

size and sturdiness of those which derive a stunted existence from the sands of the desert. The Atacama around Caldera will barely support a cactus or an aloe. In the latitude of Coquimbo, 200 miles to the south, these Arabs of the vegetable kingdom occupy so exclusively the unirrigated ground, and in such variety of species as almost to choke the life out of any struggling individuals of other families. Two hundred miles still further to the south—about Valparaíso—the myrtle, rhododendron, and such thick leaved shrubs, and even the oak and guillai, and other stately trees, withstand the summer drought, while 200 miles further brings us fairly into the forest zone.

In the centre of this arid coast stands Arica, with the unenviable notoriety of being a focus of earthquake activity. It lies at the point of the obtuse angle formed by the slightly converging shore of the west coast, where occurs a striking change in the scenery and productions of the coast. To the north the same desert and drought occur as to the south, but to the north the Andes approach nearer the sea, and the courses of the little rivers which take their rise in its recesses being short, their waters nourish strips of verdure down to the very shore. Hence, although the broken coast-line is uniformly barren, a glimpse is obtained, here and there, of a ribband of green, and the trade is in fruit and wine, and sugar and cotton, which, though shipped from desolate ports, comes from a prolific, artificially-irrigated back country.

But immediately north of Arica commences the pampa of Tamarugal, in the Province of Tarapaca, an elevated, comparatively level plateau, which has yielded so reluctantly to the wear and tear of the Pacific that its waters beat for hundreds of miles against an almost vertical and straight wall of rock. On the plateau is mined the nitre, which is shipped from forlorn hamlets and towns, squeezed in

between the sea and the cliffs. South of Iquique, the chief exporter of nitre, the coasts yield guano; and further south guano and nitre and copper are mined and shipped by a population which never sees a blade of grass, or enjoys the luxury of a cooling shower, or drinks a cup of water direct from nature's reservoir, but from year's end to year's end looks on a sky which is as brass, and around on the salt sea and the sandy desert, and the bare cliffs, and handles guano, saltpetre and copper. Such, briefly, is the seat of war!

In 1871, I travelled up and down the coast between Panama and Valparaíso. It was in the heyday of prosperity. Peru was erecting an exhibition-building, and had invited the world to come and witness her progress in civilization. She had found no difficulty in contracting an enormous debt on shadowy security, and money was therefore plentiful, and circulated freely, for she was building railroads from every post to carry to her uninhabited interior the emigrants she was refusing to admit, for to none but Roman Catholics would the State cede lands. For a time, the railroad building successfully served its political purpose—it gave ample and remunerative occupation to friends and foes alike. The Chinchas had not been quite stripped of their guaneros, and therefore she might hope to borrow more, and the public credit abroad had not been quite ruined. Chili, likewise, was throwing off her primitive manners, and adopting extravagant modes of life, for year after year her exports of minerals, metals and cereals had gone on steadily increasing, but her government and people, more prudent than those of Peru, were not so recklessly discounting the future. Times have changed, but the physical features of the country remain the same, and the traveller now, as then, depends for conveyance on the boats of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company, which, though almost monopolizing the trade and traffic of