

## CHAPTER XVI

Coast Road to Coquimbo—Great Loads Carried by the Miners—Coquimbo—Earthquake—Step-formed Terraces—Absence of Recent Deposits—Contemporaneousness of the Tertiary Formations—Excursion up the Valley—Road to Guasco—Deserts—Valley of Copiapó—Rain and Earthquakes—Hydrophobia—The Despoblado—Indian Ruins—Probable Change of Climate—River-bed Arched by an Earthquake—Cold Gales of Wind—Noises from a Hill—Iquique—Salt Alluvium—Nitrate of Soda—Lima—Unhealthy Country—Ruins of Callao, Overthrown by an Earthquake—Recent Subsidence—Elevated Shells on San Lorenzo, their Decomposition—Plain with Imbedded Shells and Fragments of Pottery—Antiquity of the Indian Race

## NORTHERN CHILE AND PERU

**A**PRIL 27TH.—I set out on a journey to Coquimbo, and thence through Guasco to Copiapó, where Captain Fitz Roy kindly offered to pick me up in the "Beagle." The distance in a straight line along the shore northward is only 420 miles; but my mode of travelling made it a very long journey. I bought four horses and two mules, the latter carrying the luggage on alternate days. The six animals together only cost the value of twenty-five pounds sterling, and at Copiapó I sold them again for twenty-three. We travelled in the same independent manner as before, cooking our own meals, and sleeping in the open air. As we rode toward the Viño del Mar, I took a farewell view of Valparaiso, and admired its picturesque appearance. For geological purposes I made a detour from the highroad to the foot of the Bell of Quillota. We passed through an alluvial district rich in gold, to the neighborhood of Limache, where we slept. Washing for gold supports the inhabitants of numerous hovels, scattered along the sides of each little rivulet; but, like all those whose gains are uncertain, they are unthrifty in their habits, and consequently poor.