

VOYAGES.

Extracted from a Review of "Narrative of the Voyages of H. M. S. Adventure and Beagle; detailing the various Incidents which occurred during their Examination of the Southern Shores of South America, and during the Beagle's Circumnavigation of the Globe."

PEACEFUL ACHIEVEMENTS.

The day may perhaps arrive when the British navy will be thought to derive as valid a title to fame from its peaceful achievements, as from its triumphs in war. At all events, the historian may give vent to his admiration when he states that the ascendancy maintained by England for so many centuries on the ocean, has been constantly founded on and directed to promote the arts of civilisation. The shores ravaged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by Drake, Cavendish, and Dampier, have been surveyed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Vancouver, King, and Fitzroy, for the benefit of mankind. The career of the heroic buccaniers was, in their days, deemed one of honour; but the rights of humanity are now better understood; and it is no mean boast that England has known how to maintain the naval superiority acquired in former times, without derogating from the improved spirit of the present age. Still, there are many for whom victories and successful violence have superior charms; and possibly some one may ask, where shall we find Sir Francis Drake's equal now-a-days? We answer that the nautical skill, hardihood, and love of adventure of that worthy, are of extremely common occurrence, and are only restrained by peace, and the general prevalence of lawful authority, from rising into distinction. The reader of the Narrative now before us, cannot fail to be surprised at the number and energy of the English mariners, who, in their industrious pursuits, frequent the stormy shores of the southern extremity of the American continent. Besides, it must be remembered that a buccanier may be successful with a far less stock of seamanship and cool resolution than is required for the execution of a nautical survey in a tempestuous region; for he plays a game of chance; whereas the surveyor adheres deliberately to the most inhospitable shores, and makes himself familiar with dangers that he may teach others to avoid them.

THE PATAGONIANS.

The Patagonians, whom some travellers have magnified into giants, are really somewhat larger than Europeans. With an average height rather exceeding six feet, they have very broad shoulders and a large head, the ample dimensions of which are set off by a quantity of long matted hair hanging in the wildest disorder over their faces. Falkner, who lived many years amongst the Patagonians, says that he never saw one of them who was above an inch or two taller than Cacique Cangapol; and 'he,' observes the Jesuit, 'must have been seven feet and some inches in height, because on tiptoe I could not reach to the top of his head.' The exaggerations of those who have represented the Patagonians as a race of giants, eight feet in height, and with the voice of bulls; are, after all, less embarrassing than the silence of others respecting the superior stature of the natives inhabiting the northern shores of the Strait of Magalhaens. But it must be observed that these people are great wanderers, roving over an immense extent of desert plains. The same tribe which was found by the officers of the Beagle on the shores of the strait, was seen a year after on the banks of the Rio Negro, eight hundred miles further north. It is probable, also, that the various tribes differ in robustness according to the abundance of their food; and, indeed, Falkner points out the distinction between the large-bodied and the small Huilliches. This circumstance, added to their nomadic habits, will serve to explain why it has not been the lot of every visiter to the Magellanic shores, to see natives with the Herculean proportions of Cangapol.

INHABITANTS OF TIERRA DEL FUEGO.

The inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego have but little temptation to cultivate the soil; their solid and habitable land is reduced to the stony beach on which they wander in quest of food; and, owing to the steepness of the coast, they can only move about in their canoes. These are made of branches intertwined and covered with bark; and, though small and frail, the natives are not afraid to venture in them to a considerable distance from the shore, and even to hoist a sail of sealskin. The canoe is plastered inside with clay, and in the middle of it a fire is kept burning; yet the Fuegian, in this case attentive to his comfort, appears in general insensible to cold. The women dive for sea-eggs in winter as well as summer; a small skin thrown over the shoulders or round the loins, constitutes the whole clothing of either sex; and their naked limbs are protected from the sharp winds only by being smeared with clay. Their shores supply them with seals and various kinds of shellfish; with their slings and arrows they are able to kill snafowl even on the wing. In the art of fishing they appear to have made little progress. An old voyager relates, that on his hauling a net about eighty feet long in the strait of Magalhaens, the natives, previously on friendly terms with him, grew so incensed at the great quantity of fish thus taken at once, that they immediately commenced an assault on him with stones.

VARIETIES OF CLIMATE AND PRODUCTIONS.

The western side of the southern part of the South American continent, presents the strongest possible contrast with the eastern. The open dry plains of Patagonia, enjoy clear skies throughout the

year, and in summer are scorchingly hot. But beyond the mountains which bound them on the west, the scene is totally changed. The narrow strip of western coast is broken by numerous inlets, which penetrate quite through the Cordillera; here attaining a height of seven thousand feet. The ramifications of these inlets terminate in immense glaciers, one of which was found to have an extent of twenty-one miles in length. Beneath the perpetual snows, and between the arms of the branching glaciers, grow impenetrable forests. Constant rains, pouring down from skies ever clouded, have covered the islands with a dense mass of vegetation. This, towards the south, resembles the vegetation of Tierra del Fuego; but towards Chiloe the woods became incomparably more beautiful, and the dusky beach gives way to plants of a tropical character. Northwards the climate undergoes remarkable modifications. At Valdivia, the forests have a brighter hue. The apple, introduced from Europe, has there attached itself to the soil, and has spread over the elevated plains towards the sources of the Rio Negro; so that the Indians name that tract the land of apples. Beyond Valdivia, the forests on the coast become gradually more thin; but on the sides of the Cordillera, woods of the noble Araucanian pine, the fruit of which yields the Indians a staple article of food, extend as far north as the volcano of Antuco. Through northern Chili, forests quite disappear from both sides of the Cordillera; a few scattered trees on its eastern side, alone give intimation of the approaching change. But, in Peru, the order of things is the reverse of that which obtains in the latitude of Patagonia. On the western side of the mountain-chain is the desert; on the east the boundless and impenetrable forests. No rain falls on the coast of Peru; but in the valley of Maynas, on the other side of the Cordillera, the rain never ceases; and one place in it is said to be visited by a thunder-storm every day in the year.

GENEROSITY OF INDIANS.

In May 1835, a British frigate, the Challenger, was wrecked at Tucapel, on the Araucanian coast. On that occasion, as Captain Fitzroy (who took a zealous part in aiding the shipwrecked men) relates, the Indians assembled on the shore in great numbers, all on horseback, and assisted in hauling the rafts ashore, or in helping the people to land. 'Even the Indian women rode into the furious surf, and with their lassoes helped very materially; some took the boys up behind the saddles and carried them ashore; others fixed their lassoes to the rafts.' Captain Seymour, of the Challenger, on receiving a present of a young heifer from the Cacique, expressed his regret that, situated as he then was, he had no equivalent to offer: whereupon the chieftain, with a violent exclamation, indignantly disavowed the intention of accepting anything from men in distress. The Araucanians are well clad; their ponchos or mantles being made of a dark blue woollen cloth of their own manufacture. The caciques pride themselves on their silver spurs, the silver bits and head-gear of their horses. The women are ornamented, in the old Peruvian fashion, with beads, golden pins, and large pendent trinkets of brass and gold. Captain Fitzroy saw one so adorned: 'She was a fine-looking young woman, the daughter of a cacique, who had accompanied some of her tribe to look at the shipwrecked white men. Her horse was a beautiful animal, looking as wild as herself.'

ENERGY OF ENGLISHMEN.

Before we quit the shores of South America, we cannot avoid adverting with satisfaction to the beneficial impulse communicated to the rising Republics, on both sides of the continent, by the energy of Englishmen. Many illustrations of the all-pervading activity of our countrymen, may be found in Captain Fitzroy's narrative. They improve the farms on the Uruguay; they cultivate gardens in the pampas and on the hills of Tandil, south of Buenos Ayres; and they carry on all the coasting trade. In search of seals, they despise the storms of the strait of Magalhaens; penetrate the narrow channels of Tierra del Fuego, and of the adjoining archipelago to the north-west. In Chili, they have turned into good metal the copper ores which the native miners and metallurgists had always regarded as dross. On the great tableland of Cerro Pasco in Peru, they have made vast increase to the comforts of the people, by discovering and teaching the use of coal. Two remarkable instances of the bold spirit characteristic of Britons, and which are likely to make a very favourable impression on the people of Peru, are of recent occurrence, and deserve to be here recorded. Not far from Arica, on the coast of Bolivia, is an agreeable valley of great extent, but condemned to barrenness and solitude by want of water. A company of English merchants, settled at Arica, have undertaken to conduct into this valley a never-failing stream from the highest Cordilleras. For this purpose they have cut through a ridge exceeding 14,000 feet in height, and diverted across it a stream originating in the glaciers. Though this noble work is not yet completed, there is no reason to doubt of its success; and its importance, as an example, cannot be too highly estimated. The other instance of practical energy to which we have alluded, is, of its kind, still more extraordinary. The great lake of Titicaca in the Bolivian Andes—so celebrated in the history of the Incas—has never been hitherto navigated, except in small canoes; though encircled by a productive soil and considerable population. Situated as it is, within the mountains, more than 11,000 feet above the sea, and at a distance from any forests, the construction of a substantial vessel on its shores could hardly have been thought of. An

Englishman, nevertheless, who had once been a dockyard carpenter, set all difficulties at defiance. He shaped the timbers in the forest seven leagues off; put them together on the shores of the lake; launched, and now navigates on it, to the great admiration of the inhabitants, Spaniards as well as Indians, a handsome schooner of seventy tons burden.

THE LONDON NEWSPAPER PRESS.

London, July 20, 1839.

Although I had read and heard much of London newspaper establishments, I must confess I was greatly surprised on looking at their interior arrangement. This I was not able to do without some difficulty, for the proprietors or managers keep themselves as much secluded from visitation as do the good sisters of the Hotel Dieu in Montreal. Indeed I find more difficulty in entering the presence of a sub-editor, than I should in finding my way into a convent. I had no conception that they were such a set of exclusives when in performance of their editorial labors. I had letters of introduction, but these could only be presented at certain hours; and I should have gone away from one of the leading morning offices without seeing any thing, had I not possessed a talisman from the North and South American Coffee House. When once in, however, I had no difficulty, and every thing that I wished to see was open to my inspection.

The time I selected for my visit was when every good citizen should have been in bed—it was 12. But this is the important hour for examining a printing office in this city, during the session of Parliament.

I took a rapid glance at the apartment of the sub-editor, for the editor in chief very seldom enters the establishment. Thence I went to the office for the parliamentary reporters. Here I found two gentlemen, one from the Lords and one from the Commons, writing off their notes of the debates then in progress. These remain perhaps an hour, or it may be two, in "making copy," which is carried directly into the composing room. By the time these two have finished two others come in, who have been engaged in reporting, and in this way the reporters continue until the last word is spoken in both houses, and in an hour from that time the whole of what has been said during the evening, and perhaps until 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning, is in type, and the form ready for press.

During this time the foreman is collecting together his matter, and making up his eight pages, keeping every thing very close. A proof-taker sends to the sub-editor a proof of all the matter in type—the parliamentary to the first sub, who prepares his leader or sketch of what has been done. The editor in chief, it is supposed, has sent in his leader some time in the afternoon.

The "city article" is generally concocted and written at the North and South American Coffee House, and this is one of the most important branches of the London journal's business. The gentleman whose duty it is to do this gets a good salary, and considers himself a step in advance of the highest reporters, who, by the bye, are gentlemen of education.

Then we have the translators and other subordinate collaborators. The most important, perhaps, to the proprietors, is the "advertising manager." This is no unimportant branch of the business, and in the Times, Morning Herald, &c. occupies the entire attention of one person.

The composing office in the Commercial Advertiser is bad enough for the constitution in hot weather, or when some of your boys keep your stove too hot; but that office at noon on a summer day is cool to what I experienced in a London composing room at midnight, when filled with men at their cases, each with a large gas light before him. These compositors do not work as hard as yours in New York. They have no apprentices on the daily papers in London—it is not allowed.—Correspondence of the N. Y. Commercial Advertiser.

THE FATE OF "THE INTREPID."

The following passages from Cooper's History of the American Navy, comprise one of the finest pieces of descriptive writing in our language. The American officers of the harbor of Tripoli are anxious to destroy the fleet of the Bey. A little vessel is prepared as a floating mine to be sent in the gloom of night and blown up close to the enemy's fleet. Thirteen intrepid men volunteer to guide her in. She sails.

"The night was darker than usual, and the last that may be said to have been said of the 'Intrepid,' was the shadowy forms of her canvass, as she steered slowly, but steady, into the obscurity, where the eyes of the many anxious spectators fancied they could still trace her dim outline, most probably, after it had totally disappeared. This sinking into the gloom of night was no bad image of the impenetrable mystery that has veiled the subsequent proceedings of the gallant party on board her.

"When the Intrepid was last seen by the naked eye, she was not a musket shot from the mole, standing directly for the harbor. One officer on board the nearest vessel, the Nautilus, is said, however, to have never lost sight of her with a night glass, but even he could distinguish no more than her dim proportions. There is a vague rumor that she touched on the rocks, but it does not appear