

fectly known: it is even doubtful whether, in passing over the plains, it is not evaporated and lost. We slept in the village of Luxan, which is a small place surrounded by gardens, and forms the most southern cultivated district in the province of Mendoza; it is five leagues south of the capital. At night I experienced an attack (for it deserves no less a name) of the *Benchuca*, a species of *Reduvius*, the great black bug of the Pampas. It is most disgusting to feel soft wingless insects, about an inch long, crawling over one's body. Before sucking they are quite thin, but afterward they become round and bloated with blood, and in this state are easily crushed. One which I caught at Iquique (for they are found in Chile and Peru) was very empty. When placed on a table, and though surrounded by people, if a finger was presented, the bold insect would immediately protrude its sucker, make a charge, and, if allowed, draw blood. No pain was caused by the wound. It was curious to watch its body during the act of sucking, as in less than ten minutes it changed from being as flat as a wafer to a globular form. This one feast, for which the *benchuca* was indebted to one of the officers, kept it fat during four whole months; but, after the first fortnight, it was quite ready to have another suck.

March 27th.—We rode on to Mendoza. The country was beautifully cultivated, and resembled Chile. This neighborhood is celebrated for its fruit; and certainly nothing could appear more flourishing than the vineyards and the orchards of figs, peaches, and olives. We bought watermelons nearly twice as large as a man's head, most deliciously cool and well-flavored, for a halfpenny apiece; and for the value of threepence, half a wheelbarrowful of peaches. The cultivated and inclosed part of this province is very small; there is little more than that which we passed through between Luxan and the capital. The land, as in Chile, owes its fertility entirely to artificial irrigation; and it is really wonderful to observe how extraordinarily productive a barren *traversia* is thus rendered.