

difficult matter to acquire composure, on seeing the numerous temporary lashings, giving ocular proof that accidents have been frequent, however well satisfied one may be with the skill of the conductor. Fortunately the road is excellent, though at this season (May) it is divested of much of its beauty from the want of vegetation. The interest is, however, carried forward to the lofty peaks of the Andes, of whose summits occasional glimpses are had; and the eye glances over the surrounding scenery in the immediate neighbourhood, that would elsewhere be deemed grand, to rest on some high and towering peak. Among these the peak of Tupongati is the most noted, ranking, since the measurement of King, as next in height to the Himmaleh mountains.

The first stopping-place is at Casa Blanca, a small pueblo of some five hundred inhabitants, where travellers usually sleep. The accommodations were good, having been recently much improved. In the neighbourhood is the only tract of woodland to be found in this part of the country. The elevation of Casa Blanca, about thirty miles from Valparaiso, is five hundred and ninety-eight feet about the level of the sea. The primitive district extends about fifty miles from the coast, and of course is found here. It is composed chiefly of gneiss, which is generally easily decomposed. The mountains, in consequence, are not rugged, but of an easy ascent, and mural precipices are not met with. The gneiss was in some places observed to pass into hornblende rock, resembling the trachytic or igneous greenstone. It contains abundance of diffused epidote, and among the minerals schorl was observed, but no garnets were found.

The road from Casa Blanca next passes through Curacovi, a small pueblo, three hundred and forty-four feet above the level of the sea, where the trap rock first makes its appearance, and then over a high ridge, called the Cuesta de Zapata. This terminates the first plain, and divides it from the second, of similar character, which extends to the Cuesta del Prado. It is passed over by a zigzag road, and was found to be two thousand three hundred and ninety-four feet high. On reaching the top, the view that presents itself is extensive and magnificent.

In front is the extensive plain of Maypo, with here and there a conical mountain standing alone on it. At the extremity of the plain rise the lofty peaks of the Andes, covered with eternal snow, some reaching above the clouds. They appear but a few hours' ride off, although at a distance of twenty leagues. On either side rise the high ridges of the Cuesta. Beneath lie grazing grounds, extending over the plain, and covered with flocks and herds. Variety and life are given to the whole by the view of the national road, on which are seen numbers of