

## AFOOT IN CHILE

A collection of U.S. newspaper articles written by "James A. Rankin"  
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SECTION (1)

VOYAGE FROM NEW YORK TO VALPARAISO (1856-57)

by "QUITO"

These articles were published in the "Illinois State Journal" between May and December 1856.

## LETTER "I"

*Voyage Commenced—Last View of Land—Sea-sickness—A Calm—Terrible Storm upon the deep—Ship Disabled—Gloomy Night—Turn from the destined Port—Vessel Leaking—Cargo Thrown Overboard—Pleasant Weather—Enter the Tropical Waters—Glorious Sunrise—Baffling Winds—Fair Wind—Land, ho!—Panorama of the Islands—Lovely Scene—"Hard up the Helm"—Vessel on the Rocks—Carried off by the Flood-tide—"Drop the Anchor."*

St. Thomas, W. I., March 31, '56.

I arrived in the city of New York on the last day of the year 1855, and for more than two months awaited the sailing of a vessel to Valparaiso. But the longest delays have an end — at least so I thought when the steam tug came alongside to tow us out to sea.

At an early hour on the morning of the 5th of March, I took my last stroll up South street, supplied myself with the morning edition of the city papers, and returned to the little ship, which I then thought would be my home for many long and weary weeks. Before eight o'clock, the passengers and crew — the former six in number — were on board; and, at 8:50, the "Sophia Walker", Captain C. R. Moore, dropped down from Pier 37 East River. The American flag was unfurled to the breeze, the parting gun fired, the farewell cheer given by friends on shore, and heartily responded to by the crew, when I felt that my journey had commenced; whether it would be long and adventurous, time alone could determine.

The city, with its forest of masts in the foreground, lessened in the view, and Staten Island with its romantic hills, crowned by many a lovely villa, and robed in the mantle of winter, rapidly receded in the distant perspective. At 11:45 the pilot was discharged, and, with a jolly crew and lively passengers, our ship stood boldly out toward the boundless horizon on her intended voyage around Cape Horn. I watched the Highlands of Neversink, as many a voyager had done before, until they faded in the dim distance. An intervening wave would hide them for a moment from view, another, and they were visible; but soon the last material tie that bound me to my native land had disappeared. I could not see this and the white capped waves close around us without an emotion I never felt before. The evening was beautiful, a few light clouds floating in the distance, while the ship, with a fair wind and a swelling canvass, went bounding over the wave.

I turned out of my berth in the morning at an early hour; it was a glorious morning upon the mighty deep. A fine breeze was blowing from the South; and, as our ship moved along at the rate of nine knots an hour, the rippling waves at her sides and bow flashed with phosphoric light. But sea-sickness prevented my enjoying scenery or anything else. Three mortal days were passed in almost hopeless agony. It was not until the 9th that the demon left me, certainly without regret on my part. The weather during this day was fine, though not favorable to the vessel's progress. The wind lulled down to a calm in the afternoon, the sails flapping idly against the masts. The moon and stars at night shone brightly through the deep blue sky, occasionally obscured by fleeting clouds. It proved, as the captain said it would, to be the precursor of a terrible storm.

The following day — Monday, the 10th — was rough and stormy. During the afternoon two frightful squalls came down upon us from the Southwest; the howling of the wind as it swept through the rigging was fearful; all hands were called to take in sail, the top-gallant-yards were lowered, and the ship "laid to" to drift at the mercy of the waves. The gale, from the Northwest, now commenced, and

continued with unabated fury during the two following days, but without any injury to the ship. It was reserved for Thursday, March 13th, to roll the "tenth wave" of the storm down on us. It was indeed an awful day, and one which I will not soon forget. Owing to the long continuation of the gale, the sea was lashed as though a myriad monsters of the unfathomed deep were engaged in deadly strife. The waves came rolling on like mountains tumbled down, by nature's grand convulsion, their snow-white crests boiling and hissing in waters of the brightest emerald green. At one moment our little ship was borne to the summit of one of these Andean billows of the watery waste, the next she plunged like a maddened steed down into the dark valley of water below. But the disastrous effects of one of these seas I have yet to relate. The passengers, including the captain and mate, were seated at the supper table, the second mate had the watch on deck when a towering wave came rolling down upon us in its mountain pride; on, on it came, the frowning crest reaching to the foretop; the blow came with the most stunning shock I ever felt, the ship trembled like a quivering leaf, the water streamed upon our heads through the skylight, the lamps were put out, and the dishes swept from the table quicker than thought. All then was still for a moment; it was a moment of awful suspense, for the ship, completely buried in water, seemed to be going down. Gradually she swung to the larboard side, and we felt assured of at least a momentary safety. The cabin door was forced open when everything on deck appeared to be in chaotic confusion; bulwarks stove, deck covered with water, pigs scrambling in the briny flood, and every impending wave seemed as though it would sweep us into a watery grave.

A gloomy night succeeded the day, more terrible because of the darkness. Its experience I do not care about repeating. Our brave and experienced captain was even appalled at the terrible scene; which during the twenty-four years of his voyaging upon the ocean, exceeded any storm he had ever witnessed. Owing to the damage the vessel had sustained, the captain shaped her course the following morning for St. Thomas for repairs — distant twelve hundred miles. Already she had sprung a leak, which rapidly increased as the day advanced; two pumps were kept going constantly; this state of affairs was indeed alarming. A consultation was then held; the captain said that if, in our present condition, another gale should spring up the ship must inevitably go down; our only hope of safety was to have the vessel lightened, and the sooner done, the better. Passengers and crew were then told if they had any objection to such a course, to offer them — of course none were offered. The main hatch was then opened, and we commenced throwing the cargo overboard considerably faster than it was taken in. In the course of three or four hours we had discharged about fifty tons; as this materially relieved the ship, the hatch was closed up again, the water pumped from the hold, and we rested from our labors, much relieved in mind from the pleasant appearance the weather was assuming.

The following morning, Saturday 15th, dawned bright and beautiful upon the ruffled waters. There was a clearness in the sky, and a purity in the air, I had not seen and felt since the day we sailed. A lovely breeze was blowing from the northeast, which the captain hoped would take us to the "trades;" the "stormy region" of the Gulf stream was left behind, and from this date the weather was pleasant. Day after day passed quietly away. The monotony of the scene was occasionally broken into by the view of a distant sail, or a school of flying fish, as they skimmed over the surface of the water.

The summer-like beauty of the air, as we neared the tropics was striking. This was more especially the case at night, when the full-robed moon bathed the light fleecy clouds with a soft and mellow glow, and the dancing waves reflected her rays as from a thousand mirrors.

Our ship hovered on the verge of the tropics for several days, as though reluctant to enter the fiery flood. The latitude by noon observation on the 25th, was 22 deg. 54 min.; hence, we must have crossed the tropic of Cancer during the night. I rejoiced in the thought of being within the limits of the

torrid zone. The boundless sea gave no evidence of the fact; but I knew within its bosom there reposed this gorgeous scenery of a new world.

I was roused at an early hour the next morning by the sailors singing one of their cheering songs as they pulled at the ropes. Day was beginning to dawn behind the dark clouds which were piled in irregular masses against the eastern horizon; long radiating streams of an alternate rosy azure hue soon shot towards the zenith; and as the minutes advanced, the light wavy tufts of cirrus far above the frowning ramparts below glowed and flamed like burnished gold; the rough and ragged edge of the dark mass was illuminated with a crest of the most dazzling brilliancy, when the sun arose above the whole, a fitting finale to the aerial painting.

Our progress was now retarded by baffling winds. The "trades" which the captain so confidently counted upon, appeared to have their direction reversed, and for two or three days it was a "dead beat," as the sailors term it. On the 29th, the wind lulled down into a calm in the forenoon, but as the day advanced, a light favorable breeze sprung up, increasing in strength during the night, until the water in the ship's wake fairly boiled with phosphoric fire.

I turned out of my berth in the morning, Sunday March 30th, at an early hour, and found the captain already on deck keeping a sharp look out for the long-expected land. The morning light had barely dawned, when he told me he could see the distant coast. I looked with a beating heart across the wide water, in the direction pointed out, when, sure enough, dim and shadowy against the western sky, stood the first tropical land I ever beheld. It proved to be the island of Virgin Gorda, one of the group of the Virgin isles. The ship, with a fine breeze, was sailing along at a rate unknown for days before, and, as we neared the island, its rough fantastic cliffs glowed as with a fierce internal heat. The southern part of the island was inhabited, for, with the telescope, I could see houses and plantations, and even the roads as they wound their serpentine courses around the mountains in the interior. On the extreme southern part of the Island, lone and solitary in its tropical beauty, stood a single cocoanut tree.

The captain allowed the vessel to run as close to the shore during the day as safety would admit; and what a glorious panorama was unfolded to the view! It is true that no gorgeous vegetation robed the island sides with the undying green of the isthmus; but as island rose above and beyond island, with many a little bay and cove indenting their coasts, showing that beautiful gradation of tint, of picturesque form and varied shade, which distance alone can give, I felt that my imagination had not been allowed too free a rein, in painting the charming beauties of island scenery. I longed to go ashore and roam over the hills and mountains, and explore the mysterious caves which were occasionally to be seen in the rocky shores, telling a tale of the pirate cruisers that once swarmed in the waters. As we were passing a lofty pile of rocks, which were cut off from the main land of one of the islands, my attention was called by the mate, to a century-blooming aloe, perched on the topmost cliff. I was struck with the incident. Generations were to pass away from the time it first kissed the ocean breeze, till it should bloom and then, 'twould *"blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air."*<sup>[1]</sup>

Night closed upon the beautiful scene. The clouds, which during the day had overhung the land, disappeared with the setting sun, and the stars shone forth with a lustrous brilliancy known only to a tropical sky. The dark outline of the island of St. Thomas loomed up on our starboard beam; I could hear the roar of the surf, and in the dim starlight could distinguish the dark patches of vegetation which dotted the gentle shores. A fresh breeze was blowing from the land, bearing with it the sweetest fragrance I ever breathed. I could almost have imagined myself in the gardens of Isfahan. I never in

my life before experienced such enjoyment; we had been tossed upon the ocean's angry breast, and were now almost within hail of the wished-for port: for although I love the ocean, and during the terrible storm could read and appreciate Byron's *Apostrophe*, the land, from the Andes to the Himalaya, is my home. I felt that deep and placid excitement that the traveler alone can realize, but which language cannot express. I did not see the dark cloud, whose murky folds were destined to wrap this lovely scene in momentary gloom. It was best that I did not.

I was standing on the quarterdeck, leaning against the rigging, and watching the lights in the city and harbor, as they, one by one came in view, when I heard the order of the captain to "hard up the helm," in that sharp quick tone which indicated danger; almost simultaneously with the order, the ship struck, and after dragging a few fathoms, came to a stand, save that she thumped on the rocks in a manner anything but agreeable. The boats were ordered to be lowered, which was done as soon as possible, the second mate and four men jumped in one, and taking three of the passengers, the cook and steward, and such few articles as could be picked up at the moment, pulled for the town, distant nearly two miles. The remaining passengers, Capt. Valin, Dr. Scammon and myself, determined to stay with the captain and the remainder of the crew, until the vessel was got off or went to pieces. We had the largest boat at the side, and were ready to leave the ship at a moment's warning. As soon as the second mate's boat left the ship, the cannon were fired as signals of distress, and sail made in order to force her off if possible. Fortunately the tide was rising, and after grinding her keel on the rocks for about two hours, she gave a thump which jarred every timber in her, and then swung free of the treacherous ledge. Up to this time there was only three feet of water in her hold; a ship of ordinary strength would have broken in two. An English war steamer was lying in the mouth of the harbor; and, as we steered up toward the town, we were successively hailed by her and the fort.

At twenty minutes before twelve the order was given to "stand by and let go the anchor" a harsh grating sound ensued — when a voyage short in duration, but replete with thrilling incidents, was brought to a close. [\[2\]](#)

## LETTER "II"

*Detention in Rio—Priests, Church beggars—Brazilian women—the Emperor—men-of-war's men—beautiful scenery tropical garden—negroes—yellow fever—fleet of sail boats—the "Iris" towed down the Bay to the guard ship—"who has the papers?"—last view of Rio—"your pass!"—the Portuguese captain, change among the crew—favorable winds—"Sunday sail, never fails,"—encounter a "pampero" off the Rio de la Plata—Cape pigeons—calms—Staten Land and its snow-capped mountains—Magellan clouds—snow squalls and Cape Horn gales—double the Cape—"the ship is sinking!"—placidity of the Pacific—the Chilean coast—end of the voyage, &c, &c.*

Valparaiso, Chile, S. A., September 27, 1856.

The "Iris" was detained at Rio de Janeiro for a period of two weeks, discharging her cargo and taking in more ballast. I will take the jottings down of the incidents of a week, from my journal, and then proceed to the principal events of my voyage, which at length is brought to a close.

Sunday, August 10. Another interesting week has passed away. I have been ashore every day last week, with the exception of Tuesday, and the long ramble through the city last Monday fatigued me to such an extent that I was fain to stay aboard and recruit myself on that day. My general impression of Rio is favorable in nearly every respect; I have had one obstacle in my way however, and that was, ignorance of the language; still I am very well satisfied, and if I have not seen as much of Rio as I could have wished, I can say that I have seen, considering my opportunity, no small amount of life and scenery. In wandering around I have seen quite a number of priests; a strong proof, if one were wanting, that I was in a Catholic land. I saw, last Monday morning, two or three church beggars going around bare-headed, with an umbrella spread over them. They had a light kind of gown thrown over their shoulders to indicate their calling. I noticed that they stopped at nearly every door and begged with an unblushing effrontery that was truly astonishing. There was a great procession last Sunday night and it is likely that these gentry were collecting means to defray the expenses.

With regard to the women of Rio I can say but little, for I have seen but few of them; generally speaking, they are not as handsome as my own country women, although I saw some beautiful faces by taking a sly peep through open windows. I was walking along one day near the suburbs in a winding kind of a street, when I saw a pretty little brunette looking out of an open window with her arms resting upon the sill; she was the first pretty girl I had seen, and as I passed her I happened to look down at her little arm, I regret to say that it was darker than necessary. I saw this little witch again and I am not sure but that I should have seen her a third time if I had remained in Rio. The Emperor visited the French frigate one day last week; there was grand saluting on the occasion. I saw the foreign ministers come off in the evening dressed in their brilliant uniforms. I did not see his Majesty, much to my regret. After wandering around the city for several hours, and tiring myself out, I would go down to the ship chandlery and wait for the "Iris" boat. Sometimes I would remain there an hour or two and, as the men-of-war's men landed there, I had an excellent opportunity of studying the various characters of the French, English and American tars. As our second mate, who is an old man-of-war's-man himself, remarks, the French are dirty, the English drunken, and the Americans proud. There is something about the men-of-war's-men of all nations that is altogether different from the merchant sailor. They have not that downcast look which is incident to hard treatment.

I think there are some of the finest glimpses of scenery in Rio I ever beheld. Some of the private residences that are situated back from the business part of town are exceedingly tasteful in their

decorations; the polychromatic wreaths of flowers which adorn the pediments of some of their villas, united with the general expression of the whole, I could never tire in gazing upon. From these works of art the eye would glance up to the summit of a lofty hill, and see, cutting sharp and clear against the deep blue sky, masses of dark green foliage, or that type of the South, the gorgeous palm. The gardens are in keeping with the rest of the scenery, and many a little gem of beauty will long remain impressed upon my memory. These remarks apply to the suburban portion of Rio, for doubtful sights and smells are to be observed in the lower or business portion.

I also visited the tropical garden nearly every morning during the week, and wondered at myself for passing by in a former visit so much that was interesting. Upon the dark green leaves the dew drops sparkled like a myriad of diamonds; sweet birds warbled their notes of melody among the palms; and unknown flowers basked in the early sunlight. On Thursday morning I took a sketch of a portion of the city of St. Sebastian from the terrace of the garden. This terrace is elevated ten or fifteen feet above the garden level, and is about thirty feet in width and nearly three hundred in length. It is paved with black and white marble blocks, with an occasional streak of granite. Close to each end of the terrace is an octagonal building, for what purpose used I do not know. There is also one of these buildings in the garden. The view of the garden from the terrace is a singular blending of the beautiful and the picturesque. I imagined that with a certain addition it would form an excellent sketch for an allegorical representation of the Dreams of Youth. I lingered upon the terrace the morning aforementioned for a long time; the heavy swell of the Bay beat against the wall with a crashing sound, and when at last I turned away from the beautiful scene, I felt that its charming influence had made me better than I was before.

There are many far different scenes in Rio. I saw quite a number of beggars lying around on the narrow sidewalks. They were really the most worthy looking beggars I ever came in contact with. The slaves look contented and happy. I noticed that the faces of a large number of the negresses were "tattooed;" they were probably natives of Africa. I saw a poor old negress going about one day picking up sticks of wood. Poor old thing ! I pitied her, for she was raggedness and attenuation personified. I have understood that there is considerable yellow fever in Rio, and one morning I met two soldiers on a corner carrying a sick man in a hammock who looked rather suspicious about the eyes; but still I half doubt the tale. The temperature of the air at this season of the year is from 70 to 75 degrees. Nearly every morning a heavy fog envelopes the Bay, which is not swept away until the sea breeze sets in. This is sufficient to make the place unhealthy in the summer.

The "Iris" was hauled off to an anchorage in the early part of the week, in order to give the French mail propeller a chance to take in coals. The British steamship lay close by, similarly engaged. There was a jolly set on the English boat during the night; there was fiddling and dancing, and any amount of noise.

There are a great number of small sailing boats in the Bay. Every morning they come in from the opposite side to the city, laden with marketing, and in the evening the fleet returns. The picturesque "felucca," a boat with two separate sails running to a peak, and the Rio boat, with its single square sail, add much to the beauty of the view upon the water. This Rio boat is hewed out of a log, and is generally managed by two persons, owing to the size of the boat, who also row with paddles.

The Captain came off at a late hour last night, and gave such orders to the mate that I knew we were going to sail to-day. He had told me late in the evening that he would not sail on Sunday again, on account of his having bad luck last time—that is, a very long passage; but I presume that he changed

his mind. About half past seven this morning a little steam tug grappled the "Iris," and towed her down the Bay to the guard ship. The guard boat came alongside and demanded the papers for inspection. The Custom House officer did not have them, the Captain did not have them, no one had them. There was an evident misunderstanding. The guard boat pushed off, the anchor was let go, and the Captain, in a terrible rage, ordered the ship's boat manned, and started ashore himself to procure them. He had not been gone more than five minutes, when they were brought aboard in the ship chandler's boat, which had been cruising about an hour or two in search of us. In the mean time, there was a great commotion in the Bay. At a short distance a small steamer was careering around; her deck was covered with officers and soldiers dressed in splendid uniforms, and the notes of a brass band, softened by the distance, were borne across the placid water. A Brazilian war steamer, surrounded by men of war boats, was also getting under weigh near at hand. At the same time, the French screw propeller "Le Lyonnais" came steaming down the Bay, while boats of every kind, and manned by many a motley crew, added immensely to the general bustle.

The church bells were ringing a merry peal when our captain returned; the papers were examined, the password given, the anchor tripped, and the steam tug again made fast to us. I took the telescope and scanned the city for what may be the last time. It was one of the few mornings when no fog dimmed the beauty of the sky. Far away to the northwest loomed the blue pyramidal head of an isolated mountain, whose sharp peaks were almost blended with the northern sky. I bade farewell to Rio de Janeiro with regret, for it had brought me more than I sought. I indulged the secret hope however that I should again return. "We were soon close to "Santa Cruz" when the sentinel on the walls shouted out "your pass !" "Mar !" answered the captain "all right," was returned, and we proceeded on our way without interruption, unlike an American ship that was fired at a few days before. The captain ordered all the sails to be loosed, and the topsails were sheeted home with merry songs. The steam tug was cast adrift just as the sea breeze was setting in; her captain in broken Portuguese cried out "fair winds," for which our captain thanked him, and with a light wind we stood due South. About two o'clock P. M. we passed Raza or the lighthouse island, beyond which Redonda reared its feathery crown of palms, and shortly after the white reaches of sandy beach, like threads of silver, were hidden by the dancing waves.

During the afternoon the breeze gradually freshened, and the ship is now going nine knots per hour. The mountains that surround the bay would still be visible were it not for the darkness; the last glimpse I had of "Sugar Loaf" was at sunset. There is something of a change in our crew, and there had like to have been a greater one; the Lopez soldier and one of the boys took their departure without due notice being given, but their places are well filled by an English boy and a Portuguese sailor whose fine manly form and dark hair and whiskers remind me in a striking manner of the picture I had formed in my mind of the great navigator, Magellan. Favorable winds attended us for the three following days, and the captain remarked to me on Wednesday evening that "Sunday sail never fails." The same night the barometer commenced falling rapidly, and at five o'clock the following morning the expected "pampero" struck us, and for forty hours it blew a fierce gale from the west. The ship was "hove to" under her storm sails and proved herself an excellent sea boat. Immense flocks of Cape pigeons hovered around us during the gale. These birds are web footed, and in other respects very much resemble the tame pigeons. I amused myself at times in the very questionable employment of catching these birds with a pin hook. The storm was succeeded by light winds and calms, but a fair wind continually came to our relief, and on the 29th of August we made Staten Land bearing nearly South. This Island lies to the north and east of Cape Horn and separated from Terra del Fuego by the Straits of Le Maire. The wind was blowing a steady gale from the northwest, and our ship was running in the trough of the sea, but all the canvass was piled on her that she would bear, and for a

few hours she underwent the operation of diving.

The land indistinctly seen through the haze at first, soon assumed a definite outline, and its snow-capped mountains cut sharp and clear against the wintry sky. We ran about a league from the shore, and, at the imminent risk of being well drenched, I stood up between the cabin and bulwarks and took two sketches of that distant and desolate land. There was a scanty vegetation perceptible upon its rocky sides, but the wild sea fowl winging its rapid flight over the splintered rocks was the only living thing I saw. Several large and massive rocks upon the summit of a lofty ridge, had the exact appearance of castles with their battlements and towers, and I almost looked for a race of giants to emerge from the imaginary portals of these apparent strongholds. As we ran under the lee of the shore, the water was comparatively smooth, and although the wind came direct off of the snow fields, the thermometer did not indicate a lower temperature than 41°. A large cumulus cloud rested over the Island, and the summits of the loftiest peaks were wrapped in its dark and misty folds. The sun set behind the land, presenting the most singular appearance imaginable; the night was blessed with a clear sky and the southern constellations, and the Magellan clouds shone resplendent in their quiet beauty.

The wind was fair during the night, and on the following morning the Island was hidden from my view, but far away to the northward loomed the snowy peaks of Terra del Fuego. The weather was so fine that I hoped we would double the Cape without a gale; but the terrible storm king of the south was determined not to let us off so easily; two or three light snow squalls came out of the northwest, and then the wind hauled to southwest, and in less than eight hours from the time the main royal was furled the ship was "hove to." The howling of the wind as it swept through the rigging on the night of the 30th of August was almost deafening. The ship rolled and tumbled at such a rate that I got but little sleep, and in the intervals of wakefulness I expected to hear the main topsail sheet part every moment. I reconciled myself as well as I could to the tedium of a Cape Horn trip life; and on the morning of the 12th of September, after two weeks of baffling westerly gales, that tossed us about over the wild waters which had been plowed by the keels of the adventurous Drake, and the intrepid Cook, we doubled the celebrated promontory, and were fairly in the waters of the Pacific. A fair wind which sprung up shortly afterwards gave us ten degrees of latitude, but it gradually hauled ahead, and on the 21st, while blowing a moderate gale with a short cross sea, a wave struck the vessel on her larboard bow and stove her cutwater and did some other damage. The captain went forward but soon returned and reported the ship to be in a sinking condition. This would have been alarming news if true, but I was too well acquainted with his disposition of making much out of a little, to believe any such a tale, and to satisfy myself I went to the mate, who is not only a brave and skillful seaman, but a truthful man; he quieted any apprehension I might have had for the safety of the ship, by telling me there was no danger; personal inspection proved the truth of his assertion. Had there been a party of ladies on board at the time the captain made his announcement, I would much rather have been in the long boat than in the cabin.

This was the last storm we had; a few hours passed away and the wind came out fair, and in a day or two the waves faded away to the gentlest swell, and I felt that our ship was in the Pacific Ocean. I was charmed with the placid beauty of its waters, which move as smooth as an inland lake. We made the coast of Chile on the 25th, and sailed in sight of land during the day. Our ship was only two leagues from Valparaiso light house when darkness closed around us. In the course of two or three hours we were close to the shore, and not far off I saw the brilliant gas lights of the city I had so long tried to reach, but which fate seemed to deny. The wind had now died down to nearly a calm, and I laid down to sleep for the last time on the good "Iris". The earliest streak of dawn found me peering over the

bulwarks, and admiring the opening beauties of the sweet 'Spring Chile.' The morning breeze shortly freshened, and bore us up to the crowd of shipping, and our ship was anchored in the bay where

*"Valparaiso's cliffs and flowers  
In mirrored wildness sweep." [\[3\]](#)*

My long and varied voyaging and counter-voyaging of sixteen thousand miles was thus brought to a close.

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SECTION (2)

FIRST WANDERINGS IN CHILE (1857)

by "QUITO"

These articles were published in the "Illinois State Journal" between May 1857 and March 1858.

## LETTER "VI"

*Farewell to the "Iris", and her crew—Appearance of Valparaiso, when viewed from a position in the Bay—View of the distant Cordilleras and Coast—Range of Mountains—Scenery around Valparaiso—Earthquakes—Native Chileans, their dress, &c.—Singular Customs—Unrivalled beauty of the Climate.*

Valparaiso, Chile, Feb. 28, 1857.

My last letter left me on board of the "Iris," but my stay on the good ship, after her arrival here, was by no means prolonged. For four long months, through sunshine and storm, had the noble vessel been my home; but the hour came when I had to leave and again encounter strange faces, and as I parted from the kind stewardess and intelligent mate, and sung out a "good bye" to "old Jack," which was heartily answered, I felt sadder than I ever did before on a similar occasion. Two or three days after, I ascended one of the cliffs and looked in vain for the ship; she had sailed for another port. Will I ever again see her tall and tapering spars, or tread her clean, familiar deck?

I will say nothing about my first impressions on coming ashore in this place, save that they were not those of disappointment. Although the appearance of Valparaiso when viewed from a position in the bay is singular, I cannot say that the beautiful is blended with it. This is in a measure owing to the mean appearance of most of the buildings, which are low, built of adobes and tile-covered. Deep and precipitous ravines descend toward the bay, and up these deep "*quebradas*" a single street will take its winding, tortuous way. There is, strictly speaking, but one principal street in Valparaiso; it is about three miles in length, and in its meanderings it assumes various names. To speak the truth, when I first looked upon the cliffs and flowers of Valparaiso, it was not with that feeling of indescribable rapture which I felt a few weeks before when I saw for the first time that scenery which surrounds the "*most magnificent of all the havens of the earth.*"<sup>[4]</sup>

Ascending one of the lofty cliffs, which in some places are almost perpendicular, and looking toward the North and East, we have in view the Coast Range of mountains, distant some thirty or forty miles. These mountains are from fifteen hundred to six thousand feet in height, and when I came here in September many of them were covered with snow, but this has long since disappeared. When the weather is fine and clear, beyond the coast range can be seen the Cordilleras, white as Parian marble<sup>[5]</sup> with the snows of countless centuries.

Conspicuous above all others, at the distance of ninety miles as the crow flies, Aconcagua rears his lofty head more than twenty thousand feet above the level of the sea. This mountain is, if we mistake not, the loftiest volcano on the globe. It is now many years since it was in a state of eruption, but the numerous, and at times, disastrous earthquakes with which Chile is visited, give evidence that the fires which rage within are as fierce as ever.



*Valparaíso from "Deck and Port", Rev. Walter Colton (1850)*

South of Valparaíso is an elevated ridge, which gradually slopes from the upper portion of the town to a distance of two or three miles; its undulating outline terminates the view in that direction. There are no trees in or around Valparaíso of any size; the hillsides are covered with low bushes thinly scattered, and the dark red soil contrasting with the green patches of verdure, the whole mingling with the blue sky, in the distance, add still more to the singularity of this place. The vegetation, however, has lost that green and lively hue which it wore when I first came here, but the winter rains will restore it to its primitive beauty and render that season, so I am informed, by far the most delightful portion of the year. Although I have said [that] the buildings here cannot lay any great claim to architectural elegance, yet there are exceptions; the post office and some of the private residences on the Plaza Victoria would do credit to any city.

The walls of the houses are built of immense thickness to resist the shock of earthquakes. The necessity of this was made very apparent to me a few evenings after my arrival here by a heavy earthquake. It was the first I had ever felt. I was in the second story of a building at the time and the first intimation I had was a deep rumbling sound like the roll of thunder when heard far off at sea; I instinctively knew what it was and started for the stairway instanter, but before I reached it I thought the granite foundations of the globe were breaking up; the surface of the earth seemed to rise in mid-air as the mighty wave of lava rolled beneath our feet. I descended the stairs with difficulty, and when I got into the Plaza del Orden it was nearly full of people, half of whom were on their knees, crossing themselves in a manner the most devout. The yelping and howling of innumerable dogs, with which the city abounds, made the scene eminently ludicrous, and notwithstanding the terror depicted on the faces of those around me, I could not refrain from laughing. Fortunately it was not succeeded by a second shock, which is usually the case, as a heap of ruins would have been the result. The earth was tremulous and gave evidence of internal commotion for the three following weeks.

The population of the city is variously estimated at from forty to eighty thousand inhabitants, but the latter number is nearest the truth. The better class of Chileans dress remarkably well, while the *peons* all wear the everlasting "*poncho*." The favorite dress of the women is black, than which none is more appropriate, for it contrasts finely with their handsome black eyes and the clear olive of their complexion. They invariably wear a mantle, which is worn in a manner peculiarly graceful;

sometimes this mantle is used for the double purpose of a masque, the face being entirely covered, with the exception of a small portion about the eyes, and in this they strikingly remind me of that custom which used to render so famous the women of Lima. At an early hour every Sunday morning one will see the Señoritas wending their way to the different churches, clad in this costume which has been handed down to them by their Spanish ancestors. With regard to the social life of the natives I cannot say much, for I know but little as yet; the influx of foreigners, however, and those of the worst sort, since the discovery of gold in California, has changed the manner of the people from what it was twenty years ago, and the primitive simplicity which characterized the inhabitants of Valparaiso in the days of Capt. Basil Hall<sup>[6]</sup> is sadly on the wane.

They have a peculiar custom here of burying the dead at night, for no funeral procession is ever seen in the day time. There is something to my mind very impressive about this. The quiet stillness which reigns around at that hour, unbroken save by the measured tread of the hearse bearers or the voice of some distant watchman, as he cries the hour of night, awakens a deeper reflection than one is apt to have in the bustle of noonday. The Pantheon or cemetery where the higher class of Chilenos are buried — for the *peons* are thrown into a common pit — although of small size, is the neatest place of the kind I ever saw. It looks more like a flower garden than a city of the dead.

I will make a few remarks about the climate and then bring this wandering letter to a close. The climate of Chili is probably unsurpassed for salubrity. The mountainous, arid, rocky character of the country and entire absence of all rank vegetation accounts for this in a great measure. During the five months I have been here there has been but one rain, and two or three months more will elapse before the rainy season sets in. Everything as a consequence is dry and parched up and a strong wind coming in nearly every afternoon here in Valparaiso, fills the air with clouds of dust and makes it somewhat disagreeable to be in the streets at that time. The temperature of the air seldom exceeds 80 of Fahrenheit, and so dry and pure is the air that even in the warmest season one does not experience the least inconvenience from heat. Sometimes the mornings are cloudy, or very seldom a light fog will come in from the Ocean; but, as a general thing, the sun rises clear and cloudless above the flashing snows of the Cordilleras; and long after his broad red disk has dipped behind the Pacific's wave, and the nearer coast range are wrapped in the purple line of evening gloom, the snow fields of Aconcagua are flushed with his ruddy glow.

## LETTER "VII"

*The "Vale of Paradise"—Long dry season—The Festival of Semana Santa<sup>[7]</sup>—Visit to the church of St. Augustin and the Cathedral of La Matriz after night—The lovely Chileans—Praying Peons—Grand Procession on the night of Viernes Santo<sup>[8]</sup>—Incidents of the same, &c., &c.*

Valparaiso, Chile, S.A., April 14th 1857.

The sight of land to those who have long been on the ocean is always hailed with rapture, and the most barren island assumes a beauty and a grace that the landsman can scarcely realize. It is probably for this reason that the early Spanish navigators named this place "Valparaiso," or the "Vale of Paradise," a name, says Capt. Hall, "*that its present appearance by no means justifies.*"<sup>[9]</sup> I cannot agree altogether with the good Captain, who wrote more than thirty years ago, in his opinion; an opinion that even the humorous Englishman was disposed to recall, when he had climbed the mountain south of here, and looked from a height of nearly two thousand feet, upon the vast scene which was spread below and around him.

There has been no rain in this part of Chile since last September, and I have quite forgotten how a rain storm looks. The season, within the last few weeks, has changed materially; and the strong dry winds which occasionally prevailed during the summer months do not disturb us now with their clouds of dust and sand. Vast masses of clouds roll in from seaward every morning and plainly indicate that a "norther" will soon sweep over the Bay. When the bright sunlight, during the day, disperses those clouds among the valleys, and their white fleecy folds half envelope the lofty mountains, I am reminded of the Bay of Rio.

Last week was "*Semana Santa*" or Saint Week. At ten o'clock on the morning of the 9th, all business was discontinued, not even a carriage was allowed to run through the streets. The Chilean vessels in the Bay "cock billed" their yards, and lowered their flags to half mast in commemoration of this solemn event. When night came the streets were filled with women and *peons*, hurrying to and from the different churches. The first church I visited was that of St. Augustin, situated on the Plaza Victoria. This building is about one hundred feet in length, and when finished will present quite an imposing appearance. The roof is supported by two rows of Doric columns between which at regular intervals, on the night in question, were suspended chandeliers, while the Altar was splendidly illuminated with a pyramid of flashing lights which pained the eye to gaze upon. The central space between the columns was occupied by women kneeling on small mats and gazing intently on some image while they repeated their prayers. Dark skinned *peons*, whose high cheek bones gave strong evidence of their close relationship to the Indian race, were scattered around in different directions, devoutly engaged in prayer. An image of the Virgin Mary with the Child Jesus received a large share of the worship. It was erected on a stand close to one of the columns and robed in a rich mantle, the hem of which every good Catholic kissed previous to their exit. Quite a number went through with the ceremony in a hurried and, I thought, irreverent manner, but the earnestness of a majority was not to be questioned. I saw one woman whose care-worn face indicated the hardships she had endured, kneel upon the floor in front of the image, repeat a short prayer, then bow her head and kiss the floor in adoration of the Shrine. No one could doubt her sincerity. I went close to the Altar where an image of our Savior was fastened to the cross, and a large crowd were gathered around taking their turn in

kissing the feet. While I was leaning against one of the columns, two Chileans came and knelt down close by my side; they were not only handsome but their faces were irradiated with that mild and gentle beauty that Religion alone can give to woman. I never witnessed such calm devotion, as was theirs, in a Protestant church, and when I presently left the building it was with the impression that there must be something remarkable, if not much that was good, in a religion which so fascinated the mind: a fascination whose influence I felt myself.

I next wended my way to the Cathedral of La Matriz. It was nearly full of people. The Altar was more brilliantly illuminated than that of St. Augustin; the intervals between the burning tapers were filled up with bright colored glasses of various hues and vases of rich flowers. Two soldiers in full uniform stood within the recess and kept guard on either side of the Altar. There also was an image of Christ nailed to the cross. I crowded my way up to the Altar and stepping in between the two rows of columns— for the style of construction is similar to that of St. Augustin— and looking toward the principal entrance, a sea of upturned faces met my gaze. They were all women and without an exception dressed in black. From their numerous lips there went up the busy hum of prayers, to that Being before whom in different form but with undivided faith, we all bow and worship. When I went out of the Cathedral I was saluted by a crowd of beggars, to whose numerous petitions I paid but little attention.

The Cathedral of La Matriz — by no means a fine-looking building externally — is considerably elevated above the houses in the front of it; and over their tile-covered roofs I could see the lofty spars of the shipping in the bay, and the shimmering light of the full orb moon, as her rays played upon the dimpled surface of the water. In spite of the night and the dim haze with which the air was filled I could see, though forty miles away, the Coast Range of mountains. During the evening I saw numerous parties of *peons*, with bared heads, perambulating the streets and praying in chorus. They would walk quite a distance in silence, and then, as it were with one voice, repeat some passage of a prayer. The sound of thirty or forty voices at once, breaking upon the still night air, was very singular.

There was a great procession the next night. It was about seven o'clock in the evening when I sallied out from the "Hotel del Orden;" the night was clear and beautiful, as it nearly always is in this highly favored clime, and the moon, which had just risen above the mountains in the interior, shed a mild radiance upon every object, that acted like the invisible charm of an enchanter's wand. I passed through the Calle San Juan de Dios, the Plaza Victoria and then into Calle Victoria, or Victoria street. Upon either side of this street numbers of people were waiting for the procession to pass, but I pressed on until I met the procession, when the living tide of humanity forced me to halt. First in order, borne upon a stand erected for the purpose, was a figure of the Virgin Mary. At a considerable distance behind this, resting on a white bier, was the supposed body of Christ; about an equal distance in the rear, on a large canopied platform, was the figure of some saint, surrounded by six beautiful little girls dressed in gold and silver tissue. They were supposed angels, and well did they represent their part. Their heads were wreathed with bright flowers, and their dark Spanish eyes flashed as they peered from under the gilded canopy. Immediately following this was a brass band. On either side of the musicians, and as far in advance as the image of the Virgin Mary, was a row of men and boys bearing palms, to each of which was attached a glass lantern of the shape of a truncated pyramid. The space between the lantern bearers was occupied by the Padres and others who officiated in the ceremonies. Several boys dressed in red robes, over which a white gauze was thrown, walked in advance of the last mentioned Saint and the six "angels," and waved censers of burning sandal wood.

I took my position in the crowd opposite to the band. As far in either direction as I could see, it was

one living, surging mass. The majority were women; for the proportion in their favor in Valparaiso is as three to one — so said — and I am not disposed to doubt it. How they withstood the crowding and pressing is more than I can reasonably account for. The balconies and windows on either side of the street were filled with spectators, and I even saw some venturesome boys on the house tops. As the procession advanced towards the Plaza Victoria, the crowd became more compact, and shoving and pushing seemed to be the order of the day, or rather night, among the mischief-loving and less religious portion. In some places the sidewalk is elevated two or three feet above the street, and in such places it appears to be quite creditable to shove as many over the verge as possible. At one time some boys approached too near the edge, and a great, burly *peon*, seeing what a fine chance for fun, began to sweep the "*muchachos*" from his path as with the brand of the Destroying Angel. This created considerable disturbance, but the shrill whistle of a *vigilante* restored order and checked his operations rather quickly. When the procession arrived at the Plaza it countermarched down the Calle Nueva, a street which runs parallel with and close to Victoria. I thought for a few moments there would be a general fight on the corner of the Plaza: some dandy, getting his hat smashed, commenced a vigorous onslaught on those around him with his cane. "¿Qué es eso?" (What is that?) shouted a dozen voices, and on they pressed to the conflict: but a number of *vigilantes* were on the ground and soon quieted the belligerents.

It was a considerable time before I forced my way into the Calle Nueva, and when I did the waving of the lanterns on the feathery palms, seen far in advance and marking bright against the dark range of hills, presented a magnificent perspective. The procession presently reached the church from whence it set out, and people quietly dispersed. It was now late in the evening and the moon was high in the cloudless heaven; far out on the bosom of the Pacific there hung a light mist and as the surf of the bay beat softly on the beach, I thought that the lovely beauty of the night surpassed the meridian splendor of the day.

The simultaneous firing of cannon by the Chilean and French men-of-war, at 10 o'clock on Saturday morning April 11th announced the termination of "Saint Week" and business was again resumed.

## LETTER VIII.

Quillota, Chile, S. A., May 5th, 1857.

*Preparations for a journey among the mountains of Chile.—Pleasurable emotions when fairly among the valleys.—Viña del Mar.—Up the ravine.—Quilpué.—First night in the Country.—An early Walk and a late Breakfast.—The town of Limache.—The Railroad Tunnel.—Valley of Quillota.—Entrance into the Pueblo.—Curiosity of the women.*

I have always had a desire to travel in South America, and especially in that portion occupied by the Republic of Chile. To observe the customs and manners of the Spanish American, of whom the Chileno is undoubtedly the best type, and, still greater incentive, to view the magnificent scenery with which this country abounds. Chile is a land unhackneyed by travelers; there are no guide-books to tell the wanderer of every stream, mountain, or gold mine, there is to be seen; and, if I except the random notes of Capt. Hall, the written information I have obtained of this country has been scanty indeed. I shall give you my immediate impressions of whatever I may see, transcribing my "Wanderings," almost literally from my Journal.

The 2nd day of May was of unparalleled and cloudless serenity, and I watched the lingering sunlight on the Bell of Quillota, (pronounced key-lee-o-tah) and the wintry head of Aconcagua with more than ordinary interest. It was a late hour before my knapsack was packed to suit me, for numerous were the articles contained within its narrow limits, but when I came to test the weight, I found it too heavy for comfort, and was obliged, though with regret, to take out my telescope. I was prepared for the journey, and lay down to rest, but not to sleep, for my thoughts were busy with the future. I heard the crowing of cocks long before day, and fell into a slight doze about three o'clock, but the echoes of the morning gun roused me, and while the stars were still shining in the early gray of morn, I arose, dressed, shook hands with my good hearted roommate, shouldered my knapsack, and started "*a pie*".

Early as the hour was, there were many people in the streets. Before the sun was up, I was out of the suburb of Almendral. The morning was nearly clear; there were some cumulous clouds in the east, and out on the Ocean some small fog banks. The air was still, and the surface of the Bay was ruffled only by the slightest "cat's paws." The rain which fell a few days previous had laid the dust, and when I was fairly among the valleys, and heard the twittering of birds, and smelled the fresh green earth banks, I was thrilled with life I never felt before; I feared that it could not last long. The road was very winding, and after two leagues were traversed I came to the little village of Viña del Mar. There are but few houses, and one street, on one side of which is an adobe wall that forms part of an enclosure to a large field. The valley is of considerable width here, and through it a broad swampy stream makes its way into an arm of the sea. The railroad runs up the valley, and instead of taking the road to Quillota, I followed the track. The valley gradually narrowed for a league, when the mountains nearly come together. Up one of the ravines that put down into the valley, I saw my first Chilean palm— it bears a striking resemblance to the cabbage palm. They do not grow to a great height, but have a large trunk; I ate my dinner in the shade of one two feet in diameter. Four or five miles from Viña del Mar, the road pursues, for a short distance, a northerly direction; it then turns to the east, and close to the bend were several thatched huts, with gangs of natives engaged in various games. The physical appearance of the valley changed from this point materially; the steep precipitous character disappeared, giving way to more gentle slopes, and when I had ascended a moderate elevation I saw

before me the higher Costeros, and a short reach of the snowy Cordilleras.

Feeling quite fatigued with my walking, I stopped in at a roadside house to procure a drink and a little rest. I was invited to take a seat under a rustic porch; a large bunch of purple grapes were placed before me. I remained here an hour, and when I got up to leave I gave an old woman who wished me a "lucky journey," some *cigaritos*. She did not fail to tell me that I would certainly be robbed if I traveled alone among the mountains. Two miles further over, a road with a brush fence on one side, and on the other an occasional house, out of which snarling curs barked furiously, brought me to the little village of Quilpué. I passed through the village without stopping, and came out upon a barren plain, which was slightly undulating. On the left, at a distance of half a mile, was the railroad. Trees, twenty or thirty feet in height and of a dark green bushy appearance, were scattered along the watercourse. A mile or two from Quilpué was another collection of houses. In some of these houses they were playing the guitar and dancing, others again were surrounded by drunken *peons*. It was nearly night when I stopped at a wayside house and asked for permission to stay within, which was readily granted. There were two elderly women, and one old, and another middle-aged man, and these with two girls composed the family. The old man's mind was impaired, I presume, for while he was talking to me in an incoherent manner, the younger one whispered to me, "*el no comprende nada*" (he understands nothing.)

The air grew very cool after sunset. A brazier of coals [*charcoal, Ed.*] was brought into the large rooms and I went in and watched one of the *señoras* cook the supper. For drink, I had *mate* and a small piece of bread to eat with it, but the supply did not equal the demand. An hour or two afterward I partook of a dessert consisting of a large bowl of milk and *harina* - flour made from parched wheat, ground between two stones. A bed was prepared for me in another part of the building, on the dirt floor, and I had for a covering a single *poncho* that did not keep me warm. The room was a kind of granary, and nearly filled with wheat sacks. The walls of the building were nothing more than sticks woven together and plastered with mud on the outside. The roof was covered with long oat straw, and when I peered out from under my covering in the morning the light streamed through numerous crevices in the walls. I went out and found the air cool and chilly. A fog was coming up the valley, and the sides of the mountains were soon shrouded in the mist. The old man was lying outside of the building, on a rug, and covered up with his *poncho*. The young man shook hands with me, and asked me how I had passed the night. I bade him '*adios*' and picking up my handkerchief took the road.

The sunlight in a few minutes gladdened the mountains and valleys with his beams, and the fog quickly disappeared. The road pursued an easterly direction, up a small valley that diverged from the larger one. In the course of a mile and a half the ravines disappeared and I commenced ascending a gorge in the mountains; when I had attained the highest part of the "Sierra de la Campana," another rough and apparently higher mountain stood before me. I descended into another valley, and inquired at three or four houses for something to eat, but I met with ill success at first. I presently came up to a party of men who told me that I could procure something in a rude hut close by. A little girl at the same moment brought out a glass, of what I took to be water. One of the men took it from her hand presented it to me to drink. As I was thirsty I did not discover my mistake until I had taken two or three swallows; when I found myself almost choked with *aguardiente*, the most fiery of liquors. A hearty laugh was raised at my expense. I walked into the house and asked a woman for a *cazuela*. She took a pot off of the fire and poured the contents into a large flat dish. It consisted of mutton and potatoes boiled up together. The dish was set on a low stool, and the drunken crowd and myself gathered around, each one having a spoon. The company were quite happy, and talked and laughed

more than considerable. When the victuals were all devoured, I was only half satisfied, and at this juncture one of the tipsy desired me to treat [perhaps, to stand a drink, Ed.], but my comprehension grew dull very suddenly, and seeing how things might turn, I paid the woman a *real* and vamoosed.

I descended into another valley and crossed a little brook that bubbled over its pebbly bed, and again ascended another spur of the Costeros. When on the summit of this, I met an old man and inquired of him how far it was to Limache. He did not answer my question, but asked me what I wanted in Limache. I started on again, and he said "*mire*," but I paid no attention to his call. In a few moments I met a train of pack mules and asked one of the drivers: "*media legua*" (half a league) was the reply. A few minutes more and I looked upon the Valley of Limache. A short walk down an easy slope, brought me to the level plain, which is of considerable extent and surrounded by lofty mountains. I could see the poplars and other trees in the village of Limache. On my left and extending up to the range of mountains, was a field enclosed with a ditch and mud wall. I crossed a little brook in the suburbs of the town and ascended the opposite bank, and entered one of the streets. A mud wall whitewashed was on my right, and on the left for a short distance ran the stream I had just crossed. In its bed were two *peons* making adobes. I was soon on the *plaza*, and took a street that runs to the eastward; I went some distance and then inquired for Quillota. I was on the wrong path. I returned and took the right direction but the wrong street; a little girl showed me the right way, and in a short time I was out of this beautiful little village.

It is situated immediately at the base of a mountain spur, in a rich and fertile valley, which, by proper cultivation, would be unsurpassed. I crossed two streams of water that ran over pebbly beds, and then entered a path which pursued a northerly direction. A league brought me to San Pedro, the mountain through which they are boring the railroad tunnel. The tunnel will be fifteen hundred feet in length when completed. They are cutting both ways, and also into the bowels of the mountain by means of a shaft. I went to the shaft and looked over, and could hear the picks striking against the granite, but could see nothing but darkness.

I followed the new made-track to Quillota. I passed over a deep rich soil as I could see, by the cuttings on the sides, the accumulation of washings from the mountains around the valley. I walked between two rows of lofty poplars, on either side of which was a green meadow for three or four hundred yards, when I came to a high wall, the gate of which was locked, but there was a hole through which I could creep; and thus I made my entrance into the Pueblo of Quillota. The street in which I found myself was long and narrow, and the houses low and mean. The people stared at me as I passed and an old woman, more curious than the rest, invited me in her house. I seated myself and answered the innumerable questions that she asked. She had three daughters, one of whom brought me a plate of grapes of enormous size, while another swept the dirt floor and then seated herself by her mother, and, leaning towards me, with her dark dreamy eyes half shut, drank in every word I said. I ate my grapes, and inquired for the Hotel Colombet, and in a minute more was in the Fonda Francesca.

## LETTER IX.

*Impressions of Quillota—Disappointment—Start to Santiago—Sierra de la Campana—Pass the Night with my old Friends—The Wrong Path—My Little Guide—Temblor!—Gold Mines—Hacienda de las Palmas—Difficulty in finding the Road—Incidents in a Chile Country House—The Highway at last—Casablanca—Ascent of the Costeros —Valley of Curacavi.*

Curacavi, Chile, S. A., May 8, 1857.

On the north side of the town of Quillota there is a high hill, from the summit of which there is a fine view of the town and surrounding scenery. Early on the morning of the 5th I walked around and ascended this miniature mountain; but I found that the higher I went, the more dense became the mist, until, when I had reached the summit, I could not see two rods in any direction. A large cross is erected on the summit, with the inscription of "INRI"<sup>[10]</sup> near the top, and on the cross-bar, Mission, 1849. I waited nearly an hour for the fog to clear away, but was at last obliged to descend without an impression of what was before me.

There are many gardens and graperies in Quillota, all enclosed with adobe walls. In some of them I saw prickly pear trees, twelve or fifteen feet high, laden with this delicious fruit. Water, for the purpose of irrigation, runs in nearly every street. The houses are low, and make no pretension to architectural elegance. There are several churches, and one of them, from its time-worn appearance, I should take to be two hundred years old. I returned to the Fonda, and as I was too late for the regular breakfast, I took my meal with M. Colombet and his good-natured and inquisitive wife, who wished to know where I was going. When I told her, she said, with surprise, "*Está muy peligroso; allá hay muchos ladrones.*" (It is very dangerous; there are many robbers.)

It was nearly noon when I started on my way to the Capital, taking the regular road to Limache, which led between two rows of poplars for more than a league. I had scarcely left the place before the clouds rolled away, and the "Mountain of the Bell," or Sierra de la Campana, stood clear against the eastern sky. This mountain has a bell-shaped summit, when viewed from Quillota. From the summit of San Pedro I took a sketch of the valley, which compensated me in some measure for the disappointment of the morning. The streams of water which from my elevation I could look down upon, resembled threads of silver glittering in the sun.

The sun was hid behind the mountains, and the shades of night were drawing around, when I was welcomed to the house where I had spent the first night. The air was pleasantly cool on the following morning, and down the valley there was a light fog. I walked along a blind path that led through a ravine in a southerly direction. The path presently faded away, and I called in at a hut to inquire the way. They gave me some directions, and after sitting a few minutes, watching a man grinding parched wheat, I gave them some *cigaritos* — small paper cigars — and went my way. But I missed the road again, and was ascending a mountain when I heard someone crying out for me to stop. I turned around and saw one of the boys I had just given a *cigarito* to, trying to catch up with me. I stopped until he came up. He said that I was on the wrong track, and then guided me around a hill and across a ravine, and pointed out a path in a gorge of the mountains. While he was guiding me, I heard a sound that filled the valleys with a roar. It seemed to come from a northerly direction. My little guide stopped

and said "*Temblor* !" It was an earthquake. I passed through the mountain gorge, as directed, and saw before me a small valley in which there were several buildings in the distance, and a good hacienda building nearby. I passed the farmhouse on my left, and came to another large tile-covered building, near which was a windmill of very primitive construction. As it was near a large pit, I inferred that its power had been used for raising dirt preparatory to gold washing. A short distance further on was a river, now nearly dry, but a wild, rapid stream when the snow melts off of the mountains in the spring. I walked down the bed for a considerable distance. It is still, and has been since the days of the early Spaniards, worked for gold. The coarse gravel was piled up in different directions, in order to get at the fine sand wherein is the glittering metal. There were a good many houses, or rather huts, here, and I inquired at one for Las Palmas, for I had learned during the morning that there was such a place.

I was shown up a deep ravine, the sides of which were bare. While ascending the bed of the ravine, the sun beamed down with a tropical fierceness. I descended into another deep ravine which opened to the West, and again inquired my way to the Palmas. Two children were playing on the hillside, but they fled at my approach and hid behind a tree. As I came near the hut to make my inquiries, I was saluted as usual by the dogs; and when I left the whole troop rushed towards me, but not daring to make the attack, they fell upon one another and fought like demons, the least dog in the lot gaining the day. The ravine of which I have just spoken was beautifully wooded with dark green trees, of from twenty to thirty feet in height. I journeyed down it for a short distance and then turned to the South up another ravine similarly wooded, but much narrower. The sides were lofty and steep, and I could see but a small patch of sky above me. It was a wild romantic spot. The air was hushed and still, and nature seemed to repose as from a mighty labor. I was oppressed with a sense of loneliness I cannot describe. A half mile took me through the narrow pass into a valley of considerable width, looking up which to the Eastward, I saw a large tile covered house, enclosed with a thick adobe wall, and still farther up the vale, I saw about a dozen tall and stately palms. It was the Hacienda de Las Palmas. I inquired for the road to Santiago, but took the wrong direction, and wandered for nearly a league up a narrow ravine; the farther I went, the dimmer became the path, and more dense the *chaparral*; I could not see a rod in the tangled mass of brush. I returned and took another path, but met with no better success, the second path taking me into a more dense thicket than the first, and I was obliged, though reluctantly to return to the Hacienda. They showed me the road, and I followed it in a Southerly direction, for about two miles up another valley. Some of the scenery up this valley was very beautiful. When near the summit to which it led, and in an abrupt turn in the road, I met three Chilenos driving a lot of oxen. A short distance farther on I passed through a gate and followed a path which led me into a plain a league in width, upon which were feeding large numbers of cattle. A man and boy were collecting them together. I presently came to the enclosure where the cows, some fifty in number, were collected together, and several girls engaged in milking them. The sun was setting and I concluded that I would stay for the night at this place. I asked and gained permission from an old woman who was paring potatoes for the evening meal. I seated myself upon a low stool to observe the culinary operations, and was by no means surprised when I saw the knife with which the potatoes were being pared, repeatedly wiped upon a dog's back. But I have grown used to such things among the Chilenos, and it did not spoil my appetite. The girls soon gathered in from their work, and ranged themselves on an opposite side of the hut from me, and when the whole family were collected together, the old woman said to me with some pride, "*Mi familia*." There were nine girls and three boys. The floor of the room was dirt, and as uneven as the surface of the country around; a fire was built in the middle, and, as there was no outlet for the smoke, I was nearly blinded. A large pot sat on the burning embers, containing the supper, and entering into a mathematical calculation as to the probable amount each one would receive, I came to the conclusion that my portion would be very

small.

In nearly every house among the peasantry I have yet visited, there is a little table about eighteen inches high, and two feet square, upon which to set the dish of *cazuela*. A clean napkin was placed upon said little table — for this house was no exception to the general rule — a large bowl of this favorite Chilean dish was set thereon, and I was informed in the politest manner, that I was sole proprietor of what was before me. I was more than delighted, for the amount far exceeded what I had reason to expect, and my appetite was none the worse from a hard day's journey.

When supper was over, the hut was vacated to me and the dogs, and a vigorous attack was made by them upon the empty dishes. An old man came to the door presently and said, "*Mire, amigo.*" ["Look, friend"] I arose and followed him to another large *casa*, with very large openings for doors, but the doors were not there. One man and two little boys were lying on the pallet, spread on the smooth dirt floor, and the old woman, and one of the girls were preparing a bed for me. I laid down and drew a thick cover for me; when they asked me if the covering was sufficient, I replied in the affirmative, but the *señorita* brought a thin sheet from a corner of the room, and carefully spread it over me. The hot victuals I had just eaten filled my whole system with a fiery glow, but towards morning it all glowed out, and I thought I might as well have slept under the starry dome without, for all the good the shelter afforded me. I was up before sunrise, the air was sharp and cool, and there was a heavy frost spread over the ground.

I struck down the valley, and after going about two leagues, I saw, towards the south, a bridge, and a row of poles placed at regular intervals. It was the highway from the Port to Santiago. A small stream was to be crossed before I reached it, and I was nearly mired in the bog in so doing. The road was broad, and in places parties of *peons* were engaged in repairing breaks, occasioned by the recent rains. The road presently led in among the mountains, and a distance of four leagues brought me to an abrupt turn, and I saw another valley of considerable extent, and the road stretching to the south for a long distance, straight as an arrow. Here I met two Chilenos, who told me that Casa Blanca was at the farther extremity. I found it to be a small village with a *plaza* and unfinished church. A league from the town, and I stopped for the night. The sun set clear and beautiful, and some blue strata clouds rested in an area of the valley that extended to the southeast. I ate my supper, and lying down upon the floor, I was soon in a land that is dearer to me than the vales of Chile.

I was up at my usual hour in the morning, and, bathing my face and hands in a cold, clear stream of water near at hand, I shouldered my knapsack, and jogged on through a heavy fog. Three leagues from where I had passed the night brought me to the Costeros, and I commenced ascending the mountain, and soon left the gloomy mist below me. The road doubled upon itself twelve times, and when I had gained the summit of the pass, I looked down upon the fog banks through which I had just passed. The upper portions were resolved into strata of clouds. No sight that I ever beheld was more splendid than that before me; wild mountain scenery in every direction, and below me white fleecy clouds. In an easterly direction was a long narrow, valley deeply embayed among mountains, and far away, in the brilliant sunlight, the glistening snows of the Andes.

When the descent was accomplished, I found that the road ran nearly east, and close to a stream of water, the borders of which were fringed with bushes from ten to fifteen feet in height, the leaves of a very dark green, and forming a thick mass of foliage. I have seen the same kind of bushes thirty feet in height. They bear a fruit about the size of an acorn, and of a purple color, These are gathered by the Chilenos and boiled, which softens the outside; this they eat, rejecting the large kernel inside. The

fruit has a bitter, greasy taste, not at all palatable at first.<sup>[11]</sup> Shortly after entering the valley I saw a cactus eighteen feet high. At intervals along the road I passed side huts, and met numerous lumbering carts drawn by oxen. Near a stream of water which passed in a southerly direction, I passed a large hacienda house, surrounded by half a dozen smaller ones, and half a league farther on, came in sight of a church spire. It was early in the afternoon, but I was fatigued with the morning tramp, and when I entered the village, I inquired of a very pretty little girl for the Posada; she blushing told me. I walked into an open courtyard and inquired of a man who was dusting mattresses, if I could pass the night here. He looked at me with that lofty, attempted air, that servants and men of little minds always have, and asked me if I was a Chileno, "No, I am a 'gringo.'" "*O, Americano!*" I nodded affirmation, and was shown into a large room; and here I am in Curacavi, fifteen leagues from the Capital. There is an open window that looks out upon the only street, and the people stop and stare in at the "*extranjero*," as he writes of adventures in their land.

LETTER X.

*Journeying in the Valley of Curacavi—Foggy Morning—Suspicious Customer—Ascent of a Second Range of the Costeros —The Plain of Santiago—Beautiful Night—A Cold Bivouac—The Morning Dawn—The City of Santiago.*

Santiago, Chile, S. A., May 11, 1857.

The village of Curacavi is scarcely worthy of a notice. It is situated at the base of a mountain on the north side of the valley. On the outskirts of the town, on the southern side, are several large vineyards. When I left there, on the morning of the 9th, there was a fog in the valley to my right; but the mountains at whose base the road lay, stood dark and shadowy against the dawning light. The rosy sunlight that, in the course of an hour, bathed the mountain tops, failed to dispel the heavy mist which soon gathered thick around me.

While journeying along the road which, on account of the mist seemed lonely, I came upon a man and woman, who had dismounted and were cutting grass for their horses. The woman asked me if I had any bread, and when I came opposite to the man, he said in a surly manner : '*Que quiere en Chile, burro?*' - (What do you want in Chile, jackass ?)

The winding road led around the spur of a mountain in an easterly direction — in the early part of the morning it had been southerly — and the fog clearing away, as it were, by magic, the fiery rays of the sun glared upon the dusty way. The mountains on either side gradually drew together, and presently I saw before me the limit, and the mountain I had to ascend. It was noon when I commenced the ascent, which took me more than two hours to accomplish. I had traveled ten or twelve leagues in the valley, where the view was confined by the mountains which immediately surrounded me; and as I neared the summit of this last pass of the Costeros, I wondered if the toilsome ascent would be rewarded by a glorious view. When I stood upon the topmost point, I could see the plain upon which is built the city of Santiago, and apparently within my reach the Cordilleras de los Andes. The plain reminded me of a prairie when the frosts of autumn have seared the grass. An occasional hill was to be seen upon the vast expanse. In almost any other part of the world they would be called mountains; here they are mere mounds. The mountains were covered with snow halfway down, and as the plain is only a few hundred feet above the level of the sea, the full effect of this great height is not lost by a lofty table-land. I descended to the base of the mountain and after walking along the smooth level road for nearly a mile, I stopped for the night where there was a small collection of palm-thatched huts.

I had, as usual, a scanty supper; but two of the girls and a wild boy, after the rest of the family had retired to another *casa*, cooked two pots of "*sopa*." This dish consists of onion, *harina*, grease and Chile peppers. It was late in the evening when they bade me good night, and I was left by the expiring embers alone. The hut was not even much plastered, and I could see through the interstices in every direction. I turned to a pile of sheepskins which were designed for my bed, and found that they were four in number. I spread two on the ground, and placing the other two over me, with my knapsack for a pillow, I slept until awakened by the cool air. A party of half-drunk *peons* came in during the night, and lit their *cigaritos* at the fire, and then roused the sleepers in the *casa* adjoining, and held a long and noisy conversation. Some of the natives slept outside under skins and *ponchos*; and a boy who said he was "*mucho frío*" (very cold), bawled and blubbered at regular intervals. It was a musical sound by no means agreeable.

The full moon shone bright and glorious during the night, and I could plainly see the Andean snow fields. Long before the least sign of light appeared in the east, a bright-eyed, lively little boy, with scarcely a rag on his back, came in and kindled a fire. I immediately got up and drank some of the *mate* which he prepared [...] burning my lips and tongue in the operation. This favorite beverage of the Chileans is sucked through a silver or iron tube, when it is nearly scalding hot; and it costs the stranger many a tear before he is a "*huaso*" in this particular.

The morning was beginning, to dawn when I started. The mighty ramparts of the Cordilleras stood in majestic grandeur before me, and long bars of roseate light radiated to the zenith. Far away, above and beyond, this most magnificent mountain chain on the globe, and hovering over the pampas of Buenos Ayres, were a few light clouds, the feathery edges of which were red with the rays of the rising sun, while the mountain vales of Chile were still in the shadow of the Andes.

The road led for about a league between mountains, through an arm of the Great Plain. A low stratus cloud rested on its surface — so low that I could see the sky above me — and I hoped that it would soon clear away, but in this I was disappointed. I journeyed for a long distance over the gently undulating plain, until finally the road wound around the base of one of the hills I have spoken of, and then across a bridge which spans the river Mapocho, the bed of which is now nearly dry. A little farther on, I crossed another bridge which spans a smaller stream. The fog commenced clearing up eventually, and the mud-plastered huts were more thickly scattered as I advanced towards the city. The mist had now cleared away, but the air was filled with a haze, and through its dim medium, the mountains in the southeast, their summits covered with snow, were tinged with a mellow glow, like summer clouds at home. Santiago was before me, and in the different parts of the city I could see the domes and spires of the numerous churches. The distant view of the Capital realized my anticipations, whatever they may have been; but the mountain scenery was on a far grander scale than I had dared to imagine.

I entered at length a winding street, one side of which presented a perspective of mud-thatched huts, and the other low adobe houses whitewashed. "*And is this,*" I thought, "*the entrance to the Capital, the city adored by the Chilenos?*" Numbers of drunken *peons* were reeling around, and from within some of the houses I heard music, and the bacchanalian sound of revelry. It was Sunday, the "drunk day" of the lower order of Chilenos. But this was a suburban view; my eyes were not greeted with such scenes when in the long avenues of the central portion of the city.

## LETTER XI.

*Style of Buildings in the Capital—The Palace, Cathedral and Churches—Bridge across the Mapocho—Wall to Protect the City from Inundations—View of the City and Plain from the summit of a Hill.*

Santiago, Chile, S. A. May 12, 1857.

The houses in Santiago, as in all old Spanish towns, are low in height and far from imposing in appearance. As usual, they have thick adobe walls and are covered with heavy tiles, that give them a clumsy, rather than a light appearance, which the bright sunlight and splendid climate would seem to demand.

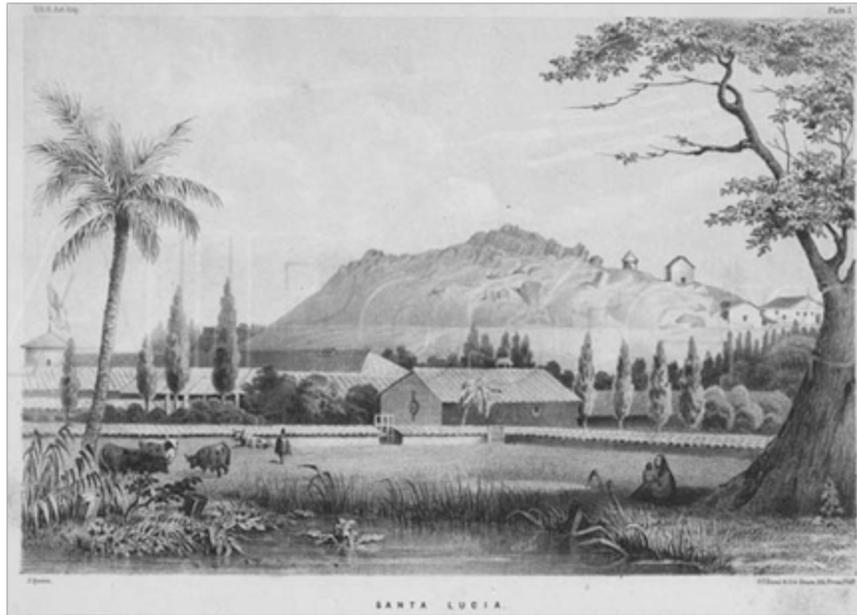
The Palace occupies a *cuadra* or block. In this the President resides, and a portion of it is also appropriated to the mint. I made no effort to go within, as I care but little about anything to be seen in the towns or cities; it is the country I wish to see. The Cathedral is a large granite building, occupying a position on the Plaza de Armas.<sup>[12]</sup> It was partially destroyed some years since by an earthquake, and is now undergoing repairs, and receiving an extensive addition.

The bridge over the Rio Mapocho, which runs through the Northern portion of the city, is a strong solid fabric, built of brick. It has nine arches, and over each arch, on one side of the bridge, are stalls built of the same material and in the shape of a concave recess. These are occupied by cake and fruit vendors. This bridge was built by the Spaniards in 1792<sup>[13]</sup>. The river when the snow melts off of the mountains in the spring is a wild and rapid torrent, and would inundate the city were it not for a strongly cemented wall that extends for a long distance on either side. The wall on the South side is four or five feet thick and on the inside of the wall a single course of bricks is built up some three feet in height, forming a balustrade. The top of the wall makes an excellent footpath, and early one morning I took a long walk up the river. In the outskirts there are several mills. At various points along the river the water is diverted from the main channel into the streets, and in this way water is conveyed through every *cuadra* in the city.

I crossed the river at a convenient point, and came down a narrow, filthy street through the Northern suburbs, and recrossed it on a footbridge a short distance above the old Spanish bridge.

Soldiers are to be met with in every street and on every corner, and barracks filled with soldiers occupy convenient points, to hold the disaffected in subjection, for even now the government is shaken to its base, and is probably on the eve of another revolution.

I ascended this morning a high rocky hill in the Eastern part of the city. In the days of the Spaniards, cannon were planted here, but they have long since been taken away. The cluster of rocks on this hill is singular. I climbed to the summit of the highest and had a splendid view of the city spread out like a map at my feet. The air was filled with a haze so thick that the extreme Western suburbs were scarcely discernible; but this added to, rather than detracted from, the glorious beauty of the scene. The rays of the sun in passing through this medium shed a remarkable gold-colored light on the wilderness of red-tiled roofs and spires and domes of the numerous churches. Toward the Andes, the spurs of which are distant nine miles, the air was clearer, and the patches of green grass on the *pampas* looks green and refreshing.



*"Santa Lucia", lithograph by James F. Queen (1855)*

Innumerable gardens were to be seen in the interior of the squares, but the leaves of the trees were tinged with that gorgeous hue which autumn gives to the perished leaf. The sun shone hotly upon me, and I was forcibly reminded of a warm October day at home. I presently quitted the place, perfectly satisfied with what I have seen of Santiago — little as it may be — and anxious to continue my journey to the South part of Chile.

I will close this letter with Capt. Hall's description of the "effects of the setting sun on the Andes."[\[14\]](#)

"The sun went down while we were still a league or two from the city, (Santiago) and his rays, by passing through the thick haze before described, shed a remarkable gold-colored light on the spires and domes of the numerous churches; whilst the tops of the mountains, the highest of which were covered with snow, still retained the clear bright sunshine. In a short time, [however,] the light began to fade, even on the highest peaks, and at every successive moment a change took place in the color of the different ranges; the lower ones first catching the golden tint, which was soon changed for a variety of pink, and, lastly, for a dull cold gray; so that the whole view in the [eastern] quarter was variegated in the most singular manner, according to the height. Each ridge of hills [was] thus prominently distinguished from all the others, and its outline most distinctly displayed. It was rather a disappointment to discover that our fair companion, with all her good sense, had not much feeling for the magnificent beauties of her native spot. In reply to our reproaches on her insensibility, she said it might be very wrong not to admire what she saw, but as she had never been out of the valley in her life, and consequently had no other scenery to compare with this, she was, at least, unconscious of its superiority to the rest of the world."

## LETTER XII.

*Journeying towards Talca—San Bernardo—Puente de Los Morros —An old Friend—The "Bridge of Boards"—Life among the Peons—Ascent of a Mountain—Shooting at Condors—Legend of the Silver Mountain—Climate.*

Puente de Las Tablas, (on the Rio Maipo,)  
Chile, S. A., May 17, 1857.

I left the Hotel Inglés on the morning of the [?]th, for Talca, distant from the Capital eighty leagues. The road is said to pass over a plain, in places desolate and many leagues in width. A railroad is commenced, to be finished in five years, intended to connect the two cities. I stopped a short time at the station, where I saw several Americans, one of whom gave me some excellent information about the country through which I expect to pass. I bade them all goodbye, and started on my way, and after going a short distance I met an Englishman, who was greatly surprised at my traveling alone. When I left him he said, "Put down in your journal that you met me." "What is the name?" I inquired. "Kent," was the reply.

The grass on either side of the road is short and thick, and is irrigated by numerous streams of water, diverted from the Maipo. As I passed over the level plain I frequently snuffed an aguish swampy smell, which I by no means relished. It was late in the afternoon when I came to the village of San Bernardo, some five or six leagues from Santiago. Poplar and other trees were planted around in every direction. Passing through the village I turned to the left, and after going a short distance, came to an overshot mill, painted white; adjoining the mill was a dwelling house, that had an air of neatness and comfort I have seldom seen in the country. The road led between two rows of poplars on one side, and an adobe wall on the other. Between the poplars ran the stream of water which turns the mill. A half mile in this direction and I turned to the south, down the well-traveled road which leads to the Puente de Los Morros, or Bridge of Castles, which spans the Rio Maipo. I left a mountain of considerable elevation on my left, and after walking about half a league came to the bridge. There are several houses here, including a *posada*. From a large Chile bake oven by the roadside, there came the savory perfumes of hot bread. The bridge is a plain structure, built of pine and covered. A large and castellated rock stands at one side of the entrance. I passed over, and leaving the main road, turned to the left, following close to the bed of the river, which is now a shrunken stream. A little boy, riding a horse, presently caught up with me and I had a lively conversation with him. Seeing a cross by the wayside, erected by a pile of stones, I asked for what purpose it was, though I knew before. He answered me that a murder had been committed there. It appears that two *peons* who had been gambling had fallen out, and one had killed the other with a knife. A party of natives pursued the murderer; when he drew his knife on them, one of the number raised his gun and shot him dead.

The sun was setting behind hazy clouds in the west, as I turned a point in a mountain to my right, and found myself among a collection of small houses, near a large quarry. Crowds of *peons* were standing around the huts, and some of the men were preparing a blast, which they soon let off. Here I found my friend, Mr. Canda, whom I had known in Valparaiso. He is superintending the work at the quarry, where they are taking out rock for the great Maipo bridge. The name of the place is "Puente de Las Tablas," which literally means "Bridge of Boards," and here is still to be seen the ruins of those swinging bridges of which every schoolboy has read, and probably seen a sketch. This bridge was formed with chains stretched across the river, upon which boards were laid. Its construction, judging from the remains, was rude and primitive, though a great improvement on the swinging bridges made

of raw hide. The bed of the Rio Maipo is of considerable width at this place, but the water is confined to a narrow stream, which at night lulls me to sleep, with its continuous roar as it dashes over the rocky bed. The scenery around is fine; lofty mountains in the east, covered with snow, at distances of from seven to sixty miles, their numerous chasms and gorges plainly visible, even at such a wide interval. The Maipo at this place runs nearly west; the plain extends to the river bank on the opposite side; and here on the south is a mountain, whose summit is several thousand feet above the river bed.



*"Hanging Bridge", from "The Araucanians" by Edmond Reuel Smith (1855)*

About a hundred *peons* are here getting out rock. Most of them are dressed in the old Cholo costume. A piece of rawhide strapped on the sole of the foot, thin cotton pants reaching to the ankles, of enormous width, and a vest which is generally a world too small, completes their dress when at work; when idle, a *poncho* of the coarsest texture is thrown over their shoulders. They were paid off one evening, and as soon as they received their money, they gathered around among the huts in groups of four or five, and commenced gambling. A *poncho* or cloth would be spread upon the ground and while one of the number held a light, the rest would game with as much earnestness as though millions were at a stake. The night was clear, but there was no moon, and as the dim tapers lighted up the dark swarthy faces of the Chilean *peons*, I was reminded of what I had read of California in its early days. Some of the number were broke early in the evening, but so intense was their love for gaming, that they would strip off their clothes, and stake them against the money of their more fortunate opponents.

One afternoon I walked around the base of the mountain toward the southeast. A short distance above, a small river puts into the Maipo, wending off in a southerly direction; between it and the mountain was the winding road. I found a mild and beautiful landscape after going a half league. The mountain side was gently undulating, in places, and dotted over with bushes and small trees. Here an arm of the plain extends to the eastward for 10 or 12 miles. I could see patches of cultivated land low-down upon the Andean spurs, and far off to the southeast what I took to be the spire of a church. Numerous

condors, and the vultures of the Andes, were winging their lofty flights overhead, and occasionally I saw them perched upon the base and splintered cliffs. I fired two shots at one of the vultures, but I was too far off to do execution.

Mr. Canda and I ascended the mountain this morning. It was much loftier than I anticipated. When we had gained the summit, we stood upon the verge of a precipice two thousand feet in depth, and amused ourselves in shooting at condors with a revolver, but could not succeed in hitting any.

Mr. C. pointed out a large mountain in the South, saying that a little more than a year ago a miner had ascended this mountain, and after being absent four or five days, he returned, but so exhausted with hunger and fatigue that he was taken to the hospital at Santiago, where he shortly died. Previous to his death, he described to a friend the position of a rich silver mine he said he had discovered. Whether there is a silver mine in the mountain described or not, were it not that the rains in the south will soon set in, I should certainly make a journey thither. The mornings here are invariably cool, as a light wind invariably comes off of the snows, but this lasts for two or three hours only, and during the afternoon it is at times uncomfortably warm.

### LETTER XIII.

*Journey up the Maipo to see an old Suspension Bridge—Ascend a Spur of the Andes—View up the Valley of the Maipo—Return to the Puente de las Tablas—Legend of the Bridge the Devil built—Prepare to resume my Journey—Account of Robbers—Basilio, my Companion—On the Road—Linderos—An Agreeable Family—The Pass of Angostura—Sugar Loaf—The inquisitive old Chileno—Rancagua—Lose Basilio—The pretended Robber—Interruptions on the Road—Village of Rengo—Parched and Barren Scenery—San Fernando.*

San Fernando, Chile, S A., May 22, 1857.

Having learned that two or three leagues up the Maipo there was to be seen one of the old swinging bridges, I took my portfolio one morning and started in search of it. My course was in an easterly direction, at a short distance from the river bed, over a level plain upon which were feeding vast herds of cattle. I was nearly at the base of the mountains when I inquired of a *huaso* for the "Puente de Las Tablas." I was directed to go a short distance and turn to the left, which I did; and soon coming to a steep bank, I descended by a winding road to a narrow strip of level ground immediately adjoining the river, and saw before me what I had long wished to see, a rustic suspension bridge, resembling in a certain degree the one at Niagara Falls. I crossed over to the Northern bank and seating myself on a boulder, which projected from the steep bank, I obtained an excellent view not only of the bridge, but of the surrounding scenery. While taking a sketch of the spot, numerous troops of mules passed over the swaying fabric, cautiously shuffling their way, the *arrieros* whooping at them at a sound rate.

The bridge is not built with boards, as the name implies, but round poles are lashed together with raw hide, which answer the purpose quite as well, but much more rudely. The poles are laid upon two large chain cables, between which are several smaller ones. Upon the larger poles, which are placed together as close as possible, is a closely woven mat of round sticks about four feet in length.

It was my intention to have [gone] to the upper bridge, which is four or five leagues higher up the river than the one just described, and I started for that; but when I had ascended a low spur of the mountain, I looked to the westward, and saw the valleys and ravines of the Costeros choked up with masses of clouds. I decided upon a return, though not without a regret, for the "Puente" is said to be very rude; and there is a country tradition that it was built by the devil, the remarkable feat having been performed one night, to the great astonishment of the "*cholos*" on the succeeding morning.

From the summit of the spur I looked far up the Valley of the Maipo, hemmed in by the wildest scenery imaginable, and saw a single white house, nearly hidden with leafless poplars. Here also was a large stream of water, which was conveyed around the mountain side<sup>[15]</sup>, a part of which was diverted from the main channel and tumbled down the side of the spur with a roar like the Falls of St. Anthony<sup>[16]</sup>. A different sound from the waterfall once woke those mountain ravines and gorges — the roar of musketry and cannon, when the proud Spaniards encountered the troops of Chile, and fought the sanguinary battle of the Maipo.

I cut me a cane from the "*espino*" and returned just before nightfall, tired enough. The following morning there was a heavy fog, but it cleared off by ten o'clock. It was my intention to have started at an early hour on my journey to Talca, but Carmelita intimated to me that a boy who had been living with her wished to go with me to Talcahuano. It was noon before Basilio was equipped for the tramp. I shouldered my knapsack and shaking hands with my friend, who accompanied me a short distance,

started on my journey in a thoughtful mood, for a long road was before me. Mr. Candee [Canda?] tried to dissuade me from the undertaking — pointing the dangers from robbers in a vivid light. Were I to believe half I heard about "*Los Ladrones*," I would in imagination, see the glitter of knives, and the far more disagreeable [...] of numerous lassos, at every step.

I jogged on for a long distance [...] When I came to the "Bridge of *Catlos*["?]," I turned to the south upon the regular Talca road, which was dry and dusty, and enclosed at times by mud walls, and lined on either side with poplars. We met many carts and mounted Chilenos. Passing through a little town on the south side, we took the road which leads through the mountains. Basilio inquired of a woman we met if we were on the right path. She said it was a dangerous road to travel; that there were "*mala gente*" (bad people) among the *cerros*; and my companion thought it was best to return and take the other road, which we did.

The distance of a league brought us to the little pueblo of Linderos. Here I inquired at a *despacho* for the *posada*, and was directed across the street to a house, and by a boy redirected in another direction, but, happily, in the right one. It was a long, low house, with a porch in front, with a bench on either side of the door. I was met at the door by an elderly woman who invited me to take a seat, and I threw my knapsack on the bench beside me. Her three daughters came out in a moment, and commenced conversing with me with that unreserved freedom which I have always met with among the Chilenos.

My hostess presently asked me if I wished to eat, and upon my replying in the affirmative, she invited me into the hall, where the table was set, and I seated myself with the girls before a "*cazuela*." The table was low and small, and the space was well filled up; but a young man who was cousin to the girls contrived to squeeze in at a corner. As I was sitting down, the *señora* asked me what my name was, and when I told her, "Santiago!" she cried out, "*Cómo le va Don Santiago*," ["How are you, Mr. James"] at the same time shaking my hand with wild delight. Two glasses of *chicha* were placed on my right, and my hostess repeatedly drank to my health, at each time addressing to me a handsome speech, the half of which I did not understand; but as the *señoritas* laughed heartily, I considered it must be good, and laughed as loud as they.

The young Chileno spoken of asked me many questions relating to different countries, which showed a superior intelligence to any I had yet met with. I drank a cup of "*mate*," and telling them that I was fatigued and sleepy, was shown to my room, the door of which opened out into the street. There was no inside fastening, but I propped my cane against the door, sticking one end in the dirt floor, and after loading one of my revolvers that I had discharged in the morning, I lay down to sleep and dream of home.

The light was just beginning to show itself in the morning, when I looked out, and I stood in the door a long time, watching the dawn. The sunlight was glittering on the mountain tops in the south-east before my hostess made her appearance, and telling her to awaken the boy, I paid her five [reales?], and we took the road which led between two high walls in a southerly direction. Crossing a shallow stream of water, we entered an avenue of willows. The willows, with their grateful shade, were left behind, and we emerged into an open plain of small extent. Before us towered the rugged peak of Angostura. The mountains appeared to come together as we advanced towards them, but as I turned the base of the mountain, the Pass of La Angostura was disclosed to my view. The Pass is about two hundred yards in width, and across it ran a stream of water, which, as it bubbled over its rocky bed, looked as black as ink, but in reality was as pure as crystal. A little further on was another stream, and a short distance below where the road crossed, it spread out into a *laguna*, and in this two men were

dragging a seine for fish.

Houses, mud-plastered and thatched, were scattered along the road, and off to the left a half mile, was a large, tile-covered building. The valley, or plain, gradually expanded as we walked along, and a league from the Pass brought us to a wheat field of immense extent. The wheat was three or four inches in height, and the ground was scattered over with the thorny "*espino*," which, with the cactus, is a prominent feature in a Chilean landscape. The ground on the right appeared to be swampy, and masses of leafy bushes, five or six feet in height, dotted the surface. Half up the mountains to the westward was a robe of low, green bushes.

Towards evening the road led along the base of the Costeros on the west side of the valley; and two mounds, which reminded me of the Islands of Rasa and Redonda<sup>[17]</sup>, rose above the level of the plain. One of them at a distance resembles a mighty dome: it is called Sugar Loaf. We stopped at its base and spent the night. It was a late hour before any preparation was made for supper, and I thought at one time — which was a long time — that we would have to lie down with empty stomachs. One of the girls at length set a large pot containing beans on the fire, and then commenced paring potatoes and laying them on the burning coals. Basilio was sitting on the ground at my feet at the time, and when the culinary operations began, he looked up in my face and gave a smile of simplicity and satisfaction which I will not soon forget. We certainly "done justice" to our supper.

The owner of this house — if house it was — was an old man, whose hair and heavy whiskers were white with the snows of many winters, but his black eyes still flashed with more than ordinary intelligence. When I told him I was an American, he was surprised, and asked me many questions relating to my country. "Is North America a very large country?" he inquired. Yes, was my reply:— "Is it larger than Chile?" he continued: "*Poco*," ["A little"] was the answer I gave him. After asking whether our cities were as fine as Santiago, and if we had any churches, he turned to a Chileno and said — "Do you know that in North America they have little pieces of paper (*papelitos*) worth many ounces of gold?" His less knowing friend was greatly surprised at this fact.

The old man gave me two sheep skins for a bed, and Basilio one, but I managed to slip a *poncho* off of his pallet during the night, and thus got through in a comfortable manner. We started with a cloudy sky overhead the next morning, for Rancagua, distant three leagues. This town is situated in a delightful portion of the valley, but as one old Spanish town is a type of all the rest, I merely passed through the place. South of Rancagua is a river, on the bank of which we stopped for our dinner, and I allowed Basilio to rest for a couple of hours, as he was footsore and lagged behind. A league farther and he gave out, and I was obliged to send him back with a passing *carretero* which was bound to the Puente de Los Morros. I assisted him to mount the lumbering vehicle, and could not repress a feeling of sadness when I saw the cart rolling off in the distance with his little form perched on top.

I passed the night at a wayside house, and started this morning with fourteen leagues between me and San Fernando. I was stopped on the road this morning by a pretended robber who proved in the event to be a dragoon soldier, and shortly afterwards I was interrupted by a party of *peons*, who kindly wished to relieve me of my small change, but I placed my hand upon a celebrated weapon, and they quickly came to a safe conclusion.

I left the little village of Rengo behind me — with it, dark leaved orange trees and their golden fruit — and passed through a country that was wild, parched and barren. A league before reaching San Fernando, the scenery is directly opposite, the road leading through an avenue of trees, while the soil

on either side was highly cultivated. I am now in the halfway place between the cities of Santiago and Talca; every one stared at me as at a wild beast, and I feel as though I was in a remote country town. The church bell solemnly tolls the hours; it is night and I am in San Fernando.

#### LETTER XIV.

*Change in my Mode of Traveling—On the Road "a la Huaso"—Low Range of Hills—Desolate Plains—The Solitary Palm—Wild Natives—Curicó—Beautiful Sunset—Traveling in the night—Molina—The Post Office Official—Close of a fatiguing Day's Journey—Volcano of Peteroa—Distant View of Talca, and Entrance into the City, &c.*

Talca, Chile, S. A., May 25, 1857.

The sun was an hour high when I left San Fernando, on the morning of the 23d. When I came to the outskirts of the town on the south side, I spied a beautiful grove of tamarind trees on my left, and descended into a bottom strewn with round stones, which indicated the propinquity of a river. I had not gone far before I was overtaken by a "*birloche*"—a two-wheeled vehicle, drawn by three horses, containing the southern mail. A postillion was riding on each side, and one of them was leading a horse that was saddled. They stopped and offered me the horse they were leading to ride across the river near at hand. I gave one of them my knapsack to carry, and mounting the Chilean pony, rode with them nearly a mile, crossing several streams before we ascended to the opposite plain. I came to the conclusion, in riding along, that I would go with them to Talca, if they would take me for a reasonable sum; and when the "*birloche*" was stopped again, I commenced bargaining with one of the "*birlocheros*", a roguish-looking chap, for a passage. I reduced him from a half ounce to five dollars, when the bargain was closed, and we started on the gallop to Talca.

I swung my closely braided leather thong like a "*huaso*," and if I had been provided with a *poncho* and heavy wooden stirrups, I might have passed for a genuine "*Chilo*." At times the country we passed over partook of barrenness, but I noticed an increasing greenness in the vegetation, which indicated the presence of heavier rains than in the north.

A few leagues brought us to the village of Chimbarongo, where we stopped a few minutes to deliver the mail, and at a distance of eight leagues from San Fernando, our jaded horses were changed for a fresh lot. There were two passengers in the "*birloche*" and an agent, whom the "*birlocheros*" called Don Francisco. While the horses were being changed, the passengers walked on to a *hacienda* house in advance, to get their breakfast, and here also we pulled up, and a girl brought out a mixed up dish of *charqui*, potatoes, eggs and pepper, and a cup of hot milk and pepper highly sweetened. The victuals were divided among the "*birlocheros*", Don Francisco and myself.

We started again, and at the distance of a mile crossed a stream of water, and when I rose the opposite bank, I saw before us, extending from mountain range to mountain range, from the Costeros to the Andes, a low range of hills. Rapid driving soon brought us to them, and here, upon the northern slope, we passed the Railroad Engineers. The hills were small and smoothly rounded, and some of them were covered with a growth of wheat four or five inches in height.

The mountains were now far apart, and before us was a wide and desolate plain, many, many leagues in width, and scattered over in places with rocks. The plain was not truly level, but was occasionally broken by hills and small ravines. A few huts of the rudest description were to be seen at an

occasional hillside, but their presence only contributed to the desolate scene. As I rode over the plains I wondered if any mineral treasures were hid beneath, or whether below a thin crust rolled a burning sea of lava.

Several leagues from the low range of hills we passed a collection of small houses, and a considerable stream of pure water whose crystal waves rolled over pebbles of every hue of the rainbow.

Nearly half a mile down the gravelly bed of this beautiful stream, a single palm raises its graceful form. The lonely situation of this tropical plant reminded me of the first palm I had ever seen. The plain was now smoother, and fewer rocks were to be seen, and in their stead the thorny "*espino*." The natives were wilder and more ignorant than any I had yet encountered, singing out their peculiar appellatives of "*gringo*" and "*burro*" to me at every point I met them.

Two leagues from the river, and we came to a *posada*, or country inn, where the horses were changed, and the "*birlocheros*," Don Francisco, and myself got a *cazuela*; Don F. and I, forgetting our temperance principles, drank too much *chicha*, which, although it did not make us tight, nearly made us sick.

The "*birloche*" drove on, to take the mail to Curicó, while one of the "*birlocheros*" and I took a shorter road at an easy walk. The village of Curicó is situated at the base of a long hill of moderate elevation. I saw the church spire rising up from among the trees, and upon the hill a large cross.

The evening was remarkably fine; the clouds which promised rain, a day or two previous, had cleared away, and a few scattering cirrus and cumulus were alone to be seen. Flocks of gay-plumaged parrots winged their way in different directions, and we occasionally scared up an unknown bird from the wayside. It was nearly sunset when we came to the bank of the river, which runs south to Curicó; and here we stopped for the "*birloche*" to come up. While we were waiting, the sun set behind the low ridge of mountains. It was a quiet, lovely sunset, and one that I will long remember. I thought of sunset in Italy, and doubted if it could surpass a similar scene in Chile.

Shortly after the "*birloche*" came up and drove into the river, which was deep and swift; the horses stopped in the middle of the stream, but the drivers urged them on with loud shouts, and finally made the passage. Wherever the road would admit of it, we went on the full run. Houses were scattered along the wayside at close intervals, with groups of natives gathered around the brush fires. The twilight gradually faded away, until darkness overspread the land. We drove in between two rows of poplars — on the right loomed a lofty church spire against the western sky. Here we stopped, and I changed my little pony for a white horse which the "*birlochero*" said I would ride to Talca on the following day. We remained here nearly half an hour, and then started again. At the farther extremity of a long row of poplars a single light gleamed through the darkness; others soon made their appearance, and in a few minutes we were driving through a street in the town of Molina. We stopped on the corner of the *plaza* at the Post Office, and waited nearly half an hour for the official to come and receive the mail. I was nearly given out with fatigue, and my patience was quite exhausted, when the important man of the country town made his appearance. He appeared to be wonderfully impressed with the responsibility of his station, and unlocked the door, and commenced assorting the mail in the most dignified manner. I said nothing about the delay, for I knew it would do no good. Presently one of the postillions mounted a horse and said — "*Patrón, venga por aquí*," [Patron, follow me.] I did follow him, and to a *posada*. I rode through an open gateway into a courtyard and dismounted. A bright fire was burning under a shed, and thither I repaired. A woman was cooking a

*cazuela*, and I asked her for a drink of water, which she brought me, and I seated myself upon a chair more fatigued than ever I was before. It was a satisfaction however, to think that I had passed over ninety miles since morning. I could not eat, and asking for a bed, I lay down with barely sufficient cover over me, and slept soundly.

Morning had just begun to dawn in the east when I went out. My fatigue had vanished, and I was ready for anything that might turn up. The woman spoken of made a hot *aguardiente* punch, and the roguish "*birlochero*" was very particular to invite me to share a portion. We started before sunrise, and the road, after a short distance, took a [southwesterly] direction over a smoothly undulating plain, which extended as far as the eye could reach to the southward. The sky was particularly clear; in the northeast were some glorious clouds, while far away in the southeast, the Cordilleras faded away in the dim haze. In the east was a lofty, remarkable mountain, shaped like the frustum of a cone. Were it continued to a point, it would realize my impression of Chimborazo, and be the most perfect type of a mountain in the world. It was the volcano of Peteroa; it is cold and silent now, but who knows when the sleeping giant may awake?

Our horses were kept on the run, and about 11 o'clock in the morning the white and lofty church spires of the city of Talca rose in view, close to the base of the low mountains in the southwest.

We crossed the Rio Corrientes[?], and ascending the opposite bank, I saw the red-tiled houses. The postillions urged their horses to the utmost speed, so that I could scarcely keep up, and my horse's hoofs, in a few minutes, were clattering over the stony streets; and as the city bells were striking the hour of twelve, the "Correos del Sur[?]" was brought to a halt in front of the Post Office. The mail was delivered, and we rode on to the *plaza*. I stopped at the Hotel du Nord, and shaking hands with the roguish "*birlochero*," and Don Francisco, I paid them five dollars and called for a room.

It being Sunday afternoon, a battalion of infantry was paraded on the *plaza*, and I had an opportunity of seeing the veterans of Chile go through with their exercises.

## LETTER XV.

*Leave Talca for the Port of Tomé—Muddy Roads—Gold Mountains—Take the wrong road, which changes the plan of my route—Another horseback adventure—Passage of the Rio Maule—Rocky road—The gold hunter—Night among the Mountains—The little round mountain—Sierra Nevada, or the Volcano of Chillan—Journeying over the Cerros—Ludicrous adventure on the banks of the Rio Cauquenes—Incidents on the Plaza of the Pueblo.*

Cauquenes, Chile, S. A., May 29, 1857.

A heavy rain fell during my stay in Talca, which detained me a day; but the morning of the 27th dawned bright and clear. I was up, as usual, at an early hour, and hunting up the little Frenchman who is landlord of the Hotel del Norte, I paid my bill, and started for the port of Tomé, sixty-six leagues from Talca. I crossed a small stream of water on the western side of the city, and ascending the hill, I took the Chillan road.

The recent rains had rendered the road muddy, and for the distance of a league the traveling was disagreeable. I passed two or three neat looking buildings, with wings at either end, leaving an open square in front. In one of the courtyards was a single palm, that glowed in the bright sunlight with tropical magnificence; sweet type of the sensuous South. The road presently opened out upon the open plain, an arm of which extended two or three leagues to the westward. Before me was a barren range of mountains. I stopped by the roadside a few minutes, to discharge and reload one of my revolvers, and while so doing was overtaken by a pedestrian, who said he was going to the Rio Maule. He told me that the barren and rocky *cerros* we were nearing contained gold mines "*muy rico*." ["very rich"] I walked along with him for a couple of leagues, without heeding where the path was taking me to — thinking I was on the road to Parral. But the road grew dimmer as we advanced, and when we commenced ascending a mountain, through a pass, I knew I was not on the route for Chillan, which leads over a plain. I turned around and starting back, went but a short distance when I met two men driving a loose horse and three mules, the latter loaded with goods, before them. I inquired of them the direction to Parral, when they told me I should have left the mountains to the right, and that the road upon which I then was led to Cauquenes, capital of the province of Maule, to which Pueblo they were then bound. The road to the ports of Tomé and Talcahuano, by Cauquenes, is called the coast road; it leads through the mountains and is difficult to find. The road that passes Parral and Chillan takes over the plains, is broad and well travelled, and hence the reason of my wishing to reach the above mentioned ports by the valley road.

I concluded to accompany them to Cauquenes, and let circumstances determine the course I was to pursue when I reached the Pueblo. The horse was lassoed, and I mounted, having a very rude saddle. One of the Chilenos was a very respectable looking man, and carried a double-barreled shot gun, and a brace of pistols in his holsters. The other was the *mozo*, or servant, who attended to the mules. The winding path now struck into the mountains, and rude granitic rocks were scattered around in every direction. A few bushes and the hardy cactus were growing on the steep hill sides. While passing through a ravine, the *mozo* pointed out a mountain on the right, which he said was rich with gold.

We descended into the valley of the Maule, and after going a short distance, came to a plain several hundred yards in width, that extended to the river, thickly covered with round stones, which rattled under our horses' feet like dry bones. This passed, and we were on the river bank. The river had to be crossed in a launch, and the packs were removed from the mules, and the animals driven in and tied.

When all was ready, the launch was shoved out into the rapid, eddying stream. Two stout oarsmen were well forward, and they, with the rough looking steersman, constituted the ferrymen. We were soon on the opposite bank, and while the packs were being replaced on the mules, I took a rude draft of the scene, with the Andes in the distance. While engaged in this, a launch, laden down to the water's edge, shot past a projecting ledge of rocks, the boatmen pulling as for life through the whirling eddy, and then resting on their oars. For a moment, and a moment only, I wished myself on board, as I was charmed with the wild life. Two or three houses were on this side of the river, and Don Juan whispered to me that there were robbers here, and the rough looking customers who stood around confirmed the statement. We ascended the bank, and the road took a southerly direction among fragments of granite, and presently up a very steep ravine, down which ran a small stream of water. On the opposite or western side from which the road led, were occasional groups of bushes, which indicated the presence of a spring of water. Cattle and sheep were feeding on the short herbage.

A quarter of a mile brought us to the summit of the *cerro*, and we descended into a small valley where the hillsides were smoother and the landscapes milder. Less rocks were to be seen; and the thorny "*espino*" was more thickly scattered. At wide intervals we passed rude houses, from which would emerge many dogs barking at our cavalcade most vociferously. Every house in Chile, I believe is well supplied with dogs: miserable, wretched curs, that annoy anyone with their barking, but not with their biting, for they are the most dastardly canine cowards I ever saw.

We journeyed on at an easy walk during the day; but as the road is seldom traveled we met but few travelers. A traveling peon fell in with us about noon. Shortly afterwards I saw an old man coming towards us, carrying a crowbar, pick and large pan. One leg of his trousers was rolled up, and his coarse *poncho* nearly hung to the ground. "*Un minero*," said Don Juan to me. "May you find much gold mines" was the salutation of my companions when he came opposite. "*Gracias, Caballeros*," ["Thank you, Gentlemen"] — said the gold seeker, but without turning his head, for his thoughts were but on the acquisition of the yellow metal, that was hidden in the mountains around. Men speak of old California miners, but the old Chileno had grown gray "prospecting" before the land of gold was dreamed of.

An opening in the valley to the eastward showed a short reach of the Cordilleras, and ever and anon, some lofty snow-white peak would show its glittering summit in the depressions of the Costeros. The sun set while we were still in the valley, though at the southern extremity, and how blue, soft and beautiful, at that hour, were penciled on the sky, the low mountain ranges in the North and West. We ascended the mountain again, and when we had gained the summit, daylight was half gone. Before me was the wide plain that extends to the outlying ranges of the Andes, and, as the mighty range rolled far away and appeared to be lost in the South, I was strikingly reminded of the first view I had of the plain of Santiago. The misty curtains of night shrouded the *pampa* in gloom, but the light of the young moon and stars sufficed to show, though dimly, the eternal snows.

We descended to the foot of the mountain, and the road wound close along the eastern base. An occasional gleaming taper on the dark mountain to our right revealed the situation of a house. It was about eight in the evening, when we stopped in front of a long building with a porch in front. It was the residence of the *dueño* of the hacienda, and here we passed the night. While the *mozo* was unpacking the mules, Don Juan and I, went in to inspect the apartment assigned to us. It was a large lofty room, with a cleanly swept dirt floor. In one corner there was a bed, and this, with the exception of three chairs, and a lighted candle, was all the furniture in the room. The *mozo* presently brought in a bottle of *mosto* — an excellent wine made from the grape — which we drank out of a horn. In about

half an hour a little table was brought in, a cloth spread, and a fat good-natured woman, who was the *dueño's* wife, brought us our supper in a very large dish. It was a thick kind of a soup, made out of *charqui*, (dried beef) mixed with onions, potatoes and pepper. Three small biscuits were also placed on the table, and the four travelers sat down to eat. We had but three spoons, and the *mozo* and traveling *peon* had to take it turn about. Supper over, the *mozo* and *peon* lay down upon their sheepskins, while the good natured *dueño* spread clean sheets on the bed, for Don Juan and I, and we turned in under a load of blankets and *ponchos*, and I slept warm for the first time in nearly a month.

We were up early in the morning, and after eating some broiled *charqui* and a biscuit each, I bought a bottle of wine "*por el camino*", (for the road) as the *mozo* said, (he took good care to drink it all himself, not leaving me a drop,) the mules were packed and we started.

I preferred walking to riding, and I had my knapsack lashed to a mule, which, poor thing, was already overburdened. The road took up a ravine to the southwest, and a strong refreshing breeze blew direct in our faces. Mountains were on the right and left, and after going a league or two, passing several houses on the way, the road led into a valley that extended to the west and eventually opened upon an undulating plain, to the South. When we came out upon the plain, Don Juan pointed in a southwesterly direction, towards a round blue mountain that was far away and said to me— "Do you see *la redondita de Coiquén*." Yes, I replied;— "Near that mountain he continued, there is a little town called Quirihue, through which you have to pass in going to Tomé; it is ten leagues from Cauquenes, and more than fifty miles from here. Another round oval mountain to the westward was pointed out as Name.

Here the traveling peon dropped behind and we saw no more of him, and Don Juan riding ahead at a brisk pace, the *mozo* and I were left alone for the remainder of the day. We presently crossed a small river which runs to the eastward and empties into the Maule. Here the plain opened to the eastward, and showed the Cordilleras, and a large mountain in the southeast loomed up like a snow bank. Its outline was very smooth, and no sharp and splintered crags were visible, which distinguishes it from most the of Andes. It is called Sierra Nevada, but is known on the map as the Volcano of Chillan. Five hundred feet below its perpetual snows, are "*Los Baños*," or the Baths, boiling springs, containing in their waters sulfur, potash and iron. They are the best in the known world for medicinal purposes.

*Peons* were plowing with oxen in different directions, preparatory to sowing wheat, and little boys, with conical shaped hats, were watching flocks of sheep. Some of these children we passed had remarkably sweet-looking faces. It scarcely seems possible that they would ever be transformed into, surly looking *cholos*. Could their minds be irradiated with the light of knowledge, such would not be the case. Such is the effect of education. Dark indeed is the mind of the *peon*,

*"More dark than groves of fir on Huron's shores."*[\[18\]](#)

The surface of the country, as usual, was thinly dotted with *espino*, and at occasional points along the road the granite cropped out. During the afternoon, the road passed through a more mountainous district, and we descended and ascended several long and gentle slopes. High up on the *cerro* were many spots of freshly plowed land, the soil of a dark reddish brown. The road was hard and solid as a rock, and in many places was, thickly strewn with finely crushed, quartz and beautifully colored pebbles.

During the day the sky had been nearly clear and the air cool and temperate, but late in the evening a

fleecy mantle overspread the sky. We were now upon a highly elevated *cerro*, and at this moment the sun set behind the western hills. We were then about three leagues from the Pueblo, and the shades of evening found us journeying in a valley. I was tired of the long tramp. At different points along the road the *mozo* gave me the distances to Cauquenes, and when I looked down from a moderate eminence upon the lights in the town, I secretly rejoiced that the day's journey was nearly brought to a close. A river had to be crossed first, and when the mules were driven across I mounted behind the *mozo*, as the water was too deep to wade; but the little horse he rode was wild and kicked up at a great rate. My hat fell off at this juncture and I was obliged to dismount, and the *mozo*, fearing that the mules would scatter and be lost, went over to the opposite side to collect them. I heard the clattering of hoofs and the crashing of brush as he rode to and fro at a furious rate. I seated myself on a bank to await his return. In a short time he came across and I mounted again, but the animal rebelled at the double arrangement and did its utmost to land us both in the sand. I gave the *mozo* my heavy cane and he pounded the brute over the head, and swore and raved in Spanish at a desperate rate; while I was nearly convulsed with laughter at the novel adventure, which in the dim moonlight, would have been highly edifying to spectators, had there been any — fortunately there were none. The animal tamely submitted at length and we effected the passage.

The musical cry of the watchman rang out upon the still air, "*Las ocho y media*," (half past eight) when we entered the *plaza*, and here upon the corner, in front of the residence of the *Intendente*, a brass band was playing. As usual, a crowd of boys were gathered around, who raised a great shout when they saw the mules. The little white mule wheeled about and took the back track, followed by the *mozo* on the full run, who overhauled the little thing and the white object darted across the *plaza* like an arrow. I followed, but lost sight of them in the darkness. I inquired of a *vigilante* which direction they took — he told me — but as I went down the street they were not to be seen. But that natural instinct which has enabled me to find places in spite of difficulties did not desert me; I peeped into an open door and saw José, the *mozo*, unpacking the mules.

## LETTER XVI.

*Hospitality of Don Juan—Jog on, jog on the footpath way—How a Cazuela is cooked—Lonely Valley—Attacked by Robbers—The old Mountaineer—Village of Quirihue—Incidents met with in the Pueblito—Glorious Sunrise—Remarkable physical appearance of the Country—The Pacific—Rio Itata—Last night in the Country—Taken for an Organ Grinder—Storm among the Mountains—The Valley of Collen—Tomé and the Bay of Talcahuano.*

Port of Tomé, Chile, S. A., June 2, 1857.

I spent the 29th of May in Cauquenes, with my friend Don Juan, who would not allow me to go to a *posada*. He would receive no remuneration on the following morning when I came to leave, but as I shook hands with him, invited me to come and see him if ever I should return to Cauquenes. His servant boy went with me, as a guide out of town, and as I crossed the Rio Cauquenes, on an unfinished bridge, the sun was rising and the drummers were beating the reveille. I felt sad and lonely when I first started, but

*"Jog on, jog on the footpath way,  
And merrily hunt the stile-a;  
A [merry] heart goes all the day,  
Your sad tires in a mile-a."*[\[19\]](#)

Before me, and in a southwesterly direction, was Coiquén, or the "little round mountain," alluded to in my last letter, which I took for my guide. The road passed through a well-settled and fertile, but broken, country. When I was three leagues from Cauquenes, I stopped in at a wayside house and asked them to cook a *cazuela*. I will give a description of the process. A chicken was killed, and while one woman stripped off the feathers and cut it up, another pared the potatoes. A small pot of water was placed on the fire and a handful of dirty salt thrown in, and when the water was brought to a boil, the pieces of chicken, and presently the potatoes, then an onion finely hacked, and lastly, a large pepper, previously pounded between two stones. This latter ingredient is considered indispensable among the "*huasos*." While the *cazuela* was cooking, one of the women, a slovenly slut, took a handful of corn and ground it between two stones, making a very coarse meal, and out of this a rude cake was made. I ate my breakfast out of a sea shell, thinking, at the time, that it was the rudest meal I had ever eaten.

Nearly all of the buildings I passed were adobe and tile-covered, and this is a distinguishing feature from Northern Chile, where the houses are thatched. I met with no particular adventure until about the middle of the afternoon, when I descended into a lonely valley; and when about halfway through, I saw four men under a little brush-covered shed. As I approached them, I recognized a drunken mail carrier, who had passed me two leagues back, and had here delayed the mail in order to rob the *gringo*. They ordered me to stop when I came opposite, but as usual in such cases, I paid no attention to them. I was two or three rods in advance, when they all rushed out, roaring "*venga por aquí*," ["come over here"] in the most authoritative manner. I allowed them to come pretty close, when, seeing that they were bent on mischief, I drew my revolver. The effect was magical. I did not have to use my weapon, for they beat a retreat, and I went on my way without further annoyance.

I emerged from this valley, and entered another that extended for a league in a westerly direction. At the further extremity I met an old man riding a donkey. He asked me where I was going, and when I

told him, he held up a little apple and said: "Here is something to shut your mouth." I took the fruit, and as I saw the rude old mountaineer riding up the mountain side to his hut, I thought that the valleys were not peopled by robbers alone. A small stream of water was running through this valley, and up the little ravines which put down towards it, though dark leaved lingy<sup>[20]</sup> was thickly set. The sun was probably half an hour high when I emerged from this valley; before me was a little wheat field, and as the slanting rays shone upon the young wheat just springing from the ground, I was reminded of home. The smooth undulating land very much resembled a rolling prairie.

At a distance of two leagues, in a westerly direction, was a high range with well-wooded sides, and the crest bristled with trees of considerable altitude. A heavy bank of clouds was rolling over this range into the valley, and on a small rain cloud in the southeast was a beautiful rainbow, the first I had seen in Chile. The road wound around the mountains to the southward, and I anxiously looked for the *Pueblito* of Quirihue. Several horsemen who overtook me said there was no *posada* in the place, and I jogged along for half a league in the dark, wondering what adventures I would meet with in search of a place of rest.

When I came into the outskirts of the village, I went up to two men who were seated on their horses in front of a little thatched house, to inquire where I could pass the night. I did not perceive in the darkness that they were drunk, until I had spoken to them. I could get no information from them. Continuing my search, I came to the door of a yard where four or five girls were gathered together. I asked them where I could find a *posada*, and without telling me, they invited me into a large room, on one side of which the floor was raised a few inches, and covered with a carpet. Here was seated a handsome middle-aged woman, and an elderly lady close to her was taking "*mate*." A bevy of pretty, dark-eyed girls came in and seated themselves on a divan, and directed their flashing glances towards me. I remained there several minutes, reflecting what I was to do; but finally got up and left, as they said they had no bed for me. I believe the good people would not have driven me away, though I think their minds were much relieved when I made my exit. I walked up the street, and presently came to a *despacho*, or store, where I found a couple of very well dressed young Chilenos, one of whom told me that he could give me a room, but nothing to eat. I found the room to be entirely bare of furniture, and had, as usual in this country, a brick floor. A peon brought me a couple of small sheepskins, and I was satisfied as far as a bed was concerned.

I went out and bought some bread, but could procure no cheese. I returned to my room, and found the *comandante* of the troops stationed in the town, talking with the young men spoken of. He told me if I would go to his house he would furnish me a supply. He was a fine-looking man, and had a rich cloak thrown over his undress uniform. I complied with his request, and a few steps brought us to his house. A long table with decanters and glasses was standing in the middle of the room. I had to wait some time, as the "*señora*" was not in. She came at last, and as she entered the room, bowed to me in the politest manner. A servant boy then brought the cheese to the man of epaulettes. He laid it on the table and commenced cutting; but he was so fat and full of "[...]," that he made slow work. I could scarcely keep a straight face when I thought what a ludicrous scene was there presented; the military commander cutting cheese, the toil-worn traveler sitting near by, anxiously scanning the size of the piece, and the pensive *señora* and her little son looking on as though they thought I was taking the food from their mouths. The arduous task was at length accomplished by the man of the sword, and a piece large enough for two or three meals was presented to me with true Castilian grace. I tried to pay him for it, but he would receive nothing; and when I was presenting a piece of money to his bright-eyed boy, he would not permit it, and almost pushed me from the house. I returned to my room again and found my young friends still there, and after I had finished my frugal meal, we went up to the

*despacho* and waited for "Antonio," who, they told me, could speak my language "*Muy bien*," (very well). Nearly a dozen young Chilenos gathered into a little back room, and presently in came Antonio, who, but for his *poncho*, I would have taken for an American. He had been five and a half years in California, and could speak the English with native fluency. He said the "old man" was still in the land of gold. Among other American accomplishments he had learned to swear, and altogether there was considerable of the "Young America" about him. Several of my young friends accompanied me to my room, and after bidding me "good night," in English, I was left alone.

The watchman was crying "*las cinco*" (five) in the morning when I got up, and started in the dim, uncertain light to the south-west. There was a heavy mist gathered around, and at that early hour, the street which I walked through was silent and deserted. The road immediately led into a region of country whose valleys, ravines, precipices, hills and mountains were blended together in a singular and remarkable manner. I had passed through two or three small valleys, and gained a summit of considerable elevation, which commanded an extensive view, when the curtain of foggy clouds raised up from the westward, and the rays of the rising sun gilded the mountain sides with a rosy tint. I was still in the shadow of the cloud that was rapidly rolling away to the eastward. An occasional mass of vapor would be detained in a valley or against the side of a mountain, curling and wreathing itself in the most varied and fantastic forms. Again, other detached masses would cast their shadows upon the multitude of hills, presenting altogether one of the most glorious scenes I ever beheld. I thought of Byron's two lines, descriptive of the morning dawn:

*"Night wanes; the vapors round the mountains curled,  
Melt into morn, and light awakes the world."*[\[21\]](#)

But the clouds soon rolled away to the great plain, to be checked by the frowning bulwarks of the Cordilleras, an occasional snow field of which I saw through the openings in the fleecy vapors.

The aspect of the country, as I have said before, was remarkable, especially in a southerly direction. Here it seemed as if the earth had once been in a molten state, foaming and boiling like a mighty cauldron, and that by some powerful agency it had been suddenly hardened, presenting outlines that the pencil, and even that imperfectly, alone can portray. The sun shone with cloudless and burnished splendor, and as I journeyed along the winding road, a Sabbath-like stillness reigned supreme. It was the last day of May — the November of the South — not wild and stormy as our own November, but lovely and beautiful as the May of a northern clime. I stopped on the crest of a ridge, and listened intently for the music of the sea shore, though the ocean was leagues to the westward, and hidden from my view by intervening mountains. There *was* a sound— low, solemn and sublime— the deep pulsations of the Pacific's heart. I stopped at a house that was on the border of a valley or ravine which extended in a westerly direction, and inquired of a woman the distance to the Rio Itata, and was told that it was three leagues, though a reach in the river was visible, which looked like a mirror framed in with hills. The road took me across two ravines, down one of which was a little grove of bushes. After crossing the last ravine and ascending a hill, I saw on my left and far below me, the valley of a river which enters the Itata a league below the ferry. I now commenced descending by a doubling road into the valley. When nearly half way down, I met a cut-throat "*cholo*," and asked him which road I should take when I reached the bottom, as I saw several diverging in different directions. He answered me in a surly manner, and I saw that he stood in the shadow of a small tree and watched me until I had reached the margin of the river aforementioned. I passed two horses in my descent, and saw many more in the valley before me. The river flowed over a sandy bed intermingled with mica, which latter glowed among the sands like gold. On the opposite side I found the soil to be a dark

sandy loam.

Before was a long, high ridge, extending from east to west, and beyond this was the Itata, now hid from my view. On the side of the ridge were many vineyards, the vines planted out in regular rows like corn. When near the western extremity of the ridge, I overtook a Chileno, who piloted me around the point near which ran the little river. The road turned toward the south-west, and after crossing a few low black sand hills, I emerged into the river bottom, which, at this point, is half a mile wide, but gradually narrowed as I journeyed to the east. Half a league from the west end of the ridge, or *cerro*, brought me to the ferry. Some *peons* were playing a country game under a brush-covered shed, and a crowd of idlers gathered around, watching the performance. Near by was another brush-covered shed, fronting on the river; under it was a bench, and a woman seated on it, holding a guitar on her lap; but the strings were mute. I asked her for a drink, and she gave me a horn half full of *chicha*, which I swallowed, and then a girl filled it with water, which was as refreshing, though not quite so well tasted, as it was strongly impregnated with mud.

I waited here a short time for the launch to come across, and as soon as it was made fast to the bank I stepped on board and seated myself on the gunnels. A big stout *peon* presently came down from the group of players, and throwing off his *poncho*, took a long pole and shoved the boat out into the Itata, a stream as broad as the Hudson, and rolling on, in placid and silent grandeur to the Pacific. A little boy was the only passenger besides myself. I was surprised at the shallowness of the water, which was not more than four feet in depth, and the boatman propelled the launch with a pole alone.

I cannot call the scenery on either side of this river other than beautiful. It is not wild and rugged, but as I looked to the eastward, where it seems to lose itself among the hills, there was an air of loneliness in the scene, almost painful. When we were fairly out in the stream, one of the women of whom I have spoken, commenced playing the guitar, accompanying it with her voice. The music was continued during the passage, and even after we had gained the opposite shore, the plaintive notes of that singular song, the national air of Chile, was borne across the untroubled bosom of the Rio Itata.

The boatman landed me on a long narrow island, which is probably covered with water when the river is high. The portion of the stream on the other side of the island was very narrow. There was a rudely fashioned canoe, fastened to the bank and my fellow passenger ferried me across, and after giving him a *media* I passed through an apple orchard and in a few minutes was in the Calle Comercio of the contemptible little village of Coelemu. I had intended to have passed the night there, but there was no *posada*, and I was obliged to continue my journey towards Tomé. The road took up a ravine in a southerly direction, between rows of poplars, but although the evening was beautiful, and the scenery mild and pleasant, I was too much interested in finding a place of rest for the night to dwell upon the works of nature. I was probably a league from the river and on the summit of a high ridge, from which I could see the little round mountain, when I came to a roadside house, with a porch on the back part, that suited my fancy, and I concluded to try my chance of a welcome. I crossed the ditch that separated it from the road, and as I did so I heard the joyous laugh of a child. Surely, I thought, there can be no robbers here. I was not mistaken. I found a large family seated under the porch, some of them around a fire, and all of them on the ground. Two middle-aged men and a fat chuckle-headed *peon* constituted the male portion. The others were women from the time-worn grandma to the rosy-cheeked granddaughters. With the exception of the *peon* and his wife — a loving well matched pair — they were all apparently of Spanish descent, and although poor, possessed more than ordinary intelligence. I inquired of the patron as a prelude, the distance to Tomé; he looked up over the hills and counted the distance and said, "*siete leguas y media*" (seven leagues and a half.) I rejoiced that

my journey was so nearly brought to a close. Permission was given me to stay all night, and I seated myself on a stool, and took a deliberate survey of the group.

After eating a dish of highly peppered beans, I was invited within the house, where a dish of *charqui* soup was soon brought and the whole family gathered around to partake, myself among the number. The *charqui* was old, and the prospect of high living in Tomé made the scent and taste intolerable, and after a few mouthfuls I gave it up as a bad job. There was a plentiful supply of *mosto*, however, which was circulated quite freely, and of this I partook, though sparingly, each time, for numerous were the times it was passed around. Some of the party were not so temperate, and before the hour was late, they were in that condition, which a nautical friend of mine used to term "happy."

My host sung me a song, portions of which he had forgotten, but one of the girls prompted him, after which he spread a bed of sheepskins and I laid down with the big peon and his "*adorable*" on my left and half a dozen girls still farther out in the larboard direction. I had two thick sheets for a covering, and passed the night much better than I generally did in a country house.

The sky was overcast with clouds, with the exception of a narrow strip in the east, and the sun was rising with a red and ominous glare, when I bade "*adios*" to my kind friends and started on the last day of the last of the present journey by land. The road took me over high ridges and down through deep ravines. Passing two or three houses near a stream of water, I heard someone calling out behind me. I turned around and saw a little boy with his hat in his hand, who begged me to return and play a tune. He had mistaken my knapsack for a hand organ, and me for an organ grinder. I could not convince him that it was not a genius music box. "*Está tan bonito*," (it is so pretty) he said. I laughed at the mistake, and turning on my heel I left him standing in the road. I had not walked a league before it commenced raining. The mist settled around heavy and thick, and the wind rose to a moderate gale, and howled mournfully through the thinly scattered trees by the wayside. They were genuine trees; not giants of the forest, but of respectable size.

The road was dim and difficult to find at first, but two leagues brought me to a broad, well traveled road, leading from Chillan to Tomé, and thence forward I had no difficulty on that score. A league and a half after striking this road, and I came to the village of Rafael; here there is a large flouring mill in a state of repair. I ate a *peon* breakfast here, consisting of white Chile bread and *chancho* [pork]. I surprised a woman greatly by buying four cents worth of meat, instead of half that amount, "*a la peon*." The clouds had partially cleared away, and I thought there would be no more rain, but I had not gone more than half a league from Rafael before the mist gathered around me heavier than ever, and so tremendous was the force of the wild gale, that I could scarcely face, and at times was stayed for a moment by the fierce pelting of the storm.

The road struck into the heart of a mountain region, whose woods, precipices and ravines were mingled together in splendid confusion, and occasionally when the clouds would show an opening on either side, I would see far below me, green sheltered valleys, which looked like islands of verdure, amid the wild waves of a troubled sea. Sometimes the cloud was so thick that I could not see beyond the side of the road, which wound around the steep mountain sides, and at such moments, I seemed to be on the verge of an unfathomable abyss, from which I almost shrunk as from a real danger.

At length I commenced descending, down, down, to the level of the sea. A few hundred feet and the flying scud was left above and behind, and the wind came only in fitful blasts around the abrupt turns of the road, and instead of the roar of the hurricane, I heard the murmurs of waterfalls in the numerous

ravines. The valleys were choked with vegetation. In places it was one tangled mat of trees, bushes and vines, the latter bearing a bright red flower. How rich and tropical looked the dark leaves lying in those valley depths !

I came at right angles into a narrow valley, but a few hundred feet in width, through which ran a stream of water, and turning around a mountain, I unexpectedly came to a large mill. I crossed the stream, where it runs across the valley, on a bridge, and a few hundred yards below the first mill I passed another, and at an equal distance below this, still another. The rain now commenced falling in heavy drops, but I heeded it not, for the scenery in the valley — the Valley of Collen — is so beautiful, that I did not mind the harmless drenching which my cap and not myself received. The valley contracted in some places to less than a hundred yards in width, and the sides of the mountains were steep and smoothly rounded, and flaws of wind would wave the green bushes — it was a green wheat field. A short distance below the last mentioned mill, the valley expanded, and the road turned at right angles, to the left. Above me, on the mountain side, was an aqueduct conveying water to some mill; the aqueduct overflowed in one place upon a mass of vines, and innumerable streams of water trickled from the little tendrils.

Before was a collection of houses, and I said to a *carretero* who was resting his tired oxen in the muddy road— "*Adonde es Tomé*" ["Where is Tomé?"] — "*Allá*," ["There"] was the reply. I could scarcely believe him, but I took down a street; and ceased to doubt when, half a minute afterwards, I looked upon the white-capped waves of the Bay of Talcahuano.

### SECTION (3)

#### SECOND WANDERINGS IN CHILE (1858)

by J. A. R.

These articles were first published between May and September 1858 in the "Daily Alta California"; a later, incomplete version (1859) appeared in the "Illinois State Journal" (see Annex).

## ARTICLE ONE

I spent a week, in the early part of last January, in the pleasant village of Limache, recruiting myself<sup>[22]</sup> after a fatiguing ramble among the loftier mountains of the coast range, near Quillota. Whilst there, I met an old friend, of a spirit akin to my own, and the plan of a journey was soon sketched. One of the principal places we proposed visiting was the Baths of Cauquenes, one of the oldest discovered of the numerous hot springs existing in the Cordilleras of Chile.

The morning of the 11th was fixed for the departure, but as my companion had a large circle of acquaintances among the fairer portion of the villagers, it was late in the forenoon before the last "*adios mi alma*" [goodbye, my soul] was repeated, and we were fairly on the road. The day was uncomfortably warm, and the fierce reflected rays of the sun from the dry and dusty road, and parched mountain sides, dazzled our eyes with a blinding glare. A few hours travel brought us to La Dormida, and the rough mule path led through groves of low bushy trees, and along the margin of a small stream of water. I never felt more sensibly the soothing influence of shade, heightened as it was by the music of miniature cascades which tumbled over the rocky bed of the mountain brook. The Spaniards, who traversed this same vale more than two centuries ago, well named it in their beautiful language, "La Dormida," or "Vale of Repose." I fancied, as we seated ourselves at intervals under the evergreen boughs of the *lingue* and *roble*, that the steel-clad knights of Valdivia might have once occupied the same spot. The vale is surrounded by mountains of considerable altitude. On the south side is a mountain called "Vizcachas," whose barren rocky summit is unrelieved by the slightest sign of vegetation. It contrasts strangely with the mountains on the opposite side, which are well wooded from base to summit.

We were frequently invited to partake of fruit by the hospitable people, whose rude homes we passed in journeying up the valley. Late in the evening we came to a furnace for smelting copper ore, but it was not in operation. Large piles of slag were lying near the furnace. From the imperfect manner in which the smelting is performed, a considerable per cent of the metal is lost. We stopped for the night at the last *chacra*, or farm-house, in the valley, which is elevated more than two thousand feet above the sea. The evening was calm and lovely. At our feet was "La Dormida," and beyond was the valley of "Olmué." Still further away was a dark expanse, which, in the evening haze, I mistook for a cloud. "It is the Pacific," said R. I asked our *patrón* to settle the question. "*Es la mar, Señor,*" ["It is the sea, Sir"] was his quiet reply. The distance could not have been less than forty miles to the sea shore. Glorious Old Ocean, whose long heaving swells rolled in unbroken from the South Sea Isles. Several natives were lying around under a brush-covered awning, resting from the labor of thrashing a pile of wheat that was near at hand. The good woman of the *casa* served us a supper which a king might have envied, when we penciled the incidents of the day in our notebooks, and, spreading our *ponchos* on the bare ground, slept until the morning dawn.

I gave our host two *reals*, and we commenced ascending the steep and winding path that leads up the "*Cuesta de Dormida*." The sun was an hour high when we reached the summit of the pass, and stood at an elevation of more than four thousand feet above the sea. A portion of the Cordilleras loomed up in the eastward, and through the dim haze we could see the Plain of Santiago. The path now led down a ravine, which was barren, in comparison to the vale we had left. In places the road was washed deep by the winter rains, and there was barely space between the banks for a loaded mule to travel. We

passed another deserted smelting furnace, and high up the mountains, on the south side of the ravine, I saw a troop of mules winding along a tortuous path laden with copper ore. We stopped at one of the *chacras*, and bought a *real's* worth of bread, making a primitive breakfast on the borders of a crystal stream of water.

At length the road led us into an oval-shaped valley, that extended in a southerly direction. The mountains on the west side of the valley were steep and rugged, while those on the east were lower, with smooth and gentle slopes. These latter were the spurs of the Coast Range, and beyond them was the plain we saw from the summit of the pass. We passed a small town on our left, which a woman told us was Tiltit. The air in the valley was like a heated furnace, and our clothes were as wet with perspiration as though we had been dipped in a river. About three o'clock in the afternoon we stopped at a *hacienda* house, owned by a Frenchman. Here was a school for boys and girls. They were all reading aloud at once, and appeared to be under strict discipline. We seated ourselves on a bench made of *adobes*, in the shade of poplar trees, and the teacher came out and conversed with us for a while. When he returned within, I heard him chastising some luckless urchin for misbehavior during his absence.

From this point, our direction for a short distance was easterly, over an arm of the plain. On our right was a large field, thickly set with *espino*, a thorny bush, as its name imports, of ten or fifteen feet in height. In the N.E. the volcanic peak of Tupungato loomed up in mighty grandeur. This is the loftiest volcano on the globe; its summit snow fields being more than twenty-three thousand feet above the level of the sea, surpassing in height the Chimborazo of Ecuador. Mr. Robertson<sup>[23]</sup>, an English traveler, speaks of Tupungato as being the loftiest of the four thousand miles range of the Andes. The latest measurements award the palm to Mount Sorata, in Bolivia. My heart yearned toward this grand old mountain, whose eternal snows were tinged with a golden hue by the rays of the declining sun.

The road again led in a southerly direction, over a long range of hills, from the summit of which we saw the domes and spires of Santiago, seven leagues away. Beautiful plain! No wonder the proud Spaniards were charmed with the glorious view of the broad and fertile pampas, overshadowed by the frowning bulwarks of the Cordilleras. We stopped for the night at the foot of the hills, and went supperless to bed, and before sunrise were again on the road, journeying in a southerly direction. The houses were mean and thinly scattered, and for three leagues my inquiries for *pan blanco* (white bread) met the sorry response of "*No hay, Señor.*" ["There is none, Sir."] We finally came to a *posada* for *carreteros*, where we made ample amends for our long fast.

It was one o'clock P.M. before we entered the suburbs of Santiago, by the San Felipe road, an excellent macadamized highway, approaching the city from the north. We sauntered along the streets, crossing the Rio Mapocho on a brick bridge of nine arches, built in 1792<sup>[24]</sup>, and late in the afternoon stopped at a hotel in the southern portion of the city.

Early on the morning of the 14th, we visited the market, which is unrivaled. Fruits and vegetables, peculiar to every latitude, are found in the numerous stalls. Venders of chocolate and sweetmeats pursue a thriving business during the early hours of the morning, and as good fare is to be obtained in the market as in some of the *fondas*. The chocolate of the Santiago market is celebrated, and its celebrity has lost nothing in my estimation. It is rich and delicious. We next visited the cathedral, which is situated on the "Plaza de las Armas."<sup>[25]</sup> The interior of this fine building is grand and imposing, heightened as it is by the continual service which, day and night, is performed before some

of the numerous altars. We were there nearly two hours. The deep notes of the organ, and the chanting of the choristers (children), contributed greatly to the religious effect. The worshippers were mostly women, dressed in the appropriate and favorite costume of the Chilenas — deep black. There are many fine buildings in Santiago; some of them the finest private residences in the world. In the interior of most of the squares are splendid gardens. Streams of water flow through every *cuadra* in the city. The fashionable place of resort is the *cañada*, or public walk, in the southern part of the city, extending from east to west. It is planted with rows of poplars. In places they have been cut down to give way to oak and elm. The trees are irrigated by streams of water flowing around their roots. There is a fountain in one portion, surmounted by Neptune, with his trident, poised in a pile of rough rocks. The jets of water are so contrived as to represent springs gushing from the fissures in the rocks. In the eastern portion of the city is the rocky hill of Santa Lucia, from which the best view of the surrounding scenery is obtained. The city, bathed in the soft, mellow light peculiar to this climate; the distant Costeros, and the spurs of the Cordilleras, distant but three leagues, are unfolded to the view of the enraptured beholder. One feels in Santiago as though he was elevated a vast distance above the sea, though the height of the city above the ocean level is but eighteen hundred feet. Santiago was founded in 1541, by Valdivia, who was killed three years later<sup>[26]</sup> in a battle with the Araucanian Indians.

We took the cars<sup>[27]</sup> at 3 o'clock in the afternoon for San Bernardo, a village, 4 leagues south of the Capital. Half an hour brought us to the station, where the cars were detached, and we proceeded seven miles farther on the engine to the bridge across the Rio Maipo. We stopped at a canvas hotel, kept by an American for the accommodation of the workmen. There were several Americans here, and among the rest Henry Meiggs, contractor of the bridge. We passed the night here, and at a late hour on the following morning crossed the river on a foot bridge, which was lashed to the piers of the main structure. The river foamed and roared wildly beneath, and R., who had been boasting of his adventures in crossing the rivers of California, nearly fell overboard. Ascending the bank, we took a path that led us in between two rows of lofty poplars, pursuing an easterly direction for two leagues, when we came to the main highway between Santiago and the city of Talca; and turning to the left on the main road, a half league brought us to the "Puente de los Morros," or Bridge of Castles, which span the Rio Maipo. This bridge is so called on account of the singular castellated rock on the north bank. We now left the regular road to the Baths, to visit some of the swinging bridges on the upper waters of the Maipo, taking up the south bank of the river.

A half league brought us to a place called "Puente de las Tablas." There is a quarry of porphyry here, from which stone was taken to build the piers of the railroad bridge; and in times past there was one of those rustic bridges of which every schoolboy has read, but its ruins alone remain. I spent a week here some months previous, when everything was life and bustle; now, the place is almost deserted. A few *peons* were lying under a tree, and their listless forms but added to the loneliness of the scene, which clouded my mind with sadness. A few hundred yards from the Tablas we crossed the Rio Claro, in whose limpid waters we had a fine bath. The Claro is a small stream, and has its source in the lower spurs of the Cordilleras. We were now on the "*Hacienda principal*," once the largest in Chile. The plain extended two leagues to the south, and was bounded by rude and barren mountains, and the same distance to the eastward were the spurs of the Andes. Far up the river was a reach of the snowy Cordilleras, including the volcano of Maipo, whose internal fires are smoldering beneath the icy glaciers.

We overtook some *carreteros*, who invited us to ride in their lumbering vehicles, which we gladly

accepted, as the heat was oppressive. A short distance from the mountain spurs we left our friends and turned aside to see a swinging bridge. Its length is one hundred and twenty-three feet. Chain cables are stretched across, and upon these, round poles, ten feet long, are lashed with raw hide. Round sticks, one and a half inches in diameter and four feet long, are closely woven together, and well secured to the larger poles, which forms a safe footpath for mules.



*"Chilian Cart", from "The Araucanians" by Edmond Reuel Smith (1855)*

## ARTICLE TWO

We continued our journey, stopping a few minutes to buy *pan blanco* and *harina tostada*, and were shortly in the *cajón* of the Maipo. The narrow valley is hemmed in by mountains, and the path led along the bank of a *seco* or artificial canal for irrigation, which must have been constructed at immense expense. The steep mountain sides in places have been cut down more than a hundred feet perpendicular. We stopped for the night at the hacienda house of San Juan, about a league above the swinging bridge. Lofty poplars surround the building, and a grove of gnarled willows, near by, appear as old as the hills. Groups of horsemen and *peons* were gathered around in the out-yard dressed in the national costume. A girl was cooking *pan blanco* in a large dome shaped oven. We had *charquicán* and mutton for supper, but our lodging place was not comfortable, as we had to lie down in a narrow rough place in the *cocina*. We were up at day dawn, and paying the *mayordomo* three *reals*, and taking a drink of *aguardiente* he offered us, were off for above. We stopped a few minutes on the borders of a tiny rivulet to write up our journals, and shortly afterwards passed the place where the canal is diverted from the Maipo. The narrow path wound round the base of the lofty mountains, at times ascending for a short distance their barren rocky sides. The scenery was grand and terrific, and I felt that I was In the Cordilleras. The air was hot and dry, and we were unable to procure water, as the banks of the river were often perpendicular and confined to a narrow channel, the water roaring and dashing wildly against the rocks. How appropriate are Indian names : "Maipo" signifies "roaring," in the Indian tongue, and truly the Maipo is a "roaring river." Almost the only persons we met were a boy and a girl, both riding a mule. I asked the girl how far it was to a spring of water. She replied in the sweet - Castilian : "*Está lejos, Señor,*" (It is far, sir.) I blessed her kind heart, and felt that much of my fatigue and thirst was taken away. It was nearly noon when we stopped at a lime kiln to inquire the distance to the upper bridge, which we learned was but a short distance above. The *mayordomo* directed a *peon* to show us the path. Its construction is similar to the one below. The width is but seven or eight feet, and a fierce wind was blowing down the *cajón* of the Maipo, which caused the fabric to sway to and fro fearfully as we crossed to the opposite bank. While my companion was sketching the wild and rugged scenery, I climbed a short distance up the mountain, and had a view of the Rio Colorado, which empties into the Maipo a short distance above. Three leagues above the Rio Colorado is the little town of San José. There is a pass up the Rio Maipo to the city of Mendoza, on the eastern slope of the Andes.

Our sketch completed, we took down the northern bank of the river, along a road passable to wheeled vehicles. The valley is from a quarter to half a mile in width on this side, and we passed some beautiful *chacras*. On this side of the river is the *Canal del Maipo*, which supplies the city of Santiago with water. The work was performed by the Spaniards. It was after sunset when we re-crossed the river at the lower *Puente de las Tablas*, and stopped for the night at the house where we had purchased *pan blanco* on the preceding day. The old man welcomed us in the most hospitable manner. I was too tired to eat, and threw myself down on an ox hide to sleep off my fatigue. The next day was Sunday, and the sun rose beautiful and clear while we were journeying to Los Morros. We rested a few hours in the shade of a tree on the banks of the Rio Claro; and, resuming our journey late in the evening, were soon in the Talca road, which led in a southerly direction over a well cultivated and fertile plain. Taking the left hand road out of the little village of Maipo, we journeyed for some distance between rows of poplars, and a league and a half from the river, stopped for the night at a wayside house.

I was under the impression that the Lake of Aculeo — which we designed visiting — was in the spurs of the Andes, as stated by Captain Hall, but our patrón, with whom we passed the night, informed us that it was two leagues below the Pass of Angostura, in the Costeros. When I learned this, the charm my imagination had given it, was gone, and I did not wish to see the "Lake among the Andes," so graphically described by the humorous Basil Hall.[\[28\]](#)

We took a narrow path across a *hacienda*, to again reach the main highway, and stopped to inquire the way at the *hacienda* house, where we found the *dueño* and his daughter, a stout, English-looking *señorita*. The old gentleman would not suffer us to depart until we had ate breakfast, himself waiting upon us in that hearty unfeigned manner so grateful to the toil-worn traveler. It was mid-day, and the sun shone hot and fierce, when we left the abode of our hospitable entertainer, and wound around the base of "La Angostura," a rude and rugged mountain east of the pass of the same name. Passing through a portion of the *Laguna Paine*, a swampy place, and crossing a brush fence made of the thorny *espino*, we again struck the "*camino real*," a league from the Pass of Angostura, and put up for the night at the *posada* close to the entrance.

There were several young Chilenos here from Santiago who wished to know when Don Enrique (Harry Meiggs) would commence building the railroad from the Rio Maipo to the city of Rancagua. My feet were sore after our hard tramp, and before going to our room, which was in the back yard, I seated myself on a foot bridge across a large *seco*, and bathed them in the pure cold water that swiftly ran beneath. We took a mattress off of one of the beds in the room, and spreading our *ponchos* upon it, slept gloriously. I was awakened during the night by a travelling party coming into an adjoining room, who had considerable to say about the danger of robbers. We were up at our usual hour, and paying the sleepy-headed *mozo a real* for the use of the room, took the road and were soon through the pass, of which R. took an outline sketch. The Pass of Angostura is not more than one hundred and fifty yards in width, and through it flows the Rio Angostura, one of the clearest and most beautiful streams I ever beheld.

Houses, mud-plastered and thatched, were scattered along the roads, and off to the left a half mile was a large tile-covered building. The plain now gradually expanded as we walked along. On our left was the Hacienda de la Compañía[\[29\]](#), the largest in Chile. The ground on the right appeared to be swampy, and masses of leafy bushes, five or six feet in height, dotted the surface. Most of the time the road — a magnificent highway — led us between rows of lofty poplars, and towards noon we passed two remarkable hills, which rise from the level of the plain like islands from the sea. One of them resembles a mighty dome, and is called the "*Pan de Azucar*," or Sugar Loaf. Three leagues from the "*Pan de Azucar*," brought us to Rancagua, twenty-five leagues from the capital, and with the exception of Santiago, the most populous *Departamento* in Chile.

We did not stop long in Rancagua, but pushed on to the Rio Cachapoal which is a half league south of the town. The river is spanned by a splendid bridge of nine arches, which was not quite completed. It is probably the finest structure of the kind in South America. We passed the night in a shanty at the south end of the bridge, sleeping under a brush-covered shed. It was ten o'clock the next morning before we got our breakfast, and in the meanwhile we sent to the town for a supply of *pan* to last us during our stay at "*Los Baños*." Our preparations complete, we bade *adios* to the good-natured *señora* and her two daughters, with a promise to return in three or four days, and set out for the baths of Cauquenes, two as enthusiastic and veteran-looking travelers as ever trod a mountain trail of the

Andes. The distance to the baths, from the bridge across the Cachapoal, is five leagues, the mule path leading up the southern bank of the river. A short distance above we hired a couple of *peons* to take us across a large stream that diverges from the river, and, without proper engineering, will eventually change its bed. The path led along the river for nearly a league, when it left the bank and wound round the southern base of a hill, but another league brought us close to the shore.

The scenery now changed materially; the river was hemmed in between narrow banks, and the mountain sides were partially robed with evergreen foliage. The landscapes were mild and beautiful and had but little of the terrific grandeur which distinguishes the *Cajón* of Maipo. At length we came to the Rio Claro (there are many Rios Claro in Chile), a mountain stream which puts down from the southward. I could see the snowfields that feed its anything but clear waters. We pulled off our boots and waded across; it was knee-deep. The scenery grew more lovely at every step; it was the hour of evening, and the soft air stole down the valley in gentle zephyrs. We passed the ruins of an old hide-rope bridge, and a half hour more we were in sight of the baths.

We pitched our camp on the edge of a narrow ravine and slept comfortably, notwithstanding the coolness of the air. We were received with courtesy the following morning by the young man who has them in charge. He took us around and showed us the baths, which are five in number. Each one is in a small room, not more than seven feet by ten. They are of the rudest description, mud-plastered and thatched with straw. In the centre of each room is a vat two feet wide by four-and-a-half long. The names of the baths, with the temperature of each, are "Pelambre," 118°; "Pelambrillo," 116°; "Corrimiento," 110°; "Templada," 104°, and "Solitario," 102°. We both took a bath; I chose "Pelambre," but found it impossible to completely immerse myself in the fiery flood. When I came out, the perspiration flowed from me like rain. In rheumatic and cutaneous diseases, the Baths have performed miraculous cures. The waters are strongly impregnated with mineral substances, potash, iron, salt, sulfur and mercury entering into their composition. We employed ourselves during the day in taking sketches of the scenery around. The accommodations are not of the finest description for visitors. A large open yard is enclosed by buildings, with means of exit at the corners. In these buildings are some 20 or 30 rooms, which are let out at prices ranging from six *reals* to one dollar and a half a day. Board is two dollars per day, and the price of a bath is six cents. One cannot expect to live at the Baths with any degree of comfort for less than four dollars *per diem*.

The springs ooze out of the river banks from among boulders, within a few feet of the verge, and taken together, would form a considerable stream of water. After flowing through the bath tubs, they are precipitated into the Cachapoal, which foams and roars a hundred feet beneath. I could not ascertain how long the Baths of Cauquenes have been known; I was told that the oldest natives in the valley are ignorant of their age. I saw names carved on the doors bearing date of 1830. But few persons were there at the time of our visit. An old gentleman and his party who passed us in the "Vale of Repose" occupied one of the rooms. I noticed a poor palsied wretch bathing in "Pelambrillo," but I doubt whether even the magical waters of Cauquenes can restore his withered frame.

On the second morning of our stay I tried the "Solitario," the temperature of which is quite bearable. I found R. bathing in "Corrimiento," and as I opened the door he remarked that h—I had broke loose during the night. As R. was anxious to try the effect, I stripped off again, and gradually lowered myself down into the tub. The operation was painful, and even after I was completely emerged, the great heat of the water made me puff like a porpoise. I stood it five minutes, when a sick and dizzy sensation obliged me to get out. I never had my system so completely relaxed, and more than an hour

elapsed before the perspiration ceased to pour from me.

We sketched the different bath houses, and while working up the drawings, under the main buildings, a *mozo* brought us our dinners. The *dueño* of the Baths is a very intelligent man, and in the course of our conversation with him he informed us that we could see the Peak of Cauquenes from the plains of Maule. He had a pack of English fox hounds, and showed us some lion<sup>[30]</sup> and fox skins as trophies of the chase.

A small tile-covered building that stands at one corner of the courtyard is the chapel. The same pretension to ornament and show existed in this rude building, though in a far less degree, that I saw in the cathedral of Santiago. It is the only tile-covered building at the Baths, and gives evidence of considerable antiquity.

When our drawings were finished, the handsome daughter of the *dueño* had numerous questions to ask about our travels. It was early in the afternoon of the 22d of January when I bade *adios* to the excellent *dueño* and his family, and taking the hand of the fair *señorita* of whom I have spoken, she returned the warm pressure I gave her, and said, from her kind heart I know, "*Adios, caballero, ¡vaya muy bien!*" [Goodbye, gentleman, go very well!"] I will never forget those words, which fell in soft accents from her rosy lips. How gentle and confiding is woman. Soon the Baths were hid from our view, and [we] stopped for the night at the ruins of "*Puente de las Tablas.*"

### ARTICLE THREE

*Chilean national anthem—Ringuin and Rengo—Pelequén and Teno—Curicó—Lontué and Molina—The volcano of Peteroa—The City of Talca—Deserted gold mines—Mirage—Achibueno—The river Longavi—Night at a farm house—Parral—Languen—Arrival at Chillán*

We left our forest camp at the ruins of the "*Tablas*" on the morning of the 23d. The weather was fine and clear, and a pleasant breeze was blowing up the valley of the Cachapoal. On our way down the river bank, I shot a fine mess of birds, consisting of doves, blackbirds, and the Chilean quail. About a mile above the bridge, nearly half of the river is turned from the main channel, and the water runs swift in the several streams it forms. We crossed two or three, but found one that baffled our efforts, and nearly swept us away in its turbid flood. Turning back, we found a *huaso*, who took us across for a *real*.

Previous to reaching the bridge, we came to a collection of houses, in one of which a number of *señoritas* and *mozos* were dancing the "*zamacueca*" and other Spanish dances. One of the girls was playing the national anthem on the guitar, accompanying it with her voice. The performance was excellent, losing nothing by the mournful cadence that tinged the voice of the pensive *señorita* as she sang :

*"Puro Chile, es tu cielo azulado,  
Puras brisas te cruzan también.  
Y tu campo de flores bordado  
Es la copia feliz del Edén:  
Majestuosa es la blanca montaña" &c. [31]*

We related the story of our adventures to the daughters of our *patrona*, while the good lady herself prepared a *cazuela* of our game, from which the whole family partook. We passed the night there, and long before day I was awake by the clarion notes of a cock, that was perched on a pole above our heads. I waited until the second call before I arose, when the east began to glow with the morning sun, and the sharp and splintered peaks of the Andes were strongly marked against the sky. When viewed from the bridge across the Rio Cachapoal, the Andes present the most singular appearance I remember of having seen. Numberless peaks rear their frozen summits into the higher regions of the atmosphere.

#### RINGUIN AND RENGO.

We shouldered our gun and *ponchos*, and started for the city of Chillán, distant more than ninety leagues, the road leading in a southerly direction along the plain. We stopped in the village of Ringuin about ten o'clock in the morning, where we got our breakfast. There is a church here, and a large crowd of persons were gathered before the door on their knees. The country appeared to be well cultivated, the road leading between the mud walls, six or seven feet in height, inside of which were planted rows of poplars. A few leagues more brought us to Rengo, a straggling village of considerable size. Rengo is situated in the midst of a fruitful district of country. There is but one street in the place, and through this [the] road runs. I saw a great number of orange trees in the gardens. An old *caballero*, who was standing in his doorway, invited us to enter his garden and partake of fruit. He told us that the *ladrones* broke in and robbed his orchard frequently. I told him I thought the Chilenos

were too honest to steal, to which he replied: "*No, Señor: en Chile hay muchos ladrones y salteadores del camino.*" (No, sir; there are many thieves and highway robbers in Chile.) We called in at another house, where a woman had a long tale to tell us about an American who had married an Indian woman. "*No una señora como yo, pero una India pura.*" (Not a lady like me, but a pure Indian), she said. I could scarcely keep a straight face during the narration of the story. She played several tunes on the guitar, while a young Frenchman and her sister danced the *zamacueca*.

#### PELEQUÉN AND TENO.

A league south of Rengo is the pass of Pelequén, which separates the Coast Range from the spurs of the Cordilleras. It is but two or three hundred yards in width. The mountains on the coast side are composed of white porphyry. A quarry is partially opened here. It is the finest porphyry I ever saw, and at a short distance appears like marble. We passed the night at a house two leagues short of San Fernando, and by seven o'clock on the following morning were in the town, which is forty leagues from Santiago. San Fernando is a town of some size, but beyond a passing notice, it is not worthy of much attention. In the southern suburbs there is a grove of olive trees, and half a league from town is the Rio Tinguiririca. We arrived on the banks of the river just in time, for a *carretero* was going to take a couple of organ grinders to the other side, and I bargained with him to ferry us over for a *real*. The water was deep and swift, and the scene wild and exciting; but we got over in safety, and when landed on the opposite bank, the organ grinders played the national airs of Chile and Ecuador, the notes of the beautiful tunes mingling with the wild roar of the mountain stream. One of the principal passes of the Andes is up this river. We passed the village of Chimbarongo on our right, and about noon took a *siesta* of two or three hours' duration under some plum trees, which we were *ladrones* enough to strip of their fruit. As we journeyed along in the evening, we had a view of the volcano of Peteroa, bearing S. E. A *carretero* overtook us about sunset, and invited us to take a ride in his cart. The night was calm and clear, and we lumbered along the road between the avenues of dark green poplars, the bright moonlight illuminating the plain with silvery splendor. It was nearly ten o'clock before we put up for the night.

We crossed a small clear stream of water the next morning, in company with a *carretero*, who was taking a gang of painters to Talca to work on the Cathedral. I made an agreement with him to take us across the intervening rivers for a few *reals*. A low range of hills was before us, extending from the Costeros, or Coast Range, to the Cordilleras. The plain was forty or fifty miles in width, and, comparatively speaking, barren and desolate. Nearly due east was Descabezado, one of the loftiest of the Chilean Cordilleras. South of Descabezado, four geographical miles, is Blanquillo, or the "little white mountain." Between the two mountains rose a vast column of smoke, showing intense volcanic action. Two or three leagues took us across the barren portion of the plain, of which I have spoken, to the banks of the Rio Teno. Far down the river I saw a solitary palm.

#### CURICÓ.

We now had before us the beautiful country that surrounds Curicó, the finest I have seen in Chile. From the summit of the low hills on the south bank of the river, we had a fine view of this splendid portion of the plain — the plain of Colchagua. The lines of poplars, which marked the boundaries of *haciendas* toward the Costeros, and the masses of low bushy *espino*, that add such a charm to the Chilean landscapes, were spread below and around us.

Our company stopped early in the afternoon at a *posada*, that is situated a half league north of Curicó. At it was the intention to pass the night there, after a short rest I proceeded on to visit the town, which is a half mile from the direct Talca road. Curicó is situated at nearly mid-distance between the Costeros and the Cordilleras, at the southern base of a hill, that stands isolated on the plain. I skirted the northern base of the hill, and, entering the town at the *cañada*, walked the whole length of the beautiful rows of poplars, which are seven in number. The main walk it swept clean, and is as smooth as a floor. I saw but very few people in the village. An old sage-looking man, of the better rank, was standing on one side of the *cañada*, and a soldier was sitting idly on a bench watching two prisoners dig a hole. These, with two or three women, were all of the persons I saw on the public walk. I walked up one of the streets to see the church of San Francisco, but the door was shut, so I could not enter. I peeped into the various houses as I walked along, and in one of them saw a fat, well-fed priest. It was sunset when I returned to the *posada*. Our *compañeros del camino* were cooking their supper by a blazing fire, I had shot a species of the hawk during the day, and they had it served up as a kind of desert. I was invited to partake, which I did, but it can be proved by me that hawk is not very good eating. One of the number was a German, who could neither speak English or Spanish, but he was a capital musician, and procuring a guitar, he beguiled the evening hour, and charmed his listeners with songs of the Vaterland.

#### LONTUÉ AND MOLINA.

Our company were on the road before sunrise, and south of Curicó we crossed a clear stream of water, in which I shot a couple of ducks. A league or more brought us to the Rio Lontué, which runs in several channels, and its muddy waters tell a tale of their coming from the Andean snows. Our gigantic *carretero*, who stood six feet four, stripped off his clothes, and throwing a *poncho* over his shoulders, was prepared to withstand the swift-deep current. A *lazo* was attached to the horns of the lead ox, all hands mounted the cart, and into the river we drove, each one seeing who could make the most noise. The vehicle tottered over the rocks, and in mid-current of the principal channel we came to a stand-still, with the waters roaring around us. "*¡Hijodeputa, carajo!*" ["Sonofabitch, damnit !"] roared the *carretero*, in the classic language of the Knight of La Mancha<sup>[32]</sup>, as he punched the oxen with his steel-pointed goad. The poor brutes bellowed, and the cart flew up the bank of the river amid shouts and yells.

A few leagues' travel brought us to the village of Molina, where we arrived about noon, and the oxen were turned into a pasture to recruit themselves [recover strength, Ed.] for the night journey we had in view. Molina is the dullest little town I was ever in, and it was not with regret that I saw the oxen yoked up at a late hour in the evening. The sun was half-an-hour high when the cart got under way. We crossed the Rio Claro before twilight had gone, and then we all dismounted at the *carretero's* cry of "*a tierra*" and jogged on afoot, in advance of the cart. We were all in a jolly humor, laughing and singing to while away the evening hours. There was an old Peruvian in our party, whose equanimity was not disturbed by the fact of his going to Talca. He was a veteran traveler. Not so with some of the younger adventurers, who, in the excitement of joyous anticipation, would occasionally sing out, *¡ Viva ! se van por la ciudad de Talca* — (Hurrah! we are going to the city of Talca.)

The moon was nearly at the full, and as we journeyed along the road which was broken by *quebradas*, the vast plain from the Costeros<sup>[33]</sup> to the Andes was flooded with light. Our companions, at length, succumbed to the fatigue, and R. and I travelled on alone for leagues, with the cart rumbling behind us. The rest of the party had stowed themselves away in the cart, and were asleep.

## THE VOLCANO OF PETEROA.

The birds were singing, and I thought I could discern a faint trace of dawn in the east, when the cart was stopped in a little ravine, and we lay down on the bare ground for a short rest. The sun was rising when we started again, and a league farther on our eyes were greeted with the sight of the church spires of the City of Talca.

In the east was the volcano of Peteroa, the Mountain of Smoke. Peteroa is the frustum of a cone, and one instinctively feels, when looking upon the mountain from the Plain of Talca, that they at last behold a volcano. There is something awful in the majesty of Peteroa, which, in my imagination, stands alone the only perfect type of a volcano in the world.

A long distance to the south was the Peak of Cauquenes, and the Peruano said to me, "Paisano; do you see that mountain that looks like a small, white cloud, the most distant of the Cordilleras? It is Sierra Velluda." I did see its distant snow fields, glowing in the morning light, but I also knew that its Indian name was Chillán.

## THE CITY OF TALCA.

We crossed the Rios Pangué [Estero Panguilemo?] and Lircay, both streams as clear as crystal, and by ten o'clock in the morning were in the city. We parted from our friends and *patrón*, the immortal *carretero*, and proceeding to the *cañada*, rested our tired limbs on a stone bench, in the shade of the lofty poplars. The city of Talca is built on the border of the plain near the Costeros, and is the second inland town, in point of size, in Chile. The houses are low and tile-covered, and the streets are laid out at right angles, and paved with round stones. The city is compactly built, and presents a neat, clean appearance.

It was late in the evening when we resumed our journey. Passing a *posada* for *carreteros* in the suburbs, we were hailed by an American, who wished us to stop until the next day, when he would accompany us on our journey. We complied with his request, and passed the night there. Our countryman was married to a fair Chilean, and had been resident of the country several years. The *carreteros* who were to take the household effects of our friend, got drunk during the night, and on the following morning they had sore heads, and were dilatory in their movements, and as we had no time to spare, we again pursued our journey alone. Nearly a league from the city we passed a *hacienda*-house, in the open courtyard of which was a splendid palm tree, the feathery leaves of which sparkled in the morning sunlight with tropical magnificence.

## DESERTED GOLD MINES.

A league or so farther on, in the barren spurs of the Coast Range, we passed deserted gold mines. Five leagues from Talca brought us to the Rio Maule, one of the largest rivers in Chile. We were ferried over in a launch for six cents. A deep gap in the Andes, up this river, disclosed the Pass of "*El Planchón*," the only known pass in the Cordilleras passable to wheeled vehicles. We left the village of Loncomilla to our right, and waded for a long distance through deep sand. Three or four leagues from the Maule we crossed the Loncomilla, now a tiny stream. A large spring gushed out from under the bank near the road. The water was as pure as crystal, and of an ice-like coldness. A league more, and

we crossed the Rio Trapiche, another small stream. The road still continued sandy in places, although the country was well cultivated. The highway leads along next to the Costeros, and occasionally we would leave a low spur to our left. The plain to the eastward was covered with *espino*, which gave a fresh and agreeable appearance to the scenery, with the snowy Andes in the background. It was nearly sunset when we crossed the Rio Putagan, a stream fifty yards wide and two feet deep. We bathed in its crystal waters, and a hundred yards from the river, in a patch of bushes, we spread our *ponchos*, laid down to sleep and dream of home. I awoke several times through the night, and found the moon shining in my face, but experienced no evil effects therefrom. We were on the road at our usual hour the next morning, and a league's walk over some hills, or outlying spurs of Costeros, took us to the Rio Patuco [?], a small stream some ten or fifteen yards in width. We crossed on some stones at the rapids, above which the water was deep. We stopped here an hour, and I shot six ducks, but succeeded in getting but four of them, as the other two sunk. The margin of the stream was lined with bushes. A short distance from the Patuco we stopped at a house where a woman cooked us a *cazuela*. There was a rude mill here. I went inside and took a sketch, with the miller picking the stones. R. at the same time sketched the water wheel, the like of which the philosophic mind of Olmsted<sup>[34]</sup> never dreamed of.

## MIRAGE.

Before us, and extending to the southward, was a smooth plain, gradually ascending for about a league. On the crest were some *espino* bushes. Shortly after leaving the house where we procured our breakfast, we met a *huaso* riding a mule and driving two others. I inquired of him the road to Parral; he told me, and we started on. We had gone but a few yards when he called out to us to stop, and asked me if I did not want some bread. He gave us a *pancito* spice, and I thought to myself, this is hospitality indeed. We were now a short distance on the smooth plain of which I have spoken. About a mile in advance was apparently a pool of water, with the green *espino* reflected from its glossy bosom. This was a deception, though I could scarcely believe it, so perfect was the illusion. The formation of the country precluded the possibility of a lake, and R. laughed at me when I told him that it was a mirage. As we walked along it disappeared. We came at length to a large *espino*, and lay down to rest, for it was now drawing to midday, and the heat was oppressive. We crossed two sluggish streams of water (*secos* or *esteros*), and then came to the banks of the Rio Achibueno, the clearest and most beautiful stream I ever saw. Where we effected a passage, the water runs in two streams, some fifty yards apart. The first one we crossed at the foot of the rapids. The stones were smooth and slippery, and the swift current, three feet deep, nearly swept me away. I was within ten feet of the opposite shore, with the crystal waters roaring around me, and so near gone that I stood still a minute before I could summon courage to move. I deposited my pack, and returned to help R., but did not use sufficient caution, and, stepping on a round stone, I fell into the water; but I was near the bank, and no harm was done. The water was smoother in the next stream, and, with the exception of the rocks, we crossed with ease. We threw our things down in the shadow of the bank on the south side, and R. went to a house near by to procure some *harina tostada*, while I bathed in the limpid waters of the river. In places the water is ten or fifteen feet in depth, and where I bathed it was a hundred yards in width.

## ACHIBUENO

The river comes from an E. S. E. direction. and, looking up the stream, is the Peak of Cauquenes, one of the noblest mountains of the Andes. Such a mountain, and such a river ! Sweet, pellucid Achibueno ! I will long remember thee, and the dazzling snowy diadem of Cauquenes. I took a sketch of the

peak, and while resting ourselves, shot a large duck, and gave it to the kind woman who sold us the *harina*. It was late in the afternoon when we resumed our journey across the broad and level plain. The country appeared to be fine and well cultivated towards the spurs of the Cordilleras. The Coast Range was low and smoothly defined. Name and "*la redondita de Coiquen*," two of the Costeros, looked blue in the distance, But —

*"'Tis Distance lends enchantment to the view,  
And [robes] the mountain [in its] azure hue."*<sup>[35]</sup>

I have reason to remember the "little round mountain of Coiquen;" for in a lonely valley at its base, near the village of Quirihue, I was once attacked by robbers<sup>[36]</sup>.

#### THE RIVER LONGAVI.

The shades of night had drawn around us, when we reached the Rio Longaví. Among the bushes on the sand we found a good resting place; but previous to lying down I went to the banks of the river, and saw that it was broad, though I knew from the murmurs of the waters that the current was not very swift. The moonrise from behind the jagged peaks of the Andes was unsurpassed.

We lay down and slept until after sunrise, as it was our intention to spend the day on the banks of the river. I went to two or three houses to obtain something to eat, but the answer to my inquiries were — "*No hay, señor*," (there is nothing, sir,) and we concluded to cross the river. We speculated about the possibility of doing so for some time, but at length came to the conclusion that we could wade it, though the deepest part was five feet, and the current by no means slow. At this moment, a *birlocho* came along, who agreed to take us over for two *reals*, and in a few minutes we were safe on the opposite shore. Nothing to eat could be procured on this side of the river, and we proceeded on our journey, much to R.'s disappointment, who had anticipated having a fine time on the borders of the Longaví.

#### NIGHT AT A FARM HOUSE.

I crossed a plain two leagues in extent, before I reached some trees that bordered an *estero*, or creek. My companion had fallen considerably behind, and I stopped for him to come up. I began to be uneasy at the length of time, but he eventually made his appearance. He had turned aside at a farm house, and was lucky enough to procure some *pan negro* (black bread). We made for a house on the opposite side of the *estero*, where we stopped for the day. The *señora* swept a place under a shed, and spread an ox-hide for us to lie down upon. The air was still, and the heat fairly stifling; but we reposed ourselves in the grateful shade, and were as happy as travelers could be; which, indeed, is the acme of all happiness. There was an old man here who had travelled afoot from Curicó, and was going to San Carlos. He labored under some infirmity, and had learned that there was a "*remedio infinitivamente*"<sup>[37]</sup> in the latter place. The sun was low in the west, and the breeze cool and refreshing, when we continued our journey. A vast plain was before us. The Coastal mountains, in the west, had sunk to low hills, and in places the plain seemed to extend to the sea. Calm and beautiful was the sunset. Night shrouded the *pampa* with her raven wing, and the stars shone from a cloudless sky. At times we could scarcely see the road, and the Cordilleras hung like a hazy mist on the eastern horizon. Vivid flashes of volcanic light blazed from Peteroa and others of the Andes, though distant Antuco in the south appeared silent.

## PARRAL.

We must have walked three leagues before we come to a house, though lights were seen at distances on either side of the road. We walked between rows of young poplars, on either side of which was a deep, well-cut ditch, for nearly a league, when we came to a large farmhouse. Everything was silent, save the bark of some distant house dog, or the wild scream of parrots. A brush-covered shed was unoccupied, and R. said : "*What a glorious place this is to sleep in.*" We went inside, and lay down on our *ponchos*, until day was dawning in the orient. No one was visible about the house when we vacated our quarters. In a short time we came to a place called Membrillo. About a dozen houses and a mill comprise the *pueblito*. A small stream, called the Rio Chimbarongo, runs north of the village.

A couple of leagues, in a southerly direction, brought us to Parral, a town of but little importance. We turned aside from the road to go through the *plaza*, and procure our breakfast in the market, but were unsuccessful. The foundation of a large church is laid on one corner of the plaza, but it is overgrown with grass, and years have elapsed since any work has been done on it. In the southern outskirts of the village we passed at right angles through the *cañada*, where some soldiers were guarding the chain-gang.

A league south of Parral, is a small stream of water, skirted with a beautiful growth of trees which resemble an oasis in the desert. Here we spent the heat of the day. We stopped at a house a short distance from the stream of water to buy some *harina*. Although the exterior of the building was rude, I was agreeably surprised to find those within refined and intelligent. An old woman was sitting on the floor when we entered, and near a table were seated two young women, one of whom was married, and had a beautiful girl of seven or eight summers. Things wore such a pleasant appearance that we spent nearly an hour here.

## LANGUEN.

It was night before we stood upon the banks of the Rio Perquilauquen. It was our intention to have traveled a part of the night, but as we were unacquainted with the depths of the stream, we spread our bed upon the river bank, and slept until three o'clock in the morning. The moon was rising when we started, and we found the river but two feet deep. We crossed three streams in all, but by some means we missed the Chillán road, and followed a path in the right direction for three leagues, being between the *camino real* and the spurs of the Cordilleras. Our path led us through wheat and corn fields, the former harvested, and along hedges, which reminded me of similar scenery at home. We stopped at a country house, at length, and got a breakfast of *harina* and hot milk. While there I crept upon a flock of parrots perched in a bush, and killed three of them at one shot.

We spent the heat of the day at a roadside *posada*. While we lay dozing under the corridor, a girl was playing on a guitar, singing a parody on the national air of Ecuador. It ran thus:

*El día dos de Mayo—  
¡Qué día tan fatal!—  
Paseando por el castillo,  
Mataron un oficial.  
Sí, sí; no, no, mi amor;*

*Se van por el Ecuador.*

*En la ciudad de Cadegua*

*Mataron una gallina*

*Y un general de marina.*

*Sí, sí; no, no, &c.*

It was the second of May—

What day so fatal?—

When going to the castle,

They killed an official.

Yes, yes; no, no, my love;

We are going to Ecuador.

In the city of Cadegua

They killed a chicken

And a commodore.

Yes, yes; no, no, &c

We left our resting place at the *posada* in time to reach the town of San Carlos before night. I saw nothing worth of particular note in this village. Like all other towns in Chile, it has its *plaza*, unfinished church and *Vigilantes*. The road led in a southwesterly direction, after leaving the village, and night found us again on the *pampa*.

We passed by an *espino* bush that had a number of crosses sticking in its branches, and in the ground around it. Shortly afterwards, we came to two singular-looking rocks, close to the wayside. The largest was about ten feet high, and fronted the road. They were separated by a narrow fissure. A cross near at hand told a tale of blood, and, in the solemn gloom of starlight,

*" Implored the pining tribute of a sigh. "[38]*

It was easy to conceive how the robber hid in the space between the rocks and pounced upon the unsuspecting traveler. A cold raw wind was blowing from seaward, and we seated ourselves in the lee of the largest rock, and watched the flashes of light from Antuco. While sitting here we heard the roar of an earthquake, but felt no shock. We jogged on again, but lay down at length on the ground to wait for the moon to rise; and, while resting, fell asleep. When I awoke, the queen of night was peeping above the Cordilleras, and we journeyed on again. About midnight, we heard the roar of the Rio Ñuble, and walked along an hour before we came to the crossing, where we laid down near a *seco* for the morning to dawn.

The sky was overcast with foggy clouds when we arose. A few minutes walk brought us to the banks of the river, which was crossed in a launch. Above the crossing were rapids, but below the stream was still and tranquil. Five leagues below the ferry the Ñuble empties into the Rio Itata. In a certain measure the Ñuble reminded me of the latter stream. Chillán is a league and a half south of the river, and when we ascended the opposite bank, we saw before us the lofty spires of the cathedral, and before eight o'clock in the morning were in the city.

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## ARTICLE FOUR

*River Chillán—The Renegado River—Mount Chillán—The Baths—Visit to the Boiling River—Visit to the sulphur deposits—Cave of the robber Benavides—The road down the mountain—A night at a farmer's house—Arrival at Tomé—The ruins of old Concepción*

It was a late hour on the afternoon of the 3d of February, when, in company with another American, I left the city of Chillán, the capital of the Province of Ñuble, for the baths of Chillán, distant twenty-five leagues, in nearly a due east direction. We had some difficulty at first in finding the right road, but came upon it at length; and when at a league's distance from the town, we turned aside in a wheat field, and, spreading our blankets by the side of a murmuring stream, lay down for the night. We were on the road an hour before sunrise, journeying over the Plain of Ñuble. A heavy bank of clouds rested against the Andes, and prevented our seeing the Volcano of Chillán, which had been visible since leaving Talca. At a distance of seven leagues from the town, trees, thinly scattered, began to appear on both sides of the road, their number and size gradually increasing until we came to the spurs of the Cordilleras, when we found ourselves in a dense forest.

### THE RIVER CHILLÁN.

The roar of the Rio Chillán was heard at intervals during the day, but we missed the regular crossing, and were directed by an old man, whom we found at work in a wheat field, to another ford. There was considerable water in the river, and the rocks were large and slippery, and the footing very insecure, and the opposite bank was gained at the expense of sorely bruised feet. I have had considerable experience in fording the swift-flowing rivers of Chile, and more than once in the roaring floods of the Rios Cachapoal and Achibueno, I thought my fate was sealed; but the most painful recollection I have is the crossing of the Rio Chillán. We ascended the bank, and in a few minutes were in the regular road. The day was far advanced, and the sun shining through the openings of the large trees in the west was another remembrancer of home. We went inside of a field enclosed with a log fence, and in a pleasant nook among the bushes, kindled a bright, blazing fire, by the side of which we ate our supper and passed the night. The morning of the 5th dawned bright and beautiful and found us, as usual, on the road at an early hour. A league from our encampment brought us to a snug farmhouse, where we bought a piece of mutton and roasted it in the fire, whilst an old woman baked tortillas for us. Eight girls, the promising daughters of our *patrona*, were seated around, engaged in various household occupations. We bade *adios* to the *señoritas* and resumed the road, which led along the margin of a precipice, over which tumbled a rivulet of water into the leafy abyss below. Far below us was the river, the banks of which were densely wooded, whilst in the east rose the vast snow fields of Chillán. The forest grew denser as we proceeded, until it surpassed anything I had ever seen. The most common trees are the oak, laurel and cypress. In this forest of evergreen there are more than ninety-five different species, only thirteen of which shed their leaves. Clumps of cane were clotted around, and at times we could not see fifty yards on either side of us.

### THE RENEGADO RIVER.

At length we left the banks of the Rio Chillán, and crossed a mountain spur, pursuing a southerly direction. A league or more took us to the valley of the Renegado. At times the winding road would be seen but a short distance in advance; again it would open, and in the vista distant mountain sides would appear, robed in undying green, the same dense forest, tinged with the enchantment of distance. We crossed the Rio Renegado on a log bridge. The river has worn a deep and narrow channel in the

sold rock, and immediately above the bridge are three beautiful cascades. Our direction was again easterly, along the banks of the winding stream. The valley is not a league in width, and in the right was a perpendicular wall of rock, hundreds of feet in height, which reminds me of the "Palisades" of the Hudson. We stopped to rest a few minutes in the shade of a tree, and, a *carretero* passing at the time, I inquired for the Casa del Santo [House of the Saint]. He pointed out a rock, and said that we would see it a short distance ahead. When the rock bore north, on the opposite mountain side, this remarkable curiosity was seen to the best advantage. It has the exact appearance of a door with a human figure standing in the entrance. The natives say it is a saint. The rock is near the mountain top, and all around is dense vegetation.

## MOUNT CHILLÁN.

A short distance farther on we pitched our camp, under the spreading limbs of a giant oak. Owing to the great elevation above the sea, we had a cool bivouac, and after a scanty breakfast of *harina tostada*, on the morning of the 6th, we resumed our journey to the baths. An occasional snow field of the mountain appeared as we journeyed along, and an opening in the trees presently gave us a fine view of Chillán. The summits of the mountains on both sides of the valley were comparatively barren, though lower down the heavy forest still showed itself. Different portions of the Chillán came in view, until eventually the whole summit appeared. The sun shone upon the snow fields, and it seemed as though I could reach them. At one point in the road, about three leagues from the baths, a smoothly rounded mountain with a long horizontal summit, appeared on the left. Immediately overtopping this, and beyond, was a vast snow field, parallel to the heavy-wooded spurs; and the dazzling snows of Chillán were relieved by the evergreen of the laurel, the oak, and the cypress. It needs but the palm, I said to my companion, to complete the glorious scene. I was staggered at the magnificence and grandeur before me. Such is Andean scenery. Where is its parallel? We again crossed the Renegado, at a place called "Las Trancas." ["The Barriers"] There is a rude house here, and under a shed were several *birloches*, or two-wheeled carriages. This is as far as carriages generally go, though the rude country carts perform the entire distance. The road led, for a short distance, through an open space, and we saw, on a mountain side to the left, a beautiful waterfall of two leaps. Shortly afterwards, we saw another, which, surrounded by heavy vegetation, as it is, rivals that of Minnehaha<sup>[39]</sup>. We again entered a heavy forest, and the trees were festooned with moss, which gave them an ancient and venerable appearance. The little ravines glowed with the orange, lily and other beautiful flowers.

## THE BATHS.

The road now commenced ascending rapidly, and we were obliged to rest at short intervals. At last we came in sight of the Baths — a rude collection of houses in the lap of the mountain, nine thousand feet above the level of the sea. I saw the clouds of vapor rising from the boiling springs, and a stream of water we crossed smelled strong of sulfur. People of all classes swarmed around, to the number of two or three hundred. Some were encamped under brush-covered sheds, while overhanging rocks afforded a retreat to others. The Baths of Chillán are probably unsurpassed for curative properties. I will give their history, as I learned it from an Englishman, who, for many years, has been a resident of Chile. Not many years ago, an Italian padre followed the Rio Renegado up to its source, and discovered the boiling springs, analyzed the waters, and told of his adventures on the plain below. People came up and dug holes, to allow the water to flow in, bathed, and their infirmities left them. A Chileno went to Santiago, and leased them of Government for nine years. This is the last year of the lease. An American now has possession of them, who will conduct affairs on a different scale. New buildings are to be erected, and the old ones on the ground are to be torn down; so that I was just in

time to see the Baths in their primitive simplicity. The view from the Baths, down the valley of the Renegado, is one of the finest in the world. I remarked this more particularly on the second evening of my stay. During the afternoon, clouds came rolling up from the ocean, resembling the gorgeous clouds of the trade wind sky. The sun set behind dark blue masses, tingeing their edges with the most splendid hues, conveying to my mind the same impression I had when I first looked upon the cloud-capped mountains that surround the Bay of Rio Janeiro.

#### VISIT TO THE BOILING RIVER.

In company with an Englishman and a Chileno, I set out on the morning of the 9th to visit the Agua Caliente ["Hot Water"] and sulfur deposits, some three leagues farther in the Cordilleras. We crossed over into a valley south of the Baths, and spent some time in examining springs of boiling mud. A steep, and almost inaccessible mountain, was before us, but a walk of two hours brought us to the summit. The view was grand and extensive. Far away to the south were mountains, whose melting snows feed the BioBio and Imperial — rivers which flow through picturesque and romantic Araucania. Nearby was Antuco, rearing his volcanic cone above the lesser Cordilleras. In the west were the Costeros and the Great Plain, indistinctly seen through the haze. Around and above where we stood, winter and desolation reigned supreme. We crossed a snow field, and, by a steep and winding path, descended into another valley. We crossed a roaring stream of water, and came to another. This was the Agua Caliente, the boiling river. On both sides of the stream was a long ridge of black volcanic rock, intermingled with ashes. From out of their sides gushed innumerable springs, boiling hot. Growing among the rocks, near the water's edge, we found the wild rhubarb, with leaves nearly five feet across. We followed the stream up to the snow. The hot water came out of a snow cavern that was arched like a fairy palace. I crept into the entrance of this cave, the like of which I had never seen before.

#### VISIT TO THE SULPHUR DEPOSITS.

With some difficulty we crossed the Agua Caliente, and a half league's walk over fragments of black rock and lava, took us to the sulfur deposits. They are nothing more than fissures in the sides of the mountain, emitting steam and smoke. At these crevices, flowers of sulfur are deposited in large quantities. In places the ground was very hot, and gave forth a hollow sound as we walked over it. I climbed to the top of a pile of loose rocks and saw far below me the moss-covered valley, through which wound a stream of water. Horses and mules were feeding in various places, looking like specks in the distance. To the eastward was the pass through which no American or Englishman ever trod. A day's walk would have taken me to where water runs toward the Atlantic. Wreaths of smoke, from the sulfur cones curled against the azure sky. The air was calm and still. We were more than thirteen thousand feet above the Pacific surf, in the regions of solitude and everlasting silence. Far, far below us was the busy world. I took a sketch of the snow fields and the volcanic cones, and after my companions had gathered specimens we commenced our return, taking a short cut for it, crossing snow-field after snow-field, sliding down some, and carefully feeling our way over others, until we reached the base of the mountain to be crossed before the Baths were attained. Water cresses bordered the stream of water here, and numerous wild flowers were growing around, some of them of the most gorgeous hues — crimson, blue, yellow and white. Flowers and snow-fields ! We rested a few minutes and then commenced ascending the weary road, ever and anon turning to view the grand scenery of the Andes. It was nearly night when we reached the Baths. I found R., my old companion, quite well. Although it was late, we bade adios to *Los Baños*, ["The Baths"] and commenced the downward walk. I felt sad indeed, for our journey was brought to a close. I knew too well the

symptoms of the lingering fever my companion had, to doubt what it was. It was hard to turn back from the heart of the Andes, when a few days would have placed our feet on the Pampas.

#### CAVE OF THE ROBBER BENAVIDES.

We stopped the following day at the cave or grath<sup>[40]</sup> of Benavides,<sup>[41]</sup> and spent two or three hours in what was once the haunt of the pirate robber. It is a vast overhanging rock, the grath extending some ninety feet into the mountain. A little waterfall tumbles over the cliff, and forms a stream that runs in front of the cave. While there, I could not help musing upon the varied life led by the robber chieftain: his meeting with San Martín at the hour of midnight on the grand *plaza* of Santiago, his control of the Araucanian Indians, and the awe in which he held Southern Chile, and even vessels on the coast, and lastly his ignominious death. We fired our pistol and gun several times in the cave, the sound nearly deafening us. A better retreat for a robber could not have been found. A heavy forest comes up to the mouth of the cave, and a fallen monarch of the woods that lay near by was five feet in diameter. A path leads from the main road to the cave, a cross cut in a tree marking the spot.

#### THE ROAD DOWN THE MOUNTAIN.

We stopped for the night in a house near the bridge over the Renegado, and early the following morning we came where a party had been camped during the night with a drove of mules. I said to one of the muleteers: "*De adonde viene usted?*" ["Where are you coming from?"] "*De la otra banda, Señor,*" ["From over the border, Sir"] was the reply. "*Cuántos días ?*" ["How many days ?"] I continued. "*Tres,*" ["Three"] was the reply he gave me. At the bridge just spoken of, a road turns off to the right, leading across the Cordilleras. I felt for the moment like turning back alone. We took a different road from the one we came, striking the Plain nearly two leagues south of the Rio Chillán. It was the dustiest path I ever travelled. I pressed on and lost my companion. Long after night had closed in, I stopped at a mill near the wayside, where I was hospitably entertained by the millers. I slept on a bed of skins, and was lulled to sleep by the murmuring water and creaking of the huge millstone. I started in the morning on my solitary journey, and before noon, I had left the last vestige of the forest behind, and was on the dry and arid plain of Ñuble, with the fierce sunlight darting its fiery rays upon my head. An occasional *espino* bush would afford a relief from the intense heat. It was sunset when I entered Chillán. The next morning I visited the market, and while there R. came, in much to my surprise. I spent most of the day in Chillán, and when evening came I bade farewell to my companion with whom I had journeyed many leagues. I then started for the port of Tomé, distant eighteen leagues; passed through the *cañada*, on the west side of the *pueblo*, and entered the broad and level road, which extended in a south-westerly direction as far as I could see. A strong sea breeze blew in my face, and night found me on the same highway, gently undulating, which gave evidence of my approach to the Costeros. It was nearly midnight when I came to the banks of the Rio Chillán. It was dark, and I dared not trust myself in its waters, but a friendly *carretero* came alone in a few minutes and ferried me over in his cart. I watched the constellations as they one by one sank behind the mountains in the west, and the Magellan nebulae that hung like fleecy clouds on the southern sky, and still I journeyed on over the serpentine road, which wound its way among the Costeros. Day dawned at length, and before the sun was half an hour high, I came to the Rio Itata. I was ferried over in a launch for three cents, and afterwards bathed in its crystal flood, which is small compared to the same stream below the confluence of the Ñuble.

#### A NIGHT AT A FARMER'S HOUSE.

I travelled but little during the day, and at night I stopped where some *carreteros* were repairing a broken cart wheel. The *dueño* of a house near by was with them, and when the carts passed, I asked him if I could pass the night in his house. He hesitated for a moment, as he said he was not acquainted with me; but it was only a moment, for the Chileno is never inhospitable to the solitary traveler. "*Pase, pues,*" ["Enter, then"] he said, and I followed him to the *cocina*, where a bright fire was blazing. Here was his wife, an intelligent, bright-eyed woman, and daughter, a girl of twenty. I was soon well acquainted with the mother and daughter, for neither were bashful. I heard the sound of a guitar in an adjoining building, but it ceased as soon as the news of my arrival was announced, and two other girls, of sixteen and eighteen, came in to see the *extranjero*. The good *señora* rated me soundly for being a *soltero*. I attempted to reply to her arguments, but my heart failed me when I met the roguish glances of the handsome *señoritas*.

#### ARRIVAL AT TOMÉ.

I enjoyed myself for an hour or more in conversation with the mother and daughters, congratulating myself at the time that the last night of the journey should be spent in such a happy manner. One of the girls prepared me a glass of *harina*, and as I ate it I could not repress a feeling of sadness, when I reflected that it was the last I would eat in a Chilean country house. I parted from the family with regrets in the morning, and, with a cloudy sky overhead, I continued my journey to the Port. I had hoped to go down the valley of Collen in bright sunshine, to contrast the difference with the wild storm I experienced in a former journey; but Fate ordained otherwise, and I yielded with reluctance. When three leagues from Tomé, it commenced raining. My *poncho* was soon wet through, and weighed me down with its watery load; and my boots, now sadly worn from journeying many a weary league, let in the water at numerous holes. Again I commenced going down to the level of the sea, slipping and sliding at a fearful rate, meeting drunken *carreteros* by the score in my rapid descent. The same rich vegetation choked up the valley with its evergreen, the same mills were passed, again the bay was before me, and at four o'clock on the evening of the 14th of February, I was housed in Tomé.

#### THE RUINS OF OLD CONCEPCIÓN.

I left this beautiful little port on the 19th, for Talcahuano, journeying around the bay. Three or four leagues brought me to Penco, the site of old Concepción, now a miserable place, with an occasional fallen down wall that reminded me of its former grandeur. A small stream of water runs through the centre of the place, and south of, where it empties into the sea, is the "Castillo del Rey." ["Castle of the King"] The town is surrounded by hills, forming an amphitheatre. They are partially covered with low evergreen trees, that contrast singularly with the dark red soil. I deposited my baggage in the *posada*, and then visited the *Castillo*. It is situated on the low sandy beach, and its walls are washed by the sea in a storm. Its length is about two hundred and fifty feet, with a breadth of one hundred and twenty. The wall that fronts the sea is ten feet thick and fifteen in height, built of solid masonry. I went inside of the magazine, which is bomb-proof and arched. Stalactites were beginning to form. The date on the seawall is "1687." The parapet is some thirty feet in width. A Jesuit cross is erected at one end, and three dismounted cannon occupy the middle portion. The wall that separates the interior of the fort from the parapet is sadly wrecked. I looked at the entrance to the parapet, as I was seated on one of the cannon, and thought of the proud Spaniards who trod through the portal at the morning drum beat a hundred years ago. But they have gone, and the "Castillo del Rey" is deserted; and instead of martial music or the call to arms, I heard the innocent prattle of children in the open yard of the fort, and the merry laugh of some sea bathers but a stone's throw from where I was sitting. I spent

a day in the city of Concepción, and on the evening of the 24th, I embarked from Talcahuano in the steamer "Inca", for Valparaiso. The rosy twilight was fading away when we emerged from the bay of Talcahuano upon the placid Pacific; but no incident worthy of note occurred until the morning of the 26th, when the "Inca" dropped anchor in the bay of Valparaiso.

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SECTION (4)

FAREWELL TO CHILE (1858)

by J. A. R.

This letter was published in the Daily Alta California on 25 May 1858.

## FINAL LETTER

*Off to Limache—Two country houses in Chile—The Vale of La Dormida—The romantic ravine of Almendral—The hospitality of Alvarado—Up to the copper mines—Travelling through a cloud—Down the mountain—The Bell of Quillota—The town of Quillota—The village of Concón—The valley of Aconcagua*

Valparaiso, March 13th, 1858.

### OFF TO LIMACHE.

I soon grew tired of an inactive life in the port, and having a few days to spare, I took a seat in the cars<sup>[42]</sup>, on the morning of the 9th, for the Limache station, which is some thirty miles from Valparaiso. The day was calm and beautiful, and scarcely a cat's paw ruffled the waters of the bay, as the trains thundered along the sea shore. The cars stopped a few minutes at the villages of Viña del Mar, and Quilpué. Near the latter place I observed where the ground had been dug over for gold, but as the fields only pay a dollar a day at best, I would not advise miners to leave their claims in California for the gold mines of Chile. The aspect of the country on both sides of the road, although comparatively barren, is not uninteresting, on account of the varied features of the mountain landscape.

### TWO COUNTRY HOUSES IN CHILE.

I left the cars at Limache, and proceeded up the valley on foot. The heat was oppressive, and at the distance of a league, I stopped at a house where I had passed the night nearly three months since. I found the eldest daughter seated *a la chilena*, engaged in sewing, and her father enjoying his siesta on the dirt floor. I inquired for Luisa, who was my favorite, but the words were scarcely spoken when she came in, and gave me a cordial welcome. A large watermelon was cut open for my especial use, and one of the girls brought me a dish of purple grapes and luscious rosy peaches. I spent about three hours here, and when I got up to leave, I offered them some money, but their receiving it was out of the question, as I was told that the fruit was worth nothing, though I thought differently. The road led for two leagues in an easterly direction, between mud or stone walls, enclosing vineyards or groves of orange, fig, pear and peach trees, all robed in foliage of the darkest green. Long pendent clusters of grapes hung from the vines, speaking of the great fruitfulness of this beautiful valley.

I turned aside from the road, and took a path that led a short distance up the mountain side, to the house where I passed the night after descending Bell Mountain<sup>[43]</sup>, in December last. The *chacra*, or small farm, is owned by two sisters; and as I approached that rude grass thatched building, which looked as familiar as home, I met the younger of the two, who kindly invited me within. Gangs of pigs and chickens came with me to dispute my claim, keeping my friend busy in driving them out. "*Los chanchitos son muy fastidiosos*," ["The little pigs are very annoying"] said my hostess. I took a seat on the outside of the building, after sunset, and watched the glow of departing sunlight in the west. The air was so calm that the leaves of the lofty poplars scarcely moved. Four or five hundred feet below me was the oval-shaped valley of Olmué. Existence seemed an absolute joy, and I thought to myself how sweet is this more than Italian clime. As night closed in, firelights were seen in various places in the valley, and far off on the crest of a mountain in the south was a fire, which the brother of the girls said had been kindled by the *vaqueros* of a hacienda, who camp out wherever night overtakes them. The bill of fare which my friends furnished me was ample, and after a hearty feast on fruits and

a prime *cazuela*, washed down with an incredible amount of *mate* and *chicha*, I had a sound night's rest, and early in the morning was off for La Dormida.

#### THE VALE OF LA DORMIDA.

It is proper to remark that the Valley of Olmué divides, some three leagues above Limache. The road to Santiago — a mule path over the noted Cuesta de Dormida — takes up the right hand, or south valley, which is known as the Quebrada de Alvarado. The ravines to the left are called Cajón Grande and Quebrada de Granizo. There is quite a little village in the vale of Alvarado, and I stopped there and made a *peon* breakfast off of bread, cheese and watermelon. A young girl came in the house where I was eating, and inquired if there was a revolution in Valparaiso. It appears that there were vague rumors to that effect in the country. She said President Montt was to be deposed, and all of the foreigners driven out of Chile. The valley heads up in two lofty mountains that are southeast of the Bell of Quillota. They are more than ten thousand feet in height and have snow in their southern ravines the year around. Valparaiso is often supplied with this substitute for ice by a class of men called *neveros*. For nearly a mile after leaving the little town of Alvarado, there is a portion of country covered with low bushes and the columnar cactus. A sugar loaf mountain seemed to block up the entrance to La Dormida, but I journeyed on, when a turn in the road presently disclosed to me the Cuesta de Dormida in the distance, 4300 feet above the level of the sea, and the barren Sierra Vizcachas, nearly as high again. At its northern base is La Dormida, or the Vale of Repose. I entered the ravine, which is not a quarter of a mile in width, save in one portion, and after a short distance, I stopped in a wayside house where I had procured some pears on a former journey. I asked for some peaches, when a basketful was placed before me, which I expected to pay for, but not a cent would the hospitable woman receive.

#### THE ROMANTIC RAVINE OF ALMENDRAL.

It is here that the vale is nearly a half mile in width. A half-dozen grass and palm-thatched huts occupy one portion, and the rest is planted with vineyards and fruit trees, forming one mass of green that is taken up by the steep mountain on the north side, and continued to its undulating summit. Here the palm and oranges of the tropics grow side by side with the poplar and willow of the north. Immediately south of the collection of huts is the Quebrada del Almendral, or Ravine of the Almond Grove, through which runs a beautiful stream of water. A short distance above is the church, an unpretending little structure; I walked about a mile above the church, along the narrow winding path. My ears were saluted with the murmuring music of numerous waterfalls, while romantic glens greeted my eyes, that in any other land would be the theme of poetry and song. I took a sketch of the vale, looking downward, and then commenced my return. Near the church are four or five houses, including a *posada*. I stopped to sketch the church. At one corner is a weeping willow, and near its roots a waterfall. While sitting in the shadow of a house, making the sketch, a drunken *minero* came out of the *posada* with a glass of *aguardiente*, and wanted me to drink, and then tried to beg a *media* of me to buy more, though he had quite sufficient. He annoyed me so that I roared at him in rough English, which mended his manners in a moment, as he instantly left me, and until I completed my drawing I heard him singing of the *mineros* and the mines of Chañarcillo. I stopped a few minutes at a house in the turn of the valley, and then with more than a traveler's regret I turned away from the Vale of Repose.

#### THE HOSPITALITY OF ALVARADO.

The sun was declining in the west when I returned to the vale of Alvarado. The valley was in the shadow of a mountain, and a narrow gap, looking to the northwest, showed a portion of Olmué and the ranges of mountains beyond bathed in sunlight, hazy and beautiful. It was a scene of perfect beauty. The mountains around had just enough vegetation on their sides — more would have been a burden. As I sat upon a bank of earth, above the road, with vineyards and fruit groves at my feet, I thought that it was the loveliest valley in the world. I never saw it equaled; I never expect to see it surpassed. Several natives passed me while I was drawing — the happy residents of the valley. They would invariably speak to me. I was particularly pleased with the graceful manners that the little boys used when touching their hats, nor was I totally lost in admiring the beauties of Nature when some of [the] pretty *señoritas* cast inquiring glances at the *Gringo*. I believe the people in this vale have a more primitive and innocent simplicity than I have met elsewhere.

The last trace of daylight had faded from the west when I stopped in front of a house where two or three women and a man were sitting. One of the girls invited me to take a seat. Presently a candle was brought, and I was requested to pass within. I sent a little girl out to buy me some bread, and the *señorita* spoken of, who appeared to be the *patrona*, bought me some *charqui*, which she cooked and brought in on a plate, and then sat down and watched me with mute earnestness while I made a meal and wrote in my journal. I lay down on a bench and nearly fell asleep, when the *dueño* of the house came to me and said : "*Patrón, vamos por su cama.*" ["Mister, let's go to your bed"] I followed him to the *cocina*, where he spread three sheepskins, and with a saddle for a pillow, and my *poncho* for a covering, I slept warm. During the night some peons came in and stirred up the fire; and, although I was in a dreamy doze at the time, I have a vivid recollection of seeing the firelight on their swarthy faces. I arose in the morning at an early hour, and found to my sorrow that the sky was overspread with clouds, which hung low down on the mountains. There are three or four dwelling-houses where I stayed, and one *despacho*, or store; but no one was stirring, so I threw my *poncho* over my shoulders and started for the copper mines of Bell Mountain.

#### UP TO THE COPPER MINES.

I wended my way to the north side of the valley and stopped at a *despacho*, where I made a breakfast off of watermelons and grapes. Here I was shown a fine specimen of copper ore from a mine called La Merced, A heavy mist was falling when I stopped, but it had abated when I resumed my journey. I left the *Cajón Grande* on my right, and took up the *Quebrada de Granizo*, literally, the Ravine of Hail. I soon found myself in the strata of clouds. The ravine narrowed and was choked with bushes and trees, on both sides of the steep path that followed close to a bubbling stream. On, on I journeyed, and yet no mines came in sight. Nothing but a dense mist was encountered, that dripped from the bushes like a rain. I was bathed in perspiration, and was obliged to halt at intervals and cool off. I began to think that I had taken up the wrong road, but the sound of ringing iron was at length heard, which cheered me on. Nearer and nearer the sound seemed as I pushed ahead. The path had left the bed of the ravine and wound up the mountain; on both sides was the same heavy vegetation of low bushy trees, and I saw a singular flower growing on a long stem, that was as white as the driven snow. The rude houses of the *mineros* loomed up above me in the fog, and, climbing up a steep bank, I found myself in the blacksmith shop. I sat down and rested myself a few minutes, and then requested a young miner to show me the mines; but with that hospitality which is peculiar to those who live a wild backwoods life, he insisted that I should eat first. I followed him to a shed, under which was a bake oven and a large fire blazing by its side, with a kettle of beans cooking. A bit of broiled *charqui*

and a huge piece of brown bread furnished me a repast that my mountain appetite relished keenly. I then visited the mine which is open to the air in the side of the mountain. My young guide said the mine was very poor at present. Two or three piles of ore were scattered around, and from these I selected specimens, for which I offered pay, but not a cent would the honest young fellow receive. The name of the mine is El Abajo.

#### TRAVELLING THROUGH A CLOUD.

As I wished to visit the Merced, I got the miner to accompany me a short distance and point out the road. I bade him *adios* and pursued the winding path that led me around the mountain side. So dense was the cloud through which I was travelling that I could not see two rods on either side. I knew that, at times, I was on the verge of precipices. All below me was a fathomless blank; a dim undefined mystery; an awful abyss that I could fathom only in imagination. I would rather that it had been thus than bright sunshine. I love such dim uncertain scenes, for within them is contained the unknown. A half hour's walk brought me to a group of buildings that appeared to be deserted, but I presently came across a shaft that was sunk in the side of the mountain on an incline. I had not just got to the mouth, when a miner came out with a sack of ore on his back, puffing and blowing with the exertion. He was followed by his companion in a moment. They were the sole residents of the mine. I wished to descend the shaft, but they had just made a blast, and the mine was full of smoke. This mine is known as El Alto. I got new directions and continued my journey to La Merced, descending at a rapid rate. I soon heard human voices, and the chirp of chickens, and knew that I was near the habitation of man. I stopped at a small house near a shaft, where a pretty, though dark-skinned woman and her little child were seated by the fire. I ate a piece of water-melon that she gave me, and then proceeded to the principal mine, which was near by. I found the *mayordomo*, and several miners seated under a shed, but I regretted to learn that no one was allowed to descend into the mine without permission from the owners. The *mayordomo* took me to the mouth of the shaft, and gave me two beautiful specimens of ore. This mine has been worked more than fifty years, and is the richest of the three, but, if the tale of the miners is true, its palmy days have past. There are other copper mines in the north side of Bell Mountain, and according to the statement of the *mayordomo* of La Merced, one silver mine.

#### DOWN THE MOUNTAIN.

I returned to the valley with a couple of miners, who took me by a nearer path. Twenty minutes walking down a steep winding path, which led among rocks and bushes, took us below the cloud, and before sunset I arrived at the house of my Chilena friends. I drank my mate with the girls and a neighbor woman who called in to see me. She professed to be "*muy alegre*," (very happy) at seeing me; and rather mischievously inquired if I wished to ascend Bell Mountain again. I was up the following morning before sunrise, and found the sky clear, save a few beautiful clouds in the west. I walked a short distance up the mountain, and took a sketch of the valley of Olmué, while mountain-shadows still rested on a portion of this earthly paradise. I bade farewell to my kind friends whom I may never see again, and took the downward road for the station. The morning was calm and beautiful, and Nature seemed to proclaim that it was the Sabbath, the day of rest. I stopped to see Lucia, and of course, was treated to a large melon and a dish of peaches and grapes. I told them that I expected to leave Chile in a few days, which they appeared to regret very much. I shook hands with the mother and her two daughters, and went my way, imploring a blessing on the heads, of not only those I had just parted from, but all the kind Chilenas I have met with in this land of valleys and mountains. I got my breakfast at a cookhouse near the station, and as I was too late for the train, I was

obliged to wait until five o'clock in the evening. The pretty little *cocinera* with whom I stopped had two beautiful children. I tried to buy the little boy from her, but she would not sell him alone, but gave me to understand that twenty *ounces* [gold coin] would purchase the whole family; I declined purchasing. *Peons* of the road and miners were gathered around the various workshops and *pulperías*, drinking and carousing. Guitars were in requisition, attracting an idle crowd. In one building a guitar and violin discoursed excellent music. Some horsemen came up late in the afternoon, and rode in the open door, but the music did not cease, and the crowd within only moved out of the way of the horses' hoofs.

#### THE BELL OF QUILLOTA.

At five o'clock the train came along for Quillota. I got aboard and a few minutes brought us to San Pedro, where the cars were detached and the passengers shifted to some freight cars, which were drawn to the summit, and lowered by means of a stationary engine. We got into the cars at the foot of the hill, and away we sped, along a road as straight as an arrow, through the celebrated valley of Aconcagua. Long rows of poplars extended in various directions, and on either side of the road, in the broad and fertile meadows, were feeding vast herds of cattle and horses. Far down the valley to the westward streamed the golden sunlight through masses of clouds. The Bell of Quillota was shrouded in mist and I feared, as we rolled along, that the object of my visit to the city would be fruitless. As soon as the train reached the station I proceeded to the hill north of Quillota, and the cloud that enclosed the summit commenced clearing away, and in a few minutes the Cerro Campana loomed up its marked singularity. A little to the right, and beyond the Bell, is another mountain, much loftier in reality, though, on account of the distance, apparently lower. It is rather singular that this mountain is generally ascended as the Bell. Such adventurers labor under a most grievous mistake. The height of the Bell of Quillota is six thousand two hundred feet above the sea. I took a sketch, taking great pains to get the outlines of both mountains, and waited until twilight was quite gone before I left the hillside.

#### THE TOWN OF QUILLOTA.

The town of Quillota appeared more lovely to me than it had ever before. Its vineyards and gardens, churches and tiled houses, spread like a map at my feet, contributed to render it one of the most beautiful scenes I ever beheld. In occasional spots I noted a palm tree, that reminded me of tropical scenery. To the eastward of the hill runs the noted Calle Larga, which is more than a league in length, and the principal street in the city. I wended my way to the Fonda Inglesa, where I passed the night, and on the following morning, with a cloudy sky above, I left the city of Quillota for the port of Concón. For six or seven miles I journeyed between rows of lofty poplars. On both sides were level fields, which, in the richness of their soil, reminded me of the prairies of Illinois. The road struck the range of hills that bound the valley of Aconcagua on the south, and separate it from Olmué or Limache. It was around the sea shore, by Concón, and up this valley, that engineer Campbell<sup>[44]</sup> wished to bring the railroad. Every one who sees this rich valley will regret that the road was not built where first located.

#### THE VILLAGE OF CONCÓN.

The air was close and warm, and about ten o'clock it gave indications of clearing in the west, and I cast anxious glances to the eastward, to see if the clouds were flitting from the Cordilleras, for my

principal object in visiting Concón a second time was to take a sketch of the Peak of Tupungato, the king of volcanoes. I stopped a few minutes at a house where I had passed the night some months previous, and then passed on to Concón, which is a league below. As there was no *posada* in the village, I returned up the valley, stopping a few minutes to sketch the Port with its two palms, and the Cerro El Mauco, and entrance of the Rio Concón<sup>[45]</sup> into the Pacific. The village of Concón is built on a point of land south of the valley, and consists of a dozen or more mud-plastered and palm-thatched houses. There is a long stretch of sandy beach extending to the northward, of a crescent shape, and a tremendous surf was rolling in. Less than two leagues from the Boca<sup>[46]</sup> of the Rio Concón, there is a ledge of rock, upon which the steamship *Chile* was nearly lost, many years ago. The sandy slope above the village is covered with melon vines. I saw a boy gathering the pumpkins together, which reminded me of the fall of the year at home. A few hundred yards to the eastward of Concón, the road descends into the valley. A short distance to the right are two palm trees. It is known to the natives in the valley as La Palma. It was late before I reached the house of my friend, and after supper, his jewel of a wife, who is a Quillotina, spread me a nice bed, and I lay down with my feet toward the *cocina* door, which opens toward the foot of the valley, and at intervals, when I awoke during the night, I heard the solemn boom of the Pacific surf; I dreamed that clouds still lingered over the Andes, hiding the great volcano from my view. Chanticleer clapped his wings, and uttered a shrill morning note, that roused me from my bed, and, getting up as light began to dawn, I looked up the valley and saw the dim and shadowy mountain, sharply defined against the eastern sky. No one in the house was up, save the old *mamita*, and, giving her two *reals*, I went a short distance to a piece of rising ground and took two sketches, one looking upward, the other down the valley.

#### THE VALLEY OF ACONCAGUA.

It was a morning dawn, grand and glorious. A halo of light seemed to rise from the Bell of Quillota, preceding the rising of the sun, while a wreath of smoke curled from the volcano of Tupungato, telling a tale of the lava waves, which roll beneath his untrodden snows. The Rio Concón was at my feet, winding like a serpent far away to the east, and when the golden sunlight rolled down the Andean valley of Aconcagua, it was reflected from the bosom of the sparkling river as from a thousand mirrors. I turned away from the valley of Aconcagua, as I had from many other charm-spots, with regret. The road led me in a southerly direction, over an undulating country, that reminded me of the district near Cauquenes. A league took me to the Valparaiso road, and, shortly after striking it, I crossed the Rio Reñaca, a small stream of the Costeros. At length I reached the ridge, from which I had a view of Valparaíso, and the white sails that dotted the glassy bosom of the Pacific.

ANNEX : REMINISCENCES OF CHILEAN TRAVEL (1859)

by "QUITO"

*These November 1859 articles from the "Illinois State Journal" were previously published in the "California Daily Alta" in 1858 (see Section III). There are slight modifications from the original text; the sequence is incomplete.*

***The Andes—Scenery in the Valley of Maipo, and Incidents of a Journey to the Baths of Cauquenes.***

In one of my letters to the Journal, from the "Puente de las Tablas," I described the incidents of a visit to a swinging bridge near the foot-hills of the Andes, and noted the fact that some distance up the river there was a similar structure, of ruder construction, which a country tradition stated was built by the Devil. I had, upon the occasion referred to, ascended to the summit of a low spur, several hundred feet above the bed of the Maipo, and obtained an excellent view of the magnificent scenery in this Andean pass; but the masses of clouds in the ravines and gorges of the Coast Range, warned me to return and prosecute my journey to the southward.

It was the 15th of January, '58, when, in company with a traveler whose love of adventure was akin to my own, I stood upon the same mountain spur. Hemmed in as it is with the wildest scenery imaginable, my heart thrilled within me as I crossed for the first time in my life, the threshold of the Andes. The path led along the bank of an artificial canal, or *seco*, which must have been constructed at an immense expense. The steep mountain sides, in places, have been cut down more than a hundred feet perpendicular, and the stream rushes along its sinuous channel like a miniature river.

The distance of a league brought us to the *hacienda* house of San Juan. The *mayordomo*, who was standing under the porch of an outbuilding, received us kindly, and gave permission to us to pass the night there. Groups of horsemen and *peons* were scattered around dressed in the national costume; and there was an old-fashioned air to the scene peculiar to a Spanish-American *hacienda*. Lofty poplars surround the building of San Juan and a grove of gnarled willows nearby appear to be as old as the hills. A girl was cooking bread in a large dome-shaped oven, and the *peons* were anxious to propitiate her favor in order to obtain a supply of the *pan*, but she dispensed gifts only to particular favorites. We had an excellent supper of *charquicán* and mutton, and after writing the incidents of the day in our journals, we lay down in a narrow rough place in the *cocina*.

We were up at day-dawn and paying the *mayordomo* three *reals*, and taking a drink of *aguardiente* he offered us, were off for above. We stopped at a short distance on the borders of a tiny rivulet that came out of a deep ravine and wound, like a thread of crystal, through a grassy plat to the river bank. We were here an hour working up our sketches; and again resuming the path, we shortly passed the place where the canal is diverted from the Maipo. The narrow path now wound round the base of the lofty mountains, at times ascending, for short distances, their rocky sides. Thousands of feet above us towered the summits of those rugged peaks, their scarred forms worn into the most fantastic shapes, while patches of snow, although midsummer, still lay in some of the loftier ravines. The scenery was grand and terrific, and I felt that I was in the Cordilleras. The Coast Range offers no parallel, comparatively speaking, to the *montaña* or spurs of the Andes; how grand and awful then is the view that rewards the traveler, when, from the summit of some lofty pass, he looks upon a sea of glittering peaks, or mountains black and desolate, almost appalling the mind with their awful immensity!

The air was hot and dry, and we were unable to procure water as the banks of the river were perpendicular and confined to a narrow channel, the water roaring and dashing wildly against the rocks. Maipo is an Indian word, and signifies "roaring," and truly the Maipo is a "roaring river." Almost the only persons we met were a boy and girl, both riding a mule. I asked the girl how far it was to a spring of water. She softly replied in the sweet Castilian, "*Es lejos señor.*" (It is far, sir.) I blessed her kind heart, and felt that much of my fatigue and thirst was taken away by the gentle manner in which I was addressed by the Chilean girl.

It was nearly noon when we stopped at a limekiln to inquire the distance to the upper bridge, which we learned was but a few hundred yards above. I learned also, with regret, that the "Devil's bridge," was farther up the river, and as our time did not permit us to make a longer journey in that direction, we were obliged to be content with a view of the one near at hand. The *mayordomo* directed a *peon* to show us the path, and arriving at the bridge, we found its construction to be similar to the one that spans the river some five leagues below. The width is but seven or eight feet, and a fierce wind was blowing down the Cajón of the Maipo that caused the fabric to sway to and fro fearfully, as we crossed to the opposite bank. While my companion was sketching the wild and rugged scenery, I climbed a short distance up the mountains, and had a view of the Rio Colorado which empties into the Maipo a short distance above. Three leagues above the Rio Colorado, is the little town of San José, the centre of a copper and silver mining district.

It is currently believed in this portion of Chile that there is a subterranean channel immediately below the Colorado, that carries off a large portion of the waters of the Maipo; but I saw no fact to support such an hypothesis, as the smallness of the river on the plain below is easily accounted for, when one takes into consideration the large *secos* that tap the river near the foot-hills of the Cordilleras. There is a pass up the Rio Maipo, to the city of Mendoza, on the eastern slope of the Andes.

Our sketch completed, we took down the northern bank of the river, along a road passable to wheeled vehicles. The valley is from a quarter to half a mile in width on this side of the river, and the level space is occupied by beautiful little farms that seemed to quietly repose, far from the bustling world outside, at the feet of the everlasting hills. Two or three leagues above the plain, the river yields a large portion of its waters to the "Canal del Maipo" which supplies the city of Santiago with water. This work was accomplished by the Spaniards at a great outlay of capital.

It was after sunset when we recrossed the river at the lower "Puente de las Tablas," and stopped for the night at the house where we had procured some bread on the preceding day. The old man

welcomed us in the most hospitable manner. I was too tired to eat my supper and threw myself down on an ox-hide to sleep off my fatigue. The following day was Sunday, and the sun arose beautiful and clear while we were journeying to "Los Morros." We rested a few hours in the shade of a tree on the banks of the Rio Claro, and resuming our journey late in the evening, were soon in the Talca road, that led in a southerly direction over a well cultivated and fertile plain. Taking the left hand road out of the little village of Maipo, we journeyed for a long distance between rows of poplars. Avenues of the same kind of trees would diverge at intervals from the main road, and neat white-washed houses would appear in the perspective. They were scenes of quiet and rural beauty. A league and a half from the Maipo, we stopped at a wayside house.

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### *Journey to the Famous Baths of Chillán.*

Our journey to the plain, after leaving the banks of the Rio Cachapoal, which to many would have been uninteresting, was to us relieved of its monotony by many pleasing incidents of travel. Whether jogging along the beautiful Plain of Colchagua, or the wide spread Pampa of Ñuble, the colossal range of the Andes loomed up an apparently impenetrable barrier against the eastern horizon. Each succeeding day, some peak would be lost to view in the north, whilst other snow-capped mountains would rise up in the distant perspective of the south.

Falling in with a *carretero* near the lovely village of Curicó, who was conveying a band of journeymen painters to the city of Talca, I engaged him to ferry us over the intervening rivers; among which was the Rio Lontué, one of the wildest and most impetuous streams that flows from the Chilean Andes. Leaving the little town of Molina late in the evening of January 27th, the road led us through a district of country that was dotted with the bushy *espino* which, to my mind, adds such a charm to the Chilean landscapes. Crossing the Rio Claro, as the sun was setting behind the Coast Mountains, we dismounted at the *carretero's* cry of '*A tierra!*' (literally—to the earth), and journeyed along the undulating plain afoot.

We were all in a jolly humor, laughing and singing to while away the evening hours. Several of the younger members of our party, in the enthusiasm of joyous anticipation, would occasionally sing out, — *¡Viva! , se van por la ciudad de Talca.*' (Hurrah, we are going to the city of Talca.) One of the number was an old Peruvian, whose equanimity was not disturbed by the fact of his going to the city of the Plain. He was a veteran traveler. The moon was nearly at the full, and as we journeyed along the road, the vast plain, from the Andes to the Costeros, was flooded with her silver light, and through the deepening haze I could trace the outlines of the eternal snow-fields.

Our companions succumbed at length to the fatigue, and Rile and I jogged on alone for leagues, with the cart rumbling behind us. The rest of the party had stowed themselves away in the cart and were asleep. The birds were singing, and I thought I discerned a faint trace of dawn in the east, when the cart was stopped in a little ravine, and we lay down on the ground to rest our wearied limbs. The sun was rising when we started again, and a league farther on we saw the white church spires of Talca rising above the dark green poplars that skirt the northern limits of the city.

In the east was the Volcano of Peteroa, the 'Smoking Mountain.' Peteroa is the frustum of a cone, and one instinctively feels, when looking upon the mountain from the Plain of Talca, that they at last behold a volcano. There is something awful in the majesty of Peteroa, which in my imagination stands alone, the only perfect type of a volcano in the world. This mountain is often in a state of intense action and Molina describes a terrible eruption that occurred on the 3d of December 1762<sup>[47]</sup>. It was ascended in 1831 by Claudio Gay, whom Humboldt styles 'the distinguished and highly gifted naturalist.'

While we were but a short distance from the northern suburbs of Talca, and my attention was still directed to the Peteroa, the old Peruvian pointed to the south and said to me, "*Paisano*, do you see that mountain that looks like a small white cloud, the most distant of the Cordilleras. It is the Silla Velluda." I did see its distant snowfields glowing in the morning light, but I knew that its Indian name was Chillán. It was the *ultima thule* of our southern journey, for as the Peruvian said, "Near that mountain is the Pass of Antuco, through which you will go to the *Otra Banda*, the Land of the

Indian." Many weary leagues were yet to be traversed, for the Chillán was, as the crow flies, one hundred miles away.

We entered the city at 10 A. M., and paying our patron the ever-to-be-remembered *carretero* one dollar, parted from our friends and proceeded to the cañada, where we rested ourselves in the grateful shade of the lofty poplars. Leaving our resting place near noon, we passed through the *plaza*; and, crossing the *estero* or small stream of water, on the same foot-bridge I had journeyed over some months previous, we stopped in at a brush-covered shanty, where, after a dish of corn and beans, we enjoyed a *siesta* of several hours' duration.

The sun was an hour and a half high when we shouldered our packs and proceeded on our way. Passing a *posada* for *carreteros*, I saw a man standing in the gateway who looked as though he could speak English. As I eyed him pretty close he spoke to me, and inquired our destination, saying that if we would wait a short time there would be some carts going to Parral, and we would thus have a good opportunity of crossing the river. We stopped; but the *carreteros* were drunk and did not get off, and we concluded to stay all night. Our friend, who proved to be an American, had resided several years in Chile, and was married to a fair Chilena, who appeared to be highly pleased at our arrival, if we were rough looking travelers.

We slept in the open yard of the *posada*, and were nearly devoured by the fleas. We were up before sunrise the following morning; but the *carreteros* had sore heads, and were dilatory in their operations, and at my suggestion, we concluded to go on afoot, as we had no time to spare in unnecessary delays. The distance of a league brought us to the *hacienda* house, in the courtyard of which was the palm tree that so attracted my attention in my former journey. I seated myself on an uprooted poplar stump and gazed long upon its feathery leaves before I gave it a final good-bye. To me there is more than an ordinary interest attached to this palm. Humboldt,<sup>[48]</sup> on the authority of the naturalist Claudio Gay,<sup>[49]</sup> says that the Chilean palm (*Coco de Chile*) does not grow further south than the banks of the Rio Maule, and for aught I know, this may be the southern limit of that tropical plant.

*The Andes—Scenery in the Valley of Maipo, and Incidents of a Journey to the Baths of Cauquenes.*

I was under the impression that the Lake of Aculeo which we designed visiting, was in the spurs of the Andes, as stated by Capt. Hall, but our patron with whom we passed the night informed us that it was two leagues below the Pass of Angostura in the Costeros. When I learned this, the charm my imagination had given it was gone; and I did not wish to see the "Lake among the Andes," so graphically described by the humorous Basil Hall.

We directed our course the next morning, across the country in a westerly direction, to reach the Talca road, from which we had slightly diverged at the village of Maipo. Winding around the northern base of the Angostura Mountain, in the burning rays of an almost tropical sun, wading through a portion of the Laguna Paine, and climbing brush fences made of the thorny *espino*, which are almost as difficult to surmount as an Andean pass, tried our patience and consumed our time; and it was late in the afternoon when we struck the main road, a league north of the Pass of Angostura; journeying along the dusty way in the cool of the evening, we stopped for the night at the *posada*, or inn, that is situated close to the entrance.

We were tired and footsore, but a bath in the crystal stream of water that flowed through the backyard of the *posada*, followed by one of the most refreshing night's rest I ever experienced, restored us to our wonted good humor; and I roused the sleepy *mozo* from his slumbers on the morning of the 19th to pay our bill of one *real*; when we resumed our journey to the Baths. We immediately entered the Pass, which is less than two hundred yards in width, but a quarter of a mile took us through the narrowest portion.

The Pass of Angostura, which strictly speaking is but a contraction of the plain, separates the Coast Range from the foothills of the Cordilleras, and through it flows the Rio Paine de Angostura of which I had occasion to remark in a former journey. How often when athirst upon some barren plain, or keeping the lone night watches on the declivity of the Bell of Quillota have I thought of those sweet pellucid waters.

The plain now gradually expanded as we walked along. We were journeying through the *Hacienda de la Compañía*, the largest estate in Chile; and between the road and the mountains in the east was a wheat field, the extent of which was measured by thousands of acres. The grain was being tramped out in a *corral* by the roadside, and carts were seen in all directions engaged in gathering the sheaves. Affairs were here carried on in a scale befitting the size of the *hacienda*; the *corral* was several hundred feet in diameter, and a troop of more than a hundred horses were flying around the ring, pursued by mounted *huasos*, who were swinging their *lassos* and shouting at the top of their voices, "Yegua ! Yegua ! Yegua !" (*Yegua*, is the Spanish for mare.)— The natives enjoy themselves hugely during the season of harvest, for the *mosto* and *chicha*, country wines, circulate freely, and as the evening of each day approaches, the mirth grows both loud and furious.<sup>[50]</sup>

It was late in the afternoon when we reached the town of Rancagua, twenty-five leagues from the Capital, and with the exception of Santiago, the centre of the most populous district in the Republic. We did not tarry long in Rancagua, but pushed on to the Rio Cachapoal which is a half league south of the town, The river is spanned by a splendid bridge of nine arches, which was not quite completed. It is probably the first structure of the kind in South America. We passed the night in a shanty at the

south end of the bridge, sleeping under a bush-covered shed. It was ten o'clock the next morning before we got our breakfast, and in the meanwhile we sent to the town for a supply of *pan* to last us during our stay at the Baths.

Our preparations at length complete, we bade *adios* to the good *señora* and her two daughters with a promise to return in three or four days, and set out for the Baths of Cauquenes, two as enthusiastic and veteran-looking travelers as ever trod a mountain trail of the Andes. The distance to the Baths from the bridge across the Cachapoal is five leagues, the mule path leading up the southern bank of the river. For the distance of a mile we journeyed over round stones which, in seasons of high water, form a portion of the river bed. A large stream of water was now encountered, which diverges from the main channel, and, without proper engineering, will eventually change the course of the river. A party of laborers were at work here, and we hired a couple of horsemen to take us to the opposite bank.

"The Baths are this side of that white snowy mountain," said the *mayordomo*, in answer to my inquiry about the road. We were now at the foot-hills, and ascending by a steep winding path a few hundred feet, to cross an angle of the mountain, a more gradual slope led us down again to the river, the margin of which we followed for the distance of a league, when the road left the bank and wound round the southern base of a hill, but another league brought us close to the shore.

We passed one or two large *hacienda* buildings, and small *ranchos* were scattered along at close intervals. In one of the latter we procured our dinner, consisting of boiled wheat and milk. It was a capital dish, and Rile, my companion, thought if he ever returned home, he would try and introduce it into general use. As we did not wish to reach the Baths before sunset, we loitered along the road, enjoying an agreeable suspense in not knowing what moment the object of our visit would come in sight.

From the point we struck the Cachapoal the second time, the scenery changed materially; the river was hemmed in between narrow banks, and the mountain sides were partially robed with evergreen foliage. The landscapes were mild and beautiful, and had but little of the terrific grandeur that distinguishes the Cajón of Maipo. At length we came to the Rio Claro, a mountain stream that puts down from the southward. Looking up the deep canon of the river, I could see the snow fields which feed its anything but clear waters. We pulled off our boots and wading across, found the water but little over two feet in depth.

The scenery grew more lovely at every step; it was the hour of evening and the soft air blew down the valley in gentle zephyrs. We passed the ruins of an old hide-rope bridge, and in a half hour more we were in sight of the Baths. Passing to the eastward of the buildings, we pitched our camp on the edge of a narrow ravine, and slept comfortably on a pile of bamboo canes, notwithstanding the coolness of the air.

I was up with the morning dawn, engaged in writing up our incidents of travel, which I had neglected for some days. It was a calm and beautiful summer morn. To me, the temperature seemed perfect. At sunrise a funeral procession passed close to our encampments, bearing someone to his long home. My mind, for a moment, was clouded with sadness, when I reflected that no perfection of climate could arrest the fell destroyer, who visits alike the swamps and lagoons of Central Africa, and the sweet clime of Chile.

We were received with courtesy by the young man who has charge of the baths. He took us around and showed us each one, as there are five in number. The bath buildings are not more than seven by

ten feet in size, and, mud plastered; and, thatched with straw, as they are, present a rude appearance. On the centre of each room is a vat, two feet wide by four and a half long, into which the water flows from separate springs. The names of the baths, with the temperature of each, are "*Pelambre*," 118°; "*Pelambrillo*," 116°, "*Corrimiento*," 110°; "*Templada*," 104°; and the "*Solitario*" 102°. We both took a bath. I chose "*Pelambre*," (the scalding,) but found it impossible to completely immerse myself in the fiery flood. When I came out the perspiration flowed from me like rain. In rheumatic and cutaneous diseases, the baths have performed miraculous cures. The waters are strongly impregnated with mineral substances; potassia, iron, salt, sulfur and mercury entering into their composition. The springs ooze out of the river bank from among boulders, within a few yards of the verge, and taken together would form a considerable stream of water. After flowing through the bath-tubs, they are precipitated into the Cachapoal, which foams and roars a hundred feet below.

I could not ascertain how long the Baths of Cauquenes have been known. I was told that the oldest natives in the valley are ignorant as to the date of discovery. I saw names carved on the doors bearing date 1830. But few persons were there at the time of our visit. An old gentleman and his party, who passed us in the Vale of Repose, occupied one of the rooms. I noticed a poor palsied wretch bathing in "*Pelambrillo*," but I doubt whether even the magic waters of Cauquenes can restore his withered frame.

The accommodations are not of the finest description for visitors. A large open yard is enclosed by buildings with means of exit at the corners. In these buildings are some twenty or thirty rooms, that are let out at prices varying from six *reals* to one dollar and a half a day. Board is two dollars per day, and the price of a bath is six cents. One cannot expect to live at the Baths with any degree of comfort for less than four dollars *per diem*.

The evening of the first day of our stay closed as beautiful as the dawn of the morning had been splendid. I was alone on the mountain side, when the hill-tops were tinged with the rosy blush of the setting sun, and a silence, broken only by the dashing waters of the Andean torrent, reigned supreme in the Valley of the Cachapoal. How fascinating is such a life! Who would not love such a beautiful land, whose plains and valleys bask in the sunlight of a perpetual summer?

On the second morning of our stay, I tried the "*Solitario*," the temperature of which is quite bearable. I found my companion bathing in "*Corrimiento*" and as I opened the door of his bath room, he remarked that "*Infierno*" had broke loose during the night, and his appearance certainly indicated a recent exposure to remarkable heat. As I was anxious to try the effect, I stripped off again, and gradually lowered myself down into the tub. The operation was painful; and even after I was completely submerged, the great heat of the water made me puff like a porpoise. I stood it for five minutes, when a sick and dizzy sensation obliged me to get out. I never had my system so completely relaxed, and more than an hour elapsed before the perspiration ceased to pour from me. I scarcely believed that our excellent physical condition at the time of our visit could be improved upon, but the effects of these medical waters proved beneficial to us in a high degree; and for days we possessed that buoyancy of mind, and elasticity of frame, that eminently fitted us for the toilsome and fatiguing journey we subsequently accomplished.

We sketched the different bath houses, as well as the principal buildings, and while working up the different drawings under the corridor, a *mozo*, or servant brought us our dinners. We found the *dueño*, or rather lessee, of the Baths to be a very intelligent man, and in the course of our conversation with him, he informed us that we could see the Peak of Cauquenes from the distant Plain of Maule. He had

a pack of English fox-hounds, and showed us some lion and fox-skins as trophies of the chase.

A small tile-covered building that stands at one corner of the courtyard is the chapel. The same pretension to ornament and show was observed in this rude building, though in a far less degree, that I saw in the cathedral at Santiago. It is the only tile-covered building at the Baths, and gives evidence of considerable antiquity.

When our drawings were completed, the handsome daughter of the *dueño* had numerous questions to ask about our travels. It was early in the afternoon of the 22nd of January, when I bade *adios* to the excellent *dueño* and his family, and taking the hand of the fair *señorita* of whom I have spoken, she returned the warm pressure I gave her, and said from her kind heart I know,— "*Adios, Caballero, vaya muy bien !*" I will never forget those words, which fell in soft accents from her rosy lips. How gentle and confiding is woman. Soon the Baths were hid from our view, and we stopped for the night, scarcely a league below, near the ruins of the "Puente de las Tablas."

We pitched our camp under the spreading boughs of a *quillay*, the bark of which is so famed for its saponaceous qualities. This tree is an evergreen, and attains a height of from fifteen to thirty feet. The effects produced by the bark are something similar to that of the soap plant of California.

We left our rustic camp with regret, at an early hour on the following morning. The weather was fine and clear, and a pleasant breeze was blowing up the Valley of the Cachapoal. On our way down the river bank, I shot a fine mess of birds, consisting of doves, blackbirds and the Chilean quail. Following the same road down to the borders of the plain, where we had crossed the portion of the river that disembouches from the main channel, we took another path, that led us higher up the mountain side, and in so doing obtained an excellent view of the fertile Plain of Rancagua, which lay spread out like a map at our feet. The fields of golden grain, contrasting with the dark green patches of maize, the vineyards and groves of fruit trees, with the Coast Range of mountains in the West, and the rugged Angostura, standing like a faithful sentinel at the pass, and not omitting the ever present Andes, constituted a panorama of varied beauty and grandeur.

Descending to the level of the plain, we encountered considerable difficulty in crossing the streams of water formed by the bifurcation of the Cachapoal. Previous to reaching the bridge, we came to a collection of houses, in one of which a number of *señoritas* and *mozos* were dancing the *Zamacuea* and other Spanish dances. One of the girls was playing the national anthem on the guitar, accompanying it with her voice. The performance was excellent, losing nothing by the mournful cadence, that tinged the voice of the pensive *señorita* as she sang:—

*"Puro, Chile, es tu cielo azulado,  
Puras brisas te cruzan también,  
Y tu campo de flores bordado,  
Es la copia feliz del Edén;  
Majestuosa es la blanca montaña, &c.*

It was late in the afternoon when we arrived at the bridge, where we spent the remainder of the day in making preparations for our southern journey. We related the story of our adventures at "*Los Baños*" to the daughters of our *patrona* while the good lady herself prepared a *cazuela* of our game, from which the whole family partook. We passed the night there, and long before day, I was awakened by the clarion notes of a cock, that was perched on a pole above our heads. I waited until the second call before I arose, when the east began to glow with the morning sun, and the sharp and splintered peaks

of the Andes, were strongly marked against the sky. *Se van!* (They are going,) said one of the *muchachos*, in reference to our departure, and the family, the most of whom were sleeping on the ground around us, imitated our example of early rising! Our note-books and specimens carefully packed away, we shouldered our pouches and guns, and with an *adios* to our hospitable entertainers, who would receive no remuneration, and a parting glance at the Cachapoal, we started for the far distant Bath of Chillán, more than three hundred and fifty miles away.

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### *Journey to the Famous Baths of Chillán.*

Less than two leagues brought us to the road that leads to the town of Cauquenes, and here I resigned my honorary station as guide, taking the highway for Chillán, a road I had never traversed before. On our right were barren mountains containing deserted gold mines. Five leagues from Talca brought us to the Rio Maule, whose turbid waters we crossed in a launch. A deep gap up this river, in the Cordilleras, disclosed the Pass of '*El Planchón*,' which is the only known pass in the Andes practicable to wheeled vehicles. Leaving the little village of Loncomilla to our right, we waded for a long distance through deep sand, and three leagues from the Maule crossed the Rio Loncomila, then a tiny stream. A large spring gushed out from under the bank close to the road. The water was clear as crystal and of an icy coldness. A league more, and we crossed the Rio Lapiche, another small stream. The road still continued sandy in places, which fatigued my companion greatly. The highway leads along next to the Coast Range, and occasionally we would leave a low spur to our left. The plain to the eastward was covered with the *espino*, which gave fresh and agreeable appearance to the scenery, backed as it was by the snowy Andes.

It was nearly sunset when we came to the Rio Putagan, a stream fifty yards wide, and two feet deep. We waded across and then bathed in its crystal waters. A hundred yards from the river bank was a thick *chaparral*, where we spread our ponchos, and lay down to sleep and dream of home. I woke several times during the night, and found the moon shining in my face, but experienced no evil effects therefrom. A league's travel on the following morning, over some hills or outlying spurs of the Costeros, brought us to the Patuco, a small stream some ten or fifteen yards in width. We crossed on some stones at the rapids, above which the water was deep. We stopped here about an hour, and I shot six ducks, but succeeded in recovering only four. There was a house near at hand, where we found some women who manufactured our game into a *cazuela* for which, in our half-famished state, we stood sorely in need. There was a rudely constructed flouring mill here. I went inside and took a sketch of the interior with the miller pricking the stones, whilst Rile made a drawing of the water-wheel, the like of which the philosophic mind of Olmstead never dreamed of. Continuing our journey, we had before us and extending to the southward, a smooth plain, gradually ascending for about a league. On the crest were some *espino* bushes. Shortly after leaving the house where we got our breakfast, we met a *huaso* riding a mule and driving two others. I inquired of him the road to Parral; he told me, and we started on, but had gone only a few yards when he called out for us to stop, and asked me if I did not want some bread. He gave us two biscuit, for which I thanked him and thought to myself, here is hospitality indeed.

We were now a short distance on the smooth plain, and about a mile distant was, apparently, a pool of water, with the green *espino* bushes reflected from its glassy bosom. This was a deception; though I could scarcely realize it, so perfect was the illusion. The formation of the country precluded the possibility of a lake, though my companion laughed at me when I told him it was a mirage. As we walked on, it disappeared. We crossed two sluggish streams of water, and then came to the banks of the Rio Achibueno, the clearest and most beautiful stream I ever beheld. Where we effected the passage, the water runs in two streams, some fifty yards apart. The first one we crossed was at the foot of the rapids. The stones were round and slippery, and the swift current, three feet deep, nearly carried me away. I was within ten feet of the opposite shore, with the crystal waters roaring around me, and was obliged to stand in one position for a minute before I could summon courage to move. I deposited my pack, and then returned to help Rile, but did not use sufficient caution, and stepping on a round stone I slipped and fell in the water; but we were both in reach of the bank, and no harm was done.

The water was smoother in the next stream, and, with the exception of the rocks, we crossed with ease. Rile, my humorous companion, cut one of his feet on a broken rock, which he considered at the time to be the only fragment in the river, from the Andes to the seaboard.

We threw our things down in the shadow of the bank on the south side, and R. went to a house near by to procure some *harina tostada*, while I bathed in the limpid waters of the stream, above the ford. In places the water was ten or fifteen feet in depth, and nearly a hundred yards in width. The river comes from an E. S. E. direction, and looking up the stream is the Peak of Cauquenes, one of the noblest mountains of the Andes! ¡ *Caramba* ! Such a mountain and such a river. Sweet, pellucid Achibueno ! I will long remember thee, and the dazzling showy diadem of the Cauquenes. I took a sketch of the Peak, and whilst resting ourselves, a large duck came floating down the transparent bosom of the river. I fired at it as it came opposite, when it raised; and I gave it the benefit of the other barrel, which brought it down near the head of the rapids. A Chilean boy, who was standing on the bank, plunged in and secured the bird, exciting my admiration as well as envy, at the skillful and experienced manner with which he struggled with the swift-flowing waters. We gave it to the good woman who sold us the *harina*.

The sun was low in the west when we resumed our journey across the broad and level plain. The country appeared to be fine and well cultivated towards the Cordilleras, and long rows of the Lombardy poplars in the east, indicated the position of the little village of Linares. The Coast Range was low and smoothly defined. Name and '*La redondita Coiquen*' were visible; the summit of the latter blue and beautiful with its distance, but—

*' 'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,  
And robes the mountain with an azure hue,'*

I have reason to remember the round mountain of Coiquen, for in a lonely valley at its base, near the village of Quirihue, I was once attacked by robbers.

The shades of night had drawn around us, when we came to the Rio Longaví. Among the bushes on the sand we found a resting place; but previous to lying down I went to the banks of the river and saw that it was broad, though from the murmur of the waters I knew that the current was not very swift. The moonrise from behind the serrated peaks of the Andes, was unsurpassed for loveliness. It was one of those enchanting night scenes of which poets dream, but that are only looked upon in that distant land.

We lay down and slept until after sunrise, as it was our intention to spend the day on the banks of the river. I went to two or three houses to buy bread or *harina*, but the answer to my inquiries was the sorry response, 'No hay, *señor*;' (There is none, sir,) and we concluded to cross the river. We speculated about the possibility of doing so for some time, and at length came to the conclusion that we could wade it, though the deepest part was five feet, and the current by no means slow. At this juncture a horseman came along, and I saw from his leather leggings that he was a *birlochero*, so I bargained with him to take us across for two *reals*, and in a few minutes we were safe on the opposite shore. Nothing to eat could be procured on this side of the river, and we proceeded on our journey, much to Rile's disappointment, who had anticipated a fine time on the banks of the Longaví. I left my companion behind, and crossed a barren plain of two leagues in extent, when I came to a grove of bushes and trees that skirted the borders of an *estero* or creek. Here I waited for him to come up, until the length of time made me uneasy; but he eventually made his appearance. He had turned aside to a

farm-house, and was lucky enough to obtain a quantity of *pan negro* (black bread). We made for a house on the opposite side of the stream, where we spent the remainder of the day. The *señora* swept us a clean place under a brush-covered shed, and we reposed dreamily upon an ox hide, and were as happy as travelers could be, which, indeed, is the acme of all happiness.

Early in the morning a cool breeze had blown from the snow-fields, but it died away, and during the day the air was still and the heat stifling. The long extended chain of the Andes seemed to fairly glow with heat against that azure sky; though the snowy summits of Peteroa and Cauquenes and the majestic dome of the Chillán, white as marble with everlasting snow, proclaimed that the burning heat of the Line [Equator, Ed.] was but shortly removed from the icy cold of the Polar Circle. There was an old man there who had journeyed afoot from Curicó, and was bound to San Carlos. He labored under some infirmity, and had learned that there was a *remedio infinitamente* [sic] (a matchless remedy) in the latter place.

The sun was half an hour high and a refreshing breeze was blowing from the south, when we resumed our journey. Before us was a vast plain; the Costeros mountains in the west had sunk to low hills, and in places the plain seemed to extend to the sea. The sun set behind the western hills, and night, at length, shrouded the *pampa* with her raven wing, and the stars shone with unwonted brilliancy from a cloudless sky. At times we could scarcely see the road, and the Cordilleras hung like a hazy mist on the eastern horizon, whilst vivid flashes of volcanic light blazed at intervals from Peteroa, and other portions of the Andes, though distant Antuco in the south seemed silent.

### *Journey to the Famous Baths of Chillán. [concluded]*

It was midnight when our practiced ears caught the murmuring sound of the Rio Ñuble. It was a joyous sound to us toil-worn travelers, for the Ñuble was the only intervening river between us and the long wished for City of Chillán. The stillness of the night air enabled us to hear the roar of the Andean torrent for a long distance, and my companion grew impatient ere we reached the margin of the river. We spread our *ponchos* on the borders of a *seco*, and lay down to await the dawn of morning; but the latter portion of the night proved damp and chill; and the sky was overcast with foggy clouds on the following morning, that seemed in striking contrast to the hitherto unparalleled serenity of the sky.

A few minutes walk brought us to the banks of the Rio Ñuble, which we crossed in a launch. Above the crossing were rapids, but below the stream was still and tranquil. Five leagues below the ferry the Ñuble empties into the Itata. In a certain measure the Ñuble reminded me of the latter stream. Ascending the low bank of the river, we found a boy awaiting with a cart, who offered to take us to Chillán for a *real*; and as the distance was a league and a half, and my companion was still comforted with sore feet, we accepted the offer and mounted the lumbering vehicle that brought to R's mind, as he told me, all the Grecian and Trojan wars that ever were. It was more difficult for my unimaginative mind to perceive the resemblance of the rude *carreta* of the Chilean to the chariots of the Grecian heroes.

Before us were the lofty spires of the cathedral of Chillán, and a small grove of thick-set evergreen trees, to the left of the road, contrasted strangely with the comparative sterility of the plain. We entered the city before eight o'clock, where we spent the largest portion of the day. Chillán (pronounced cheel-yan) is the capital of the Province of Ñuble, and is situated about midway between the Costeros and the Andean spurs, on the banks of the river of the same name. It has been twice destroyed by earthquakes. During the last shock, hot water was forced up through fissures in the earth, and many persons were scalded to death. Each time it was rebuilt the site was removed farther north to higher ground. The different portions are known to the natives as Chillán Viejo, and Chillán Nuevo (Old and New Chillán.) The cathedral, which is a large and fine looking building, is the only structure deserving notice.

It was nearly sunset when we started direct for the Baths of Chillán, distant from the city twenty-five leagues in nearly an east direction. We experienced some difficulty at first in finding the right road, but came on it at length, and when at a league's distance from the town we turned aside in a wheat field, and spreading our blankets by the side of a murmuring stream, lay down for the night.

We were on the road an hour before sunrise, journeying over the Plain of Ñuble. A heavy bank of clouds still rested against the Andes, and prevented our seeing the Volcano of Chillán, which had been visible since leaving Talca. We crossed several large *secos*, or canals for irrigation, and a considerable portion of the country appeared to be under an excellent state of cultivation.

We were approaching an interesting region of country; and as we drew nearer to the forest robed *montaña*, now plainly visible, my mind was tinged with that deep and pleasurable excitement, which is common to all, upon the eve of the fulfillment of a long cherished desire. The glowing description I had received from Mr. Datnell<sup>[51]</sup> of the forest, and magnificent scenery on the slope of the Chillán, had haunted my imagination for months; and I had an innate faith that my expectations would be

realized, for I could not doubt the veracity of the English traveler.

At a distance of seven leagues from the town trees thinly scattered began to appear on both sides of the road, their number and size gradually increasing until we came to the spurs of the Cordilleras, when we found ourselves in a dense forest. The road led along the north side of the Rio Chillán, but at some distance from the river, the roar of which we heard at intervals during the day. By some means we missed the regular crossing, and were directed by an old man, whom we found at work in a wheat field, to another ford. There was considerable water in the river, and the rocks were large and slippery, making our foothold insecure, and the opposite bank was gained at the expense of sorely bruised feet. I have had considerable experience in fording the swift flowing rivers of Chile, and more than once in the roaring floods of the Cachapoal and Achibueno, I thought my fate was sealed, but the most painful recollection I have is the crossing of the Rio Chillán.

We ascended the bank, and in a few minutes were in the regular road. The day was far advanced, and the sun shining through the openings of the large trees in the west, was another remembrancer of home. We went inside of a field, enclosed with a log fence, and in a pleasant nook among the bushes, kindled a bright blazing fire. I could not tire in gazing upon those giants of the forest, for years had elapsed since I had been in a densely wooded district. I felt like examining every strange plant that met my view. The sudden transformation from the arid plains of Chile, to the awe-inspiring forest solitudes of the Cordilleras, changed my nature completely; and my spirit, partaking of the infection, reveled in the unalloyed enjoyment of that perennial spring. We were indeed in a new world.

A description of the famous Baths is reserved for my next letter.

[ends]

g g g

APPENDIX ONE : GLOSSARY OF SPANISH TERMS

a la chilena: in the Chilean manner

adios: goodbye

alma: soul

aguardiente: liquor

alma: soul

amigo: friend

arriero: muleteer

azúcar: sugar

baño: bath, thermal spring

birloche: light carriage, drawn by three horses

birlochero: driver of a birloche

blanco (adj. f. blanca): white

boca: mouth (of river)

bonito: pretty

burro: jackass

caballero: gentleman

cajón: drawer; (figuratively) deep, closed valley

calle: street

camino: road

Camino Real: Royal Road

campana: bell

cañada: (archaic) public walk in a city

¡Caramba!: Wow!

carreta: cart

casa: house

castillo: castle

cazuela: soup/stock prepared with meat and vegetables  
carretero: carter  
cerro: mountain  
chacra: small farm  
chancho: pig, pork  
chaparral: thicket  
charqui: jerked beef  
charquicán: stew made with charqui or meat, plus various vegetables  
chicha: alcoholic drink made from grapes  
cholo: person of mixed race (white and native American)  
cigarita: small paper cigar  
ciudad: city  
cocina: kitchen  
cocinera: cook  
comandante: commander, captain  
compañero: companion  
corral: animal pen  
cuadra: city block  
cuesta: mountain pass  
departamento: department (administrative unit)  
despacho: shop  
dueño: owner  
espino: species of bush, *Acacia caven* (literally, thorn)  
estero: stream creek  
extranjero: foreigner  
familia: family  
fonda: inn, boarding house  
frío: cold

grande: large

gringo: North American

hacienda: estate, ranch

harina (tostada): flour made by grinding parched wheat

huaso: peasant

Infierno: Hell

inglés (adj. f. Inglesa): English

intendente: provincial governor

ladrón (pl. ladrones): thief

laguna: lagoon

largo (adj. f. larga): long

lazo: lasso

legua: (distance) league

lejos: far

lingue: species of tree, *Persea lingue*

mamita: mother (literally, little mother = term of endearment)

mar: sea

mate: infusion, prepared from the leaves of the bush/tree *Ilex paraguariensis*

mayordomo: foreman

media: (noun) coin of defined value

medio (adjective, f. media): half

mire (imperative): look

minero: miner

montaña: mountain

morro: small rounded hill

mosto: alcoholic drink prepared from the first pressings of the grape

mozo: youth

muchacho: lad, boy, youngster

mucho: much

negro: black

nuevo: new

onza: a gold coin (literally, ounce)

otra banda: neighbouring country (literally, other side)

paisano: fellow countryman

pampa: plain

pan: bread

pancito: bread roll

papelito: little piece of paper

patrón (f. patrona): master, landlord

peligroso: dangerous

peon: unskilled labourer

peruano: Peruvian

planchón: slab; (figuratively, ice field)

plaza: town square

poncho: woollen overgarment with a slit in the middle for the head

posada: inn

pueblito: small town

puente: bridge

pulpería: general store

quebrada: ravine

Quillotina: woman, native of Quillota

rancho: shack

real: coin of defined value: see also "Camino Real"

redondita: little round (hill)

remedio: remedy, cure

renegado: renegade, rebel

río: river

roble: oak; (in Chile, *Nothofagus obliqua*)

salteador: robber, highwayman

S. A. : South America

santo: (noun) saint; (adjective) holy

seco: (noun) irrigation channel

Semana Santa: Holy Week

señor : Sir

señora: lady

señorita: young lady

sierra: mountain range

silla: chair, seat

soltero: bachelor, unmarried

sopa: soup

tabla: plank

temblor: tremor, earthquake

tierra: earth (imperative "a tierra" = descend)

tranca: bar, obstacle

velludo: hairy

Viernes Santo: Good Friday

viejo: old

vigilante: guard

¡Viva!: Hurrah!

vizcacha: mountain rodent, chinchilla, *Lagidium viscasia*

yegua: mare

zamacueca: Spanish colonial dance, originally from Peru (modern *cueca*)

## APPENDIX TWO

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[1] Lines from Thomas Gray's "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard".

[2] At this point there is a break in the narrative, perhaps the result of a missing letter or a missing edition of the newspaper. The story of the voyage resumes in Rio de Janeiro.

[3] Unattributed lines, quoted in "Deck and Port", Rev. Walter Colton U.S.N. (pub. 1850), p.191, Ed.

[4] Quotation from Chapter XI of "The Sea Lions: or The Lost Sealers" by James Fennimore Cooper (1848). The reference is to the Bay of Rio de Janeiro.

[5] Parian marble is a high quality stone used by ancient Greek sculptors; the name comes from the island of Paros.

[6] Basil Hall was a British naval officer (1788-1840) who visited Chile in 1820-21.

[7] Semana Santa = Holy Week (Easter Week)

[8] Viernes Santo = Good Friday

[9] Ref. Hall 1824:1 6.

[10] Latin "*Iesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum*", "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews".

[11] Probably the Chilean hazel, *Gevuina avellana*.

[12] Plaza de Armas = Main Square.

[13] The Puente de Cal y Canto, built of stone (not brick), was inaugurated in 1780.

[14] Ref. Hall 1824:1 174-175.

[15] Irrigation channel built by Ramón Subercaseaux, c1850.

[16] Falls located on the Mississippi River at Minneapolis, Minnesota.

[17] Rasa and Redonda are islands located near the harbor of Rio de Janeiro.

[18] Words from the first lines of "The Wilderness of Mind", an unattributed short poem found in several publications from 1822 onwards.

[19] Rhyme from Shakespeare's "A Winter's Tale".

[20] Evergreen species of tree, *Persea lingue*.

[21] Opening lines of Lord Byron's "Lara", Canto II.

[22] Recruiting myself = recovering.

[23] William Parish Robertson (1794-c1850), English merchant in Buenos Aires, was author of "A Visit to Mexico ...", published 1853.

[24] The Puente de Cal y Canto, built of stone (not brick), was inaugurated in 1780.

[25] Plaza de Armas = Main Square.

[26] In fact, Valdivia was killed thirteen years later, on Christmas Day, 1553.

[27] Cars = Railway carriages.

[28] Ref. Hall 1824:1 168-170.

[29] Formerly a property of the Jesuit order, whose assets were confiscated in 1767.

[30] Lion = Puma

[31] "Chile, pure is your blue-coloured sky,  
And pure the breezes that blow.  
And your countryside embroidered with flowers  
Is the faithful copy of Eden:  
The white mountain is majestic" &c.

[32] Don Quixote, Spanish fictional character of the book of the same name by Miguel de Cervantes.

[33] The author uses the term "Costeros" to identify the Coast Range.

[34] Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), a prominent U.S. landscape architect and journalist. His month-long walking tour of England in 1850, together with Bayard Taylor's 1846 account of a walking tour of several European countries, may have served as inspiration for the present author's Chilean rambles, later in the same decade. (See Bibliography for publication details.)

[35] Lines from the 1st verse of "The Pleasures of Hope" by Thomas Campbell (1799).

[36] Attack by robbers: see Section II, Letter XVI.

[37] The phrase is ungrammatical; perhaps, "perfect remedy".

[38] Source unidentified.

[\[39\]](#) Minnehaha is a fictional North American woman, named by the poet Longfellow, whose name means "waterfall" in the Dakota language.

[\[40\]](#) Grath: perhaps "garth", a yard or enclosure.

[\[41\]](#) Vicente Benavides (1777-1822) was a notorious royalist military leader during the Chilean War of Independence.

[\[42\]](#) Cars = Railway coaches.

[\[43\]](#) Bell Mountain = Cerro Campana.

[\[44\]](#) Allan Campbell (US), the engineer-in-charge, resigned in 1853.

[\[45\]](#) The modern name of Río Concón is Río Aconcagua.

[\[46\]](#) Boca (Spanish) = Mouth.

[\[47\]](#) Another secondary source gives a date of 5th December.

[\[48\]](#) Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859), German natural scientist.

[\[49\]](#) Claude Gay (1800-1873), French naturalist and illustrator.

[\[50\]](#) Words adapted from Tam o' Shanter (poem by Robert Burns), "... the mirth and fun grew fast and furious, The piper loud and louder blew, ...".

[\[51\]](#) Mr. Datnell has not been identified.