

The morning proved so boisterous, with frequent hail-showers, that they determined to remain the day, to rest their mules and recruit themselves. Their breakfast was more acceptable than the last night's supper; it consisted of olla-podrida and milk.

As the weather allowed them to botanize, they set out in two parties, but had not been occupied over two hours, before they were overtaken by a severe snow-storm, which entirely covered up all small plants, and made it difficult for them to scale the rocks.

On the 21st, they had determined to proceed to Baños, which, from the description of their guides, who were ignorant, however, of the route beyond Casa Cancha, they had been led to believe was on the eastern slope of the mountain.

They started at an early hour, with the wild geese flying and feeding around them, determining to visit Alpamarca, which is distant from Casa Cancha about two leagues; but owing to their guides being unacquainted with the paths, they were led about among the mountains, and over extensive plains, covered with coarse herbage. A variety of beautiful flowers were found, and many domesticated llamas were seen feeding. At eleven o'clock they stumbled, as if by accident, on the place, consisting of a number of huts; one of these showed the welcome sign of bread for sale, viz., a basket stuck upon a long pole; and they were fortunate in procuring some small rolls.

Alpamarca proved to be in the vicinity of a silver mine, and here they found a goodly company of Peruvian gentlemen, collected from various quarters, and among them the general to whom they had brought letters to Obrajillo. They were received with great kindness and attention; the company insisted upon their dismounting, and gave them the cheer they had prepared for themselves, which was readily partaken of. It was served in a large gourd-shell, and consisted of a Spanish hotch-potch, or olla, with carrots, pot-garlic, pepper, and small bits of mutton. It was observed, as the eatables were disappearing, that the Spanish Dons now and then would partake of the tidbits by reaching over their shoulders from behind. This repast was well timed, for our party had been fasting sufficiently long to enable them to do ample justice to it.

On further examination, the hut proved to be provided with some few of the necessaries of life, although the supply was not large.

The Peruvians sent for the superintendent of the mine, and in the mean time showed the process of extracting the silver, which was as follows: the ore is broken up until it resembles earth; it is then thrown into a large round vat and mixed with mercury and water; six or eight mules are then turned in and driven round and round, until the