

began to think of explaining to my native guide that the wisest heads which lived in my land believe that the centre of the earth is nothing but a mass of molten rock, and to inquire of him whether he was sure we should stop short of such an uncomfortable place. . . . The crater is not circular, but composed of two circles of unequal diameter, which unite on one side. . . . The width of the larger crater at the level of the lake, as given on the best maps I have been able to consult, is three geographical miles; that of the smaller crater, at the same level, two and a quarter miles; and the length of the lake, which lies in a northerly and southerly direction, and is approximately parallel to the great Barizan chain in which it is found, is no less than six geographical miles. Even the famous crater of the Yenger Mountains becomes of moderate dimensions when compared with this."—*Bickmore, "Travels in East Indian Archipelago,"* pp. 399-401.

Page 545.—CATARACTS.

From Captain Burton's recent book of travel we borrow a graphic description of the great falls on the Rio São Francisco (Brazil), appropriately named Paulo Affonso, the King of the Rapids:—

"The walk," says Captain Burton, "leads to a table of jutting rock on the west side, where we cling to a dry tree-trunk, and peer, fascinated, into the 'hell of waters' boiling below.

"The Quebrada, or gorge, is here 260 feet deep, and in the narrowest part it is choked to a minimum breadth of fifty-one feet. It is filled with what seems not water, but the froth of milk, a dashing and dazzling, a whirling and churning surfaceless mass, which gives a wondrous study of fluid in motion. And the marvellous disorder is a well-directed anarchy; the course and sway, the wrestling and writhing, all tend to set free the prisoner from the prison walls. Ces eaux! Mais ce sont des âmes; it is the spectacle of a host rushing down in 'liquid vastness' to victory, the triumph of motion, of momentum over the immovable. Here the luminous whiteness of the chaotic foam-crests, hurled in billows and breakers against the blackness of the rock, is burst into flakes and spray, that leap half-way up the immuring trough. There the surface reflections dull the dazzling crystal to a thick opaque yellow, and there the shelter of some spur causes a momentary start and recoil to the column, which, at once gathering strength, bounds and springs onwards with a new crush and another roar. The heaped-up centre shows fugitive ovals and progressive circles of a yet more sparkling, glittering, dazzling light, divided by points of comparative repose, like the nodal lines of waves. They struggle and jostle, start asunder, and interlace as they dash with steadfast purpose adown the inclined plane. Now a fierce blast hunts away the thin spray-drift, and puffs it to leeward in rounded clouds, thus enhancing the brilliancy of the spectacle. Then the steam boils over and canopies the tremendous scene. Then, in the stilly air of dull warm gray, the mists surge up, deepening still more, by their veil of ever-ascending vapour, the dizzy fall that yawns under our feet.

"The general effect of the picture—and the same may be said of all great cataracts—is the 'realized' idea of power, of power tremendous, inexorable, irresistible. The eye is spell-bound by the contrast of this impetuous motion, this wrathful, maddened haste to escape, with the frail steadfastness of the bits of rainbow hovering above; with the 'Table Rock,' so solid to the tread, and with the placid, settled stillness of the plain and the hil-