

after which they entered into a wild and romantic pass, between steep acclivities and precipices of immense height.

At ten o'clock they reached Culnai, a distance of five leagues; it contains about thirty cottages; its height is believed to be ten thousand feet above the sea, and here cultivation ceases, ending with the potato, *Tropæolum*, *Oxalis*, and *Basella*. The second region of plants also terminates here, and now ensued the "Paramera," or pasture region of the Andes, avoided by the inhabitants of the lower districts on account of the cold. This third region gives growth to a set of plants which make a gradual transition from those of the second region to low alpine scraggy bushes, none of which exceed two feet in height. The Paramera is remarkable for a dense sward of coarse grass, and low herbaceous plants, principally of the order *Compositæ*. The flowers of the latter, it was remarked, were particularly large in proportion to the plant. These form a rich pasturage for the flocks and herds, which are seen feeding in the valleys and along the sides of the hills.

No cultivation is attempted beyond Culnai, and but two species of Cacti were met with above this point.

They had hitherto for the most part followed a northerly direction, but now they diverged more to the northeast. The temperature was falling as they ascended, the air was clear and bracing, and the scenery as they advanced become more interesting, and even sublime. To its wild and precipitous features was now added the high snowy peak of La Vinda in the distance, and some few spots of snow were occasionally seen in places sheltered from the sun's rays. The mule-paths had become narrow, and when they met with mules, which was often the case, it became necessary to turn under the rocks, until the path was clear. On one occasion, one of the party allowed his mule to take the outside; the consequence was that a muleteer shoved mule and rider several feet over the bank. No injury was received, and the dilemma passed off with a good laugh at the fright.

The sagacity of the mules on these occasions is remarkable. They endeavour always to cling to the wall side, and will succeed in doing it, if not prevented by the rider. Their caution is great when they apprehend danger in passing over steep places; the instant danger was anticipated, the nose and fore feet were used to ascertain its extent, which done, the animals cautiously proceeded, and reached the bottom with great care and ease both to the rider and themselves.

About three o'clock they had gained the fourth or alpine region, where they were met with sharp and cutting winds, accompanied with