

28th.—In the afternoon we arrived at a cottage at the foot of the Bell Mountain. The inhabitants were freeholders, which is not very usual in Chile. They supported themselves on the produce of a garden and a little field, but were very poor. Capital is here so deficient that the people are obliged to sell their green corn while standing in the field, in order to buy necessaries for the ensuing year. Wheat in consequence was dearer in the very district of its production than at Valparaiso, where the contractors live. The next day we joined the main road to Coquimbo. At night there was a very light shower of rain: this was the first drop that had fallen since the heavy rain of September 11th and 12th, which detained me a prisoner at the Baths of Cauquenes. The interval was seven and a half months; but the rain this year in Chile was rather later than usual. The distant Andes were now covered by a thick mass of snow; and were a glorious sight.

May 2d.—The road continued to follow the coast, at no great distance from the sea. The few trees and bushes which are common in central Chile decreased rapidly in numbers, and were replaced by a tall plant, something like a yucca in appearance. The surface of the country, on a small scale, was singularly broken and irregular; abrupt little peaks of rock rising out of small plains or basins. The indented coast and the bottom of the neighboring sea, studded with breakers, would, if converted into dry land, present similar forms; and such a conversion without doubt has taken place in the part over which we rode.

3d.—Quilimari to Conchalee. The country became more and more barren. In the valleys there was scarcely sufficient water for any irrigation; and the intermediate land was quite bare, not supporting even goats. In the spring, after the winter showers, a thin pasture rapidly springs up, and cattle are then driven down from the Cordillera to graze for a short time. It is curious to observe how the seeds of the grass and other plants seem to accommodate themselves, as if by an acquired habit, to the quantity of rain which falls