upon the face of the Globe. The more solid parts of the country yield limestone, gypsum, marble, granites, and their accompanying spars. In general, the soil is rich, though in some places sandy, in others moist and clayey. It is, in many parts covered with majestic woods, affording valuable timber; and produces rich gums, fruits of admirable flavour, and various medicinal and officinal herbs.

Among the latter is the Matté, an article peculiar to South America, and there in such general use, and so highly esteemed, as to demand a brief notice. In Brazil it is commonly called Cangunha, or Congonha; which is probably a corruption of Caancunha, the Woman's Leaf. It grows, not in the province of Paraná alone, but, more or less, over the whole Table-land. Its qualities and consequent estimation are various; the best is said to be found in the vast Serro of Maracajú. It is the produce of a low shrub, so much like the tea-plant of China, that two Gentlemen, who had been in the East, first led me particularly to notice it, as a species of wild tea. Being curious to discover, whether there was any other similarity, besides the appearance, they gathered some of the leaves, dried them on hot stones, and produced a beverage of an agreeable bitter taste, not unlike Bohea. In the common preparation of Matté, the collected leaves are laid in large heaps upon hides, and placed between two fires, so as to be thoroughly dried. They are then broken small, and though more yellow, form a substance much resembling what is called the dust of tea. When ready for sale, it is packed in hides, or in sacks made of a kind of reed or cane, opened and made flat. To prepare it for use, it is infused in water, generally in the half of a cocoa-nut shell, variously ornamented, and not poured into cups, but sucked through a pipe, which has a strainer at the lower end to prevent the herb from entering the tube. In taking it, the vessel is commonly passed round to a whole company; and whatever disgust may arise from the sight of some of the mouths, receiving the pipe in their turn, it would be deemed the height of ill-breeding to decline a share of the Matté.

I am not aware that the Brazilian Government has sent any Civil

Officers into its newly-acquired possessions; nor, as it seems, would it answer any valuable purpose to do so, the whole country being in a state of insurrection under Artigas, who has a strong antipathy to Brazil and its rulers. They are, however, formed into municipal divisions, taking their names from the principal towns; and are not undeserving of some description.

Assumption, the largest place in the Province of Paraná, and a sort of metropolitan town, is more important on some other accounts than for its comparative size. It is not very well situated for trade, though on the borders of a large river, and surrounded by a fertile and populous country. It has lately been visited by British merchants, who have found that it affords little scope for enterprize, producing no commodities for export, but such as are of little esteem in European markets, or can be bought on better terms at Buenos Ayres, having little demand for our manufactures, and possessing no circulating medium. The exports consist chiefly of matté, a little tobacco, wood, both in billets and planks, and imbé, which, I think, is the thread made of the fibres of the Aloe, and sold in the shops of Brazil, under the name of Ticúm.

When this part of the American Continent was ceded to the Brazilian Crown, some sanguine people imagined that, should the Plata ever be shut against British shipping,—a circumstance not very likely to occur,—commerce might be carried on to Assumption, through St. Catharine's or St. Paul's. But if the encouragements to trade thither should increase, it appears to me that establishments at Colonia would answer more effectually, for that place must command the commerce of the Paraná, and the rivers flowing into it, as soon as the country shall be quietly settled under its new masters.

Corrientes is a smaller place than Assumption; but, although its neighbourhood produces neither Wheat nor Matté, its superior situation will probably enable it to outstrip its rival, when the Paraná becomes better known to Europeans, and when ecclesiastical influence, the bane of old countries and the curse of new ones, shall have given

way before the energies of commerce, and the general spirit of improvement.

At Nhembucú, a small place on the Paraguay, a few leagues North of Corrientes, some vessels are constructed. I had opportunities of examining minutely the Maria Primeira, of four hundred tons, receiving her name from being the first vessel of her size built so high up the river; and if she may be taken as a specimen, and my judgment in such matters be not unworthy of notice, the place possesses excellent timber and skilful shipwrights. All the iron work, however, was obliged to be sent up ready formed, there being no artisans on the spot competent to perform it. She appeared to me, in every respect, a superior vessel, well modelled and well put together. The builders were extremely anxious that their vessel should not get a-ground, therefore when launched, she waited for the periodical floods, and was brought down in ballast; a delay, which, I am informed, was by no means necessary, as there is a sufficient depth of water even in the dry season, though the channel is intricate.

Most of the small vessels on the Paraná, which, from their shape and solidity, appear very singular to persons accustomed to modern forms, were, I believe, built here. Some of them are very old, and have done much service; yet the state in which they appear, shows the good quality of their materials. There can be little doubt, that, when the country is more known, and the population becomes sufficient to induce the inhabitants to cut and square their timber, and to bring it down at a moderate expense, it will become an important article of commerce. At present, there is such an abundance of the necessaries of life, the people have so few wants, and so little desire, or even knowledge, of superior accommodations, that labour must be expected to remain high in the provinces of Brazil, especially those bordering on the Plata.

Coruguatý and Villa Rica are the great marts for Matté. Santa Luzia, and Little Santa Fé, or Paraná, export large quantities of Lime, Gypsum, and Plaster of Paris; hence, I believe, proceeds a considerable part of the materials with which the houses of Monte Video and Buenos Ayres are whitewashed. I never could discover that there is

any chalk in the country. Arroio da China stands on the Uruguay, is inhabited chiefly by white people, and exports Cattle, Wheat, and Fruit. Corpus is the most Northerly, and perhaps the pleasantest civilized station in the province of Paraná.

The Capitania, or Province of Uruguay, or the Red River, comprises the other portion of the newly acquired territory. It is somewhat of a triangular form, bounded on the West by the river from which it takes its name, on the South by the Plata; Eastward its boundaries have long been a subject of keen contention between Portugal and Spain. It is allowed by both that the line of demarcation commences on the coast, a little North of the Plata, at those remarkable rocks known by the name of Castelhos Grandes. From thence it is said, by the Brazilians, to run along the ridge which divides the waters flowing Eastward into the lakes Mirim and Patos, from those which run Westward, and fall into the Uruguay. The Spaniards, who, in this case, seem to be the most correct, claim as their boundary a line running up the Western shore of the lake Mirim to its Northern bay, there joining the ridge before mentioned, and proceeding upward until it strike the heads of the Ibicuý, whose stream then becomes the limit until it enters the Uruguay. The contest is not likely to terminate but by the permanent annexation of the province to Brazil, according to the cession lately made.

The rocks, called the Great Castelhos, consist chiefly of three large masses of naked granite, about a hundred feet high from the water, with perpendicular sides and roundish tops. They appear close to the shore, and, at a distance, are thought to resemble castles built on the beach; but if there be such a resemblance, at any point of view, it vanishes on a nearer approach. They are backed by low woody hills, and the beach to the Northward of them, as far as the Castelhos Pequenos, is flat and sandy. There seems an expanse of water towards the West, which ought to be surveyed, as probably a harbour might be found, useful for small vessels, when the wind blows hard from the

South-east. More than once I have known these rocks mistaken for Cape St. Mary; the cape, however, is very different, being a flat sandy point. The coast between them is low and naked, with inlets, some of which are said to afford good anchorage.

Near to the little Castelhos is the Fort of Santa Tereza, from whence the road to Maldonado is very delightful, passing through a country diversified with small hills, well wooded and watered, and abounding with deer. In the few habitations which occur nothing like splendour is to be expected, neither should the traveller look for many appearances of comfort. Their walls, constructed of wood, with the interstices filled up with mud, give them, however, some external resemblance of the cottages in Huntingdonshire, and they are pleasantly situated, with small pieces of cultivated land near them, and abundant pasture for their horses. Black cattle run wild, and are very numerous. All the inhabitants are so far happy as they have few wants, and these amply supplied; but to the happiness arising from personal character and neighbourly concord, they seem almost strangers. The greater part of the inhabitants are Spanish subjects, and strongly prejudiced against the Brazilians. The passions and prejudices of the fathers are communicated to their children without any diminution of their violence; fresh injuries are heaped on each other, confirming a resolution to avenge them on any occasion which may offer; while there is a total want of moral culture, and scarcely any check from examples of a better spirit. Yet the traveller, if admitted into their houses, receives the best treatment which they can afford him, provided he be willing to pay dearly for accommodations, and careful to intimate no dissatisfaction nor distrust; otherwise he will find them jealous, fierce, and revengeful.

Passing Westward from the great Castelhos, we first meet with marshes and sandy plains, which form a sort of margin to the country, nearly ten miles broad. Beyond this begins an elevation of about a hundred feet, which, though slightly varied with hill and dale, appears, from the sea, so nearly level, and its declivity so regular, as to convert the work of winds and waves into the resemblance of an artificial

embankment. It terminates before we reach the rocky coast of Maldonado.

On the coast, immediately off Maldonado, lie two islands; one of them, called Lobos, displays but little verdure; the other, Gorita, is lower, has a few buildings upon it, and under its lee is the harbour; the beach of which is exposed to a heavy surf, which renders landing sometimes dangerous, at others impossible. There are two entrances; that on the Eastern side of the island is very narrow; forced, on one occasion, to go through it, we used some extraordinary precaution, and succeeded happily. On the West, the coast is bold and stony, the entrance broad and deep, and to small vessels perfectly safe; but about midway is a rock, with twenty-four feet of water upon it, on which his Majesty's ship Bedford once touched, and laid a buoy. The anchoring ground is near the centre of the bay, where lies the wreck of a British ship—the Agamemnon.

The town of Maldonado, which, from the sea, has no very attractive appearance, is two miles from the shore; standing on the brow of a hill, gently ascending two hundred and fifty feet above the level of the water. The principal buildings form a quadrangle, on the North side of which is a considerable Estalagem, or Inn; on the South side a Church, which, when finished, will be, for such a place, magnificent; the common habitations, occupying the rest of the square, are built of brick, and covered with straw. The houses in the streets issuing from the square, or running parallel with its sides, are chiefly low, and constructed of earth. The whole number is about two hundred and fifty; that of the inhabitants from eight hundred to a thousand. It is manifest how much ecclesiastical interests prevail here over civil ones; though the seemingly incongruous splendour of the Church may, in part, be vindicated by the consideration, that it is a sort of Cathedral of an extensive district, called by the name of St. Carlos, to whom the church is dedicated. A village, bearing the same name, lies about nine miles from the town, towards the North-east, and appears to have been, formerly, the chief place in the district.

The Governor resided in a small house at the back of the Cathedral. At the door his carriage was in waiting, which struck us as a singular specimen of antiquated taste and official finery. It had four small wheels, the front ones half the diameter of the hinder; all of them kept from falling in pieces by thongs of raw hide. A square frame-work, raised to the height of the hinder axle, held the body of the carriage, not much larger than an English sedan, suspended within it by leathers passing under the bottom; so that it hung about eighteen inches from the ground, and his Excellency had to step down from the frame into his seat. The painting and gilding, with which it was profusely covered, had suffered much from age and use. Altogether it looked as though it might have been the vehicle of Royalty two centuries ago; and, in the eyes of its common beholders, no doubt, continued to shed a bright ray of dignity over the person of a sequestered chief.

In one of my visits to Maldonado, I went on shore with two companions, determined to explore as much of the country as we could, in the short time which we had to spare. Having finished our business, we proceeded to the Square, wishing to hire horses for our expedition. A number of miserable unshod beasts were quickly produced by the boys, some of them with and some without bridles, all without saddles, which we did not, at that time, know it was necessary to hire separately. The price of a horse would not have been more than two dollars, and one was demanded for the use of him for a few hours; and having occasion, a few days afterward, to go farther into the country, I paid a dollar for the hire of my horse, two for the use of a saddle, and four for the first set of shoes which the animal ever wore.

One of my companions procured a horse at the inn, and galloped away as far as St. Carlos, observing little but the plain over which he rode, and the few mud huts which he met with in his path. To the other there happened a little adventure, which would hardly have occurred in a place farther advanced in the common manners of the

world. In the streets of Maldonado he was accosted by an old man, who inquired what he was seeking. Having informed him, partly in bad Spanish, and partly by signs, he invited my friend into his house, presented him politely to his family, and requested that he would wait a little while. In ten minutes a female slave appeared, leading a fine black horse, with a Spanish Lumbillio, or saddle, and splendid trappings. The host inquired at what hour he would return; my friend, apprehensive that a longer absence might occasion some anxiety about the horse and his furniture, fixed upon two hours as the extent of his excursion. Returning about mid-day, he found his unknown benefactor preparing a dinner for him, which he lamented was not ready, as, by a natural mistake, the stranger was not expected until two o'clock.

As to myself, disappointed of a ride, I strolled about unmolested, and without observing any symptoms of that wonder which a lounging stranger usually excites. The scene of my walks was exceedingly dull; in the streets were few passengers, in the fields fewer traces of human industry. I met only one person on horseback, and he enables me to introduce a new character—a Gouger, or country farmer. He rode a fine stallion, about sixteen hands high, light, and well made; and, one of my companions having then joined me, we united in opinion that, in England, the horse would sell for eighty guineas. We asked what his value might be there; "I do not wish to sell him," was the reply, "if I did, he would produce me, I think, two dollars." This man may serve as a pattern of the farmers in the province of Uruguay, and perhaps in some parts beyond it. He was a tall, erect, athletic man, rather spare, with well proportioned and sinewy limbs. He wore a Spanish Poncha over a waistcoat of calf-skin; close to his body a coarse cotton shirt, open at the breast and sleeves; short cotton trowsers; on his head an old, slouched, high-crowned hat; and on his heels spurs, furnished with thick prongs, instead of rowels. On his feet he had neither shoe, tamanca, nor sandal. But the most remarkable part of his dress was his boots, or rather stockings. Each of them was made, as he informed us, of the skin of an embryo-calf,

the body having been forced through an aperture, made by cutting round below the head. The limb is thrust into the skin while quite moist, and serves as a model, on which the stocking is formed, by rubbing it well with the hands, until it adjusts itself exactly to the leg and foot, while the leather becomes thickened, and assumes the colour of a bladder. To the Lumbillio, on which the farmer sate, was fastened his Lasso; behind him, across it, lay his missile balls; and at his right knee, in a sheath secured by his garter, was a knife.

On the way from the sea to Maldonado we found a sandy soil, the ground unenclosed and uncultivated, producing little besides a coarse grass. The immediate vicinity of the town showed us a few Craals, or Corals, as they are here called,—that is, pens for cattle; and a few patches of ground inclosed for gardens. We noticed also a plot of bearded wheat, about two hundred yards square; it flourished luxuriantly, the ear and the straw equally fine; yet, as far as we could observe, it stood a solitary example of what the land might be made to produce. In other parts of the neighbourhood the widely extended open plain was rich, though dry and sandy, in many places covered with a short, and seemingly sweet grass. Here and there were trees, whose stunted growth seemed to indicate that the winds of the ocean were too rough for them. In the bottoms were shallow pools, but no brooks; and the cattle grazing around looked meagre and hungry. Those on which more care was bestowed seemed to repay the owner's pains. In a Coral, to which we went to purchase an ox for the ship's use, we found nearly two hundred, and selected a fine young one, as large and well shaped as Smithfield usually affords. The flesh was delivered on the beach, in quarters, for a dollar; the man who slaughtered it retaining the hide and tallow.

Returning to dinner at the inn, our hostess favoured us with a dish of beef-steaks, of which she had learned the name, and which she supposed to be the favourite food of Englishmen. As in these houses there is no respect of persons, and as in this part of the world there is no notion of the comfort of a party eating by themselves, we had a great

deal of company during dinner. The conversation was lively, and turned on a most unexpected subject. A few days before I left Rio the Spanish frigate Zwoa had touched there, in her way from Plymouth to the Plate. In England the crew had been furnished, by the British and Foreign Bible Society, with copies of the New Testament, in Spanish, two of which I had bought in the streets for six hundred and forty Reis, that is, three shillings and sixpence each; intending to improve my knowledge of the language during the voyage. In this object I was disappointed, the translation proving to be an impure dialect of the Spanish, which none of our crew well understood. The people belonging to the Frigate had sold other copies at Maldonado, before we arrived there, one of which appeared in the inn. Several persons were poring over it, and endeavouring to turn a narrative, on which they had lighted, in one of the Evangelists, into intelligible Spanish. The matter was evidently new to them, and excited a very lively interest. On this subject the conversation turned, and led by their inquiries, we were induced to become lecturers in Christianity Divinity, while we ate our dinner; the office devolving chiefly on one of our party, who spake the language of the listeners with fluency. The scene appeared to us most extraordinary at the time, occurring as it did among subjects of the most bigotted of Catholic powers in Christendom; nor can I, at this distant period, cease to contemplate it in something of the same light.

Business afterwards called us to the habitation of one of the principal people of the town, where we were freely introduced to the family, although the master was from home. We entered by a low broad gateway, and on our right hand, beneath it, found the door of the Sala or Drawing-room. This apartment was nearly square, furnished with one large window, placed very high for the purpose of admitting light without exposing the room to public view from the street, and had wooden forms placed all round, close to the whitewashed walls. The Lady of the house was lively and polite: she paid me a compliment in the true Spanish style by supposing me a native of Old Castile, although she must have perceived my extreme ignorance of the language. I

should gladly have returned her civility if I could have done so with truth, by ranking her, in point of beauty, among the handsomest of my own countrywomen. She, however, was pretty, very frank, and accomplished; her children had been educated with care, for, having ordered a little girl, who was playing with her sister near the door of the room, to procure for us some milk, the child presented a tumbler full of it, on a common plate, with a degree of politeness, freedom, and grace, which I have seldom seen surpassed, and would have adorned a more conspicuous situation.

The inhabitants of this part of the country, generally speaking, appear contented and civil, though poor. Some of their good qualities, I believe, have been fostered by their recent intercourse with British troops. Certain it is that our soldiers have left behind them pleasant impressions, though one occurrence threatened a very different result. In December, 1808, we found several houses in Maldonado in ruins, and were told that, when our military embarked, some of them, in the wantonness of intoxication, thrust firebrands into the thatch. The people not only excused them on account of the state in which they were, and the irritation they had suffered from the conduct of their General, but warmly praised the humane exertions of the officers to check it. Some, doubtless, respected our countrymen, on account of the profit derived from them, and some because they hoped for and anticipated a change in their political relations; but most, I think, from a conviction that the British character is of a superior cast. I have often found such a persuasion strongly rooted among the native inhabitants of South America; while the emigrants from Spain and Portugal, and even temporary residents from these countries, too generally dislike us. The former love the French, tolerate the Portuguese, suspect the Spaniards, and stand in a respectful awe of the British; and withal, incongruous as it may appear, entertain a mixture of contempt for the people of every nation.

In the track from Maldonado to Monte Video, we soon pass over the only lofty ground in the neighbourhood, which is part of a ridge,