

CHAPTER X.

Survey of the western coast of Nueva Granada—Return to Panama—Departure for Peru—Coyba—Iguana Island—Payta—Callao—Viscount d'Ozery—Lima—Payta—Journey through the desert—Piura—Travelling in the interior.

ON the 26th of January, 1847, we left the Port of Perico, to commence surveying the Bay of Panama, and until the end of April we were employed in sounding, taking angles and sights, working out the observations, and laying down the results on charts. Hydrographical surveys are always tedious and laborious, but they are peculiarly so on a coast like that of New Granada, where heavy showers of rain are followed by the sudden appearance of the sun, and noxious vapours which such a change produces; where muddy mangrove-swamps, swarming with alligators and generating unhealthy miasmata, line the shores for miles together; where in some places mosquitoes are so numerous, that the surveyor requires more than human patience to endure the stings to which he is subjected; and where the nights are often so hot and oppressive, that sleep is

sought in vain. A chart may seem to be very simple to those who are not aware of the skill, diligence, and expense required to complete it; but those who have watched its progress, and the amount of labour required to finish even a small piece of such a delineation, look upon it with different eyes, and are able to appreciate the vast treasures which the Hydrographical Office, by its publications, is constantly offering to the public.

We carried on the surveying operations along the coast of Panama and Darien, until the rains, towards the end of April, began to be so incessant that we were compelled to discontinue our task, and go back to Panama road. On the 21st of April, H.M.St.S. Sampson, with Rear-Admiral Sir George Seymour, arrived from Callao. On the following day we saluted the flag of Nueva Granada with twenty-one guns. The Republic returned the compliment, and Don Tomas Herrera, who was at that time Governor of the province of Panama, gave a ball in honour of the Admiral and Captain Kellett's expedition; indeed, there was a great deal of good feeling manifested by the inhabitants. At the ball all the "belles" of the city were assembled; there was a profusion of pearls on that occasion, the ladies being generally well supplied with that article, pearl-fishing having been pursued on the coast ever since the discovery of the Pacific Ocean. Most of the Panamanian ladies have handsome countenances, regular features, dark sparkling eyes, and fine black hair. Their figure, however, is generally defective: being in the habit of having their dresses open behind when at home, and not wearing any stays, they have no waist, and do not look

well in ball costume. The dances performed were mostly slow waltzes, contradances, and quadrilles, polkas and gallops being too heating in such a climate as that of Panama. Towards the end of the festivity we were entertained by the introduction of the "*punta*," a dance performed only by a single pair, and being a great favourite among the negroes and zainboes, but now almost proscribed in refined circles,—which, by the bye, from its frivolous tendency, is not to be regretted: of course it was only shown to us in order to give us a notion of one of the "*costumbres del pays*."

On the last day of April we departed from Panama, towed by the Sampson, and on the 1st of May anchored off the island of Coyba, coast of Veraguas, for the purpose of watering and wooding. Some of the carpenters of the steamer were blinded for several days at this place, from having cut down Manzanilla-trees (*Hippomane Mancinella*, Linn.), and got some of the poisonous milk of that plant into their eyes. Not being aware that salt water is an efficacious remedy, they had to suffer very great pain. A boat's crew of the Herald, when surveying on the coast of Darien, had the same misfortune from having lighted a fire with the branches; and I myself, I may mention, having gathered specimens of the tree for the herbarium, lost my sight for more than a day, and had to endure a smarting of the most acute nature, coupled with the fearful thought that I was never to see daylight again.

On the 6th of May we sailed, touching at Iguana Island, near Punta Mala, where we were joined by the Pandora, and then directed our course southwards, to

Peru. After beating against baffling winds, we reached Payta, and, having remained there two days, we continued our voyage and on the 28th of June anchored in the port of Callao, where H.M.S. Collingwood was met with. This part of the passage is most tedious, and the viceroys and high dignitaries during the old Spanish rule were well aware of it; for when coming from Panama, they always disembarked at Payta, and performed the journey to Lima by land: a road leading through a desert was preferred to calms and contrary winds.

The Peruvian newspapers were filled with accounts of a frightful murder which had been committed on the person of the French Viscount d'Ozery, who was exploring the interior of Peru. It appears that he embarked in the village of Bellavista, province of Jaen, accompanied by four native guides. When at a place called Puerto de Yusamaro, on the Marañon, one of the guides stabbed him with a dirk. The unhappy victim instantly fell to the ground, but, not being quite dead, another of the treacherous guides inflicted upon him the final blows. The four then divided the property and valuables amongst themselves, and returned to their village, saying that the Viscount had been slain by the hands of the Gebaros, a savage tribe of Indians. However, suspicion soon arose, a legal investigation took place, and the crime was traced to those who perpetrated it. Two of the guides were sentenced to suffer the extreme penalty of the law, and the others, who had had no active part in the foul deed, were condemned to imprisonment. Considering that the life taken was that of

a foreigner,—that great tracts of country still in the possession of wild Indians, over which the Republic has no control, had to be explored to ascertain the fate of the traveller,—and that the complicated nature of the case rendered its investigation extremely difficult, great praise is due to the Peruvian Government for the pains it took in bringing the offenders to justice.

During our stay, the ship's company of the Herald obtained "liberty," and the officers amused themselves as well as they could, playing cricket, riding on horse-back, going to Lima, and seeing everything that was to be seen. There were no bull-fights at this season, but the theatre was open, and Victor Hugo's "highly successful drama," as an English manager would say, was repeated several times. The play-house is about the size of the Adelphi theatre in London, but very dirty, and so full of fleas that a person has to take a more than ordinary interest in the performance to disregard the irritating operations to which he is exposed. It is almost as amusing to watch the movements of the audience as it is those of the actors. In the last two or three years, however, some improvements have been made, and an Italian opera company has been engaged to give variety to the Lima "season," and perform the masterpieces of their native land; for whatever our northern critics may say about the lyric dramas of the Italians, people of the south do enjoy them more than the classical compositions. Light music and light reading is what they admire. That thought and recreation, study and pleasure, may be coupled together, and even constitute one of the purest enjoyments of northern

nations, is a fact which but few of them are able to understand.

On the 23rd of July, 1847, H.M.S. Herald left the harbour of Callao, and reached Payta in five days, thus speedily accomplishing a distance which, in going down, had occupied her more than three weeks. Payta was all bustle and festivity. It was the 28th of July, the anniversary of Peruvian independence. Twenty-seven years had elapsed since General San Martin obtained possession of Lima, and proclaimed that Peru and Spain were no longer governed by the same head. The independence however was not finally secured until December 1824, when General Sucre defeated the Spanish forces at the battle of Ayacucho. The contest was then virtually concluded, though General Rodil held the Castle of Callao until the beginning of 1826. The fall of Callao deprived Spain of every inch of ground in the continent of America. Her policy, to secure to selfish and grasping officials the sole use and benefit of those magnificent regions, by excluding all foreigners and oppressing the children of the soil to an intolerable degree, was at an end, and she herself was lost, paralysed, and decayed through the very means which she used for self-aggrandisement; while the countries so long subject to her misrule, though paying dearly for experience and undergoing severe trials in striving for liberty, are looking on a much brighter future than that dawning on the Peninsula.

Payta owes its origin to the invasion of Pizarro, having been built as early as 1531. It soon attained a considerable degree of prosperity, on account of which, and in

consequence of its exposed situation, it was peculiarly open to predatory attacks. The first sack was made on the 26th of May, 1557, by Sir Thomas Cavendish, who found it "a neat, well-built place, of about two hundred houses," and left it, alas! a heap of smoking ruins. The next attack took place on the 2nd of November, 1604, under Captain Swan, in the *Cygnet*, of sixteen guns and 140 men, and the *Bachelor's Delight*, a fine vessel of thirty-six guns. By this descent the town was again burnt, after an offer by the rover to leave it unmolested if the inhabitants would ransom it with 3000 lbs. of flour, 300 lbs. of sugar, 25 jars of wine, and 1000 jars of water, had been rejected. Another attack was made by Captain George Shelvocke, in the *Speedwell*, a vessel of twenty guns and 130 or 140 men. The ship, on the 21st of March, 1720, hove-to off the *Peña Horadado*, a remarkable rock about four miles from the port, when Shelvocke landed in his boats with sixty or seventy men. Finding the town deserted, and the Spaniards refusing to ransom it for 1000 dollars, "it was burnt to the ground by way of farewell." While the greater part of the crew were engaged in shipping off all convenient moveables, a Spanish ship of fifty guns came into the bay; but the master, although he had only fifty men on board, gallantly engaged and beat her off. The next misfortune of the devoted town was brought about by more dignified actors. Commodore George Anson, in *H.B.M.S. Centurion*, attacked Payta on the 12th of November, 1741; he appears to have occupied three days in shipping off all he could get,—boat-loads of hogs, fowls, and other refreshments, besides money and

jewels. The burning of the place seems to have been wanton and unnecessary, but it was a custom which is only now beginning to disappear.

At present Payta is the most frequented seaport in northern Peru. Its climate is healthy, its harbour secure, its inhabitants hospitable ; but beauties as a town it has none, and of charms of situation it is destitute. It stands at the foot of a ridge of barren and desolate-looking mountains. The houses are about eight hundred in number, and built of bamboos and mud, and are, with a few exceptions, only one story high. The streets are narrow, irregular, and unpaved, the principal ones running from east to west. There are two churches, both dedicated to the rites of Roman Catholic worship. The only public square is the market-place. Wood being scarce, earthquakes frequent, and labour dear, all the public edifices are small, and undeserving of special description. The number of inhabitants is stated to be about 3000 ; they are chiefly of Indian descent ; whites, negroes, and the various shades produced by their intermixture are few. Since the Peruvian independence, several English merchants, who devote their attention principally to the Quina trade, have taken up their residence there.

The country adjacent being a desert, there are but few articles to be obtained at Payta. Salt, a product of Colan, is one of the chief exports : being of superior quality, and cheap, it is much disposed of to southern Peru, and also smuggled in considerable quantities into Ecuador, where salt forms one of the Government monopolies. Wood and water, the most necessary wants of shipping, are scarce ; the latter is brought on donkeys

from Chira, a river about twelve or fourteen miles distant; intentions are however entertained of boring Artesian wells in different places on the Peruvian coast, which, if carried into execution, will prove most beneficial. Goats, poultry, potatoes, camotes, yucas, yams, and Indian corn are brought from the interior, and are always to be had at a cheap rate. Sea-fish of a delicious flavour is caught in great variety, and appears to be the only eatable that Nature has dealt out with a bountiful hand to the place.

The Herald was to proceed from Payta to Guayaquil, in order to survey the river; and as that operation would employ the vessel several months, an opportunity was afforded to carry out a favourite idea of mine—exploring a part of the interior of South America. I intended to start from Payta, visit the towns of Piura, Loja, Cuenca, Riobamba, and Quito, and rejoin the Herald at Guayaquil; the views of Captain Kellett fortunately coincided with my own, and he permitted my friend Bedford Pim to accompany me. In making preparations for our departure, we were assisted by Mr. Higginson, the British Vice-consul, who kindly procured the necessary passports, mules, and guides.

On the 29th we departed. It was late in the afternoon when we reached the top of the mountain-ridge surrounding the town. We stopped a moment to take a last look at the place. Payta was as gay as on the previous day: music, dancing, and festivity were still kept up, flags were waving, and boats plying in the harbour. But what a difference when we turned towards our destination! A region of sand, a country without water,

a dreary wilderness met our view. We stood at the entrance of the desert, a tract of land extending over twenty-five degrees of latitude—more than fifteen hundred miles.

Our mules seemed to know that we were proceeding towards Piura, their home; for notwithstanding the deep sand, they walked at a steady pace and without stopping till eleven o'clock, when we saw a light, and shortly after came to an inn. The building was surrounded by several hundred mules and donkeys. The animals were feeding; the muleteers either sleeping, wrapt up in their ponchos, or sitting together in groups, chatting and smoking. The landlord, who seemed to have been roused from sleep, conducted us into a clean apartment, certainly one of the most respectable-looking we met with in Peru. Our supper, consisting of omelet, *tasajo*, and coffee, was soon got ready; and while we were eating, the landlord entertained us, telling us that his was the half-way house, the only house between Payta and Piura, and that we should have to ride from six to seven hours before we could reach the town; then, turning more to his private affairs, he explained how great were the difficulties in bringing food and water to the inn, and how considerable the expenses which such a transportation caused.

Having to wait for the rising of the moon before the journey could be resumed, and being exhausted by our preparations for starting and by the long ride, we did not keep awake long after supper, but lay down without undressing, and slept till one of the guides aroused us. We mounted our animals, and in a few minutes

had left the inn behind us. Most of the muleteers had the start of us, but ere long we came up with them, and proceeding to the same destination we soon became friends. Their songs, the many little anecdotes they told, and the numerous questions which we had to answer, all tended to shorten the night, and to make the journey less tiresome; still the ride was far from agreeable—the cold was acutely felt, and when dawn commenced our teeth were chattering violently. Luckily the dawn in the tropics is of short duration. The sun soon rose, and diffused a more genial temperature; but what a landscape did it illumine! As far as the eye could reach nothing was seen save a greyish sand and a few Algaroba-trees. Skeletons of animals, fallen victims to thirst and fatigue, were scattered about. The road was indicated at short distances by high poles, and wound along amidst mounds of shifting sand, the much-dreaded Medanos, the tombs of so many travellers.

Both ourselves and the mules began to get tired. The poor beasts besides seemed to suffer greatly from thirst; now and then they took a mouthful of sand, probably to quench the thirst by collecting the saliva. We were therefore delighted to behold towards eight o'clock the towers of Piura, and to stand half an hour later at the entrance of the town. Our clothes were thickly covered with dust, and whilst we were cleaning them the guides offered up prayers to the patron of the road, whose effigy we saw standing amidst a group of trees. Sending one of the men to Don Narciso Espinosa with a letter of introduction, we proceeded to the rancho of the guides. The messenger soon returned, stating that the gentleman

to whom we had been recommended was still asleep, but that his wife had taken the letter and promised to deliver it instantly. About an hour after Don Narciso arrived; he excused himself for coming so late, and informed us that from want of room he was unable to receive us into his house, but that he had procured lodgings for us at the residence of a friend. The owner of the house to which we were conducted received us kindly; he proved to be a gentleman from Lima, who had come to Piura to get cured of rheumatism, a disease for which the climate and the sand-hills of the neighbourhood are said to be excellent remedies. The patients are buried for nine days in the hot sand of the desert, with all save their heads covered, and afterwards have to lie in bed an equal space of time, constantly drinking decoctions of sarsparilla.

Our intention was to leave Piura as soon as possible, in order to penetrate further into the interior. We made a bargain for mules and donkeys to carry us as far as Sarsaranga, the first village in Ecuador; and submitted our passports to the sub-prefect of the province, Don Manuel Cafiote. The official, however, treated us most uncivilly, telling us in vehement language that the document we carried was merely intended from Peru, and that, if we wanted to go to Ecuador, we should have to get another passport, the cost of which would be three dollars. Vexing as it was to have to give three dollars for a piece of paper that would neither further our object nor identify our persons, we had to pay.

Having finished our arrangements we intended to leave on the 2nd of August, early in the morning. At

the appointed hour we had our boxes packed, our spurs put on, and everything got in readiness. But we had to wait till the afternoon, when the oldest of the guides arrived, trying to make a long face, and reporting that the mules had been in his court-yard, but that during the night several had escaped, and that hitherto his exertions to catch them had been unsuccessful. Having in accordance with the custom of the country paid in advance the whole sum for the hiring of the beasts, no alternative was left but to wait. To be entirely in the hands of these people is one of the greatest annoyances of South American travelling. Threats are of no avail, kindness is lost upon them, and paying in advance deprives the traveller of every check which otherwise he might exercise on their conduct. Buying animals is equally disadvantageous: unless the beasts belong to the muleteers, they pay no attention to them; the food, whenever a chance presents itself, is withheld and sold, and it not unfrequently happens that during the night the animals change masters.

At first we were at a loss to account for the sudden reluctance of our guides to proceed, but the truth was soon revealed. For some time the vicinity of Piura had been disturbed by a band of robbers; several murders had been committed, and on the very day our departure was to have taken place two people had been killed. Various stories were in circulation. It was said that a woman possessed of great courage was the chief of the band; and other statements equally singular passed from mouth to mouth. Detachments of soldiers had been sent in pursuit of the peace-disturbers, but had hitherto

been unsuccessful; in fine, Piura was in a state of excitement, and it was evident that so long as it lasted our mules would not be caught.

The stay thus enforced enabled us to make acquaintance with various persons, and from their conversation as well as from our own observation we obtained a tolerable knowledge of Piura and its vicinity. Piura, —or San Miguel de Piura, as its name at full length is written,—was the first settlement made by the Spaniards after their entry into the country, and the first place where a Christian church was erected. The position however of this early colony was not at the spot at present occupied by the town, but a few miles distant, the site having been changed on account of the climate. Piura is the capital of a province of the same name, and the largest town in northern Peru, standing on the left bank of the river Piura. The best houses are in the centre of the town; they are mostly one story high, built of adobes, and, agreeably to a law, white-washed; their internal arrangements are similar to those observed in Lima, with verandas and pateos. The outer portion of the town consists of mere huts (*ranchos*), the habitations of the poorer classes and Indians. The streets are small, irregular, and unpaved. In the centre of the town is the Plaza, with a statue of Liberty; two churches, Matriz and Belen, the town hall, the Government offices, and several private buildings form the sides of the square. Besides the two churches mentioned, there are five others. Near one of them is a college, which was opened in 1846, and had at the time of our visit about a hundred and twenty pupils; Latin, Spanish grammar, and natural

philosophy are the branches of learning taught in the establishment. There are also several preparatory schools, and in some of them it is customary to give eggs instead of paying money.

The number of inhabitants is said to amount to 10,000. About a tenth part of them are whites, hardly a tenth negroes, and the rest Indians; their vernacular language is Spanish, but the Quichua is also understood. In civilization the Piurans are not so far behind as might have been expected from a people who live in a desert. Every week there appears a newspaper, 'El Vija,' which contains the political news not only of Peru and South America, but also those of every part of the world. In drawing and painting many of them are very skilful, and we met a young man, Luis Montero, who, though he had never left Piura, nor received any instruction except from his own townspeople, painted in a masterly style. Music is much practised, and in walking through the streets in the evening the number of pianos heard is striking. Keeping up the communication between the coast and the interior is the chief occupation of the inhabitants. The rearing of goats, and the cultivation of cotton on the banks of the river, are other sources of employment. Agriculture on a large scale is not practised, the nature of the climate, the sandy soil, and the want of water being unfavourable to it.

The river on which the town is built has only sufficient water as long as the rains in the Andes continue; whenever they cease it begins to diminish, and not unfrequently dries up altogether. In Piura itself rain does not fall sometimes for seven or eight years, a thick mist

or an occasional drizzling being the only substitutes. That it never rains in the Peruvian desert is one of those fanciful notions so frequently met with in the accounts of the old travellers. On the contrary, sometimes in the month of February the clouds pour down immense masses of water. In 1834 the showers were so violent, and followed each other in such quick succession, that mounds had to be raised in the streets of Piura to keep the water out of the houses; some of these mounds are still to be seen. The effect which such a rain produces on the desert is said to be wonderful: everywhere vegetation appears; everywhere water-melons, Indian corn, and numerous grasses spring up; and food becomes so plentiful, that the Indians of the mountains are for a time compelled to leave off bringing supplies.

The vicinity of Piura is a flat country, only varied here and there by mounds of shifting sand (*medanos*). Like the greater portion, or perhaps the whole, of the Peruvian coast, it seems to have been at one period below the level of the ocean, and only to have been elevated to its present position in modern times. Numbers of shells, intermixed with the sand, and belonging to species still inhabiting the adjacent sea, the preponderance of saline matter, and the occurrence of littoral plants, such as *Prosopis horrida*, *Varronia rotundifolia*, *Capparis scabrada*, and *C. avicenniæfolia*, are in favour of the supposition.

From the nature of the country, it cannot be expected that the flora and fauna* should be well represented.

* See an excellent account of the animals in Tschudi's 'Untersuchungen über die Fauna Peruana.'

There are only five species of plants that form wood. The largest and most common is the Algaroba (*Prosopis horrida*, Willd.), a tree the beans of which furnish subsistence for mules, donkeys, and goats. The Overal (*Varronia rotundifolia*, DC.) is a large bushy shrub, yielding a berry which fattens cattle and poultry. The physical circumstances under which these plants grow being similar to those existing in Ascension, and their fruits highly useful, I have recommended their introduction into that island. The Zapote de perro (*Capparis scabrida*, H. B. et K.) and *Capparis crotonoides*, H. B. et K., are woody plants, very common, but without known use, and not even touched by animals. The Yierba blanca (*Teleianthera Peruviana*, Moq.), a whitish herb, creeping on the sand, is, in the absence of better fodder, given to cattle. When Cactuses, Aloes, and other succulent forms are met with in arid places, it seems natural, and we can account for it; but when such as the Algaroba, Zapote de perro, and Visacha, plants of a dry woody texture, are found in a region deprived of rain sometimes for years, it must ever be a matter of surprise.

On the banks of the river vegetation is more luxuriant. The Algaroba-trees attain a height of from thirty to forty feet, growing with the Peruvian willow (*Salix falcata*, H. B. ?), and forming thickets inhabited by parrots, carpinteros, putitas (*Myoarchus coronatus*, Cab.), and other birds. Almost every spot is cultivated either with the shrubby cotton-plant, or maize, water-melons, plantains, sweet-potatoes, cassava-root, and bird's-eye pepper. All the productions of the district, as well as those brought

from the mountains, are every morning at sunrise exposed for sale,—on week-days in the Plaza, on Sundays in the Plazuella de la Restauracion.

Near Piura are numerous tombs of the ancient Peruvians, which for the sake of gain are frequently opened, especially on Good Friday, which, according to popular belief, is a lucky day. The objects met with are dried-up bodies and earthen vessels; gold is seldom found. The vessels are neatly made, and generally have whistles, which either produce a sound when blown, or when the vessel is filled with water. One of the latter obtained by us imitated the voice of the turkey-buzzard in an extraordinary degree; another vessel, representing a number of Indians carrying a corpse, was shown to us, which, on being filled with liquid and moved, caused a sound similar to that of a body of men crying. Specimens of this pottery are frequently sent to Europe; but, as is the case with ancient Roman coins, the demand for them is so great, that imitations are passed off for genuine ones.

On the 4th of August the soldiers returned, bringing several robbers, and, strange to relate, our guides and animals shortly after made their appearance. Having everything in readiness, we started at once. It was pleasant to see the little caravan trotting along: eight donkeys, carrying water-flasks, provisions, and fodder, opened the train, two mules loaded with travelling necessaries followed, while the guides and ourselves brought up the rear. The road led for the most part along the banks of the Piura, and was for the first few leagues most monotonous. By degrees the country became undulating, the Algaroba-trees attained a greater height, and occa-

sionally a scarlet parasitic plant (*Loranthus*) was seen in their branches; and here and there arose some tall Cactuses, which, though little calculated to enliven the landscape, were hailed with delight as friends in adversity, their fleshy stems supplying both food and water to the beasts.

Towards evening we reached La Peñete, a collection of huts chiefly inhabited by goatherds. The guides took us to the house of their relation, a Limenian, who evinced much joy in hearing news from her native town. After supper she treated us with rover stories, and inspired our people with such horror that they could hardly be persuaded to move from our sides. Having on the following day to pass the district in which the scenes related had taken place, the information was not disregarded by us: we loaded our arms, and made every preparation to repulse attacks. In La Peñete however nothing occurred. We started early the next morning, and, before the sun's rays had obtained any power, travelled over a considerable piece of ground. The road, or path, as properly speaking it must be termed, ascended slightly; the soil changed from a loose sand into a hard clay, and several river-beds, though empty, showed that we had reached a region more subject to rain and moisture than that left behind.

After riding the whole day without meeting any water, and being almost suffocated by heat and dust, we were delighted to arrive towards evening at the banks of the Siupira. Having crossed the river, we met a woman who invited us to stay the night in her house. She proved to be a widow, and the proprietor of El Parco,

a little farm. The building to which we were conducted stood on an eminence, and was like all those of the district,—the greater portion was a mere shed, with a flat roof loosely thatched with straw of Indian corn. The walls were made of sticks arranged close to each other, but the sticks being all crooked—the country not producing any straight ones—the whole had an irregular and untidy appearance. The after part of the house consisted of one large room, and was more substantially built, having a tiled roof, a door, and windows, and being furnished with beds, a table, and a few chairs. The kitchen was in a side wing, and as rude as the rest of the establishment. The fire-place was on the floor, and a few pots and gourd-shells were all the cooking utensils that could be seen.

While my companion was making a place to sleep upon—bed it could not be called,—I prepared the supper. The hostess and her daughter, a nice girl of about sixteen years of age, assisted. When the meal was ready we invited them to partake of it, but they could not be persuaded; indeed the South Americans consider it an impropriety to eat with a guest who has just come from a journey, thinking that in doing so he would restrain himself, and not eat heartily. Having on the following morning refreshed ourselves with a bath and taken breakfast, we departed. The country began to get more woody, and groups of Cactuses, both *Melocacti* and *Cerei*, were passed: the latter formed trees from thirty to forty feet high, and their wood was as hard as ebony. Goats and sheep became more numerous, and bullocks were occasionally met with. At noon we rested for about an hour in

the shade of a tree, and towards sunset reached the river Quiros. The banks were lined with willows, and the bed about a hundred yards across. Close by was a hut, the most miserable and filthy we had as yet met with. Mosquitoes and sandflies were so numerous that we had always to surround ourselves with smoke to avoid their irritating operations. The inhabitants were extremely poor, and could not spare either food for ourselves or fodder for the animals. A few Algaroba beans were given to the latter, and we managed to scrape together the remnants of our provisions, and made a kind of stew, consisting of rice, some potatoes, cheese, a crust of bread, and a slice of *tasajo*: bad as was the mixture, it was made worse by being burnt.

The people we were staying with looked very suspicious, and caused us to be on our guard. An occurrence during the night justified our apprehensions. About one o'clock somebody entered the apartment, and slowly advanced towards the corner in which we were lying. Thinking that we were asleep, the person stretched out his hand across our bodies to take hold of our guns. Being kept awake by mosquitoes, I observed every movement, and just when the robbery was to be committed I jumped up and drew my dirk; but before Pim awoke, or I could lay hold of the arm, the person had escaped. At first we thought some robber had come into the house; when however we heard our host and hostess whispering together, we entertained little doubt that they themselves had first attempted to steal our guns, and probably afterwards intended to kill us with them. Sleep for the rest of the night had fled. We awaited the dawn

with anxiety, and it was still dark when we continued our march. We passed Suyá and Las Pampas de Chirina, but in neither of these places could any provisions be obtained. About noon we came to a farm, and although quantities of fodder were lying in the courtyard the proprietor could not be induced to dispose of any. The beasts were now quite exhausted, and the greatest exertions had to be used to drive them on. At last we gained the Macara, the river which separates the Republics of Peru and Ecuador, and without difficulty we crossed over to the opposite side.