods, we found ourselves on the banks of the noble Paraná. Its breadth is here about two miles, and no island intervenes between the opposite banks. The Paraguay border I saw was as thickly wooded as the one on which we stood.

The sun was fast going down, and the great

waters of the majestic river flowed along its banks in solemn silence, and in grandeur undisturbed. As I viewed distinctly, from a rising bank, the mighty stream which lay before me, and the deep, dark, and impervious woods which stretched along its banks as far as my eye could reach, I was struck with a reverential awe. The vastness of the scene,—the deepness and gloom of the solitude,—the unbroken silence which reigned throughout,—were all alike impressive, and all equally calculated to lift the soul from the contemplation of Nature to the adoration of Nature's God.

My reveries were interrupted by Geronimo, who felt altogether uneasy under our actual position. As we galloped along he had dilated on the horrors of the Artigueños, and he had expressed his fears that we might meet some of them at the Paso del Rey. He now told me that we must bend our way to the canoero's, or ferryman's hut,—though he was afraid we were too late to cross; and in that case he saw nothing for it but that we should instantly return to Corrientes.

The fact is, that Don Geronimo was a great

coward, in spite of the pistols and sword with which he was armed. While he kept pouring his fears into my ear, we came upon the hut in question, and here we found only a boy, who, to the inquiries of Geronimo, replied, that both the canoeros had gone from home. We had scarcely received this answer, when we heard the galloping of horses and clanking of sabres behind us. We turned round (Geronimo as white as a sheet), and in another moment two Artigueños proper threw themselves from their saddles, and came up to us on foot, trailing their steel-scabbard sabres along the ground, and jingling their huge iron spurs as they walked.

“ Good evening, friend,” said I, in the blandest tone, turning round in my saddle to the first who approached,—“ Good evening.”

“ Who are *you* ?” said the Artigueño, gruffly ; “ where’s your passport ?”—I pulled it out.—“ Well, well,” he added ; “ come along with us.” So saying, he and his companion remounted, and led the way to a hut which, having been converted into a guard-house, lay on the border of the wood.

These two Artigueños were really savage and

fierce-looking men. Their beards were black and bushy; their hair hung thick and matted from under old foraging-caps; and their small, dark eyes scowled from beneath very shaggy eyebrows. Their blue jackets, with red facings, were all the worse for wear; their shirts (which apparently had never been washed) were open at the collars, and showed each a rugged and bronzed neck beneath. Tawdry waistcoats,—a sort of kilt, called a *chiripà*,—ample drawers under this, and *botas de potro*, from the feet of which their bare toes protruded,—completed their attire. Each carried a carbine in his hand, and each had a long knife stuck in his girdle; while his sabre kept dangling and clattering by his side.

My friend Geronimo quailed beneath the glances of these myrmidons, and I confess I was anything but satisfied myself with their looks. But I felt assured that, by bringing the Governor's passport properly into play, all would go smoothly with us.

I commenced by asking the spokesman, whether he thought they could not themselves paddle us across the river in the absence of the canoeros? The Artigueño doggedly replied, that that was

no part of their duty. "But then," said I, "here is a special passport from my good friend Colonel Mendez, and he assured me I should meet with every assistance from you at the ferry."

This brought us to the guard-house, where we found two more Artigueños. They took the passport, and turned it upside and down, for not one of them could read a word. Then they thrust it into my hand, and desired me to read it to them, which I did. Hereupon, leaving us outside, they retired all four to the hut, and began to hold a consultation in a low tone of voice.

From the moment I proposed to the Artigueños that they should ferry us across, Geronimo was in a fever; and when he saw them enter the hut, he could no longer contain his terrors; he grasped my arm quite convulsively, and stammered out that they were deliberating as to how they should put us to death. "Let us mount," he said; "Oh, let us mount, and return to Corrientes. If you do not, be assured, when we are halfway across the Paraná, they will shoot us, and throw our bodies into the river."

I upbraided my conductor for his cowardice,

and told him all the danger existed in his own brain. "At any rate," I said, "when we get into the canoe we shall be equal numbers. Do you keep your hand on your pistol, and if you see any appearance of foul play, be ready to act with myself."

The Artigueños came out, and I believe they had only been consulting as to the maximum of the charge they could make for ferrying us across. "We do not understand paddling well," said the original spokesman; "but if you like, as you are our Governor's friend, we will do our best to get you to the other side. The Governor knows," added the Artigueño, with a grim smile, "that we can pull the trigger of a carbine much better than we can paddle a canoe."

Our recados were taken from our horses, and placed in the canoe, towards the centre of which the Artigueños took their stations and their paddles. Geronimo and I got in, and sat near the stern, pulling our horses after us, and then holding them by the reins of their bridles in our left hands, as the animals swam on either side of the canoe. I exhorted Geronimo, by my looks, to keep an eye on the movements of the Artigueños,



and thus we launched into the current of the great stream.

The Artigueños, I fancy, never had a thought of doing us any harm; but unskilled in the art of stemming the tide, they allowed it gradually to sweep our canoe to leeward of the opposite ferry, so that by the time we reached the bank we were nearly two miles below the landing-place. The Artigueños, however, had done their best. They demanded two dollars, and, when I gave them four, they took the increased pay with the same taciturnity, and the same stern rigidity of feature which they had maintained during my whole intercourse with them. Geronimo thought himself not safe from them till the last faint sound of their retiring paddles died away upon his ear.

Yet it was only here that our real danger began. The banks of the river, as I have said, are lined by a broad and thickly-interlaced belt of wood. The shades of night were fast falling around us, and Geronimo made all haste to saddle, and to get through the wood while he could yet see his way to thread its mazy and entangled

paths. He had many misgivings, and I soon found we were engaged in an arduous enterprise.

We had to make a path for ourselves through briars and thorny acacias, and underwood of every kind. These lacerated our legs very much, and the boughs of the trees not only scratched our faces at every turn, but they greatly impeded our progress. The horses got frightened and restive,—Geronimo got confused and distracted,—he invoked every saint in the calendar—he made vows and promises of masses and wax candles to St. Jerome in particular. He was full of ejaculations to the Virgin Mary, under all the different names she obtains in the devout Catholic church. *Nuestra Señora del Socorro nos Ayude! Santa Maria purisima, nos favoresca! O! siempre bendita Madre de Dios! ten piedad de nos!* In the midst of these and a thousand other exclamations, the poor fellow kept pressing back the boughs so as they might not scratch me;—he went before, and, as well as he could, he made the road for me. It was all in vain,—the darkness was increasing, and Geronimo at last exclaimed

in despair,—“ We shall be lost,—we shall be devoured by the tigers,—let us endeavour to hasten back to the river-side.”

We scrambled back through briars and bushes, and prickly trees, and reached the banks of the placid river safely enough, albeit much lacerated, especially poor Geronimo, who made a very piteous figure. However, he gave many hearty thanks to the Virgin, when he found we were at the river-side. Here I discharged a pistol with a large dry wadding, and Geronimo immediately began to kindle a fire. My experience on board the brigantine had taught me the necessity of this precaution. We broke down and gathered together dry boughs and sticks, and heaped them on our bonfire. Then we tossed the burning brands among the bushes, and stirred the sparks and the flames as high as we could into the air. Our exertions, which were incessant, were by no means thrown away. Half-an-hour, or less, after our fire had been fairly lit, we heard the roar of a tiger in the distance. My flesh crept as another growl, in another direction, gave proof indubitable that we were surrounded by beasts of prey. They sometimes

came very near to us, and then their deep roar fell horribly distinct on my ear, and might well have appalled a stouter heart than my own. We redoubled our efforts with our fagots. Our horses stood ready saddled on the brink of the river: they trembled excessively when they heard the tigers, and seemed quite as well aware of their perilous situation as we of ours. Our pistols were in our belts, and we every now and then fired a bullet into the thicket, as an additional check upon the savage animals which we so much and so justly feared.

Never did I spend a more anxious night; never did one appear to me so long; and never did I feel more truly thankful to God, than when, towards three o'clock, the fainter sound of the tigers' growl gave indication of their retiring to their lairs, or of their seeking other haunts in which to prowl about for prey.

We did not venture to move till it was broad daylight, and then, with the total cessation of danger, Geronimo's courage revived. I must do him the justice to say, that he showed even more solicitude about me than about himself during the night. He now passed his jokes upon the

woful plight which our figures by daylight presented, but he said all would be put to rights when he got to the house of "his brother, the curate" of Neembucú. He was in no small degree proud of the learning and abilities of "my brother, the curate;" and he divided his loquacious humours between him and the tigers. The Artigueños came in for an occasional reminiscence; and, indeed, he went on embellishing the whole matter in such wise, as to make it clearly appear at last that we were a couple of heroes, who had faced both Turks and tigers with undeniable courage and bravery, and had won imperishable laurels on both banks of the Paraná.

We soon and easily cleared the wood with the daylight. We changed horses at a post-house on the other side of it, and before noon we rode up to the really neat cottage of "my brother the curate," in the village and port of Neembucú, which is prettily situated, as has already been mentioned, on the Paraguay.

"My brother the curate" was the simple-hearted pastor of a simple little flock, and he listened in wonder and dismay to the magniloquent account which Geronimo gave him, Falstaff-like, of our

terrible adventures. In the mean time, his two domestics were busy preparing dinner for us, which was on the table by twelve o'clock. Immediately after it, I very gladly accepted of the worthy curate's offer of his bed. I had been for thirty-six hours without repose, passing rapidly from one scene of excitement to another; so that my frame now felt that it could no longer be sustained without "tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep."

Over-excitement and over-fatigue, however, are far from procuring the soundest sleep. Even the soft couch and cool chamber of the curate of Neembucú did not secure to me immediate repose. I first tossed myself from one side to another, and then the scenes I had just witnessed came before me in the shape of the most fantastic and perplexing dreams. Here, I saw Perichon in papillotes sitting on the back of a tiger, and bringing it up to attack me; there, his pretty sister-in-law, with his nightcap drawn over her ringlets, was waltzing with one of the grizzly Artigueños. Now, I was stemming the tide of the Paraná on horseback, with Doña Pastora on a pillion behind me, exclaiming, "Bà èh picò!"

Anon, I was on board of the brigantine, tied to a tree, and watching Geronimo as he sailed down the river on a camelote.

Exhausted Nature at length taking her right course, these jumbling visions gradually faded away ; and ere long I fell into a profound and undisturbed repose.

Yours, &c.

W. P. R.

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## LETTER XLV.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Road by the Coast to Assumption—The Comandante's Letter—  
Journey Coastwise—Loss and Recovery of my Valize—Jour-  
ney Coastwise continued—Arrival at Assumption.

*London, 1838.*

WHEN I awoke I could by no means conceive where I had got to. I was in utter darkness, and I had to trace my course, step by step, from the brigantine, before I could recollect that I lay in the comfortable bed of "my brother, the curate" of Neembucú.

I had slept a siesta of seven hours. On getting up I found the curate and Geronimo seated at the porch of the little cottage doorway, with their maté and cigars, enjoying the cool of the evening. It was near eight o'clock,—Geronimo was still over our adventures; and he was just protesting, as I joined them, that nothing would ever tempt



him again to leave Corrientes with an Englishman—in the afternoon.

The kind and courteous curate,—I afterwards knew him well,—conducted me forthwith to the Comandante, Don Jose Joaquin Lopez, who had long been expecting my arrival, and who now waited for me at his own house. I was received, with the usual demonstration of cordial regard, and all was arranged for my proceeding onwards the following morning.

There are two distinct roads from Neembucú to Assumption; one by the Misiones, and another by the banks of the Paraguay—by the “coast,” as it is there called. The first route is circuitous, but the roads are comparatively good. The distance is called one hundred and thirty leagues. The “coast” road only measures about eighty-five leagues, but it passes through many marshes, swamps, and large shallow sheets of water. It was in a peculiarly bad state on the present occasion, from the unusual height to which the Paraguay had risen, and from the inundations of the surrounding country which had followed. The Comandante pressed me to take the circuitous route; but a saving of forty-five

leagues tempted me to travel by the other ; and as the thing *could* be done, by the coast I determined to go.

The Comandante picked out the best man he had in his service to accompany me as my guide and man-at-arms on the road. He was, indeed, a very fine and handsome young fellow,—brave, intelligent, active, yet altogether modest and unassuming in his deportment.

I had quite a parting scene with my kind and tender-hearted friend Geronimo, in the morning. I considered it a positive duty, in paying him his " honorario,"—his fee as my guide,—to take into account the risks he had run of his life with Artigueños and tigers, and to increase the amount in a due proportion. Geronimo was very grateful, and he returned to Corrientes, pleased in the extreme with the issue of a journey, which at one time had threatened so disastrous an end.

The Comandante, a plain, honest soldier, gave me, before I started, a letter which I am tempted here to translate literally, as it now lies before me. We intend to give in the Appendix one or two more of his epistles, which were all the productions of a learned personage called Araujo,

who held the situation of private secretary to the Comandante.\*

“ *Villa del Pilar (Neembucú),*  
16th May, 1814.

“ My esteemed Friend,

“ The presence of the bearer, your dear brother, has been one of the happiest moments which Fate could prepare for me, since it has enabled me to offer my humble services to him as I have done : but I feel an accompanying regret that they have not been accepted entirely as I desired ; for I implore you to believe I would myself have been his guide, in order to insure his safety, in which I feel deeply interested. Nothing farther need be said by one who ranks himself among the happy number of your friends, —one who truly esteems you in the most superlative degree, and who for ever kisses your hand.

“ JOSE JOAQUIN LOPEZ.

The Comandante having made up his despatches for his Excellency the Consul of the republic, I took leave of him on the 17th, and set forward, accompanied by my new guide Francisco.

\* The style is to be taken as the general one of the Comandante's secretary to *all* his correspondents. Every one of them was laid under a similar load of high-flown eulogium.

I had soon very practical proof of the soundness of the Comandante Lopez's advice, not to take the road which I had chosen. We had only advanced a few leagues from Neembucú, when we found ourselves in the marshy land. We waded for hours together through apparently interminable lakes, or great shallow pools of water. Patches of dry land were to be seen only here and there, with miserable huts upon them. We skirted the woods which ran all along the banks of the Paraguay, but of the river itself we never got a sight.

At the distance of every three or four leagues we came upon what were now swollen and wide rivers, though in ordinary times most of them were but rivulets easily fordable. In such cases we had to cross either in a balsa or a pelota. The former is a safe and easy mode of ferrying; the balsa consisting (as you have already been told) of two canoes made fast together. But the pelota is always a nervous sort of affair. It consists simply of a square hide, tied at the four corners, so as to form a kind of bag. In this our recados were first placed, and then I squatted down in the centre with orders to sit

perfectly still. A hide rope being attached to the pelota, Francisco stripped, plunged into the river, and taking the rope in his mouth, swam across, pulling me in the pelota after him.

With great exertion and perseverance we made out seventeen leagues the first day, and at the close of it we took up our night's lodging at a miserable rancho or hovel, the damp mud floor of it being our bed. Two-thirds of the day we had been up to our saddle-girths in water, and I found we had the same sort of travelling to expect till we should get to the Angostura, nine leagues from Assumption.

The second day we came to a swollen laguna or lake, which we found was not fordable, and where there was yet neither balsa nor pelota nor ferryman. Francisco galloped back a couple of leagues, and from the top of a covered waggon, which we had observed standing on one of the dry patches, he cut a square piece of hide, moistened it, doubled it into four, and thus brought a boat for me under his saddle. He then formed it into a pelota, and though it scarcely held me, I successfully crossed the laguna in this portable conveyance.

I crossed several other lakes in it; but at last, on a somewhat rapid stream, I got carried into an eddy,—the pelota was upset,—I tumbled into the river,—and with some difficulty Francisco pulled me on shore. I would trust to the *pelota* no more: from that time forward, when there was no balsa, I stripped, and crossed the rivers and lakes on my horse's back; guiding him with the bridle in one hand, and with the other holding on by the mane.

We now and then got out of the marshes, and penetrated the natural woods of the country. Even here the land was in many places saturated with water, and the travelling everywhere was irksome and laborious. I could never contrive to make more than sixty miles in a day.

The second day, when we had just done wading through one of the pestilential and mosquito-covered marshes, Francisco to his horror discovered that my valize, which had been fastened behind his recado, was gone. My money was in it, and we were in the *only* part of Paraguay where money was requisite towards travelling. Francisco was *au désespoir*. He thought however that some of the tangled branches of the trees of

a wood through which we had passed, must have jostled the valize from him. Back he went, therefore, through bog and marsh and stream, while I sat down under a palm-tree to await his return. After he was gone, my nearest neighbours were the tigers and lions of the forest; and I was not without my fears that some of them might pay a passing visit to the place where I had taken up my temporary abode.

In a couple of hours Francisco returned with the valize, which he held up in triumph as he waded through the cañaveral, or marsh; and we resumed our journey. When we got to the next post-house, however, Francisco, with a serious and respectful air thus addressed me:—"My patron, when I returned to look for your valize, I promised to Nuestra Señora de Mercedes (Our Lady of Favours) that if she should permit me to find it, I would light up four candles at her shrine in the Capilla, which is about three leagues from this spot, and that I would have a mass said for the poor souls now in purgatory. I pray you to remain here while I go and fulfil my vow, and I will return with all possible despatch."

“Francisco,” I replied, with due seriousness, “I am very glad to observe the proper regard which you pay to your religious duties; and I myself am so much interested in your present purpose, that I desire it may be postponed till we get to Assumption, and there, in the cathedral, twelve candles shall be lighted, three masses shall be said, and the bishop himself shall know that it is in fulfilment of your promises to Nuestra Señora de Mercedes.”

Honest Francisco demurred; it was very kind, —he felt for ever obliged to me,—but what I proposed was not the accomplishment of his *promesa*, which at the Capilla alone could be fulfilled. I positively objected to this dreadful loss of time. Francisco was grieved and astounded that I should care so little about the safety of his soul; and the issue was, that I was *obliged* to remain three hours at the post-house, while the scrupulous and devout Francisco conscientiously fulfilled his duties at the Capilla.

I believe we made a narrow escape of our lives next morning. I was anxious to start very early, —at the dawn of day,—but Francisco strongly objected, as we had, immediately after leaving



the post-house, to cross a wood, where there is always danger of tigers till the sun is above the horizon. While we stood at the door of the hut, waiting for broader day, a shower fell, and we shortly after set forward on our journey. We entered the wood, and on the very outskirts of it, Francisco quietly called my attention to the distinct prints of the feet of two tigers, left where the rain had fallen. These enemies must have crossed our path a quarter of an hour before ourselves.

The part of the republic which I traversed, is a narrowed, yet marked exception to the general character of the whole country. Fertility, abundance, hospitality, are its great and leading features everywhere, except in the marshy lands which lie along the river Paraguay, and at Francia's two Botany bays,—Curuguatí and Tevego.

The marshes of which I speak of course reduce the soil to sterility, and the country through which I passed is very thinly inhabited by families who derive a wretched and precarious livelihood from the cutting of timber on the banks of the Paraguay. They are the refuse of the

population, and live in squalid poverty. During four days that I travelled, I never once undressed; and for *two entire days* we subsisted on the hard Indian corn given to horses, and on *maní*, a dry unsavoury nut, the produce of a tree growing everywhere in that part of the interior. The men were rude in their manners, and half savage in their looks. Poverty and filth, with a dogged sort of apathy on the part of the inmates, were the characteristics of every wretched hovel I entered.

Scanty as was the population of this little plague-spot of Paraguay, many of its wretched inhabitants had been forced by the unusual severity of the inundations, and by consequent famine, to the uplands, where they were always hospitably received and cared for by their more thriving and richer countrymen. Yet hunger alone forces the *costeros*, or people on the marshy banks of the river, from their own miserable patches of ground to the sunny and luxuriant uplands which lie close to them; and the moment the waters so far subside as to allow them to become again "hewers of wood," they return to their accustomed mode of life.

Early on the afternoon of the fourth day, we quitted at last the marshy lands, and got on the rising ground of the Angostura,—a narrow pass of the river, nine leagues from Assumption. Here I came in view of the Paraguay for the first time since I had left Neembucú. It flows rapidly down the Angostura, amid a profusion of the richest woodland scenery. A short way above, the noble river, Pilcomayo empties its great tributary waters into the Paraguay, and this is again enriched by numerous smaller affluents. Downward it flows, till the celebrated Vermejo, a little below Neembucú again gives a vast accession of water to the parent stream, which it carries to Corrientes. Here it loses its own name, and makes one body with the Paraná. Here also, or a little higher up, on a scale of the most magnificent grandeur, the junction of the Paraguay and the Paraná takes place. The proper name of Corrientes is San Juan de las Siete Corrientes,—St. John of the Seven Currents.

The country, from the Angostura to Assumption, after what I had seen and suffered in the marshes, appeared to me to be nothing short of

a terrestrial paradise. But it has already been described to you : I galloped along till we came to one of the deep and shaded pathways which form the approaches on all sides to the city ; and on the 20th of May, nine months from the time of my leaving Portsmouth, I shook hands with my brother in Assumption, and so finished my long and eventful journey.

Yours, &c.

W. P. R.

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## LETTER XLVI.

To J — G —, Esq.

J. P. R. RESUMES AND CONCLUDES.

Reading substituted for Society—Cervantes—A Paraguay Shower-Bath—An Arrival, and the Celebration of it—The Dog Hero, a Pointer of the Malvinas, or Falkland Islands, Breed—Lord Byron's Dog Boatswain.

*London, 1838.*

I HAD now been nearly three years in Paraguay; and, with the exception of a short trip to Buenos Ayres, I had rarely in all that time seen an English face, spoken an English word, or communed, otherwise than by letter, with an English friend. Intimate as I was with the inhabitants of Paraguay, and indebted as I felt to them for their kindness, my position was, to a great extent, one of isolation. That I might not become wholly estranged from my own country, countrymen, and language, I spent a good deal of time in my library, among those dumb but instructive

companions, my English books. I laughed over Gulliver's Travels, and much admired the irony of the "Drapier." I went to Pope for satire, to Addison and Steele for humour, to the Rambler for philosophy, and to Goldsmith for pathos and simplicity. These and others of our best English authors, I often read with a pleasure heightened, perhaps, by the circumstance of their being the only English classics that had ever penetrated into those remote regions. But I was constrained, after all, to acknowledge, that for a combination of everything choice and excellent in literature, I had read no book, in any dead or living language with which I am acquainted, that excelled Don Quixote. I mean Don Quixote in his Spanish garb, not the knight errant in his English dress. Homer and Virgil I have read in their own beautiful languages; but I confess I have not derived from them anything like the pleasure which the masterpiece of Cervantes has afforded me. Give me a conversation on the road between the Andante Cavallero of La Mancha, and his panzudo squire Sancho Panza: or let me hear the courteous and learned knight addressing a discourse to the Cavallero del Verde Gaván; or

give me an apostrophe to Dulcinea, or a description of the armies of sheep ; give me any part, in short, of Don Quixote, clothed in the magical diction of Cervantes, and you give me all that imagination can conceive of excellence, that reason can require of depth and propriety, that humour can sketch of ludicrous and bewitching, or that eloquence can demand of polish, energy, and simplicity. Well might Cervantes, when he laid on the shelf the grey goose-quill with which he wrote Don Quixote, address all who should dare to take it from its place with a "Táté, táté, folloncico !"

But, leaving Cervantes, I must proceed to an incident in my narrative, of a domestic kind, which led to a conclusion of the sort of *otium cum dignitate* with which I was pursuing my literary recreations in Paraguay.

The houses in Assumption which have patios, or courts, have also long spouts which project from their flat roofs, to carry off from these the rain. During a heavy shower, which generally follows a protracted period of insufferable heat, these spouts pour their cool, clear, and liquid

contents into the patio. Down falls the water upon the brick pavement with a *splash*, the very sound of which refreshes and cools the body. Before the advent of such showers, you lie panting in your hammock, and gasping for breath. Exhausted nature during the night, half asleep half awake, dreams of suffocation, of unslaked thirst and burning siroccos; but in blows the south wind, and down fall the refreshing waters, and Elysium opens upon the senses,—almost upon the view,—of the sufferer in a tropical climate.

It was my invariable practice, when, by the double agency of wind and water, the atmosphere got thus cooled, to go into the patio, whether it might be by day or by night, to undress, and so let the water from one of the largest spouts *souse* me for ten minutes from top to toe. The transition was such as you may imagine would be that from the burning sands of Libya to the coolest groves of Arcadia.

After the shower-bath I have described, a negro servant was wont to bring and throw over me a linen sheet, with which he rubbed and dried me



under the corridor. I then retired, if at night, to rest, if during the day, to my library; and I found these immersions, though entirely deprecated by the natives, the best mode of invigorating the system in that relaxing climate.

It was on one of these occasions,—in the evening,—when after my spout-bath I had had my glass of wine and my pine-apple (one of the finest and most abundant of Paraguay's fruits), and when in refreshed indolence on the sofa, I was dropping asleep even over Don Quixote, that my negro Juan ran into the room, astonishment and delight depicted in his countenance, and called out aloud, "Mi àmo, mi àmo, el Señor Hermano de su merced."—"My master, my master, here is your brother." Close at his heels appeared the party announced. I thought the whole an apparition, a prelude to my fast-coming dreams. But when I was closely hugged by my own flesh and blood, I became sensible that it was my brother indeed; and starting from my couch, I received him into my arms with an enthusiasm of feeling which had long lain dormant in the quiet and somewhat sluggish regions of Paraguay.

I had been some weeks looking for such a visit; but the obstacles interposed to its realization, by Artigueños, revolutions, non-intercourse acts, pirates and banditti, had not only sickened me, by giving rise to "hope deferred," but made me wish that the risk of realizing my most earnest desire should not be run. My brother *had* run it, however, and succeeded. Home,—the family circle,—the narrative of his "hair-breadth 'scapes,"—his language, look, manners,—all were alternately the subjects of my wonderment, and of our mutual discourse. One bottle of claret followed another. The intoxication of a meeting after a six years' absence, in an isolated region, distant seven thousand miles from our paternal abode, ourselves being the only two Englishmen within a thousand miles of the spot where we embraced,—the intoxication of such a meeting bade defiance to any other. How many bottles of claret we drank I know not; but this I know, that the glare of day found us still in conversation over our wine and fruit; and that my negro Juan, without understanding a word of what was said, stood all the night and all the morning in admiration and wonder of the manner in *which* it

was said. He laughed as we laughed; he ran to fetch another bottle of Bordeaux long before the one on the table was finished; and as the animation of our discourse increased, he frisked about, rubbed his hands, opened his capacious mouth, and displayed his white teeth, in rare contrast with his usual sedate habits, and sombre cast of thought.

There was another witness of that night's arrival, and he took a lively interest in the scene. That friend was a dog, a native of the Malvinas, or Falkland Islands, and had been introduced into Paraguay by the old Spanish governor Velasco. His name was Hero; and his breed, I think, was the finest in the world. All fidelity, love, and obedience to his master, this dog left me not for an instant. He was at my heel all day, and slept by my bed all night; but upon no other mortal being would he cast a cheerful look; nor for any other mortal man do a civil thing. His tail only wagged in his master's presence; volition seemed suspended in his absence. I have shut him up by himself, with, as his only companions, three or four live partridges in the room. They were as if they had been not. The dog

sat moaning at the door through which I had passed; but the moment I re-entered, he made an immovable set at the game.

Yet this dog *instantaneously* acknowledged my brother. He licked his hand, hearkened to his voice, followed his steps, and obeyed his commands. He recognised, it would appear, a certain family resemblance; and on his immoveable principle of fealty to his master, he yielded willing homage to his kith and kin.

The true Malvinas pointer combines, in the highest perfection, all the qualities and instincts of the pointer, the setter, the Newfoundland dog, and the water-spaniel. His scent, courage, and endurance are only surpassed by his sagacity, fidelity, and attachment. He is a small-sized dog, generally of a liver-colour, with beautiful points, and long silken ears. His speed is prodigious; and if he has once ranged a field without coming to a point, you may stake your existence on it, that in that field there is not a single bird. If well trained, a whistle brings him from any distance, however far he may be out of sight; and if he strays from his master, he traces him by his scent through all the mazes, and over all

the distance he may have travelled. Then, for his *utility*, no sportsman who has ever shot behind a Malvinas dog, can admire, he can scarcely endure, another. When shooting in Paraguay, your bird often falls in the very midst of a dense prickly-pear fence, so irascible and impenetrable, as to forbid every attempt at extricating the game. The Malvinas pointer alone is equal to the task; and when he is shot over by a master that he knows will kill his bird, the undaunted quadruped will sacrifice his life rather than leave the prize. I have seen Hero struggle for half an hour in one of those terrible thicksets, and come out at last, bleeding, with the partridge in his mouth. When engaged in a search of this kind alone it is that he is disobedient. Neither coaxing nor threats will seduce him from his pursuit.

I remember, one day towards sunset, having winged a pato real, or royal duck, as he was rising from the lake to his roost in the woods. Hero saw him fall, plunged into the water, and in a few minutes was engaged in the struggle of death with his victim. But the royal bird, large, and vigorous of body, being only *winged*, splashed

in the water, dived under it, and by other stratagems and efforts, kept Hero so long off, that the close of day began to shut the combatants out from my view. In vain I whistled, in vain I called; the dog that crouched under my feet, and humbly licked my hand at other times, lent a deaf ear to my remonstrances against his remaining in the lake. As night was coming on, I rode off with my negro Juan from the spot. I knew that my dog would find his way home. Two hours afterwards, accordingly, I heard his yelping, barking, and scraping of feet at the gateway. There I found the faithful animal, covered with mud and dust, with the pato real, or royal duck, having trundled his aquatic prey a distance of two miles from the marsh in which he had first engaged with it. The moment I appeared, the gallant Hero, with every demonstration of joy, resigned his dead foe into my hands, and crouching down in submissive affection at my feet, seemed to implore my forgiveness for his being out at so late an hour. The next day the highly-flavoured pato real was roasted, served in good style, and Hero had the wounded wing to pick.

There was nothing which I attempted to teach this dog that he did not learn. He took his lessons from my brother with the same docility and perseverance as from myself, but from no one else. We used to derive great amusement from his curious tricks and sensible performances; and on finishing them, as he always did with *éclat*, he was wonderfully pleased to receive our caresses in full payment of his exertions.

Poor Hero! He died; died of starvation; and I dare not tell you of the sorrow and indignation with which the event filled me. He came to his sad end from the barbarous neglect of the captain of a ship to whose care he had for a few days been intrusted.

I cannot help here quoting part of the epitaph inscribed by Lord Byron on the monument erected by him to the memory of his dog Boatswain. I was forcibly struck, on first reading it, by the vivid expression of the feeling of the poet. With the vituperations poured upon man I had nothing to do; but in his tribute to the dog, which Hero's death led me again to peruse, I sincerely sympathised.

" When some proud son of man returns to earth,  
 Unknown to glory, but upheld by birth,  
 The sculptor's art exhausts the pomp of woe,  
 And storied urns record who rests below.  
 When all is done, upon the tomb is seen,  
 Not what he was, but what he should have been.  
 But the poor dog, in life the firmest friend,  
 The first to welcome, foremost to defend,  
 Whose honest heart is still his master's own,  
 Who labours, fights, lives, breathes for him alone—  
 Unhonour'd falls—unnoticed all his worth."

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" Ye who perchance behold this simple urn,  
 Pass on—it honours none you wish to mourn.  
 To mark a friend's remains these stones arise;  
 I never knew but one—and here he lies."

The inscription which precedes the verses, if  
 you recollect, is antithetical and pungent in the  
 extreme.

" Near this spot  
 are deposited the remains of one  
 who possessed beauty without vanity,  
 strength without insolence,  
 courage without ferocity,  
 and all the virtues of man without his vices.  
 This praise, which would be unmeaning flattery  
 if inscribed over human ashes,  
 is but a just tribute to the memory of  
 BOATSWAIN, a Dog."

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.



## LETTER XLVII.

To J—— G——, Esq.

Licence granted by the Consul to leave Paraguay—His Motives for granting it—An important Audience—Francia expatiates upon South America and a Union between Paraguay and England—A curious Exhibition—Francia's Oration— I am ordered to appear at the Bar of the House of Commons—A Dilemma—Commissions from the Consul—The Consul and his Chancellor of the Exchequer—My second Departure from Paraguay.

*London, 1838.*

A MONTH brought my brother acquainted with all the natives of Assumption; and having myself long meditated a voyage to England, I determined in two months more to leave him in the management of our concerns in Paraguay.

But the port of Assumption was again closed against all egress; and in order to effect my intended voyage, it was necessary to have recourse to the special favour of the Consul Francia.

I took all the necessary steps to insure this, and I was, after a few weeks of manœuvre, permitted to leave, by special licence from himself, a place hermetically sealed against the exit of all others. His object in having heretofore been so gracious, and in then granting me the highest favour he could bestow, was at length apparent and avowed. The interview at which he laid open to me the secret imagery of his heart was characterised by so much naïveté, while at the same time it displayed an ignorance so complete of diplomatic forms and ceremonies, that I shall give you the substance of it in nearly his own words.

I had explained to Francia that it was my intention to proceed, if possible, from Buenos Ayres to England. It was his most earnest desire that I should; and you will see from his own views, as developed by himself, what mighty prospects were dawning upon his mind, and what gigantic projects were already buzzing in his busy head, in the anticipation of his being able to connect, by a league offensive and defensive, the empire of Great Britain with the republic of Paraguay.

“ His Lordship the Consul,” said a young ensign, who had been despatched from the palace by Francia, “ His Lordship the Consul desires immediately to speak to you.”

Off I marched with the aide-de-camp. On arrival at the palace, I was received with more than ordinary kindness and affability by the Consul. His countenance was lit up into an expression that almost approached to that of glee ; his scarlet cloak depended in graceful folds from his shoulder ; he seemed to smoke his cigar with unusual relish ; and quite in opposition to his usual rule of burning only one light in his small and humble audience-chamber, there blazed in it on that evening two of the best mould candles. Shaking hands with me very cordially, “ Sit you down, Señor Don Juan,” said he. He then drew his chair close to mine, and desired I would listen very attentively to what he had to say. He addressed me thus:—

“ You know what my policy has been with respect to Paraguay ; that I have kept it on a system of non-intercourse with the other provinces of South America, and from contamination by that foul and restless spirit of anarchy and

revolution which has more or less desolated and disgraced them all. Paraguay is in a more flourishing (pingüe) state now, than any of the countries around it; and while here all is order, subordination, and tranquillity, the moment you pass its boundary, the sound of the cannon, and the din of civil discord salute your ears. As may naturally be anticipated, these internal broils paralyse industry, and chase prosperity from the land. Now, whence arises all this? Why, from the fact that there is not a man in South America but myself, who understands the character of the people, or is able to govern them. The outcry is for free institutions; but personal aggrandizement and public spoliation are the objects alone sought. The natives of Buenos Ayres are the most fickle, vain, volatile, and profligate of the whole of Spain's late dominions in this hemisphere; and therefore I am resolved to have nothing to do with the Porteños. My wish is to promote an intercourse with England direct; so that whatever feuds may distract the other states, and whatever impediments they may choose to throw in the way of commerce and navigation, those states shall themselves be the

sole sufferers. The ships of Great Britain, triumphantly sweeping the Atlantic, will penetrate to Paraguay; and, in union with our flotillas, will bid defiance to all interruption of commerce, from the mouth of the Plate to the lake Xarayes. Your Government will have its minister here, and I shall have mine at the Court of St. James's. Your countrymen shall traffic in manufactures and munitions of war, and shall receive in exchange the noble products of this country."

At this point of his oration the Consul rose with great emotion, but evident delight, from his chair, and calling to the sentinel at the door, desired him to order in the serjeant of the guard. On appearance of this person the Doctor gave him a significant and peremptory look, and told him emphatically to bring "*that*." The serjeant withdrew, and in less than three minutes returned with four grenadiers at his back, bearing, to my astonishment, among them, a large hide package of tobacco of two hundred weight, a bale of Paraguay tea of similar dimensions and exterior, a demi-john of Paraguay spirits, a large loaf of sugar, and several bundles of cigars, tied and ornamented with variegated fillets. Last of

all, came an old negress with some beautiful specimens of embroidered cloth made from Paraguay cotton, and used there by the luxurious as hand-towels and shaving-cloths.

I thought this very kind and considerate; for though I could not but wonder at the somewhat barbarian ostentation in the mode of *making* the present, yet I never doubted that the accumulated native productions, now arranged in order before me, were intended as a parting manifestation of the Consul's regard. Judge, then, of my surprise (you will see it cannot bear the name of disappointment), when, after ordering his soldiers and the negress out of the room with a "vayanse" (begone), he broke forth in the following strain:—

"Señor Don Juan, these are but a few specimens of the rich productions of this soil, and of the industry and ingenuity of its inhabitants. I have taken some pains to furnish you with the best samples which the country affords of the different articles in their respective kinds; and for this reason: you are now going to England; you know what a country this is, and what a man I am. You know to what an unlimited

extent these productions can be reared in this Paradise, I may call it, of the world. Now, without entering upon the discussion, as to whether this continent is ripe for popular institutions, (you know, I think, it is not,) it cannot be denied that, in an old and civilized country like Britain, where these institutions have gradually and practically (not theoretically) superseded forms of government originally feudal, till they have forced themselves upon legislative notice, in a ratio proportioned to the growing education of the majority, they are those best adapted to secure the greatness and stability of a nation. And that England is a great nation, and that its people are knit together as one man, upon all questions of momentous national concern, is undeniable.

“ Now, I desire that as soon as you get to London, you will present yourself to the House of Commons, take with you these samples of the productions of Paraguay; request an audience at the bar; and inform the assembly that you are deputed by Don Gaspar Rodriguez de Francia, Consul of the republic of Paraguay,

to lay before it these specimens of the rich productions of that country. Tell them I have authorized you to say that I invite England to a political and commercial intercourse with me; and that I am ready and anxious to receive in my capital, and with all the deference due to diplomatic intercourse between civilized states, a minister from the Court of St. James's; I also will appoint to that Court an envoy of my own.

“Such a treaty of commerce and political alliance may then be framed, as shall comport at once with the dignity and interests of the great empire of England, and with those of the rising state which I now rule. Paraguay will be the first republic of South America, as Great Britain is already the first of European nations. The alliance seems, therefore, natural; and how beneficial for the European state, you, Señor Don Juan, can fully elucidate and explain.”

Such were the terms, and almost the words, in which Francia delivered himself of his views and aspirations in reference to an alliance with Great Britain. I stood, as you may imagine, aghast,



at the idea of being appointed a minister plenipotentiary, not to the Court of St. James's, but to the House of Commons. I was charged especially not to take a private interview with the head of the executive: "For," said Francia, "I know well how apt great men in England are, unless under the fear of responsibility to the House of Commons, to treat questions even so important as this, with levity or disregard.

"Present yourself," continued he, "at the bar of the house, and there deliver my message, as of old the ambassadors of independent states delivered theirs to the senate of Rome. According to the reception which they shall give to you, one of their countrymen, and above the suspicion, therefore, of being a witness in my favour, shall be the reception (*acogimiento*) which I will extend to their ambassador to this republic."

Never in my life was I more puzzled how to act, or what to say. To refuse the Quixotic mission, and thus incur at once the Consul's displeasure, and draw down upon my own devoted head the ruinous consequences of it, was an alternative too horrible to be thought of. The only other

was acquiescence ; and to this I came, in spite of the strong sense of the ludicrous which pressed itself upon me, as I drew a picture of myself forcing my way to the bar of the House of Commons ; overpowering, with half-a-dozen porters, the Usher of the Black Rod ; and delivering, in spite of remonstrance and resistance, at once my hide-bound bales of Paraguay merchandise, and the oration, verbatim, of the First Consul. But Assumption was a great distance from St. Stephen's. I therefore bowed assent to Doctor Francia's proposition, and trusted to the chapter of accidents for providing me, when the time should come, with a suitable apology for having been unable to get into the predicament which he had so graciously prepared for me.

Having taken leave, the serjeant and grenadiers, heavily laden, followed me home ; where I not a little astonished the new-comer, my brother, with the account of the diplomatic interview to which I had been called. I bade defiance to his scepticism on the subject, by making the soldiers unload at his feet the ponderous physical evidence, by which I sustained the truth of my tale.

At a subsequent interview, Francia made out a long list of commissions for me to execute. I was to bring him gold lace, a cocked-hat, a dress-sword, a pair of double-barrelled pistols, sashes, sabres, soldiers' caps, musical and mathematical instruments, with a very protracted detail of *et cæteras*. About the procuring of these, however, I had by no means so many misgivings, as in regard to my power of persuading Mr. Speaker and the House of Commons to accede to the political and commercial league, of which the Consul was so full.

Thus did matters stand. I was to sail in a fortnight, with an exclusive licence for the exportation of my property and person, and upon an understanding that, if I proceeded home, I should there do my endeavours to bring about an intercourse between England and Paraguay, which I was about as likely to effect, as a junction between any two of the planets the most remote from each other in our system.

A circumstance occurred, during our interview, curiously illustrative of the growing despotism, the abrupt manner, and rude disregard of propriety, which Francia was taking daily less pains

to conceal, whenever his capricious humour was at variance with anything said or done by those around him. The question with him was not how unconsciously offence might be *given*; it was enough that it was *taken*. He stopped not to inquire whether it was the result of ignorance, or even of well-meant deference and assiduity. His irritable and jaundiced temper sought, at the moment, something on which to vent its spleen; and the innocent and guilty were alike immolated at the shrine of his caprice. In the instance referred to, while Francia was dilating to me upon his prospective alliance with Great Britain, the sentry announced as being in the lobby the minister of finance. This office was then united with that of director of customs; though the double functionary was no better than a subordinate clerk of the Consul. It was the duty and the daily practice of the financial minister to be in attendance, at a certain hour, in the lobby of the haughty doctor, at once to give an account of the transactions of the day, and to take instructions for the morrow. The hour of this accustomed interview was now occupied by Francia in the opening up to me of day-

dream projects, much more fraught with importance to him than the routine account of a day's receipt and expenditure of the treasury, albeit, on ordinary occasions, this was exacted, to the last maravedi, with scrupulous and inquisitorial severity.

“El Señor Tesorero aguarda” (Mr. Treasurer waits), said the sentinel. “Que aguarde” (*let him wait*), replied the consul. Two hours did the consul's harangue to me, and subsequent explanations, occupy; and when, at the close of it, he saw me off, escorted by the grenadiers with the tobacco and yerba-bales on their shoulders, the treasurer was still pacing up and down the corridor of the palace, and *waiting*, as he had been ordered to do, his master's farther commands. Upon seeing Francia come out, the minister of finance went up to him, and most respectfully taking off his hat, asked him if he were that night to give in his accounts? “Take him to the guard-house,” said the supercilious despot. “Did I not tell the fellow (*el bribón*) to *wait*? and now he must needs ask questions.”

Off was the Chancellor of the Exchequer marched to the guard-house, and there, on a

bullock's raw hide, in company with the soldiers, was he constrained to ruminate all night on the danger of breaking in upon the consul's associations, even for the purpose of rendering an account of his stewardship.

Such was now the state of affairs; so singular, so anomalous, that though myself the most favoured and the least suspected individual in the country, I was truly happy in the prospect of escaping from under the jealous glance and capricious rule of a man, who was hatching cockatrice' eggs, from which was destined to spring a Pandora's brood of grievances to desolate his country, without the bequeathment even of hope to alleviate the anguish of his terror-stricken and paralysed vassals.

A fortnight after my interview with Francia, I left the Republic for Buenos Ayres, thence to make good my return to England. When I got to the former place, however, I found that it was not so to be; and, even at the expense of relinquishing my diplomatic mission to the House of Commons, I prepared to return to Paraguay itself.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

## LETTER XLVIII.

To J—— G——, Esq.

(W. P. R. RESUMES.)

Assumption—Kindly Intercourse with the Inhabitants—A Monarchy and a Republic—Development of Francia's Character—His Birth and Education—Formation of his Character—Anecdotes of Francia—Summing up of his Character.

*London, 1838.*

My brother has informed you that three months after my arrival at Assumption, he took his departure for Buenos Ayres.

I was now on a footing of greater or less intimacy with all the principal families and personages of the city and its vicinity. I appeared to be a welcome guest wherever I chose to visit. All jealousies of our mercantile character and operations had disappeared; and, indeed, so far from any feeling of that kind showing itself, the kind-hearted inhabitants, by innumerable little acts of

personal attention and courtesy, showed an evident desire to render agreeable to me my residence in the country.

As I intended to remain for a few years at Assumption, I sedulously cultivated, on my part, a kind and frank intercourse with all,—old Spaniards as well as Paraguayans; and by continuing in my dealings the liberality which my brother had always kept up in his, I repaid, as far as I could, the cordiality with which I was everywhere received.

There were two or three very agreeable families in the place, and some really well informed men, with whom I got something more intimate than with the mass. At the same time, the political surveillance which now every day penetrated more and more into the very bosom of domestic life, made it absolutely necessary that my intercourse with those about me should be of a general and open kind; such as to leave no room for suspicion that I mixed myself up, in the remotest way, with the fears and the jealousies, which were already entertained in many quarters, of the now all-powerful Doctor Francia.

This extraordinary man had been, from the very



day of my arrival, the object of greatest interest to me, even in a place so full of interest to a stranger as was Paraguay. I had come straight from England, where an ancient monarchy is firmly established, to a country professing the purest republicanism. But the moment I began to look into Francia's government, many of my illusions about South American liberty were dispelled. He who ran might read, by the rule of Francia, how empty and delusive a mere name might be. In England we had monarchy, but happily based on free institutions. In Paraguay they boasted of a republican form of government, but the despotic will of one man ruled and enslaved the community at large.

With this despotic chief I was suddenly brought into terms of intimacy: my fortunes, to a certain extent, were to be placed in his hands; and, without compromising my own character, I was so to guide and govern my conduct, as to maintain the good will, if not to win the favour, of the all-powerful consul.

I gradually fell into the same sort of intimacy with him which he had extended to my brother. It was a remarkable circumstance, that during

our whole stay at Assumption, we never could perceive that he allowed the least approach to familiarity on the part of any other respectable individual. Indeed I am sure he had (at that period) no intimacy but with ourselves. I never, in all my intercourse with him, met at his house a third party who was admitted to a *seat*, or to join in our conversation. Any interruption to our *tête-à-tête* was casual. The consul invited nobody merely to visit him (as far as I could learn) during my stay, except myself.

My own peculiar position, therefore, even more than simple curiosity, led me to investigate Francia's character as closely as I could. His public acts were before me; but I wanted, as much as possible, to get at the springs of action,—the impulses, passions, or principles by which he was guided,—a knowledge of which could alone enable me to form a just or correct estimate of the man who, it became clearer to us, day by day, was about to exercise whatever influence he pleased over the destinies of every living soul in Paraguay.

Francia's father, as alleged by himself, was a Frenchman; but generally believed to be a Por-

tuguese, who, having emigrated to Brazil, had gone to the interior and ultimately settled in the Misiones of Paraguay. Here he married a creole, by whom he had a pretty large family. José Gaspàr was his first son, and was born about the year 1758.

Young Francia was originally intended for the church, and he received the rudiments of his education at one of the indifferent conventual schools of Assumption. Thence he was sent to the University of Cordova de Tucuman. Having no taste however for theology, he turned, at college, to jurisprudence, and took his degree of Doctor in the faculty of law with great éclat.

Returning to Assumption, which he never thenceforward left, he entered on his profession; and as an acute lawyer and eloquent advocate he soon stood alone. His fearless integrity gained him the respect of all parties. He never would defend an unjust cause; while he was ever ready to take the part of the poor and the weak, against the rich and the strong.

But his manners were generally, and especially to his own countrymen, distant and haughty; his studies were incessant; and general society

he shunned. He never married; his illicit intrigues were both low and heartless; he had no friends; he looked with cold contempt on every one around him; and he thus gradually grew into that austerity of habit and inflexibility of character which so strongly marked his career in after-life.

Francia was vindictive, cruel, and relentless. These were the detestable but leading qualities of his character. But he not only never forgave an injury, real or supposed,—he gradually marked out all those whom he believed, in his own mind, to be secretly opposed to his tyranny, as his victims; and whenever these were doomed in the gloomy recesses of his jealous and suspicious heart, their destruction, sooner or later, invariably followed.

In saying this, I am anticipating the career of Francia. As you have already been told, he began to exercise his cruelty cautiously, step by step; imperceptibly almost, as regarded the degrees of increasing severity by which that cruelty was marked. Up to the time of my leaving Paraguay, although Francia had then been Dictator for a whole year, he had not put one individual to death.

But he was, as I have said, vindictive, cruel, relentless, from the very commencement of his career. Two or three anecdotes of the earlier part of it will fully illustrate the truth of this assertion.

Many years before Francia became a public man, he quarrelled with his father, though I believe the latter was in the wrong. They spoke not, met not for years ; at length the father was laid on his death-bed, and before rendering up his great and final account, he earnestly desired to be at peace with his son Josè Gaspar. This was intimated to the latter, but he refused the proffered reconciliation. The old man's illness was increased by the obduracy of his son, and indeed he showed a horror of quitting the world without mutual forgiveness taking place. He conceived his soul to be endangered by remaining at enmity with his first-born. Again, a few hours before he breathed his last, he got some of Francia's relatives to go to him, and implore him to receive the dying benediction of his father. He refused: they told him his father believed his soul could not reach heaven unless it departed in peace with his son. Human nature

shudders at the final answer which that son returned:—"Then tell my father that I care not if his soul descend to hell." The old man died almost raving, and calling for his son José Gaspar.

Soon after Francia became Dictator, as, on his accustomed ride to the Quartel, or barrack outside the town, he passed the door of an old Spaniard, Don José Carisimo, his horse stumbled slightly on crossing a gutter which was somewhat out of repair. The Dictator sent word to Carisimo to have it put to rights; but by some accident the repair was not finished next afternoon, when Francia again passed. The moment he got to the barrack, he ordered Carisimo, who, though not rich, was a very respectable old gentleman, to be thrown into the common prison, and put in heavy irons, from which he was told he would be released when he paid a fine of ten thousand dollars, or two thousand pounds! Carisimo had not the money, and his family hoped that ere long the Dictator, seeing the offence was so trifling, would relent. They knew not as yet the man. Old Carisimo was corpulent, and the irons which he wore pressed into

his flesh. The fact was reported to Francia. "Then," said he, "let him purchase larger ones for himself:" and accordingly the wretched wife of the prisoner was left to perform the sad office of ordering her husband's fetters. The ten thousand dollars were ultimately raised by Carisimo's friends and paid to Francia, and the prisoner was then set at liberty.

The owner of the house in which we lived, Don Pascual Echagüe, was a native of Santa Fé, but married to a Paraguayan lady of good family, and settled in Assumption. A pasquin on the Dictator was found one morning, stuck on the wall of the house in which our landlord resided with his family. To suppose that Echagüe himself had stuck it there was monstrous and absurd. Yet that day he was thrown into prison and into chains. His unhappy wife, after her husband had languished in solitary confinement for some months, contrived to get an interview with the Dictator. She threw herself at his feet. Her tears and her sobs choked her utterance. "Woman," said the stern and immoveable tyrant, "what do you want here?" "Oh my husband! my husband!" was all that

the unhappy lady could articulate. Francia then turned to his guard,—“Order,” he said, “another *barra de grillos* (heavy fetter) to be placed on Echagüe, and an additional one every time that this mad woman dares to approach me.” The wretched husband, like many other victims, died in his prison, and in his chains.

Francia’s word was a law more irrevocable than were ever the laws of the Medes and the Persians.

A shipwright of the name of Soloaga, a Buenos Ayrean, was busily engaged in building a small vessel for me. One evening, as I was examining the work going forward, an order from the Dictator came to Soloaga to look out for some half-dozen of planks, wanted for I don’t know what government job. “I can do it in the morning,” said Soloaga to me, for he was much interested at the moment in showing me all the fine points of the vessel. I recommended him to fulfil the Dictator’s order on the instant, but he delayed.

Next morning early he was called up by the Dictator, and asked if he had picked out the wood wanted. Soloaga was just on his way, he



said, to do it. "Sir," said the Dictator impatiently, "you are a useless member of society here, for you do not serve the *Patria*. Leave it therefore within twenty-four hours." The man had been married and established in the country for years, and was carrying on an extensive business. "Señor Excelentísimo," he began; but Francia stamped his foot, and sternly added, "Leave the Republic within twenty-four hours, and quit my presence this moment." Wife, children, work, property, all were abandoned; and in twenty-four hours Soloaga was on his way to Corrientes, never to return to Paraguay.

These domestic incidents will perhaps convey to you, more distinctly than mere abstract delineation could do, the cruel, callous, pitiless nature of the man. His ambition was as unbounded as his cruelty. His natural talents were of a higher class than those which had been displayed by any one of his countrymen in either a public or private capacity. His education was the best which South America afforded; and he had much improved that education by his own desire to increase his general attainments. He possessed an exact knowledge of the cha-

acter of the people of Paraguay. He knew them to be docile, simple, and ignorant, easily guided to good or to evil, and without moral or physical courage to resist oppression. He was sagacious, astute, patient, and persevering. No moral or religious principle was allowed to stand between him and his plans: his end was absolute imperious sway; and in using his means for attaining it, he was prepared to view the commission of crime without fear, and to inflict every suffering which human nature could endure without pity and without remorse.

These were the elemental parts of the character of the governor and of the governed; and by these have been upheld, for twenty-five years, the extraordinary tyranny under which, during all that time, Paraguay has groaned.

Yours, &c.

W. P. R.

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## LETTER XLIX.

To J—— G——, Esq.

## ELECTION OF FRANCIA TO THE DICTATORSHIP.

His Initiatory Measures—Anecdote of Yegros, the Second Consul—Francia's Manœuvres—Institution of his System of Espionage—The Spy Orrego—Nature of my Interviews with Francia—Tenor of his Conversation—His Deportment to his Countrymen—His Habits—Assembling of Congress—Members of it—The City Members—The County ones—Meeting of Congress—A Guard of Honour furnished—Francia elected Dictator.

*London, 1838.*

DURING the last four months of the joint consulate of Francia and Yegros, the latter took absolutely no part in the government of the country; while the former not only engrossed all the executive power, but was busily though secretly engaged in his manœuvres to carry into effect, with every appearance of legality, what he had already determined should at any rate take place—his appointment to a Dictatorship of the Republic.

Yegros, an illiterate Estanciero, although dignified with the titles of Consul, and General of the armies of the Republic, could in no possible way cope with Francia; and he gradually and quietly resigned himself to the obscurity into which the First Consul was determined he should sink.

I met Yegros once or twice at the Government house before the conclusion of his consulship; but he then showed nothing save a timid deference to Francia. The former really knew as little about state affairs as the meanest of the few government understrappers whom Francia at this time employed. Of his general ignorance Yegros one day gave my brother and myself, in the presence of Francia, an amusing instance.

We had received letters from Buenos Ayres, and were giving the Consuls the latest news from Europe. We mentioned among other things that the Emperor Alexander had joined the general alliance against Napoleon, and that several vessels loaded with arms and munitions of war had been despatched from England to Russia. "Malhaya!" said Yegros, after considering a

while, "Malhaya soplara un viento sur, largo y recio, que traxese todos estos buques aguas arriba!" "I wish to goodness a long and strong south wind would blow, and force all these vessels up the river!" Yegros fancied that if the south wind blew long enough, it would force every vessel bound for the Baltic up the Paraguay, and into the port of Assumption.

"Just consider," said Francia, after his compañero, his companion, as he called him, was gone, "if such an *animal*, such a fool as that be capable of governing a republic."

Francia went on drilling, clothing, cajoling, bribing, and augmenting his troops, particularly his quarteleros. He observed the most rigid economy in every department of the state; and he kept accumulating government treasure very fast. He encouraged all the lower classes to look to him for favour and employment, and he sowed discord and jealousies among the better portion of the community by every underhand means to which he could have recourse.

He commenced a system of espionage which he every day extended and ramified, and by

which at last he so distracted and alarmed every family in Assumption, that the whole population fell an easy prey to the terrors with which his stealthy watchfulness of their movements inspired them.

I had, unknown to Francia, an opportunity of observing the manner in which he placed spies upon the actions of those whom he either feared or suspected, and who gradually became the victims of his jealousy.

The principal *reconocedor*, or examiner of yerba in Assumption, was a man of the name of Orrego, who kept a *pulperia*, or public-house. He was a joyous and good-natured looking little man, not much more than five feet high, with a portly body, a round and laughter-loving face, and a look of easy indifference and simplicity which would have made you believe him altogether incapable of guile or deceit. He used to wear a gaudy-coloured handkerchief about his head, with a small coarse hat stuck on the top of it. His *calador*, or long steel probe, sharp at the end and hollow in the centre, with which he pierced and drew out samples of yerba from the

serons, was always in his hand, and he went gossiping about, in the prosecution of his business, received by all, and suspected by none.

As we had more business to do than almost all the other merchants put together, Orrego was constantly employed by us, and very much dependent upon us for an income.

This little man, I found, was one of Francia's principal and most confidential spies. Seeing the open favour shown to me by Francia, and knowing that I would not betray him, he could not help boasting to me of the secret intimacy which he was permitted with the Consul. He was "reconocedor del Gobierno," or Government inspector of yerba, and this lulled any suspicion which might arise from his being frequently seen with Francia.

Little Orrego, when his public-house was filled with the lower orders, would hold forth in eloquent strains of Guarani, in praise of "Caraî Francia;" and when going about the stores or warehouses and shops of the better citizens, he caught up all that was said of the Consul without appearing to listen to a single word. While a conversation was going on, I have seen the little

fellow astride over a bale of yerba,—striking the hard substance under him with his calador,—half whistling or humming a tune, in apparent abstraction of all that was going forward, and yet drinking in every word that was uttered around him.

“But Orrego,” said I one day, “I hope you do not betray your friends.” He fidgeted, and looked uneasy. “Ah!” said he, “Carai Francia is a hard man to deal with. I do my best to let things go on as quietly as possible, but I *dare* not deceive the Consul. He has many others employed beside myself, and *I do not know who they are*; if through any of them I was detected in a falsehood, or in anything like equivocation, you know what would be the result to *me*.” I knew indeed but too truly that the result would be imprisonment and irons for life. Orrego was a cunning though a good-hearted little man; and you will perceive what an admirable sort of tool he was with which to work out dark ends like those of the First Consul. Most of the spies I believe were chosen with the same keen observation of character, more particularly as developed in Paraguay.



When I was myself in company with Francia, he seldom or never permitted me to see the dark side of his character. Any business I had to transact with him I always did by calling on him in the early part of the day. My visits to him in the evening were always of his seeking. Before the Dictatorship, the message invariably delivered to me by an officer or one of his body-guard was, "Suplica el Señor Consul que se vaya V. a casa del Gobierno,"—"The Consul begs that you will go to the Government House." And after he became Dictator it was "*Manda el Supremo que pase V. à verlo*,"—"The Supreme orders that you go and see him."

He always received me with great urbanity, in his small dark and dismal-looking room, situated at the extremity of a low, black corridor. One tallow candle generally stood on a small round one-legged table, at which not more than three persons could be seated. This was the dining-table of the absolute lord of that part of the world. A *mâté* and a cigar, handed by an old and ill-dressed negress, or by a black man, the only servants Francia had, were the refreshments to which he invited me. I once sent him

a dozen bottles of porter (more highly thought of by me in Assumption than you would think of a hogshead of Lafitte in England), and three days afterwards, on paying a visit to his Excellency, the first bottle which had been drawn, half full, and without a cork, was brought in, and a wine-glass was filled with Meux's "entire sour," and presented to me. I told Francia that we drank porter from tumblers, and that a bottle once opened must at once be finished. Francia smiled: "I thought," said he, it was *rather* sour to-day at dinner; but come, we shall drink a bottle in English style."

His dinner consisted generally of two common dishes; or of one, with a little caldo, or broth; and water was his beverage. One forenoon his frugal meal was placed on the table before I had taken my departure. I took up my hat. "I do not ask you," said the Dictator with some consideration for my comfort; "I do not ask you to 'hacer penitencia\*,' for I know a good and substantial dinner, and plenty of wine every day are indispensable to an Englishman."

\* 'To do penance;' a general mode among Spaniards of asking you to stay to dine, if you happen to be with them at their dinner-hour.

Francia's conversation was chiefly of a political nature; and he himself was the centre of perfection to which all his observations pointed. If he touched on scientific or literary subjects, it was still to boast of some acquirement of his own. His vanity, under a thin skin of pretended indifference to fame or applause, oozed out at every word he pronounced. His own government,—his own political sagacity,—his wisdom,—his acquirements,—he constantly contrasted with those of others, and as constantly to his own advantage. Paraguay was a Utopia realized, and Francia was the Solon of modern days.

He spoke contemptuously of all Europe, with the exception of England. Paraguay and England—England and Paraguay;—these were the enlightened countries which he wished to see united, like the Siamese twins, firmly and irrevocably in one.

He could not bear to hear of the celebrity, glory, or renown, of any South American but himself. General San Martin, the great and honest champion of South American independence, and General Alvear, at that time the suc-

cessful and energetic leader of the fortunes of Buenos Ayres, he hated with a deadly hate. It was when speaking of them, alone, that I used to see all the malignity of Francia's character. He always began his discourses about these his celebrated contemporaries with affected and bitter contempt; but he invariably ended with violent and passionate declamation.

When not on the subject of South America, Francia's manner was pleasing, and often jocose. He no doubt felt it to be a relief to have one who could place himself on a footing of equality with him—one who was *not afraid of him*. Every other living soul in Assumption was. Sometimes, while conversing with me, his guard would announce visitors; they were often sent away, sometimes admitted. In this latter case, Francia assumed a cold and stern inflexibility of feature. He stood erect. The crouching applicant came to the door. "What do you want?" Francia would abruptly and harshly say. The want was expressed with tremour, or with profound reverence. "Bien—retirese,"—"Very well—retire." The self-constituted intruder would retire accord-

ingly, too happy to escape from the presence of the haughty Consul; and then the latter would turn to me and resume his discourse\*.

Francia could seldom keep to his chair while he was talking. He would walk up and down the room with his cigar, or stop in front of me as I sat, and in this way lay down his propositions or urge his arguments.

Before he became Dictator he had commenced a custom, which he thenceforward regularly kept up, of riding from the Government House to the Barracks, outside of the town. As if he would not be an exception to the character which he gave his countrymen, of having defective necks, he always rode with his head bowed down to his breast. He was attended by a few of his *Quarteleros*, but he rode in gloomy silence, and seldom returned the salutation of those he met. He came back at sunset in the same taciturn way.

I have thought these slight details of Francia's

\* Francia used to be much annoyed at the abject fear in which his coun'rymen stood of him, but which he himself had produced. He used to say,—I do not know whether the saying was borrowed or original,—“that he thought every Paraguayan wanted a bone in the back of his neck, for he never knew one who could hold up his head.”

habits at the time I became acquainted with him, might amuse you, and serve also as a starting-point from which his dark and despotic career during his dictatorship might be traced.

As the joint Consulship expired in October, 1814, Francia took measures for calling together a new Congress about that time. The Yegros and Cavallero party were already much dispirited; and the unceasing energy with which Francia and his myrmidons had been preparing to give the *coup de gráce* to Paraguay liberty left them with little or no doubt of his unqualified success.

Francia proposed,—and as a necessary consequence it was resolved,—that the new Congress should consist of the monstrous and really laughable number of one thousand deputies. It was decimating the country of its heads of families, to bring that number of members of Parliament to fulfil their legislative duties in the metropolis: but Francia's *fiat* had gone forth, and the thing was to be done.

In September the motley multitude began to give increased activity to the streets of Assumption. As might have been expected, more than

one half of the knights of the shire and burghesses of the smaller towns, could neither read nor write—wore neither stockings nor shoes. Every one had a horse, but every one had not a coat, much less a court-suit, in which to attend the levee of the-at-present condescending Consul. A jacket of white dimity, very short, and excessively tight; a bespangled waistcoat, still shorter than the jacket; knee-breeches of crimson velvet-teen, with highly embroidered drawers hanging down to the ankle; a blue silk sash, such as you see worn by itinerant voltigeurs; potro-boots open at the toes; large silver spurs on the heels; a very small coarse hat half covering the head; and an immense queue of plaited black hair hanging down the back;—such was the singular costume of many of the gentlemen of the House of Commons which Francia had summoned for the august purpose of creating a Dictatorship.

I do not think there were twenty Paraguayans (and not one out of Assumption) who knew what a Dictator meant. President, Consul, Director, Protector, and Dictator, were with them synonymous terms with the old-fashioned name of Governor, as constituted by Old Spain.

The city of Assumption, if I mistake not, was to return some sixty or eighty members to represent its complicated interests in the millenary assemblage of legislators.

There was one bitter, irreconcilable enemy of Francia with whom I was intimate. He had been my fellow-traveller in the *Carmen* from Santa Fé; and he and his family (they were my next-door neighbours) had been more than commonly kind to me. His name was Manuel Domècquè.

He came into my house one morning when I knew the nominations to the great Congress were in process of issue. No *popular* election took place: the Government made out the lists, and these were adopted, as a matter of course, by the municipal and other local authorities.

Domècquè was full of indignation, not un-mixed with alarm. "What do you think," said he, "this *picaro*, this villain Francia has done? He has named *me* a member of his Congress; and not only me, but all those whom he considers his greatest enemies in Assumption! What are we to do?"

I advised him, for I felt alarmed for his safety,



to accept the nomination, and to vote for Francia. Poor Domècquè saw as well as I did, the necessity of adopting my advice. Francia named his enemies because he knew he had a majority without them, or in spite of them. If they voted for the Dictatorship he would always turn round and tell them that they had seen the propriety of investing some one with absolute power; that that absolute power they had placed in his hands; and that it was for him exclusively to determine how it ought to be used. If they voted against him, and he gained the day, they were all lost men. Sooner or later, Francia would destroy every one of them.

The Consul's influence and sway in the country districts was unbounded; hence his desire to swamp the votes of Assumption, and one or two other towns, in those of the numerous representatives of the rural districts.

Another reason for his calling together such an overwhelming mob of senators was, that three-fourths of them were poor men, having families depending on them for their daily bread. Such men could not afford to spend their time in cities, even with the magnanimous purpose of serving

the *patria*. Charity, very literally with them, began at home; and therefore, they might all be emphatically termed anti-protracted-sessions-members. This was what Francia desired. He wanted his work done effectually, but quickly.

Of the thousand Legislators of Paraguay, about six or seven hundred were collected together, driven into town by the comandantes,—as Pat drives his pigs along the road—unwilling and grumbling travellers.

Many were the droll scenes which I witnessed with these representatives. Our name was now well known in Paraguay, our intimacy with Carai Francia had been bruited abroad; so I had numerous visits from honourable members as they poured into the city. Most of them, instead of discussing politics with me, began by asking how they could dispose of yerba or tobacco; all of these primitive legislators having brought a small quantity of one or other, or both of these productions to pay their expenses in town. They had, happily, no electioneering bills to pay. In the pure and incorruptible republic of Paraguay we had no East Retford questions to puzzle us; no Gattons nor Old Sarums to disfranchise.

Schedule A's and Schedule B's were things unheard of in the land of the Jesuits; and the only question which disturbed the duly chosen representatives of the great body of the people of Paraguay was, how they could get a fair price for the calculated hundred dollars' worth of tobacco which they had brought to enable them to subsist till they were allowed to return to their respective counties and paternal estates.

It was found necessary to convoke the Congress in the church of San Francisco, no other building being capacious enough to contain the august assemblage.

All matters of form, election, and etiquette, were settled at two preliminary meetings; and on the 3rd of October the Parliamentary business commenced. The proceedings were opened by Mr. Speaker about nine o'clock in the morning; and notwithstanding all the precautions which Francia had taken, some awkward inquiries began to be made about the propriety of a Dictatorship. The services and abilities of Francia were spoken of in the highest terms; indeed, he was loaded with the most extravagant and hyperbolic praises; but it was doubted whether a

Dictatorship would conduce so much to his glory as a more limited power, assisted by a national Congress. Hereupon debates commenced, and heats ensued.

I went up myself to the church about twelve o'clock. The doors were shut, but great confusion seemed to prevail within. At last, one of the dimity-jacketed members came out wiping his forehead, and seeming to have suffered much, either from the heat of the church or of the debate.

"How go things within, my friend?" said I to the representative.

"Why," replied the honest member, "to tell you the truth, these are matters which I do not pretend at all to understand; but if I may judge from the noise (*los gritos*)—*todo va bien*—all goes well."

About two o'clock, as the members of Congress were still in warm debate, Francia got impatient, and very politely sent a numerous guard of honour to wait on the members. The troop was well armed, and quite surrounded the church. The hint was sufficient even for the clod-pated deputies in dimity jackets; besides, the dinner-

hour was past, and hunger, as well as the *moustaches* of the Quarteleros hastened a decision.

At this juncture one of the most energetic of Francia's partisans rose, and in a stentorian voice called silence. "Gentlemen," said he, "why should we waste our time here? The Carai (Lord) Francia wishes to be absolute. He ought to be absolute; and I say" (here he struck the table at which he stood with his whole force), "he SHALL be absolute!"

The question was forthwith put to the vote, and without one dissentient voice, Francia was invested with the Dictatorship for three years.

The Congress dissolved itself instanter; the Quarteleros marched to the Government House with flying colours; and Francia heard, with the malignant sneer of a devil on his face, that Paraguay was all his own.

The insensate populace celebrated, with mirth and music, and festive meetings that night, the decision of the Congress. Alas! the low sobs and moanings of those who were destined soon to be bereaved widows and wretched orphans—the heavy sighs of the prisoners, and the groans

of those whose blood was ere long to irrigate the streets of Assumption—ought alone to have announced that FRANCIA was DICTATOR OF PARAGUAY!

Yours, &c.

W. P. R.

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## LETTER L.

## TO OUR READERS.

IT often happens in regard to a book, as it does in regard to a fox-chase.

You shall see, in the latter case, a splendid company take the field in high spirits, as they anticipate an excellent day's sport. Renard breaks cover, and off he runs at a gallant pace. The huntsman sounds his horn; the hills and valleys re-echo the music of the hounds; the field of sportsmen clear the fences, and take, at flying leaps, the brooks and the gates. At first in close array, they make a goodly show of courage and perseverance. But there are ploughed fields to traverse; long detours to make; now a hunter gets short of breath; anon, his rider; the pace is too hard for some, too slow for others; the dogs are frequently at fault; the drizzle becomes a rain, or the light sleet

ends in heavy snow ; many are already far from their homes ; and many, engaged at a distance to dinner, cannot longer tarry. From one cause or other, one after another leaves the field ; and it is only perhaps half-a-dozen of the more persevering that, undeterred at once by tedium and fatigue, are fairly " in at the death."

Just so it is with a book and its readers.

Having gathered around him a goodly list of subscribers (and few take the field with a more select yet numerous company than ourselves), your author's production at length breaks cover. The newspapers, with trumpet-tongue, proclaim that the sport has commenced, and off in pursuit of it starts the whole of the company. But sometimes the author, like the fox, runs too fast, at others too slow, and anon his readers are " at fault." There are rough passages through which they find it heavy work to travel ; detours that they have not patience to make. Some stop at one place, and some at another. One by one, they drop off. The dinner-party recalls many ; the length or the dreariness of the way many more ; till at length, of five hundred readers who started at first, perhaps not a dozen are " in



at the death;" that is, reach the end of the book.

It is obviously the select and patient number alone who have come thus far, that we can expect to know how much we thank them for their courtesy; for though we address ourselves gratefully to all, including those who have accompanied us but a short part of the way, as well as those who have been content through the medium of "skip," to fall in with us only at certain points of the country; yet we cannot know that such expression of our acknowledgments will meet the eye of these latter classes.

Dropping simile, however,—to all our readers who *do* see this our parting address, we desire to unfold the following "plain, unvarnished tale."

When first we sat down to edit anew these letters, our chief difficulty lay in the selection from those in our possession, of the matter to which we would give a place in our book.

After as careful a scrutiny and estimate as we could make, we thought we should be able, in this our first series, to bring down the life of the Dictator Francia to the present time. In this

anticipation we have been disappointed. We could only have realized it by a curtailment, after we had gone to press, of much matter and of many incidents which we thought essential, as well to the continuity of our story, as to the unity of plan upon which we set out. Should the fiat of the public not go forth against it, this plan is, to publish in succession, collections and extracts from the many letters and documents in our possession, connected with various sections of America and its inhabitants.

In these two volumes, or first series of letters, we have been unable to proceed beyond the election of Francia to the Dictatorship of Paraguay. But it is our intention, in one forth-coming volume, to be entitled *Second Series*, and bound uniformly with this, to trace the career and finish the history of that cruel tyrant and bad man. The volume in question will contain, in like manner, reference to scenes, adventures, and persons, which want of space has excluded from the series now published.

If it should appear to some of our subscribers that more delay has taken place than they were led to expect in the publication of these "Letters

on Paraguay," they will perhaps admit as an apology in extenuation of the involuntary fault, the following simple and authentic story.

On one of those desperate nights of January last, when every inanimate substance in nature was congealed; when the roads were covered with snow, and the footpaths overlaid with slides, one of the authors of these "Letters on Paraguay" was travelling in that conveyance for all, an omnibus, from London to Kensington. He had his manuscript under his arm, having got it, after perusal, from the publisher. He got down from the omnibus; but in getting upon the footpath, he placed his foot on a slide, and came down upon the ice. He was stunned for a moment by the severity of the blow, and so acute, when he got up, was his pain, that he limped away from the scene of his calamity, without even a thought about the MS. Unconsciously to him, it had slipped, when he fell, from under his arm. Scarcely, however, had he proceeded many minutes on his way, when up to his bewildered conviction arose the fact that he had *lost his manuscript*. Back he went to the ill-fated spot where he had fallen: search was made in vain;

the MS. was gone. Next morning, handbills and newspapers proclaimed the loss, and offered the necessary reward; but never again did we set our eyes upon our lost sheets.

Some of our friends were facetious on the catastrophe. One said the MS. had only gone to the trunk-maker a little before its time; another, that it *must* have found its way to Mr. Tegg at last; while a third, more considerate, said he thought the loss a gain, as we should thus be saved the expense, as well as the mortification, of publishing a book that might never be read.

Now, although we recollected that of the MS. of Cyd Hamet Benengeli, the first part was found by Cervantes as an envelop to a pound of butter, and that the remainder he purchased from the grocer at the cost of a few maravedis; yet unable to flatter ourselves that the merit of our lost MS., even should it be now in the grocer's shop, would ever stimulate a Cervantes to edit it, we have been ourselves constrained, from the same original documents, to compile anew the seven hundred long pages which were irretrievably lost on a winter's night.

THE AUTHORS.

SINCE writing this work, a report has reached Europe of the death of Doctor Francia. We believe he had entered his eightieth or eighty-first year. Should the report be confirmed, we hope to be enabled to give, in our second series, some authentic particulars of the close of that singular man's life.

6th August.

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**A P P E N D I X.**

A STATISTICAL TABLE of the MISSIONARY TOWNS of the JESUITS, showing their Latitude, their Families, and Inhabitants, together with the number of tame Cattle (the wild being innumerable), according to the Inventories made during the Expedition undertaken by his Excellency Don Francisco Bucarfi, for the purpose of the Expulsion of the Jesuits, decreed by His Majesty.

TOWNS.	Lat.	Families	No. of Souls.	Tame Cattle.	Oxen.	Horses.	Mares.	Mules.	Asses.	Sheep.	Goats.
San Yonacio Guazú	26 53	425	1,926	11,000	853	364	464	110	223	3,014	12
N. Sxa de Fee	26 43	716	3,954	40,231	1,549	2,618	7,404	912	446	8,518	"
Santa Rosa	26 52	497	2,242	60,629	1,011	2,112	4,166	656	1,093	8,029	"
San Jago	27 10	701	2,822	23,000	1,890	1,346	2,586	702	350	4,700	40
San Cosme	27 52	656	2,337	25,045	1,792	638	2,945	558	240	8,050	"
Ytapua	27 19	1,108	4,784	45,820	3,599	2,782	4,898	1,263	983	7,427	"
Candelaria	27 25	754	3,064	4,632	1,780	1,910	3,791	501	198	4,648	6
Santa Ana	27 23	1,131	4,334	33,796	3,331	638	4,651	819	963	6,574	"
Loreto	27 20	625	2,462	30,000	511	1,413	2,770	73	222	1,181	32
San Ignacio Miní	27 15	839	3,306	33,400	"	"	3,953	983	272	7,991	"
Corpus	27 1	1,205	4,587	11,880	"	591	1,813	492	616	4,079	"
Trinidad	27 10	622	2,865	17,059	527	728	552	106	32	5,922	"
Jesús	27 3	521	2,365	50,000	1,000	557	1,170	390	20	5,000	"
San Joseph	27 48	556	2,122	39,089	1,370	1,292	2,231	507	531	5,931	29
San Carlos	27 40	543	2,367	25,000	1,633	763	3,202	861	29	5,000	"
Apostoles	27 55	475	2,127	44,920	2,383	2,116	2,277	523	42	11,400	4
Concepcion	28 0	746	2,829	24,000	2,000	1,181	445	100	100	11,215	"
Santa Maria la Mayor	27 51	324	1,475	12,000	520	1,962	1,522	1,395	388	7,475	"
San Xavier	27 50	438	1,527	14,535	1,264	450	624	253	19	1,244	"
Martires	27 46	430	1,662	11,317	1,799	1,303	"	728	"	2,018	"
San Nicolas	28 13	791	3,811	19,316	1,060	570	461	188	7	1,966	"
San Luiz	28 25	809	3,353	6,585	1,194	375	465	162	12	1,056	"
San Lorenzo	28 25	311	1,264	4,560	254	140	301	61	6	1,691	"
San Miguel	28 26	799	3,164	18,728	1,560	1,047	1,048	164	"	713	"
San Juan	28 18	916	3,791	2,760	1,476	247	1,048	108	"	408	"
Santo Angel	28 0	715	2,362	2,679	1,006	313	189	200	3	18,471	"
Santo Tome	28 40	419	2,172	15,781	1,006	401	1,092	175	175	13,425	"
San Borja	28 46	521	2,583	16,626	2,145	785	1,400	124	42	27,000	430
Cruz	29 26	724	3,242	32,000	1,600	400	1,400	140	"	46,118	39
Tapeyú	29 46	1,719	7,974	54,715	7,964	5,899	3,099	1,536	544	230,384	592
		21,036	88,864	724,903	46,936	34,725	64,353	13,905	7,505		

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The following is a translated specimen of the epistolary style of Pâi Montiel, the hospitable curate. The originals of this and of one of the subsequent letters are annexed. It is not easy to do justice to them in a translation.\*

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† †

San Lorenzo.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE great designs of Providence, and his paternal love in distributing equal rights to his creatures, are abundantly manifest in his dealings with us in our native home.

We, the South Americans, had long experienced, by his divine will, a most wretched lot; but, at length, through his inscrutable mercy, he has unveiled to us the glory of our imprescriptible, inalienable rights. In spite of the power of so many enemies, who have cruelly conspired to extinguish them, our constancy and confidence, as we have reposed in the arms of his providence, have been crowned with the highest proof of his holy love, in the great achievement of the capture of Montevideo, the arsenal of military stores, and golden key of our Americas.

\* The hyperbolic and inflated compliments which pervade some of these letters must be attributed to the heated imagination of the writers, and to the flowery style in which they endeavour to give it expression. It is not because they are addressed to this or to the other individual; all to whom they write come in for a like share of overwhelming panegyric.

† The Spaniards generally commence their letters with a cross.



God be praised, and all those who have contributed to so interesting a result!

Praised especially be they who directed the naval operations; to whom, being as they were, English Europeans and English Americans, I desire, as represented by your person, to offer up my heart full of jubilee and full of gratitude, for which no mortal tongue can find adequate terms of expression. How can language portray my feelings on occasion of this prodigious achievement, of which I have this moment received the news!

Long live the Consul Francia! Long live the republic of Paraguay! Long live Buenos Ayres! Long live all European and American English gentlemen! Long live Admiral Brown! Long live the smack that brought the glorious news. Long live Don Andres Gomez! Long live the Englishman that overtook the smack with the account! Long live Don Juan and Don Guillermo! Long live Paí Montiel, to rejoice by the side of Don Juan Robertson, his friend! Finally—Long live all decided Americans; and perish all European Spaniards, with all their adherents! Long, a thousand times long, live Paí Montiel, to quaff half a dozen goblets of Bacchus in the banquet-room of his friend Don Juan Robertson. Hip—hip—hip—hurra!

Your friend,

PAÍ MONTIEL.

P. S.—To the simplicity of the South Americans, it seems more polite, because indicative of more familiarity, to write upon paper of which the edges are not cut, than on that of which they are.

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*Original of the preceding Letter.*

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†

San Lorenzo.

ESTIMADO AMIGO,

LA grande obra de la Providencia ofrece en nuestros hogares la prueba mas evidente de su amor paternal en distribuir los derechos de igual suerte à sus criaturas.

Nosotros los Americanos del Sur, quienes experimentavamos, à su Divina presencia, la suerte mas desgraciada, hoy por sus altas misericordias nos descubre las glorias de nuestros derechos imprescriptibles, y á pesar del poder de tantos enemigos que conspiraban cruelmente ahogar nuestros derechos, nuestra constancia con la confianza en los brazos de su providencia nos han sellado con las expresiones de su alto cariño en la grande empresa con Montevideo, plaza depositaria y Llave de oro de nuestros Americas.

Dios sea alabado, y todos los que han contribuido á este efecto tan interesante, especialmente los que hacian fuerzas navales, por lo que siendo como eran Yngleses Europeos e Yngleses Americanos, à ellos en la persona de vmd., se dirige mi corazon lleno de jubilo, lleno de reconocimiento, que no cabe en language expresion de tanto prodigio, por una nueva tal como esta, que en este instante me aseguran.

Viva el Consul Francia! Viva la republica! Viva Buenos Ayres! Vivan los caballeros Yngleses Europeos y Americanos! Viva el Comandante Brú! Viva la balandra que condujo tal noticia! Viva Don Andres

Gomez! Viva el Yngles que dio alcance a la balandra con esta noticia! Vivan Don Juan y Don Guillermo! Viva Pâi Montiel para regocijarse al lado de su amigo Don Juan Robertson! Vivan—por conclusion—todos los Americanos decididos y mueran los Européos Españoles con todos sus seqüaces. Viva mil veces Pâi Montiel para sorberse media docena de copos de Baco en la sala de su amigo Don Juan Robertson! Viva! Viva! Viva!

Su Amigo,  
PAI MONTIEL.

P. O.—La sencillez de los Americanos del Sud guada por mejor politica expresarse en papel sin cortar.

*Vale.*

SPECIMEN NO. 1 OF THE EPISTOLARY STYLE OF THE  
COMMANDANT LOPEZ, OF NEEMBUCU, OR THE VILLA  
DEL PILAR, A FRONTIER TOWN IN PARAGUAY.

+

MY MOST DELECTABLE FRIEND,

YESTERDAY Don Augustine David presented to me your introductory letter; and I instantly complied with your directions by giving him a recommendation to a person who, in consequence of our reciprocal friendship, I feel assured will serve him with zeal and efficacy.

Do not hesitate, nor let the remotest delicacy intervene, to occupy me incessantly as far as my inutility

can stretch to serve you. You have long known that I esteem you for your excellent conduct and noble sentiments. How shall I thank you for the supply afforded to my son, and for your having even offered him more? This has sealed anew upon my heart impressions of the most lively gratitude; and, together with the remembrance of the favours and services with which you have already overwhelmed me, makes me feel that if I did not testify my acknowledgments of them, as far as lies in my feeble power, you might justly hold me in the predicament of ingrate.

Dispose, on every occasion, according to your own good pleasure, of the sincere and refined attachment which, with bowels of affection, is dedicated to you by your invariable friend, faithful patriot, and assured servant, who kisses your hands.

JOSE JOAQUIM LOPEZ.

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SPECIMEN NO. 2 OF THE COMMANDANT'S STYLE.



Villa del Pilar (Neembucú).

MY MOST DELECTABLE FRIEND AND DEAR SIR,

I AM apprised of the whole contents of your esteemed letter of the 13th instant; and, while I am sensibly affected, on the one hand, by the account of your indisposition, from which, by Divine assistance, you have no doubt recovered, I have, on the other, experienced the greatest delight on hearing of the happy arrival of Don

Guillermo, under circumstances which must indisputably be productive of all the glory typified by an exalted friendship, based upon sweetest brotherhood and harmony.

I know not how to express my gratitude for the immense benefit you have conferred upon me, and great zeal you have shown in the management of my law-plea. It is notorious to me that you have placed it in the hands of a great, a learned, and a polished man; for I have been overwhelmed with delight on perusal of his representation, setting forth the solid reasons upon which my legal claim is based.

I am beholden to you beyond measure for the advance of the fifty dollars which you have made to my agent; and I pray you now, and for ever, to consider me not among the fortunate number of your friends, but of your loyal slaves.

I have no news to communicate beyond those of which you are already aware; and it only remains for me to inform you that I have had the honour of receiving under my protection the Cavallero Don Estevan Maria Perichon, with a brother-in-law of his, whose brother, Don Cayetano Martinez, was assassinated while a prisoner in the barracks of Corrientes. These relatives of his have taken refuge here, fearful of experiencing a similar fate at the hands of the troop of militia under the command of Aguiar (an Artigueño).

Place me at the disposal of Don Guillermo; and I pray that neither you nor he will keep me idle here; for my desire is every moment to be occupied in your ser-

vice, being, as I am, your loyal and invariable friend, who kisses your hands.

JOSE JOAQUIN LOPEZ.

---

*Original of the preceding Letter.*



Villa del Pilar (Neembucú).

MI DILECTISIMO AMIGO Y SENOR,

Quedo impuesto de todo el contenido de su apreciada de 13 del corr<sup>te</sup>. y al paso de serme sensible el accidente de en ermedad suya, de que mediante los Divinos auxilios habrá ya recuperado la salud; por otra parte se me imprimió un gran goze con la noticia de la feliz llegada de Don Guillermo, en circunstancias de que indispensablemente se hallarán en las glorias que representa la fina amistad de una dulce armonia, y fraternidad.

No sé como explicar mi gratitud por el beneficio grandioso, y mucho esmero que ha hecho para conmigo en el litis, cuya secuela me és notorio pusó á manos de un gran hombre docto y fino; pues me hé engolfado en la lectura de la copia del escrito con las solidas razones que patentisan el derecho.

Agradesco en suma el suplemento de los cincuenta pesos dados al apoderado, y por ahora, yá puede vmd, y para siempre, contarme, no entre el numero dichoso de sus amigos sino de sus leales esclavos. Por ahora no corren noticias algunas que las de qué fué vmd. participe; y solo me resta decirle que tengo el honor.

haya venido á tomar mi proteccion el Cavallero Don Estevan Maria Perichon, con un cuñado suyo, cuyo hermano llamadose Don Cayetano Martinez, fué asesinado, estando en el quartel preso. Han venido estos temerosos de que procedan tambien con ellos los milicianos, cuyo Gefe es Aguiar.

Pongame vmd. á la disposicion de Don Guillermo ; quien, y vmd. no me tengan acá osioso, pues desea momentaneamente servirles su leal è invariable amigo,

Q. S. M. B.

JOSE JOAQUIN LOPEZ.

SPECIMEN OF THE EPISTOLATORY STYLE OF THE COMMANDANT'S SECRETARY.



Villa del Pilar (Neembucú).

MY ESTEEMED FRIEND AND DEAR SIR,

With the greatest complacency and joy I lifted my eyes upon your esteemed letter of the 31st of last month, addressed to his Honour the Commandant, in whose absence, and in consequence of the confidence reposed by him in me, I opened your communication. The result is very fortunate, for the vessel arrived the day before, and I delivered your packet and letters to the supercargo, Don Hilarion Martinez, and took his receipt for both. This I immediately dispatched to the frontier, where his Honour the Commandant now is, in

order that he may take the earliest opportunity of satisfying you by the transmission of it, in testimony of the reciprocal friendship you enjoy.

The moments on which my heart loves to expatiate are those when, from an impulse of prudence, or effect of generosity, in spite of my ignorance, arising from want of literal\* studies, men do me the inconceivable honour of committing to my charge commissions in which they feel an interest: consequently, with active energy does my spirit propend to fulfil their precepts, especially when enjoined by a personage whose conduct, like yours, invariably noble and enlightened, is testified by the various credentials, over which, with rejoicing, I have so often pondered.

With this exordium of my highest regard, do you, with all confidence, and from whatever distance, make use of the absolute inutility, but immeasurable good-will, which are cordially offered to you by a faithful patriot, and unalterable friend, who kisses your hands.

MANUEL MATIAS ARAUJO.

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Shortly after the abrupt dismissal, by the government of Paraguay, of the envoy from Buenos Ayres, Don Nicolás de Herrera (as mentioned in vol. ii. p. 28), the latter state, as an act of retribution, at once, for her envoy's treatment and her rejected proposals of alliance,

\* He means "literary."



levied very heavy duties on all the produce of Paraguay. To every remonstrance against this measure a deaf ear was lent by Buenos Ayres; and, having written myself on the subject to my friend Mr. Herrera, then principal Secretary of State at that place, I received from him a letter, of which the following is a translation:—

“The new duty, I admit, is heavy; but, believe me, circumstances imperiously demand it. If the Paraguay Congress of the 1st of October had better understood its own interest, it would have avoided the imposition of so heavy a tax. But every one knows best his own affairs.

“There was once in Buenos Ayres (let me give you a little anecdote), a captain Banfi, a man celebrated for wit and drollery. He occupied the first floor of a house, of which the rooms on the ground one were tenanted by a wealthy shoemaker, who had a splendid shop.

“Banfi observed that the journeymen, in order to vex and disturb him at siesta time, sang aloud, and made the devil’s own noise with their hammers. Tired of this nuisance, the captain went down stairs one day during the siesta hour, and with the greatest politeness begged of the master and journeymen shoemakers to do him the favour not to be so very zealous in the prosecution of their work and amusement at a time when people generally wanted to sleep. But the shoemakers replied, ‘*That every one was at liberty to do what he pleased in his own house.*’

“Banfi said not a word; but, on the following day, he ordered a huge caldron of boiling-water, and at

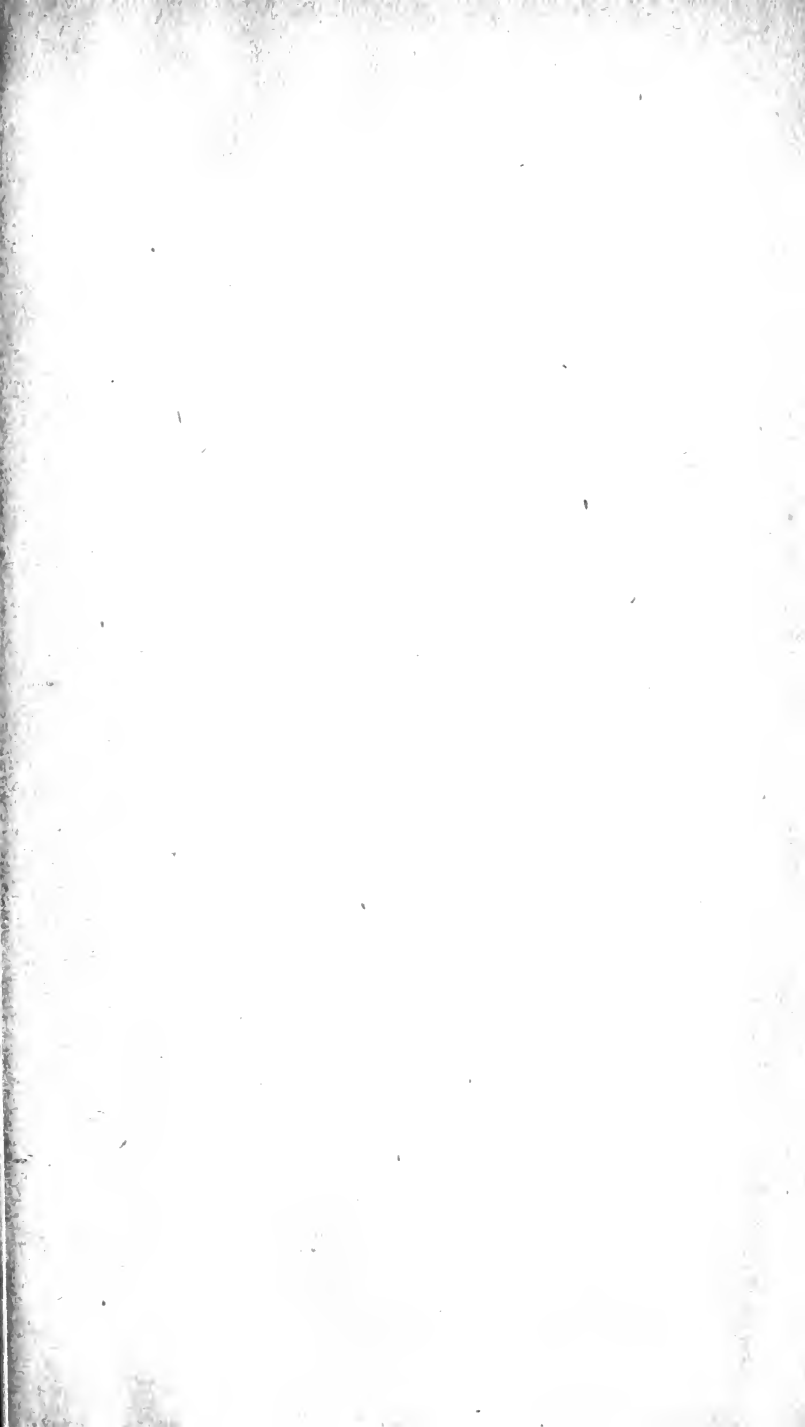
siesta time began copiously to irrigate the floor of his chamber. The water penetrated through the crevices of the floor, and falling upon the heads of the noisy shoemakers, scalded some and drenched others; so that, rushing out into the street, they began, with shouts and yells, to remonstrate against the outrage, and they threatened to have the Captain up before the governor. Banfi, who was waiting the result in his balcony, replied to them, with provoking composure, Well, my friends, do so; and I will answer the governor's rebuke by saying, 'That every one is at liberty to do what he pleases in his own house.' "

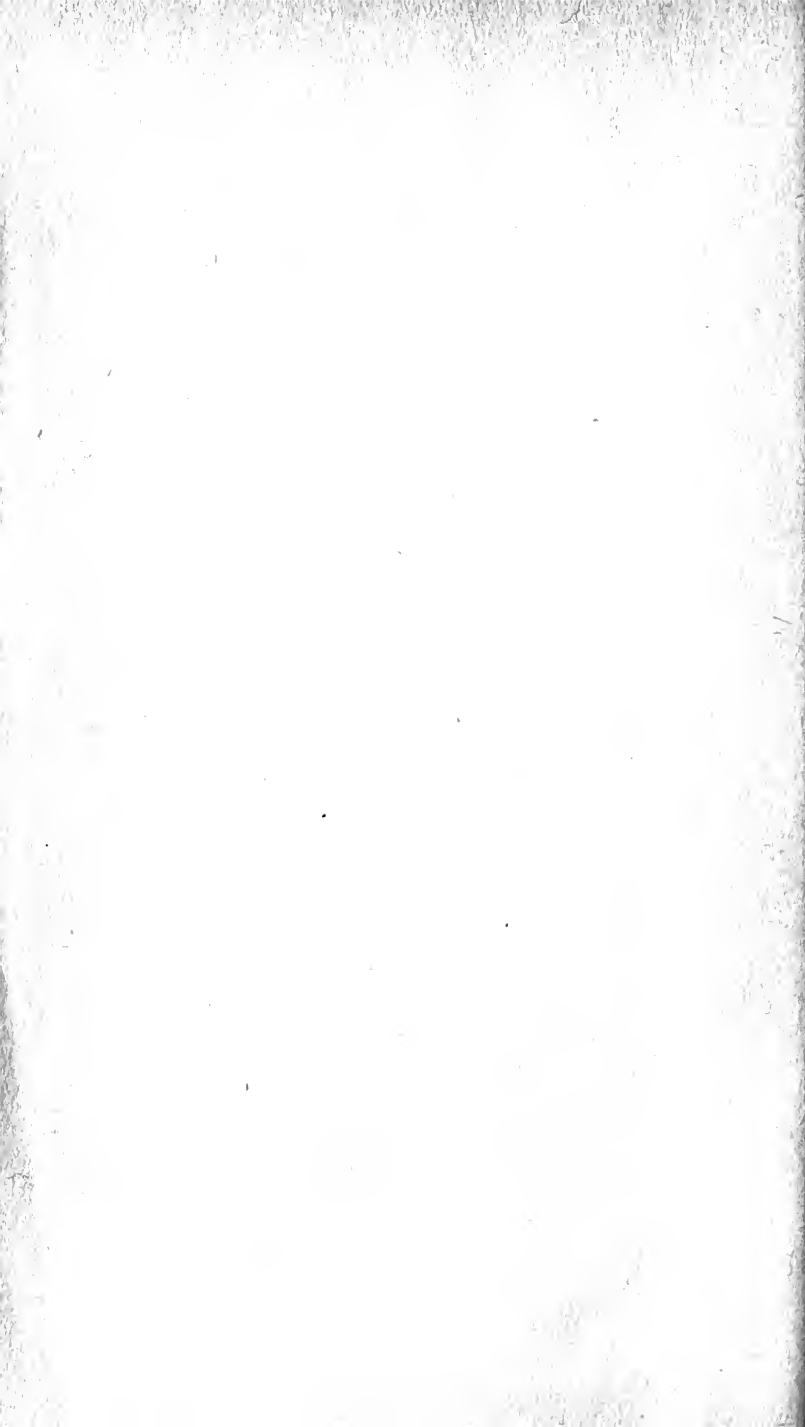
(Signed)      NICOLAS DE HERRERA.

THE END.

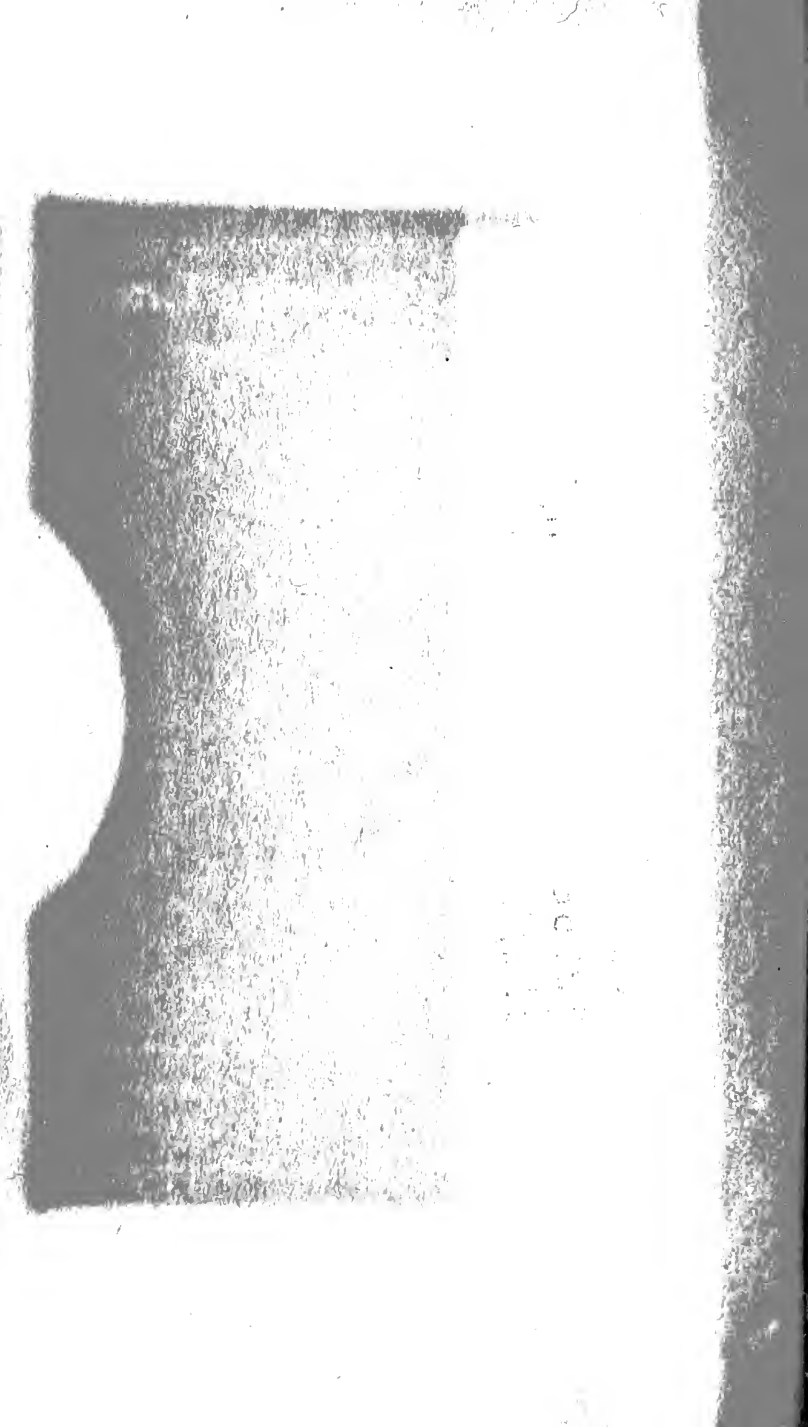
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