

CHAPTER XIII.

Departure from Bogota for Popayan—Guaduas—Chuguani—San Juan—Return to Guaduas—Short stay in that Town—Beltran—Ambalena—San Luis—Chaparral—Natagaima—Parande—Sanboja—Villa Vieja—Neyva.

AFTER having passed three months at Bogota, I prepared to quit that town at the commencement of the month of August.

There were several routes by which I could return to Europe, and all presented an equal degree of interest; it remained for me to choose one. The first, and the most frequented, that of Caracas, offered a considerable extent of country for observation; but as many illustrious travellers had visited it before me, little could be added to their accounts. The Oronooko, from the importance it will be of at some future period, held out greater temptations; but I had already traversed a country similar to that watered by this stream, in sailing up the Magdalena; lastly, I might have preferred the route of Maracaïbo, opened by the successes of the patriots, to the two others, if, after having visited the eastern Cordillera, I had not thought it interesting and useful to examine that of the west, so much richer in minerals.

Having obtained a passport for Buenaventura, where it was my intention to embark, I left the capital of Colombia on the 9th of August, 1823, at six o'clock in the morning.

My baggage was much lighter than that which I had when coming from Carthagena; two mules sufficed to carry it. The guide, who had conducted me in the province of Socorro, accompanied me in the capacity of muleteer.

Two roads to Popayan, my first place of destination, presented themselves, that of Mesa Grande, and that of Guaduas; I chose the latter.

The roads which traverse the plain of Bogota are so excellent at this season, that we arrived at an early hour at Fontibon; a short time afterwards we passed by Resuela, and were soon at Facatativa. The next day I descended from the immense plateau of Bogota by the narrow and dangerous paths of the mountains which surround it on every side, like walls destined to support an immense basin.

Fortunately all was dry. Subject to the seasons of the plain commanding them, the vallies which are situated to the west, enjoy the fine weather which prevails above, with this difference, however, that here a severe cold is continually felt, while below, they are subject to a burning temperature. Here, it may likewise be remarked, that when the places situated, to the west of the Plateau of Bogota, enjoy summer,

those which are placed at the same altitude towards the coast experience the only winter of this climate in torrents of rain, daily poured from the clouds that have escaped from the plains of Meta. One very interesting peculiarity struck me, viz. that the inhabitants of the vallies on the west are much afflicted with goitres and epidemical complaints,* while those on the east entirely escape them. Further, to mark more strongly the difference which exists between the temperatures of the two vallies on the east and the west of the plains of Bogota, it must be added, that the harvests in the former are not gathered in until the month of October, while in the latter the whole is finished before the end of August.

The roads were tolerably good; and although my travelling companions were satisfied with them, they could not forbear cursing the Spaniards, who, in order to repair them, had employed very harsh measures, by forcing all those who had been condemned for political opinions to work on the highways, making them only a daily allowance of a pound of bread and a pound of meat.

We at length lost sight of those prodigiously high mountains, against which the Plateau of Bogota rests; and on the 11th of August, at an

* In some places, only, the black leprosy appears.

early hour arrived at Billata, a village thirteen leagues distant from Bogota.

In descending the immense pyramid of the Cordillera, I every where found the same shells which I had met with in the Socorro ; another sight, similar to that which had given me so much concern, when I was at Moniquira, now attracted my attention ; this was a lad tied down upon a mule, in the same manner, as with us they tie sheep or calves, who, in spite of his cries, was being conducted to Bogota, there to be tried for the crime of desertion. I had often before been astonished how a people, softened by a peace which had lasted three centuries, could thus quickly adopt a conduct so different from that to which they had been so long accustomed. May not the cause be discovered in those combats with animals which the Spaniards introduced, and which habituating the people to spectacles of blood, prepared them for still more barbarous actions ? It is true that these dreadful tragedies seldom ended in death, yet notwithstanding, the Americans found in these exercises such perils and so lively a representation of war as familiarised them with the contest in which they afterwards dared to engage.

I must confess that Guaduas appeared to me less pleasing upon descending from Bogota, than when I passed through it on my first journey ; the features of the inhabitants, gene-

rally agreeable, now appeared to me to be pale and emaciated ; and I remarked a great number of goitres which had escaped my notice in the midst of those illusions which this village had excited, on quitting the wretched shores of the Magdalena. I also perceived with regret, that the same men whom I formerly considered so cheerful and happy, were little better than noisy and intruding drunkards.

In fact the people are incessantly employed in drinking brandy mixt with anniseed, under the pretence that this liquor is absolutely necessary in a hot climate ; a maxim, which as far as regards the moderate use, may be well founded, for it is very singular, that the ruling but feeble race of whites can neither exist nor work in the torrid zone, without drinking to excess. As soon as the weather becomes hot, they groan under its oppression, and the inhabitants of Guaduas afford a strong proof of the torments their fellow whites endure. Although the heat is very great in this city, it is however supportable, they are however continually complaining of it ; sometimes it is too hot, at others, they have violent stomach or head-aches. The higher classes of people especially, amongst whom goitres are most frequently found, enjoy but a very precarious state of health.

I was obliged to remain at Guaduas until the 20th of August, when blindly confiding in

the directions with which some of the inhabitants furnished me, I pursued the route they recommended. I started at half past ten in the morning, and, by noon, gained the summit of the chain of mountains which enclose the valley of Guaduas towards the west. I here contemplated with admiration the immense plains, amongst which the Magdalena rolls its course. Thick forests cover its banks, and I imagined that a coolness might be found there, which would enable me to support the volumes of heat that I beheld, in the form of vapours, circulating in these burning regions. Scarcely had I descended a few yards, when I found myself envelopped in a suffocating atmosphere, which became still more overpowering when I arrived at the foot of the mountains. I was travelling in the shade, but not a breath of wind agitated the trees; on the contrary, their thick foliage deprived me of the little air I had respired in places more exposed.

I had been previously informed that I should meet with no habitation in these deserts, but I had at least hoped to find water, the parched up beds of the torrents, however, no where afforded me a single drop; it seemed as if, in a few hours, I had passed from the southern provinces of France, to the burning deserts of Africa. We were now so overcome with fatigue, that after consulting with the guide whom I had en-

gaged at Guaduas, I turned out of my route, and following a narrow path, arrived at an inhabited place called *el Puerto del Corral*, not far from the Magdalena.

The vicinity of this river has transformed the agriculturists, who have retired there, into fishermen. Their large nets, hung out upon the hedges which protect their sugar-cane fields from the cattle, made me believe that I should at least procure some fish. I asked for some, but was informed that the present season being that in which the southern winds prevailed, the fish were not able to ascend the river, in consequence of these gales increasing the rapidity of the current.

This period of the year is, for these poor people, one of the greatest misery; the burnt up plains are no longer productive, pasture is no where to be found; even the borders of the rivers, whose stony beds now serve as a road, are destitute of all verdure. Every thing languishes in that season which Europeans call the spring, the rigour of which rather recalls to mind our severest winters. During this time of scarcity, no less felt by man than by his flocks, the only nourishment he derives is from some bananas; while a few sugar canes supply him with the only article of comfort, that can make him forget the heats so destructive to his health.

The white inhabitants of these hot countries

who, like all other men of that colour living within the tropics, are sickly, whatever may have been the period at which their ancestors took up their residence there, employ this season to some advantage ; it is then that they set fire to the bushes that cover the fields, and which, during the rainy season, are converted into verdant meadows ; in the same manner, they burn the woods, in which they intend, either to sow maize, or plant sugar canes. These conflagrations, which destroy a great portion of the ancient forests, illumined with their brilliancy, the darkness of the night, for it is then that they generally set fire to them. Less industrious than the Africans, the inhabitants of these countries suffer their cattle to perish, rather than take, like the negroes, the trouble of procuring them food from the herbage of the trees, by which they might be supported during the terrible interval between the wet seasons.

Venting our execrations on those who had induced us to take this frightful road, which is that used by smugglers, we arrived at nine o'clock at Puerto-Chaguani. It was here, upon the borders of the Magdalena, which I had already coasted, that a suffocating heat indicated the approach of the disorder with which I was about to be attacked. In fact, before I could get to Palmar, the heat of the sun, and an intolerable thirst occasioned a violent fever : I was forced

to alight under the outhouses of a cane mill, where I remained until the evening of the following day, very uneasy about the result of so sudden an illness. On the 22nd, I got as far as Palmar, where continual vomitings indicated that it was not there that I could hope for the re-establishment of my health; I therefore resolved to return to the mountains, and the next day began to climb their sides. In proportion as I ascended, a salutary perspiration increased, a freer respiration succeeded, and by the time I arrived at St. Juan, I felt myself considerably better. This beautiful village, situated upon the top of one of those mountains, which overlook the Magdalena, presents an appearance of comfort which must indeed be found there, since it is the resting place for the tobacco merchants, who coming from Ambalema, have passed the river in their journey to Santa-Fè.

Unfortunately neither the beauty of the situation, nor the continual passage of travellers, has inspired the members of the family of Rubio, the sole possessors of the village, with sentiments of hospitality. I could find no accommodation in St. Juan, and should have been obliged to have quitted it, if an amiable and charitable young man, the curate of the place, had not offered me an asylum in his own parsonage-house; during the two days that I remained there my health rapidly improved. I did not

however consider myself sufficiently recovered to prosecute my journey direct to Popayan ; it appeared to me requisite to seek some more efficacious remedies than I could procure at St. Juan, and I consequently resolved to return to Guaduas.

I bade adieu to this obliging curate, who had lately arrived at St. Juan, and who, in the midst of the respect, or to speak more correctly, the adoration of which he was the object, (for no one spoke to him but with bended knee,) had deigned to bestow upon me all the kind attentions of disinterested friendship. By noon, I was at Chiguani, a miserable spot, where the wretchedness of the inhabitants afforded me no assistance. I continued my journey to Guaduas on the 26th and arrived there before noon. Here I devoted a fortnight to the re-establishment of my health, which three days of sickness, caused by too rapid a change from a moderate temperature to the equatorial heats, had terribly shattered.

By the 25th of September, I thought myself sufficiently recovered to be again able to proceed to Popayan, whither I was accompanied by a mulatto, who had been recommended to me by the civil magistrate of Guaduas. I traversed the same route which I had previously pursued, and the same evening got as far as Mora, a hamlet upon the banks of the Magdalena. Al-

though I very much regretted the delay occasioned by my illness, I found that the latter part of the season possessed many advantages that I could not enjoy in my former journey. The sky being more cloudy, I was, in some measure, protected from the scorching rays of the sun, while stronger gales from the south made the atmosphere less oppressive.

At two o'clock in the afternoon of the following day, I reached Beltran, the place of embarkation for crossing the Magdalena on the way to Ambalema. I had been advised to travel along the right bank in ascending the river, but I gave a preference to the left, as affording me an opportunity of making a greater number of observations, of which in particular the tobacco plantations of Ambalema presented some that were very interesting.

The passage of the Magdalena, which is often attended with danger, I safely accomplished, at the expense of a dollar, in a piruaga, to which my three mules were tied; and I landed without accident upon the other side. An hour's journey brought me from the place of disembarkation to Ambalema. This village, which encloses within its boundaries some plantations of tobacco of an excellent quality, enjoys a moderate degree of prosperity. Every person seems in a bustle, and being better furnished with the means of subsistence, the inha-

bitants appear to be less afflicted with disease, than in other parts of this country. Ambalema is badly built, and its church, forming an exception very uncommon in Colombia, would, as an edifice, be destitute of all interest if it did not possess a choir of violins and wind instruments, that might vie into competition with the best that are to be found in the rest of the republic.

The quantity of tobacco exported from Ambalema, is estimated at 2 or 3,000 loads, and the farming of it would be productive of much benefit to the government, were it not deprived of the greatest part of its revenues by the contraband trade, which maintains its ground in despite of the twenty guards, who are here supported at an expense of twenty dollars per month for each man. It is singular that, in all parts of the world, this class of men should be the subject of public animadversion, and even here, their culpable indulgence does not protect them from the hatred of the people.

Tobacco of the first quality costs government three dollars per arroba, and of the second quality, ten reals ; it is retailed to private individuals at double this price. The time of making these purchases is in April, May, and June. At a little distance to the east of Ambalema, is a place called Peladero, containing, according to report, many gold mines.

On the 18th of September, after having taken

a fresh guide, which is indispensable in the plains of Magdalena where so many roads intersect each other, I left Ambalema. On the opposite side of the river I could discern nothing but very high mountains covered with forests, while the side on which I was travelling, was entirely destitute of the least shelter from the sultry heat of the day. The stony soil reflected the rays of the sun with terrible violence, and occasioned us much suffering, from which we could find no alleviation but in the pure and limpid stream that descends from the paramos of the western Cordilleras.

We crossed the Benadillo which was nearly dry, although frequently at this season the mountain streams of the west suddenly swell, from the melting of the snow, to such an extent, that travellers are compelled to remain several days before they can ford them in safety. On the other side, on the contrary, the rivers being fed only by the rain, their parched beds afford, at the same period, an easy and commodious path.

On both sides of the Magdalena, a few isolated cottages constructed with reeds, and containing a sickly and feeble population composed of different races of beings, are the sole asylums in these desolate regions; thus, while in Africa the negroes congregate in small communities to defend themselves against the invasions of their neighbours, in these countries the inhabi-

tants pass their days remote from one another ; a few cows constituting their whole fortune, the wine of their palm trees their sole consolation.

Sometimes they are found to possess a horse, whose whole harness consists of wooden stirrups, rope reins, and a piece of flat wood, by way of a saddle, while the little flesh upon his bones attests the frequent fasts he is obliged to endure in these sun-burnt plains. These animals are not however very dear, the best horses not selling for more than twenty dollars a piece. The master suffers as much from hunger as his beast, a little flour of maize being all his nourishment.

I alighted about six o'clock at the hut of one of these savages in a place called Puertillo, but I only required a room for my luggage, as the mild temperature of the nights made me prefer sleeping in the open air. My hosts were plunged into the deepest misery, and I could have imagined I had before my eyes a family of Moors. The covering of the females perfectly recalled to my mind that of the women of Sahara, they wore a dress of blue African cotton, without sleeves, which they fastened across their shoulders with a cotton lace. The men wore nothing but a pair of drawers, and the upper part of their bodies were so sun-burnt, that the colour of their skin was almost completely black. They passed the whole of the night in drinking palm-wine, which, from their ignorance of the use of the African

hoop, they procure by felling the tree. This method would ultimately drain the source of their pleasures, if the infinite number of the palm-trees and the smallness of the population did not, at least for a long time to come, remove the apprehension of so great a misfortune.

At an early hour in the morning, we left this hut of christian savages of the Magdalena, and soon after met some inhabitants of Ibagua, who were going on a pilgrimage to Mendes, a village at a little distance from Honda. An image of the holy Virgin has given it celebrity; when this was first placed there, the town was very diminutive, but since that time it has increased every year in a most miraculous manner. Religion, in thus imparting a peculiar sanctity to certain places, has opened a way for commerce, and has established communications amongst men in spite of bad roads, the dangers of the journey, and the policy acted upon by the Spaniards which tended to isolate the inhabitants as much as possible.

The heat appeared to me to be more supportable in proportion as we advanced towards the south, and approached the source of the river; the vicinity of the snowy summits of Quindiu, was the principal cause of this change in the temperature; the ground was much less arid, and much less encumbered with stones. The grass was no longer rarely to be found, nor was it

burnt up with the heat ; the appearance of the verdure reanimated our beasts, and gladdened our sight. We were now in the vast meadows of the Cordilleras ; and, had it not been for the rays of the sun and the sight of the palm-trees, which on all sides majestically waved their heads, I could have believed that I had quitted the burning soil of the tropics, and had again entered the European vallies of the Cordilleras.

I crossed the Totarus, and afterwards the China, two rivers of great magnitude in the rainy season, but which, at other periods, are very low. Our passage up them was therefore effected without danger, although we were a long time in discovering the ford ; a hut at a little distance afforded us an asylum.

I now greatly congratulated myself that I had taken the route of the Magdalena for my journey to Popayan, in preference to that of the Mesa, which is usually preferred ; for one experiences an infinite satisfaction in the traversing, in all its length, the immense valley of this river, no less beautiful than the plateau of Bogota. I had the advantage of enjoying a very refreshing gale from the south, which sprung up about two o'clock every day, and continued blowing till night, sufficiently strong to temper the ardent heat of the sun. The people that I met with on the road enabled me to form an opinion of the inhabitants in the plains of the Oronooko, to whom I was assured they bore a great resemblance.

I crossed the Chipalo early in the morning, as well as several other rivers, the deep vallies of whose beds intersected my path at every step; a circumstance that had not happened to us before, as the waters of the torrents we had hitherto passed were on a level with the surrounding plains. We left Ibagua on our left; and, although we were at a considerable distance, could clearly distinguish the church steeple, though almost an imperceptible point in the midst of the prodigious summits of Quindiu, which elevated themselves above the town. If my design of proceeding along the course of the Magdalena, as far as Neyva, had not been thoroughly determined upon, the sight of this imposing spectacle would have instantly inspired me with the resolution of crossing the Quindiu, and entering the valley of Cauca. Every thing conduced to invite me to such an undertaking; the season was very favourable, the mountains, at this time, well frequented, presented but few dangers, and without having recourse to the shoulders of porters, this terrible passage might have been performed in five days, upon mules trained at Ibagua for that purpose, and hired at the trifling expence of sixteen dollars.

I, however, continued my route to Neyva, and had no reason to repent of my determination. Thanks to the influence of the mountains covered with snow, which form the Quindiu, the verdure was every where most

beautiful. The less shrivelled appearance of the shrubs announced a less arid temperature than that which pervaded the lower regions. We had a still better opportunity of observing the beneficial effects of a change in the temperature, on descending into the deep abyss which forms the bed of the Cuello. The chilly, limpid streams of this river, which rises in the snowy tops of Cartago, run through a tract of country much lower than the surrounding plains, so that when we viewed them from the level of the river, they appeared like a chain of mountains, nor was it possible for us to conceive that they were all of an equal altitude.

The coolness experienced in these deep hollows is most delicious, and the vegetation is on the grandest scale; nothing can be more delightful than the ravine of the Cuello. It might be said to be composed of different stages, and the lower one descends, the greater the fertility becomes; it is for this reason that it is chosen as a spot for the cultivation of tobacco, and the crop which it produces is considered the best of the Magdalena. The breadth of this valley is considerable, and although it is a long journey to reach the opposite banks, the prospect on all sides is so extremely beautiful, that the distance is lost in the enjoyment of it. The gentle warmth that is felt between the tropics, the shade of the palm and the bombax, and the fresh verdant turf

which is like a carpet under the feet, impart such sensations of delight, as banish every idea of fatigue. Our joy was complete, on receiving the rights of hospitality in the residence of one of the guardians of these fruitful abodes. So great a value is set upon the spots appropriated to the rearing of cattle, that very strong hedges are every where planted : these are kept in excellent order, and are provided with large gates, which are carefully guarded by men.

The inexpressible charm of these places has naturally imparted some amenity to the character of the inhabitants. They possess none of that ferocious aspect which distinguishes their neighbours in the plains of Puertillo ; they are obliging, attentive, and hospitable, with an air of robust health created by plenty of good food. I here provided myself with a stock of meat dried in the sun.* Near the puerta San Francisco, where we had passed the night, is the beginning of the plain which is called by the natives *Llano Grande*, and which is distinguished from every other we had before passed over by the almost perpetual verdure that every where covers it ; by the very few stones to be found upon it ; and by the considerable number of cattle that were seen grazing in every direction. Three roads are found at the puerta San Francisco : one leading to

* The butchers cut their meat into strips, and sell it by the yard.

Espinal, a village situated near the borders of the Magdalena; the other to Goamon, which is a little further distant from it; and the third to San-Luis, built at the foot of the western Cordilleras. I took the latter. We travelled upon a Sunday, and met numbers of people upon the road going to visit their respective priests; those who were on their way to San-Luis soon left me behind them, men and women being all mounted on horseback. The females were wrapped from head to foot in cotton dresses, to protect them from the sun; for, to repeat what I have before observed, both whites and mulattoes are unable, like the negroes, to support the intensity of its rays.

After having passed the mountains of Guaduas, I approached the Cordilleras; it became necessary to descend into the abyss, which the Luisa has worked in its passage, and which presents a frightful sterility, scarcely the least verdure appearing even upon the borders of the river; the opening by which it escapes from the barrier of the Cordilleras, appears to have been the effect of an earthquake.

We were completely bewildered amid the intricacies of a real labyrinth, and were many times obliged to cross the dangerous bed of the river, and travel along its sandy banks. It was four o'clock before we quitted this gulf, which we had entered at three. Having at length sur-

mounted these difficulties, I had the pleasure of seeing San-Luis, where I soon arrived. A spectacle of desolation arrested my attention : a few days before, half the village had been destroyed by fire, and notwithstanding the generosity of N. Caicedo, one of the richest proprietors of this country, many of the inhabitants still remained in the streets.

Thanks to the care of this worthy man, I did not experience the same inconvenience ; for I obtained a very comfortable lodging in the parsonage-house. Here I remained two days, being obliged to exchange one of my mules that had got injured, and procure myself another guide, both which arrangements were concluded to my satisfaction.

The site of the village of San-Luis is very beautiful : well sheltered by the mountains from the north-easterly winds, its temperature is continually refreshed by gentle gales ; and although its seclusion from the more frequented parts might seem to prevent its becoming of any commercial importance, the sale of sugar manufactured from the plantations of sugar-cane which abound in its neighbourhood, causes it to be much frequented by dealers in that article. The neighbouring mountains abound in mines of silver.

Almost every body is either afflicted with goitres, or covered with the black leprosy, which

afflicts the white population in the same manner as the white leprosy attacks the blacks: both the one and the other render the inhabitants most hideous figures.

Upon arriving at San-Luis on the 22d of September, I found the rains had already commenced in these plains. I therefore started the next day to endeavour to reach the sources of the river before the wet might impede my further progress. Before night-fall, I halted at a solitary hut; but I was well prepared against any deficiency of provisions, as it had been my practice for a long time to carry with me a store for several days, especially of bread, since in all these regions no species of corn is cultivated: it is imported from the eastern Cordilleras.

I found my guide, with whom I was well satisfied, to be an interesting, intelligent fellow, and far from possessing the usual taciturnity of the Indians; he talked much, and kept up a very animated conversation. Born in Socorro, he had all the vivacity of his countrymen; had been a great traveller; had made considerable observations: and, what was more surprising, recollected all he had seen. I learnt from him, that in the chain of the Quindiu, at the foot of which we were travelling, there still existed many tribes of independent Indians, but that there was no danger to be apprehended in meeting with them,

as had been sufficiently proved by numbers of persons who were proscribed during the late warfare, and had sought refuge in the woods that cover these mountains.

We perceived Chaparral in the south-west, at the extremity of a very extensive plain, separated by a chain of mountains from that in which we were; its distance is one day's journey from San-Luis; it is celebrated for the storms that continually burst over it, and the rich minerals that are discovered at every step; the hollow in which Chaparral is situated, into which, in the rainy season, the north-east winds drive with all their fury, is without doubt the cause of those meteors that so frequently glide along its atmosphere, continually charged with vapours.

At an early hour, we reached the borders of the Saldana river, which rises in the Chaparral, and from the sands of whose banks some gold is obtained; but the thirsty traveller regards as a treasure, far more precious the palm-trees that overshadow its waters, less pure, indeed, than those of the Cuello; but at the same time less chilly, and consequently less dangerous. A piruaga carried us across for the moderate charge of two reals.

We now entered the territories of the Indians of Coaima *, whose villages are situated upon the

* It is not without reason that the Indians regret the ancient order of things, since they then enjoyed the privileges

brow of the western mountains. Upon quitting the borders of the Saldana, we could discover nothing before us but plains of an immense extent, covered with withered herbage; the soil is nevertheless of a very good quality, but it is never refreshed by the cool breezes that blow from off the snowy mountains of the Quindiu.

The assertion, that the Indians possess none of those virtues which atone for many of the vices of the mulattoes, is not incorrect; the truth of this I experienced in one of those huts which we encountered in our route, and in which I determined to pass the night, as in these solitudes no better habitation was to be seen. I could not attribute the cold reception I experienced, to the generally received opinion of every stranger being a heretic, but rather to the egotism of my host, and to the blind hatred of the Indians to every individual who does not belong to their cast.

Like all the Indians inhabiting the plains, the family of my host wore no other clothing

of landed proprietors : the republic has deprived them of these, by making them only usufructuaries of that property, of which it is virtually the sole possessor, since it alone has the right of selling it. The republic has, however, given to the Indian villages, alcalds of their own cast, subject to a white alcald; but the latter exercises no other species of authority over them than that of transmitting to them the orders of government.

than a strip of cloth round their loins in the manner of the Africans, the rest of the body being quite naked. A flock of sheep, which they watched with an attention common through all the Cordilleras, formed the whole of their fortune. The wool, which is but of a very indifferent quality, is collected with great care, and sold in the neighbouring villages at the price of twelve reals the arroba. This is a great change from what was formerly the practice, for they used actually to pay persons for shearing the sheep, and did not set the least value upon the wool. Arts and civilization gradually advance; but how slow is the education of these people! All foreigners are still Triptolemi, Bacchusses, and Vulcans, and cannot but be benefactors in a country where the people are ignorant of every thing. Compared with the state of perfection to which we have arrived, the inhabitants of South America bear the same relation to us, as they bore to the Spaniards at the time of the discovery of this continent; they knew nothing then, and actually all they know now is by hearsay, or by a few books, which some educated persons have commenced reading; nothing as yet has been carried into execution.

The following day, about noon, I passed through Natagaima, another Indian village, formerly built in another place, and afterwards removed here from motives of salubrity and greater

public utility. According to the popular tradition, the patron saint of the ancient place has twice set fire to the new church; so that, when I visited it, Natagaima was without a place of worship. I know not why they call this miserable hamlet an Indian village, for it contains but very few Indians, nearly all the inhabitants being mulattoes, and as it is only about six leagues from la Purification, many of the inhabitants of this part of the Magdalena have settled at Natagaima. On the opposite side in the eastern Cordilleras we had a prospect of the villages of Paramo and Alpujada.

From the place where I crossed the Anchiqua, the distance between the two Cordilleras is lessened, and the plains begin to be covered with bushy trees. Two days after we perceived a mountain which projected forward into the plains like a promontory into the ocean; and by six in the evening we arrived at the spot: its name is Pakande, and I was informed it contained copper-mines. From the numerous volcanic stones which are every where scattered about, as well as from the gaps in the earth, of which there are numerous traces, and from the peak with which the Pakanda is surmounted, there cannot be the least doubt of its having been, at some period, the mouth of a volcano.

Having fallen in with some huts at a little distance, we demanded hospitality: it was offered

us by a little child, and during the time that we were making the best use of it, he made his escape to announce our arrival, and to give an alarm to his friends, who were occupied in the fields. Thus, until six o'clock in the evening, we were sole occupiers of the dwelling; at this time the proprietor returned, and appeared tranquillized as to our intentions, satisfied that, without standing upon any ceremony, we had made ourselves at home. At the bottom of his heart, this Indian, perhaps, cursed our intrusion; for to speak the truth, the continual passage of undisciplined troops, has every where greatly increased the distress of the inhabitants; if they suppose that the traveller is a military man, they betake themselves to flight as soon as they gain sight of him, as they would at the approach of an implacable enemy, and the timid beings leave him master of all they possess: this is not worth much, scarcely ever exceeding a little maize, and a few green bananas.

My foreign appearance has often made me pass some miserable moments, for after the fatigues of a toilsome day, when I have approached a place to which I had fondly looked forward to obtaining some comfortable refreshment, I have found myself unable to obtain either fire or water, and have been obliged to content myself with some bananas, and the bread and dried meat which I always carried with me:—if on the

contrary the master of the house has had the courage to remain, and if to the question with which he invariably at first addressed me : " Colonel, are your soldiers with you ?" I replied, " I have none," his countenance has sparkled with joy, and, his fears being dissipated, he has treated me with an obliging attention that dread could never have commanded.

On the 26th we quitted the territory of the Indians of Natagaima, through every part of which reigns a frightful solitude. At eleven o'clock, I passed that part in which the western Cordillera has the least width, so that upon gaining the summit, the route is continually upon a descent towards the west, we there saw the village of Lateko, near which are the gold mines of Apore, said to be very rich. Further on we entered upon a more woody country, covered with palm-trees, the trunks of which are stronger than those were of Africa, the oil extracted from them is of great importance as an article of commerce ; it is used instead of butter. At intervals, posts are set up to mark the distances, and here and there tambos,* for the accommodation of travellers, as it is but very rarely that any habitations are to be met with ; they may indeed occasionally be seen, but then they are perched upon the steepest acclivities, and so dispersed, that they doubtless have but very little communication

* A Peruvian word, signifying caravansary.

with each other. The distance at which these people live from any parish church, obliges them to inter their dead in the fields. These tombs are usually erected by the side of the most frequented routes, and thus amidst the wilds of the Cordillera we may recognize a custom that was common to the Greeks and Romans. These sepulchres, the sole evidence of the residence of human beings, do not, in such a situation, excite melancholy reflections, as they show that, at a short distance, resides the family of the person who here reposes in his last abode, and a certain pleasure is experienced at the certainty of not being in an uninhabited desert. I however forbore seeking in the woods for the concealed dwellings, and hastened to arrive again upon the borders of the Magdalena which I crossed at a place that is called Samborja. The river, at this spot, is not very wide, and its green tinged waters show that it is fed from the sources of the Paramos.

We soon crossed to the other side, where we obtained a little refreshment from some fishermen. We partook of it in company with some bogas, who were conducting balsas or rafts laden with cocoa. Each raft contained twenty loads, the expense being six dollars for the whole voyage. This means of carriage is the one mostly used in these cantons, on account of the rocky banks every where met with, besides the luggage boats

seldom come higher up the river than Ambalema.

The heat of the place as well as the noisy company with which I was surrounded, determined me to sleep in the open air, at the risk of being blooded by the mosquitoes. This was not the only inconvenience which reminded me of the uncomfortable resting places lower down the river, for in this one, the crying of children, with the dread of serpents, scorpions, and millepedes, very common in these parts, did not leave me a single moment of repose. Happy should I have been if my hostess, to relieve the wearisomeness of a long night, had continued chaunting her Indian ditties whilst she was swinging in her hammock, and accompanying herself with her guitar. By midnight every one except myself was in a state of repose, but the hideous noises made by a troop of pigs and dogs, that seemed to try which could most frighten each other, prevented me from closing my eyes.

At day break, I ordered the guides to saddle the mules, and joyfully quitted the unfortunately encountered hut of Samborja. Before ten I arrived at Villa-Vieja, a village about six Spanish leagues distance, where I established myself for the remainder of the day, under a shed thatched with reeds, that an inhabitant gave me permission to occupy. The road as far as Villa-Vieja had been excessively fatiguing for seve-

ral days past ; there were none of those south-westerly breezes that so charmingly temper the plains of Ambalema and San-Louis. We had travelled all the day under a burning heat, caused by the nature of the ground which is composed of sharp stones, and rocks bearing so close a resemblance to ruined fortresses, that it is difficult not to imagine them the produce of men's labour ; these works of nature vie with those astonishing pyramids that Ulloa mentions having seen in his travels in Peru.

Villa-Vieja is situated at a little distance from the Magdalena, the heat of its climate is suffocating, on account of the approximation of the two Cordilleras, the eastern range of which is here so little elevated, that it forms no impediment to the winds of the plains of Guaviare, which sweep along the bed of the river. It is asserted that these winds never reach across the Magdalena, but I had no opportunity of verifying the fact ; it is not so however with the northerly winds, for their influence is general.

The church of Villa-Vieja, which they were building when I was at the place, deserves some notice. Its architect is a negro ; his plan upon the model of some churches at Bogota is regular, and shews much study and good taste. This edifice will cost the parish 14,000 dollars, but this enormous sum will be paid by all the wealthy inhabitants, each being required to

leave at his death, funds sufficient to construct a square yard of the building.*

Opposite to Villa-Vieja, is Aipa, a village inhabited by Indians, who are reputed by the lower orders to be well skilled in astrology.

The heat, which I had experienced during the preceding day, made me regret that I had not followed the advice of my guides, to travel as much as possible by night. For once I gave them credit for being right, and leaving Villa-Vieja at two o'clock in the morning, we got to Fortalissa by ten; here I found some merchants who were travelling to Bogota with the intention of making a purchase of salt, and carrying it to Popayan.

Resuming my journey, I discovered in the midst of the arid plains in which I had been travelling since the morning, a wood intersected with numerous paths, forming a screen that deprived us of a view of Neyva, but affording us a shelter from the overpowering heat which we had experienced in the plains of Villa-Vieja. Some brooks spread around a delicious coolness in these groves, and their waters flowed on all sides through a multitude of trenches which the inhabitants of Neyva had opened, to water the roots of their cocoa trees. The cool temperature enjoyed in this place is very agreeable,

* The bricks used in this building, are very large; they cost 15 piastres a thousand.

and the air was scented with the perfume of flowers which grew along the borders of the rivulets. I forgot all my sufferings in this delightful garden, although, had it been the rainy season, I should, on the contrary, have been miserable at finding myself in the midst of impassable marshes, formed by the overflowing of the rivers, and arresting the progress of every traveller.

At two o'clock we entered Neyva, where hospitality was immediately afforded us, for which we were indebted to one of the wealthy inhabitants. I requested a continuance of his courtesy for two days, but he would not limit it. This time was however sufficient for me to procure a mule, one of my own having been injured at Fortalissa. They had neglected shoeing it, an omission which causes the loss of great numbers of these beasts of burden. I had also to procure a new guide, the one whom I had engaged at San-Louis being about to leave me and return home.

Neyva which is seventeen days' journey from Bogota, is the chief town of the province of that name. It is situated on the borders of the Magdalena, was formerly built on the mountains, where the Andaquis, a race of savage Indians living in the neighbourhood, massacred all the inhabitants; the terror which they spread occasioned the site of the new town to be placed

near the river, so that, upon the least alarm, the people might embark and escape their fury.

The climate of Neyva is excessively hot, but the waters of the Magdalena are very cold, being supplied from the neighbouring paramos. Their colour is greenish, and although their taste is not disagreeable, the springs, which traverse the town, are preferred for drinking. The caymans never show themselves near Neyva.

Opposite this place, is the hamlet of Saint Andras, in the environs of which gold is collected. The ground near the village of St. Antonio, situated in the cold regions of the eastern Cordilleras, produces a great quantity of fine vegetables. No difficulty would therefore be experienced in obtaining crops of corn, but the inhabitants, reluctant to depart from long established customs, prefer bringing flour from Bogota, at the rate of sixteen dollars per load, to procuring it at their own doors with very little trouble.

Cocoa forms the principal riches of Neyva. It is estimated that this province alone furnishes annually two thousand loads, a large portion of which comes from the town of Timana, although its population does not exceed two thousand souls. A load of cocoa cost thirty piastres. The expense of transporting it to Honda, is estimated at twenty reals. It is one of those articles, which with coffee and sugar, is not subject to tithes.

As Neyva produces no sugar, it is obtained either from Mesa, or from la Plata, at the rate of one real per pound ; salt likewise is procured from the same place at the same price.

The inhabitants of Neyva have, by the way of Timana, some intercourse with the Andaquis, who live about eight days' journey from this place, near the source of the Magdalena. They furnish these Indians with knives, looking-glasses, glass beads, &c., and receive in exchange wax of a brilliant whiteness, and varnish which they use in covering several sorts of wooden bowls. The preparation of this varnish is very simple ; the workman puts it in his mouth, masticates it, spreads it into leaves with the palms of his hands, and thus applies it on the colours. Neyva is by no means opulent, for the war, as well as the frequent ravages of the ants, has nearly ruined it. The streets are not paved, there are not six houses covered with tiles. The greater part of the population is composed of men of colour, and the diseases to which they are most subject are the elephantiasis and leprosy.

The principal town in the province after Neyva is Timana, situated near the sources of the Magdalena ; this town is the last of the republic in the basin of this river ; beyond it only a few hamlets, some solitary huts and savages are to be met with. The journey to the sources of the Magdalena cannot be performed on horseback,

for the roads, upon some of the highest mountains are so narrow, as only to be traversed by foot passengers.

Rafts are the only mode of navigation in all these parts, the trunk of a tree forms the keel, and some reeds the deck and hold. On these fragile rafts guided only by a single oar, a whole family will sometimes fearlessly commit itself to the rapid current of the river, being certain that their flexible materials will bend, but not break, if dashed against the rocks. In this manner a poor labourer prepares for his journey to Honda. He hastily constructs his raft, places in it a few sacks of cocoa, seats his wife upon them, and, with his dog at his side, takes his oar, and through the midst of the breakers, steers his hopes and his beloved, whose cotton mantle sometimes suspended to the mast, forms a sail which increases the swiftness of his bark.