back, and, according to the custom of the country, riding astride; one of them had holsters and pistols before her, the other a hanger by her side, slung with a military belt over her shoulder; they had with them only a little boy, who rode behind one of them, and hence I concluded that they were inhabitants of the neighbourhood, and had travelled only a short distance. They were well dressed, appeared to belong to the class of Planters or Miners, and excited among the people no symptoms of surprize.

The temperature of Villa Rica and its neighbourhood is low; in the morning, during my stay, the thermometer varied little from 60°.; at noon, it was generally 64°. or 65°. in the shade. There is a considerable degree of moisture in the climate; the mornings were in common foggy, which sometimes turned to a drizzling rain, coming uniformly from the North, over the brow of the hill. About ten o'clock, the atmosphere cleared and brightened, and the sun became scorching until four; but there is something ungenial in the heat, which parches the skin, without materially warming the air. The evenings were clear and beautiful, and the stars shone brightly at night, as during a frost in England, unobscured by a prevailing glow of light, which rendered distant objects uncommonly visible.

In the Gardens, many of which have a soil of extraordinary fertility and are regularly laid out, as well as among the herbage of the fields, appeared a singular intermixture of plants and flowers, which seemed to indicate the united influence of the torrid and temperate climes. The Aloe had suffered from cold, and on the hills trees had been stripped of their leaves, but were putting out fresh buds. All besides appeared, in October, to be still winter; owing in part, it may be, to the unusual dryness of the season.

In the neighbourhood of the town, I shot a Merlu, a bird in shape and size resembling the Woodpecker. The head, neck, back, and tail, were a greenish brown; the breast, belly, wing-joints, and the part near the root of the tail, were of a beautifully bright yellow; the legs slender; the toes long, three forward and one behind.—The Bem-te-vi, another

of the winged inhabitants of this district which appeared to me observable, is similar to the bird of the same name at Rio de Janeiro, only that the plumage is more vivid, and the bill of a fine straw colour.—When viewed in different positions with respect to the light, the plumage of the Taniazú appears green, blue, or brown; and the colours are somewhat lighter on the belly, and under the wings, than in other parts; in shape and size it resembles a Sparrow.—The Guarísa, or Garísha Grandé, is of a pale brown, with a slight tinge of red; its size is nearly that of a Lark, and its form delicate; the bill is long, slender, and a little hooked; it has a short tail, and its thin legs seem disproportionately long.

CHAPTER XVI.

RETURN TO RIO DE JANEIRO.

CONGONHA AND BARBAZENA.

A. D. 1818.

TRAVELLERS FROM PITANGUI'.—CONTRABAND GUNPOWDER.—BLACKSMITHS.—RODEIRO.—CHAPAOM.—CONGONHA, OR CAANCUNHA.—SPLENDID CHURCH THERE.—MIRACULOUS INTERPOSITION OF THE VIRGIN.—LEPERS.—SUA'-SUI'.—BRAZILIAN ADMIRATION OF THE TASTE AND MANNERS OF FOREIGNERS.—REFLECTIONS ON THE FORM OF THE COUNTRY.—ST. JOZE.—BARBAZENA.— REGISTRO VELHO.—BORDO DO CAMPO.—JURUOCCA.—THE RIO GRANDE'.—MANTIQUEIRA.—PEDRO ALVES.—SINGULAR SNAKES.—ST. VINCENTE.—PATRULHA.—ROÇINHA DO NEGRO.—PARAHIBU'NA.—GOVERNO.

TO proceed farther towards the North did not then suit the arrangements which I had made, and having determined upon a route for my return in some points different from that by which we had advanced, we left Marianna, and proceeded towards the capital.

We had not gone far when we met with a party of travellers, consisting of a gentleman in a military habit, three ladies, and seven slaves. The ladies were his wife and daughters, the former of whom rode alone on one horse; the two latter, though full grown, were mounted together on another. All of them sat astride, and all were equipped with shoes and stockings,—a circumstance by no means common in the interior of Brazil. Nothing among their baggage appeared so singular as the lading of one mule, which carried a cumbrous bedstead, made of Jacarandá; the tester being slung on one

side, and balanced by the rest of the frame-work on the other, so that the poor animal was half hidden, and could with difficulty proceed in a right line. The party was travelling from Pitanguí to Rio, at the former of which places the gentleman had filled the office of Governor, for the usual term.

Considering the laws against the private sale of gunpowder, and the jealousy of the government with respect to that article, I could not notice, without surprise, that, as we passed along, an old woman offered us as much as three pounds of that article for sale; she had it concealed, indeed, among her clothes, and made the offer to us, as strangers, with some little secrecy; but it seems as though the laws were relaxed, or exercised with less strictness than formerly; and this supposition is confirmed by the fact, which we afterwards learned, that much powder is secretly made, while the demand for fowling-pieces is very considerable, and the trade in them conducted without reserve.

One of my horses having lost a shoe, I was glad to meet with a blacksmith's shop, where another might be obtained. Several white people were standing about the place, yet I was obliged to order my own servant to take up and hold the horse's foot, for no one else would condescend to do it. One of the operators then, with a very sapient air, having adjusted the shoe, delivered it to another to nail it on. The latter, taking his station directly behind the horse,—in a position where a kick from a restive animal might have gone near to demolish him,—proceeded to fix the shoe in the same style that a ship-carpenter would have nailed it on to the fore-mast. Awkward and ceremonious as these workmen were, I saw them here with pleasure, independent of my own want of their aid; for a blacksmith is really to be numbered among the most useful of artizans.

Notwithstanding the dangers of this part of the country, and the perpetual exaggeration of them from the lips of our guide, he suffered me to leave Sicara alone, nor was I again favoured with his company until I had long wandered over wide moors, and through uncertain tracks, where it was out of my power to obtain information, for,

applying at several huts, they were all found to be empty. Afterwards a small village showed itself on the right, standing on the summit of a hill, while the Ita-columi bore from us East by North. Our course was directly opposite, by the side of a stream, over some singularly broken land, covered with a calx-like dust, and amidst large masses of iron-stone, and beds of schist and clay.

Rodeiro is a large well inclosed farm, cultivated on a considerable scale, and in the best modes. The proprietor wisely employs himself and his means in this way, rather than in the common search after gold. Yet it could hardly be that he should not enter, in some measure, into the spirit of the country; his slaves are employed like those of his neighbours after the freshes have passed away, and they collect for him no small quantity of metal. His works connected with this occupation are extensive, and, in some points, of a superior kind. Yet I contemplated with greater pleasure the vegetable produce of the farm, consisting partly of good wheat and barley, together with some oats not equal in quality to the other grain.

The Venda at this place stands in a close and hot situation, so that the Thermometer, about two o'clock, was as high as 78°. It is surrounded with bluff rocks, and mountains at least seven hundred feet in height; yet the road seemed to be frequented, and we traced the impression of wheels. The woods about this spot were full of Carapatos, insects much like bugs, and probably of the same tribe.

Having refreshed ourselves and the cattle, we proceeded downward by the stream, rounding the head of the ridge, which passes Eastward by Ouro Branco. At the distance of four miles we crossed a low ridge of land, proceeded along the bed of a parallel stream, and finally entered upon a broad dry moor, where were two or three good farm-houses. As night approached the guide confessed that he had lost his way, and we expected to pass the hours of darkness by the side of our horses. But his presence of mind appeared to increase with the difficulty, and he recovered the track leading to Chapaom.

This is a lone house, standing in a lofty and exposed situation,

about fifteen miles from Rodeiro. It was full of travellers, but the lateness of our arrival prevented that communication with them which I should otherwise have sought. Early in the morning we looked back on the high ground near Rodeiro, nearly North-East of us; and from thence Westward extended a noble wall of mountain, whose face was an inclined plane from twelve to fifteen miles in breadth. Nearly North-West of us these mountains descended to a point, behind which rise other and more majestic heights. The waters of a spacious amphitheatre tend to the interval between the two ranges, and hasten through it to swell the vast Francisco.

Hence we proceeded Westward over uneven ground, for we evidently crossed the little streams of the country in a direct line, where the soil and minerals change very abruptly. At one point we passed a deep Corgo, the naked sides of which, down to the bottom, were composed of red clay, mingled with mica. A little farther on, the road led us through a pretty village, surrounded by rocks of a soft, white, unbroken stone, different from any thing of the kind which we had recently observed. It appeared to me to be the uncrystallized substance of which quartz is formed, some of which I have detected in the decomposed granites of Rio, and which, in the parts of the country where it is found in masses, is described as a saponaceous earth or stone. In some places veins of quartz are seen running through it, and the natives call it Tabatínga, a name which alludes to its colour alone.

It has already been stated as probable, that Gold, in Brazil, is never found in Lime-stone; to confirm this opinion, an appeal may, I believe, be made to the state of things in this part of the country. It is here diffused through every variety of soil and rock besides; not in Cascalho, as is most common, nor in the lumps called Caldeiraos; but scattered, in the form of dust, among Schist, Clay, and the other component parts of the ground. Nor does it seem to make any difference, what is the external appearance of the soil; this Gold Dust is found in it with equal certainty, and in nearly equal quantity, whether it be of the prevailing red hue, or any of the shades of brown and yellow. The

Gold Washings are, as might be expected, numerous; but they are managed in a little way, and the profit made of them is contemptible.

Matozinho is a clean, lively, little town, composed of about a hundred and fifty houses and several churches. It hangs on the Northern bank of the Parapéba, in front of Caancunha, in the same manner that Gateshead does with respect to Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The river, flowing between the two towns, is about seventy yards wide, has a good wooden bridge across it, and separates the two Comarcas of Villa Rica and the Rio Dos Mortes. Its waters contain much clay, which, communicates to them a red-brown colour. They flow rapidly towards the West, over a shallow bed of hard sand, said to be rich in gold. People were employed in washing it as usual; but there were no appearances of abundant profit giving energy to their labour.

Caancunha, situated upon the steep bank of the river, presents a very pleasant object, when viewed from the North. It contains about two hundred houses and some churches. One of them, though small in dimensions, vies in splendid ornament with the most admired of ecclesiastical buildings in Brazil. It formed the object of my visit to the place, and occupied nearly the whole of my stay there. On more accounts than one it may be considered as the Loretto of this country.

It is not in its exterior that this Church makes such high pretensions, yet its appearance is respectable. The stone used in its construction is hard, with a slaty texture and a greenish colour; and the masses, composing the walls and pavement, are large and well cut. Standing on the brow of a considerable elevation, it is reached by a double flight of broad steps, which meet in a platform, connected with a spacious paved area, in the front of which is a handsome stone balustrade. Within the area are twelve statues, about eight feet high, intended to represent the Prophets of the Jewish Church. They are well executed, their costume appropriate, their attitudes various; and each holds a scroll, on which is engraved, in Latin and an ancient letter, a striking passage from his own writings. It is said, that they are the production of an artist, who had no hands, that the hammer and chissel were fastened to

his stumps by an assistant, and in that manner their most delicate cutting was executed. One circumstance slightly supports the credibility of this story, the stone, of which the Statues are formed, is of the soft and saponaceous kind, which abounds in the quarries of the neighbourhood, and appears to harden from exposure to the air.

But the internal wealth and decoration of this Church are the things which give it most celebrity. The walls are divided into rows of compartments, of which the upper ones are filled with good paintings, representing portions of the History of Jesus Christ, from his birth to his crucifixion, and the lower with pictures, in a less relieved style, of several detached religious subjects. Round the bottom of the arched roof, are representations of the state of innocence, of sin, and regeneration; and above them, some historical pieces from the Old Testament. The great Altar is exceedingly splendid, and over it, covered with a glass case, is a small image of our Lady, most exquisitely cut from a stone of the country, of the purest white, probably quartz or fel-spar. The Altars of particular Saints are, also, highly ornamented with polished stones of Brazil, of different colours, white, green, red and variegated. A small organ, gaudily painted, is placed over the principal entrance, and in various parts are distributed lamps, the donations of the pious, some of them of silver, others of cut glass. The Conservatory has, in its ceiling, an excellent portrait of Pope Pius the Sixth.

Close by the Church, yet separate from it, is the House of Miracles, consisting of one large room, and containing some hundreds of paintings, models and tablets, memorials of cures performed and deliverances granted. There are in it, also, four statues of wood, which are carried in religious processions; one of them, that of the converted Centurion, is really a fine piece of carving. My companions were not pleased, that this should receive higher admiration than the multitude of clumsy models of heads and limbs, and of miserable daubings, with which it was surrounded; and the Cicerone, who was in a Priest's habit, seemed particularly anxious to correct my pitiable ignorance, and rouse my attention to proper objects. With all the preface which might

have introduced the Last Judgment, and with a solemnity worthy of that subject, he told me that our Lady had lately granted a very singular favour, having communicated to some distinguished individual, an infallible method—of destroying ants. I could not but acknowledge that this was an object worthy the interposition of the blessed Virgin herself, in a region where there are more ants than leaves, where these insects are sometimes more than an inch long, and cannot be kept from intruding into the most sacred places, not even from making their abode among the petticoats of our Lady herself; nor could I fail to be curious as to the modes, which she had deigned to prescribe. These were, to inflame a quantity of sulphur, near the apertures to their nests, and to fill the hollow dome with its fumes, by means of an instrument never heard of before. This new, celestial machine, he described minutely, and by his imitation of the motion of the hands in using it, made me clearly comprehend that it was no other than an English pair of bellows. To be longer grave, though on holy ground, was impossible; and I advised him the next time the Virgin interfered in the affair, to whisper in her ear, that gunpowder would answer the purpose much more effectually, which the heretics knew, by experience, long before her Ladyship manifested any concern about the business. Still he maintained, that the Instrument was a gift becoming the first favourite in Heaven; and remained utterly faithless, when assured that it had long been conferred on almost every cottager in Britain. He would converse no longer; and I, too, thought it high time to be silent, recollecting the poor wanderer at Coral Novo, and his incredible story of English glass windows.

Seldom have I met with so thorough a Catholic devotee as this man. Had he lived a few ages earlier, and been allowed a wider stage on which to figure, he could hardly have missed the honour of canonization. He was a native of Caancunha, and had seldom gone beyond its precincts; he had taken an early vow never to leave this Church, and was ignorant of all extraneous matters, things unconnected with his own chosen and perpetual abode. In him faith had blotted out almost every trace of reason and judgment, to a degree which might

justly render him an object of unqualified wonder to a thinking European.

Behind the Church is another sacred singularity,—a Garden in imitation of Paradise, where Adam and Eve, beneath the Cross, are sitting beside a fountain, in all the nudity of innocence. They are surrounded by a multitude of birds and beasts, of a domestic, and of a wild and savage kind. It is observable how many absurdities the contriver has introduced into so confined a scene; but they seem no longer in vogue, for the place is falling into complete dilapidation.

The town, however, is not so advanced that useful arts are in much request, or the professors of them very accessible. Wanting a small service at the hands of a mechanic, we were compelled to beg as a favour that he would open his shop, collect his tools, and put them to use. He did so, to oblige us, but required no intreaty to take an exorbitant payment for his trouble.

Congonha is, in writing, commonly substituted for Caancunha. The name is derived from a plant, an infusion of which is held to be an excellent remedy in female complaints. It is said to be the same with the Matté of Paraguay, but to me it appeared more nearly to resemble a low shrub, with a downy leaf, the green of which has a greyish cast, growing in abundance on almost all the low lands about Rio de Janeiro. I am sensible, however, that this cannot be exactly the Caancunha of Minas Geraes; and I never heard of its making any pretensions to medicinal qualities.

Our progress, when once more, advancing on our way, was cheered by a distant view of the mountains to the Westward, through which were several rough and narrow chasms, the passages, it may be, of streams tending towards the Rio Grande. To the North of the Parapéba, whose basin we were now quitting, the country seemed to be composed of a grey slate or schist; and that on which we are entering contains much quartz. We descended rapidly towards the West South-West, winding round to the South, and crossed the principal stream in

these parts, which seemed to collect the waters of a track about ten miles broad.

On the dry Downs, which succeeded, we noticed Doves of a most delicate form, and beautiful, though sober, plumage. Their colour was a light grey, every feather having at its extremity a crescent of pure white; their size was about that of our thrush.—There was, also, a small Sparrow-hawk, whose general hue was a greenish brown, with a tinge of yellow.

Travellers must not expect to meet with pleasant objects only. We saw, on this part of our road, many Lepers, whom disease had rendered extremely disgusting. They were chiefly black people, living, with their families, apart from society, but not under those restraints, which authority might justly conceive itself warranted to lay upon them.—The Goitre, also, begins again to appear frequently, and to pain the observer though in a smaller degree.

During our progress, we remarked several instances of culture, but it was by no means general. A small and feeble kind of oxen were in use for draught; to which some excellent hunting dogs formed a very observable contrast. The people, however, were not occupied in the pursuit of game; it was the height of the sugar-cane harvest, and they were better employed.

Suá-suí is a village in a dry and exposed situation, containing about fifty houses, arranged after the manner of the Jesuits. None of them are either whitewashed or plastered,—an evidence that we were entering into a region having different minerals. Here we meet again with some patches of yellow clay, remnants of the former coat, which has been mentioned as probably covering the immediate summit of the Mantiqueira.

The Keeper of the Venda in this village informed me that he had the day before, forwarded in the road to Barbazena, a Gentleman, who had been several months in the Sertoens, or uninhabited forests, in search of plants. He expressed his wonder,—and, with his limited knowledge, naturally enough,—why a man should wander from Europe, to collect