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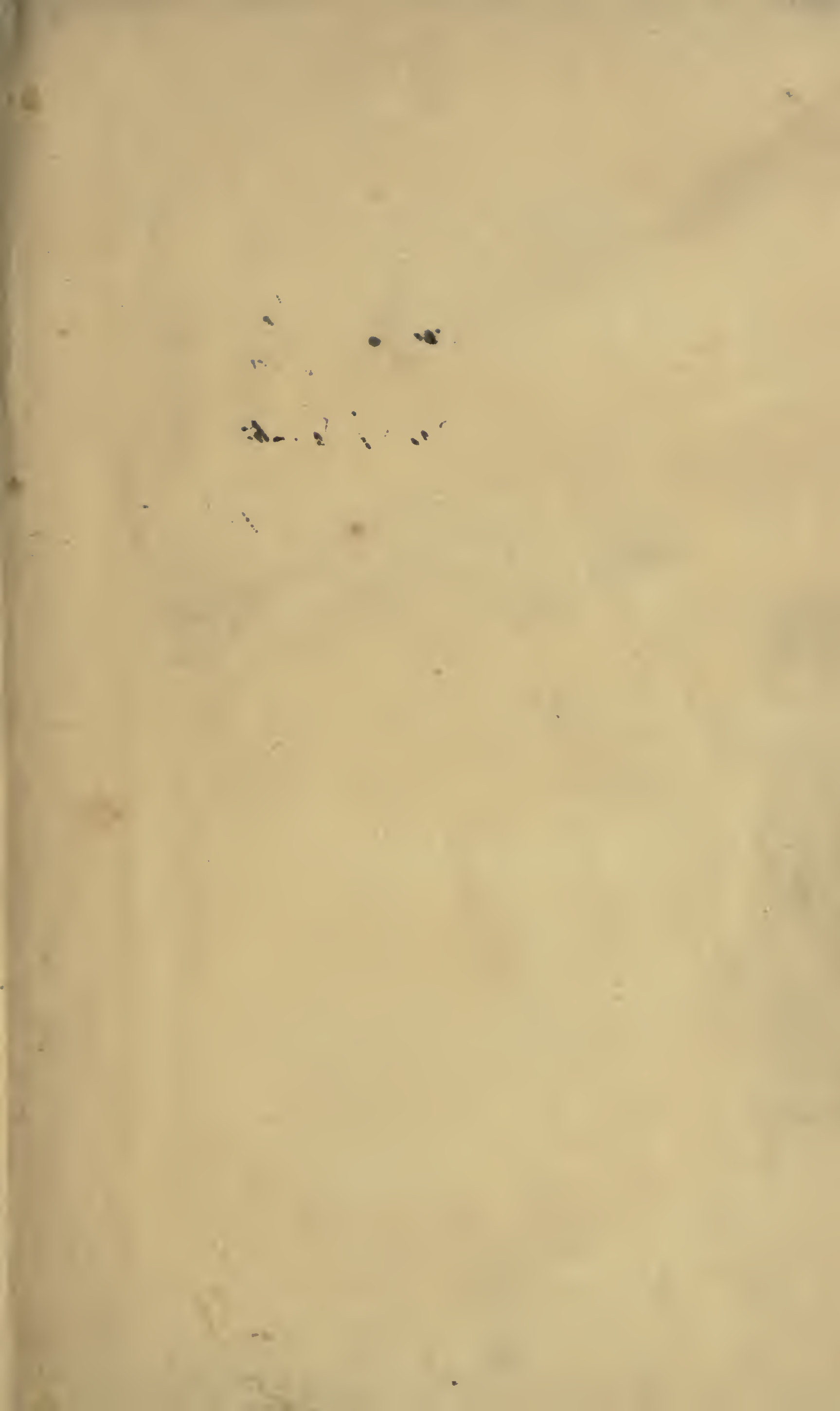

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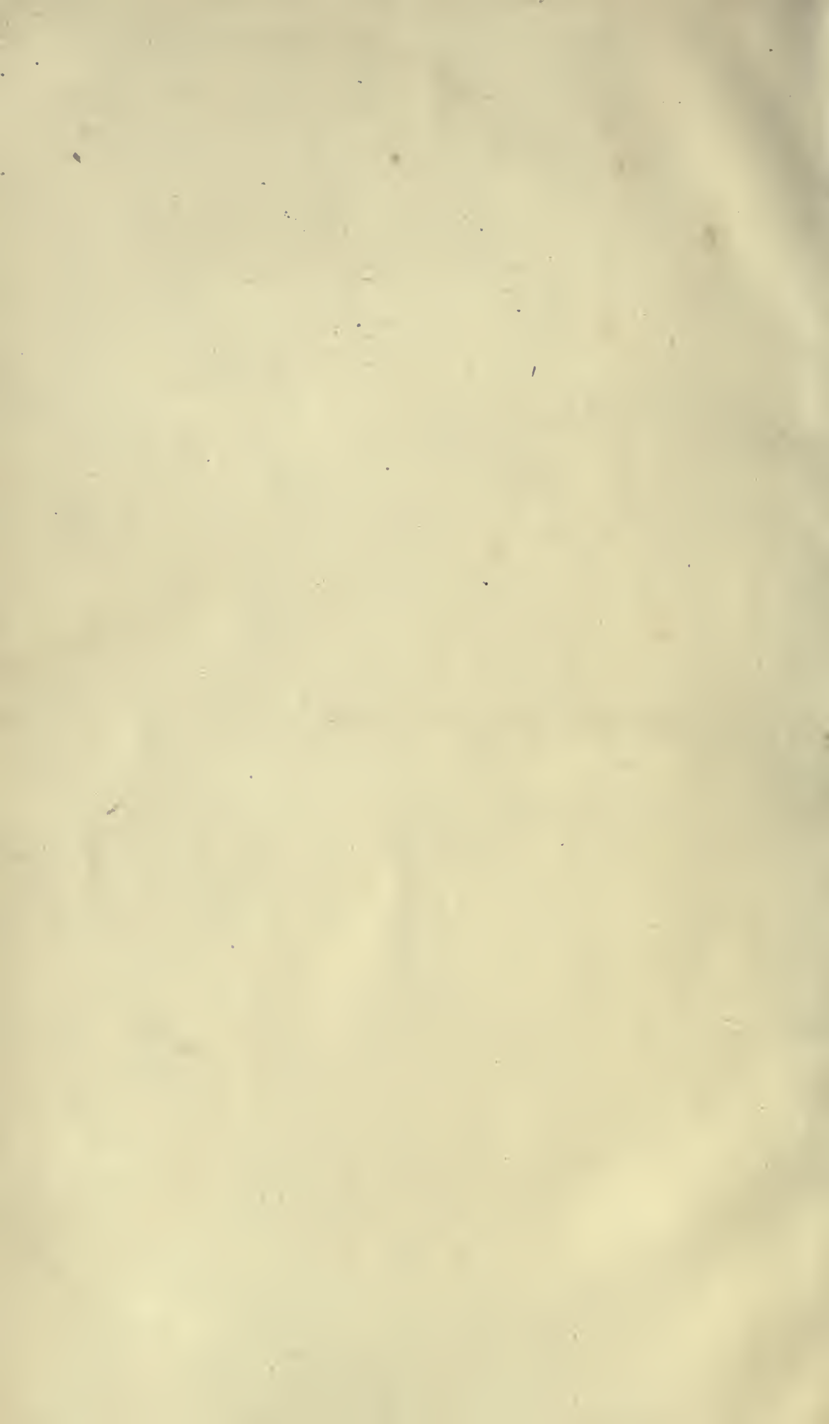

WANDERINGS

IN SOME OF

THE WESTERN REPUBLICS.

By the same Author,

WILD LIFE IN THE INTERIOR OF CENTRAL AMERICA.

George Byam del[t]

Hullmandel & Walton Lithographers

CHAGRES.

London John W. Parker, West Strand 1850.

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WANDERINGS

IN SOME OF THE

WESTERN REPUBLICS

OF

AMERICA.

WITH

REMARKS UPON THE CUTTING OF THE GREAT SHIP CANAL
THROUGH CENTRAL AMERICA.

BY GEORGE BYAM,

Late 43rd Light Infantry.

LONDON:
JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.
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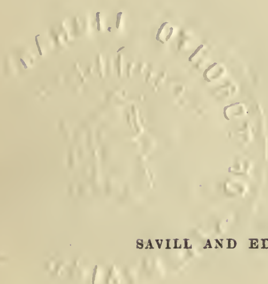

LONDON:
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TO

LIEUT.-COLONEL JAMES FORLONG, K.H.

AND THE

FORTY-THIRD LIGHT INFANTRY,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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INTRODUCTION.

HAVING passed six years in wandering through several of the Republics on the western coast of America, I have beguiled away many a winter evening and rainy day since my return, in putting into order numerous notes, and copying sketches taken during that period of my travels. As I almost lived on horseback, I must have travelled in that manner over more ground than has fallen to the lot of most foreigners in those countries.

In this small work, I purpose to take my reader (if he will be kind enough to accompany me) from Chili to the interior of Central America; and I promise him, as far as lies in my power, to avoid any ground that has been so trodden before as to leave a broad, beaten trail.

On our arrival in the dense forests of Central America, I will say 'Adios,' and leave him to return home by any route he prefers, as I wish to meditate there a little on the possibility, practicability, and probability of a great Water Communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans; but I trust he will remain with me and discuss the question.

Two years' wanderings in Central America must naturally have made a man of strong constitution, rather erratic habits, and fond of adventure, pretty well acquainted with that wild, wooded country; and, last year, I wrote a slight work relating a few of those adventures in the depths of the forest. Many reviewers spoke kindly of it, as they generally do of a work which almost disarms criticism by the absence of any pretension; but the limits of the book would not allow me to touch upon the subject of the Great Ship Canal through Nicaragua.

I offer to the reader the following remarks upon the manners and customs of the people on that extended coast, upon the habits and nature of the birds and beasts, interspersed with anecdotes and tales of travel, as the result of my own observation and experience, and I shall be happy if the last chapter, which touches on the important question before alluded to, may prove useful to mankind.

I also add a Map of Central America, in which the *line* is marked which I believe will be adopted in cutting through that country, to form the contemplated canal between the two great oceans, together with vertical sections of the whole operation.

These were taken from the surveys of Mr. Bailey, an English officer, and his son. As far as I can judge, they are quite correct; and I believe the said line to be the only one feasible.

LONDON, JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

WANDERINGS

IN SOME OF

THE WESTERN REPUBLICS.

CHAPTER I.

REPUBLIC OF CHILI.

ITS NATURAL BOUNDARIES — CLIMATE — FORM OF GOVERNMENT—SERFDOM OF THE PEONS—THE MURDER OF DON DIEGO PORTALIS—MILITARY FORCE.

NO country in the world, except it be an island, can have its boundaries more clearly fixed than Chili. The Pacific Ocean forms the Western boundary; the immense ranges of enormous and ever snow-clad mountains of the Andes, the Eastern one. The Northern limit is clearly marked out by the sterile and terrible desert of Atacama; and the Southern barrier no less well defined by the lances and lassos of the savage Araucano Indians. This frontier is less secure than the others, and requires a large portion of the regular army to protect it; but those said spears and lassos always have been, and now are, quite sufficient to deter the Chilians from extending that frontier, or making any attempt at, what is now commonly called, *annexation.*

The only mode of ingress or egress is, either by

the sea or over the Andes; the principal ports on the coast being those of Conception, Valparaiso, and Coquimbo; but they are not regular ports—they are merely bays or roadsteads, and are insecure, with the exception of Cóquimbo. Every winter some vessels are lost from the effects of northern gales; happily they occur rarely. There are three principal passes over the Andes. The south one being that of Santa Rosa, the centre one of the "Cajon of Maypo," and the north one in the province of Coquimbo. On each of these passes is a sort of guard, or rather custom-house, garrisoned by a few men, and it is very rarely a person can make his escape, or, indeed, leave the country without a permit; the north and south being well secured by the arid desert of Atacama, where there is no water, and the above-mentioned Araucano Indians.

Also, in no other country, perhaps, is there such a variety of climate and temperature as in Chili. About a thousand miles in length from south to north, the temperature naturally varies as we approach the equator, but a far greater difference is felt when travelling from west to east. In the latter case, sometimes, one day's journey will enable the traveller to experience a transit from burning hot plains to most intense cold and never-melting snows. The change is sudden; and though I have often heard a parched-up traveller on the plains express a wish to take a good roll in the snow above him, yet, when he had arrived there, I never knew one that did not express a strong desire to be back again and get *unfrozen.*

In the south, the climate is like that of France; and the luxuriant vegetation shows plainly that abundance of rain falls on the Province of Conception. Fine natural grass and well-grown timber are constantly met with. The crops of wheat (both white and red) are very heavy. Irrigation is not wanted; and everything that grows well in the same northern latitude, flourishes in the south provinces. They are likewise very healthy.

As the traveller proceeds towards the north, the climate gradually changes, and on arriving at about the latitude of Valparaiso or Santiago (33°), the rains are much scarcer than in that part of the country he has left behind him. Natural grasses are only seen after the few rains that fall, and soon get eaten up by the cattle and mules, or else scorched up by the burning sun, and recourse must be had to artificial grasses, which can only be procured by irrigation; and the way *that* irrigation is managed is truly wonderful, considering the 'acequias,' or small canals, are often levelled by the eye only, and that frequently for many miles.

The artificial grass used and grown to immense extent in Chili is called 'alfalfa,' which is the Spanish for clover; it is not clover, but a valuable species of lucern. It requires much irrigation, and grows very fast. It also possesses the valuable property of being the most favourite food of grazing animals, and of very soon restoring flesh to hard-worked horses and mules, although it still retains them in hard-working

condition. When it is fed close down, the animals are removed into another fresh field, and water turned on the old one for a day or two ; and what with the irrigation, and the heat of the sun, in six weeks the field is ready for another troop of animals, or, if near a town, another *cut*. It is a natural 'pièce de resistance.' I do not know what the people of Chili (as an equestrian nation) could possibly do without this useful herb.

Everything grows in great abundance about Santiago. The wheat is still very fine, and also barley, which is the Chilian substitute for oats. Almost every sort of vegetable grown in England is produced, and many not known in Europe. Pears and apples are very inferior ; but fine strawberries, large peaches grown on standard trees, but mostly of that sort in which the stone adheres ; apricots and nectarines, likewise on standards ; very fair oranges ; the finest melons, figs, and grapes, to be seen anywhere, with many others, are sold at Santiago remarkably cheap.

The animal produce is equally reasonable, with the exception of butter, which is extremely bad and dear; but fowls, turkeys, and beef, are to be purchased very cheap. In the country, near Santiago, I have frequently bought fine fowls at about threepence (English) each, and a good sized turkey for less than two shillings. At Valparaiso, which is crowded with English and other foreigners, everything is much dearer, and forage for horses both expensive and scarce. The rent of houses is exorbitant—one thousand or

twelve hundred dollars a-year being a very common price. Fuel is also scarce and dear.

Proceeding further north, the traveller will find that the climate undergoes another rapid change: Coquimbo, which is only three degrees of latitude further north than Santiago, but which three degrees are converted by Chilian roads into four hundred and fifty miles, has, in general, a beautiful soil; but sufficient rain is denied it, and the consequence is, that in four years out of five there is scarcely an appearance of natural grass; and the mules and horses of those poorer persons who cannot afford to place their animals in irrigated fields, suffer in proportion to the dryness of the season, and often die in large numbers.

The province of Coquimbo, being a mining country, immense troops of mules are kept in it for the purpose of conveying copper ores and bar copper down to the port of Coquimbo for shipping. Some of these troops belong to the owners of mines; but they mostly belong to some muleteer, who, with his sons or some hired men, are engaged by the journey. Each mule on an average carries sixteen arobas (four hundred weight Spanish), some more and some less; but sixty-four hundred weight, or, what is called a 'cajon,' is only paid for as sixteen mules' load, and the muleteers may divide the load over twenty if they please. I have never seen a huanaco carry a load in Chili, though in Peru long files of lamas are seen every day; but there is a saying in the north, that 'a mule should carry sixteen *arobas,* a burro (donkey)

eight arobas, and a huanaco only four; but then a mule *must* have grass, a donkey can live on nothing but sticks, and a huanaco can exist on stones.'*

Rain seldom falls in Coquimbo more than on four or five days in the year; each hour of rain is watched with anxiety, and in those four or five days it is generally only for a few hours each day; but I remember one year it rained for nearly nine days consecutively, beginning with drizzling showers, that prepared the earth to make the most of what followed, and the consequence was that the natural grasses grew almost to the height of a horse on spots, where, in other years, a few goats could barely find subsistence.

All sorts of provisions are far dearer and more difficult to be obtained than in the southern provinces. Fowls and meat are more than double the price, and fruit scarcely to be procured. Vegetables also are seldom to be had, except in the city itself.

Proceeding further north, the traveller still keeps rapidly changing his climate, and that essentially for the worse. As little rain falls about Coquimbo, at Huasco that little is sadly reduced; and, though the soil is excellent, yet the difficulty of irrigation is so great that very little land can be brought to produce anything.

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* In central America a mule load is considered very heavy when it amounts to two hundred and fifty pounds; but having some fine mules in that country, I had them loaded as in Chili, only giving something for the climate. It was not the mules that could not carry, but the lazy loaders of the mules: few could lift up a load of one hundred and fifty pounds on to a mule's back.

Vegetables and fruit can hardly be expected; fowls and beef are six times the price paid in the south; and, as we have now arrived in the silver mining country, nothing scarcely under a dollar is taken for accommodation that would be given gladly five hundred miles further south for little or even nothing.

Travelling still further north the annual rains almost cease; there is some little vegetation, but procured entirely by irrigation.

At last, to the north of Copiapo, the ultimate verge of vegetation is passed, and the traveller finds himself absolutely stopped from further progress by the desolate arid desert of Atacama, which forms that boundary of Chili—and a most secure one it is.

And now, having taken the reader from nearly the south to the extreme north of Chili, let us return to the capital, and make, not only a few excursions in the hunting and shooting line, but also remarks on the Government, which rules a population of about two millions, thinly scattered over an immense extent of territory. I have purposely carried my reader very nearly in a hand-canter for many hundreds of miles; and we will now take rest, to consider what we have seen.

The government of Chili is called a republican government, and believed to be such by those who look only to a name; but it is really no more a republic, in the strict sense of the word, than the rule of any other government that relies on the clergy, the very higher orders of gentry, and the

army for support. The name is the only resemblance it bears to a republic; but in strict fact, it is an oligarchical government, with an immense quantity of real feudal power; that power being in the hands of a few,—and those few being the heads of the clergy, and also the landlords, owners of large estates and enormous herds of cattle.

These owners of 'haciendos' are really and truly as much the owners of the peasantry as the feudal lord was of the serf; but the obligation and power are widely different,—for the Chilian landlord asserts no power except that given him by a law recognised all over the world—viz., that law which relates to debtor and creditor.

Cities and towns may be freer from this influence, but in large estates it is real feudalism. This remark may appear strange—republicanism to be compared with feudalism!—but a plain account of the management of one of the large estates will fully bear out the statement, adding that the said management is more or less the same on every estate.

Happening to be on a visit to a friend who owned a very large hacienda, about one hundred miles to the south of the capital, Santiago, I very naturally took every opportunity of making myself acquainted with the rules and regulations by which the estate was managed. The annual revenue from this 'hacienda' was estimated at above sixty thousand dollars; and my friend's income, or rather fortune, was greatly increased by the accumulation of large sums, saved

by keeping his expenditure below one quarter of his receipts for many previous years. The results of my observations are as follow.

The population on an estate is seldom reckoned by the actual number of living beings. Old and infirm men, women, and children, are thrown out of the account, and the owner of the estate can sometimes say, 'I have one thousand men ready to mount on horseback at my call.* The greater part of these men, though bound to do service, are never paid in money, but the owner allows them a piece of ground, which they till, and also rear melons and other fruits. Should the peon wish to sow wheat, the patron supplies him with seed, and requires it to be returned at harvest-time.

For this land, the peasant, or 'peon' is to furnish his landlord so many days' labour during each year, the *call* for such labour being absolutely at the disposal of the owner, or his 'major-domo.'

Should more labour be required of him than his due, he is paid for it, either in money or goods. The wages are very low, and he may take which he pleases, either goods or money. The first time he tries, he *may* have his choice, but in a short time he will find he has *none*.

Beside the above-mentioned duty, he has to mount on horseback, to serve his landlord, once a year, for a few days, during the great annual 'rodeo;' but as

* This number alludes to the estate I am describing.

those days are considered a period of rejoicing for a Chilian guasso, it is not thought an onerous duty. He has also to attend on horseback at all the changes of horned cattle from one pasturage to another; and he has likewise to give his aid and help at the threshing, or rather treading out of the corn, at harvest time. Lastly, he has to be ready to mount on horseback on any special command from his 'patron.'

Under such circumstances, the peons lead rather a rough and uncertain life. Beneath the sway of a kind landlord, they may be pretty comfortable; but under a hard one, they may be ground to the dust.

But the reader may say, 'This is not feudalism; he may go and change his bad master for a good one!' Wait one moment.

Every landlord keeps, at his 'hacienda,' a shop in which is sold every article that can possibly be wanted by any *Peon*. Charque (or hung beef), candles, grease, jackets, trowsers, pouches, boots, shoes, linen, calico, buttons, thread, needles, together with saddles, pillions, sudaderos, bits, bridles, and enormous spurs are there exhibited; and, at the same time, temptations in the shape of muslins, gauze, French imitation ear-rings and necklaces, and all those 'objets de luxe' that may prove attractive to the fairer (only by comparison) sex.

The first object of a Chilian guasso is to have a handsome saddle and good skins, or pillions, over his (generally speaking) good horse, with an ornamented

head-piece and large spurs—silver, if possible. He goes to the above-mentioned shop, and easily gets credit for the whole turn-out; and he immediately becomes a *bondsman;* he can never pay his debt, or, if he pay that one, he still remains in debt for something else—even necessary articles, that can only be bought at that shop and nowhere else. He at last arrives at that point of debt when he is as much bound to the soil, as if he lived in England in the time of our first Norman kings. It is no use flying and seeking another home and another patron; he is almost certain to be caught; sent back, severely punished, and the expenses of his capture added to the original debt. He is, to all intents and purposes, *bound to the soil:*—should the estate devolve to heirs, the debt passes with it. Should the hacienda be sold (even to a stranger), the debt may be sold with it, and the man is nothing more than a respectable kind of serf. Now out of about one thousand men ready to attend my friend's bidding, there were scarcely a dozen out of debt; in fact, *they had sold themselves.*

Many men can, and do keep themselves out of this dependence, and the dwellers in towns, and squatters in wild parts of the country, know nothing of this oppression except by name; but the independence of Chili was not gained by shopkeepers and the inhabitants of cities; it was gained by these very guassos, instigated by the owners of the estates they lived upon. After their victory, they returned quietly

under their yoke, and that yoke in most cases is a very light one, but still it *is a yoke.*

Even the higher order of dependants, such as major-domos and head cattle-keepers, are almost always in debt to their patrons; and yet, under this almost feudal system, both patron and peon, master and servant, manage to get on very amicably together.

It is not considered derogatory, for the owner of a large estate, to sit behind the counter of his shop for several hours *every day*, when he is in the country, selling or measuring tape, calico, needles, saddles, or spurs; and by a strict attention to economy, many of the owners amass enormous fortunes, for I never remember one great proprietor that lived up to half his income.

I will give an account of the annual value of the estate I have mentioned, and the same may apply to most of the estates in the country, bearing in mind that those near large towns (as in England) are much more valuable than those far away; as cattle may then be sold to the butchers daily or weekly, instead of being slaughtered once a-year.

Besides, the alfalfa in the fields is sent into towns for horses, and cattle taken in to graze.

The owner of this hacienda grew from 36,000 to 40,000 fanegas of wheat every year, which, at the low price of rather more than one dollar per fanega (about 160 lbs. weight) will give upwards of 40,000 dollars a-year.

He possessed a herd of about 14,000 head of horned cattle.

Now, a certain portion of a herd are picked out every year for the great 'Matanza,' or killing, and those slaughtered may produce about twenty-two dollars each, including everything; but the usual way is to calculate a little more than one dollar a head for the whole herd, as the annual income derived from cattle. The 14,000 head of oxen produced about 16,000 dollars a-year. The grazing he let out for mules was valued at about 2000 dollars, and the profits of his shop about 4000 more annually. In short, the estate produced him upwards of 60,000 dollars a-year, besides good round sums for horses and mules, of which he bred a great quantity.

The only difference between the landlords of the South and those of the North is, that the latter add mining and smelting to their other sources of profit. The miners and muleteers being all paid in cash or goods, as they please, and in noways bound to any particular soil, are all equally well off, and as there is only one scale for wages, rations, and general treatment provided by law, they little care under what master they serve; but even a miner cannot take service with another master without showing a paper signed by his last master declaring he is not in debt to him.

The above account applies solely to the agricultural labourers and dependents upon large estates, and not at all to artizans and dwellers in towns, but,

out of the whole population of Chili, four-fifths at least must be dependent on some hacienda.

Thus the owners of the soil, with the assistance of the all-powerful clergy, are, in fact, those who really dictate to the government, though the landowners are seldom seen as one of its members.

The president has generally been a military man, supported by civilians, the great part of whom are generally lawyers; and it fell to the lot of General Prieto, when he was elected president, to be supported by the only man that had shown the smallest capacity as a statesman. That man was poor Don Diego Portalis, who was afterwards murdered in a cowardly and treacherous way by a portion of the army.

When he entered into office, his first care was to make all the roads and communications safe to travel on, and the numerous human heads and hands, stuck on poles and sweltering under the sun by the wayside, soon convinced the remaining sanguinary highwaymen who had previously infested every path, that their 'occupation was gone.' He then applied himself to the finances of his country, and succeeded in bringing them into something like order. The way he met his death was as follows; and it is so characteristic of South American armies, that it deserves mention, even (which I am not aware of) if it be a twice or thrice told tale.

A division of the army was ordered to be reviewed, and this division was commanded by an ungrateful

scoundrel whom Portalis had himself brought forward from a low rank, and had procured him at last the command of a division. Don Diego Portalis went to the review to inspect the troops; he was the only minister present. He advanced to the front of the line and a handsome charger was led by his side; the horse being intended to be presented to his 'protegé.'

He met his false 'Judas,' who came forward to meet him, but was instantly made a prisoner of and carried to the rear.

This *man* (though he does not deserve the name) had under most false pretences, corrupted the division under his command, both officers and men; he had taught them that their present government was iniquitous, and that they ought to, and must, raise another. In short, he wanted to be made President, and to get up a revolution in the style that now disgraces, every year, Central America; and the officers he had seduced from their duty were to have a portion of the good things. Fancy such a state of things, reader, if you happen to be an English officer!

Poor Portalis was put under the charge of a few officers and several privates, who placed him in a carriage that they had already prepared for him. The prisoner and escort were placed in the rear of the army, which instantly commenced its march upon Valparaiso, with the avowed object of plundering it, and then taking possession of the reins of government.

But the chiefs of the insurrection found the men very difficult to command and manage; the soldiers got drunk, and although they still marched on towards Valparaiso, the 'coup-de-main' entirely failed, and they only managed at last to get into something like a *position*, not far from Valparaiso itself.

In the meantime, the militia of that Port, aided by a few of the garrison, were got under arms, and advancing to meet the mutinous soldiers, also took up a position between the town and the regulars (if regular they can be called), and within musket-shot. The action was very short; the two parties fired at each other, and the soldiers, knowing they were fighting on the wrong side, soon made their escape, leaving the real criminals to bear the brunt and atone for their crimes.

But during these events poor Portalis had been dragged along after the army, in charge of a rascally escort of officers, who had involved themselves so far with their chief that they determined to stand firm to the last.

Being placed in the rear of the position, they had no duty to perform beyond that of guarding their prisoner, but when these disgraces to the name of officers heard that affairs were not going on well in front, they determined to murder their prisoner.

They were afraid of being apprehended, should those affairs turn out badly, as Portalis's guards; and should the minister escape, his well-known firmness and courage were warrants for bringing them to

justice. They halted the carriage, and told him to descend; they then ordered one of the soldiers to fire at him; I believe the man refused: but at all events one of the officers snatched a musket from a soldier, and fired it at Portalis,—close to him,—but the minister was only wounded, and asked time to pray and confess; but another officer drew his sword and ran him through the body, and the others followed his example.

He died a miserable death; but thus did Chili lose her most efficient minister and servant. His memory is still cherished by all who wish well to the country.

The authors of the revolt and consequent murder tried to escape in all directions, but, as remarked before, escape is almost impossible from Chili. On the western side, the Chilian navy was ordered to cruize, and no person allowed to get *into a boat* without a permit. The passes over the Andes, on the eastern boundary, were strictly guarded upon the first news of the outbreak. The two roads, one near the sea-coast, and the other nearly under the foot of the Andes, that formed the only way of reaching the desert of Atacama, were also carefully watched, and I was myself a witness of the capture of two of the actual murderers. They had intended to commit themselves to the mercy of the desert, but they would have met *there* a far worse fate than that awarded to them; and they would never have dreamed of confiding themselves to the mercies of the Araucano Indians.

They were both fine young men, but one had real pluck in him, and the other was craven. Yes, craven to the extreme. Well did his companion say, 'If my comrade had only helped me to clear the road with our pistols and sabres, we should have been saved, and gained the desert; for we were attacked by only three, but this pitiful coward gave up at once, and left me to too great odds.'

They were conveyed in a Chilian man-of-war to Valparaiso, and were both shot a few days after. The numerous officers implicated in the revolt were executed in the like mode.

Although *one* was so craven in the fighting line, yet I have often observed that the inhabitants of the south, and by the south I mean even Spain and Portugal, meet death, *when it is inevitable* (such as an execution), with the greatest coolness; and the coward met his death as well as the brave man, who wished to sell his life dearly.

Shooting a criminal is an uncertain and sometimes a most barbarous way of putting him out of the world; but respecting that cruel mode of execution some remarks will be found in another part of this little work, which will prove it, in some instances, really atrocious.

The only possible ways by which such criminals can escape from the justice of their country are the two following:—by the first one, an acquaintance saved his life by being carefully hidden in the country-house of an old friend who proved faithful to him;

but the second way is rather too much for most Chilians. That way of escape is to *take to the Andes,* —far, far away from any track or trail, and amidst terrible privations, wait until the vigilance of the pursuit be abated. I do not think the constitution of any of their *gentlemen* could stand the trial; however, I think that a strong, healthy man, with warm clothing and a poncho or two; together with a gun and plenty of ammunition *might* get through four or five months' wandering in the Cordillera.

For my own part, I should not have hesitated a moment: I would have faced anything instead of quietly giving myself up to be *butchered,* as many were who had no part in the murder, though they had taken one in the revolt. I should have gone to the hills, and there, most likely, died; but not within the gaze of an assembled populace.

Since that time Chili has, little by little, consolidated her position amongst the nations of the world. She has always acknowledged her debt, and is now paying the interest on it very punctually.

Few regular troops are seen about the centre of Chili. A squadron of hussars do escort duty for the President at Santiago, and there are also a few artillerymen: the force in the capital is composed of four regiments of militia infantry, which assemble once a-week for drill, and are respectable enough. At Valparaiso there were, when I was last at that place, two regiments of militia infantry, and two or three

squadrons of militia lancers, besides a few regular artillerymen.

Almost the whole of the regular army is quartered on the south frontier to keep in check the bold, savage Araucanians; but in the north, from Valparaiso to the Desert, a *regular* soldier is scarcely ever seen.

Specimen of the South Frontier of Chili.

CHAPTER II.

MINES OF CHILI—VISIT TO A SMELTING ESTABLISHMENT—DIFFICULTIES OF THE ROAD — COOKING BY STEAM AT GREAT ALTITUDES.

THERE are very many valuable mines in Chili; but the principal mining provinces are those of Coquimbo, Huasco, and Copiapo, with all the intermediate and adjacent country. There are some copper mines within forty miles of Santiago; but they all contain a good deal of water, and the ore is seldom rich, and the veins seldom steady. In the north, the mines are mostly free from water, which is a great advantage. In the Andes, no doubt there must be splendid gold, silver, and copper mines in abundance; but the trouble and danger in hunting for them is too great, and, even when discovered, the working of them, and the transport of ores down to the plains, would offer insuperable difficulties. However, there is one known silver mine on the very summit of a high mountain in the Andes called San Pedro Nolasco. The Baron Von Humboldt made a party to ascend the mountain. Years afterwards, wishing to inspect the mine, and having the advantage of the owner being an English friend, we formed a party consisting of three other English gentlemen, who, together with myself and a couple of servants, were to ride over to the 'Tollo' (as my friend's house

and smelting establishment is called), the day before we attempted the ascent. This place is situated a long way up the 'Cajon of Maypo,' which is a huge gulley, with precipitous banks, worn for ages by the furious river Maypo, that rushes over its bottom, and on the side of which is the path that leads to one of the passes over the Andes.

On leaving Santiago, the road lies over the vast plains of Maypo, that a few years ago were parched sterile tracts; but, a company having been formed, a large dam was made across part of the river many miles higher up; and, by means of a reservoir and a canal, water was conveyed to these plains and distributed by trenches or 'acequias,' as they are called. All who pay for this water are supplied by the company; and some parts of the land are so well irrigated that wheat and melons are now growing where scarcely a blade of grass was previously seen. We sent a mule load of refreshments to the 'Tollo' the night before; and, as we intended to travel fast the next day, sent a servant with spare horses to meet us at the entrance of the Cajon. The distance from Santiago to the Tollo is about seventeen leagues, or fifty miles; the breadth of the plains being about twenty miles, leaving thirty to be travelled up this great gulley, and principally along side of the river—often at great heights above it; but the road is not bad, though dangerous at night. We started at about twelve o'clock in the day, and, it being over-clouded, our horses carried us the twenty miles in about two hours, and in good style.

For going fast long distances, there is nothing like what the Chilians call, 'trote y galope,' which their horses do to perfection,—a quarter of an hour's trot succeeded by a quarter of an hour's canter,—and when they are tired of one they take to the other quite naturally. We found our horses waiting for us at the entrance to the cajon, and having changed our saddles, proceeded up the gully. About half way, we crossed the most furious stream I ever saw; it falls into the Maypo, about two hundred yards from the bridge. The river is called 'Rio Colorado,' or Red River, from the hue of the water.

This bridge is merely composed of a few thick planks laid across, without the smallest guard on either hand. Some years ago, a prisoner was passing over it on horseback, in charge of two 'vigilantes,' or armed constables, when he suddenly wheeled his horse round, but so sharply that he forced the horse off the bridge, and made him plunge into the raging stream. I suppose he preferred being drowned to being shot; but he was hurried at a tremendous rate down the stream, and, together with his horse, were smashed into formless masses.

On arriving at a village two miles from the Tollo, we found our host, who had ridden forth to meet us; and half-way from the village to the smelting establishment, we had to cross the Maypo river itself,—for the establishment and the mountain we were going to are both on the other side, though the pass over the Andes is on the side we had been riding on.

The bridge over the river is made of wicker-work, suspended by ropes over the torrent.* These bridges are made pretty nearly on the same principle as our suspension ones, but very much more primitive in their construction. The following brief description will give some idea of the way these rivers are crossed, for the Maypo could not be forded. The bottom or floor of the bridge is of a coarse wicker-work; and although at each end of it the side ropes are high enough, yet in the centre they come almost down to a level with the floor, leaving no guard on either side. I had been several times there before, but I believe my companions had not, and the remark of one amused us, as it was said so seriously,—'What would my mother say, if she saw me going over that thing!'

The way the bridge is passed is thus. The rider dismounts, and throwing the reins over the head of the horse, takes hold of the long plaited whip which is joined on to, and forms the end of, the reins, and walks on to the bridge, followed by his horse. At first, the bridge only shakes, but by the time man and horse have arrived in the centre the oscillations are very great; they then diminish as the other end is approached; and when on the other side, the rider has the satisfaction of seeing his successor perform

* These ropes were formerly made of bull-hides twisted when green; but the foxes were continually gnawing them, and it was found necessary to substitute hawsers.

the same feat, for no more than one man and horse can pass over together. It often happens that a horse gets his foot into a hole in the wicker-work, or breaks one through himself, and then his struggles make the bridge vibrate in a strange manner.

We all passed over in safety, and soon found ourselves at the Tollo. A good supper was ready for us, and beds arranged for us on the floor, around one large room; and we soon turned in, having agreed to turn out again early in the morning.

We started early, mounted on mules supplied us by our host; for had we taken mules who had seldom been up to great altitudes, they would most likely have been attacked with 'puna,' or violent affection of the breathing, soon after they had ascended half way, and we should have been obliged to return.

The 'Tollo' is about seven miles from the foot of the first large mountain range of the Andes, which contains San Pedro Nolasco; and the river Maypo is followed up-stream for nearly half that distance; but on the opposite side of the stream, alongside of which is the path over all the Cordilleras. That pass, bad and dangerous as it is, is a high road, compared to about three miles of the pass we had to travel,—and I know them both pretty well. About one mile from the Tollo, we had a specimen of what we were to be treated to; and this was in the shape of a staircase, cut into the rock, of about one hundred steps, but with a perpendicular wall on one side, while on the other side was a fearful precipice,

actually overhanging the centre of the river. The pass is scarcely one yard broad, and well deserves its name, 'El Paso de las Animas,' or the 'Passage of Souls;' so called from the numbers that have been hurried into eternity over that precipice. After having climbed these stairs, the path continues gradually ascending; but the path is not much broader, and the wall on the right-hand side is just as perpendicular, while the precipice on the left increases every yard in depth, until it leaves the appearance of the rushing Maypo as a mere mill-stream. The same narrow path, with the same perpendicular wall, and the always increasing perpendicular precipice, was the way we toiled on for about three miles. Every one of us — masters, servants, and muleteers — were crying out at the utmost stretch of our voices, to warn any one from entering into the pass until we had left it; as there *could* be no room for two mules to pass; and in most places there was no room for a man to get off his mule's back. We went over this pass without meeting any one,—though at the other end we found a peon with his mule, laden, waiting for our arrival, as he had heard our shouts. He *might* have saved his own life, but he never would have saved his mule, had he met us in the pass; for it is not broad enough for a mule to turn round, and his mule would have been sacrificed to the safety of the party, although no doubt he would have been paid its full value. But when muleteers meet each other on *some*

of the passes, the struggle is not one to be decided by words, but by acts,—and fearful are some of those necessary acts.

Beyond this pass—'the Pass of Souls'—the road is comparatively safe: it is rugged and rocky in the extreme; but during the whole of the remainder of the way the traveller can say contentedly to himself, 'Now I can't tumble down more than fifty feet, instead of a thousand,'—and that is a great comfort, as I have often felt.

We arrived at the foot of the mountain at about eight o'clock in the morning. About half way up, we could see that there was a heavy mist, and, visible above that again, large patches of snow—*perpetual*, for we were in the summer. We heard the next day, that in the village all the muleteers had been making bets about our arriving at the summit of the mountain, on account of the mist, which always foretels severe weather.

However, one or two of *them*, who knew *one* or *two* of *us* pretty well, made something by backing us.

It is calculated that from the foot of the mountain to the top, nine hours are required for a mule to carry a man, giving the beast short restings; and we began the ascent, at about half-past eight o'clock, of San Pedro Nolasco.

There was nothing, at first, in the appearance of the vegetation to distinguish it from that which grows on the surrounding mountains of lesser height; but if any naturalist, or even any common observer, pays

strict attention to the different changes of plants corresponding with those of the ascending altitudes, he must be struck with the regularity with which bushes get more and more stunted; how the plants run less to wood; how, at length, they only run to a sort of wire-grass, and lastly, how that wire-grass only grows in the interstices of the rocks and stones.

About half-way up the mountain, we arrived at a curious place, called by the few men (except the miners) who have reached that spot, the 'Portezuela de los Vientos,' or the 'Gateway of all the Winds;' and never was a name better merited; for having travelled on the lee-side of the mountain, we were not aware that a terrible tempest of wind was raging around us, and when we got to this Portezuela we could hardly keep our seats on the mules.

'Here,' said the guide, 'on just such a day as this, the Baron Von Humboldt stopped, and, feeling the strength of the wind and looking at that cloud,' pointing to the circling mist above our heads, 'declared he had had enough of it, and would return;' adding, 'and I counsel you to do the same.'—However, as we had gone so far, we were determined to persevere, and after we had passed this favourite abode of Boreas, requested the guide to choose out a sheltered spot where we might refresh the inner man and rest our mules for a short time. We soon found a well-sheltered nook, and our saddle-bags being opened, we all of us sat down to a plentiful repast, washed down by something better than water.

Suddenly we found ourselves entirely enveloped in a dense mist, and the guide summoned us to mule-back, so that we might get through the mist as soon as possible. He also said, 'If you have any brandy or other spirits, do not carry them up with you, as the extreme cold may tempt you to take some, and your life would be in danger, as you are sure to have 'puna;' take wine if you please, but even that you had better leave here, and we can take it up as we return.' Thinking that a man almost living in the mountains must know better than we did, we took his advice, and were very glad we did so.

Continuing the ascent, we at last emerged from the mist into clear frosty air, but blowing a heavy freezing gale, which soon stiffened our wet clothes, saturated by the mist. The mountain had now become so steep that, as we wound up the zig-zag path, we were obliged to rest every ten minutes to enable our mules to recover their wind, as the atmosphere was getting so light that we were all sensibly affected, and so were the mules. At one rest, observing one of the guide's mules very bloody on the sides, from constant spurring, I pointed it out to him, and said, 'Poor beast!' 'Oh,' he replied, looking at the animal, 'it is his fate!—why was he not born a bishop?' It tells better from a Chileno, in Spanish, as they consider the lot of a bishop to be the most enviable of all lots, enjoying every comfort and luxury in this world, and sure of a high place in the next. As my mule was done up, and we had at least

another mile to go, I gave him to my servant to lead, and started off on foot, with my gun, in the hopes of getting a shot at a guanaco. One barrel was loaded with ball and the other with shot; but as I had left my poncho with my mule, I felt actually freezing; night was coming on, and both warmth and the feeling of vitality leaving me fast; but hurrying on as fast as I could, I heard a noise over head, and saw a large condor, not much above me. I let fly the ball barrel at him—he was hit, but went and settled on the other side of a deep ravine. The report of the gun flushed a white bird near me, which was brought down by the other barrel, and it proved to be a most beautiful partridge, snow white, with the exception of a delicate rose-colour under the wings, but not feathered down the legs.

The delay this occasioned brought up the party, and most thankful we all were when we found ourselves in a snug rancho, or cottage, the thick walls of which were built entirely of silver ore, but of too poor a quality to bear the expense of removing.

Some of the miners took our mules down to a sheltered valley about a thousand feet below us, where there was some little forage to be picked up, and as we had none of us any inclination to eat or drink, we made our beds with our saddles, sheep-skins, and saddle-cloths, and were soon asleep. About midnight we were awakened by violent sickness, in short, we had the first attack of 'puna,' but it did not last long.

Early the next morning, we visited the mine, the main shaft of which is about thirty yards from the major-domo's rancho, where we had passed the night. In the time of the Spaniards, many years ago, this mine had produced immense sums to the owners; but it appeared to me that it had been *worked out*, for when I saw it, the receipts would scarcely pay the expenses. The ores lately had only about nine marks of silver to the cajon* (fifty hundred weight), which at the rate of nine dollars a mark would be eighty-one dollars per cajon, which could not pay the expenses of working, transport, mules, provisions, wages, grinding ores, and waste, besides loss of interest on quicksilver; without mentioning the gross robberies that take place during the last washings. The consequence is, that my friend's predecessors had been ruined, and I believe that at present the mine is abandoned. The lode was about nine or ten inches in breadth when I was there, and the 'caxa,' or wall, on each side very hard. The ore itself was of a very dark colour—nearly black, also very hard; and less work could be got out of the miners than on lower ground, on account, not only of the lightness of the air, but by reason of the provisions they were obliged to consume. Unlike the miners of Coquimbo and Copiapo, who have a diversity of food, these miners eat scarcely anything but bread and charque, or jerked

* The cajon of copper ore weighs about sixty-four hundreds, but the cajon of silver ore only fifty.

beef. Their fuel is very scarce, and has to be brought from afar on mules; but even if they had it in abundance, the height of the mountain is so great that they could not boil a potato, and still less, their favourite red haricot-beans, or 'porotos,' as they are called; and they are thus reduced to a far less healthy diet than the miners in more favoured spots;—the wages are certainly much higher; but the mine can only be worked six or seven months in the year, and on the whole I thought them more miserable than they thought themselves; for they get a four or five months' holiday in the year, during which time, they can cultivate some patches of ground in the valley of the river below, to support their families during their absence.

The sun was just rising over the eastern range of the Andes as we returned to the surface, and a *more* magnificent sight few men have ever seen—at least, *I* never did. Turning towards the east, the north, and the south, nothing met the view but mountain piled over mountain, and rock over rock, of every fantastical form and shape; all the highest ones covered with eternal snows.

The different hues the snow-capped mountains assumed as the sun gradually rose, were like 'dissolving views;' scarcely one view had been admired, when it changed to another. Some mountains reflected the sun's rays like burnished gold; others like silver, but the most beautiful, to me, were the different roseate tints that the golden hues left behind them,

and also preceded them. This undulating colour was like that of the under part of the wing of the partridge I had shot the evening before, if it had been *metallic lustred*. At last, when the sun was well up, the tops of the mountains as far as the eye could reach, regained gradually their pure white crests.

Turning to the west, the River Maypo could be traced in the gully beneath, winding its way towards the plains, and appearing almost like a silver thread, as it disappeared in the distance; far below us were huge patches of snow, that bear the rays of every summer's sun without melting, and as the miners said, filling up 'Quebradas,' or gullies, many hundreds of feet in depth. The violence of the wind had swept away all traces of snow from the extreme top of the mountain, except in those crevices of the rock sheltered from the wind. But the cold was too intense and the gale of wind too violent to permit us to remain a long time watching this splendid view; water poured upon the ground froze in a minute, and we sent for our mules, wishing to get back to the spot where we had lunched the day before; but the bad news soon arrived that the mules had strayed, and we had to pass our time until one o'clock before we were enabled to start on our descent. Feeling very cold, we determined to make some soup to warm us, and as we had plenty of meat and onions, cut them up; put them into a saucepan with salt and cayenne pepper, and set them to boil. I only relate this for the information of those who have not been to great heights, those

who wish to go there, and also of those who, perchance, may believe that *boiling* must be the same *boiling* all over the world. After our soup had bubbled away, in the most orthodox style, for more than two hours, we naturally concluded that our 'bouillon' was ready and the meat perfectly done; especially as the last had been cut into rather small pieces; but, to our great surprise, we found the water almost colourless, and the meat almost as raw as when it was first put into the pot. One of the miners told us it was of no use trying to boil anything, as nothing could be cooked by water on the top of that mountain, for although the water bubbled away very fast, the heat was not great enough to boil a potato.*

I saw directly how the matter laid, and sticking the lid tight on the pan, made it fast with heavy lumps of silver ore, that were lying about, attaching them to the handle, and putting others on the top of all. In a very short time the steam *got up*, and, though it made the lid jump a little, I managed to get a good broth, to the great surprise of the miners, who could not conceive what I was about.

We took our leave of these honest, obliging miners at about one o'clock, and wended our way down the mountain, but could not stay at the desired spot for

* At great altitudes the water begins to boil long before it arrives at the heat of 212° of Farenheit; and as water cannot get hotter than boiling point, except by the compression of the steam, nothing can be cooked except by some means of confining (with safety) the steam.

luncheon. We could not even stay to take the bottles of good things we had left behind, and night overtook us as we reached the foot of the mountain. The night was pitch dark, and we had this horrible pass in prospective ; however, we still kept on, until we arrived at a small spot near the entrance of the pass, just large enough to hold us all, and determined to bivouac there until the moon rose, which she would do at about ten o'clock. What with the cold and the fatigue, we sadly missed the small comforts we had left on our luncheon ground. However, at ten o'clock, we started again, and got safely down the pass ; though I am sure I scarcely know how the mules got down the 'Paso de las Animas,' composed of steps, as the moon was just then behind an immense mountain. I left myself entirely to my mule, and, though I am not much given to nervousness, all I can say is, that if the remainder of the party were as pleased as I felt, when we were all safe at the bottom, we were a very happy party.

Before concluding this chapter, I trust I may be allowed to give a little advice to those who have any chance of travelling in very high altitudes, and who must necessarily suffer the 'puna' sickness,* which is very distressing, especially when exercise is obliged to be taken, however slight.

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* Baron Von Humboldt says, that 'Puna,' in Indian, not only means high ranges of mountains, but the dwellers thereon, and even some of their habits.

Provide yourself with raw onions, biscuit, and wine; the latter ought to be Amontillado sherry without spirit, and for other eatables take whatever you fancy. Eat plenty of raw onions, and they will enable you to support the oppressive feeling and sickness of 'puna.' Mind one piece of advice—however cold, miserable, and wretched you may feel, *never touch spirits*, either *hot with* or *cold without*—take now and then a small glass of wine, and, when you get down to the lower grounds, a glass of hot brandy and water will set you up again sooner than anything else.

One thing do not forget, and that is a saucepan with a lid *screwing* tight on to the pan; but it must have a small spring safety-valve at the top. You will then be able to make broth, tea, or coffee, when nobody that is not similarly provided can have it.

CHAPTER III.

GOLD MINES AND GOLD WASHINGS — HONESTY OF THE MULETEERS—THEIR MODE OF BIVOUACKING—DISCOVERY OF A MINE—THE RACE OF MINERS—THEIR GREAT STRENGTH —PRODUCTIONS OF CHILI.

THERE are gold mines and gold washings within one hundred miles of Santiago; but the gold mines in that part of the country are very poor and uncertain: they have always proved losing speculations to those who worked them; and the only one I know to have been successful, situated to the south of Coquimbo, is a mine about half way between that town and Santiago, on the upper road, or that nearest to the foot of the Andes. It belonged to a gentleman who was the owner of a large estate, and was called the 'Mina de las Vacas.' When I visited it the expenses were calculated at about one hundred dollars a-day, and the receipts at about two hundred, leaving one hundred dollars a-day clear gain. No bad thing in these hard times.

The gold washings are always carried on by poor men, who exile themselves for a certain period after the rains, or, rather, after the melting of the snows in the Cordillera has swollen the rivers and streams. They take up their abode near some stream, and dig

and wash the earth left dry by the receding of the water: they work on their own account, but their earnings are very small, and still more precarious.

Copper mines abound in the province of Coquimbo; and, for many miles north of the town, the only mines I know of are copper: some of them exceedingly rich and productive; others hardly paying their expenses; and others again that prove a dead loss to their owners.

Further north still, both silver and copper mines are in great abundance. The miners in these northern districts used to have an 'esprit de corps' and a rectitude about them it would be difficult to meet with among the labourers of the south of Chili, or, indeed, of any other country. The muleteers of the north have the same character, and are always frankly entrusted with very valuable cargoes of bar silver and 'plata piña,' which they have never been known to make away with.

An instance of the honesty of the latter was related to me by an English gentleman, very much respected in Coquimbo, who had settled in the country more than fifty years ago, during the time of the Spanish rule, marrying a Chilian lady.

He had mines in Huasco, and one night he sent a 'proprio,' or courier to his mines, with a large number of doubloons to pay the workmen, and other expenses. The man left Coquimbo with the doubloons packed in his saddle-bags, each side of the saddle, but the weight of the gold broke an opening in each of the bags, and let them down one by one until the

bags were empty, which fact he only discovered at his journey's end. He went to the magistrate and to the padre, and having related his misfortune, was advised to have a few notices written, and on his return to stick them on some of the trees on the road, as the chief muleteers generally can read. This he did; but meeting some troops of mules with muleteers on the road, he utterly despaired of ever seeing the doubloons again. However, the muleteers *had* perceived them; they gathered them carefully up, and brought them faithfully back to the owner. There was only one doubloon missing, and *that* missing one gave the muleteers much annoyance; they only accounted for its loss by the chance of a mule having trod on the piece of gold, and buried it in the sand. This gentleman added, however, that since they had mixed so much with foreigners, much of the simplicity of their character had disappeared.

Many of the most valuable mines have been discovered by pure accident, and that in spots that have been searched with perseverance, for many years, owing to traditions.

One of the richest mines in the north belongs to three brothers, who now possess fine estates and fine houses, and are rolling in wealth, although, not very long ago, they were simple muleteers.

Travelling with their troop of mules, they passed one night in the open air, as usual, and on the side of a mountain.

The way muleteers bivoauc is as follows:—

A troop of mules on the line of march is always

preceded by a boy mounted on a spare mule, and leading a white, grey, or piebald mare, with a bell round her neck. She must be of a light colour, to be easily distinguished in the dark, and is generally handsome.

On arriving at the spot where the night is to be passed, which is generally selected for its proximity to water, wood, and pasture, the mare is halted, and the mules form into a large ring near her, and are then unloaded, so that the cargoes, saddles, and aparejos, form a sort of circular barricade. Each muleteer has his own duty to perform; but the first one is the same for all, and that is, to examine the state of the mules backs after they are unloaded. The boy then leads the mare away, followed by all the mules, to the nearest pasture; he then turns her loose, and the mules seldom stray away from the 'Madrina,' as she is called. He returns with his own mule, and ties it up, letting it feed the range of his lasso, for he has to mount it several times during the night, to 'rodear,' or circle round the troop, and take care that they do not stray too far from head-quarters. He also has to attend all night to the fire; but he does very little in the day-time, and soon learns the art of sleeping on his mule. The boy ought also to bring in the first firewood, and to form a small fire-place in the centre of the circle with four large stones.

The muleteers are at first occupied in overhauling all their aparejos, slings, and girths, and seeing that everything is in such order, that they may load the

next morning before sunrise without confusion. One of them proceeds to cook their evening meal; their cigars follow as a matter of course, and they are soon asleep with their feet to the fire, which is kept blazing all night.

Such was the process followed by the three brothers M——, on the night in question. When morning dawned their mules were loaded, and they were just leaving the spot, but one of them returned to the fire for the purpose of lighting his cigar, and his visit to the fire was certainly *to* some purpose, for he saw long streaks of melted metal issuing from the little fire-place; this, on inspection, proved to be pure silver. The mules were unladen, and one of the brothers dispatched with the fastest mule, to *denounce* the mine, and in a fortnight afterwards they became owners of a prodigiously rich silver mine. I believe that the first year the three partners divided two millions of dollars. Many persons affirmed one million each; but when I left the country the profits were still enormous.

It is very curious that there was an old Indian tradition respecting the said mountain: according to that tradition, the mountain was 'full of silver.' For many, many years, hundreds of 'Buscadores,' or mine-seekers, had annually been exploring, with the greatest care, this *very* mountain. They *all* failed; and yet accident revealed it to some poor muleteers, who chanced to light their fire exactly on the only spot of the whole mountain where there is the slightest *spirt* of ore to the surface.

The mines of Potosi were discovered purely by accident. A shepherd, slipping down the steep side of the mountain, caught hold of a tuft of grass to save himself; the grass came out by the roots, and laid bare a small spot exactly upon a vein of nearly pure silver.

That some of the very few pure Indians that are left in Chili have certain traditions relating to rich gold mines, and also have some marks by which they may be found, has been pretty well ascertained; and though no doubt those traditions are very much exaggerated by the credulous, yet I believe there is some truth in a portion of them. One thing is certain, that no pure Indian likes to talk upon the subject.

I will relate a story on the subject, told me by a Chilian gentleman who owns a large and fertile estate, near the banks of a broad river, and in a country where there are no mines actually worked, but surrounded by metalliferous-looking mountains.

I should think the tale must be authentic, as it related to this gentleman's *own father*, and he told it to me, after supper, in his own house, where, whenever I passed in my frequent journeys, patron, servants, and animals were always hospitably entertained. I give the story as it was told to me.

'Don Jorge,' he began (we had previously been talking about mines), 'my father, possessed the same hacienda, and the same house, that we are now sitting in. He was always kind and obliging to his tenants and 'peons.' There were several pure Indians on

the estate, whom the other peons, proud of their whiter blood, would not associate with, but treated them with great contempt. My father, on the contrary, pitying their state, treated them even more kindly than he did his other dependents; and he certainly deserved and also gained their gratitude. But my father fell into difficulties. He lost a great sum of money by the taking or sinking of four frigates by the English, not far from Cadiz; and the troubled state of the country consequently increasing those difficulties, he was threatened with the loss of this same estate.

'One day, when he was sitting in his room, that gives on to this 'patio,' in deep distress, and meditating how to rescue his property from his creditors, he observed an old Indian (whom he had invariably been kind to) watching him with great attention. Rather annoyed, he asked him sharply what he wanted. The answer was, that he had seen with great sorrow that his patron had been in deep grief for some time, and he wished to know the cause. 'But if you did know it, you could give me no relief.' 'How do you know?' replied the Indian; 'the most humble and low can sometimes help the great; so pray tell me what ails my good patron.' 'You cannot help me, at all events, in this,' said my father, 'for I owe a large sum of money, and if it is not shortly paid, this hacienda will be sold, and you will have another patron, who perhaps will not treat you as kindly as I have always done.' 'I was almost

sure you wanted gold, my dear good patron,' answered the Indian. 'I will call upon you this night, three hours after sunset; see that your servants are not in the way; have ready for me a lantern, a case of candles, a barreno (long, heavy iron bar), some provisions, and a bladder of spirits—for I am afraid of what I am about to do. Also, let me take with me your large leather saddle-bags.'

'Well,' continued my host, 'at ten o'clock it was quite dark, and the Indian arrived, took what he required, and told his patron to wait for him at 'media noche' (midnight) the night after; but during the next day to go on as usual, especially if he saw any of the other Indians belonging to the estate.

'My father could scarcely place any reliance upon the Indian; but although he had actually *promised* nothing, my father, remembering the traditions the Indians kept up, had still a vague hope that good might be in store for him.

'He passed the next day in anxiety, and when night set in, dismissed his servants early, and sat up awaiting the result. About midnight, the old Indian made his appearance, staggering under the weight of the saddle-bags, which he threw down at his Patron's feet. The bags were instantly opened and examined. They were full to the brim of gold ore, but of so rich a quality as to be almost pure.

'Turning towards the Indian to thank him for his timely aid, he was surprised to see him so haggard and troubled, and asked him what was the matter

with him. He replied, 'Patron, give me a hundred dollars in coined silver, for I must fly this night, or else I shall be assassinated in a day or two. I dare not take any of that gold; but give me a hundred dollars and your benediction, for I must be away this instant. If you miss any Indian from the estate during the next two or three days, send out on his trail and have him brought back, for he will be sure to be on mine. Adios, my dear patron!'

The contents of the saddle-bags seem to have saved the estate, but the Indian disappeared, and was never again seen or heard of by any one belonging to the hacienda.

One thing occurred the next morning, that we can scarcely reconcile ourselves to, in this country. The owner of the estate sent for one of his majors-domo, who was an excellent hand, or rather eye, on a 'rastro,' or trail, and asked him if he could follow one thirty or forty hours old. He answered that perhaps he could, but it was according to the ground. He was shown the Indian's footsteps, leading to the river, which is divided into four rapid streams. But at the first stream it was completely lost, for the Indian had, by either taking up or down stream, entirely hidden his trail. The mountain he was suspected of having visited was carefully searched, but not the slightest trace of gold was found. The remaining Indians were questioned, but they all professed entire ignorance on the subject; yet one by one they left the estate. The peons on the estate,

to the present time, relate a similar story as happening to their patron's father. I cannot vouch for the truth of the tale, but relate it as I heard it.

Stories of rich mines, only known to the Indians, are common enough, but which mines they dare not touch themselves. Some may have foundation, but, of course, exaggerated—others probably have none at all; but it is certain that some of the pure Indians have strange traditions on the subject, handed down from father to son, but whether correct or not it is impossible to say.

As a race of men (physically speaking), the north of Chili miners are fine: they are very seldom above the middle height, but of immense power and strength. This great development of muscle does not proceed from the breed, nearly as much as it does from the severe training they undergo from their youth, which hard training brings on old age rather prematurely. In form and feature they are not to be compared with the Anglo-Saxon race; but in the peculiar way in which they have to exert their strength it would be difficult anywhere to meet their match.

As a great portion of the population in northern Chili are, have been, or will be, miners, a few remarks on their habits and training may be interesting to those readers who are fond of ethnological researches.

The working miners are divided into two principal classes—the first class is the barretero, or the man who bores and blasts; the second is the apiri, or man who carries on his back the proceeds of the blast

to the surface of the mine, and separates the ore from the rubbish. The barretero gets higher wages than the apiri, and only gets his rank after having served a rather long apprenticeship in the latter situation. The weight some of these apiris will carry from the bottom of a deep mine to the surface, up ladders made by simply cutting deep notches in a tree, is astonishing.

I have often seen them coming out of a mine so bathed in perspiration that it dripped freely on to the ground, and the men were nearly naked. I have frequently weighed their load at the mouth of a mine, and many of them would constantly bring up about ten or eleven arrobas of twenty-five pounds each, Spanish (rather more than English pounds); but one day an apiri, well known for his strength, was coming up, when he was met half way by another going down, who told him that the French and American Consuls were on a visit to the patron, who intended to weigh his load. The man returned to the bottom of the mine and stuffed his 'capacho' as full as it could hold with the heaviest ore, and, when he came to the surface, he left traces as if he had been through a river; for the mine was very deep. When he had thrown the 'capacho' down it was with much difficulty that two men could get it to the scales, when it was found to weigh fifteen arrobas and a quarter, or about three hundred and eighty pounds. I should have been afraid to have asserted this, had it not been well known and witnessed by several.

The apiri is constantly practising boring blast-holes, in order to get the requisite strength of arm for hitting with a very heavy hammer; and at length he obtains the great object of his ambition—the rank of barretero.

A barretero ought to have great strength of arm, for he has to turn the 'barreno' or borer with his left hand, and at the same time wield a ten or twelve pound hammer with the other; and I have known a man strike a hundred blows with a fourteen pound hammer in succession, exactly over his head. The barretero always has with him a twenty-five pound hammer, with which he sometimes finishes, double-handed; but I never saw a man work single-handed with so heavy a one.

When the barretero is incapable of pursuing his vocation any longer, owing to premature age, he then seeks a situation as major-domo of some mine; and he is generally an active, good director of works inside the mines.

Copper *ore* is the only raw material that pays an export duty on leaving Chili. A duty *ought* to be paid on gold, silver, and 'plata piña;' but a great portion of these is smuggled on board ship. The larger bulk of copper and copper ore renders it impossible to avoid paying the duty, and they are weighed on the wharf before shipping. Until lately, copper ore could only be transported to England in English and Chilian vessels; and it served to fill up many an English vessel with a home freight, that

now will have to return empty; and though it would be very foolish to give any opinion on the general effect the repeal of the Navigation Laws will have on British shipping, and which repeal has not yet had a fair trial, yet, in the particular case of vessels trading on the west coast of America, it will be a heavy blow and discouragement.

If any one supposes that, in this individual case, if a cargo of copper ore be conveyed from Coquimbo to Swansea in a foreign vessel at £3 a ton, instead of in an English one at £5, any good is done to the English consumer by reducing the price of copper, I think, with all humility, that he is mistaken.

Great injury must be done to the English ship-owner who cannot get a freight home: some good will be done to the foreign owner who *does* get the freight; and a great advantage is given to the Chilian miner without any reciprocity, owing to the difference of freight going entirely into his pocket, and who certainly will not buy a yard of cloth or calico more than he did before.

He knows well the price of copper at Swansea, and, being rather acute, would be sure, in case freight is reduced by £2 a ton, to add *that* £2 to the price he asks for his ore; but the best way to illustrate an argument is to cite a case in point, and that case I have often witnessed. Let us consider a purchase of ore for exportation, the purchaser an Englishman, the vendor a Chilian mine proprietor: the bargain is carried on pretty nearly in the following way:—

'Señor, you have a quantity of copper ore for sale; what will you take for the whole parcel?'—'Yes,' answers the proprietor, 'I have so many cajons (about three times as many tons); they have been sampled and essayed: you may sample them and essay them yourself; but they give so much (say 28 per cent. of fine copper.)' 'Very well—what is the price?' is the next question. The proprietor, who, as before remarked, knows pretty well what he is about, pulls out the last account of sales at Swansea. 'I see here, sir, that by the last news from Swansea, the standard of copper is *so-and-so*, and if you will look at the sales, you will find that Chilian ore, containing 28 per cent. (the same as these), sold for £25 per ton.' Then out comes a Valparaiso gazette. 'I see also by this paper,' he continues, 'that freights by foreign ships to England are *so much*. We *both* know what the expenses down to the coast will amount to, as also those for export duties, weighing, and shipping.—I am perfectly aware what the landing, commission, and other expenses come to at Swansea. Now, add these different amounts together and deduct the total from the £25. Pay me the remainder at the present rate of exchange with England, and you may take the ore.'

Now who, in this particular case, would pocket the difference of freight? It surely seems that the miner would. Who would also be benefited? Why the foreigner who gets the freight, although at a cheaper rate than an English vessel could afford to carry it

at: and the reason is clear. Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Hamburg, and all the vessels belonging to the Baltic, can afford to offer to take these freights because England is just in their way home. They can take the ore to Swansea, and in a very few days can be loaded again for their own country; they could take bar and sheet copper, and even if they could not get that, they could always load with coal.

All vessels belonging to those nations are thus sure of three freights for the whole voyage; and might have four, if they called at an English port on their way out, unloaded timber, hemp, hides, &c., and took an English cargo round the Horn. But the English vessel has no intermediate port: she goes straight out, and must come straight home; and the owner thinks himself lucky if his vessel is filled up both ways. But I am afraid—though I trust heartily that I am in error—that the chance of his procuring a cargo home will be sadly diminished.

But in every great change, some particular interest must suffer, especially at first. The principle of free trade will *now* have a fair trial, and a very few years will suffice to test well its merits.

In a mercantile point of view, gold, silver, and copper, are the principal productions of Chili, especially for exportation; but the country is very rich in agricultural produce, and large quantities of white wheat are exported to Peru, and other parts of the coast. There are two sorts, white and red. Both sorts give abundant crops; and in many places in

Chili, good white wheat may be bought for a little more than a dollar the fanega (about 160 lbs. weight), and I have often known the price at three-quarters of a dollar. Melons, both water and musk, are sown in the open fields, and are abundant and very cheap, wherever irrigation can be procured ; peaches, nectarines, and apricots, grow on standard trees, as apples do in our orchards. Every vegetable or fruit which we know in Europe is easily raised; but as to most of the tropical fruits, the dry climate, and especially the cold night land-winds, would destroy them in a few days. The plantain, the banana, the shaddock, the pine-apple, the granadina, and, as she is called, the queen of fruits, the chirimoya, are unknown in Chili, except by name.

I now come to a class of the productions in Chili with which I am more immediately acquainted, and that class is the animal one. Horses, cattle, game, beasts, and birds,—also the mode of capturing, hunting, and shooting them; and as the horse is the principal agent in all out-door work, and used by the very lowest beggar as well as by the richest landlord, I will commence with the peculiarities of the Chilian race.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHILIAN HORSE—ITS CHARACTERISTICS—SANTIAGO TO COQUIMBO—PRIMITIVE MODE OF THRASHING—THE VAMPIRE BAT.

IN England, we should call the Chilian horse small, for his average height is from fourteen to fifteen hands high; but he very rarely attains to the latter. I had what was considered a very large black horse, but when I measured him, he was only fifteen hands. Most of the horses have capital points—small head with broad forehead, and well set on; wide chest, slanting shoulder, well barrelled, strong loins, and clean flat legs, short under the knee; good hard feet; plenty of courage, and a constitution of iron—these are the principal features of the breed. One fault the Chilian horse has that is not seen at first, on account of the pains taken throughout the whole country to hide it, and that is, they are all ewe-necked. The defect is hidden by cropping the mane repeatedly when young, and at last, when the horse is broken in, the mane is trimmed or hogged very neatly, and gives an appearance of *crest* to the horse, to which he has not the remotest pretension; but it is not unlikely that this very fault is one cause of the extraordinary lightness in hand, and beauty of mouth, for which the Chilian horse is proverbial.

The distance they can travel for days and days together, with no other sustenance but what they can pick up during the night on some hill-side, with the bitter winds from the Andes sweeping over them, would rather astonish some English gentlemen, who think their horses would soon go to the knackers unless they passed the night, after a long journey, in a comfortable stable; yet these horses are ready and fit for their work the next morning.

The reason of such a difference in their relative constitutions is probably this:—in England, we begin to make our horses do more than simply gain their livelihood at two and three years old. At four years old, they generally are at very hard work, before their bones, muscles, and sinews have gained their power and strength, and before their constitutions are fully formed; they soon wear out, and although at seven or eight years of age they have learnt a great deal, yet by that time they are very often sadly in want of a new set of legs. Also, the transition from a warm stable to a cold bitter wind; or, just as bad, from the cold to a hot stable, soon undermines the constitution of a young horse, and are the principal causes of the many ills to which 'horse-flesh is heir.'

They manage these things, if not better, at least differently in Chili. The horse is born and passes all his life in the open air; and mostly for the first four years on the mountains, where the half-wild horned cattle pass nine-tenths of *their* life; and although at the great yearly 'rodeo' he is driven down with the rest to be counted, and on one occasion to be branded,

he is scarcely ever backed and broken in until four or five years of age, and seldom does any hard work until later.

Mares are never ridden in Chili; but roaming about half-wild impart to their foals their own hardy constitution. Thus the horse has acquired his full growth and strength before he is called upon for great exertion, and *when* he is, his good health and constitution both enable him to perform it, and after a long day's journey to defy the bitter blasts from the snowy Andes. At seven or eight years of age he is considered almost a colt. I have often asked a man the age of his horse, and have been told, 'Oh, quite young; he is only twelve years old.'

Another remarkable point in the Chilian horse is the perfection in which he is bitted, especially for the use of the lasso, which is the case with ninety-nine horses out of a hundred.

A well-bitted horse ought to be able to pull up sharp on the very top of his speed, and make a whole turn round, almost at the same instant, on his own ground. No other horse can do it, for the simple reason that no other nation requires their horses to perform this particular feat; but in Chili it is indispensable. In the great Pampa plains the horses are very badly bitted, and a Chilian would scarcely accept a Pampa horse as a gift, on account of his wretched mouth and soft feet, and the gauchos on those plains do not want high breaking-in for lassoing on those flats, as there are no obstacles to avoid; but in Chili,

if you have a bull at the end of your lasso, and he is tearing down a hill as steep as the roof of a house, without footing for you to settle your horse to *cast* him, you must follow at the same pace until you arrive at a safer piece of ground; but should the bull take one side of a tree on his way down, and your horse not be bitted well enough to make a quick round turn, and enable you to pass the same side as the bull, the tree would take the centre of the lasso, and bull and horse meet face to face; therefore the Chilians are *obliged* to have beautifully broken-in horses.

I can give an instance of this bitting which I have often seen tried, and tried myself; indeed, almost all my horses could perform the same feat.

The hide of an ox, freshly killed, and, consequently, slippery, is pegged down to the ground, with the hair below and the fresh side above. The horse is galloped on to it at the top of his speed, and, when he feels the check, makes the 'vuelta,' as it is termed, or the entire round on his hind legs, bringing down his fore-feet on the skin, so that he stands exactly as if he had been only pulled up very sharp.

I had generally between twenty and thirty horses for myself and servants for my frequent journeys, and also kept two or three in stable condition for especial occasions in towns; but the latter horses would not stand roughing it, like those which had scarcely ever seen a stable; and yet they managed to keep a fine coat for the greatest part of the year.

From Santiago to Coquimbo is about four hundred and fifty miles by the road; although, as before mentioned, they are only three degrees of latitude apart; but in some parts of the road, where the mountains approach the sea, it is intersected every two or three miles by tremendous deep quebradas, or ravines, with generally a stream running at the bottom; and though often a rifle would carry and kill sure (if held straight) from side to side, yet the zizzag descent and the ascent to the opposite side will frequently take half-an-hour and more to perform.

Having often to make this journey, I had, as usual, two modes of doing it: the first mode fast and without luggage; the second far more moderately paced, and with a few laden mules. In travelling fast, neither my servant nor myself carried beyond what our 'alforcas,' or saddle-bags, could hold, and our pillions, or sheepskins, made our beds.

A young light lad (son of a servant) rode a-head, leading a handsome mare with a bell round her neck, and he regulated the pace by signs from the rear; the other horses then followed at the same pace, and the rear was brought up by myself and servants, spreading sometimes out a little, to prevent the loose horses straggling to the right or left.

We generally started, except when the road was very bad, about an hour before sunrise, and rode the same horses until about eleven o'clock, when, if a favourable spot for lassoing occurred, we rode into the troop, and each lassoed a fresh horse, the tired ones going on with the loose ones.

A day's journey *ought* to be finished by half-past three o'clock, or, at the latest, four in the afternoon, to allow time for the sun to dry the horses' backs thoroughly before the cold night wind sets in from the Cordillera, which produces bad sores. A lamb, kid, or a few fowls are then purchased, and we sit down to the only meal we have during the day, about sunset. Many persons cannot start in the morning without breakfast, and that may do for slow work, but not for *fast work*. Travellers *ought* to be twenty-five miles on their road before breakfast can be made ready and eaten.

A hearty breakfast before starting only makes a horseman who goes fast feverish and uncomfortable all the day's ride; but a cigar or two, a crust of bread, and a glass of brandy-and-water at noon, are ample, for a person going his eighty miles a day, until supper. He enjoys his meal as few can enjoy it; he makes his bed generally under the clear sky, and sleeps a sleep that no feather bed could procure him; he awakes the next morning two hours before sunrise, gets his horses collected and in order, and finds himself as fresh as they are.

I have often done the distance between Santiago and Coquimbo, with the same troop of horses, in five or sometimes six days, but without baggage,—though it has taken me ten long days, having with me mules rather lightly laden. I have done the distance in less time, on an emergency. It is generally the custom, when travelling slowly, to ride one horse a

whole day, and then allow him two days' rest, running loose. Gentlemen mostly allow their servants, for a journey of four hundred or five hundred miles, three horses apiece, and keep five or six for themselves, in case any extra speed be required.

It is astonishing the weight these rather small horses have to carry. Next to the skin of the animal are one or two thick 'sudaderos,' or sweating cloths; over these are four or five pillions, made from the skin of a breed between the goat and the sheep, but not made of such fine skins as the ones over the saddle; then comes the saddle, with its silver cantle and pommel, and heavy, carved box stirrups, and is tightly girthed up. Over the saddle are placed the saddle-bags, and over those five or six handsome and valuable pillions. On the top of all is a thin seat of handsomely-dressed leather, or of some wild-beast skin, the whole girthed up a second time with a massive surcingle, to which are attached the iron rings to which the lasso is made fast.

The above weights, together with the very heavy spurs, and in cases where travellers carry gun, pistols, and ammunition, make up a weight unknown to the English horse, that has to travel fast and far. I put into the scales one day every article my horses generally had to carry, and the whole weighed down two hundred and twenty pounds (Spanish), or above sixteen stone. Only weighing ten stone ten pounds myself, there remained five stone and upwards dead weight; but the reason these animals carry the

burden easily, is, that it is more equally distributed along the back than with our saddles. Their saddle-frames are long, and press equally upon all parts of the tops of the ribs, leaving a clear hollow over the back-bone, and never tire a horse on one particular spot.

Taking every situation in which a horse can be useful into consideration, there is no nation possesses a more useful breed for the purposes for which they are required. The Chilian does not want a cart-horse, nor a race-horse: he wants a serviceable, useful nag; fast enough to overtake cattle or horses, strong enough to pull a bull down in his career, and of a constitution hardy enough to stand the change from a burning hot day to a cold night in the open air,—and the Chilian has *just got what he wants.*

The diseases of the Chilian horse are few; and when stables are used in towns, they are mere sheds, entirely open to the rear. Glanders, farcy, and all contagious maladies, are quite *unknown,* and most of the others arise either from accident or ill-treatment. The principal ones are, 'despechado' (foundered in the shoulder), 'cortado' (broken-winded), and fever in the feet,—mostly caused by riding a poor beast an immense distance without shoes. Colic is often produced by giving horses green food after barley; and sometimes the animals go mad, from eating a herb called 'yerba loca' (mad-grass). I have never seen that disease that is so fatal in English hot stables—viz., inflammation of the lungs—except in one case,

and it was found the horse had staked himself; but, with the above exceptions, the Chilian horse is almost free from the many ills incident to the European animal.

I suspect that the science of thrashing out corn has scarcely advanced a point in Chili, since wheat was first sown there, and that the first farmers must have learnt the mode from the Holy Scriptures. The only improvement is that they work faster than with oxen treading the corn out, for they use horses, or rather mares.

A temporary corral is formed in every field, and proportioned to its size, and the corn piled up in the centre of it. As before mentioned, mares are never ridden except by the very poorest, and the only duty they have to perform, beyond rearing foals and mules, is thrashing or treading out corn. In a large hacienda, perhaps two or three hundred mares are driven down to the vicinity of the corn corral, or 'trillo,' and divided into separate parties to relieve each other. The ground of the corral is mostly chosen for its hard quality, and is often artificially made. The circle next the enclosure is then strewed with the straw in ear, and a division of mares (unshod) are driven in, followed by about half a dozen peons on *horse*-back. The troop are then driven round and round the corral on the wheat laid down; reversing the order of from right to left, to left to right, as much for the sake of getting out all the grain, as for saving the horses a peculiar giddiness. When the first portion

of the wheat thus strewed is supposed by the major-domo to be thoroughly threshed, the division of mares is driven out, kept apart and away from water, while another division is being driven in.

In the interval, the corn and broken straw is brushed outwards, and a fresh layer of wheat laid down for the fresh troop of mares, who are driven by fresh peons on fresh horses ; for the work at first is really very hard, all the animals having to make a succession of buck-leaps, many times round, before the straw is trodden down enough to gallop smoothly,—and they are not very easy to sit, when the riders are not accustomed to it.

Sometimes the contents of a corral will take two or three days to thrash out ; but when the grain is fairly galloped out of the straw, the whole is swept into the centre, and the temporary corral removed ; a set of peons are then set to work, for the purpose of separating the grain from the straw and chaff.

This can only be done upon a day when a breeze of wind is blowing ; for the peons, standing on the heap, throw shovelfuls high in the air, but following the course of the wind, as the wind at this time of the year always blows nearly from the south during the day-time, a new pile of pretty clean wheat is formed to lee-ward, and another pile of straw some yards beyond. The straw that has been thus broken by this mode of threshing looks like chopped straw, in pieces two or three inches long, and serves the purpose that hay does in the north of Europe. Horses

in Chili are, if they belong to any person who can afford it, fed, when tied up, on this straw, mixed with barley.

Before leaving the subject of the horse, it would be as well to mention some of his torments, or rather tormenters.

As a colt in the hills, he has only to fear the Puma lion, which beast is scarce; and the condor, which bird is most abundant, but would scarcely attack a colt unless he was bogged. During his life he has little to fear from the 'araña de caballo' (horse-spider), so destructive in Central America; but he has an adversary which, though to the horse not even disagreeable, is very much so to his owner on a journey, and that is, the large vampire bat. This bird, or beast, is common enough in Chili, but whatever rank of the animal creation it belongs to, it has luxurious habits, and chooses its habitation, no doubt, for the same reasons the comfortable monks of yore chose the site of their monasteries—viz., sheltered fertile spots, well wooded, well watered, pleasant to the view, and affording the food they delighted in.

Should the traveller, at the end of a long day's journey, turn his horses out for the night on a bleak open spot, near the sea-shore or foot of the mountains, from whence the chilly night-winds proceed, he will be pretty sure to find, the next morning, that his animals have not suffered from the vampire; but when he takes up his abode for the night in a pleasant romantic spot, with a clear sparkling stream

running close to him, a quantity of fine trees about him, interspersed here and there with wild rocks that seem to have fallen from the skies, he may make up his mind that some of his horses will have been visited during the night, and although the horse cares nothing about the visit, the rider does, for the animal performs his next day's work with difficulty.

The few horses who have full manes are more subject to the blood-sucking of the vampire-bat, in their necks than horses with cropped manes, because the bat gets a slight hold of the mane, and keeping the horse quiet by fanning the head with its wings, runs its beak or rather teeth into some vein, and in a short time sucks an enormous quantity of blood from the poor beast. But the bat often makes its attack from the rear, and hanging on the tail, soon finds a vein to practise phlebotomy upon.

The horse loses a great quantity of blood; for besides what the vampire carries away with it, the animal is streaked down to his feet with clotted blood, and a large pool is generally found near him.

I have seldom made a long journey without some of my horses having been thus bled, and have frequently in consequence had to shorten my next day's journey, but these accidents occur almost always in the summer time.

In Central America, the vampire-bat will not only bleed your horses, but I have often found some of my own fowls, that roosted in the open air, dead and

stiff on their perches, with the blood so exhausted from the rear by this flying leech, that the flesh was whiter than any fowl I had previously seen; and yet the bird must have died, since it remained on the perch, insensible that the 'Barber Surgeon,' as some persons call this bat, had the lancet in it.

CHAPTER V.

HORNED CATTLE OF CHILI—THE ANNUAL RODEO—ROASTING A CALF—THE MANTANZA.

I WILL now try to describe the horned cattle of Chili, and the wild way in which they are treated; and although I am aware all our great breeders would look upon the breed with contempt, still it has, like the horses, very good points, and especially adapted for the country.

In the first place the breed is very hardy, living until four or five years old in a state of wildness; when those who are destined to be slaughtered are put into potreros or meadows, and in three or four months they improve in a wonderful manner; the change from scanty food to good lucern soon tells on the carcase.

As the breed of horses was originally brought from Andalusia, in Spain, so all the cattle of Chili are from South of Spain origin; but they do not in the least resemble the cattle we now see tame in Andalusia, and still less those monstrous horned beasts lately imported from Corruña, with immense horns, very large bone, little flesh, and less fat. The Chilian cattle resemble more the short-horned breed, half-wild, on the sierras, about Ronda, Grenada, and

Cordova, in Spain, and are also very like, in some points, the cattle of Fez, Barbary, and Morocco.

Like the last mentioned animals, they are *better bred;* being very light below the knee and hocks—they are small boned, but make flesh much faster than fat; but they fatten also when well fed. During their whole lifetime, except their last fattening process in the meadows, they live on the mountains, are very savage, and are so aristocratic, that they will very often charge a humble pedestrian, though he might be shooting with a 'Joe Manton,' over a brace of English dogs, while they fly from a horseman; most likely on account of the uncomfortable reminiscences of previous falls they had experienced from the lasso. However, as no man ever goes on foot, except now and then a stray Englishman in pursuit of game, and he knows how to defend himself, there is not much harm done by them.

The difference between a rainy year and a dry one is soon known by the appearance of the cattle when driven down to the great corral, at the grand annual 'rodeo;' which being a sort of festival on every estate, both for patron and peon, I will give an account of; although perhaps the ground has been already trodden on, and the trail stale; but I do not relate as a looker on, but as *an actor* on such scenes for some years. I will pick out one of many 'rodeos' to which I was invited, and which I attended.

Three Chilian gentlemen who owned a very large and valuable estate, and who had invariably during

three years given my horses the run of their meadows, without which they must have starved,—and also never would allow me to pay anything for their keep, —invited me to a 'rodeo' of cattle. I will describe one; and the same will answer for many, or all, with the sole difference of 'location.'

The kindness of these gentlemen allowing me to send my horses to them, can only be appreciated by one who has twenty or thirty animals to feed, and has nothing to feed them on, within fifty miles. The three brothers had been educated in France, and they were most gentlemanly and of high feeling, both by education and by birth. Everybody who knows the north of Chili, knows to what family I allude; and in describing their 'rodeo,' I only describe what all the neighbouring people, rich or poor, were invited to.

It must be first remarked that a 'rodeo' of cattle generally takes place in September, and as the 'matanza,' or general killing, usually takes place in January, the cattle chosen for the great annual slaughter enjoy about three or four months in rich irrigated meadows, that they may get well fattened before being killed.

A party of about sixteen arrived at the hacienda the previous afternoon, each well provided with lassos, &c. As my horses were all shod, my host promised to provide me with unshod horses the next day; for a shod horse has no chance on the side of a rocky mountain, and horses kept for the hills have hoofs as hard as ebony or iron-wood. We dined about five

o'clock, and a merry dinner it was; but, beforehand, most of the tenants were mustered on horseback, with the exception of those who lived too far off, and who had previously received their orders. They then divided into many separate parties, and rode off to the summits of the range of mountains that nearly surrounded us. At about eleven o'clock at night we all went out to the front of the house to see if the parties had arrived at their different posts, and on most of the mountain-tops we saw fires blazing as signals that they had taken up their positions, and also naturally to keep themselves warm. We then turned in, and turned out early the next morning to secure our horses for the day. We were told, however, not to be in a hurry, for the duty of the tenants and peons before daybreak was to thoroughly hunt and scour all the sides and gullies of the mountains most remote from the plains to which the cattle were to be driven, and so we had plenty of time for a hearty early breakfast.

A little after sunrise, looking through my small telescope, I could see the various tops of the mountains swarming with cattle being driven slowly down towards the plains below, and our whole party then mounted and proceeded to the large cattle corral, erected in a very wild spot, about five miles from the house. We went rather fast, and found a 'ramada,' or hut, composed of green branches with the leaves on, built for us to live and sleep in for a day or two. Our host said that he could not have a regular house or cottage built there, on account of the 'benchucas,'

or large filthy flying bugs that infest all thatched houses in that country; but that he had a fresh ramada built every year, and very pleasant it was.*

As we were waiting, near the corral, for news from the mountains, another curious thing attracted my attention, and that was a fine calf lately killed, and lying alongside of a pit dug in the ground, looking like a grave. The pit was lined with stones, and a huge furnace-like fire kindled in it. The calf was then taken to a small stream close by, and the inside cleaned. It was also skinned, except a narrow strip along the spine: it was then brought back to the edge of the pit, and the empty stomach was filled with all sorts of good things. The kidneys, heart, onions, potatoes, chesnuts, salt, peppers, chilis, spices, &c. &c., were all stuffed in, and the hide brought round together again and sewed, or, rather, laced up, along the stomach. The fire was then abated, by throwing green leaves on it, and the calf in its own skin, 'carne con cuero,' was carefully deposited on its back in the pit, the skin acting as the holder and receptacle of the gravy. The whole was then covered with more leaves, and buried completely with earth and stones.

Just as the calf was consigned to his oven, we were called to our saddles by the news that the advanced guard of the herds was debouching on to the

* "Benchuca:" I scarcely know if the word is rightly spelt, but it is pronounced as written. These flying bugs are more than an inch in length, the bite is very painful, and when the animal is crushed the smell is fetid in the extreme.

plains, and we went to help the herdsmen and peons in their rather arduous task of taking about five thousand half wild cattle over about six or seven miles of broken plain. The gentlemen *here* are of the greatest use, though they would not be of much service in the slow work of driving the cattle down *to* the plains. The peons' horses are generally rather tired with their mountain work before they get down, and the gentlemen help them on fresh horses, by keeping the wilder animals in order. When one bull dashes out, two of the gentlemen are after him, and not only lasso him, but, unless he is a very handsome animal, tame him for life, and drive him into the herd. When four or five bulls rush away at once, the peons have enough to do to prevent the remainder following them, and the gentlemen hunting in pairs do good service.

These sort of chases are very exhilarating; for, though there is not much danger, there is just enough to be a little exciting, and I have often known severe accidents.

Two or three steady yoke of oxen are generally sent to head the herd with long wooden yokes on their necks. They answer two purposes; for they lead the way, and persuade the herd to follow them; and also when any animal is very vicious he is lassoed, and his horns made fast to the yoke between the two tame oxen, who soon bring his spirit down and make him go quietly along. Also, if a runaway bull is particularly obstreperous, when he is thrown, one of

his hind legs is made fast to his horns, and he is left on the ground until a yoke of oxen can be spared to go and fetch him.

After many courses in pursuit of the wilder cattle, the herd at length arrives at the corral; the tame ones go in first, the horsemen form a double line, and at last they are all safe in the interior.

A 'corral' has often been described, but I doubt if Englishmen in general understand what a cattle corral for a 'rodeo' really is. A corral is generally understood to be rather a small enclosure of some thirty yards in diameter, into which horses are driven, and there lassoed or secured; but a corral destined to receive many thousand head of cattle is a large spot, and although it is considered right to crowd them together very closely in order to prevent riot, yet still some thousands of cattle, packed ever so thickly, will occupy a good space of ground.

The walls of the corrals near the house itself of my friends, were formed of 'adobes,' or large mud-bricks, and these corrals were only meant for horses, and the cattle that were picked out for the great killing in January; but the large corrals for cattle are generally composed of strong piles of wood driven deep into the ground, and connected one with another. It is not easy to judge exactly the size of a plot of ground, but from this corral being about one hundred paces in diameter, it must have been about two English acres, but divided into a large partition and a smaller one, the last being intended for the cattle separated for the 'matanza.'

This separation was to be effected the next day, and is generally performed by gentlemen, aided by the major-domos of the estate. The calves are also separated, placed in a small enclosure, and the mothers allowed to roam about, and feed near them, as *they* are sure not to wander.

It was five or six o'clock in the afternoon before all the cattle were safe, and the gate secured; men were placed at intervals on the outside of the corral, to prevent man or beast approaching to frighten the animals, for sometimes a very slight cause, such as the sight or smell of a fox, will produce a sudden panic, and the cattle, wild with fear, will burst all restraints, and gallop away to the mountains.

This panic is a curious thing, for it sometimes seizes a herd without any seeming motive, nor must it be wondered at, as it sometimes attacks the bravest bodies of trained soldiers. During the Peninsular War, one of the finest divisions that ever carried arms was asleep in a wood;—suddenly, in the middle of the night, a simultaneous *panic* struck the whole of the men, and it was only by the commanding officer telling a bugler to sound the "alarm of cavalry" that they were rallied.

We then proceeded to the rancho, and sat down to a good, wild, country dinner; for the calf could not be well baked until a late breakfast the next day.—We made our beds with our saddle-skins, and after a cigar and a *night-cap*, were soon fast asleep.

The next morning we all proceeded on foot to the

small corral to brand the calves with the owner's mark, and then returned to the long anticipated breakfast. The fatted calf, baked to perfection, was deposited on the grass, with the legs in the air; we then took our seats all round it; the lacing down the stomach was cut, the hide spread out like a large dish, and some twelve or fourteen large dagger-knives, always carried on the person, soon were cutting away at the "*pièce de resistance.*"

The most constant attendant upon city feasts; the most fastidious follower and admirer of Ude, Carème, and Soyer, would have pronounced this rather large dish undeniably good. Not a single particle of the goodness or flavour of the calf could possibly have escaped through the hide; though done to perfection, the meat retained all its juices, and we certainly did justice to it. When we had finished, the herdsmen attacked the remainder with their long knives and keen appetite, and the calf (a large sized one) had its bones literally picked clean. The baked hide and bones were then given to the herdsmen's dogs, and in a very short time the whole of the animal very nearly disappeared. There is nothing (roasted) better than meat sewed up in its own hide, and baked in a pit; from a buffalo's hump to an entire calf it is as superior to any other roast as turtle is to its imitation. After breakfast, we all proceeded on horseback to the great corral, and into the very centre of the crowd of beasts, for the purpose of separating those chosen for fattening from the remainder.

On such occasions, the major-domos and herdsmen of adjacent estates also attend, to claim any cattle which bear their patron's mark or brand.

Two lines of horsemen are drawn up as regularly as soldiers, and between these lines the animals chosen are driven out, one by one, and into a smaller coral. The master and his major-domo, followed by his guests, ride in among the cattle, and point out one to be separated ; two persons immediately place themselves, one on each side of the beast, and sticking close to his flanks, force him into the lane of horsemen, who shout out, 'Afuera!'—out! out! The animal, pressed by a horse on each side of him, and also by a few blows from the heavy bridle-whips, or the ends of a lasso, gallops through the lane of horsemen, and dashes into the smaller partition. When the requisite number has thus been separated, the remainder are liberated, and away they scamper to their native hills. The separated ones are left quiet until the others have gone out of sight and scent, and are then escorted to the corral of the hacienda. They are examined, and afterwards turned out into irrigated meadows, full of luxuriant lucern, and soon get into capital condition for the great 'matanza' in January.

The 'matanza,' also, is a sort of festival for the peons ; and they enjoy the slaughtering of the cattle more than they do the rodeo, as almost all the lassoing falls to them. January is the month chosen for the great killing, on account of its being the hottest

and dryest month in the year, and the charque, or jerked beef, gets sooner thoroughly cured.

The cattle meant to be killed are driven into the corral nearest the house (which generally has the curing-yard in the rear) a day or two before, and kept without food, that the flesh may be in better order for curing; and, on the morning of the matanza, long before day-break, some dozens of mounted peons, with their lassos, are waiting at the gate of the corral; while all the females of the estate, in their best dresses, are watching from the walls and surrounding ranchos.

At the gate of the great curing yard, where the cutting up goes on, six, seven, eight, or more professed butchers and charque cutters stand with immense knives in their hands and daggers in their sashes; each butcher is paid according to the number he kills and cuts up.

The owner of the hacienda and his guests take up their position about sunrise, and then the major-domo, accompanied by one or two horsemen, goes into the corral, and turn out just as many animals as there are butchers. These cattle rush out at a furious pace, and immediately a number of peons are galloping after them, two or three lassos sometimes going over each beast at the same time. Each beast is almost sure to have a heavy fall, but he is lugged along to the great gateway, where the butcher awaits him; this man gives the animal two blows with his heavy knife just above the hocks, and thus hamstrings him

in both hind legs; pulling out his short, sharp dagger, he runs up towards the head and plunges it into the pith of the spine, which kills the animal very suddenly. He then strips the skin off the face of the beast, for if he left it for a few minutes, the skin would cool and adhere too strongly to the forehead. A yoke of oxen are ready, attached to a large loose bull's hide; a rope is fastened to the fallen animal's horns; he is dragged on to the hide, and thus conveyed, as on a sledge, to the curing yard; this is done to prevent his own hide being injured.

The carcase at first is only skinned and divided into large joints, and in a very short time the butcher is again at the gate calling out for a fresh victim.

The matanza ceases every day at about nine o'clock, and the butchers occupy themselves during the remainder of the day in cutting the flesh into thin slices for making charque, or jerked beef. The tallow is melted down for candles; the fat (not the kidney and inside fat) is melted and clarified; it is used all over Chili, instead of butter or lard, for cooking. A quantity of coarse soap is made from the refuse; some of the hides are sold for exportation, others go to various uses on the estate and adjacent mines, and the average value of each ox is about twenty-two or twenty-three dollars, but near populous towns, where fresh meat is daily sold in large quantities, oxen will fetch much more.*

* The best bull's hides are generally reserved for making lassos.

CHAPTER VI.

A PUMA HUNT—BEASTS OF PREY—GAME—HAWKING—THE PLOVER'S SCRATCH.

THE wild, mischievous beasts in Chili are very few in number, and rarely do much damage: the Puma lion and two sorts of foxes being actually the only predatious quadrupeds in the whole country. The Pumas are not so large as I have seen in Central America, and I never killed one with my own hand in Chili, though I have been at hunts when the beast has been destroyed. As the manner of hunting the animal is different from the description I lately gave in a little work upon Central America, I will relate how it is sometimes done, but the mode differs as the nature of the ground does.

The mischief the Pumas do is generally confined to young cattle, colts, and young mules pasturing near the foot of the Andes or other high mountains, which are their haunts. They seldom trust themselves any distance from their homes on the plains or lower grounds, although sometimes hunger induces them to go many miles further than usual.

Unlike the custom in the wild forests of Central America, where, if a panther or puma commits ravages, his trail is seldom taken up by more than two or

three men, and very often single-handed, in Chili a good number, fifteen, twenty, or more, assemble to take vengeance on the common foe. Some attend on horseback and others on foot—the latter to be able to act on rocky spots, but all armed with lassos and their usual long knives. Fire-arms are scarce among the middle and lower orders in Chili, and, indeed, very few good ones are in the possession of the higher and richer orders, and the few I have seen have generally been cheap, worthless, but ornamented, French guns; the carving on the stocks being worth more than the locks and barrels put together. Bows and arrows are unknown.

Every dog in the neighbourhood—from the large, ferocious herdsman's dog, down to the tailless sheep guardian and the yelping cur—is put into requisition, and the party proceeds to the spot where the last depredation has been committed by the Puma.

In one instance when we met to retaliate upon a 'leon,' who had slaughtered a colt, we mustered about fifteen men, more than half on horseback, and the others unwillingly on foot, for all Chilians, even the commonest beggars, have a mortal aversion to foot-padding.

The trail was soon found, but the Chilians are mere infants in *following a trail*, compared with the wild dwellers in woods north of the Darien Isthmus; though the latter are perfect children, when compared with the Chilians, in the use of the lasso. However, with the help of dogs and, now and then, very fresh

signs on the patches of sandy ground we passed over, we concluded, after about an hour's hunt, that we were close upon the beast; and, at last, one of the foot-men viewed him *couchant,* on a rock half way up a hill too steep for horses; so the men on foot went straight up the hill towards him, while we went fast round the foot of it, to intercept him in the valley he would have to cross in his retreat to his almost inaccessible haunts. I had no fire-arms with me, as I wished to see the thing done in the style of the country. On arriving at the other side of the hill, we separated some distance apart to view the whole valley; but, in a few minutes, the puma was seen tearing down the hill, so as to cut through the centre of our line, which he did, evidently not seeing us, but giving all his attention to his foot pursuers. All the horsemen were after him as fast as they could gallop, and were gaining on him, at the rate of three yards to two, when the animal made for a small tree that stood in the way, and, jumping into the boughs, laid down, seemingly exhausted, on one of the horizontal branches.

'Ah! we have him now!' said the major-domo, who led the hunt; 'he cannot escape, if he had all the lions in Chili to help him.'

During the chase, all the lassos had been got ready for throwing, and the major-domo himself galloped past the tree, at some little distance from the branch on which the puma was lying, and cast the lasso just round his neck. Spurring his horse, the lasso soon became taut, and pulled the lion down to the ground with tremendous violence, dragging him along

half stunned, at the height of a horse's gallop. The other horsemen were close behind, and one of them lassoed him again round the neck, when both horses were pulled up, and, keeping a tight strain on both lassos, the small remains of life were soon choaked out of the beast.

The principal haunts of the puma are in the deep gullies and ravines that intersect the Andes in every direction. Many cattle from the herds that feed on the western side of the Cordillera, annually go astray, and roam further and further in those wild regions; and their calves, with now and then a guanaco, must form the usual food of these carnivorous beasts.

The panther, so common in Central America, is unknown in Chili, and the puma is the only carnivorous wild beast in the country, unless we include two sorts of foxes—one about the size of our common fox, and the other nearly as large again, and of a deep red colour. 'Cunning as a fox,' is an old adage, but man, living in the wilds, manages to get the better of him. I had many troublesome neighbours, in the shape of foxes, and though I have often coursed them, with good dogs, have never run one down, as they always take *up hill*, and *then* beat the dogs hollow—down hill, the dogs have a better chance. I have frequently shot the two species, and when I have known them to be actually in a garden or vineyard have often caught them by placing nooses in the gaps all round; dogs are then turned into the vineyard, and the fox is too frightened to look carefully at the spot where he makes his exit, and is sometimes caught by the neck.

There are no wolves in Chili and no cuyotes, or wild dogs, which are such a plague in Central America. There are no stags, roebucks, or deer of any kind—at least, in the extensive part of that country with which I am acquainted. Hares and rabbits are unknown, and, were they even introduced, the enormous quantity of condors, eagles, vultures, and large falcons of every sort, together with the foxes, would soon exterminate them.

The sportsman is free from one thing in Chili, and that is, the dread of snakes—I mean a rational dread, for I know many persons who have a perfect horror of all snakes, and scarcely make a difference between a poisonous snake and a harmless one. Snakes are not common in Chili, and though I have killed many dozens, it was most likely owing to my having walked over more ground, in pursuit of game, than most persons in that country. No accident occasioned by the bite of a serpent has ever been heard of by me, and although, whenever I kill a snake, I always examine the teeth, I never met one in Chili with moveable fangs. These snakes are, like the harmless ones, very common on the higher part of the Rock of Gibraltar, and also those that are found in the south of Spain, and in Barbary.

The country people, living in small ranchos in the north of Chili, constantly aver that snakes are in the habit of drawing the milk off from mothers in the night time, when they are asleep; and women themselves have often repeated the story to me. The

herdsmen also say that they suck the cows when they are lying down. Anecdotes of this nature, when believed by those who relate them, as these evidently are, must have some foundation, however slight.

The guanaco, or huanaco, holds undoubtedly the first rank among the game of Chili, and the further north the traveller goes, the more guanacos he will see. They inhabit the Andes, and sometimes the highest hills between the Cordillera and the coast; they seek the spots most inaccessible to man, and as they can subsist on food that would starve a donkey, they prefer the barren, rocky, and stony tops of mountains, where they are comparatively secure, to the more fertile but dangerous plains below; but often, during the tempests and snow-storms that rage so furiously on the tremendous mountains of the Andes, they descend to the lower hills that are connected with the western range, and sometimes down to the very plains.

It is very difficult to approach them within fair rifle distance; the sportsman may see two or three on a mountain, and commence stalking them up some side of the ascent that can conceal him from view; but when, after a long and desperate clamber, he arrives tired and panting at the spot he had calculated would be within shot, he looks in vain for his game, and perhaps, in a short time, sees the same animals watching him from some distant rock, much higher than the one he had gained with such toil and trouble.

I have always found that with this game, as well as

with wild deer and other animals in different parts of the world, I have had far more shots, quite unexpectedly, either in travelling, or at all events unsought for, than when I have gone out on purpose to hunt any particular animal. The traveller has far more chance of killing a guanaco with little or no trouble than the sportsman who toils for days and weeks without, perhaps, seeing a head of the game of which he is in pursuit;—and the rougher the weather, the more chance the traveller has of meeting a herd.

Cuvier classes guanacos with the camel tribe; they are handsome, graceful creatures, and grow to a large size. Unlike the lamas of Peru, the hair is rather short and fine. They are easily tamed, but are not used, as in Peru, as beasts of burthen. Though so easily tamed, they have a very unpleasant habit of collecting a quantity of chewed grass in their throats, and spitting it out with considerable force on any one who offends them, or upon strangers who approach them. They can likewise use their forefeet and teeth with pretty good effect, when wounded, or when attacked by dogs.

An acquaintance of mine had a brace of dogs looking something like large lurchers, that could run down a guanaco in a few minutes, on his own native hills.

The flesh is coarsely grained, and not to be compared with venison, but still it has a game flavour, and the haunch, properly kept and well roasted, has much merit; but it seldom falls to the lot of any one to taste it under such favourable circumstances,

for the guanaco being generally killed during a journey, is soon hacked up into small pieces, and grilled over wood ashes.

Whilst on the subject of game and sporting in Chili, we will devote a few pages to the partridge.

The merits of partridges are by most persons considered in two lights—viz., their merit on the table when cooked, and the merit a sportsman allows them as game. In the first respect, the Chilian partridge is about the worst in the world, and in the latter about the best.

In very few countries do we meet the same sort of partridges. In England, Belgium, Holland, and the north of France and Germany, the common brown partridge possesses, in an eminent degree, the two attributes of being good for the spit, and also for the dog and gun. A little further south, the red-legged partridge is met with; as every sportsman knows, this is a handsomer bird than his brown relation, but what he gains in appearance he loses in value; he is dry and worthless when roasted, and will spoil the best dogs by the distance and pace he runs at before rising. Further south, again, the Spanish and Portuguese partridge is also a red-leg, but much superior in size and plumage to the handsome French bird; his habits are the same, and his value in the kitchen about equal. Still further south, again, and on the African side of the Mediterranean, in Fez, Barbary and Morocco, a larger sort of red-legged partridge is met with, as superior to the

Spanish bird both in size and plumage, as the latter is to the French, and also far better for the table, but yet very bad for dogs; but they have a peculiarity which I have never seen in a European partridge—they will, when hunted, sometimes take refuge during the heat of the afternoon, in fig trees, orange trees, or any ones affording good shelter. I have often, on the north coast of Africa, marked a covey of birds into a clump of trees, and have seen the dogs sniffing about under the branches in a strange way, and no wonder, for the partridges were sitting up in the trees. I have never seen any other partridges do the same thing, though I believe it is common enough in the United States.

I cannot speak from experience of any other African partridges, much more to the southward, but have been informed that they get larger and better to eat the nearer they are to the line, but that they are all red-legged. After the sportsman has filled his bag with red-legs, he ought to consider how they are to be cooked, and he will find a recipe at the end of this chapter which he may make use of, unless he knows a better one.

In the wild woods of Central America the partridge is as good, or even better, than the English brown bird for the table, but worthless for the sportsman, as the only way of bagging a few is to peer to the right and left of your path through the forest, and shoot them on the ground. The sportsman may say it is deliberate murder, and so it may be, but if he has

any scruples, he has the easy alternative of going without partridges.

In the Equador, and also in Columbia, the partridge is excellent eating, but bad for sporting; in Peru and Bolivia, it is not so good for the spit, but rather better for the sportsman.

In the Pampas, between the Andes and the Atlantic, there are two sorts of partridges; one small, and more like a very large quail; and the other very large, almost as big again as an English bird, with a graceful feathering crest on the head.

Both sorts are excellent eating, and the Gauchos often ride a covey of the large ones *down;* for after flushing them two or three times, they refuse to rise again, and are caught with small horsehair nooses or lasitos fixed at the end of a long stick.

The partridge of the lower part of the Andes is like that of Chili, to be described, and the partridge of the upper snow-clad ridges is of a pure white, not feathered down the legs, and of a very delicate rose-colour underneath the wings.

This dissertation on partridges, which perhaps is only interesting to the sportsman who has shot in many foreign lands, brings us at last to the Chilian one. Of all the different species of partridge, the Chili bird is the worst and dryest, and also the most difficult to make eatable, though art will sometimes triumph over those difficulties; but the bird is the very best in the world for the sportsman, especially when abundant. The goodness of Chilian partridge-

shooting consists in this—viz., that however plentiful they may be, they never rise in coveys, but generally only one or two at a time. In a good country, which is usually covered with thick bushes, but not higher than the hips, your dog points, draws a little, and a single bird rises, is fired at, and very likely the report flushes another, who gets the second barrel. After loading, and going on to pick up the birds, perhaps one or two more are flushed in the same way, and it is almost indispensable for your dog to be a good retriever.

I was so lucky as to have a very stanch English pointer, who was equally good at partridges, snipe, or ducks; was an excellent retriever, and also a faithful guard alongside of my bed at night. When shooting, I always had a lad on horseback leading my own horse about fifty yards in the rear; he was a capital hand at marking where a bird fell, and every now and then the contents of the game-bag were transferred to the spare saddle-bags.

In some parts of the country, where water is scarce, a partridge is rarely to be seen; but in spots where water is abundant, and consequently vegetation luxuriant, these birds are found in great quantities. Such places are those which a traveller seeks out for his resting-place for the night, and I have often, after a long journey, which ought to be finished before four o'clock, taken my gun and called my dog (who had trotted alongside of me all day, besides amateur hunting), and in the course of two hours, before sun-

set, bagged six or seven brace of birds, besides, perhaps, three or four ducks;—a great help they often prove in wild places where nothing can be bought.

As nobody ever saw a Chilian shoot flying, the only enemies the partridge has to contend with are hawks, foxes, and a very few Englishmen; and, as stated above, the goodness of the shooting arises from the birds springing singly, or, at the most, in pairs.

Two guns on the same beat, but working about one hundred yards apart, will, generally speaking, produce the best sport and heaviest bag; but one gun, if the bearer does not spare his legs, will very often kill more than half the two others would.

Although these birds are very dry when roasted, yet they may be made into an exceedingly good dish, as taught to me by a Frenchman whom I once met on a long journey, and with whom I travelled about four hundred miles, though his *hired* horses kept mine sadly behind their usual time.

One evening, having arrived at the end of the day's journey, and as our larder was in the last stage of consumption, I took my gun, and went to get some food for ourselves and servants, for though my French friend had been firing at a great many objects during the day, the only thing he had killed was a snake, in a cactus bush, swallowing the young birds in a nest. I soon brought back a few partridges, a brace of ducks, and two bandurrias (a very large and beautiful species of inland curlew). The fire was ready, and

the ducks and curlews put down to be roasted; but my French acquaintance—who united, in his own person, to the qualities of traditional historian of the glories of the great Empire, and of stanch republican, a most curious knowledge of the British constitution, and various other accomplishments, the still more useful one of the theory and practice of the 'cuisine,' with original ideas,—said to me, that, although the Chilian partridge was dry when roasted, he had long meditated on the subject; that he had tried his plan on red-legs in the south of France, and that as we had birds, and that everything that he wanted was at hand, he was resolved to make the experiment. I can only say the dish was capital; I have since tried it with red-legs, and succeeded equally well, and I give the recipe for the benefit of those who have red-legs to shoot at, and can scarcely eat them when bagged; for it is not everybody who can stand 'perdrix aux choux,'—at least, when not very well prepared.

Take three or four partridges, the sooner after they are shot the better, clean them, and divide each bird into two parts, lengthways; dry them well with a towel, and lay them in an earthen pot, with a large spoonful of lard. Take a few of the mild onions, known in England as Portugal onions, and slice them over the birds until well covered up. Season with pepper and salt, add a few capsicums or chilis; just cover the whole with water, and place the *earthen* pot over some wood-embers, and only give heat

enough to simmer, and not boil. In half an hour add, according to taste, a few tomatos divided in two, but this may be omitted if not liked. When the stew is nearly done, add a small glass of white wine, and give a little quicker heat, and I believe most persons would pronounce the dish worthy of notice in the 'Almanac des Gourmands,'—certainly better than 'perdrix aux choux.' But the real way to serve it at table is, as 'pepper-pot' is served up in the West Indies, and that is, in the same pot that it is cooked in, but neatly wrapped up in a white napkin.

Before leaving the subject of partridges, a few words on hawking may be interesting to lovers of sport in general. Our ancestors gloried in this pastime, but it is now scarcely known, except by name, in England. Only a very few practise it in Chili, and one of those few was a friend of mine, with whom I have enjoyed many real good days' sporting. He lived about one hundred and forty miles from Valparaiso, and about forty from Santiago. He caught his own young hawks, tamed them, and trained them himself, flew them, and reclaimed them.

Many a day's sport I have been able to afford some of my friends belonging to British men-of-war, and many of them must remember the kind old gentleman, Don Pedrito, who was always ready to do the honours of his house and hawks.

Mounted on a large white horse, well-known in the country, with hawk on wrist, surrounded by his little dogs, and followed by the party on horseback, he

looked as if he had been taken out of a Wouvermann. The little dogs were called by him, 'couis,' which I believe is *chabacano,* or a provincial term for guinea-pigs. On arriving at the first likely ground for partridges, these very small dogs begin to hunt, keeping within forty yards of their master, and give tongue on scent. A partridge is soon flushed; the hawk's jesses cast off the wrist, and away the noble bird goes after his prey, followed by the whole party at full gallop. A very good pace must be kept up to have any view of the chase and *kill.* At first, the partridge gains, for he gets his speed quicker; but in a short time the hawk gets his steam up, and his great superiority becomes evident, like the greyhound over the hare; but, unlike the greyhound, the hawk never turns the quarry, but strikes it down dead with one blow. The only chance the partridge has is in gaining some thick hedge or cover, before the hawk can overtake him; if he does, which is not very often, the hawk is sometimes badly hurt by the violence with which he dashes against the hedge, if close to the game; but in general, when the party rides up, the partridge is dead on the ground, and the hawk seated proudly on some little branch close by, or if there are not any, stands on the ground a few yards from his prey. The master of the hawk then takes the partridge, and dividing the head with a knife, *lures* the hawk by throwing the bird towards him; upon which the hawk goes and takes a nibble at the

brains, and the owner, walking gently up to him, lays quietly hold of the jesses (which are strung with small bells), and then replaces him on his wrist.

In this manner we have often had as many as fifteen or twenty flights with a single hawk in a day's sport, and some days without missing a bird. Eheu! poor Don Pedrito; he was always ready and happy to be of use to his friends, and was continually requesting me to bring down British officers to see him; but, poor fellow, he has done with hawk and hound, and died a miserable death, regretted by all who knew him, both rich and poor.

I have travelled a great deal in different parts of the world, and have shot game wherever I have been, but I have never been in any country (save one—Central America,) that did not produce snipe; of course, I mean the parts of a country that are adapted for the bird, for on dry, stony land no person would expect to find it. But in Central America there are numerous bogs and marshes, difficult, and some dangerous, to walk over, but though I have hunted over them with a perseverance that I believe is rather peculiar to the British character, I never sprung a snipe, either jack or full snipe, in the course of two years, and whenever I have described the bird to the Indians, they all declared there was no such bird in the country. In most parts of Chili, the snipe is unknown, but in some few spots the sportsman is amply repaid for his really hard work. The first

snipe I shot in Chili were on the borders of a small lake that suddenly made its appearance, about ten miles from the capital, in one night, after a smart earthquake. No river or stream runs into it, and no water escapes except by evaporation, and it seems to have been caused by the earthquake having made a fissure in the earth, and opened a large spring of water.

This lake, when it first made its appearance, was a great object of curiosity to the inhabitants of Santiago, and parties were continually being made to see the new lake; but the novelty shortly wore off, and the piece of water was soon covered with wild fowl of many different sorts, and the shores lined with curlew. The edges of the lake soon got marshy and reedy, and a small snipe also soon made its appearance. There were no full snipe, but only jack-snipe, rather curiously feathered. They must have come from a lake in the Andes, that has been described as literally swarming with swans, geese, the large flamingoes, ducks, curlews, and all sorts of waterfowl and waders.

Near Coquimbo I heard of a marsh of great extent, situated nearly parallel to the sea-shore. I determined to try it, and found a great quantity of full snipe, though the country people could hardly understand why a man would go for hours up to his knees in mud and water for such a small bird.

I have never seen a woodcock in any part of Chili, or indeed in any part of America I have visited. Some people say that they are found, far to the south,

but I doubt the fact, on the known migratory habits of the bird.

In Chili, wild ducks are very plentiful; wherever water is in abundance, and even in very dry spots, large teams of ducks are often found on the scanty ponds met with here and there. I have rarely killed the large Muscovy duck, but very often a great sort of sheldrake; I have rarely killed the teal, but many hundreds of the small, red-headed dun-bird have gone into my bag; I have seldom killed the 'puy-quen,' a peculiar species of wild goose, from a lake situated very high in the Andes, though I have often shot the common wild goose; and I have only once killed a magnificent species of swan, who is indeed a 'rara avis in terris,' although not a black one. This bird differs only in one respect from the finest specimens of our own domesticated breed, and that difference is a black head, with about six inches of the throat jet black, rising above a snow-white body.

The only place where I have ever seen these fine birds is on a beautiful lake about eighty miles to the south of Santiago, and about ten miles from the hot springs of Angostura. This lake was really crowded with wild fowl of every sort, and the swans were in great quantities.* I have been informed that all the

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* One of this sort of swan I have seen lately in the British Museum, but it gives no idea of the bird in its true beauty. Let the reader fancy the finest swan he can see in England, but with a black head and partly black neck—all the other plumage being pure white.

swans, puyquens, geese, and other wild fowl that are seen in Chili, come from a large lake high up in the centre of the Andes. Some of the very few wild country people who have seen it, say that during the hatching season this lake is quite alive with all sorts of birds; it is rarely disturbed, and the wild fowl breed in perfect security, as they have no enemies to fear.

I was truly sorry not to have made a point of seeing this lake, far up in the Andes, but I never *could make up* a party; and my servants, who would willingly have gone with me had three or four well-armed friends been with me, evinced such a dislike to go alone, that I never had my wish gratified. They were afraid of the Pampa Indians, who often make excursions as far even as the Tollo (before mentioned),—the major-domo of that place having a mark of their hand writing on his face, in the shape of a 'machetaso,' or sword-cut, which nearly joins his mouth to one of his ears.

In enumerating the different game birds of Chili, the curlew tribe ought not to be overlooked. There are several species, but the handsomest in the country, and perhaps in any other, is the bandurria. In describing the size of any bird or beast, it is not a bad plan to select an object of comparison with which everybody is acquainted. The bandurria is a curlew of about the same size as a pheasant, but with a much longer neck; the body is grey, marked with darker colours; but its peculiar characteristic is the

breast and neck, which is of a fine orange hue, the bill being long and curved, like that of all curlews, and seven or eight inches in length. When the sportsman gets near a flock of these birds, or sees them within shot over his head, he ought to pick out those to shoot at which have the lightest coloured necks, for they are the youngest birds, and best to eat; but if he wants them for a collection, he ought naturally to select the older ones, in full plumage, and they are known by the deep rich orange colour of their necks.

The bandurrias generally keep in flocks, and frequent the large wild and barren plains, of which there are so many in Chili; and it seems strange that a bird whose bill seems adapted for marshes or the sea-shore, should prefer such sterile spots as they usually haunt. They seem to be very clean feeders, and when well roasted are very fair eating.

Another species of curlew frequents the sandbanks tufted with coarse grass, near the sea-shores, but are often found near the banks of rivers. The bird is of a variegated grey colour, and when shot inland is more delicate than the bandurria.

There is only one sort of parrot in Chili, and that is the common-sized green parrot. These birds mostly live and build their nests in holes that they excavate in the deep 'barrancas,' or perpendicular banks, that the rapid torrents from the Andes have cut out for themselves in the course of ages; these banks being often from fifty to two hundred feet

perfectly perpendicular. Young parrots are far better eating than young pigeons.

There are many varieties of water-rails in Chili, some of them so vividly coloured, that if they were exactly copied and painted, most persons would say the painter had exaggerated.

Many very beautiful specimens of the kingfisher would reward the ornithologist's labours; and though some of them are three times as large as our own beautiful English bird, yet they have the same habits, and have very brilliant plumage. Like the parrot, they build their nests in the steep banks of rivers, and are generally seen sitting on some branch that overhangs a stream, watching for their prey.

Towards the north of Chili, and in those bays where the water is pretty smooth, pelicans abound, but they generally seek sheltered water. In the bay of Coquimbo, there are often a great many. We read in Scripture of the 'pelican in the wilderness;' but does that wilderness mean a sort of desert or the sea-shore, or is another bird alluded to, whose name has been badly translated? They are generally seen within two or three hundred yards of the shore, and I never met with more than *one* further than twenty yards from the sea-shore, and he was near a creek.

I pass over many birds that cannot interest the sportsman, and only mention two species that have a sort of interest from their peculiarities.

The first one is called the 'tapar camino,' or 'to shut up your road,' from a habit it has, near night-

fall, of alighting in front of the walker, on the path; the pedestrian goes on, and the bird waits until he is very close, and then flies a few yards on a-head, and waits again until the person is near. This, the bird will repeat perhaps a dozen times, and at last he seems tired, and rising up, settles on the path behind.

The other bird is a variety of the 'spur-winged plover;' and I should not mention it, were it not for a strange superstition that holds among the country peons and guassos. The plover is about the same size as our lap-wing, but on the pinion joint it has a sharp spur about half an inch in length, of a red colour, and very sharp; and the peon has an idea that if he can procure a live bird and scratch the woman he is attached to, so as to bring blood, that same woman is inevitably destined to share his affection, and become his better-half.

A gentleman whom I was acquainted with told me one day, that when out shooting he was much annoyed with the cries of the said plover.* At last, he fired a barrel at it, and brought it down, but only winged. A countryman came up and begged for the bird, offering a sheep in exchange. My acquaintance gave him the bird, and received the sheep, meaning of course to pay for it, but wished to know what the

* I believe Dr. Johnson defines plover as 'a noisy bird.' Anybody that has been trout-fishing in Ireland, about the month of May, can bear testimony to the truth of his definition.

bird was wanted for. The peon was jealous; he went to the house of his beloved—gave her a good scratch on the arm with the spur of the *live* bird, and the fair one succumbed to her fate, and was soon married to the man who gave a sheep for a plover.

I have often heard rather curious stories relative to the effect of a plover's scratch; but when there exists a predisposition to believe them, it is not difficult to predict the consequences.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CONDOR—ITS SIZE—MODE OF KILLING—AN UNPLEASANT POSITION—AN EAGLE'S NEST—THE CHINCHILLA—THE NEST OF THE OSTRICH.

THE finest bird in Chili, whether carnivorous or granivorous, is without doubt the condor,* and I have often wondered why the Chilians do not call the huge bird by his nobler name—instead of calling him 'buytre,' or merely vulture—thus classing him with all the other disgusting varieties of that filthy feathered biped. But the Chilians call him 'buytre' *par excellence*, for no other vulture is called by that name; they have all a local appellation, and the condor is almost as beastly in habits as any of them; but I have never yet seen a true condor preying upon cast-up fish, and other worse things that are found upon the sea-shore. This bird ought to have been chosen as the emblem of their country. Dr. Franklin said, that, in the first instance, he considered that the magnificent turkey of North America (as the finest specimen of the feathered production of the United States) should have been selected as their national emblem, but, on reflection, he thought it would expose them to

* May we except the beautiful swan before mentioned?—'the peaceful monarch of the lake!'

ridicule, and so they left the beautiful and useful turkey for the eagle, just as greedy as the vulture, but far more rapacious. Though the eagle cannot, and dare not attack such large objects as the condor does, yet he destroys life in the proportion of *many* to *one.*

The Cordillera eagles seldom gather in great numbers, although, two or three times, I have seen about forty or fifty together, high in the air, making large circles, the wings being seemingly motionless. At any great height, the difference between an eagle and a vulture may be easily known, for the wings of the eagle appear like two equilateral triangles, and I have never remarked the same appearance of wing in any other bird, high in flight.

From all I have observed I think the condors, when watching for food, soar higher than the eagle; and I know that whenever one vulture is seen to fly *straight*, any person watching will see many other condors following the one who is evidently bound for some dead animal. The eagle does not do this, unless now and then the sea-eagles descry something very good, as waifs and strays on the coast.

Just as a bee laden with honey flies straight to the hive, so does the condor, or any vulture, fly straight to the feast he has espied, *and never otherwise*, for even when returning home at night-fall, he flies in large circles.

When any condor *flies straight*, others soaring in the clouds immediately follow, as they know that the leader has viewed some poor horse, cow, or other animal dying on the ground, or else bogged in some

'pantana' or marsh; when they fall upon the animal, and very soon literally pull him to pieces. I have never seen an eagle mixed with them. The condor is many times more powerful than any eagle, and drives away the largest dogs that may be engaged on a carcase with the greatest ease. These birds, it is well known, watch dogs or beasts of prey, who may have discovered a carcase, and they then wing their way towards them, and soon discover where it is lying.

Having lately written on the controversy that has been carried on for a long time, as to whether sight or smell is the cause of the gathering of the vultures, I will not recapitulate the evidence in favour of sight,* although I could bring forward many other anecdotes and incidents in support of the piercing sight alone being that cause, added to the instinct that teaches them to watch the gathering of dogs and carnivorous beasts; and also the straight flight of their own species.

A great deal has been said and written concerning the extraordinary size of the condor when full grown. The Peruvians say that the largest are seen in the Andes of their country; and the Chilians affirm that no *flying* bird can be larger than their full-grown 'buytre.' As far as I can judge, they are both of about the same size. I have shot a great many, varying in bulk, but the largest one I ever killed measured

* Wild Life in the Interior of Central America.

exactly fifteen feet from tip to tip of the wings when stretched out fairly, and not pulled out too hard.* He was a very powerful heavy bird, with legs almost as thick as my wrist, and the middle claw or finger, (which I kept, for I cut off one foot) was seven inches in length. Some little time afterwards, I shot a large albatross, which had been driven inland by a heavy gale of wind, and compared him with a fair sized condor, killed the same day. The albatross measured a foot wider from tip to tip of wing, but did not weigh much more than one-third.

Condors are sometimes killed in great numbers, and indeed, when they *are* killed, are generally victims to their own voracity. In spots where they do much mischief, an opportunity is waited for, and that opportunity is usually the death of any horse, mule, or cow, that dies upon the estate where condors have been committing havoc. The dead animal is dragged to some *small*, but high corral, and, after being skinned, the carcase is left as a bait for these large vultures. They soon arrive. One bird is seen flying *straight*, and, in a very short time, a number are also seen from up or down wind, shaping their courses in the direction of the first discoverer. After a few circling flights over the corral, they descend, and in an incredibly short time devour everything devourable on the beast, actually separating legs from the body; but these condors, when they descended to

* When pulled out he was much wider.

their repast, could not have reflected how they were to leave it, for even if left alone they would find it a difficult matter to get out of a small corral. They are like albatrosses and Falkland geese on the deck of a vessel, and want a run, or an elevation, to get on the wing so as to clear the fence. When well gorged with food, it is still more difficult to rise, and several men, armed with long poles, entering suddenly into the corral, soon knock a good many down, but it is no joke getting within reach of beak or claw.

Another way of killing these birds is sometimes attempted, but only by some party of Englishmen. Upon going on a condor excursion into a mountainous country, leave may sometimes be obtained from some cattle-owner to shoot any animal (generally a good-sized calf) that may be met with in a suitable spot: a good place is selected, and a mountain calf shot down; the best parts are selected for the use of the party, and the remainder left in some contiguous and conspicuous spot. Watching carefully the sky, a speck somewhere or other may soon be seen; the speck soon enlarges, and it is not long before the form of the bird can be distinguished. · All the condors who have seen the leader fly *straight* to his prey, follow his course—when over the carcase a few circling flights, lower and lower, give further intimation to the more distant birds of the repast which awaits them, and also hint to them that if they do not make haste, there is no chance of anything being kept for them; when the condors alight, or before,

according to circumstances, the guns and rifles of the party are soon at work, and should one or two be knocked over, the others sympathize so much with the sufferers as sometimes to sweep closer to the sportsmen's heads than is comfortable; for I am certain a full-grown condor could split a man's skull with a single blow from his powerful beak, if the man allowed him the opportunity. In this way many of these birds may be killed, and those who may be making a collection of skins for stuffing would do well to try this plan, for if fifteen or twenty condors be killed, the finest could be selected, and out of twenty, one would be, almost surely, a fine specimen.

During a journey, I was once *in* a position with regard to these condors that I would rather have been *out* of. After a weary climb up a steep mountain, trying to kill a good specimen out of some condors which were reposing on a castle-looking rock, after a plentiful meal upon a poor horse, who had sunk exhausted in the pass below, I found myself on the said rock, standing alone with two fine specimens dead at my feet; but the numerous survivors of my two shots seemed disposed to be vindictive, and I had only taken up the hill with me, by mistake, a couple of the swan-shot cartridges that killed the first pair. Standing alone on the rock, my servants in the pass below got alarmed, and seeing my powder-horn and shot-bag on the side of the road, they knew I must be without ammunition, and they hastened up to me, and I must say I was glad of it, for the birds were flying

so close to my head that I was obliged to fire off the two barrels I had left; one of them being fired so close to a condor that the shot made a hole like a ball through him, and I was actually obliged to make use of stones, of which there were plenty, before my servants brought up my ammunition. A few quick shots soon dispersed them all.

The first bird killed so close to me was the one mentioned as being the largest I have ever killed myself: he was fifteen feet, and though some persons pretend that this bird is much larger in some countries and parts of the Andes, I doubt it; for the next largest I ever shot was thirteen feet, and a great number only twelve. I am inclined to believe that no fair specimen of condor has ever been seen in England, dead or stuffed. I am sure that those I have seen myself in England, cannot convey to the mind any true idea of this bird. In his wild state he is tremendously strong. In seizing an animal who has sunk under exhaustion, or an animal in strong vigour, but who has been bogged and is helpless in a marsh, he has always one point of attack, and that is under the tail; tearing long strips of skin away from the belly, the dirty vulture soon gets actually into the carcase, and seems to bury himself there. The condor is the head of his tribe, but I should like to see him in presence of the 'King of the Vultures.' I have often seen His Majesty surrounded by his courtiers, too well bred to think of dining before his majesty had concluded his meal; but I must confess

that I do not believe that a large, powerful bird like the condor would pay deference to the King of the Vultures, only one-third of his weight and size. However, the Peruvians say that they *do* pay that homage, and as they told me the same story of all vultures having great respect for their king—which I have seen myself, since, many times, and the fact can be testified by British consuls—I do not see why the condors should not be as great fools as the others; but one thing ought to be added, the King of the Vultures is not a revoltingly beastly bird; he takes a good dinner, and then goes to a branch of a tree to clean himself, but he *never remains near one spot*, and that wherever filth is found, as other vultures do, unless we may presume that he returns to the inaccessible haunts in which he breeds.

I have never found the nest of a condor, and never heard from any of the peons or guassos that they had seen one themselves; although I have heard plenty of stories about the birds and their nests, some as curious as the tale of the 'Eagle and Child,' so well known in the Derby Chronicles; but the result of my own researches and inquiries has been, that no person I have ever spoken to on the subject had ever seen a nest himself, although many said they knew persons who had seen one of them. Second-hand, or hearsay, evidence is of little value; but I hear from common report that they build their nests in the inaccessible fissures that are so often seen in perpendicular cliffs. About fifty miles from Coquimbo, a man on horseback

tumbled over, in the dark, a frightful precipice, and both man and horse were killed. I remember well, the man being missed and search being made for him, in which I helped, with my servants; he was, at length, discovered in the gully below the pass, *untouched*, and close to the remaining bones of his horse. The condors had done quick work with the beast, but they *durst not touch the man:* his eyes were still open, and the greedy vultures were afraid of the open eye. Now it seems strange, but it is very true, that when an eagle has secured his prey, the first thing that he strikes at *is* the eye.

Although I have never found the nest of a condor, I have frequently that of the beautiful Cordillera eagle. Travelling, one day, at the foot of the Cordillera, I was about half a mile in advance of my mules, and, turning round a rock, suddenly came in view of a pair of eagles, not the distance of the length of a common room from me. They did not see me, for, from the first glimpse of a flutter of feathers, I had jumped off my horse, and hidden him, as well as myself, behind the said rock. I watched them for some minutes: the food they were giving to the young ones seemed to be of the curlew species, but the nest was built in the converging branches of a thorny cactus, issuing out of a perpendicular rock, and not above twenty feet from the path, but from the appearance of the trail, no person had passed that way for several years.

I watched them for some minutes, within ten yards,

which again confirms the argument of 'sight *versus* smell,' for I was smoking a cigar, and my horse was smoking in a lather. I had a double-barrel in my hands, but walked up to the nest, and they went away, but relunctantly. No *sportsman* would have fired on them, after so watching them, and they escaped, which they would not have done, if they had been filthy vultures. I tried to climb up to the nest, but although it seemed easy at first, I could not succeed, and the day was too far advanced to allow of other means being adopted. I should have been glad to secure the contents of the nest.

There is a very pretty little animal in Chili that deserves a short notice, the skin of which is well known to ladies, as trimmings for winter dresses. I have never seen this beautiful chinchilla in any of the *southern* provinces of Chili, but in the *north,* and especially in the province of Coquimbo, a great number may be found and killed.

There is no use in describing the skin, as it is so well known, but the habits of the animal have very seldom been noticed: he is found in the most sterile and dry wastes, and how he can exist so far from any water seems a marvel; but he burrows at the foot of a large shrub with a succulent root, which, perhaps, supplies him with the requisite moisture; also as he is only abroad at night-time, the heavy dews may, perhaps, supply him with sufficient liquid. The great quantity of birds of prey would also deter him from making his appearance during the day-time.

A young lad, the son of one of my servants, was very clever in catching them. The way is to go, on a fine moonlight night, to the spots where they abound, and besiege their citadels, one after the other. A few boys with sticks, and a few cur dogs, are quite enough to secure a good number of skins. Fire is set to the root of the shrub, which soon burns enough to make a great smoke, and the chinchillas are obliged to make a sally, when they are knocked down, or killed by the dogs. I am sure the father of my boy used to make a good thing by selling the skins his son procured for him. It is not so easy to catch them alive, for the boys must place their hands at the holes to lay hold of them when they *bolt,* and they bite as sharp as rats ; but my lad often brought me live chinchillas, and more graceful little animals can scarcely be seen.* They are about the size of a small rat, with a rather long, feathery tail, like a setter's. I once tamed one in a few hours: he was young, and literally omnivorous, for he would follow me round the table on which he was placed, and eat, indifferently, bread, sugar, figs, or meat. However, an English pointer I had came into my room, just as I was priding myself on having tamed my pretty little chinchilla, and, making a snap at him, put an end to his education.

Before ending my account of the animal produc-

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* Small bag-nets, something like those used when ferreting rabbits, would soon procure a good number.

tions of Chili, I ought to add, that I never knew of a fish being caught in any river north of Valparaiso. I can add, as regards my own knowledge, in the south also. The snow-water from the Andes would destroy them if they existed. In the few lakes, fish are abundant, but those lakes are not subject to the same cause. In most of the rivers a very large and also delicate kind of cray-fish, called 'camarones,' is met with, but generally within a few miles from the mouths of the rivers. Being a close observer of nature myself, I cannot refrain from giving a slight zoological story; and although the ostrich is not a denizen of the country I have been describing, yet, as the bird lives so near to it—only the other side of the Andes—a short notice of one peculiarity will, I am convinced, be acceptable to naturalists. Everybody has read of the ostrich laying her eggs on the desert, and leaving them to be hatched by the heat of the sun.

It is very true that a single ostrich's egg is often found on a barren spot, and the inference is drawn that the ostrich had left the egg to take care of itself. There is nothing more unjust towards the female ostrich than to accuse her of abandoning her eggs—the truth is, that she is a careful and provident mother, which I am going to *prove.*

The traveller who has seen an egg of the ostrich, in the desert, naturally says it is left to providence; but if he had reflected a little, he would have felt how utterly impossible it would be for a bird break-

ing the shell to provide for itself. He would have searched further, and he would have found what any man can do who chooses to look carefully right and left, instead of right a-head.

The story of the ostrich's nest is curious, and, although unconnected with Chili, I feel sure that it will be acceptable to some of my readers.

The ostrich makes a large nest on the ground, and, by drawing down the grass gradually, makes it imperceptible a short distance off. She lays three or four eggs; but one of them she carries out a good way from the nest and leaves it by itself. Now, it is that solitary abandoned egg, often found, that has given rise to the story of the ostrich abandoning her eggs to providence. The truth is, that she sits upon her eggs all night, and the male bird does the same a great part of the day; and the question is, what is the use of the egg so separated from the rest? The use of that egg is a beautiful instance of a bird's foresight. A few days before the young ones are hatched, the ostrich goes and splits the cast-out egg; the blue-bottle fly immediately *blows* it, and, by the time the young ostriches break their shell it is full of maggots; and, on the birth of the birds, the mother leads them to the egg for their first repast.

Every one, on reflection, must feel that a new-born ostrich could not be independent—the first hawk or vulture that passed over would soon put an end to him.

Having concluded the foregoing observations on

the animal productions of Chili, I trust I may be pardoned for making a few on the Chilian race—of man and woman—and I trust that no Chilian can or will take offence at remarks so favourable, in general, to their country, and also to themselves.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INHABITANTS OF CHILI—THE LADIES—THEIR EDUCATION—MATRIMONIAL CUSTOMS—THE LAW OF SUCCESSION—COSTUME—STYLE OF LIVING—A WHOLESOME BEVERAGE—THE DIET OF MINERS.

CHILI contains about two millions of inhabitants, scattered thinly, except in some few populous parts of the country, and that over a territory of more than a thousand miles in length and of various breadths. In these inhabitants, white blood predominates, even in the lowest classes, but it is that sort of white blood that has flowed in the veins of the Andalusian and Moor.

Physically speaking, they are far superior to any other nation I have seen on the west coast of America. The dry weather, together with the bracing night-winds from the Andes, harden the frame and constitution of those who live much in the open air, in a degree not to be seen north of the great desert of Atacama. But this scarcely applies to many of the upper classes and dwellers in large towns, who seldom mount on horseback, although living in such a decidedly equestrian country. Those of the upper class who live on their haciendas are often strong and active, and use the lasso as well as a peon; but many of those who confine themselves to towns, and copy French manners, are more effeminate, and require a cloak after sunset.

The ladies are often very pretty, but are seldom educated except in a very slight and superficial way. A little knowledge of the guitar, less of the piano and dancing, is the general extent of their acquirements; of course there are exceptions; but as for drawing, painting, foreign languages, and other common rudiments of an English girl's education, they are seldom thought of—at least, during four years' knocking about in the country I have rarely met such accomplishments. I believe the young ladies to be brought up strictly, and to be generally *very* well behaved *before* marriage. There are a great many married ladies who have some little story attached to their names—I trust not all true; but generally speaking, in a very short time after marriage, the husband is scarcely ever seen in company with his wife, nor does he attend her evening 'tertullias.'

There is one custom that would strike an English young lady as being strange, if not worse. When a marriage is decided on, the husband is expected to make his intended such an immense number of valuable presents, to give her such a handsome trousseau, and, in short, to fit her out so completely, as materially to cripple his own resources for some time. I remember being at breakfast one morning, with a gentleman who was soon to enter into the blessed state of matrimony, when a servant came in with a letter that completely destroyed his appetite—at least, for breakfast.

He had already made his intended many valuable

presents; but the said letter was from the lady's mother, requesting no less a sum of money than five thousand dollars (about one thousand pounds) to pay for articles she had bought for her daughter.

I thought the demand would have taken away his appetite for matrimony also, but, after raving a little at her extravagance, he was obliged to pay the money.

An English, French, or United States girl, would be rather ashamed of being adorned and actually dressed before marriage by her future husband; but the practice obtains from high to low, rich and poor, and if a man does choose to fall in love, full payment according to his means is sure to be exacted in some form or other.

When a gentleman marries a lady, they are both obliged to declare the amount of each of their fortunes, and the laws of dowry and succession seem curious to an Englishman.

The two sums are united, and whatever increase arises in their joint fortune (but not by inheritance) belongs in equal parts to each. So that if both husband and wife brought equal sums, say 30,000 dollars each, and the united 60,000 dollars were increased by trade, speculation, or by parsimony to 100,000; on the death of one of them, 50,000 dollars would go immediately to the children of the defunct, or to the heirs; the said defunct being only able to bequeath two-fifths of whatever property she or he may die possessed of: the said property to be paid down, without waiting for the death of the survivor.

There is a sort of justice in the law of succession, as it prevents a cruel parent from totally disinheriting a worthy son, which is too often the case in our own country; but in some respects the law of dowry opens a wide door to monstrous frauds.

A man and wife living together may speculate upon joint account, and although the law enjoins that all gains shall belong to *both*, in equal parts, yet in case of *failure*, or bankruptcy, the creditor cannot touch the wife's share, and can only seize on the husband's property.

Suppose that, on marriage, the united property amounted to 100,000 dollars, the husband may trade and speculate with the whole sum, and, if he has luck, may perhaps double the amount; in which case the wife would be entitled to half, or 100,000, for her own share; but suppose the picture reversed, and debts amount to 100,000 dollars, the creditors in that case can only touch the 50,000 of his own, and his wife's *must be paid first;* so that any dishonest speculator may, as is said, 'play upon velvet,' for he can always retire, and fall back on his wife's resources.

To an honest man, who confines his speculations and his liabilities to his own share of the joint income, this law may be a very good one, and no doubt is so, since it saves many a poor woman and family from total ruin and misery; although it is pretty evident that it throws out a great and certain temptation to any man who has a quiet laxity of conscience

to say to himself, 'Why should I not make use of all this money? I can, perhaps, make a large fortune, but, in case of the very worst, I cannot be ruined—I shall always have enough to live on with comfort!'

In the law of succession to property, let us suppose that the testator has several children. He or she has the power to leave two-fifths of the property to the favourite; the other three-fifths being divided equally among the remainder. No legitimate child can be disinherited, except in two cases (as a lawyer informed me): the first one is, the case of a son or daughter being condemned by a court of law to any punishment called infamous: the second is that of a grown-up son striking a parent; but no other conduct can empower a parent to disinherit a child.

Generally speaking, however, there is seldom any occasion for a parent to act in any other way than dividing his property equally between all his children. It is well known that mothers are more likely to have a favourite than fathers; but certainly, in Chili, children are brought up with a respect and veneration for their parents, fathers especially, that rather contrasts to our own 'rising generation.'

I have often, in the country, seen a young man of good family, handing fire to his father for lighting his cigar, and he has almost always pulled off his hat and remained uncovered until his 'governor' had completed the operation.

Whenever a gentleman asks for fire from one beneath him in rank, the person who gives it takes off

his hat, and remains bare-headed until the 'brasero,' or fire, is returned with thanks. Among equals, each touch their hats; but it is considered a mortal affront to refuse a light if you are smoking, or, if you *have* a light, to the lowest person. I suppose the feeling comes from an excommunicated person being denied fire and water from every one.

The ladies of Chili dress well; much after the French mode, and only a few months behind the fashion. Gentlemen dress very much as Frenchmen do in such a city as Bordeaux or Marseilles; but this dress is only confined to towns, for in the country everybody dresses in true guasso style, and a town lady would not be very well pleased on seeing any gentleman ride into her 'patio,' or court-yard, dressed in a poncho, straw hat, over-all boots, and enormous spurs.

The guasso dress for a person in easy circumstances is as follows:—A straw hat with narrow brim, tied under the chin with black silk tassels; a blue, round jacket, more or less embroidered, with a poncho thrown over it, the colour and texture of which depends upon the taste and purse of the wearer. A pair of tightish trousers, with a red silk sash round the waist, a pair of over-all boots, drawing up above the knee, and of divers colours; sometimes double-strapped with black Cordova leather, and confined below the knee by handsome black and silver gaiters; the costume being completed by an enormous pair of silver spurs, with steel rowels.

I have given (as a specimen of the figure such a person cuts on horseback) a drawing of the costume I always wore myself, together with a favourite lassoing horse, saddle, accoutrements, lasso, &c. It will give the reader a better idea of how persons dress and are mounted than any description.*

In almost every country I have visited I have made a rule to adopt the costume, saddlery, bits, bridles, and trappings of the said country; together with the mode of travelling, and, as nearly as possible, any peculiarity in their riding. By such means, a traveller passes unnoticed, but otherwise, perhaps, the simple fact of having an iron stirrup instead of a wooden one, proclaims the stranger. The only exception as to saddlery was in the interior of Central America, which was so utterly barbarous, that I was obliged to return to my Chilian 'apparecos.' In that country, they actually make their lassos fast to their horses' tails! I could not make up my mind to that primitive mode.

The common hour for visiting is in the evening, from about eight o'clock to ten or eleven. The lady receives in handsome, well-furnished rooms, and her tertullia is generally attended, at least for some time, by nearly the same set of men, who go and come;

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* I have tried to draw the peculiarities of the Chilian horse,—viz., a good carcase and legs, a fine head, but a thin ewe neck. The mouth and bitting are far beyond any praise that can be bestowed on them by European horsemen.

a few ladies, intimate in the family, are also there, and if the lady has any preference for any caballero, it is part of his duty to be there all the evening.

It is very seldom that the husband is seen at the wife's evening 'tertullia;' he is generally attending some other one: rarely however is a quarrel heard of between man and wife on that subject.

At these tertullias the conversation is light and gay—there is no restraint; refreshments are seldom offered, except on particular occasions, and every one goes when he pleases. If there should happen to be any musical ladies present, they perhaps sing or play, and there is a real charm in their frankness and good-nature. When once well introduced into their houses, they try all in their power (and are sure to succeed) to make the stranger feel at his ease and at home.

If this is true in the city, it is still more so at the haciendas in the country, where, sometimes, on a journey, and arriving late, I have been welcomed by some old acquaintances; blamed for not letting them know I was coming; and, though tired and wishing to go to sleep, have often been kept up till past midnight, in order to give time to the cook to serve up a capital supper—the host frequently begging me to excuse the late hour, but that he had sent a man on horseback, perhaps fifteen miles, for white bread, or something else they were short of.

The general mode of living is very simple in Chili, especially in the country. There would be no use describing the mode of life of persons of fortune in

towns, nor indeed would it, in the country, of the middle and lower orders, were there not something to be said—something, upon their articles of food, that has long struck me might be of use to our own poor.

In the country, when man or woman rises in the morning, both rich and poor take a cup of maté, also called yerba, or paraguay tea, with a burnt lump of sugar; and they suck it up through a 'bomba,' or tube, with small holes at one end, made of silver or tin. A few of the class that have been educated in France take a cup of chocolate or coffee instead,—but as these remarks are meant for the poorer class, (or rather those who have influence over that class,) I will continue the description of the food consumed by the lowest and the easier classes nearest above them.

I shall have to say a word about the food ordered by law for the miners, but as that is furnished by the owners, it can only corroborate the following observations.

The Chilian workman, or peon, does not consider his breakfast a principal meal, for, as he dines between twelve and one, he makes his dinner the principal one.

The very poor peon breakfasts generally off the remains of his supper and dinner. A peon who is a little better off, perhaps, has bread with a few dried figs. One better off, again, has perhaps an egg or two to add to his meal; but they seldom touch their favourite dish, unless they have kept some from the

last day's dinner to be heated up. The peons could not have their dish cooked in time, for it takes some hours; but they reserve themselves for dinner-time, when, from the President of the Republic to the lowest beggar, every one, even if he does not eat it, has a dish of porotos at his table, or stone at the corner of a lane or street.

But hundreds of thousands dine upon this dish every day, without touching any other, and some almost live on it, except during the time when fruits, especially water melons, are ripe.

The poroto is a species of haricot beans, but the bean is of a dark brown, or reddish colour, and is as nourishing as can well be conceived, at the same time being very cheap, and, what is so important for a poor man, it *perfectly satisfies him*. He feels full and comfortable, feels strength to work, and when once he likes it, would never abandon it for other food, unless for a short change.

It has often astonished me when I have seen an English labourer, in his cottage, eating his mid-day meal, which consisted of a piece of bread and cheese, washed down by a cup of weak tea—or rather, a poor decoction of sloe-leaves and birch-ends—when I knew that, with a little management, he could get a hot, plentiful, and most healthy meal, for one quarter the price that the tea and sugar alone had cost him. As it is, he goes back to his labour, perhaps in frost or snow, not only half empty, but feeling his dinner has done him little good; whereas

the price that his miserable fare has cost him would procure, not only a good dinner, but a good hot supper, for himself and whole family; and they would go to bed full and comfortable, and rise in the morning fit to do their work, however hard.

With respect to the healthiness of the diet, it is proverbial that no nation can go through hard and long sustained work better than the Chilians, although in physical power they certainly are not on a par, or near it, with the Anglo-Saxon race ; but the power and strength of the Chilian miners are well known ; and yet they have nothing for dinner, from one end of the year to the other, but these stewed beans.

The English peasant has a strong aversion to new, and above all, to cheap food ; many of them would rather be content to go on with scanty bread and cheese, although they preferred the other. 'Try it yourself,' is growled out, 'and see how you will like it!' That answer has been made to many useful hints. But the response I make is, '*I have tried it;* I have sometimes lived for weeks and months with scarcely any other food but these haricot beans. And moreover, I do not think that any bread-and-cheese-eating (washed down with tea) man could have done a week's work with me, and still less a month's.'

The fact is, that in the cottage, any innovation of cheap food touches that worst of all inexcusable feelings, false pride.

No English peasant, or labourer, would touch roasted corn for his breakfast, as a substitute for coffee or trashy weak tea. No; let the ground-corn coffee be beautifully made—strong, nutritious, and really good to drink, it is cast away as trash; and if any persons who truly *could* judge between that healthy beverage, and the mawkish compound that is called coffee or tea,—not only in a good farm-house, but in any labourer's cottage,—were to pronounce such an opinion, they would not only *not be believed*, but be laughed to scorn.

'Try it yourself,' is again the answer from the peasant, who insists upon paying five shillings a pound for tea.

'So I have,' is my response. I have tried it for many weeks together, and found it excellent,—as superior to wretched weak coffee and soapsuds tea, as the fresh air of a mountain is to that of a city rookery.*

Let me give a recipe for the poor, that they may enjoy a wholesome beverage that I have often and often enjoyed myself, when I could not procure good coffee. It would be hard if the woman of the cottage and her children, during harvest-time, could not glean some ears of corn, and I can tell them, that if

* If any one of my readers happens to be a very great coffee-judge and amateur, I will recommend him to procure some of the *small beaned* Peruvian coffee from 'Younghai.' It has nearly the same taste as the smallest Mocha, but is much finer in flavour than any coffee I know.

they were industrious, the gleaning would serve them night and morning for a wholesome, invigorating beverage, instead of a worthless, trashy drink, such as hedge-tea, for the whole year.

Bruise the grain, but not enough to divide it into little bits; put all the grain into a frying-pan, or even, for a poor man, on any bit of iron or tin (don't use lead) that can be procured, and fry the corn well, until it comes to a rich brown colour; take away from the fire, and let the grain dry until it gets crisp. Immediately, it *does* get crisp, crush it on a common stone with another one; place the powder in a pot, and treat it as coffee, only using six times the quantity I give this for those poor persons who have not even a little coffee-mill, and who usually buy their trash, called coffee, ready ground, mostly made of beans and oats. Boil the pot up twice, and then add milk and sugar; but if the poor cottager has a coffee-pot large enough, let him make café-au-lait, the third time of heating. I have no hesitation in saying, from personal experience, that this common beverage ought to satisfy anybody, and much more those peasants who can swallow such stuff as they now do. When one reflects that a few children, at harvest-time, could glean enough to serve a family the whole year, it is lamentable to see so much money spent on an infusion made from the trimmings of our hedges, and called tea.

These remarks on a substitute for coffee, are not so important as the following on the great staple of life

in Chili—viz., on the poroto, a species of haricot bean.

The plant that bears the poroto bean is hardy and prolific, and, I believe, would grow wherever sown and attended to.

It is not likely that these lines will be read by any labourer, but they *may, possibly,* by some one who has, at the same time, the wish and the influence to ameliorate the condition of the poor in their own cottages.

In Chili, they calculate a large double-handful of the dry bean as a good allowance for a man, but the beans swelling very much, makes the allowance a large plateful. I will give the recipe for cooking them, in the hopes it will meet the eye of some benevolent person who has the power and wish of seeing it tried among his poorer dependents.

Put the beans in an iron pot, cover with water, and boil for half an hour. Throw out the water, draining it off with care, for the water is unwholesome; but leave the beans in the pot. Cover again with fresh water, and boil until the beans are nearly done, when drain the water off a second time. For the third time of heating up, keep the beans in the pot, but add no water; instead, add a little (this is for English cottages) dripping, kitchen-stuff, salt butter, or lard, according to the means. Season with salt, and, if it can be afforded, pepper, and heat the mess up for a quarter of an hour, stirring gently, now and then. I have often, after a long day's work, sat down to a plateful

of the above humble dish with a relish I have scarcely felt at the Café de Paris, or the Trois Frères, and can add, that I was more fit for work after the first than the last. I will answer for it that an English labourer would go back to his work with his inside in a more perfect state of content than on a scanty meal of bread and cheese, and, moreover, do his work easier. Besides, the *remainder* may be heated up again for supper; and no labourer can eat a food more invigorating, and, at the same time, more satisfying. He will go to sleep full and contented, and rise in the morning fit for work. As to the usual growl of 'Try it yourself,' I never recommend anything unless I *have* tried it; and I can truly aver, that I was never more fit for real hard work than when I lived for many weeks upon these porotos.

The diet of the miners is regulated by law, and as these men are notorious for their personal strength, and require more nourishment than most men, I will give an account of the provisions that are served out to each during the day.

For breakfast each miner is allowed one loaf of good wheaten bread about the size and shape of a common brick, which is the only bread he gets during the day: the bread is rather brown, for the miners prefer having the finest part of the bran left in the bread; they say it is more wholesome, and gives them more strength *

* Our English labourers will eat nothing but white bread.

In addition, each man is allowed forty dried shrivelled up figs; but on two days in each week, they get each, instead of figs, half a pound of charque, or jerked beef; and that is the only animal food the miners are allowed in the whole year.*

For dinner, they have nothing absolutely but the above-mentioned beans, 'porotos.' All the rations are delivered over to the mine's cook, who dresses them according to the above recipe; and for the last heating up, the cook is allowed to mix with the beans, one ounce of clarified beef fat and one large Chilian capsicum for each ration. Each miner gets a very large plateful that he carries to his own little rancho close by.

For supper, each miner is allowed a large handful of 'frangollo,' to make *punch;* but frangollo punch is rather a different article to that used in England, to wash down Turtle. Frangollo is nothing more than bruised wheat, which the miners mix with water, adding a little salt or sugar.

This frugal supper ends the day's work and feeding; for the miners go to sleep soon after sunset, that they may rise long before daylight.

I do not think a Cornish miner would be content with this fare, but a Cornish miner earns good wages and buys what he likes. The Chilian miner also earns good wages, and has all his food found and

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* Twenty-six pounds of meat allowed in the year; but they have what they choose during the vacations.

cooked for him; but the work the latter does is a proof that the food is wholesome.

I wish truly that some gentleman who is in a situation, and has both the means and wish of trying to introduce the poroto as an article of food among our labourers, would make the experiment. He might improve the situation of the very man that wants his situation improved—the agricultural labourer.

I can only repeat that after the first few days, I got accustomed to the beans; after a few more days, I missed them, when they were not present at a better dinner; but I also ever looked on them in common with many men who have done hard work, as the most nourishing, the cheapest, and the most grateful food that can be procured for hard-working labourers.

How often, subsequently, when at night in a wild forest, have I not sighed for a large dish of hot porotos, to prevent the wind whistling right through my emptiness.

CHAPTER IX.

DESCENT OF THE CHILIANS—ALBINOS—SOUTH CHILIAN ROBBERS—SALTEADORES—SERENOS—EXECUTIONS.

IN an ethnological point of view, the generality of the upper and middle classes are of Spanish origin. Few of the upper class have any mixture of dark or even Indian blood; and although they are darker in general than even the ladies of the south of France, yet still most of the upper classes can claim pure European blood. This is not the case, and not cared for, further north; but in Chili it is cared for in alliances.

Although some of the women are very fresh coloured, and have fair skins, the great majority of the higher orders are of that olive complexion which, when joined to pleasing features, has so many admirers. Their hair is generally black, glossy, and very long; but, even in the highest-bred women, certainly coarser than that of Saxon or Gaulish women.

Among the lower classes, and especially among the miners, who all have more or less Indian blood in their veins, the hair is found more straight and thicker in each individual hair.

But Chili is a country where neither great varieties of the human race abound, nor the infinite number of

crosses and mixtures that are seen further to the north. The country where the greatest variety abounds is in Central America, and there the ethnological student might pursue his vocation without going to *at least* two other quarters of the globe.

Some peculiarities of the pure and mixed races, will be met with in a future page; and I can now only mention one instance of a peculiarity that has often attracted the attention of both the learned and unlearned.

A charcoal-burner and his wife were attached to a mine belonging to myself: they were a very good pair, and genuine blacks. There could be no dispute about their colour, shaped legs, or woolly hair. A long time they had served the mine with charcoal, and often had they made vows and petitions for children that had been denied them.

At last, the sable lady gave notice to all around that she would, in a few weeks, introduce into this world a little charcoal-burner. Accordingly, the comères of the neighbourhood met at her house at the appointed time, and behold! the production was not like that of the mountain, the 'ridiculus mus,' but was a snow-white child, *white from the birth*, as I have been told by women who were then employed on our property; so white, that no child had ever been seen so white.

The father was dreadfully puzzled, and swore terribly at his wife. The wife wisely sent for her confessor, and the confessor wisely sent for an English doctor at his own expense. On his arrival, the

medical gentleman, who had been some time before employed by Government on the north coast of Africa, pronounced the production, at once, to be an 'Albino.'

'Dios de mi alma!' exclaimed the father; 'what is that?'—'Only a milk-white child, with red eyes, that can't see in the day,' replied the doctor. And so the boy grew up—an object of interest to the wild neighbourhood, and was appointed to drive a donkey, laden with water or charcoal, three times a-day up a rocky mountain. It was when he was at that work, being then about twelve years of age, that I first saw him: the boy could not see his way in the daytime, and usually held on to the donkey's tail; but at night-time he could see as well as any cat; and when I have had to return very late in a pitch-dark night, I have often been indebted to him for piloting me and my horse over the rough rocks. I once saw that boy walk into a pond in the middle of the day, and another time into a heap of hot ashes, that burnt him severely: he could not see his way. The boy was ugly, very much freckled, and stunted in form and feature.

Very different was a little Albino girl I met in Central America. I saw her sitting at the corner of a lane, with a piece of linen in her hand that she was hemming. I never saw anything more lovely or delicate than that young girl: her hair was of a golden yellow; her skin as fair and as white as can *naturally* be; but the colour of her cheeks was like the faintest

rose-blush. The eye-brows and eye-lashes were also a very light yellow. She was trying to thread a needle, but could not, on account of her imperfect vision. I got off my horse, and asked her to let me help her, for I saw at once she was an Albina. She gave me the needle and thread, and I returned it to her threaded; but, on asking her some trivial question, found she was a perfect idiot. She was crying with vexation, on account of not being able to thread her needle; but when it was done for her, cast her eyes on her work, and seemed intent only upon that. I do not mean to say that this 'Albina' was perfect in outward appearance; but her complexion was more softly coloured than I have ever yet seen a woman in my life. But as we have not yet arrived in Central America, let us keep to Chili.

In the north of Chili, Copiapo, Huasco, and Coquimbo, the inhabitants are mild, kind, generous, and, generally speaking, an honest race of men, high and low; but I am sorry to say that in the south they are quite different. They may be (I mean the lower orders), equally generous as the dwellers in the north; but they have such a total disregard for human life, that I was always obliged to take care of my own life, by going so well armed, although generally alone, that I could depend upon my resources. A few years' wanderings in a wild country *does* give a man confidence in himself.

A stranger may travel through most of the north of Chili unarmed, and, perhaps, the only danger he

might incur would be from a stray highwayman from the south.

I am mentioning these facts solely to show the difference there is between the South and North Chilians as regards morality; and these facts will show that the inhabitants of the north are real good men, and that all the robbers come from the south.

Murders of the most atrocious description are heard of every day in the south of Chili, but scarcely heeded. In the north of Chili, about Coquimbo, it is different. Many of the murders committed in the north of Chili, and upon the high roads, are done by stray robbers from the south. Often and often I have been told the same thing—viz., to beware of the robbers on the highway near the capital.

I never neglected that advice, but always went so well armed, that I doubted very much getting the worst of an attack, and have not found my precautions fail, although *pretty well tried;* but I will give an account of an occurrence that happened on a spot which I passed, scarcely a quarter of an hour from the time I told my men to mount their horses, to commence their journey; adding, at the same time, that the people in the neighbourhood begged me to believe that they were not guilty of *knowing* even such murderers.

Very early, on the third morning after leaving Coquimbo for Santiago, when passing across a small 'quebrada' or gully, well wooded and sheltered, with a small stream of water rippling along its bottom,

we observed a large pool of blood, and, on further search, found two men, evidently sailors, with both their skulls literally smashed in. They had also clearly been rifled of everything, with the exception of enough clothes to enable us to distinguish their profession. My fellow-traveller and myself, leaving our servants and baggage behind, set off fast, at the 'trote y galope' pace, and in an hour found ourselves at the hacienda of a gentleman of large fortune and influence. My travelling companion, who was well known, and had deservedly many friends in most parts of Chili, related the story, and, in a short time, many men on horseback were on the track, scouring the country.

Continuing our journey, we made inquiries at the different places we passed, and the result is worth relating, if only to give an instance of justice pursuing and dealing swiftly with crime:—in this case, however, it was theft avenged; the murders, no doubt, went on to a long running account, sooner or later to be answered for.

An American merchant-ship was lying at anchor in Valparaiso Bay, and two of the crew took it into their heads to *run:* they meant to go over land to Coquimbo, and find a berth on board a coaster, as wages were then fifteen dollars per month—carpenters' wages much higher, and one of the men was the ship's carpenter.

Since the Californian discoveries, wages are said to have become almost fabulous in amount.

There would have been no very great harm in running from a merchantman, especially if badly treated, if they had only taken their own property with them; but this did not suit them, and they chose a day to effect their purpose when the remainder of the crew was ashore. Having rummaged the ship, and appropriated every article easily stowed away—such as money, watches, and any jewellery they could find in the cabin—they went ashore in the dingy. Proceeding to an Italian letter-out of horses, and paying before hand, they hired two horses, as they said, for the purpose of going a few leagues in the country, and returning the next morning.

But fate seemed to pursue them: instead of taking the road, near the sea-shore, to Coquimbo, they took the Santiago one, and arrived in the capital, meaning to go thence by the upper road to Coquimbo. At Santiago, the carpenter, who spoke a little Spanish, managed to sell the two horses, saddles, and bridles; and, with cash added to the previous robberies, this precious pair started, early one morning, for Coquimbo, on foot.

After walking about twenty miles, they were overtaken by two Chilians, also on foot, who seemed to be perfectly aware to what place the others were bound, for they went into a wine-shop close by, together, and the people of the house heard them agree to travel *on* together—adding that the sailors pulled out a good deal of money, and wanted to sell a watch.

On they journeyed in company, day after day. The Chilians had not an opportunity of putting their design in execution, as the party slept every night, until the fatal one, in some cottage. Everywhere we inquired, we heard that the sailors had paid for everything; and at the last place they stopped at, before their final one, the woman of the house said that the two sailors, accompanied by the two Chilians, had arrived at her rancho in the afternoon; that the Chilians had persuaded the sailors to go on, though the latter wished to stay the night. The murderers told them that they knew a very nice resting-place some distance on, with good water, shelter, and no fleas. The last inducement made the sailors, no doubt, consent to go on; and they bought at the house, a kid, some bread, and a large skin of chicha,—when they all marched off, and she never heard any more of them until she learned that the sailors had been cruelly murdered in the night.

It was evident that the sailors had got drunk with the chicha, and that during their deep slumber, the other two had smashed in their skulls with heavy stones, two or three of which were found close by, and stained with blood. The remains of the meal were visible, and the empty wine-skin.

Thus was their robbery not only dreadfully retributed, but they were sent to their account without time for even one moment's repentance, and in a state of intoxication.

Though the murderers escaped, yet it is not un-

likely that they were soon brought to justice for some other atrocity.

About Santiago, and further to the south, the worst assassinations are committed; and in some cases, to avoid the victim being identified, the robbers and murderers will strip the skin off the face of the dead man, after divesting him entirely of all clothes, for fear of their being recognised.

I had a very pretty cottage at a village called Lampa, about twenty-five miles from the capital; and though I only occasionally visited it, I believe many of the British men-of-war's officers remember Lampa and partridge hawking.

A man was found murdered close to my cottage, without a particle of clothes on him, and the skin torn off his face. He was discovered at break of day, but no person could guess who the murdered man could be.

A butcher, living near the spot, was missing, and it began to be suspected that this might be his corpse; but no person, not even his own wife, could positively say that *it was;* and it was only when the man's poor old mother was called to see the body, that she could say, from some particular mark, that the mangled corpse before her was once her living son.

The murderers again, in this instance, who were without doubt highway robbers, as the butcher was known to have a sum of money with him, escaped the pursuit made; and although Don Diego Portalis, who was murdered himself subsequently, did so much to clear the high roads from 'salteadores,' or high-

waymen, yet private assassination often goes unpunished. I will give one proof of it, *out of many.*

There was a man, ranking as a low sort of 'gent,' (not to profane the word 'gentleman,') who was well known to have committed eleven murders before he was sent to another world; and it was not unlikely he had perpetrated others. The tenth known one was so characteristic of his career, and of the small regard some of those assassins entertain for human life, that it is worth while relating the short story.

A superior sort of major-domo was standing one evening at the door of a country house, when this man, with whom he was acquainted, came up to him, and entered into conversation with him; in the course of it, he related the particulars of a murder he had committed a short time previously. The major-domo was shocked, and could not help exclaiming—'How horrid! how could you do such an act to a man who had never offended you?'—'Oh,' said the assassin, 'I will tell you how I did it: I said to him, 'Amigo mio, you have annoyed me;' and with that I took out my cuchillo and passed it into his heart.' Suiting the action to the word, he drove his long knife into the poor major-domo's body. Every one knew he had committed the murder, for the major-domo gave the above evidence before he died; but the man was not arrested. He had friends who concealed him for a short time, and the affair was forgotten. However, his hour had arrived, and the last time, he tempted fate.

There is a very useful body of men belonging to all large towns in Chili, who, like our own police, keep the peace, and patrol night and day. In the day-time, they are on horseback—or, at least, their horses are standing near them, under some shade at the corner of a street; but at night they are generally on foot, and patrol their particular beats, singing out, every now and then, like our old watchmen, the hour and the state of the weather, 'Ave Maria purissima! it is eleven o'clock at night, and very *serene!*' The horse constables are called 'vigilantes,' and the night ones 'serenos,' I suppose from the constant use of the last word in their song—most nights being *serene* in that country.

One of the 'serenos' was going about on his *calling*, (which, by the way, is anything but a useful one, as it only warns thieves to get out of the way, like the cry of our old 'Charleys,') when this murderer, in passing, abused the sereno for singing so badly; picked a quarrel with him, and laid him as low as his previous victims. But, as the body of constables is not to be trifled with, this last time he was soon arrested, tried, and condemned to death, and he expiated his crimes on earth, and towards man, in a very cruel manner.

Not that any other pain but being shot to death was awarded him; but it was performed in such a bungling manner, that he must have suffered dreadfully.

All criminals are put to death by shooting them, but the punishment is very unequal, as, in some

cases, a great criminal goes out of the world very easily, and in others of comparative innocence, such as political offences, the convict may suffer long and protracted tortures: however, this man's sufferings bore a remarkable proportion to his enormities.

A shooting party consists of only four men, who fire at the criminal very close to him, the victim being seated on a 'banqueta,' or small bench; but as the fire-arms are generally wretched 'old flints,' and are continually missing fire, and also as the men seldom know the management of arms, the scene is often distressing. Did they give the poor wretch, as they do in the English or French armies, a volley of twelve or more balls, there would be more certainty, though I remember a man at Gibraltar, I think of the 94th, who was shot to death; and although he behaved at first as coolly as if on parade, yet after the volley, when on the ground, his cries were dreadful, until put a stop to; but in Chili, if one volley does not do, he is put back on the bench, and the scene repeated, until all is over. In this case, the Chilian suffered far worse than any victim of the iron rule of that savage old monster, Doctor Francia, of Paraguay, who, when he ordered a man to be shot, would only allow, from pure economy, one cartridge, the instructions given being to finish the offender with the bayonet.

The day the execution took place, I was passing through the great square at Santiago, and saw some soldiers drawn up on three sides of a moderate-sized

infantry square— the prison forming the fourth. In the centre of the square, thus formed, was standing a jackass, covered all over with coarse black serge, and a few monks were standing near the animal. On inquiring the meaning of this singular scene, I was told that the above mentioned criminal was going to be shot to death, and he was expected to make his appearance immediately; he was to be shot in a street close by, and on the very spot where he had committed his last murder.

I made up my mind to follow the procession, for although I detest witnessing suffering of any kind, even in a wild ferocious beast, I wished to see whether a ruffian like the criminal, who held the lives of others so very cheap, would hold his own in the same estimation, and I cannot say that he did, but quite the contrary. The murderer, who delighted in murder, died a *craven;* but that is no excuse for the bungling of the execution.

As the clock struck twelve, a procession, consisting of friars of two different orders, made its appearance from the prison door; after the friars came the wretched culprit, followed by the firing party of four soldiers only. He was made to mount the donkey, as a greater mark of infamy (most criminals being conveyed to execution in a covered wagon containing also the firing party and confessors,) the procession then marched on; but I could not help remarking that all the priests held large umbrellas over their heads *to guard them from the sun,* while the criminal had none.

On arriving at the spot where the *last* murder had been committed, the 'banqueta,' or small bench, was placed against a house in the street, much to the horror of its inhabitants. The murderer was then helped off the donkey, more weak and trembling than I ever remember to have seen a man in his position. He stood before the bench, for a short time, receiving the consolation of the monks, and was then told to sit down, which he could only do with help.

No man can tell how he would feel when about to be executed; but I could not help being ashamed, as a fellow-creature, at his cowardice—reflecting, at the same time, that he had held his own fellow-creatures' lives as not worth thinking of.

The party then drew up within three yards of him, and fired their volley: he was rather badly hit, and knocked off the banqueta, evidently not even mortally wounded, for he spoke clearly, and prayed to be forgiven. He was placed on the bench again; and again the monks put the crucifix to his lips, and retired. At the second volley, only one of the wretched flint carbines went off; then there were hammering of flints and priming; in short, eleven times was the poor wretch fired at, or rather attempted to be fired at, before he was finished, and the scene was sickening in the extreme. I wondered they had not a loaded carbine reserved, to blow his brains out in case the first volley failed.

The mob remarked that he had been fired at eleven

times for eleven murders; but I doubt if one-tenth part of the balls hit a vital part. Shooting a criminal is a very uncertain punishment, as to suffering; and justice would be satisfied just as well with a rope and a few seconds' pain. A soldier no doubt would rather be shot, for a military offence, than hanged like a dog; but, generally speaking, hanging is more merciful.

It would be impossible for any person, who has dwelt any length of time in Chili, to relate within reasonable limits the numerous murders that have occurred, within his own knowledge, and have remained unpunished. The lower class of natives are very like, in one respect, a certain class of the lower Irishmen, who think it a duty to hide and protect the murderer, however atrocious may be the crime that he has committed; but woe betide any foreigner, especially a *Protestant*, who commits even an involuntary homicide! The following anecdote will illustrate what is meant better than any argument. A well-attested fact is worth a hundred arguments.

A North American captain of a merchantman had anchored his vessel in Valparaiso Bay; he went ashore, and was almost immediately taken very ill with a violent fever that flew to the brain. He was frequently bled; at last the delirium left him, and he was considered as having *passed* the crisis of the disease. However, one evening, when no one was with him, the delirium returned; he got out of bed, dressed himself, and, armed with a long bowie knife, rushed out into the street, like a Malay 'running

a-muck.' He attacked every one he met, indiscriminately, killing two persons, and severely wounding a third: he was overpowered; the surgeon bled him again, and he fell into a long slumber, awaking from it a helpless idiot.

As soon as he could be removed, he was conveyed to prison; in a few days, he was tried and condemned to death. The American Consul being absent, the English one did all in his power to get the sentence reversed, and all the English and American merchants used their influence for the same purpose. An appeal was made to the High Court of Santiago. The cause was again tried; plain evidence was given by the surgeon who attended the unfortunate man, as also by several of his friends, that he was *raving mad* both before and after the event, and that at that very moment he was an idiot.

Can it be believed that the evidence was not allowed to be entertained, on the plea, that, not being Roman Catholics, the witnesses were *not to be believed!* and the execution was ordered to be carried into effect! Both the English and North Americans behaved very humanely on the occasion, keeping up fast horses on the road to carry a reprieve, and also soliciting both humanity and justice; but it was of no avail.

The poor man was taken down to the end of the pier at Valparaiso, *not at all aware for what purpose.* I did not witness the execution; but a friend, who did, told me that nothing could be more shocking

than to see the poor helpless idiot taken along the pier sucking an orange, and, with insane laughter, pointing to the feathers in the soldiers' caps. They placed him on the banqueta, and although the whole population could judge of his state of mind, yet—*they shot him!*

The poor man might possibly eventually have recovered, but they gave him no chance, and shot him down like a mad dog.

For my own part, I shall always speak well of the kindness I have experienced from Chilians in every situation in which I have been placed, but certainly the lower orders of the south are not to be compared to those of the north, as far as regards order, regularity, and morality; but with respect to the higher orders, they are nearly the same all over Chili.

In the next short chapter, I shall give a few remarks on the clergy of Chili.

CHAPTER X.

THE CLERGY OF CHILI—THEIR 'NIECES'—THEIR INTOLERANCE—INDIAN SUPERSTITION.

THE clergy, both lay and regular, form an important and weighty portion of the Chilian nation, and would do so even by their numbers, apart from other considerations; but they have great power, not only in the national assembly, but by the influence they possess and certainly exercise over the minds of the whole people, saving and excepting those who have returned home *enlightened by a French education.*

There are several different orders of monks and nuns, residing in their several convents and monasteries; convents (contrary to our received ideas on the subject) being for men, and the monasteries for women.

With respect to the latter, (for women,) I have never heard any scandal or reproach; the nuns may waste their time in idleness, and pass the life the Almighty has given them, without performing a single duty to their fellow creatures—and, in fact, be as useless as if they had never been born—but I have never heard a whisper against their moral conduct, beyond a few jokes respecting the nuns and their

confessors; but from everything I have seen and heard, the same thing cannot be said in favour of the fat lazy friars.

These numerous communities are fed, clothed, and housed, without contributing, in any way, one single iota to the welfare of the nation; the only visible work they perform, if work it can be called, is forming, now and then, a part of a procession. Springing, as well as the lay clergy, from the lowest orders, they are extremely ignorant; although not quite as bad as the clergy in Central America.

As for the 'curas' of parishes, though they are doomed as well as the monks to celibacy, yet I do not know how it is, but one always meets in their houses a nice looking young woman, about the best in the village, always introduced as '*my niece*,' and often two or three little children running, quite at home, about the house, who, in conversation, are casually mentioned, as 'relations, come to visit my niece.' At two or three curas' houses, where I called several times in each year, somehow or other, I always found the same 'nieces,' and also the same children 'on a visit to the niece.'

I must, however, avow, that I have been treated often very kindly by a few of the clergy whom I was acquainted with, and sometimes, in travelling, dined with them; one of them several times remarked to me, when parting, after wishing me every success on earth, 'What a pity it is that you must inevitably be damned.'

When the French woman of the world, during the reign of Louis Quatorze, found that she had had enough of that world, or rather the world of her, she usually turned 'devote,' and consoled herself by the severity with which she condemned the irregularities of her neighbours: it is very nearly the same with the curas of parishes, for when age weans them from the frivolities of life, they generally become very intolerant.

But the intolerance of the Chilian clergy is not worse than in any other of the Spanish-founded republics: there is a churchyard at Valparaiso where an Englishman can be buried without any molestation; however, at Santiago, it used to be a service of danger to attend a funeral. In no place would the clergy allow the body of a Protestant to be interred in one of their churchyards; but in the intolerance of burial, they are far exceeded by their brethren of Central America.

A few months before I arrived in the latter country, a Protestant Irishman died in Leon, and during the time the corpse was laying in the house of a friend, who related this to me, the people, instigated by the priests, and led on by them, were yelling and hooting, day and night, round the house. It was only with great difficulty the body was buried at midnight, in a waste piece of ground, and the short ceremony was accompanied by curses and showers of stones from the same intolerant party.

I can only say, that when I read Mr. Daniel O'Con-

nell's speech to an ignorant and excitable people, in which he said that he 'pledged his *veracity*,' that in no country of the world was there any intolerance on the part of Roman Catholics towards Protestants, I should have wished him to have witnessed the funeral of his poor countryman.

Another instance I will give, solely with the view of showing that our respectable English and Irish Roman-catholic countrymen cannot, when they make such assertions as they do make, be acquainted with the intolerance of their co-religionists in the (once) Spanish possessions.

In the beautiful cajon of Maypo, which is a natural gulley worn down by the partial melting of the Cordillera snows for thousands of years, with perpendicular 'barancas,' or banks, showing where once the river that rushes down, *had* ran, and how time had gradually lowered its channel, in some places more than one hundred feet below the original bed of the torrent, is one of the three great passes over the Andes. This pass is on the left side of the river, as you go up stream; but on the other side, and not far from the fearful pass, called the 'Paso de las Animas,' resided a pure Indian from some of the rinconas, or corners, of the Andes. He had acquired a sort of reputation for his skill in making lassos, and everything connected with the hides of animals. He lived nearly five miles from any other human being, and the nearest church was in the village before mentioned, two miles on the Santiago side of the hanging

bridge. He frequently went down to the village to attend mass, but was never allowed to enter the church. The reasons given by the cura was, that he had old Indian superstitions, and no doubt had pagan gods of his own; besides, it was said that no person could understand him when he spoke. I have frequently had a long chat with him, and could certainly nearly understand everything he said, although, it must be owned, his language was a rare 'chabacano,' or, as the French say, 'patois.'

This poor man's wife died, and he was desirous that she might be allowed to be buried in the cemetery of the church where he himself had so often been refused admittance. His request was sternly refused, although he pleaded that both his wife and himself were true Christians; and that it was not his fault, if she departed life without the 'consolations of religion,' as they were too far off, and he could not pay the fees.

The poor Indian dug the grave for his wife close to his own hut, in this really desolate spot. He had one child, a daughter; they were all very miserably poor, but there was a trait in their wild ideas of religion very touching. The family met as usual for their meals, composed ordinarily of the same mess as the vultures feed on, but the meal was divided, as before his wife's death, into three portions, and one portion was deposited on his wife's grave. The foxes, no doubt, devoured the offering; but the creed of the Indian was, that the spirits of the departed require nourishment

for a whole year, unless the bodies are buried in a churchyard.

Six weeks after his wife's death, the daughter also died, and *this* time the Indian pleaded that his daughter had been born where she died, and baptized in the village church, and she ought to be buried there; but it was of no avail, and he dug his daughter's grave alongside of her mother's. The poor man had now to cook his meal himself, but when it was ready, he never forgot, in his hunger, the claims of the departed, but placed the two portions at the head of each grave. May the kind old man have his reward hereafter!

I often employed him, *after I had found him out;* his lassos were beautifully platted, but, it must be confessed, *not to be depended upon,* as he could never procure fresh bulls' hides, and I, living six hundred miles away, could not procure them for him.

I again repeat, that I trust the above remarks may not be thought unkind by my Roman-catholic countrymen; but I only wish to show that when some of them assert that there is no intolerance in any part of the world, on their part, I wish to prove that they are not acquainted with what is done in some countries. I was dangerously ill myself in Central America, and overheard a consultation respecting the spot I was to be buried in; and I knew that (although I had been only a few days in the country, and could have neither friends nor enemies) I should have been followed to the grave, or rather pit in the black mud

of a creek, by a mob, hooting, yelling, and pelting stones.

I might relate many more instances of this intolerance, which could be attested by many British Consuls; but the less said on the subject the better, and I truly feel glad that this chapter is a very short one.

CHAPTER XI.

SYSTEM OF TAXATION—DISHONEST PRACTICES OF ENGLISH MANUFACTURERS—IMPORT AND EXPORT DUTIES—EFFECT OF THE ALTERATION IN THE NAVIGATION LAWS UPON ENGLISH SHIPPING—ADVICE TO ENGLISHMEN VISITING CHILI.

MUCH has been written and spoken upon the subject of taxation, and the question is often argued, as to whether it falls easiest on the people in general when that taxation is direct or indirect; but every one must confess that a system of securing a revenue that will keep up the expenses of the state, pay the army and navy, and also provide for the interest of the national debt, and all *that* performed quite unfelt by the native poor and middling classes, is surely a wise and patriotic system of taxation.

I am perfectly aware that many persons will say that the Chilians, in taxing both imports and metallic exports, are injuring themselves: but the Chilians can fairly answer, 'We have tried our system, *and it answers;* we pay all our liabilities, and a poor man, or even one well to do in the world, does not contribute one farthing, except so *indirectly* that he does not perceive it.' As for the export duties on metallic ores and metals, the Chilians also say, 'We do not pay—the foreigners pay.' And *so it is;* for the duty on their exports could not influence the market of

the whole world, but would form a large item on the credit side of the national balance-sheet.

Before the time of Don Diego Portalis, the revenues of Chili were disposed of pretty nearly in the same shameful way that those of Spain have been for the last fifteen years and more. Revolution succeeded revolution; one president succeeded another; the whole country was in a state both of excitement and fear. Every new party that arrived at power repudiated the obligations of their predecessors, who had shortly before been either kicked or shot out of office; but after the presidency of the Generals Pinto and Prieto, no peculation in office *could* have taken place.

Before that time, many men, who had for the moment the command of the national revenue, made, like Donna Christina of Spain and her adherents, enormous fortunes from the public purse; but when Portalis came in as minister, all that peculation—which now exists in every other Spanish-originated republic—totally ceased.

To the credit of Chili, it must be said that she never even hinted at the scoundrelly system of '*repudiation*.' She always said, under her difficulties, that she wished to pay, but that she was unable to do so: immediately she *was* able, she *did* so. The proof of the honesty of the Chilian government, as believed by our capitalists, is plainly evinced by the fact, that the foreign loan is quoted on the Stock Exchange at about par.

It is fair to say that the Chilians have redeemed their promise to pay when they could; and very

different they are from the Spanish and United States debtors.

With regard to the latter, a gentleman from New York, in the course of conversation a short time ago, told me that the whole of the Northern States felt humiliated by being classed with their repudiating countrymen; that they felt ashamed when, in society, they heard of families reduced to the last stage of want, by the simple error of having put their faith in Anglo-American honesty. He also said that he was sure the time would soon come when the nation would rise up, and see that their just debts were paid. I should be sorry to record more of the gentleman's honest indignation at the conduct of some of his countrymen, but I am sure that there is a feeling, and a growing feeling, in the United States, that those States who do pay their debts ought not to be confounded with those who laugh at them.

The mode in which the taxation of the country is conducted, so as to enable her to meet all her engagements and liabilities, without the smallest oppression or even pressure on the people, is worthy of a little attention; for in Chili no man is *obliged* to contribute anything to the state, unless he chooses to do so, by buying foreign goods, or keeping a shop, or smoking government tobacco,—which latter luxury is quite supplanted by a better and smuggled article carried over the Andes.

The revenue of Chili is obtained from the following sources—viz., duties on the import of foreign goods; duties on the export of metals and metallic ores; the

'estanco,' or monopoly of the sale of tobacco, and the duty paid by those who take out a licence to keep a shop, or warehouse, for the sale of goods. To the above may be added charges for the storage of goods in bond.

During four years' residence in the country, I never paid one penny in the shape of taxes, although I generally had from twenty to thirty horses for myself and personal servants. The only duty I ever paid was on the export of ore from a mine. It may be said that Custom-house dues fall eventually upon the native consumer, and so, perhaps, they do; but *they are not felt.* Take cotton goods, or linen, as instances: the duty is paid according to the fineness—so many threads in a square inch—the said duty being very low on coarse articles. So the poor man gets his calico, or linen, very cheap; and the superior articles that pay a heavier duty are bought by those who care little whether a dress or a shirt is a few pence cheaper or dearer a yard. But it ought to be known, that, in the cheaper articles, the North Americans have quite driven the English out of the market: there is not a South American guasso who would buy a yard of English calico when he could get North American, called 'crudos,' not being well bleached. They say that good wheaten flour is cheap in their own country, and they do not wish to buy it to make shirts of. I have literally and truly seen English linen and calico that looked beautiful, but rather glazy, put into a tub of water, and, after being dabbled about for a short time, taken out, looking like the bottom of a sieve;

the interstices had been all filled up with flour and starch, which discoloured the water into which it had been dipped.

I have seen the same thing in different parts of America. Once, in Central America, some Indians asked me to send to the coast for some linen, which I did, and paid a good price for it—meaning to make it a present to them ; but, when it arrived, it turned out to be something like that open stuff that ladies embroider upon: it had fallen into a river, and took an hour to be fished out, and that hour was enough to wash the starch out of it.

These articles were all stamped with the names of respectable houses in Lancashire, but no doubt falsely. It is those dishonest practices that have deprived the English of all the 'crudo' cotton market in America, and has aided to supplant the woollen cloth trade in favour of Belgium and Germany. I have seen a piece of English blue cloth, that would, on a small strain, separate in pieces, making a dust—I suppose what is called 'devil's dust.' Now, these things *are dishonest*, and reflect on the English character, which stands so high as regards commercial integrity; and respectable firms ought to prosecute and persecute those who fraudulently assume their stamps. If cotton manufacturers make use of flour for the stuff they sell to make shirts of, *they had better own it*, and put their brand and mark on it; but they should not allow cheats and impostors, not only to assume their marks, but to sell in their own names (the names

of respectable Lancashire firms), shirts and chemises made out of flour stuck on to a sieve back.

But to return to the subject—the import duties, at the Custom-house, produce a large and certain return.

The next item, on the credit side of the national balance-sheet, is the export duty, not only on gold and silver, but on copper, and even crude copper ores. Now, I have often grumbled about paying a good sum on the last account, but, on reflection, considered the government quite right: it was the foreigner that paid it, and the treasury that received it. The said duty upon copper ores is not heavy enough to be onerous on the exporter, but still contributes a very fair proportion to the ways and means of government.

The duty upon gold and silver is mostly evaded by the precious metals being taken on board ship without the cognizance of the custom-house officers; but copper, and copper ores, are always regularly weighed and the export duty exacted, the greatest part being paid by Englishmen.

Another tax paid into the coffers of the state arises from licences granted to merchants, store keepers, and owners of different classes of shops, without which they cannot exercise their calling

This tax has truly and literally the same effect as the excise in England, but requires no staff or machinery to levy it; a few supervisors being enough for the whole country.

All the wholesale merchants, on a large scale, are

foreigners, and mostly Englishmen; and they pay the highest duty for their licence. Retail dealers pay a smaller one. There was no Englishman a retail dealer in Santiago when I was there, except an English watchmaker and jeweller; but there were many Frenchmen who pursued their vocations, some of them being hair-dressers, pastry-cooks, and of other light trades. But they all pay duty, and, that duty paid, saves all the inquisition of our excise.

Assessed taxes are unknown, and it would seem rather hard to charge horse-duty to a beggar who rides about asking charity, as I have often seen.

Another source of revenue that produces a fair round sum, is the amount paid for the storage of goods under bond. This duty is certainly onerous, because the charge is out of all proportion to the benefit incurred; but again, whether onerous or not, the money is paid by the foreigner,—it goes into the treasury, and swells the revenue of the country.

The above mentioned items, with the addition of harbour dues, are the principal sources of the public revenue. If a minister consults the happiness and comfort of his *own nation*, in distributing the share and burden to be borne by each individual, he cannot follow a wiser principle than is pursued in Chili.

There are few beggars to be seen in the country. The poor man gets his North American piece of 'crudo' calico cheap, and the small duty paid at the Custom-house is the only tax he pays. The occupier of land, or the owner of a small estate, purchases a

rather more expensive article; let it be finer linen for himself, and a good Manchester print for his wife,—the duty paid at the Custom-house is the only tax he contributes in the year towards the expenses of the state.

With the higher orders they buy more expensive articles, and consequently, as duties range *ad valorem*, the persons who purchase those articles pay so much more, in proportion, to the revenue; but no one of the before-mentioned classes need pay one farthing if he do not choose. If they made their own shirts or petticoats, or had them made and manufactured in the country, the richest of them could pass their lives without paying a single tax.

In short, the taxation is not felt; the foreigner pays nearly everything, and the Chilians pay the remainder in proportion to the luxuries they purchase, leaving every man's taxation absolutely to his own choice.

The above remarks may very possibly be contrary to the principles laid down in our new political economy; but there is no Chilian, from Arauco to the desert of Atacama, who would wish to change the mode of raising the revenue, and it must be confessed he would be a great fool if he did. 'England lent us money, and now England is paying the interest of it.' Such is the common belief, and no doubt a true one; for I know men of forty or fifty thousand dollars a year, who seldom wear anything but country-made goods, and who pay no tax from one end of the year to the other.

And now I must take my leave of Chili, and carry the reader, if he is still willing to accompany me, further to the north, meaning to dwell for a short time only in the countries that separate Chili from Central America, for there is much to be said about the latter country, and much to be done in it; but the facility of acting will be discussed near the end of this little work.

In taking leave of Chili, I cannot help repeating an opinion held by all persons who are conversant with the west coast of America, and that opinion is, that the late changes in the Navigation Laws will produce a great injury to our shipping interest in *that* part of the world.

No *uncertain single* freight can compete with *two certain* ones. The Danes, Swedes, Norwegians, Hamburgians, and Dutch; can take a freight of ore from Chili, and are certain of, at least, a cargo of coals home, but the English vessel has, now, no such resource.

I only mention the west coast of America as being the part of the world that I know the best, as regards our shipping interest, and hope that the increased prosperity of British shipping, in the remainder of the world, supposed likely to arise from our changes, will, on the average, compensate for the injury done to this particular branch.

In again saying 'Adios' to Chili, it may seem that I am like the unfortunate individual who—

> "Oft fitted the halter,
> Oft travers'd the cart,
> And often took leave,
> But seem'd loth to depart."

But I must conclude with a few words of advice to travellers in that country, and shall, at the end of the book, give a few more to those who wish to explore Central America.

The climate of Chili agrees remarkably well with the English constitution—but not for too many years together, on account of the air being so very dry, and its being so difficult to produce perspiration. Certainly no person that ever has been in Chili, could have taken more real hard work or severer exercise than I did, both on horseback and on foot; and I never had an hour's illness during the four years I was knocking about the country, except from the effects of accidents, such as kicks from horses and sprains; but there is no country where the traveller gets so cruelly sun-burnt; for, let him on his journey, or even as a sportsman, toil up a steep hill under a burning sun, doing his best, he can rarely even get into a perspiration, which would cool him immediately; and the consequence is, that the sun burning on the skin dried by the drier air, the parts exposed get perfectly parched, and the skin is peeled off the face or hands.

Although I have been greatly exposed in countries where the thermometer shows a much higher degree of heat, yet that heat was not felt half so much as in

Chili, on account of the moister climate assisting the moisture of the skin.

An Englishman living in Chili ought to take a voyage every five or six years, either to Europe or to some other country for change of air, and no doubt it would do him good; for let the voyage be even a short one, and from good air to bad, yet a change is better than the 'statu quo.'

I would advise any Englishman who has to visit Chili, to take a good English saddle with him, made for a horse about fourteen hands high; but although it may prove very useful, now and then, I should strongly recommend him to use it very rarely; and also to take no bit or bridle, which are perfectly useless.

Let him get accustomed to the Chilian saddles and bits, and, in short, to the whole custom of the country, and when he is away from large towns let him do exactly as the country people do. I would also advise him to take a good double-barrelled gun with him, and if he is fond of wandering about the country, also a pair of holster pistols—a pair of pocket pistols might sometimes be of use. Let him not look for good horses at the hands of any Valparaiso dealer; but let him get some friend on whose judgment he can rely, and who has been accustomed to the interior of the country, to purchase his horses for him;—he will pay half the price, and get really good animals, instead of rips. This plan is much better than hiring horses for a journey, for the horses, if properly pur-

chased, will fetch back their money. I could always have sold any one of my own horses for about double the price he cost me. I am alluding *only to roadsters,* and mine had a character.

Another piece of advice: Let the traveller go well armed, but with no ostentation. I was going home very late on horseback one night, with a friend, in a wild district; and he laughed at me for always going out well armed; he sorely lamented, half an hour afterwards, not having taken the same precautions.

There are also some things for the traveller to beware of, and one of those is either touching, sleeping under, or even going very near to a tree called the 'litre.'

There are many persons who are not in the least affected by the litre, but upon most men the effect is very painful; the head and other parts swell; the eyes get bunged up; the itching all over the body is intolerable, and the disease lasts for five or six days.

I have myself suffered three times from this tree; once when pursuing a horse to lasso him, I brushed right through a large clump of litres; a second time when I took my noon-day meal, during a journey, under one of these trees, and in company with a gentleman who was not affected by the tree at any time; and the last time I caught this painful infection was from leaning, for the space of about half an hour, against a post, made, as I was informed *too late,* out of fresh litre wood.

As this wood is much prized for burning in

furnaces, the wood-cutters search for it, but they suffer much before inured to the poison. Some men can *never* get over it, and others, from the very first, cut the wood with impunity; at all events, let the traveller give the tree a wide berth.

Lastly, and to conclude, let the traveller be well aware that a judicious choice of a servant or servants to accompany him, is not an easy matter for a stranger, and that he had better depend upon a respectable acquaintance than judge for himself.

I was very lucky with my servants in Chili, and indeed, in every part of America I visited. I never turned away a servant during six years I was in America, except one, and *he refused to go;* so after he had slept, and half starved, on the outside of the door for a week, I was quite beaten, and set him once more in his old position of 'Major Omnibus.' I found his son, whom I had retained in my service, had divided his rations with him.

Both father and son were well known to many British officers of the Royal Navy, and I am sure they can testify how ready they were to promote any of the officers' enjoyments on a cruise on shore, in the shape of a long gallop into the country,* with hawking parties, and above all, at great fatigue to themselves, always giving the officers fresh horses, and riding the tired ones themselves.

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* What the author means by a 'long gallop,' is about a hundred or two hundred miles, with extras.

Poor fellows! they were much attached to me, and also to many of the English officers; but I received a letter shortly after I had arrived at my first landing-place, to say that they had both died within a fortnight after my departure.

When the son first came to me, he was so young and small that he was obliged to be lifted on horseback, but he was a capital weight to ride ahead of the troop, and lead the Madrina mare.

He had been bred up in the vast pampas beyond Mendosa, and was quite a young savage when I first got him. His father asked me to take him on to my establishment, and he sent over the Andes for him. He could not go himself, for he said he had a quarrel with the authorities there; which quarrel, I believe, was something in the horse-stealing line. He said it was a *pure* matter of exchange—his own horse was tired, so he took a fresh one, and left his own in its place. Asking him which was the best horse, his only answer was, 'Why, patron, a fresh horse *must* be better than a tired one.'

CHAPTER XII.

REPUBLIC OF PERU.

CASTLE OF CALLAO—LIMA—FRUITS—NATIONAL DEBTS—CHILIAN TREACHERY—SLAVERY AND REPUBLICANISM—BULL-FIGHT—SANTA CRUZ—CHARACTER OF THE PERUVIANS.

FOR some persons, and I confess I am one of them, there is no rational, quiet enjoyment, greater than that derived from running along a magnificent coast, in a well-found, comfortable yacht in a fine climate.

A smooth sea, a fair wind, an awning spread over the quarter deck, keeping off the rays of the sun, but not checking the cooling breeze; decks as clean as holy-stone and water can make them; a pleasant book, sketching portfolio, and, for those who like it, a fragrant cigar, may complete the picture of the said quiet enjoyment.

Should any of my readers have ever run down from Gibraltar to Cape de Gata, with a westerly wind and smooth sea, he can form some idea of the run down of a part of the western coast of America. In both, the view is bounded on the land side by high snowy mountains; but, although the "Sierra Nevada" in Spain cannot be compared for one instant with the towering Andes, yet the coast itself of Spain is far more interesting than that of America, on account of the numerous small ports, and the quantity of pictu-

resque latine sails dotting the sea in every direction near the shore.

The west coast of America has few ports, and those few are far apart; it is seldom houses, or even huts, are seen, and a fishing village is unknown, as there is nobody to buy the fish when caught. Even a sail is rarely seen, as all the vessels going to the southward stand well out to the westward. During almost the whole year, except the few days when a northerly wind blows, the breeze is from the south, the sea pretty smooth; and running past the Andes, the successive views of the stupendous Cordillera are magnificent: the rising of the sun over those immense mountains in the morning, illuminating the crests with gold, silver, and roseate hues, is very fine; and the tints thrown by the setting sun upon the mountain tops, for some minutes after he has been lost sight of by those on deck, are curious and very beautiful.

All these pleasures, combined with great comfort, capital living, and pleasant society, make a voyage of this sort the perfection of yacht sailing, with the advantage that there is *an object in view.*

Nobody is fonder of yachting than myself, but to go out and sail about, without any object *but* sailing about, I never could endure, unless it was for the purpose of trimming the vessel, or stretching the rigging, and that *is* an object.

Callao is, as everybody knows, the seaport of Lima, from which city it is distant about six miles; but it is a large town of itself, and has a great many

stores and warehouses kept by foreign merchants. The anchorage is good, and the bay is seldom ruffled by a strong breeze. As an old soldier, I went to see the Castle of Callao, that, under the command of Rodil, stood a siege of two years during the war of the Independence. I had heard so much of the place in Chili, that I was anxious to see what this *Gibraltar* of Peru looked like. I was not allowed inside, and only had an opportunity of walking round part of the outside, being warned off in a very significant way by a sentry.

I can only say, as the result of my observations, that a very small army, well found in siege material, ought to have taken the place in a week, or perhaps two days, instead of two years; but if it had been properly shelled, I doubt its holding out for twenty-four hours. Such was my opinion of a fortress that had so great a Peruvian renown.

Rodil, however, deserved great credit for the obstinacy of his defence, for not only was the blockade kept up so strictly as to reduce the garrison to great extremities, but treason and insubordination were of constant occurrence inside the fortress, and it was solely by his nerve and severity, shown by many bloody examples, that he retained his power. An Anglo-Chilian, who had served some time in the Peruvian army, gave me a curious account of some of the conspiracies, one of which I will relate.

General Rodil had a suspicion, amounting to certainty, that one of his aides-de-camp was conspiring against him. He called him into his study, and,

after sealing a letter he had just written, told the aid-de-camp to carry it to the captain commanding the main-guard. The officer bowed, and withdrew; but he thought there was something odd in the general's manner, which, together, perhaps, with the state of his conscience, made him very uneasy; but he had no time to lose: he had to decide upon his line of proceeding very promptly; so, meeting a brother aid-de-camp, he said to him, 'The General orders you to take this letter to the captain of the main guard.' He himself ran to his quarters, took what valuables he could put into his pocket, and hurried away to that part of the ramparts which was the lowest. He had hardly arrived there, when he heard a volley of musketry, which he felt had been intended for himself; so, dropping down into the ditch, he got safe away into the enemy's camp, although fired at by two sentries. As the captain of the guard afterwards said, the letter given to him by an aid-de-camp contained only these words: '*Shoot the bearer of this note immediately*' ('*de repente*'); which order he was obliged to obey on the spot, and it was only found out an hour afterwards that the wrong man had suffered!

The town of Callao is not built exactly upon the same spot that it was previous to its total destruction by the great earthquake of 1746; but rather further away from the water's edge, I conclude to be more out of the way of such tremendous waves as destroyed the little of the old town that the earthquake itself had spared.

There was an old man living in Callao when I was there, whose father was one of the few that had escaped being drowned, or dashed to pieces, by the enormous rollers that swept over the ruins of the town; the said rollers in receding carrying everything back to sea, leaving the harbour dry for a long distance out.

Callao was the first place on the coast where I saw persons suffering under tertian ague, and I was much struck with the singular regularity of its attacks. However, I had plenty of opportunities of making observations on my own self in a very few months.

As mentioned before, Callao is about six miles from Lima, with a gentle incline the whole way downwards towards the coast, but not more inclination than a railway engine with a train could easily run up; and no doubt, from the quantity of public carriages running at present on the high road, a railway would pay very well.

For the last two miles near Lima the road is very agreeable, on account of the beautiful gardens on each side of it. So much has been said and written upon Lima, its ancient glories, and its present enjoyments, that little more need be mentioned about the city or the country, unless it be a few remarks upon any peculiarities that distinguish Peru from adjacent countries, and have not been recorded by other travellers.

A Frenchman told me, one day, that the state of

civilization of any nation might be judged of by one infallible test; which test was, the state of the national cookery. He pointed with an honest pride to Paris, as the capital of the world. 'I do not so much insist upon the *Café de Paris, Véfours,* or the *Trois Frères,*' he said, 'as an example, for you can have as good, and, in one or two respects, a better dinner, at the Clarendon, the London Tavern, and a few other places; but, for a moderate price, you *cannot* get a good dinner in London, and yet, in Paris, for the same money, you are *sure* to get a good one. Therefore,' the good-natured Frenchman went on, 'however mortifying it may be to your national pride, I am obliged to class Paris as the head and centre of civilization.'

If my friend's theory be correct, Peru is as decidedly in advance of the Chilians, or any other nation on the west coast of America, as France is of England.

One article used in cooking, in Chili, is at first repugnant to the taste of an Englishman, and it takes a long time before he can get rid of the dislike—that article is clarified beef-fat, which is used instead of lard or butter. It is seldom well clarified, and gives a coarse greasy taste to almost every dish in which it is used.

In Peru, on the contrary, the finest hog's-lard is used; and besides that, the Peruvian, in comparison with the Chilian, is really a good cook.

The meat in Peru is not as good as in Chili; the

poultry is better; the fish is better, or at least tastes so, from being better cooked. The vegetables in general are not so good as in Chili; and the fruits, with the exception of melons, oranges, grapes, figs, &c., are quite different from the Chilian fruit.

Here the chirimoya, called the queen of fruits, gains the highest perfection; eaten with a spoon, the inside tastes like a most aromatic custard. The granadilla, which resembles an egg filled with the insides of gooseberries, and also eaten with a spoon, is a very grateful fruit. The pine-apple is not so good as further north, in Guayaquil, but almost every tropical fruit is found in perfection; and it is curious to reflect, that all these are found in a country where *it has never rained* within the memory of man, there being a tradition that the last heavy shower of rain fell just before the tremendous earthquake of 1746.

But Peru does not want rain. The skill of the Indians has intersected the whole cultivated country with small canals, or 'acequias,' which bring the waters that flow from the Andes into the fields, where they are subdivided into myriads of little irrigating channels. Besides these waters, which are portioned off to the fields with such care, the heaviest dews that are known to fall in the world keep the country in a highly productive state of moisture. I have often gone out early into the streets of Lima, and found them quite muddy, as if a steady rain had fallen during a great part of the night; and there are no

ordures thrown into the streets, as in Lisbon, where, after dark, they soon get impassable.

My friends and I took up our quarters at a delightful hôtel; the table-d'hôte, presided over by the master and mistress, was first-rate; and every luxury, combined with very great cleanliness, was visible in each department.

We only strolled through the town the first day, and found a universal stagnation of business, except in one trade, and that was in gold and silver embroidery, which was carried on, under the piazzas of the great square, with much activity.

Lima was then occupied by Chilian troops, and the officers gave some employ to the embroiderers; but the reason of the said occupation was curious enough, and shows that neither nations nor individuals always do to others as they would be done by.

Chili owed a large debt to England: at that time paid neither capital nor interest, and yet was much enraged when any doubt of her honesty was hinted at.

Peru owed likewise a large debt to England, and like Chili, she paid neither capital nor interest; but when she was called dishonest and faithless, did not seem even to feel the indignity, but resigned herself quietly, saying, 'It may be all very true that I *am* very bad, but what is the use of telling me so?'

But in an evil hour, Peru had incurred a debt to Chili, or rather a bill was sent to Peru for payment of the costs of an expedition sent many years before to help Peru, during the war of the Independence.

Chili then acted the part of the bad servant in the parable: although forbearance had been showed her by England, she took her fellow-servant by the throat, and said, 'Pay me all that thou owest to me.' Accordingly, Chili equipped a fleet,—put a mutinous army on board, that had just murdered poor Don Diego Portalis, the prime minister,—invaded Peru, —committed horrible excesses,—and were only prevented from murdering Santa Cruz by a detachment of British marines. The Chilians then not only exacted every farthing of a trumped-up old debt, but made Peru pay for every expense that they had incurred by making use of a mutinous army; and all this at the very time that Chili was making a great outcry at a rumour that England would enforce her debt.

If England would at the present moment insist upon her debts being paid, an arrangement would be made almost immediately by every indebted nation —and by none more quickly than the contemptible repudiating States of North America. A Spaniard said to me the other day, '*Our* government is so bad that we *cannot pay*, although I am certain that almost every Spaniard wishes to fulfil his obligations; but look at those vile 'Picaros' in the repudiating States of America. They have the *means* of paying, and the abandoned wretches prefer stealing the money they have borrowed to doing their duty as honest men. What makes it worse is,' continued the Spaniard, 'that their actual prosperity is solely owing

to the money that enabled them to make their canals and railways; that money being stolen from many orphans and widows, who trusted their sole subsistence into the hands of those scoundrels, who are now fattening on their starvation and misery.'*

Before the invasion took place, and the bay of Callao was occupied by a pretty strong Chilian squadron, Santa Cruz had sent the few small vessels belonging to the Peruvian navy away to other parts, retaining only one fine schooner and a few gun-boats. The Chilians wished to get possession of the schooner, but the manner in which they succeeded in attaining their object was so disgraceful, and at the same time so characteristic of the treacherous mode of proceeding in the New Republics, that it is worth while to relate it.

As before said, this Peruvian man-of-war was lying in the Bay of Callao. A Chilian man-of-war brig, with a very large complement of men, but the greater part *kept below*, was sent to Callao, bearing a flag of truce, and carrying dispatches. The Chilian came to an anchor near the Peruvian, and after the dispatches had been delivered, the Chilian captain went on board the Peruvian vessel, to pay his com-

* I have only mentioned the opinion of a foreigner respecting the enormous sums owing to Englishmen and English women, who have been reduced to beggary and starvation by the men who lately, at a great meeting in one of the Southern States, declared that they would not pay, for fear it should go into Queen Victoria's pocket.

pliments, and to invite her captain to dinner. After dinner, they went on shore, and visited several houses of entertainment. At last, when rather late at night, the Chilian captain proposed a game of billiards. Several games were played, when the Chilian captain made some excuse, that he wanted to go out for a short time, and he asked another person in the room to play for him until he returned.

He then ran down to the shore, where his boat was waiting for him to go on board his ship, slipped his cable, and laid his brig alongside of the Peruvian vessel; the crew boarded her, and took the unsuspecting Peruvians prisoners without the slightest struggle. This Judas-like captain got the schooner under weigh, and saved the anchor and chain he had slipped, before the Peruvian captain had finished his billiards. When the last got down to his own boat he could see, by the clear moonlight, his vessel, escorted by the Chilian, standing out to sea.

I do not remember having ever heard, or even read, of such a piece of rascality, and yet I have heard the story told by an actor in the disgraceful affair, as if it had been the most successful and praiseworthy 'ruse de guerre' ever perpetrated. I could not help telling him, that I was very glad it was not an Englishman that played the part of traitor in his drama. But it must be confessed, that if success makes 'treason no treason,' and treachery allied to oppression only skilful diplomacy, the Chilians were skilful diplomatists and politicians,—

for they actually got everything they could possibly have wished for.

They paid themselves their original debt; swelled out to a monstrous amount by all sorts of accumulation of interest; they employed a mutinous army and paid it out of Peruvian forced contributions; they created a navy, paid also by Peru; and, above all, they succeeded in their principal object, which was ruining Callao and throwing her growing prosperity back to Valparaiso.

Had an English squadron behaved to Chili with one quarter of the violence that Chili used towards Peru, what cries of indignation, and what dreadful appeals to the sympathies of all nations, would have been heard over the world! But republics in general think that they have a right to perform, with the greatest coolness, oppressive acts that other governments would never dream of; and we have had plenty of examples of their free action lately from the St. Lawrence down to Cape Horn, in America; certainly, our French republican friends have not shown themselves over punctilious in their last attack upon Rome.

No monarchy would have dared to commit such an outrage.

On the second morning, at breakfast, I opened a Lima Gazette, and could not help, then, being aware that I was in a land of slavery and republicanism. There were advertisements from the police offices, saying, that such or such a slave had been found in the

streets after the allowed hour, and without a pass, requesting the citizen owner to identify him and release him. Other advertisements gave notice that a slave had run away, giving a description and requesting that he or she might be detained wherever met with. Other advertisements again gave notice that an excellent slave cook was *to be let;* or a washerwoman was to be had by the day; the money gained always going to the owner of the slave.

I could not help feeling thankful (although personally a great sufferer by *our* emancipation) that the blot of being absolute proprietors of human flesh and blood had been erased from our national escutcheon.

Yet the slaves in Peru, and especially those in towns, and all household slaves, are treated with great kindness, and even with a familiarity we should not dream of using towards our servants in England. The work they have to perform in towns is very light, and they seem to have plenty of time to enjoy themselves. Up the country, on the sugar estates, however, the work is really hard and severe, and the slaves are obliged to be kept to their work with a tight hand and a cutting whip. They are like the unfortunate slaves of Brazils and Cuba. They are supposed, by a certain class of philanthropists in England, who have succeeded in ruining entirely all our West India colonies, to afford a finer flavoured slave sugar, than what could be produced by the free (?) labour imposed upon our English planters.

I subsequently made a long voyage with a Peruvian

gentleman who had a large sugar estate about fifty miles from Lima, that estate having the reputation of being in first-rate order. He told me that although he never allowed a slave to be flogged, without his own order, when he was on the estate, or by order of his substitute when he was not,—still he had to punish slaves for gross crimes and faults that could not be overlooked, almost every day. He told me that without the whip hanging 'in terrorem' over their heads, a day's work could never be extracted from them.

For those who are, or profess to be so glad at the extinction of slavery in our English colonies, there is only one answer. The extinction of slavery might have been made more gradual, as was originally agreed upon by all parties; but *faith* was broken.

A solemn agreement was made that foreign slave-grown sugar should not enter into competition with the free-labour sugar forced on the English planters. Public faith was again broken in the most barefaced way.

I was rather amused at the observation a well-known American gentleman made very lately to me, at a dinner-party. He said, 'We do not and cannot believe, in America, that your government wishes to put down the slave-trade or slavery. *How can we believe it*, when we know that it is in the power of England to put it down, by just resolving in parliament, that no slave-grown sugar should be received into England or any of her colonies? A simple reso-

lution passed to that effect, would knock slavery up, or at least the slave-trade, in a few months. Yet you encourage slave-produce as much as you can,—and spend four millions of dollars every year on the coast of Africa, in pretending that slavery is abominable.'

There was evidently no reasonable answer to the above remark.

One advertisement in the above-mentioned gazette, also gave notice that there would be a grand bull-fight in the great bull-circus, that same afternoon; but I should not think of describing anything in such a well-known and tracked trail, if there were not something novel to relate: so after dinner we wended our way to the Bull-ring (anglice), which is a little way out of the city, on the other side of the bridge, where the fashionables of Lima take their evening lounge.

Having seen many first-rate bull-fights in Spain and in other countries, I wished to see the different modes of proceeding. We had secured a good box just opposite the gate from which the bulls issued into the ring.

There was accommodation for all ranks; high and low, rich and poor; and every place seemed to be occupied before the sports, or rather the butcheries began.

There were a great many ladies present, but none acknowledged themselves as such by wearing Parisian costumes. Some dressed in the very close fitting *saya* and mantilla, with only one eye visible, (though

the one eye often did as much execution as any two); but the greatest number were dressed in a wider flounced gown, but still wearing the mantilla. Our box was visited during the performance by many ladies, and it was as impossible to say to what rank of society they belonged, as to know at first whether they were pretty or not.

The age could only be guessed at by the hands, but the *one* brilliant eye was a puzzler.

The area of a Peruvian arena is not level and clear like a Spanish one. In the centre are five strong posts that form a sort of cross, the intervals being filled up with strong palisades, just wide enough apart to allow a man on foot between them, but not to admit a bull.

Now to the bull-fight.

On the trumpets being sounded, the bull-fighters, both on horseback and on foot, came into the circus in procession, and having saluted the governor, marched round the arena. They were not dressed in the beautiful 'majo' costume of Andalusia, but more like the old Spanish costumes, with sorts of 'Henri Quatre' hats and feathers. However, there was one of the horsemen who attracted the attention of every-one; he was a very small dwarf, with only an apology for a pair of diminutive legs. What use he could be of in the fight we could not conjecture. But when the procession stopped, one of the men on foot handed him off from the tallest horse in the caval-cade, and put him down into a hole in the ground

that had escaped our notice. The said hole was just wide enough to receive him, but rather deep, with a little perpendicular ladder on one side of the interior. There the dwarf was deposited with an immense plumage of red and yellow feathers in his hat,—his head just peering above ground.

The whole party then dispersed, and got ready for the rush of the first bull, the banderillos, or fighters on foot, remaining safe in the central barricade. The bulls were no more to be compared with the wild bulls of the Sierras in Spain, that are brought down to Spanish bull-fights, than a French caniche is to an English bull-dog. Yet still they were dangerous, and, having been teazed in their dens, were savage.

The trumpets again sounded; a large pair of folding doors were thrown open, and out rushed a red bull. He was not tormented, but killed almost immediately. The picador, armed with a short spear, (unlike the Spanish one, that has little more than a sharp nail at the point, that cannot penetrate more than two inches), stuck close to the flanks of the bull, and thrust his spear clean through the body of the animal, just behind the shoulders. The lance must have penetrated the heart, for the animal dropped down dead.

The next bull was not destined to be killed, but only to be teased by the men on foot: there was scarcely any danger with this beast, as the men could always retire to the central fortification; but part of

this drama was the most ludicrous thing I ever saw. The bull found himself, after being irritated, just close to the dwarf's head, adorned with his fine plumage: his astonishment was very curious: he snorted, bellowed, pawed up the ground, and at last made a furious dash at the party-coloured head; but when he charged, the head had vanished: up it came again, to the surprise of the bull; another more desperate charge followed, but again down went the dwarf, amidst the roars of laughter from all parts of the circus. Several times the bull returned to the charge, but, as the dwarf dropped down to the bottom of his hole every time, the perplexity of the bull was perfectly ludicrous. The same thing also occurred during more sanguinary periods of the subsequent bull-fights. This bull was then driven out.

Next appeared a negro, bearing a spear, enormous in length and thickness, with a sling at about one-third of the way from the butt. A large, square log of wood was placed on the ground, about twenty yards from the door, whence the bulls rushed out, and directly opposite our box.

The negro placed the butt of the spear on the ground, in front of the log, keeping it fast by kneeling with one knee on it, but directing the point of the spear by placing the sling round his shoulders. He held the point of the spear in a line with the door, and his object was to meet the first rush of the bull in the middle of the forehead, so as to make the bull's own impetus force the spear into the brain.

This was a feat for which this negro was famous; however, this time he failed. The trumpets sounded; the doors flew open; the bull rushed out: he made a desperate dash at the negro, but the spear missed, and the negro was taken out of the circus perfectly stunned and senseless—the bull having been drawn off by the men on foot.

This bull being destined to be killed, was dispatched by a *matador* in very fair style, but not in the chivalric way that the old Spanish '*Platero*' would have performed it.

The last fight—man versus bull—was the most perfect exhibition of coolness and skill, against brute courage, that I ever saw.

A savage black bull was let out, and he galloped round the circus, making several charges at the dwarf; but at last he found himself confronted by a huge muscular negro, who had only a small red cloak on his left arm, and a knife about a foot long in the right hand.

Now began this really extraordinary fight. The black bull rushed at the black man, who stepped on one side, let the bull pass under his left arm adorned with the red cloak, and drove his knife into the animal's neck, as he passed. Round turned the bull to rush again, but he was received in the same manner with a second severe wound. Charge after charge was made by the bull, and received by the negro in the same cool and skilful manner; the object of the negro being to strike the bull in the

pith of the neck; but that is next to impossible, or if it is done, while the bull is in action, must be done by chance.

Nearly a quarter of an hour did these two black champions fight together, and several times the black man was in great danger, but at last the black bull (not meant as a pun) was fairly *cow'd*, and the negro man became the assailant. He walked very gently up to his head, and drove his knife into the pith of the neck. The animal was dead before he fell on the ground.

Having attended many bull fights in different parts of the world, I should never have thought of relating such old stories, if I had not something fresh to tell, and I have never seen the above account in any work.

On returning home, we found the bridge crowded with ladies and gentlemen, enjoying the cool evening breeze. In no single instance did we see any of the Chilian officers conversing with, or in the society of, any Peruvians of good family. There was one universal feeling of regret for Santa Cruz, and of detestation for their invaders, who not only had destroyed the tranquillity they had long enjoyed, but had ruined their commerce; and worse than all, had put their grasping hands into the Peruvian pockets, a sin seldom forgiven by the most forgiving.

I was told by several gentlemen in Lima, that as they knew I was going to pay a visit to Santa Cruz in his exile, they trusted I would deliver him their profound respects, and tell him that they would have

written, had it not been too dangerous for themselves, and, they were pleased to add, for myself also. However, the day before I left Peru, I dined with the English Consul-General and Chargé d'Affaires, who gave me another letter to Santa Cruz, to add to some left in the brigantine.

Santa Cruz was fond of the English, and when in power showed them much attention. After his narrow escape, he always spoke with gratitude of his being saved from a cruel death by a few English marines. He had taken refuge in a seaport to the south of Peru,—I think Arica,—and was closely followed by a large body of lancers. A detachment of British marines had been landed from a frigate, and just arrived in time to form up 'to receive cavalry,' as these barbarous spearsmen galloped up. Santa Cruz placed himself in the centre of the detachment; the marines retired steadily, and in good order, through the streets to the shore, and brought the President safely off. If the detachment had been two minutes later, poor Santa Cruz would have died a cruel death. He was taken to Guayaquil, about 900 miles to the north of Arica, where he was hospitably received.

Everybody returning from Peru ought to take back with him a 'saya,' and 'mantilla,' for his sister, wife, love, or *one to be*,—and every man must have at least *one* of the above. It makes a very pretty dress for a 'bal costumé,' and has the advantage of making the wearer as perfectly unknown as if she wore a mask.

Let every one, also, who is returning home, and has a kind father, uncle, or warm-hearted god-papa, who may be fond of a delicate 'chasse café' after dinner, take with him two or three 'demi-Juanas' (demi-Johns) of that exquisite liqueur, 'Italia,' from Pisco.

This Italia is perfect; but the real Italia ought not to be confounded with common Pisco, although they both come from the same place; it obtains its name on account of its being made from a very delicate grape imported from Italy, and improved much in its adopted country. Raisins from Pisco are also very delicate, but I do not think, whatever care may be taken with them, that they could stand the passage home. In the Atlantic, few eatables can stand passing the calms, from about three degrees north of the line, to seven or eight north.

I think the above are almost the only presents a person can bring back from Peru, unless he takes gold chains, some of which are exquisitely worked. But if the person who is carrying home a 'chasse café' has room in his vessel for a sack of the coffee that is to be chassé'd, he most certainly ought to take a sack or two of the very small beaned coffee of Yunghai. It is equal to the finest Mocha, which few Englishmen can judge of, because very few have tasted it.

It would not be difficult to relate more about Peru—the animals, the lamas, vicuñas, and guanacos—but the trail is old, stale and beaten, and having no

servants or horses of my own in the country, I could not strike off fresh ground; and yet I am convinced that there is much to be done in Peru, by anybody who would take the trouble that I did, for two years, in Central America, to watch closely the habits of the wild beasts, birds, insects and reptiles, who are nearly masters of that country.

When our party assembled at dinner and we had all given an account of the way in which we had spent the last three weeks; of all our adventures and expeditions, we unanimously resolved to go to sea the next day. Abundance of the delicacies of Peru were ordered to be sent on board, and we took our leave of this harmless, indolent, but I must add, most voluptuous people.

The Peruvians, as a nation, have very nearly the same character that we hear given every day to a good-natured indolent man—'he has no enemy but himself.' The Chilian nation has continually been a thorn, and a sharp, good-sized one, in the ribs of Peru. Chili knows well, that, with a steam communication along the coast, joining the European steam communication by Chagres and Panama, Valparaiso can no longer hold her head up as the first entrepôt on the western coast of America, which she was, and which she will be for some time in relation to the vessels that now have to go round Cape Horn. But when the great canal is cut through Nicaragua, which I trust will shortly be commenced, Valparaiso will fall off to a mere entrepôt for supplying goods

for the nation, and also for a portion of the Pampa Indians, including, besides, Mendoza and a few other large towns.

In general, a Peruvian—provided he can live at his ease, enjoy his gambling, and, when young, his intrigues, for he soon gets what the French call 'blasé, worn out, and caring for little but the excitation of gambling—is perfectly indifferent to any sort of government or to any revolutions, if they only do not touch the pocket.

I could not help feeling a sort of pride, on reflecting that Englishmen would not suffer for a month, such gross tyranny as is imposed on the Peruvians in the shape of republican government.

Lima, Callao, and the adjacent towns, could surely afford ten thousand men who wish for *order* and would say they *will* have it.

Out of those ten thousand, at least one half, or five thousand, could arm themselves with first-rate rifles. And yet the generality of revolutions have been effected by two or three thousand badly-armed men.

Any one may love the beautiful country, and I cannot help wondering why the beautiful Peruvian women do not all despise the men. A great many *do.*

A confederation of the young men of Lima, well armed, might easily put down any revolution; they might choose their own president and laugh at future revolutions; and they could also, then, enjoy their easy dreaming existence in more security.

Physically speaking, the Peruvian is far inferior to the Chilian; he is inferior in bodily strength; inferior in animal pluck, and far inferior in energy,—owing most probably to the enervating influence of the climate.

But our pretty brigantine has just fired a gun; she has the blue Peter at the fore—her main-sail set, looking as flat as a board; her fore-topsail loose, the yard more than half hoisted, just ready to sheet home the sail, and the single cable right '*up and down*'—so 'Adios, beautiful Peru!'

CHAPTER XIII.

CAPE BLANCO—BOLSA-WOOD RAFTS—DOLPHIN FISHING—A SHARK HOOKED—GUAYAQUIL—THE ALLIGATOR—SANTA CRUZ—PORT OF VALPARAISO—AN OLD WRECK—SEA FIGHTS—KILLING A SNAKE—THE PADRE'S STORY.

WE are again, reader, if you have followed my trail so far, running along a magnificent coast, with a smooth sea, a fair and refreshing breeze.

I wish to carry my reader along with me, that we may discuss the last chapter relating to the great cutting through the Continent, and joining, in some degree, the Atlantic to the Pacific.

The coolest and most agreeable place on board a schooner or brigantine, provided that the wind is fair—that some sail protect you from the sun, and that you wish to be by yourself for an hour or two, is out on the bowsprit, and seated on the heel of the jib-boom, inside, as some schooners are fitted, the fore-stay-sail nettings.

Our worthy captain and myself made that spot our head-quarters, to admire how beautifully the vessel's bows divided the water, *without making any noise.* She passed ships that made as much row as a black fish blowing, but this vessel made no perceptible noise in cleaving the water. The beautiful twenty-five ton vessels of the Royal Thames Yacht Club had,

and have, that remarkable qualification of stealing through the water without a ripple being heard; but the rather dishonest system of raking the stern-post in such a manner, that when a foot or two is cut off the false keel, the vessel becomes bigger in tonnage, is rather too bad.

An 'up-and-down' stem, and an 'up-and-down' stern-post, are the safest, the fastest, and the best; and first-rate merchant builders have found that out. Again I must beg pardon for such a digression; but when I get upon yacht-building, and sailing the craft after built, I scarcely know where to stop. Many officers in the army may now remember the pleasant cruises and shooting parties, on board my pretty cutter, on the coasts of Spain and Africa.

But, 'revenons à nos moutons.'

Cape Blanco was on our starboard bow, about two or three miles off. I was sitting on the heel of the jib-boom, with a very good telescope on one side, and a sketch-book on the other—I had been making coloured views of the coast for *making the land.*

The fresh breeze was as fair as it could blow, and was sending us along at the rate of more than ten knots an hour, with almost a smooth sea.

The log had just been hove.

Our worthy captain came out to me on the bow-sprit. 'Well, here we go, sir, ten and a half—*linka-tum poop*—with the wind right aft, just giving a small stretch on our topsail-sheets.' 'Ah!' he continued, 'I see what you have been looking at through your glass;

but I calculate that you won't make out that strange piece of canvas in a considerable space of time.'

'Well,' I said, 'I have seen square-rigs, fore-and-afters, feluccas, lateeners, luggers, and lots of other craft in many parts of the world, but I never saw such a sail or hull as that.'

'Why, that,' the captain replied, 'is nothing more than a raft of Bolsa-wood, out of the Guayaquil river. When I came down this coast at first, I was as much puzzled as you are now.'

'But,' I exclaimed, 'look at the sail; it is full of holes and rents, and yet seems to stand like a board!'

'Ay!' the skipper replied, 'it is a merciful blessing she can't keep all the wind to herself; but it is impossible to see sails set flatter than those rags. See! she has just caught the stiff breeze off Cape Blanco, and has hauled close to the wind; she is bound to Payta, or some other small port close by.'

'But what a curious hull,' I said, 'for the sea washes clean over it.'

'Ay!' went on the captain, 'I have certainly seen nicer-looking craft turned out of Baltimore; but that hull that you are looking at is nothing more than a raft—and *that's a fact!* It is made of Bolsa-wood, and I make my razor-strops of the same stuff. Steward! go and fetch up one of my wooden razor-strops.'

Up came the steward, with the wooden razor-strop; it looked like the pith of some shrub, but the wood grows rather large. 'Now,' continued my friend, 'the people lash these logs together lengthways,

leaving the centre one the longest, as a stem, and others shorter on each side, for the bows of their vessel. They then cross and recross the wood, until the middle is high enough above water to keep their provisions dry and their water fresh; but the steersman aft is literally up to his knees in water. They stick a pole in the centre, as a mast to hoist that sail upon; and a few planks are thrust straight down, to serve as a keel to make the craft hold her wind; and as, whenever they have to go to the south of Guayaquil, the wind is almost always contrary, they have to work, tack and tack, to windward.

'After their return to Guayaquil, they unlash their rafts, and leave the wood on the shore to dry, as it is so porous that in a few weeks it absorbs so much water as to lose much of its buoyancy. I saw once one of these rafts close to a whale-boat under sail on a wind; and although the boat went faster through the water, it made much more lee-way than the raft did.

'But now we are round Cape Blanco,' continued the captain, 'and the wind has served me the same dirty trick it has often done just here, before—carried me nicely round the point, and then cut off, as if it was *above* being seen in the bay. Look at the stiff breeze curling the water up three hundred yards astern, while we are going barely a knot; but, one comfort, we are in a prime place for fishing, so we can have some sport, and give the people a fresh mess. Are you fond of chowder?'

'What is that in English?' I replied.

'Oh, only a tip-top soup made of dolphins' heads. I say, men, knock off work, and turn all hands to fish. Steward, bring up my grains, fishing-tackle, and a good piece of pork rind.'

Now, being a very fair fisherman myself, both in fresh and salt water, I soon made a good imitation of a flying fish out of the rind; and throwing it over the stern, scarcely twenty fathoms of my line was run out, when I had fast hold of a large dolphin, —and we could guess at his size pretty well by the rapidity with which he carried out the line,—for we had scarcely time to bend on another long line to the end in-board of the one running out.

I brought him up at last by a turn round a belaying-pin, and hauled him along-side; but he made three or four desperate runs, and was at last brought close under the counter of the vessel, when the captain, standing on the bulwarks, drove his grains clean into the fish, and he was hauled on deck.

Three or four more were caught from the stern, and the men on the jib and flying-jib boom ends also had success; but in every case, after the fish had been hooked, the captain's *grains* were called into requisition, and I never saw him miss his aim at a fish.

It is often said that the beauty of the changing colours of a dying dolphin has been much exaggerated; but under favourable circumstances—such as a bright sunshine, the changes are certainly very striking. I always run a sharp-pointed knife into the back of the neck of every fish I take myself,

which puts them out of their pain immediately; but I have often admired the beautiful metallic-lustred hues of the dolphin, and they are certainly most varying. I believe the changing of colour must proceed from the same cause that changes an apple-green whip-snake to a sky-blue one after death, as I have often seen; but a better illustration may be mentioned, in indigo manufacture, when a lump of green-looking mud is changed, by exposure to the air, to a fine rich blue, by the absorption of the oxygen in the atmosphere. I think myself, that the animals who change colour soon after death, or when dying, have the power to resist that absorption during life that they lose when dead or dying.

The first dolphin I hooked that day was the largest one I ever caught in any sea I had ever floated on; the others were all of a fair size. The men dressed their fish, with a few hints from the cook, in every sort of way, not forgetting the soup made from the dolphins' heads.

Now, our cook was a first-rate Jamaica artist, who —as all cooks should do—took an honest pride in his profession, and would sometimes make many experiments on a new dish before he ventured to submit it to his employer's table.

His dolphin-head soup, which he called chowder, was most excellent, and tasted something like turtle soup, made from a fresh-caught turtle. Being made from the head only, the pieces of fish in the soup are not tough and dry like the body. Part of the fish

was fried in slices, like soles, but it was hard and dry. Our cook, who was really an inventive artist, told me that he had tried every way to make dolphin eatable, but the only way that he knew was, pounding them up with potatoes, and baking the mixture.

I once was in a vessel, lying like a log on the Atlantic ocean, in the calms, about four degrees north of the line; and very early in the morning hooked a young shark, scarcely a yard long. Thinking he might be eatable, I had a few slices grilled for breakfast, but the first mouthful was quite enough, and it took a fair quantity of brandy to get rid of the horrible oily, rank taste. However, the sailors were not so particular, for they picked every bone in the fish quite clean.

One digression leads to another; and although I wish to arrive at the last chapter, which will be more interesting to commercial men, and to politicians, as it will relate to the great intended water communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific; yet still, I believe that many of my readers like a tale of natural history, and few persons, I believe, have watched the habits of wild beasts, birds, fishes, and reptiles, more closely than I have done.

I allude now to the remarkable tenacity of life in the shark.

Every person who has been much at sea, knows that the *arming* of a shark-hook, and that of a dolphin, is very different: the former being generally iron chain—the latter, packed with some loose *stuff*. A

dolphin will bite through a strong line if it is not armed, and I have always found that cotton wool is the best to pack round the line from the hook, *served* wide apart with any thread.

I was fishing for dolphin one calm day on the west coast of Africa, and had my two lines over the stern, armed as mentioned.

I had manufactured on board a sort of reel, something like the reel used for heaving the log, with the fishing-line wound round it, but with a small *pall* to chatter when the reel run off.

The bait was trolling astern at about half a mile an hour (barely steerage way), and we were just coming on deck from dinner, when the reel began to move slowly and the pall to make a noise. I was sure it was not a dolphin, though the crew thought otherwise; for a dolphin dashes like a strong trout on his *first run.* But feeling sure it was a shark, playing at the bait, I gave a sharp pull and hooked the monster, as I found out afterwards, exactly in the nose. Now, if he had got the bait and hook in the mouth, he would have snapped it off, arming and all; but the beast was hooked in such a tender part that a child could have led him. We were all very much surprised to see this shark, which was the largest any of the crew had ever seen, hauled alongside so easily by a dolphin-line.

When under the main-chains, and having seen the shark was hooked by the nose, I ran down to my cabin, and brought up a double barrelled smooth

bore, of musket calibre, with a quantity of ball-cartridges I had made for the gun, and a beautiful Purdey double-rifle of the same bore.

Going into the main-chains, a steady sailor took the coiled-up fishing line, with directions, as soon as he saw the fish bolt, to give him all the line he could spare. I got into the main-chains, and as the brig was deeply laden, I could not have been more than a yard from the monster's back; and a real monster he was; I sorely regretted not being able to take his measurement, as he was the largest one I ever saw or heard of. The sailors were clustered on the bulwarks, and on the lower stun-sail boom, alongside, and the shark rushed at them several times.

Now, it is a great mistake in the natural history we read, to believe that a shark turns over on his back to seize his prey; he *does no such thing,* but only turns over on one side; but as he shows part of the white of the belly, many observers think that the animal turns over on his back when he rushes at any prey, but as I have often watched the peculiarities of this creature, I can affirm that it is *not the fact,*—the under jaw being so much lower than the upper one, he just turns up on his side to make use of the awful range of teeth that Providence has supplied him with.

I merely relate this story for those who are fond of tales respecting the animal creation.

I told the man who had charge of the coiled-up line, to pay away directly I fired, and going into the main chains, I fired, nearly at the same moment, both

barrels into the nape of his neck. Away he bolted, plenty of line was given to him, and in a few minutes he was again under the starboard main-chains. The second time, I tried the head; and the head was not more than two yards from me. I pulled both triggers of the gun at the same moment, driving two balls through his skull. This was repeated until I had fired fourteen musket balls into the monster's head and neck; and although the water was tinged with blood, yet there was no perceptible difference in the strength of the shark.

The last shot was an awkward one for me. The fish was so close under the main-chains, that I had to lean over to aim at him; and exactly at the same moment a long swell made the brig roll over, and before I could lay hold of the main rigging, I fired, and was pitched into the sea, exactly in the spot the shark had just bolted from. I went down rather deep into the water, but rose again with my good John Manton (large bore,) and managed to scramble up into the chains again. I certainly did not fancy my bathing companion; however, I was not hurt.

The gun was wet and useless, and the locks of my rifle so wetted after handling it, that all firing was given up; but the shark was again hauled alongside; a rope was then rove through a block on the fore-yard arm, and a noose slipped over the monster's head; but the loop slipped, and made fast close to the huge tail fins. All hands turned to, to hoist him on board, and out he went of the water, tail first; but,

when he was a few feet out of his element, he made such a violent struggle, that notwithstanding the rope was a bran new two-inch one, the shark broke it, and went away with the noose round his tail, a hook with two lines fast to his nose, and fourteen musket balls in his head and neck. It cannot be supposed that the beast recovered, but I should much have liked to have measured him correctly, as he was the largest I ever saw.

All sailors have a hatred of sharks, and I confess to a strong antipathy to them, for personal reasons, which it would take too much space to relate.

After dinner, the captain and I used generally to go out on the heel of the jib-boom, and enjoy our cigar under the lee of the foresail, when running before the wind, and many a wild adventure he related to me of his youth, when on board an American privateer, during the last war. This afternoon, he came out as usual, for it was a dead calm, and the men had left off fishing, and some were curing fish.

'Now,' said he, 'how long is it since you tasted oysters?' 'Four years,' was the reply. 'Then,' he went on, 'I propose that we sup to-night on oysters and stout.' 'Very well,' I replied; 'but where are they to be had?' 'Take your spy-glass. Look at that projecting head-land, that looks like a dead man on his back. Well now, about three points to eastward there is a bay, and I know a fine bed of oysters there,—not your rank, coarse, pearl oysters, but small natives, the shell being rather rougher than English

natives. The very thought of them,' he continued, 'makes my mouth water; so do, pray, whistle as hard as you can for a wind! Hold hard! I'll begin—now whistle away, the wind is sure to come.'

Strange enough, after a few minutes whistling, a few cat's-paws were seen astern on the water, and the sails were soon asleep! 'Nothing like whistling for a wind,' remarked the captain, 'and that's a fact; we shall have oysters and stout for supper yet.'

And so we had; for we crept through the water so fast, that two hours before sunset we were in the oyster bay. A boat was lowered,—we started for the rocks,—it was luckily low water, and all hands had a good oyster supper. The oysters were very good, and far superior to the large, coarse pearl oysters, which, however, are very eatable when scolloped.

At Realejo, it was a very common thing to buy a few dozen pearl oysters for the sake of a chance. A person is almost sure to find some pearl or pearls in every oyster he opens; but it is not often that a good one is found. I was lucky enough to find a dozen very handsome ones, in a purchase of a dozen oysters; but it is generally the custom to give them to any ladies of one's acquaintance who happen to be present.

As it was too late to take in a Guayaquil river pilot at Poona, we came to an anchor, and enjoyed our oyster-supper (the first for some years). The river of Guayaquil is a fine large deep stream, and at the city itself is rather less in breadth than the

Thames at Westminster. The city is on the left-hand side, as you ascend the river; fine quays, of a very great length, ornament the city, and are of much use to the shipping, for large vessels may remain alongside of them, moored to the rings on the wharfs, without taking the ground; but Guayaquil has been described before, and I do not wish any reader to accompany me over a stale trail. As natural history is ever varying, and is the science to which I am most attached, I have no scruples in making remarks upon animals, as every observer generally discovers something fresh; and few persons have taken more trouble to make themselves acquainted with the wild habits of animals, than I did during a two years' residence in a wild forest of Central America. I did not see a shark in the whole river, and I could get no information respecting the great fresh water shark, so common further north in Central America. If there had been any, I think a back fin must have been seen out of the water; but I *never saw one*—that is no reason, however, why the fresh water shark should not be there. I killed, once, an enormous fresh water shark, just in the entrance, or, rather, sortie, of the river St. Juan, from the great lake of Nicaragua: he was fighting with another fish for the bones of our boatmen's breakfast, when I fired a ball through his head, and he took such a spring into the air, that he fell partly on the sandy spit of land we were breakfasting upon. He was of the class of '*tiburon*,' that the boatmen call 'tigre;' but he was

spotted just in the same way as the pie-balled porpoise, that every sailor has seen.

I trolled in the river Guayaquil for a whole day for shark, and did not get a run ; but I am able to speak with correctness concerning the alligator.

I believe the alligator attains, in the river Guayaquil, the greatest size it can attain on the western coast of America. I cannot speak of the Amazon, and some other rivers on the eastern coast, being imperfectly acquainted with them; and I also think that, on the north side of the *great lake* of Nicaragua, the alligators are larger than in the Guayaquil, owing solely to the whole coast being uninhabited, and the monsters attaining great age ; but I do not think that in any river, in any part of the world, more large alligators could be seen in a few hours than in the Guayaquil river a few miles above the city.

The Indians who bring vegetables, fruit, and especially pine-apples to market, in their slight canoes, have sometimes experienced terrible accidents by alligators overturning their fragile boats ; for although the canoe may be overturned by the accident of an alligator rising to the surface, yet if he saw a man swimming he would pull him down.

The horses and cattle who feed near the banks of the river, have a perfect dread of going to drink, and an Indian told me it was curious to see them all go together to drink, about four o'clock in the afternoon. I pulled up in the ship's little ' dingey," to an island where a great many cattle were feeding, and I saw

the same thing that the Indian had described. The cattle and horses were all collected together close to the water's edge, and began to make a great noise; the horses neighing, and the horned cattle lowing. The part of the river close to the cattle was soon crowded with alligators, lying close in shore, with only the tips of their noses out of the water. The horses and cattle seemed to know by instinct that if all the alligators were close to them, there would be none a few hundred yards off, for they all at once separated, took a gallop off to some little distance, and swallowed a hasty drink. When an alligator is awaiting in deep water for cattle coming to drink, he always lies close to the beach, with only an inch or two of his nose above water. When the horse or cow stoops down to drink, he seizes him by the nose, and pulls him down, making use of the tremendous tail for stunning the animal.

I never read any remark in natural history about the use that the alligator makes of his tail; but I assure the reader, who may be fond of that science, that I am correct, having seen it myself — three times.

When the animal that an alligator seizes is stunned, he is dragged to the bottom of the river and drowned. The teeth of an alligator could not *bite off* a child's finger, but could tear large strips of flesh from a bull. I watched an alligator at work one day, on the bank of a river in Central America; and, although I knew a good deal of the animal's habits, was surprised at

the way he was devouring a large calf that had been drowned by a flood. I saw him tear large strips of flesh that must have weighed seven or eight pounds each, with his claws and teeth, and then bolt the morsel, without much chewing.

I have watched the habits of the alligator for a long time, and believe that any man with ordinary presence of mind, and with a good hunting sword, without fire-arms, is a match for the beast.

Much has been said and written concerning the impenetrability of the alligator's armour, and also about the crocodile's. Now, never having fired at a crocodile, I cannot give an opinion; but, having sent some hundred balls into alligators, I can fairly judge of their defences, and I must say that those defences are not so impenetrable as some very late authors have described. No doubt, if a ball is fired at a large alligator, and hits him on the back, but in a very slanting direction, the said ball would glance off, without doing the animal the slightest injury. Yet, still, I am certain that an iron cast ball, fired out of a full-charged musket, at twenty or thirty yards' distance, and hitting a large alligator at right angles, in the centre of the back, which is the strongest part, would not only penetrate the armour of his back, but go out at the belly. A leaden ball would flatten if fired at the back, but that is not the place to fire at an alligator. If a rifle ball, (which must be of lead on account of the rifle grooves), is well aimed, it penetrates quite easily.

It is not a certainty to hit an alligator in the eye (when moving) with a single ball, at only thirty yards; but if a man cannot hit him in the lower part of the neck at a much greater distance, he had better abandon his rifle and take to other shooting, with a smooth bore and small shot.

The lower part of the side of the neck is the best place to be aimed at—rather under the centre of the neck, as the scales get smaller and thinner as they approach the throat, and yield to a stout thrust from spear or sword. A great quantity of blood issues from any wound on that spot, and soon destroys the beast. I remember once shooting an alligator on the north uninhabited coast of the lake Nicaragua, under peculiar circumstances. I saw him watching a small herd of deer that were feeding about two hundred yards off. Two or three times, he crept up the bank, and went twenty or thirty yards towards them, but as often did he return, plunge his body in the lake, and, resting his head on the low bank, remain gazing on the deer. I was in a canoe about forty yards off, but perfectly hidden, and I was doubtful whether to fire at the deer or the alligator.

Two hundred yards is too much for the best Purdey rifle *for a certainty,* and so the muzzle was turned on to the alligator's neck, and the ball hit him just in the proper place. After a struggle he was quite dead, and on my going up to him I found that the ball had gone out on the other side, and yet the beast was of a tremendous size.

The above may be admitted as a proof that the alligator is not a formidable adversary; but I have an utter contempt for the animal's courage and pluck. In a tropical climate, daylight is almost instantly succeeded by utter darkness after sunset, except when the moon makes her appearance; and as we had some miles to pull before we could get into a safe anchorage for the night, we could not haul the monster on shore, and measure him.

The herd of deer could never have heard a shot fired before in their lives, for they merely looked up, walked gently a few yards further off, and resumed their feeding.

Our good brigantine was moored alongside of one of the quays of Guayaquil; most of the party took up their quarters on shore, but I remained on board, as I had a boat, and was more bent on shooting and fishing than paying visits. However, my first duty was to present myself and letters to the ex-president of Peru, General Santa Cruz.

Being directed to a large house in the main street, I went in and sent up a card to his excellency. An aide-de-camp came out, and said that the General would be happy to see me. I went up, and found him in a large room with little furniture, but a sofa at the upper end, upon which he invited me to sit alongside of him. The room was full of officers who had evidently been paying their respects to him, but on my saying that I had letters for him, the room was soon cleared.

He felt much gratified when I told him of the state of public feeling towards him in Peru, and, when I gave him my letters, asked very kindly after his old friends.

He evidently did not consider the chance of regaining his position a bad one, but at the same time did not wish to replunge his country into the horrors of civil war—of all wars by far the most cruel and desolating.

At the end of our conversation, he pressed me to take up my quarters at his house—told me the hours of his breakfast and dinner, and hoped that, as a cover would always be laid for me at both, I would consider '*his house as mine*,' not in the mere language of courtesy, but as a matter of fact.

I, however, preferred the berth on board the brigantine, and told the General so ; for that I was fond of boating, shooting, and fishing, but that I would avail myself of his kind offer when I was ashore in the city.

I saw him several times afterwards, and gained a good deal of information from him and the officers who had followed him into exile.

Santa Cruz was a person certainly not likely to gain popularity by his personal appearance. He was above the middle height, rather stout, but his face was not prepossessing except in the expression. That expression was very good, but the skin was sallow and dark, and every feature, except the eyes, rather coarsely formed. His influence among the

higher orders in Peru was very great, owing to his maintaining the country in a state of tranquillity; but his popularity, that amounted almost to worship in some parts of the country, was owing to another cause.

The pure Indians from Cusco to the Lake Titipaca, in Bolivia, and as far as the city of Santa Cruz itself, looked on Santa Cruz as their natural chief, lord, and master.

His mother was of pure Inca blood. His father was not; but he took his claim, acknowledged by every Indian, from his mother.

He ruled the country when he was President, or rather Dictator, severely, but with perfect justice. Under his sway, the gangs of highway robbers were broken up. Oppression of the weak by the strong was put down with a stern hand, and the man who sowed knew that he would be able to reap at harvest time. Few things can say more in favour of Santa Cruz than that the well-known chivalrous General Miller was his chosen friend and follower, both when in power and in exile. I had a letter of introduction to the latter, also, but he was in Europe, and I have only met him once, by chance, since, in an Hotel on the continent of Europe, when I happened to have the letter in my portmanteau.

General Santa Cruz spoke very moderately on the subject of party politics, as far as regarded the generality of Peruvians themselves; but he spoke very bitterly against the Chilians, and severely blamed the

Peruvian-Chilian party for having aided the enemy to destroy the national prosperity; but nobody could blame them more than a few of them blamed themselves, when they saw the effect of their own intrigues.

Valparaiso, in Chili, had been for some years the 'entrepôt' of most of the goods and stores going to the northward on the west coast of America. From there, merchandize of every description went not only over the Andes to Mendoza, and even to the immense Tucuman and Catamarca districts, but also those goods stored in bond at Valparaiso, were sent to every port on the coast.

Many merchants thought that Callao would be a better port than Valparaiso, and consigned their ships direct to that port, as they not only had Peru *Proper* for their market, but all the country on the other side of the Andes, reaching from the shores of the Marañon, or Amazon river, in the north to Potosi, and Chuquisaca in the south.

Callao increased in wealth and importance, and Valparaiso fell off. The Chilians became jealous of their sister republic, and made a claim against them for monies owing. They fitted out the expedition, and succeeded exactly in their different objects. The first object the Chilians had in view was, to get rid, or make an external use, of a part of the army which had lately been in revolt, and had murdered the prime minister, poor Don Diego Portalis. The second was, to get possession of as much money as they could

extort out of the country, both as payment of an old debt, and for new costs in enforcing it. But the last principal reason, though not ostensible one, was to destroy the trade of Callao for some time, by declaring the port in a state of blockade, notice being given to those ships that touched at Valparaiso that they would not be allowed to go into the harbour at Callao.

If the merits of an unscrupulous foreign policy are always to be judged of by the test of success, the Chilian policy was good, because, and only because, it was successful.

The ships coming round Cape Horn, that touched at Valparaiso, remained there; those that had not touched, were allowed to enter the harbour on condition of paying all custom-house dues to the Chilian officers. By these, and many other vexatious proceedings, the trade of England and other foreign nations was driven away from Callao, and returned to Valparaiso.

Santa Cruz made one remark that struck me very much. He said, 'Suppose A and B each owe a third, much more powerful person, whom we will call C, a very large sum of money, but that A owes B a much smaller sum. Now, should A make very costly armaments, and go to great expense to make B pay by force, with all costs, when, at the same time, he denies C his money, and protests against being under compulsion to pay? Why the powerful C would naturally say—Pay me first, and then do what you

like; but if you are destroyed by your fighting, who is to pay me? This,' he said, 'is the case with Peru. Chili and Peru owe each a large sum to England; and Chili presents an old claim against Peru; fits out an expedition, and squeezes out of the people, not only her claim, but the expenses of the said expedition. Why did not England say at once, 'You both owe me money; pay me first, before you squander your resources in a petty warfare'? I could not help thinking that the case was strongly made out, especially with such large English interests at stake. But, remarking that England could not interfere in private disputes, the answer was, that she is continually doing so when it suits her purpose, or the views of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs for the time being.

It is very true, however it may be accounted for, as well as deplored, that the friendship of all nations towards England, as a nation, has wonderfully diminished. As individuals, the English have more intimate friends, and their integrity is more confided in, than the natives of any other country; but, *as a nation,* I am sorry to say, that for the last fifteen years there is hardly a people upon earth, certainly not excepting our own West Indian colonies, that would not gladly see our humiliation.*

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* One thing I never could account for, though many persons do, and that is, the intense hatred that our West Indian planters bear towards England: there is no use disguising or denying the fact, and planters on their death-bed lay their

As before remarked, Guayaquil is by far the best port on the whole west coast of America for building or repairing ships. The wood, although not oak, is of the very finest quality, and the following anecdote will vouch for its extreme durability.

I was in a vessel at anchor in the Estero of Realejo, when a brigantine-rigged vessel came into the port, and brought up. Our captain proposed that we should pay her a visit, as he knew well both the vessel and her owner, who was likewise the captain of her. 'Well, what do you think of her?' was the question when on board. I could hardly answer, for when on deck, she seemed built in a different way to modern vessels, and looked inside more like a Dutch galliot than any other vessel. I then learnt her history. Ten years before, her owner was in a small vessel off the Galapago Islands, when the hull of another vessel, dismasted, was seen. She was boarded, and presented a curious spectacle; her hatches were battened down, and the deck and bulwarks presented almost as curious a sight *in*board as the hull did *out*side—it was one mass of incrustation, formed by all sorts of shell-fish and weeds. When the hatches were taken off, which required great force, on account of the incrustation, the interior of the ship was found in a perfect state of preservation. There were papers

premature decease to the unnatural parents who prefer slave-grown sugar, raised by foreigners out of black flesh, and deny their sons the means of procuring *free* labour from Africa.

and maps in the after-cabin that had not been soiled by water, and the documents and ship-papers found in her, proved that she must have been dismasted and abandoned more than fifty years. She was copper-fastened throughout, but not coppered. And yet, after floating about the Pacific, as the winds and waves drove her, she was actually as sound as the day she was built. The present owner told the men that, as the prize belonged to them all, he would purchase the vessel, on condition of their towing it into Guayaquil. They agreed, and the vessel was taken up to Puna, and shipwrights set to work on her; but they were not allowed to go below, as they were told nothing was wanting.*

The ship was soon cleaned, and, strange to say, the very caulking was sound. She was then coppered, and rigged as a brigantine, and has since proved a most valuable vessel for the coast trade. I could not help running my hunting-knife into the taffrail, to see the state of the wood, but the knife could scarcely pick a bit out. The vessel was as sound as on the day she was launched, and the wood much harder.

It was found out, by looking over the registers, that the vessel had been built in Guayaquil, of first-rate wood (palo fino), and that she had been employed on the coast upwards of twenty years before she was lost.

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* I have heard what was found below paid at least for the repairs.

Now, here was a vessel that had done duty for twenty years; for half a century she had been floating on the wide Pacific, at the mercy of the winds and waves; she had been found, re-masted, and when she went to sea required '*no alterations.*' She ought to have been sent as *a sample* to one of our royal dockyards.

There was one small vessel at anchor in the river Guayaquil, that was the only remnant of the Peruvian navy. She had followed the fortunes of Santa Cruz, and before the expedition sailed from Valparaiso, had been blockaded in Callao by two or three Chilian vessels. She lay snug under the guns of the castle, but now and then, backed up by a gunboat or two, she would go out and play at long-bowls with the enemy's ships; but I never heard of a single shot striking, or of any mischief being done.

It is astonishing how little harm is done, and how few casualties occur, in a sea-fight between ships that do not come to close quarters, and whose crews are not well drilled to their guns.

I was witness of a sea-fight once, and if I had had the choice of any situation for viewing one, could not have selected a better. It was at Gibraltar, and it happened about the end of November, 1825.

During that period, the Spanish coast was much molested by privateers, bearing flags of Columbia and other new republics of South America. These vessels were generally fast-sailing schooners, built in the United States, and manned usually by English-

men and Americans, with a sprinkling of other nations. One of these schooners had for a long time taken refuge under the guns of Gibraltar. She hoisted Columbian colours, was very fast when close hauled on a wind, and was commanded by a Scotchman, of the name of Cunningham. Taking a ramble on the rock one afternoon, I arrived at the south part of the top ridge of the rock, where 'O'Hara's Folly,' or rather its ruins, stands. Looking towards Malaga, I saw a schooner close hauled on the starboard tack, staggering under a heavy press of sail, and heading on towards the rock, the wind being from the westward. With my glass, I easily made her out to be the above-mentioned schooner. Looking to the westward, I saw a large fleet of small craft, of all sorts of rig—latines, feluccas, mysticos, &c.—and escorted by four men of war,—as I learnt afterwards, two eighteen-gun brigs and two fourteen-gun schooners. At that time, all the small craft outside the gut of Gibraltar were obliged to assemble at Cadiz, and wait for an escort to go to the eastward. It was evident that neither party saw each other, for the rock was between them. The fleet was sailing down before the wind, with the escort under short sail, when, just as they got abreast of Europa Point, they discovered the privateer within half-a-mile of them. The privateer, when she saw them, tried to edge away, so as to cross their bows, but, finding she could not do it, bore up before the wind.

The two brigs made sail; one outsailed the other

and the privateer also, going free; but—and I am almost ashamed to write it—when she found that two minutes more would bring her alongside of the enemy, she let go her royal and top-gallant halliards, to wait for her consort brig. The privateer, seeing that, luffed sharp up to the wind, and passed her about one hundred yards apart, both vessels engaging with their starboard guns and with musketry.

The other Spanish brig was just far enough to the southward to allow the privateer to hold on her course, close hauled on the starboard tack, and engage with the larboard guns. He still stood on, and engaged the two Spanish schooners; after which he ran right through the small fleet, and after going again before the wind a short time, hauled close to it a second time, and engaged all the vessels over again. The Spanish vessels behaved in the most dastardly way; for they could at any time have brought the privateer to very close action,—which, with such odds, would soon have rid those seas of a most determined and voracious enemy, who had taken up his quarters in the very heart of their naval commerce,—but the privateer made his way right into Gibraltar Bay; and he would not have put in, if it had not been for an accident, and *that* the only one that took place in *all the fighting*. The captain had his hand so badly shot, that he ran into the bay to have it amputated.

The report of the Spanish officer in command was, that the privateer ran away so fast that *nobody could*

catch him, and that *nobody* was hurt on board any ship. At all events, the above anecdote goes to show that with undisciplined crews, the damage of a sea-fight is very small, unless they get to close quarters.

I saw the whole fight myself; it was witnessed by several officers, and many soldiers quartered near Europa Point, and the dastardly conduct of the Spaniards was looked at with roars of laughter from the men.

However, the elements, a few days afterwards, did for the coasting trade of Spain what these four men-of-war failed in performing. On the night of the 6th December, 1825, one of the most dreadful gales of wind in the memory of man, wrecked more than three hundred vessels in the Bay of Gibraltar, and among them, this very schooner. Being very sharp in the bottom, and drawing a great deal of water, she grounded some way from the shore; and when morning broke and discovered her position, the Spanish soldiers began firing at her, and sent for more troops. The captain was in hospital at the time, and though the weather had moderated, yet all the boats were stove in. Luckily, the schooner had heeled over from the shore, which served to protect the men, but they had no means of escaping. Then, two English officers, of the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusileers, went off, and though fired heartily at by the Spanish soldiers, managed to tow a boat under shelter of the schooner, and at last were able to get the men off.

The name of one of the gallant fellows was Tupper; poor fellow, he was killed in Spain; and the other, I believe, was Captain Sloane.

But I must beg pardon of the reader for having taken him some 76° of longitude, and some 36° of latitude, out of his road.

This Peruvian vessel managed to escape from the blockading squadron, during one of those dark misty nights, followed by a dense haze in the morning, so common in Peru, and gained the river Guayaquil.

I will now relate a tale that belongs more legitimately to this work, and that, I trust, is over fresh ground.

One morning, I took an early breakfast, hauled a small dingey alongside the brigantine, and put into it a basket containing a really good luncheon, both in the eating and drinking department; also a double-barrelled rifle, a double smooth-bore, with plenty of ammunition for both, and some fishing-lines; a small keg of water, and a small mast, and a small lug-sail,—a pair of *small* sculls completed the equipment of the *small* dingey. It was a grey cloudy morning, and such mornings are far more common close to the line than a few degrees to the north or south of it; but still every now and then the enormous mountain of Chimborazo might be seen rearing its stupendous head far above the clouds.

I started by myself, and sculled for a couple of hours up the river, but I cannot say there was much diversity of scenery, for after the first two miles there

was little to be seen but a thick forest on either hand, with a fine broad, deep stream. The wind being fair in one of the reaches, I stepped the little mast and hoisted my little lug, lighted my cigar—(mem.) a necessary article for health in those countries, but not in England,—and, placing my two guns handy, steered along the bank on the right hand, going up river. The banks were quite wet and slimy in many places, occasioned by the alligators climbing up them. However, I found I was sailing too close to the shore to get a shot at any of them, as they all plunged into the water as the boat approached, so I sheered off a little, and ran along the bank about twenty-five yards from it.

Going very little more than a mile an hour, I cast two fishing lines over the stern; but as the only fish I caught were the nasty cat fish, with moustachios, I soon pulled them up again. There were a good many alligators on the bank, but I was looking out for a very large one before I fired, which would frighten those in the vicinity,—and at length I did see one. He was lying lazily on the slope of the bank, partly on his side, and exposed the whole of his throat and belly. I watched him for some little time before the light breeze brought me abreast of him, and I must own he looked a teazer to have anything to do with; but I knew well that all alligators are arrant gluttonous cowards, and I gave him a rifle ball in his throat. He struggled a good deal to regain his legs, as he was on his side when I fired, and at last he succeeded,

though the blood was pouring out from the wound. When on his legs he dashed into the water, and made straight for my little boat; but I am convinced it was only chance that sent him in that direction, and that he had no evil designs; however, he came straight on, when, taking up the smooth bore, I gave him the two barrels in his face, and down he went, and I saw no more of him, which I was sorry for, as I wished much to have measured him.

I calculated his size from three or four that I shot within an hour afterwards, and they *measured* from nine to eleven feet; but this one so far surpassed them in size, that I do not think I exaggerate when I say he measured sixteen feet in length, but he was of a far greater girth, in proportion, than the others.

I was just thinking of mooring my boat to the bank, and taking an excursion into the forest to look after deer, where the underwood did not appear so thick, and directing my way back by a remarkably high tree, when I saw a very large snake taking a walk alongside of the water on the top of the bank. The undulating motion of his walk was just like that of a ship in a long swell, but I could not make out what sort of a snake it was; so I sent a barrel of small shot into its head, and pulled on shore. The big brute was not dead, but showed fight; however, I cut a long switch with my hunting sword, and soon settled him with a few blows on the back of his neck.

It is a common creed in England, and indeed in all Europe, that the way to disable a snake is to hit

him on the tail. One might just as well put salt on it. I have cut off a rattlesnake's rattle, tail and all, as he was passing, and he went away just as well, to all appearance, as ever. But a few raps on the back of the neck will stun any snake, of whatever size. I could not make out what sort of a snake it was, but it was about nine feet long, and as thick as my arm.

I cut off his head, took it into the boat, and began to dissect the upper jaw. I saw directly that the snake was a venomous one, for he had moveable fangs, which were still projecting after death, and it required some little force to bend them back with the handle of the knife. I had just pulled out one of them, poison bag and all, when a canoe ran alongside of me, paddled by an Indian, but with a padre sitting in the stern-sheets, who asked me what I was doing. I showed him the head of the snake that I was dissecting, and, as I was still moored to the bank, went ashore, held up the snake as high as I could reach, and asked the cura if he knew it. He said No, but the Indian said, 'Malo! muy malo!' But I could not learn the name of it. It was of a dark variegated brown on the back, and light grey on the belly.

This meeting was one out of a great many that have occurred to me in strange places, that I look back to with much pleasure,—not the meeting with the unknown snake, but the good old padre. I invited the cura to take his noon meal with me, and asked him the same question he asked me before,—viz.,

what he was doing on the river. He replied, 'Alas! my friend, I cannot break my fast yet; I will eat with you by and by, but at present I am fasting and waiting for one of my parishioners, who will be brought up here from the city in a few minutes to be shot, on the spot where he committed the crime for which he has to die.' 'What was the crime, padre?' I inquired. 'He ill-treated a woman on this side of the river,' he replied; 'and she swore that her male relations would avenge her, but he cut her throat to silence her tongue. He was seen by some children who knew him. He was seized, tried, and condemned; he will be shot before half an hour can elapse, and may the Lord have mercy upon his soul!'

'See!' he continued, 'there comes the procession on the river. One, two, three; yes, three large boats, —let us leave the shore, and when they pass follow them, for I must have one word with the wretch, before he dies. He is now under the care of the friars, but I am his cura, and they will let me speak to him.' I unshipped my little mast, made all snug, and the procession soon passed us. The first boat contained (besides the pullers) only monks. The second boat contained the prisoner, the firing party of four, a magistrate, and the prisoner's confessor, who sat next to him. The third boat contained a small detachment of soldiers.

The place where the murder had been committed was not more than a quarter of a mile from the spot where the snake was killed, and on the other side of

the river was a small straggling village of which my companion was the cura.

The boats stopped opposite the village, and on the river bank on the village side, a great number of Indians and half-casts were assembled, but not one person on the bank where the execution was to take place. The padre went ashore, and made his way to the prisoner, and had a little private conversation with him. However, the magistrate remarked that they had a long way to row back, and that they had better finish what they had to do. So, immediately, a little bench* was taken out of one of the boats and placed against a tree on the bank; the prisoner was then told to sit down, which he did, and his *poncho* was tied over his head; he seemed very unwilling to leave his confessor's hand; but the latter slipped his hand away, and went aside. During this proceeding the poor curate was on his knees in his canoe. The firing party came up to within three yards of the prisoner, and, on a signal, fired their four carbines into him, and knocked him off the banqueta. He was not dead, but I think not sensible—however, he was put up again on the banqueta, resting against the tree, and the next volley put every doubt out of question.

A canoe came over from the opposite shore and took the body away, and the soldiers and monks rowed back to the city.

When they were all gone, I pulled up to the good

* The 'Banqueta.'

cura, and asked him to take some refreshment, as he seemed perfectly done up.

He invited me to come ashore, and pay him a visit at his parsonage, which I did, taking care to carry my prog-basket with me.

Both the cura and I had been fasting;—he from religious motives, and myself because I had not been able to find time; but, both being sharpset, we did wondrous honours to the luncheon provided by our famous Jamaica artist, and when I poured out a tumbler of champagne for the worthy 'cura,' his admiration was enthusiastic and without bounds; yet he had no idea of *exceeding*. After we had discussed our cold chicken and tongue, and also a dish that only wants to be known, to be adored by a gastronome —that is, a duck-pie, seasoned with large green chilis —the worthy host placed three or four very fine pineapples on the table, and, as I knew that a beautiful moonlight would succeed to the daylight, I was in no hurry to change my quarters,—being very well armed, and feeling that confidence that a roving life of some years, when a man must depend upon himself, must naturally give to anybody.

So the padre and I lighted our cigars; and many a curious tale he told me, chiefly relating to the Indians and their communications with head quarters,—but the stories were so witty in that genuine humour, free from all indecency, but not quite free from what we in England would call coarseness, for which we should be laughed at in Spain; but so congenial to the

Spanish language, that I could have stayed hours more listening to the good old man.

He made two or three attempts to speak English; succeeded a little better in French; but when I tried him in Portuguese, his intense contempt of the language and people was as ridiculous as his attempt to mock their pronunciation.

Few persons have ever been in the company of any Roman-catholic priest (always excepting the Jesuits, for they are far too knowing, and well bred) without being led into some discussion respecting points of belief.

But the complaints of my friend were very different from what I expected; they turned entirely upon the lamentable superstition of the Indians.

When I told him our principal points of belief, and he saw in how few points we differed from his religion, he was quite astonished; and, still more so, when I told him that the Bible and the holy Testament were our sole guides. He said that he had been taught otherwise, and he was glad to find out that he was wrong; but that any heresy of ours was nothing to be compared to the horrible superstitions of some of the Indians up the country. He then went to a sort of writing-table, fitted up with a few drawers, and pulled out a paper, which he begged me to keep, and he told me that in the interior—not of his desk, but the country—many of the same stories might be collected. The papers he gave me, he said, were left with him some years before by a padre

from the 'Rio Negro.' I put the papers into my pocket, and continued a most agreeable conversation with the padre until rather late, when, the moon being up, I took my two guns, and went down to the boat, accompanied by the cura. He gave me his blessing, and a light for my cigar, and, taking the sculls, I began pulling fifteen or sixteen miles home in a dead calm.

During my pull home, I heard one roar on the surface of the water, and I concluded it was an alligator, for Mr. Waterton often speaks of the alligator's roar in the night; but I am not sure what it was; and, although I lived two years afterwards in the midst of their haunts, I never heard one roar; so, perhaps, it was a panther. However, I have such a respect for Mr. Waterton and his opinions, that I have always considered those opinions as coming really from his heart and soul.

I got alongside of the brigantine at about midnight, and was glad to turn in to my berth. The next morning, remembering the paper my good clerical friend had given me, I opened it after breakfast, and read a very curious story. The only thing that makes me hesitate in publishing it is, *that it may be in print before*, although I have never seen or heard of it. The story was written in Spanish, with French remarks on the margin, evidently made by a Frenchman; and inside the envelope was part of a French translation. I will translate the story literally, and

if I have committed piracy, which is not improbable, but certainly unintintional, I am sorry for it, and will make any '*amende honorable*' required. The paper is as follows—whether it belongs to me fairly, or not, I cannot say, but at all events it is curious:—

'One of my predecessors in the parish (on the Rio Negro, which has its source on the other side of the mountains, and runs into the Marañon) had discovered that his parishioners adored a god of their own creation, who was no more or less than an old Indian, whom they had dressed up in a strange fashion, and installed in a rancho, where they offered him not only their adorations, but all the first-fruit of their industry and their fields.

'This deity, who did no work, and enjoyed everything of the very best that could be procured in the village, found this mode of living uncommonly agreeable, and acted the impious part that had been thrust upon him with the greatest good will; but the cura, on his part, was determined not to suffer such infamous and sacrilegious proceedings. He preached to his flock, and reasoned with them both in public and in private; but nobody listened to him: he threatened, and was answered by threats.

'In this state of affairs he scarcely knew what to do, but at last decided upon adopting another course, and, pretending to approve of the conduct of his parishioners, he encouraged them in the folly that had seized them.

'At length, the holy week arrived, at which time many ceremonies are observed that call to remembrance the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

'On Good Friday, the cura gathered the whole of the congregation together, and after an impressive sermon, detailing all the principal events of that memorable week, concluded by proposing that the passion and death of our Saviour should be represented by their Indian god in person. 'Let him, first,' continued the cura, 'be crowned with thorns; then let him be well flagellated, and lastly, let him be crucified. After he is dead and buried, without doubt he will rise again; we shall see it, and we shall all have a double faith in him afterwards.'

'The Indians were enchanted with the idea, and, in their simplicity, resolved to follow exactly the cura's advice.

'The old Indian was first decorated, much against his will, with a crown of thorns—notwithstanding his energetic protestations that he was not worthy of such a distinction. He then received a terrible flagellation, and at last was actually crucified; protesting all the time against the high dignity he had been raised to, and that he was nothing but a miserable sinner,—which the Indians only put down to his excessive humility.

'What with ill-usage and loss of blood, he died the same evening, and the Indians took down the body and placed it in the church. They watched around the body all that night, the Saturday, and the second

night,—but awaited with the greatest anxiety the breaking of the third day (Easter Sunday) to witness the resurrection; but at this period the corpse showed such signs of decomposition, and became so very offensive, that the Indians began to entertain serious doubts respecting the immortality of their god; yet still they were resolved to await the expiration of the third day. At last, they plainly saw that no visible resurrection could possibly be expected, and in their indignation, threw the corpse out on a dung-heap, where the vultures soon made away with it.

'From that moment they submitted, with a remarkable docility, to the spiritual guidance of the cura.'

I have translated the above history, nearly word for word, and am sorry if I have made use of a story that may belong to some one else. On the margin of the paper was written, sideways, 'Don — Montgomery. 183.'

I wished much to have paid another visit to my good friend the cura, up the river, but we were obliged to run down the river to Poona, to take in shingle ballast, which I was rather glad of, as the coast and country round about are very wild. However, I was perfectly disappointed in my expectations of finding game: there is no sporting worth mentioning, for I do not call shooting alligators sporting. I like to kill them, for they are such mischievous beasts, but there is no sport in shooting at them.

We beat down the river to Poona, and landing our

pilot, steered on for a shingly beach, more to the westward; and while the men were employed taking in enough shingle ballast to enable the brigantine to stand up to the squalls that may be expected north of the line, I went with the captain and a couple of hands, to lay in a good store of oysters. We took tubs with us, and when they were filled we poured sea-water up to the brim, and so managed to have oysters for luncheon and supper, for many days.

CHAPTER XIV.

HARBOURS OF CENTRAL AMERICA—HURRICANES, AND THEIR EFFECTS—CLIMATE, FRUITS, ETC.

REALEJO is the only safe harbour at present in Central America. There are several others which may be considered safe, and *are* so for two or three years together,—but every now and then a tremendous hurricane shows clearly enough that a roadstead which is not land-locked is not always to be depended upon. These observations are made with respect to the chapter in this work dedicated to the cutting of a great water communication between the Atlantic and Pacific. The heavy northerly winds that blow during four months in the year with great violence, would never hurt any port (to be constructed) in the Bight of Papagayo, as the wind would blow off shore; but sometimes, on the coast, a hurricane will go round the compass in twelve hours. I will relate one of the most remarkable escapes from shipwreck that I ever heard of. I was standing on a headland with an old half-pay lieutenant of the Navy, and we were talking about the security of different bays in the great bight, with respect to harbours. He then and there told me the following rather curious

account of a hurricane, the effects of which he had experienced afloat; but I will repeat the story as nearly in the narrator's words as I can remember.

'You see that large bay, with a small cluster of rocks and islands, on the north-west point, nearest to us? Well, two years ago, I was bound to Realejo, from Panama, and was on board a well-found merchantman, of 350 tons. We had just arrived at the southern promontory of the bay, when it fell a dead calm, but a tremendous ground-swell kept rolling into the bay. The barometer also fell lower than I ever had seen it in these latitudes. The captain, knowing that I was an old naval officer, consulted with me, and in a very short time the ship was under close-reefed topsails, foretop-mast staysail, and close-reefed spanker. The courses were close reefed, and then furled, and everything made snug. We had no time, either, to spare, for the gale came on as soon as we had shortened sail, and in the same direction as the swell of the sea—that is to say, right into the bay. In half an hour the sea had got up frightfully: the mizen topsail was soon furled, and the spanker and topmast staysail were saved; but the hurricane had increased to such a pitch, that the main and fore-topsails were blown clean out of the bolt ropes, and split into thousands of shreds. The sea was running awfully high, and making a fair breach over the ship, having carried away almost all the weather and lee bulwarks, and there did not seem the slightest chance of saving the vessel. No anchor or cable could have

held her for one minute, and it was at length resolved to run the ship on shore at the furthest end of the bay, near a clump of cocoa-nut trees, with a sandy beach. The foretopmast staysail was run up, the helm put hard up, and she payed off.

'We were now running before the wind,' continued the narrator, 'with an awful sea following us, and the beach we were going on to was about two miles right ahead. We could see that the surf was tremendous, but we knew that the sands were smooth, and the water pretty deep to the very shore itself; and we trusted to a heavy wave throwing us so near to dry land as to enable us to save our lives.

'I was standing,' went on the old officer, 'with the captain, alongside of the man at the wheel, and had just remarked to him that five minutes more would decide our fate, when a loud flap was heard forward, and we saw the fore stay-sail aback, paying off the ship's head from the land. The hurricane had shifted to the exact opposite side of the compass, and doubled in its fury.

'Such a sudden reprieve was felt by all of us as, we could fancy, if we had been sentenced to die, and forgiven at the place of execution; but it was still very doubtful whether the vessel could get out of her position, although a hurricane was blowing in her favour, against the tremendous sea that kept rolling into the bay. The fore-topmast stay-sail still held good. The topsails had been blown to rags, but two men were sent on to the fore-yard to loose a wing of

the fore course; but it was blown to ribbons directly it was loose. However, the men were told to loose the whole sail, and come off the yard, and although the sail was soon in rags, yet the vessel gathered way, and got off shore; but as she neared the mouth of the bay, the heavy sea, dead against her, made her pitch so awfully, that her foremast gave way about two feet above her deck housings, carrying away bowsprit and maintopmast. We then tried the main course, but the vessel was quite ungovernable, and we were thrown into a small canal between an island and the main land, where we cast an anchor out a-head, and another astern.

'The next morning I went over a great part of the bay in a small boat, and there was nothing but a long ground swell to recall to mind the danger of the previous day.

'Our escape from death,' my friend concluded, 'was miraculous. Had the change of wind taken place five minutes later, it would have been death to us, instead of salvation, for it would have destroyed all our attempts at saving ourselves.'

I like narrating narrow escapes related by others, but, for very obvious reasons, do not like to mention my own escapes.

I have now brought the reader to the almost unknown part of the world called 'Central America,' and as I believe that that country will shortly be called into a new existence, by the creation of a great water communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific,

passing through that land, a few remarks on the country, and on the works proposed, will, I am sure, be acceptable to many persons who are interested in cutting the proposed canal.

Last year, I published a work on Central America, called *Wild Life in the Interior of Central America*, of which the public were kind enough to approve not, most likely, on its own merits, but on account of its being *fresh*, and relating to unknown ground.

I give my last chapter to the public for the same reason, and that is, to make that public acquainted with a country little known, and to place before the men of business in England the difficulties that must be encountered, but that may be vanquished, in the great undertaking of cutting a large ship canal.

Before I begin my chapter on the canal, I should like to make some remarks on the peculiarities of the climate and country of Central America, for the benefit of those who may have to make it a residence.

I think one of the best illustrations of the vagaries of a climate, is the following:—vines are known to grow in most very hot climates; but, in Central America, I only saw two vines, that had been planted by Mr. Manning, of Leon. One of them was very sickly, but the other bore ripe fruit, young green fruit, and flower, on different branches. One branch was in full leaf and fruit, while another one was only budding. The seasons were all mixed in one plant. The above was the only vine I ever saw in Central America that ever brought forth a bunch of fruit.

Oranges grow large, and some are at maturity almost all the year round; but they grow with such an enormous thick rind, that they are a very poor class of fruit.

There is literally no good fruit in Central America but the melon, sown broad-cast in the fields; but still they are not half so good as the melons grown in a more moderate temperature.

I saw an attempt to grow a patch of wheat on the hot low grounds; it grew up magnificently to the height of eight or ten feet, but was only good straw. I planted some up in the colder country, but still the climate was too hot; and the wheat sprang up very strong, but without any ear—*which wont do.*

Potatoes will not grow. I have seen yams tried in a garden, but with very doubtful success. Vegetables in general fail; and the only ones that I can recollect that are really healthy, are of the gourd kind.

Even the delicious fruit, the mango (I mean the East Indian one), is here dried up into a stringy fruit, sticking between the teeth. The pine-apple is stringy and dry; and yet the climate is most certainly the moistest, for eight months in the year, in the whole world.

How strange it is to compare the coast of Peru, where it has never rained since 1746, to a country only a few degrees of latitude north, and where a shower is truly a drencher; and yet the Peruvian fruit is a thousand times finer than the produce of Central America!

But I wish much to discuss with the reader who has followed me so far, the principal object of the work, and without further excuse will proceed to relate what I know to be facts, concerning the great water communication between the two oceans.

CHAPTER XV.

WATER COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC.

IT ought fully to be understood by all parties who contribute in any way, either by influence, personal co-operation, or subscription of capital, to a water communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific, that the said communication should be available to all nations; not only with regard to the right of passage, but with respect to the size and depth of the canal, which ought to be able to float a first-class ship.

If English capitalists and merchants do not insist upon the latter point, they will find themselves deceived.

A canal might be cut with English capital, and when finished, might be found big enough only for vessels of two hundred tons, while the beautiful fleets of Messrs. Green, or Wigram, Smith, or Somes, may continue to go the old way round the Cape, although those gentlemen may have subscribed to the undertaking.

With a small canal, the whole of the transit trade would fall into the hands of the Americans, who would reap the profit sown by British capital, as they are now doing in Cuba.

It is for the interest of the North Americans that the canal should be small; just accessible to their coasters, but not to our large East India and Chinamen. A large canal would be of incalculable benefit to commerce in general, and the reader who has been kind enough to accompany me on so long a voyage, may now meditate on the probability of its accomplishment.

Let us set out with the principle, that the canal, if it is to be cut at all, must be of such magnitude and depth as to allow vessels of the largest size to pass through without taking the ground; and then let us consider in what part of the world the canal should be cut.

One place proposed was the isthmus of Tehuantepec, but that scheme, *got up* during the furious speculations of 1845, was evidently not mature. Several modes of execution were proposed, and the number of locks alone calculated at one hundred and fifty. The scheme is abandoned; but if any person wishes to obtain any information on the point, he can get it by reading a survey of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (now open before me), by Don José de Garay, published by Messrs. Ackerman, of the Strand. I disagree in every respect with the projector; but it does not follow that I am right. As I may be wrong, the reader is referred to the work itself.

Two other projects remain to be discussed. Let us examine which of the two seems preferable, and then

let us see how the chosen one can be most easily executed.

From Chagres to Panama, is the first route that was ever proposed. The one *I* consider the most feasible is from the Boca St. Juan of Nicaragua, to a bay in the Bight of Papaguay.

Let us consider first the Panama question.

At the first sight of the map, a mere child would exclaim, 'Oh! how short a distance to cut!' And so it appears; but it is well known, that there are often many objections, in all stations of life, to '*short cuts.*'

The entrance into the river Chagres is very foul. Several rocks dot the bed of the bar, and would be always dangerous. But the defect on the bar has nothing to do with the other difficulties of the Panama a question; for it would be very easy to cut a canal into the river from a bay about five miles off, that might, by a breakwater, be made a first-rate harbour.

The actual depth of the cuttings would be very nearly the same in Panama as in Nicaragua; but the great difficulty would be finding water to fill the canals and locks in a Panama cutting. The lake of Nicaragua is about 130 feet above the level of the sea, and would give an unlimited supply of water. Again: let us even suppose that an East Indiaman had been able to arrive at the western coast, near Panama—*she could not leave it*, for the water is so shallow. Any deepening of the water would be choked up with sand in a few weeks.

I say nothing of the unhealthiness of the climates. Chagres and the Boca St. Juan are about on a par. The west coast, for several degrees north of Panama, is equally pestilential; but the country round the upper part of the lake of Nicaragua is moderately healthy; and would necessarily be the head-quarters of the operations after they had reached a certain point.

The want of water and the shallowness of the western coast, seem to have deterred speculators from having made any further progress in the scheme given to the public some years ago; and their attention has been turned to the more feasible, but still difficult project, of cutting a great ship canal through Central America, in the province of Nicaragua, and making use of the river St. Juan, together with the great lake.

It is upon this project that a few observations may be acceptable, not in any way to discourage the projectors, but merely to point out a few of the difficulties and dangers that *must* attend the undertaking, and only require to be known that they be fairly met with and overcome.

I lived two years myself in the interior of this country, and know it and the people pretty well.

I feel, therefore, that, with this knowledge of the country and people, my remarks may be taken in good part.

Mr. Bailey, an ex-officer of the British service, with his son, had been some years employed in surveying the whole country, including the lake, the river St. Juan, and the coasts. His surveys, together

with a valuable map of the country, are being now published by Mr. Trelawny Saunders, of Charing Cross. I have examined them, and, as far as my knowledge of the country goes, they are very correct.

Let us suppose that Central America is to be the field of operation; that all preliminaries are gone through; that the consent of the Central American Government has not only been gained, but well guaranteed; and that the conditions are favourable to all nations. And now let us look at the difficulties that will attend the very first outset, supposing, *of course*, that the survey has been so well made and digested, that the men may be set to work in a short time after the arrival of the ship, or ships, at the Boca St. Juan.

We will also, of course, suppose that the expedition has brought, either from England or the United States, every modern improvement in machinery, or mode of working, for deepening rivers, excavating, cutting, or tunnelling; but the principal question is, What labour has been brought? What workmen are there?

If the managers trust to the labourers of the country, they may just as well get up their anchors and go home again; for I know the working class well, and I also know that the kindest and most liberal employer cannot depend upon them for a week together.

Mr. B——, who was the kindest of kind employers, and who owned a large sugar estate, called San

Antonio, told me that often a large portion of his workmen would leave work for no reason but their own whims. They were better fed, less worked, better paid, and that in ready money (a rare thing in Central America, where wages are generally paid in goods that give one hundred per cent. profit) ; and yet, away a whole gang would walk, and, perhaps, return, after they had spent all their money, to ask for employment. If they behave so to a good master, who employs them on light, dry work, what will they do when working in black mud, among alligators, snakes, and myriads of blood-sucking insects ?

Without doubt, good assistance may be obtained from native labour, but it *cannot be depended upon.* English or North American labourers are out of the question. There would not be one alive, or, at least, fit to work, in a week from the first spadeful of earth turned up—a Mississippi mud-lark could not stand it.

There is a long, flat piece of sandy ground on the right side of the harbour, going into the river, that I suppose would be made head quarters at first. There is also a clear piece of land on the left-hand side going in, but it is a fatal place to dwell on. Old Mr. Shepherd, who is so well known on the Mosquito shore, told me that, at first, he had tried that shore, but that he buried his people so fast, that he was obliged to shift over to the other side. It is on the right hand side going in, I suppose, that the operations will commence, and where the overseers

and surveyors of the work will take up their nightly quarters at first; but still the question is, Where is the labour to be found?

You cannot depend upon native labour for a week together, and, even when they do work, it is lamentable to see how little they do; you cannot depend upon English or North American labour, for the work would kill the labourers in a week; you cannot depend upon work from the West Indians, because they would not go to work, and would be great fools if they did, for they are pretty nearly at present in possession of their late owners' estates!

What labour can, then, be really depended upon?

I am afraid that there is only one answer. *You must depend upon voluntary labour from the African coast.* You may make use of native assistance as much as you please, and you will get more of it when it is clearly understood that you are not dependent upon it.

The Kroemen of the African coast would never volunteer for such work, they prefer ship-work on the coast, saving their money and buying two or three wives; but plenty of volunteer labour can be obtained on the coast, and if the labourers are made comfortable during the passage, and are faithfully and well treated after their arrival, they are just the class of men to do the work, not only without injury to themselves, but with much advantage.

No doubt some kind-hearted old lady will exclaim, when she hears of a ship-load of black labourers being

engaged to work,—as she sweetens her cup of coffee with a lump of sugar from Cuba or Brazil—the said coffee and sugar, by-the-bye, being manufactured out of black blood, black sinews, and black sweat—'Oh! how horrible to take these poor dear blacks and set them to work; it is a sort of slave trade.'

However, it is no such thing. Those volunteer workmen, if they were engaged for a limited term,—say three or four years,—at fair wages, with an undertaking to give them a free passage home, and if the whole agreement was so well guaranteed as to render the execution of it certain to be honourably fulfilled, the condition of those labourers, on their return to their own country, would be far superior to their countrymen who remained at home.

This sort of free labour was tried to be carried into effect in some of our West Indian Islands, but through some spite in the Colonial Office it was forbidden, without any reason or justice. But in this undertaking, if free black labour is required from the African coast, the Americans will not pay the Colonial Office the compliment of asking leave to pay a man a day's wages for a day's work, which was actually denied to our ruined planters.

Upon that work the directors and managers may safely depend, and assisted by clever overseers and foremen from England or the United States, this great undertaking would succeed, and would scarcely cost half the money that it is now estimated at.

It must also be borne in mind, that native labour

can be very much more easily procured from the lake to the Pacific, than it can be near the river St. Juan.

The first thing to consider, after a supply of labour, is the nature of the ground to be cut through between the mouth of the river and the great lake of Nicaragua. The lake is about one hundred and thirty feet above the level of the Pacific, and I believe a little more above the Atlantic.

On each side of the river St. Juan, is an immense dense forest, composed of most enormous trees, which overshadow as thick and impenetrable a jungle of matted underwood as can be met with in the whole world. For almost the whole length of the river, I doubt that any man has ever been twenty yards into the forest on either bank, and am pretty sure he could not have been one hundred.

This forest is full of wild beasts and snakes of all sorts, and Indian report says that some of the larger snakes are far more powerful than those nearer the Western Coast. The vapours that arise from the banks of the river, where the leaves have been rotting for thousands of years, is pestilential and deadly, even to Central Americans.

The wood and forest must be cleared away for some distance on each side of the river, and that work may be very much aided by the native labourers, who are first-rate axe-men and bill-hook workmen. The roots must be extracted, and the whole burnt; when, I believe, the ground on each side of the river will prove very nearly on a level, and only a few feet above

the river. I judge from the tops of the trees appearing so level in long reaches of the river.

If the above suggestions have succeeded, and certainly there is no reason why they should not, a canal in aid of the river is of the easiest execution; a very few locks being necessary to raise a ship above 130 feet, and those locks would always be served by the great lake above their level and also by the river itself, which in some places would float any ship.

As far as relates to the cutting of a communication from the Atlantic to the Lake of Nicaragua, it is the simplest of works, and only requires energy and labour to be *depended upon.*

As for the overseers and foremen of the works, if they had been acclimated, and spoke Spanish, so much the better; but their situation at first would not be very enviable. It would improve very much when the works had been carried on as far as the lake. They would find themselves in a purer, healthier air, and they might meet with some comforts that they had before been deprived of.

The next process would be buoying the lake; *that* would be easy work, and scarcely to be mentioned as a difficulty.

But the real difficulty will be in cutting through the hills that separate the lake from the plains below. This is the only difficulty in the whole project.

Two ways have been proposed; one to cut clean down from top to bottom, making very slanting banks; and the other, to cut a canal and tunnel

capable of floating a first-class vessel with her lower masts in. I know, from experience, how difficult both operations are, in a country where the rain comes down, not as in Europe, in drops, but literally in sheets; but, after much consideration, and with a knowledge of the country, I really believe that the cutting would be child's play, in comparison with the late railway bridge over the Straits of Menai.

This small range of hills, I repeat, is the only difficulty in the whole undertaking, and may be easily overcome by labour to *be depended upon.* This last is the only aid that is not to be procured without trouble and expense; for if an accident happened, such as a land slip, and the dependence was upon native labour, the enterprise would have to be given up, for on the loss of a life or two, all hands would strike, and leave the work of months to be destroyed by a few days' rains.

From the western foot of the range of these hills is almost a dead flat, and a canal might be designed and laid out by any common workman.

On arriving at the Pacific, deep water is met with, and there are many spots in the Bight of Papagayo that would make good harbours.

One project was to go through the lake of Managua, or Leon, and terminate the canal in the gulf of Conchagua, also called Fonseca, but a mere sight of the map will show the objections.

On the sea-coast, if the opening from the canal to the sea is through a clear sandy beach, it is likely to

be not very unhealthy; but if the junction is further to the north, and is connected with the pestiferous creeks, or 'esteros,' near Realejo, few Europeans will be able to resist the vapours that rise from the black slimy mud, that at low water lies round and about the arched roots of the nasty mangrove trees.

Now let us recapitulate the difficulties of the undertaking. They may be divided into four parts, without mentioning the harbours on the two oceans.

Firstly.—Cutting a communication to float a large ship, partly by canal, and partly by deepening the river from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Secondly.—Buoying off the lake for large ships towed by steamers, to the entrance of the western canal.

Thirdly.—Cutting through the range of hills that is near to the lake, which said cutting is the only serious obstacle.

Fourthly.—Cutting a canal from the western foot of the range of hills to the Pacific, which is quite easy.

Let us take for granted that every preliminary has been carefully adjusted, every treaty or negotiation concluded to the satisfaction of every nation, and the capital subscribed or forthcoming, and lastly, a binding treaty entered into with the Nicaragua government, and guaranteed by three or four powerful governments, such as England, the United States, and France.

For executing the first portion of the work, from

the Atlantic to the lake, *dependence* on labour is all that is required.

If you trust to native labour, you will be deceived.

If you trust to European or United States labour, the deaths will soon undeceive you.

If you invite the West Indian negroes to work, they will give you a verse of a well-known nigger song for answer.

The only way is to get free-labour from Africa; to keep the labourers comfortable during their passage; to have a few interpreters; to fulfil strictly every obligation; and, when they have worked the time they have agreed for, let them be taken honourably home, free, and with all their earnings.

As for some persons saying that they disapprove of such proceedings, the Americans will laugh at them, even if those persons filled high places in office; for they say, fairly, that if a man chooses to come and work for wages, they do not see why he should not be employed, because he is black instead of white; but, perhaps, it is better not to mention arguments that raise angry feelings. The fact is, that if England does not like free-black labour, the Americans will take the work out of English hands for their own benefit. They will send to the coast of Africa, and get passengers on the same terms that English emigrants go out upon; and any interference on the part of the Colonial Office, that has paralysed our colonies, would be laughed at with

utter contempt—not only by Americans, but Englishmen, who would with shame be obliged to cover an honourable operation under a foreign flag. In the *second* portion of work, the buoying off the lake is no hard work, and, as well as No. 1, may be considered easy to accomplish.

No. 3, is the great difficulty; but with labour that the directors of the work can depend upon, I am certain that the operation willnot be difficult to accomplish.

No. 4, is nothing more than a common operation.

I have now finished my remarks upon cutting this great canal, which is so much required, and which must soon be undertaken. The Americans are more likely to undertake it than the English; but, without doubt, the best way would be to make the undertaking an universal one, instead of a party national one.

I am as perfectly convinced of the feasibility of the project, as I am of my own existence, and I believe the canal might be cut for much less money than will be required for the entire completion of the railway tube joining Anglesea with the main land.

Many difficulties are in the way; but they are mostly occasioned by national jealousies.

One dozen honest men from England, France, and the United States, and who had the confidence of the mercantile men of their respective nations, might settle the whole question in a few days,—and we might hear, in three years, of the fine Chinamen from Blackwall and Newcastle going through the canal in four days.

Often and often I have been on high mountains, taking a sort of bird's-eye view of the splendid country; thinking what *might* be made out of it, but concluding with 'what a lazy set of do-nothings this people must be, to exist in such a *low* state with so many natural advantages.'

This great work *will* be done, but it will be effected by Anglo-Saxon energy, perseverance, and capital.

If anybody expects assistance from the Central Americans, he must know nothing about the people or the country.

I have done now with my chapter on the cutting of this canal. I repeat again, that merchants and capitalists ought to see that the canal should be of such large dimensions as to enable the largest ships to pass; and if governments have anything to do with the affair, they ought to provide for the passage of the largest men-of-war.

A fair way for such governments as England, France, and the United States, would be to subscribe for so many shares each in the undertaking. Their subscription would be guarantees.

There is no time better than the present; there are no wars disturbing the peace of the world, and England has at the present moment a peculiar preponderance, that may entitle her, together with the United States, to take a lead in the undertaking, and invite other nations to subscribe, or not, as they pleased. No company ought ever to be allowed the monopoly of the transit, or to be permitted to fix the

price for the passage of a ship, for in that case the shares would soon run up to as enormous a price as those of one or two of the London companies, who possess the exclusive privilege of supplying London with a foul smelling, offensive liquid, that they call water.

In conclusion, I must say that I am certain that one-half of the money that was spent on the London and Dover Railway, would finish a magnificent canal from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

The tunnels alone on the Dover road, are far greater works than anything required in this undertaking.

I have now finished my book, and this last chapter has been written with a view that I trust will meet the acceptance of those gentlemen who have long been looking forward to this great project being undertaken.

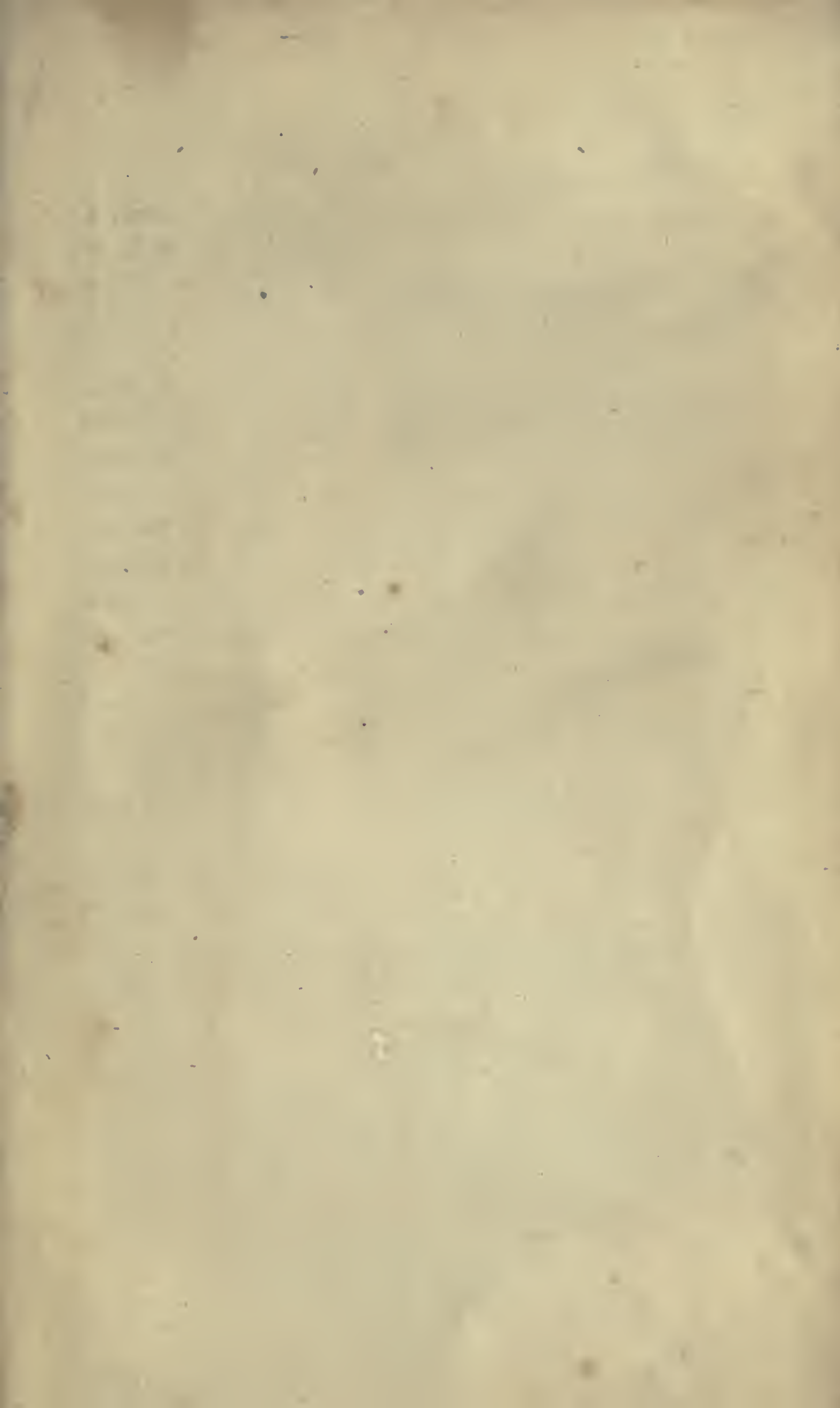
Any inquiry that any of my readers may make, will be answered, as far as it lies in my power, if it be addressed to me through Mr. J. W. Parker, West Strand. And I will conclude my unpretending work by giving a few words of advice to those persons whose business or love of adventure may lead them to Central America.

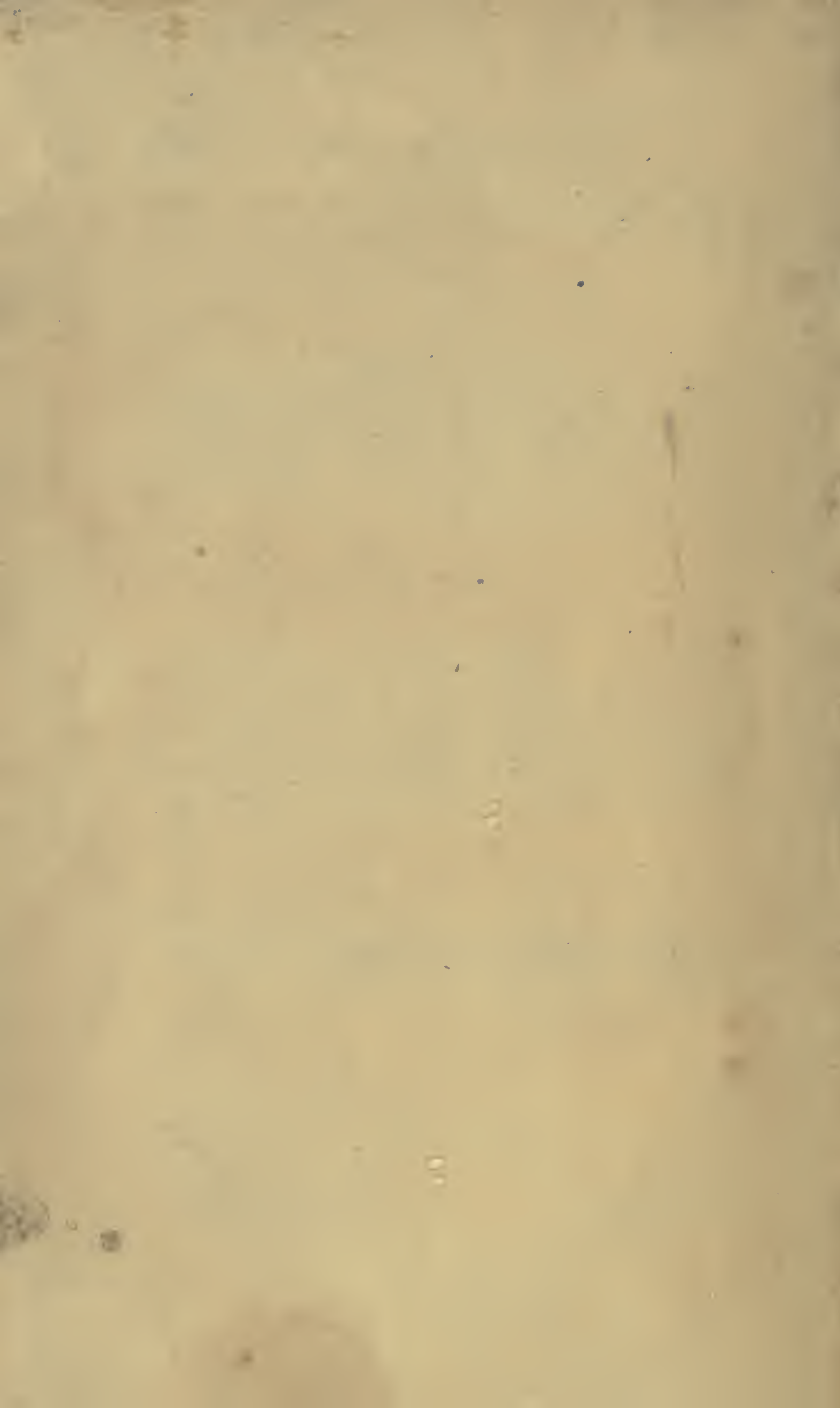
There is no use in taking saddles or bridles into the country; the traveller will find them suited for that country at Grenada or Nicaragua, and better still at Leon, where good copies of my good Chilian saddles were made.

If a person can only take one gun with him, a double-barrelled smooth bore, fit to carry ball, is better for him than a double rifle. Let him take a pair of pistols of the same bore as his gun, with a bullet mould. Let him furnish himself with a strong hunting sword, of about twenty-four inches length in the blade, with a waist-belt, a pair of strong leather gaiters, coming over the knee, with boots that may defy a snake. Let him remember never to touch water when he is warm with exercise, as he will surely get ague by even washing his hands or face. Let him be temperate; but whenever he has had a severe wetting, take a small glass of spirits and water. Let him, when engaged early in the morning amidst the pestilential vapours that arise on every side, smoke a cigar; but let him *never exceed*, or the probability is that he will never see his native country again. And, lastly, let him, as far as possible, trust to his own courage and energy.

I have brought my reader to the end of his journey. I have tried not to carry him over a stale trail, but to induce him to follow me over fresh ground. I trust my endeavour to promote the great canal will not be entirely useless.

THE END.





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