XI.—*Account of a Voyage to explore he River Negro from its mouth on the East Coast of South America, to its supposed Sources in the Cordillera of Chile.* Communicated by Woodbine Parish, Esq., F.R.S.

[The accompanying paper is extracted from the original journal of a Voyage of Discovery up the River Negro of Patagonia, performed in the years 1782-3, by Don Basilio Villarino, a Master Pilot in the Spanish Navy, by order of the Government of Spain. This river, which forms so important a feature in the geography of that part of South America, has hitherto been solely laid down upon the authority of old Father Falkner's work upon Patagonia, published in this country in the year 1775, whose account of it was derived from the Indians.

It was one of Falkner's objects to point out the facility with which, in his belief, the Spanish possessions in Chile might be reached by it, and surprised by any foreign nation choosing to disembark a force for the purpose upon the coast near its mouth; and his publication appears to have been the immediate cause of the Spanish Government sending out officers to survey the coast from the river Plate to the Straits of Magellan, and to form permanent settlements on such points of it as might secure the Spanish dominions in those parts from the chance of such surprisal.

The survey in question was commenced in December, 1778, and led to the establishment of settlements upon the river Negro; at Port San Joseph's, discovered for the first time in lat. 42° 13′, and of all others perhaps the most important point upon those coasts; at Port Desire; and at San Julian's, about a degree farther south; beyond which the river of Santa Cruz was also examined to its sources. All these settlements however were abandoned three or four years afterwards, excepting that upon the river Negro, which the Spanish Government kept up; and many families were sent out to it from Spain, whose descendants to this day form a considerable portion of the population.

The determination to maintain this settlement in preference to any other upon those coasts was no doubt, amongst other causes, in the expectation that it would lead to the discovery of an inland water-communication, not only with Chile but with Mendoza and the adjoining provinces, which might prove of vast importance to the people in those parts. Accordingly, no sooner was the settlement fairly planted than a voyage of discovery was planned to explore the Negro to its sources, and to examine the courses of those rivers which were reported to join it from the north, the command of which was given to Villarino, as the best qualified person then in those parts for such a service.]

On the 28*th of September*, 1782, the expedition left the little settlement of Carmen, upon the river Negro: it consisted of four large Spanish launches, (chalupas,) to each of which

was appointed a master, a carpenter, and caulker, besides a picked crew:—they were also accompanied along the banks by a sufficient number of peons, with horses, to assist in towing them against the current, and to reconnoitre the country as they proceeded.

On the *2nd of October* they were 11 leagues N.W. from Carmen, although by the windings of the river they had really gone double that distance.

On the *5th* they made 5 leagues more, W.N.W., having gone 12 by the course of the river.

On the *6th* they were only 2 miles from where they were the day before, although they made in the course of the day by the river 3 leagues.

It would be of little interest to recapitulate further the daily distances and bearings which will be found in a tabular form at the end of the paper, as they have been extracted from the original diary, to enable Mr. Arrowsmith to project the general map of the river which is annexed.

From Carmen to the Great Island of Choleechel, or Chuelechel, its general course trends to the N.N.W., though in some parts it is exceedingly tortuous: so that whilst the average daily way, according to Villarino's reckoning, made by the boats was seldom more than 2 leagues direct, they often really went by the windings of the river as much as five, or six, or more.

These windings of the river of course very much interfered with the sailing of the boats, and it became continually necessary to be warping or towing them along against the current:—in this the horses were of the greatest use.

The general appearance of the country is described to be an arid, sandy level, very bare of vegetation, excepting some insulated patches along the shore, which being from time to time subject to be flooded, are covered with good pasturage.

The banks of the river, as well as the numerous islands which stud it in many parts, are covered with low willows; from which it is sometimes called the 'Rio Sauces.' Its Indian name is Cusu-Leubú, signifying Rio Negro, or the Black River.

On the *27th of October*, just a month from their leaving Carmen, they fell in with the first Indians, and a day or two after were visited by some of them, with an old interpretess, named Tereza, through whom they got some information.

They spoke of the great Pass of the river at the Choleechel, higher up, where they told them they must cross their horses over to the north side, for they could no longer get along the south bank. This Villarino had already wished to do for some days previously, but had not been able to find any place where he could attempt it with safety. Their Cacique, Francisco, was gone to

meet some of the Aucazes from the river Colorado, who were passing by the Choleechel, on their way to their own country, with a great quantity of cattle.

This Francisco had already notice of their approach, and Villarino received a hint from a friendly Indian to be on his guard, for that he was only gone to send his women and children over to the Colorado preparatory to attacking the Peons and carrying off their horses and cattle.

Villarino, however, did what he could to make the most favourable impression upon these people, and made them presents of biscuit, and spirits, and tobacco, all which were articles of great demand amongst them, and greedily asked for.

On the *2nd of November* they reached the beginning of the Great Island of Choleechel, which forms so conspicuous a feature in the map of the river: here the latitude by observation was 39° S.

On the *3rd*, about mid-day, the Cacique Francisco himself appeared, with from thirty to forty Indians; Villarino stopped for them, and gave them all tobacco, and spirits, and biscuit. He was desirous to establish a good understanding with this chief, in the hope of obtaining the aid of his people to keep up his communication with Carmen; but after a day or two not only the Cacique, but the whole party became exceedingly troublesome, continually asking for something to eat or to drink; they would ride also with the Peons, which made it necessary to keep them constantly in view, and to keep a strict watch against any treachery:—so they went on for two or three days till Villarino became quite tired with their importunities and insolence, and on Francisco sending to ask for a cow to divide amongst his people it was flatly refused him. The savage rode off in extreme ill humour; and the next day the rest of the Indians followed him. Tereza, the interpretess, however, managed to inform Villarino that his ill humour on this account was not the main reason for his sudden departure, but that he had two men with him who had deserted from the boats, who he was fearful might be discovered.

This was on the *6th;* and soon after they came to a sort of peninsula, over against the Choleechel, which Villarino was struck with as an admirable position, affording an abundance of good pasturage for cattle, and easily defensible from its being connected with the main by a very narrow neck of land, not more than 250 yards across.

As they advanced, they found the Indians had everywhere destroyed the pasturage, so that it was difficult to obtain sufficient for the horses and cattle along the banks of the river: there were also other indications of their hostile disposition; fires were nightly seen in the distance, which were known to be the signal amongst

them for a gathering against their enemies. Some stray Indians who fell in with the Peons, told them that the Cacique Guisel was behind them; others were seen to pass by, some up and some down the river without coming near them as usual, and Villarino became exceedingly uneasy lest they should cut off his communications with Carmen.

On the *9th*, he determined to send to Francisco's tents, to endeavour to gain intelligence as to what they were about; and one of the sailors, a Paraguay man, named Benites, having volunteered the service, Villarino despatched him with a present of spirits, and a request to Fransisco that he would send him one of his people to take a letter down to the settlement for the superintendent, to whom he was writing for more cattle, some of which he promised to give him when they arrived, if he would undertake to forward the letter. This man, Benites, unfortunately, was not trustworthy; he was absent the whole day, and though he had been with the Indians the greater part of it, he brought back but little information; Villarino suspecting him, desired he should be carefully watched; but the precaution was in vain, for he ran away in the night. It turned out that he had taken a fancy for a daughter of Francisco's, and had for some time intended to desert: but what was worse, he, as well as the other deserters, had taken the pains to excite alarm amongst the Indians, and to persuade them that the Spaniards intended to attack and destroy them; which, in some measure, accounted for their suspicious proceedings.

On reconnoitring the ground in the neighbourhood the morning after Benites escaped, they found tracks of armed Indians who had been watching them during the night, apparently with some hostile intention. Putting all these circumstances together, and foreseeing that he could not calculate upon the least assistance from these people, on the contrary, that he must, in all probability, depend entirely upon his own resources, Villarino determined to advance no farther till he could communicate with Carmen, and receive from thence such aid as would make him independent, and enable him satisfactorily to continue his voyage: he therefore determined to go down the river again to the position over against the Choleechel which he had noticed on the 6th, and there wait for further instructions.

He came to this resolution on the *10th:* and at eight o'clock on the morning of the 11th, the boats commenced their return down the stream; a guard of 16 men having been sent on shore to drive the cattle back to the place above-mentioned, where they all, the boats as well as the party by land, arrived about 6 o'clock in the evening. Here a guard was set, the boats' swivels were loaded, and every precaution taken against a surprise.

12*th.* On a further examination of the place, Villarino was highly satisfied with it as a position where he might pass some time in case of necessity. It was found to contain excellent pasturage for a considerable number of cattle, fire wood, and plenty of game; the river in the vicinity abounded in fish, especially trout; and the peninsula being only accessible to the Indians by a very narrow neck of land, it was easy to fortify it against all their attacks; the great island of Choleechel opposite to it made it still more difficult of approach. The island in question, he says, is 9 leagues in length and in some places 3 in width.

On the 13*th* the people were set to work to cut posts for a palisado across the isthmus, and for an inclosure for the cattle; but before night a dragoon with two Peons arrived with letters from the superintendent, promising to forward some supplies in the course of 10 or 12 days; and the expectation of speedily receiving this assistance seems to have made Villarino doubt as to there being any necessity for making the stay he at first contemplated in this place. On the morning of the 15th the dragoon was sent back with letters to the establishment.

On the 18*th* the river fell about 5 inches, just enough to prevent the swivels of the boats from protecting their position, which made it necessary to land and mount them on shore. The men were employed daily till the 26th of the month in mounting the guns and working at the fortification; by which time the whole was finished; it consisted of 1670 strong posts driven upright into the ground, making a tolerably compact palisado across the narrowest part of the isthmus, having only one opening in it for the entrance; it was named Fort Villarino, and it formed quite a sufficient protection against any surprise on the part of the Indians. Its position will be found marked in the map opposite to the Choleechel.

Day after day reconnoitring parties were sent out, but, except finding the tracks of Indians who might have been watching them, nothing occurred worth notice till the 5th of December, when it was observed that the waters were falling fast. This made Villarino exceedingly anxious for the arrival of the supplies promised to be sent from the establishment. The fires of the Indians were continually seen, and it was evident they were on the watch, though they kept out of sight. On the 8th, Nicolas Baltazar, one of the sailors, who had gone out to shoot birds, disappeared, and on sending a party in quest of him, the tracks of several Indians on horseback were discovered, who it was supposed had carried him off. On the 10*th of December* he observes, 'We have now been a month in this place waiting for the supplies promised us from Carmen; the delay has been highly injurious to the objects of the expedition, and if we are kept here much longer

may make it altogether impossible to realise them; first, on account of the continual falling of the waters, and next because it may give the Indians time to lay plans to attack us and to carry off our horses and cattle, once deprived of which we can do nothing.' On the evening of the 12th, however, these long expected succours arrived in carts under the escort of a party of soldiers, foot and horse, in all, with the Peons, consisting of 46 people.

Fortified with this reinforcement, Villarino was at first inclined to proceed at once to find the Indians, and either to secure their co-operation by conciliation, or if they refused to give up the deserters and to listen to fair words, to frighten them so as, at any rate, to induce them to keep at a distance, and out of the way of giving further annoyance to the expedition as it continued its course up the river. In this, however, he was shaken by the instructions he received from the superintendent, who warned him particularly against taking any step which might endanger the safety of the people or horses: indeed, so doubtful did the superintendent consider the possibility of his being able to protect the horses as he went farther up the river, that rather than run the risk of any dispute with the Indians on their account, he desired they should all be sent back to the establishment. Villarino thought it his duty to attend to these orders, although, he says, the horses were the main stay of the expedition.

The people were fully occupied till the 20th December in repairing the boats, and loading them with the provisions sent them for their voyage from Carmen: all the cattle were killed (twenty-two animals), and the meat dried and salted and divided amongst the boats. Villarino complains of the bad quality of the biscuit, and of the scantiness of some of the other supplies which had been sent him.

On the 17*th* the carts with all the horses returned to Carmen; and on the

20*th*, The boats once more got under weigh.

On the 22*nd* they passed the place which they supposed to be that called by Falkner Tehuelmalal.

On the 25*th* they found the river so full of islands, that it was difficult to choose which passage to take: the same evening they reached the pass of the river frequented by the Indians, from whence it was found impossible to get farther along the southern bank, which agrees with their accounts. Such was the force of the current, that, although the wind was fair, they could make no way against it either sailing or rowing, and the men were obliged to tow the boats along often up to their waists in the river. Villarino bitterly complains of the superintendent having ordered back the horses, the want of which he now grievously experienced. Had he had them, he says, he might with their aid in

towing the boats have made every day at least six leagues distance, instead of being so little advanced as they were on their way.

Hereabouts the waters were noticed to be of a deep red hue, which Villarino supposed to be caused by some red soil occurring above, for they had not observed any thing of the sort lower down.

On the *29th*, at mid-day, the latitude was found to be 38° 52′ S.

Shortly after they came to a place where the Indians had crossed the river from the north to the south side with cattle and horses; by the tracks they appeared to have come from the Colorado.

The pass is easy of access from both banks, and the river is more narrow than below.

On the 31*st* about mid-day a cloud of dust was seen on the north shore, and soon after a number of Indians with their horses came in view; at first they were rather shy, but having received some presents of spirits, tobacco, &c., they became less reserved and remained gossiping till night.

The boatmen begged permission to traffic with them for some fresh provisions, which Villarino permitting, the people of the San Juan and San Francisco bought of them two heifers for a couple of knives, and those of the Champan got a fat cow for a flask of spirits, a cap, and a knife: he was in hopes they would lend him some horses to assist his men in towing the boats, for they were much weakened by the exertions they had been obliged to make since leaving Fort Villarino, and some of the strongest of them were ill from over fatigue.

1*st January*, 1783.—These Indians had with them a youth about sixteen years of age, who spoke Spanish better than any Indian they had yet met with; from whom they were able to get a good deal of information. It appeared that the party were Aucazes, or Araucanians, from Huechum-Huechum, called by Falkner the Lake of the Boundary, from which they said it was only four days' journey to Valdivia, though the road to it was difficult on account of the Cordillera.

They were on their return from the Sierra del Vulcan, for which they had left their own country nearly a year before in quest of cattle, and horses, and sheep, in which they traffic with the people of Valdivia, who give them in exchange hats, and bridles, and spurs, and a sort of indigo, with which they colour their cloaks (nothing less, observes Villarino, than an encouragement held out by the Spaniards of Valdivia to these people to go and steal cattle for them from their countrymen at Buenos Ayres). They said they mostly lived in tents (*toldos*), and that they sowed wheat, and barley, and beans; but some of them had straw huts convenient

enough built along the side of the hills of the Cordillera, who, besides their wheat and barley, grew lentils, and pease, and onions, and many other vegetables: they fetched their salt, they said, from the Colorado in skins, having none in their own country. None of them had ever been at the Spanish settlement on the Rio Negro, their usual journey being across by the Choleechel Pass to the Colorado, which is more than 70 leagues to the westward of it. On the north side of the river they said there were no resident Indians till arriving at the Apple Country, and that those occasionally seen there were only on their journeys, and that all those Indians who are met with in the Sierra del Vulcan and the Pampas of Buenos Ayres only go down for the purpose of collecting cattle; that on the south side live the Huilleches (southern people), who lay wait for the people of Huechum on their return with their cattle, to rob them. They were very particular in their inquiries whether Villarino's people had seen any of these Indians on the south side of the river.

They spoke of the river Limé Leubú, and of its inhabitants the Limeches, and called many places by the same names as Falkner. They agreed generally with his account, except that they called the distance from Huechum to Valdivia only four days, whereas he says it is six. He also supposes there may be a communication between the lake of Huechum and the river Valdivia, which these Indians denied; though they said that that river, which is a considerable one, is near the lake, not more than a day's journey off; as to the little river of the north (the Pichileubu of Falkner) which falls into the river Negro, they knew it descended from the Cordillera, but whether or not it passed near Mendoza they could not say, because they were not acquainted with those parts; but they said their Cacique had been along its banks and could give more information about it, in consequence of which, and at the suggestion of the young Indian, who proved a very intelligent interpreter, Villarino sent one of his people, a native of Mendoza, to his encampment, to request him to come down and pay him a visit. He wanted the young Indian to hire himself to go with him as far as Huechum, and thence show him the way over the Cordillera to Valdivia, where it appeared he had passed some years with a Spaniard, which accounted for his understanding the language so well; but the youth's father objected, saying he wanted his assistance to help him to take care of the cattle he had with him.

On the morning of the *2nd*, the messenger returned with the Cacique Guchumpilqui, who he reported to have with him at his encampment more than 100 Indians, and a large quantity of cattle and sheep. He brought with him five other Caciques,

who were shortly followed by a great many of their companions, with their women and children, so at last there were from 80 to 100 of them. Villarino had enough to do to satisfy this large party, and seems to have lost all patience with their insatiable importunities for presents. He got but little more information from them; but Guchumpilqui promised when the boats reached Huechum that some of his Indians should cross the Cordillera with them to Valdivia.

He gave them a heifer, which was but a poor equivalent for the spirits he and his people had drunk. Villarino also bought of him a couple of horses to give his people some relief in towing the boats.

These Indians were full of protestations of friendship and kindness, boasting all the time of their power, but always ending in begging for something or other; at last one of their Caciques going so far as to assert that all the lands from where they were, to the Choleechel were his, and intimating that he expected the Spaniards would give him something for passing through them. Villarino replied that he was delighted to make the friendship of so powerful a Cacique, and to know he was in his territories, as he professed so much kindness to him; but that the practice of the Spaniards, when the Indians came to see them, was to make them presents, and give them plenty to eat and drink; and now they were returning the visit it was but natural they should expect similar hospitality from their soi-disant friends. The cacique laughed heartily at the answer, repeating it to his companions; and promised to give the Spaniards a cow when they wanted any thing to eat: but Villarino adds, the cow never came.

On the 4*th* one of the Caciques, pretending to be unwell, begged to be permitted to go on in the boats with the young Indian interpreter, already mentioned, whose name was José, who his father allowed to go, on condition that one of the sailors should go on shore to help him in his place to attend to the cattle. They were now arrived at a range of hills of a whitish sand, stony, and covered with thorny bushes, which obliged the Indians to leave the banks of the river and to follow a circuitous route some way inland.

On the 5*th* one of the launches got aground and was with great difficulty got off; the towing rope broke soon after, and they had hard work to secure her again, such was the violence of the stream. The banks here were found to consist of a sort of mixture of pebbles and white sand, very crumbling, and giving way under the feet, in some places covered with little low thorny shrubs; and the country put on, as Villarino terms it, "a most infernal and desolate aspect."

From the *5th* to the 11*th* such was the force of the current and the wind against them that they barely made 6 leagues.

The river here is described as running through a steep, rocky pass, with such a stream that forty men could hardly drag the boats, one by one, through it; the north side of the river was steeper than at any place they had yet passed, and the bed of the river was strewed with masses of rock from it.

On the 11*th* they were joined again by the Cacique Guchumpilqui and the Indians; with them also came up their own horses, with the sailor in charge of them, who had been unable to keep along the river side with the boats on account of the intervening range of hills above mentioned; the Indians however had taken good care of him, for which Villarino did not fail to make a handsome return. .

The sick Cacique disembarked and joined his companions again; some of whom came on board and made many inquiries as to the objects of the expedition, to which Villarino replied that he was going to Valdivia to see the governor, and to arrange some matters with him; that his stay there would be short, and then he should return down the river again.

Guchumpilqui said, that in three or four days he should send forward notice to his country that he was on his return, that his people there might send him fresh horses, as those he had with him were becoming very weak from the long distance they had come. He added, that it would take his messenger to reach Huechum-Huechum six days; and three more to go on thence to Valdivia, and that this was the time of year when the Spaniards came over amongst them from that place to buy their ponchos. As this seemed to offer just the means he wanted to communicate with the governor of Valdivia, Villarino determined to write by Guchumpilqui's messenger a letter to be delivered to any Spaniard who might be found amongst the Indians at Huechum, earnestly begging he might be furnished with such succours in the way of provisions as would enable him to complete the discoveries he was engaged upon, and carry on as far as possible the objects of the expedition. Some further information was got from these Indians respecting the country higher up the river; they said, that farther up the Rio Negro inclines very much to the south, making a great bend, on which account, on their journey to Huechum, they were in the habit of leaving its course, to proceed across the intervening country, which they described to be full of good pasturage, and well watered by the streams which descend from the Cordillera.

It caused no small surprise in Villarino to be questioned by these people respecting the war between the Spaniards and the English, and if it was still going on;—they said they had heard

about it from the people of Valdivia, who told them that every thing was excessively dear in that place in consequence of it, inasmuch as the English prevented the ships from Spain arriving there as usual. On the 12*th*, after presenting the Spaniards with a couple of cows, they took leave, saying however they should meet again: this party altogether consisted of about 300, of whom only six were women. The cattle and horses they had with them could not be estimated at less than 800; all of which (notwithstanding they continually asserted that they only caught the wild animals in the Pampas) bore the marks of their owners in Buenos Ayres—some proof of the consequences of the marauding excursions of these people within the Spanish territories.

They were hardly gone when one of the sailors named José Navarro was missed, with one of the horses; another of the people, José Mariano, volunteered to go in quest of his companion, but neither one nor the other returning after some time, filled Villarino with suspicions that the Indians had carried them off, and notwithstanding all his kindness and civilities to them had signalized their departure by playing him this trick. On ascending a neighbouring height, which overlooked the country where they had been encamped, he was confirmed in his belief by seeing nothing but a cloud of dust at some distance, which marked the flight of the whole party—evidence, he observes, if any were wanting, of the little faith to be placed in the professions of a people who pride themselves in circumventing and deceiving their best friends as well as their enemies. He was excessively vexed at this, for he feared that there was an end of his friendly intercourse with the very Indians who, from their residence at Huechum, were of all others the most likely to have it in their power to render him efficient aid in the communication he was so anxious to open with the governor of Valdivia.

On the 16*th* the Champan was found very leaky, indeed she had been so ever since leaving Fort Villarino; and it was found necessary to transfer part of her provisions to one of the other vessels, when it was discovered that much of the biscuit was unserviceable; this made a general examination of it requisite, the result of which was that from eight to ten hundred weight were found rotten and thrown overboard.

In the evening a most fearful storm of thunder and lightning and hail came on, such as Villarino says he had never witnessed before in any part of Patagonia; the boats however were covered in in time and suffered no injury; its extreme violence lasted about a couple of hours.

On the 20*th* the southern shore of the river is described as putting on a new appearance. High white ridges run parallel to it at the distance of about half a league, whilst the banks of

the river are of a loose, red sand, mixed with small pebbles, steep and inaccessible, and destitute of all vegetation; the distant ridges occasionally break out into the most fantastic forms, so that some of them might be mistaken for castellated buildings and fortifications. Villarino says, in all his life before he never was in such a frightful, desolate looking place, or one so entirely destitute of all symptoms not only of vegetable, but animal life—not even a bird was to be seen; fragments of rocks constantly falling down impeded the navigation and render it more dangerous and difficult every day.

On the 23*rd*, the horses which they had bought of the Indians, and which had been of the greatest use in towing the boats, were found to be completely exhausted, and it was necessary to leave them behind. At night the boats reached the confluence of the Diamante River.

It had taken them just a month to arrive at the month of this river, from their quitting Fort Villarino, in which time, according to Villarino's daily computation, they had made 52 leagues: from Carmen to Fort Villarino the distance by the same computation was 71 leagues, so that in all they had now made 123 leagues (according to their daily reckoning) from Carmen.

It was one of the main objects of the voyage to ascertain the real course of this river, and whether or not it was likely to afford a navigable communication with Mendoza or the adjoining provinces: many streams descending from the eastern side of the Cordillera, between the latitudes of 32° and 36°, were known to take a southerly course, and there seemed every reason to suppose that this would be found to be the principal drain of those waters, and would turn out in consequence to be a very important river: for a long distance before they reached its mouth, the two rivers, though running in the same channel, might be distinguished from each other by their different colours, the Negro as pure as crystal, whilst the Diamante was muddy and disagreeable to the taste; leaving the launches moored at an island at the confluence of the two rivers, Villarino proceeded in the first instance to reconnoitre the latter in a small boat which he had with him; he ascended it about a league, and found it so far a fine navigable stream, but about that distance from its mouth two islands separated its waters into narrow channels in which there did not appear depth enough for the larger boats to pass: it is here that the Indians cross it, and Villarino found evidences of his late visiters having gone over with their horses and cattle 3 or 4 days before. He says, the river so far is nearly as large as the Rio Negro, and much larger than the Colorado, and its periodical floods must be formidable and much greater than those of the Rio Negro, to judge by the vestiges they have left of their

violence: it is much intersected by small islands overgrown with stunted willows: the lowlands along the shore have a most sterile appearance; these are again bounded by a steep range of red cliffs, extending as far as could be seen from a neighbouring eminence, and preventing, as Villarino believed, any likelihood of the river being passable by the Indians in that direction for some distance higher up. The country beyond appeared totally destitute of herbage; not a tree was to be seen at a distance from the river's side, or the least shelter of any kind for man or beast. Towards evening a terrific thunderstorm broke over them from the S.W.; the heavens became as overcast as though it were going to rain for a week, and Villarino hurried down the river again to join the boats. He does not appear to have made any further attempt to explore it. In one place, he says, the hope of reaching the Cordillera before the snow should prevent his crossing over to Valdivia induced him to abandon his first intention of passing seven or eight days in a further examination of it in the little boat: in another place he expresses his regret that he did not reach it during the time of the floods, which might have enabled him to ascend it with the launches; and he states his belief that in 25 days he should have found himself in the neighbourhood of San Luis or Mendoza.

On the *25th* they proceeded on their course, and about a league above the confluence of the rivers observed the latitude in 38° 44′ S.

Above the Diamante the country, as far as the eye could reach from some heights which a party ascended, presented one uniform desolate aspect, a vast extent of loose sandy soil mixed with gravel, destitute of all herbage. The only exception observed was upon the point formed by the confluence of the Diamante and Negro, where there was a better soil and pasture-ground sufficient for the subsistence of a permanent settlement, a position which, Villarino says, for many reasons, would be an admirable one for a permanent military post.

At the end of another week they had made little more than ten leagues beyond the mouth of the Diamante, such was the force of the stream against them. The river now began sensibly to alter its course and to run in a S.S.W. direction, between high precipitous banks.

The *1st* and *2nd February* were spent in cutting with spades and pickaxes a passage for the large boats through a part of the river where there was not above a foot and a half water; not but there was depth enough in the main stream, but, Villarino says, in that part the current ran like a sluice, and nothing but a capstern could have got the boats up against it.

On the *3rd* they came to a pass formed by high perpendicular

rocks which, advancing on either side, seemed almost to close the passage. The river here was not more than 500 yards across; a little farther on they came upon some good pasture grounds, where they found tracks of the Indians again; but in general it was observed, after passing the Diamante, that the banks of the river became daily, as they advanced, more steep and inaccessible.

On the 6*th* the appearance of the cliffs on either side was very remarkable: in one place they looked like ruined castles, in another two were noticed together exactly like a couple of brick-kilns; just past these a precipitous headland ran into the river about 600 feet high, close to which and apparently just separated from it and standing out in the river, rose a high pyramidical rock, visible two leagues off and looking at that distance like a monstrous giant upon his knees. These rocks once passed, the country became more level, and the river ran through a wider channel.

On the evening of the 7*th* they caught sight of some mountains in the distance, which they supposed to be the snowy tops of the Cordillera.

On the 8*th* they passed the mouth of a river on the north shore, which Villarino afterwards suspecting to be either the Pichi-Epicuntu, (the little river of the north,) said by Falkner to fall into the Negro, four or five days' march from the Diamante, or the river leading to Huechum, he sent back a party to reconnoitre its course, under the command of one of the masters of the launches. They were absent the greater part of the day, and on their return reported that it apparently descended from the Cordillera; that it might run about a mile an hour, and was three or four feet deep, with gravelly bottom; they brought with them a bottle of the water, which though thick was very good, but excessively cold; they also brought some boughs of apple-trees which appeared to have been stript of their fruit by the Indians. Impressed by their account that this was the river which would lead him to Huechum, the shortest way to Valdivia, Villarino determined to endeavour to pass up it, rather than follow the river Negro, which seemed to be daily trending more to the south. On the 12*th* he ascended it about two miles; but it was found impossible to get the launches farther up, in consequence of the shallowing of the water and a rapid, which they could not with all their efforts surmount. He, however, went on shore and followed on foot its course about three leagues, which satisfied him that although it was then impossible for the boats to go higher up, had he been there during the floods there would have been plenty of water, even if the launches had, as he says, a cargo of 1000 quintals on board. He observed two peaks of the Cordillera to the W.S.W., the tops of which were covered with snow; one of them, at the distance of

about 10 leagues, had the appearance A, the other B, (described on the map), was further off and much higher, seeming to rise above all the rest of the Cordillera, which inclined him to believe it was the Cerro Imperial, seen from Valdivia: its snowy top had a strikingly beautiful appearance. The river Pichi Epicuntú seemed to come from it. At the confluence of this river with the Negro the latitude was found to be 39° 35′ S.

One of the launches, the Champan, had become so leaky that she was no longer fit for going on with the service, and it was now determined to send her back to Carmen.

The 15*th*, 16*th*, 17*th*, and 18*th*, were occupied in distributing her provisions amongst the other boats, and preparing her to go down the river again, and partly in a reconnoissance on shore by an armed party of eleven men sent to examine particularly whether there was not some other water communication by which they might reach the Lake of the Boundary, or Huechum. The only result of their observations was, that where they were then moored was a very large island, which extended up the river about 8 leagues further. The Champan was dispatched on the 18th.

As they advanced further the river was found to be intersected with innumerable islands, evidently covered during the periodical floods; and the water became so shallow in many places that there was difficulty in finding a passage for the launches: on the 21st they came to a rapid running over a shallow, which it was necessary to deepen before they could pass: the men were at work the greater part of four days, for it was necessary to unload the boats, and carry their cargoes a considerable distance, as well as to cut a passage for them with spades and pickaxes. They were obliged to work nearly naked in the water all day, and suffered dreadfully from the musquitoes, from which their limbs and bodies became so swollen and disfigured that Villarino says they looked as though they had the plague. They named this place the Paso de los Mosquitos in consequence.

On the 26*th* they found, on the south side of the river, the bed of a stream from the S. E. nearly dry, which Villarino says was not to be wondered at, seeing that *it was nearly five months since there had been a day's rain.* A little beyond the mouth of this stream a spring of water burst out of the cliff, forming a sort of *jet-d'eau* into the river: the cliff, which is here precipitous and well exposed, is described as consisting of about 60 feet of clay (greda), on which rests a bed about 45 feet thick of gravel and sand, the composition of all the country round; and it is from the junction of these two strata that the spring in question bursts out.

The river became now so shallow in many places, that it was only by hard labour and deepening the channel at times with picks and spades that they made any progress, so much so, that

having made barely 9 leagues from the 19th of February to the 4th of March, Villarino began to despair of getting much farther, for, as he says, if they were only to make half a mile a day as they had done sometimes of late, it would take them a couple of months to get 10 leagues. On the 5th, however, the river deepened and became more navigable, which filled him with hopes of getting on faster. Speaking of the appearance of the country, he repeats that in all his life he had never seen any so miserable as that they had passed through since leaving the Diamante. The soil, as far as could be seen of it, was a mixture of gravel and sand, unfit for the growth of herb or tree: they might have supposed themselves on the banks of Avernus, for hardly a bird even was to be seen; for days together a stray pigeon or partridge was all that had come across them; as to any sort of game it had totally disappeared.

On the 8*th* they passed a range of cliffs on the south side, of a hard, white stone, fit for building; a reef of which ran across the bed of the river like a wall, and the navigation became dangerous from the numerous boulders from it strewed over the bottom of the river.

On the 9*th* two of the sailors were found to have the scurvy; they fortunately, however, fell in with some apple-trees covered with fruit, which proved a most seasonable supply, just as Villarino was lamenting that he had neither a surgeon nor medicine of any sort with him.

On the 13*th* the river made an elbow from which it appeared to run more to the south; and here the channel became narrower, running through rocky cliffs on either side—part of the lower range, in fact, of the Cordillera.

On the 14*th* with much difficulty Villarino ascended the highest of the hills within sight: not only was it so steep that he was obliged to crawl up it on his knees a great part of the way, but the whole soil was so loose that at every step it gave way under him, large boulders rolling down and endangering those below: no sum, he says, would have induced him to mount such a place again on his own account; and the king's service alone could ever have induced him to run such a risk of his life. However, he was repaid when he reached the summit, from which he clearly made out the whole line of the Cordillera, and was fully satisfied that the mountain he had seen some days before was the Cerro de la Imperial: its peak, he says, stands alone above and beyond the principal range of the Cordillera, completely covered with snow; and from where he was he judged it to be about 15 leagues to the N.W.: the range of the Cordillera he thought was not more than 10 leagues off.

On the 15*th* they came to a morass on the north side of

the river, into which a stream discharges itself from the Cordillera, which in the winter season, to judge by the appearance of its banks, must bring down a considerable body of water. Beaten tracks of the Indians were here observed leaving the river-side, and apparently cutting across in the direction of Huechum, or the Lake of the Boundary: from that direction the course of the river seemed every day more to diverge: according to the observations Villarino had taken the day before, he had satisfied himself that the Cerro Imperial was only 15 leagues off, and that he was already much to the south of the latitude of Valdivia.

Hereabouts they first saw some guanacoes, and it was wonderful to observe how those animals ran up and down the most craggy and apparently inaccessible places.

The channel of the river now became one deep, continuous pass or ravine, cutting through the rocks. On the 17*th* a piece of wood was picked up in the stream belonging to no tree known to grow between where they were and the mouth of the Negro: they believed it to be of a species of which there is a great abundance over against Chiloe, where it is used for ship-building, and exported to Lima in large quantities.

On the 19*th* the latitude was found to be 40° 2′ S.

If they now made a league in the course of the day, it was thought good work; but Villarino says he can hardly describe the labour of the people in hauling the boats up the stream, or the difficulties of the navigation, which seemed at every wind of the river to increase.

On the 25*th*, having made, according to their daily reckoning, 41 leagues from the Diamante, and being within 5 or 6 leagues of the foot of the Cordillera, they arrived at an island where the river seemed to divide into two; one branch coming from the south, the other from the north. Here Villarino determined to give the men a day's rest, whilst he started himself in his little boat, to explore this new fork of the river: accordingly, the next morning early, accompanied by one of the carpenters, he rowed up that branch which came from the south, called Limé Leubú (the River of Leeches) by the Indians, (marked in the map, the Rio de la Encarnacion.) They had not gone far when they came to the vestiges of an Indian encampment, where they found two stuffed horses stuck upright in the ground with stakes, as is usual where these people bury one of their Caciques, or persons of consequence. As they advanced, they met with huge piles of timber washed down by the stream: many of these trees were entirely new to them, but appeared fit for all useful purposes, some of them being very hard and close-grained, and others lighter and sweet-smelling: large quantities were seen heaped along the banks, for the most part however much spoilt by long

exposure to the action of the water and to the sun: some of them measured a foot and a half in diameter. The river itself, Villarino says, at its mouth, is about 600 feet across, with about five feet depth, where they examined it; this, however, no doubt, at any other season, would have been much more. Its course is from the S.W., running with much rapidity through a deeply-cut channel, full of large round smooth stones: the water is very clear and sweet, but the banks on either side have a most desolate aspect—nothing but sand and gravel, on which apparently nothing will grow: this was the appearance as far as they went, though they judged from the trees, that higher up the soil must be better, to admit of their growth. Satisfied with this examination of the southern branch, Villarino resolved next day to proceed up the other, which he fully expected would at last take him to the neighbourhood of Valdivia.

The island at the junction of the rivers, or rather which separates them from each other, is about a mile and a half long, and is principally composed of sand and gravel; they found some apple-trees upon it. According to their daily reckoning, they had now made 165 leagues from Carmen; having navigated the whole course of the river Negro to the very foot of the Cordillera.

On the 27*th* they entered the river, called in the map, the Catapuliche; it was hard work to make way against the stream, which became more and more rapid as they advanced; in four days they only accomplished as many leagues, which brought them to a small river running into the Catapuliche from the S.W., which, on examination, was found not to be navigable; it discharges itself into the main river by seven mouths, from which they named it the Rio de las Siete Bocas. The nearest range of the snowy Cordillera was not more than two leagues off. The Cerro Imperial, though generally covered with clouds, was occasionally distinctly visible, covered with snow, and, as they judged, distant from them about 7 leagues. The Indians had told Villarino that he would find a great abundance of apple-trees along the sides of a high mountain looking over the sea, and he was now satisfied they meant this Cerro, for along the banks of the rivers which descend from it, not only to Valdivia, but to Conception, it is well known that there is a great quantity of that fruit. He was now only anxious to reach the Lake of the Boundary, from whence he hoped to be able to communicate with Valdivia. The passage of the river, however, became every hour more difficult; about six leagues from its entrance they reached a place where it separates into three channels divided by islands; on the north side there is a considerable extent of good pasture-ground, evidently much resorted to by the Indians; and on the shore was found a quantity of the pine-fruit, which had been brought down by the current

of the river. The San Antonio was found to make so much water that she was hove down to be examined, and was found in so bad a state that, but that he did not like to lose the assistance of the men now he was so near the Indian territory, Villarino says he would at once have sent her back.

On the *5th* and *6th* they had to pass the launches over a place where there was little more than a foot water; it was necessary to take everything out to lighten them, not only all the provisions, but masts, oars, and everything else; the men were almost worn out with the hard work they had to go through; and after all, in many parts they were obliged to deepen the bed of the river ere the boats could be dragged through.

On the *7th*, about mid-day, a party of Indians showed themselves on the south bank of the river, calling out 'Basilio! Chulilaquin!' Nor was it long before the Cacique Chulilaquin made his appearance. These Indians brought with them some very fine apples as presents, which they at first set a high value upon; but Villarino soon made them aware that he knew well enough they were not so scarce as they pretended; besides which they were for the most part all the worse for having been brought some way on horseback, though some of them were of very large size; so much so, that two of them, which were picked out for their size, weighed not less than seventeen ounces. They also had with them some piñones, or pine fruit, which Villarino describes as exceeding good eating; he says, had he had but enough of them, he and his people could have gone for three or four months without any other food; he describes them as resembling the Barbary date when taken out of the husk or pine apple which covers them.

On the *9th* the weather set in exceedingly bad, with much snow and rain, which made it necessary to cover in the boats. The Indians however did not fail to visit them as usual, and they soon learnt that the Cacique Francisco with his people was hard by, with their deserter Miguel Benites with him. In fact, on the 11th some of the women of that party, and amongst them the interpretess Tereza, ventured to show themselves. On being asked why Francisco had broken his promise of joining them at the Choleechel, whence he had engaged to send one of his people down to the establishment with their letters for the superintendent,—they said Benites had told them that the Spaniards were only watching a good opportunity to attack them, to seize upon their horses and cattle; and that two Indians from the Colorado were expressly sent by the Cacique Negro to put them on their guard against them, so that Fransisco fled, from pure fright for his life. Desirous to undeceive them upon this point, Villarino told them, if Francisco would bring Benites to him he would make him confess what lies he had told, for he could

easily prove that the whole was an invention to facilitate his going off with Francisco's daughter, for whom he had taken such a fancy that he wanted to make her his wife: upon hearing which, all the Indians burst out laughing, ridiculing the notion of a Cacique's daughter marrying a slave, for as such it appeared they now looked on Benites.

These Indians said that the ruins of the old Spanish Mission on the lake of Nahuelhuapi,* opposite to Chiloe, were only two days up the river Encarnacion, and were still to be seen there; but what Villarino could not understand was, they said that not long before some Spaniards had been there with a boat, which being broken to pieces, they returned whence they came; from which they inferred there was a communication with the sea from those parts, which, observes Villarino, is physically impossible: had the Spaniards really been there, as the Indians reported, he adds, they must have put their boat together after crossing the Cordillera, or perhaps have built it on the spot, of the timber of which it is well known there is such an abundance in all the Cordillera opposite Chiloe, fit for such purposes: they added, that in those parts the lands were very fertile, and well wooded; that potatoes of extraordinary size grew there, and a vast quantity of apples, particularly about the place where the chapel of the missionaries was: that that country was called in their language Tucamalil, and that the Indians who lived there had been across to San Julian's, and bought many articles from the Spaniards at that settlement.

On the 11*th* Tereza and another woman of Francisco's party came to tell them that Benites had run away the night before from their encampment with another of their deserters; that they had carried off two horses, and stolen the Cacique's sabre; but that they had been pursued, and Benites, after being wounded, had thrown himself into the river in attempting to escape from his pursuers. It appeared that this man had really done all he could to excite the Indians against his countrymen, telling them that the object of the Spaniards was to take possession of their lands and to establish forts in them; especially at the passage of Choleechel, which had particularly excited their alarm, inasmuch as the existence of many of them in a great measure depends upon their free communication with the Pampas by that pass. This accounted for their evident anxiety to learn the truth as to the objects of the Spaniards in visiting those parts, about which they never lost an opportunity of questioning the sailors.

* This mission was founded in 1704, by some Jesuit Fathers, who were afterwards massacred by the Indians; for an account of it see the "Lettres Edifiantes." The name is derived from Nahuel—tiger and huapi—island.

As they ascended the river the pasturage became more abundant, and the country had a less desolate aspect, although they were not more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ leagues from the main range of the snowy Cordillera, in the W.S.W., and 7 or 8 in a straight line from the Cerro Imperial, or the Yajaunassen, as the Indians call it, which had a splendid appearance covered to its base with snow.

The heavy rain which had fallen increased the depth of water, though still there was not sufficient to allow the launches to make much progress through the numerous shallows, indeed nothing but the extraordinary exertions of the men could have got the launches up; but the expectation of so soon reaching the Lake of Huechum, from whence they might communicate with Valdivia, and obtain assistance to carry on their discoveries as soon as the floods should set in, gave them fresh courage, and Villarino speaks in the highest terms of their indefatigable zeal and excellent conduct throughout all the many difficulties they had to encounter. If the Indians opposed their communicating with Valdivia, they were ready, they said, to volunteer, well armed, to force a passage through their territory, and to run all risks to secure the co-operation of the people of that place in completing the service they were engaged in. Villarino says it was impossible for him to have been more admirably and better served than he was by these men from first to last.

On the 15*th* the latitude was found to be 39° 33′. They continued to receive daily visits from parties of Indians, bringing fruit and also sheep to sell; but as his own stock of marketable articles began to run short, and he was anxious to keep some of his trinkets to reward those who might aid him in communicating with Valdivia, Villarino was obliged to send most of them away; especially those who brought fruit, for which they always asked what appeared a ridiculous value in exchange. They found out, however, at last, that these Indians were themselves obliged to buy them of the Pehuenches,* the owners of the lands in which the piñones grow, as well as the greater part of the apples, for the Pehuenches will not allow them to go there themselves to gather them. The Pehuenches are a people who have fixed habitations, and live higher up the Catapuliche; they sow corn, and maize, and other fruits; and of the apples they have their yearly gathering or harvest, of which they make cider in considerable quantities: and though they traffic with the Huilleches, the Leubuches, and the Chulilaquines, and other Indians who bring them cattle and horses from the Pampas, being a vagabond, thieving, and unsettled race, they will not allow them to go and do as they please

* *Pehuen* signifies a Pine in their language, and from this the people where those trees are found take their name of *Pehuenches.*

amongst them. In examining one of the bags of these people in which some piñones were brought down, Villarino picked out some excellent wheat, maize, beans, lentils, and white and black peas, all which he was told were grown in abundance by them in the plains of Huechum, and higher up the river.

Up to the 17*th* of April they had advanced only 10 leagues up the Catapuliche. On that day they were surprised by the arrival of some of Chulilaquin's people, in great haste and disorder, to tell Villarino that Chulilaquin had had a personal quarrel with the Cacique Guchumpilqui, and had killed him with his dagger in his tent the night before, because he had come to solicit him to join in a plan to attack and destroy the Spaniards; but being greatly alarmed lest the Aucazes should immediately determine on avenging the death of their Cacique, he begged, as he had acted entirely for the sake of the Spaniards, that a party of them well armed might be immediately sent to his assistance, and that he would send horses for them. Villarino suspecting the truth of this story at first, said what he could to excuse himself from sending the men. It was evident, however, that the Indians were in a great state of excitement; and he prepared at night for anything that might happen. The next day a cloud of them was seen galloping down to the boats: the first who arrived were the sons of the Cacique and Tereza, who brought with them two sheep as a present; a great number followed, and in about an hour afterwards Chulilaquin himself appeared dressed out in the uniform and with the bâton of a Cacique given him by the Spaniards. He presented himself with no little ceremony, and made a long speech, which Villarino says, as a specimen of their verbiage, was worth hearing. He began by laying great stress on his extraordinary attachment to the Spaniards: then he dwelt upon the evil designs of the Aucazes, and their plans to cut off the expedition, in furtherance of which Guchumpilqui had had the audacity, he said, to solicit him to join him, trying to make him believe that the Spaniards were come amongst them with hostile designs, and were acting with bad faith; this he said he could not stand, and therefore he killed him: that as the Aucazes had gathered together, and were preparing to attack him, he had fled with his people to place himself under the protection of his true friends, for he was sure they would rather lose their own lives than suffer him and his people to be destroyed.

Villarino told him he might rely on his protection, and consider himself and his people perfectly safe so long as they remained near him. During the conference the Spaniards were all under arms, whilst the Indians were grouped round on horseback very attentive to what was passing. Villarino addressed some words to them to encourage them, and to show them the sort of aid he

was ready to give them he ordered a gun in one of the launches to be fired off. That night they pitched their tents within little more than a musket shot of the boats. The interpretess Tereza, however, remained on board to speak privately to Villarino. When they were alone she said the history of the cause of Guchumpilqui's being assassinated was a fabrication, that the truth was he had gone to Chulilaquin with a quantity of ponchos and some mares to ransom a girl whom the latter had lately taken; and that they had come to an agreement, and all was apparently settled, when one of Chulilaquin's sons took offence that Guchumpilqui had not made him any present upon the occasion, which ended in a scuffle, in which Guchumpilqui and another Indian were killed; but she said it was not the less necessary for the Spaniards to be on their guard, for the Cacique Francisco, who was leagued with Guchumpilqui's people, was not to be trusted—that he had determined not to give up the deserter Benites; and had been very active in exciting the Aucazes to attack the expedition, principally on the ground that the Spaniards designed to establish themselves at the Choleechel, which of all things she said the Indians of those parts were most afraid of their doing.

She said she was quite tired of living amongst them, and begged Villarino to take her on board with a little girl she had; but she said he must give his word to protect her, for Francisco would give up all the deserters to get her back again, to put her to death for betraying him.

19*th*. It rained heavily all night, but they were kept on the alert by the unceasing cries and noise of the Indians in their tents, who were in the greatest alarm. Tereza, the interpretess, came again in the morning, begging for God's sake to be received on board with her child, who she was anxious to make a Christian of; to which Villarino at last agreed, considering that it was not only a charity to do so, but that the woman might be of much use from the information she was able to give them concerning the Indians. The next day, on examining her further, she said the Aucazes were exceedingly hostile to them, and had for some time determined to surprise them if they had an opportunity. Reflecting upon Guchumpilqui's former conduct lower down the river, in carrying off the deserters—the evidences of the preparations which they found had been made for attacking them at that time—the trick of the Cacique who was with him, who came on board pretending to be sick, and other circumstances, Villarino had no difficulty in believing that this Cacique, who he was persuaded even then meditated cutting them off, had again entered into a plot with the Aucazes against them; and that they imagined the shallow parts of the river, where they then were, afforded the best opportunity for attacking them, for in

many places the Indians on horseback might ride up to the very boats: in fact he was now fully satisfied that some treachery was meant, and the night was again passed under arms.

On the 20*th*, as soon as it was morning, he examined carefully the ground about where he was; and having made up his mind as to the course he meant to pursue, he sent to desire Chulilaquin to assemble his people and come to hear what he had to say to them. When they were gathered together, he made them a long speech something in their own style, through the interpreters, the main object of which was to impress upon them a sense of the great power of the Spaniards, and the necessity of their paying implicit obedience to him as the king's officer in all that he desired them to do; that if they showed themselves faithful and loyal subjects of the king, he would enable them in this emergency to defend themselves against the attacks of all their enemies, even if they should be as thick as the grass on the ground. Then he ordered a flag to be unfurled and some guns fired, the Spaniards at the same time joining in a general shout of "Viva el Rey! Viva el Rey!" When he had done, the Cacique, who Villarino says was really a very intelligent fellow, in his turn addressed his people, exhorting them to place their faith in the Spaniards, and to thank the Pepechel (Deity?) that he had sent them such brave friends in their difficulties; all which was responded to by the Indians following the example set them, and crying out lustily, "Viva el Rey!" Finding them ready to do all that he required of them, Villarino set them to work to form a palisado; his men cut down a number of willow-trees, and the ground being marked out, before night, with the assistance of the Indians, who worked incessantly and with great spirit, a sort of fortification was made sufficient to protect them from any sudden surprise from the Aucazes. Then he sent out scouts to watch at a distance of half a league from each other along the road from the place where the Aucazes were known to be, and to bring timely notice of their movements: these arrangements completed, the Indians thought themselves invincible with the aid of the Spaniards: they killed one of their fattest mares and some sheep, and brought a quantity of apples and piñones for the people to make a feast after their work.

The result of all these preparations was soon shown, for in a day or two one of their spies brought word that the Aucazes, finding the Spaniards preparing with Chulilaquin to give them a hot reception, had retreated in order to collect more people; nor was it long before they heard that they and the Pehuenches were quarrelling and fighting with each other in consequence of the refusal of the latter to join in attacking the Christians, and that some blood had been spilt between them in consequence, so that

the Aucazes were getting out of heart, and had gone back. Chulilaquin's people became in proportion extremely joyous, and in the evening a great feast was held amongst them, according to the custom of these savages, to do honour to a grand-daughter of their Cacique. After a few days the Indians being apparently quiet, and the weather set in fine, though the neighbouring mountains were covered with snow, and all the level country below hard with frost, Villarino resolved to go up the river in his little boat, taking horses with him to tow her along. He had not proceeded far when he arrived at the mouth of the river which comes from Huechum, and which discharges itself with exceeding rapidity over a low reef into the Catapuliche. Proceeding about a league farther, he arrived at a place where the latter ceased to be navigable; and he was about to reconnoitre its course by land, when suddenly a party of strange Indians showed themselves, and then galloped off as if to give notice of his approach; some more were presently after seen; so having ascertained that the river was no farther passable, he returned to his boat, and soon reached his people again.

A party sent out on horseback on the 23rd, to explore the country, was absent two days; they returned with a great quantity of apples: they had been as far as 8 or 9 leagues; and reported the river Huechum to be formed by many smaller streams, the banks of which were covered with apple-trees, for the most part stripped of their fruit by the Indians; but from the farthest place they reached, which was the foot of the southern side of the Cerro Imperial, they said there were extensive forests of the same trees, all yellow with the fruit upon them; that the lands, unlike those they had seen lower down the river, were well watered, and covered with a rich vegetation which it was delightful to look upon; and that the lake of Huechum was in the mountains, about two leagues off; they were shown the place where Guchumpilqui was killed, and his blood; and Chulilaquin's son, who was with them, wanted to disinter the body, that he might cut off the head to show it to Villarino, and would have done so had they allowed him. Looking to the westward, they said, from the place where they gathered the apples, there seemed to be no termination to an extensive vale which opened in that direction, although both to the north and south it was bounded by mountains covered with snow, and in their opinion the opening in question was continuous and uninterrupted by any mountains to the very shores of the Pacific.

All the accounts of the Indians agreed that they were now within three or four days' journey only of Valdivia; they said they knew well the distance, that it might be done in three days on any animal, and that an answer might be easily procured in

seven, calculating three to go, one to remain there, and three to return; that the road was short enough, but bad, on account of the passage of the Cordillera, which it was necessary to travel over slowly; that if it was necessary to bring back any supplies from Valdivia, they must be transported on horses or mules, for no carts could cross; that from the Cerro Imperial the sea was distinctly visible, and was not far off; that the Spaniards had on those coasts large ships and forts, with cannon much bigger than those in the launches, and that from time to time some of them were in the habit of coming amongst the Aucazes and Pehuenches to buy ponchos and cattle, and some of Chulilaquin's people said that just about the time of the death of Guchumpilqui one of them had come with some Peons from Valdivia to the encampment of that Cacique, which was five or six leagues off, to buy the cattle which he had brought with him from the Pampas of Buenos Ayres; and they said they were there at the time, and saw the spurs and other things which he gave to Guchumpilqui's people for the cattle; but when they heard of the Cacique's death, they immediately fled, lest his people should fall upon them in consequence.

Day after day Villarino hoped to find some opportunity of communicating with the governor of Valdivia; but such was the alarm which appeared to be excited by Guchumpilqui's death, that no Indian could be found to undertake to carry a letter through the country of the Aucazes: at last a son-in-law of Chulilaquin, who had relations amongst those people, was prevailed upon to make the attempt: and he promised if he was prevented going on himself, to do his best to get a letter sent on by some of the Aucazes themselves, or by any Spaniard who might be amongst those people. He was absent three days; but on the 30th returned, saying he had found it quite impossible to get any one to undertake the mission to Valdivia after what had happened to Guchumpilqui, and the inveterate enmity of his people, and indeed of all the Aucazes, in consequence.

This seems to have decided Villarino, who made up his mind to move from where he was and return down the river; and with this resolve he forthwith acquainted Chulilaquin, whose lamentations in consequence were unceasing. 'How,' he said, 'would the Spaniards abandon him after all that had passed, and leave him and his people to be massacred by the Aucazes, who had sworn to extirpate the whole race of them the moment they were left to themselves?' 'Nothing,' he said, 'should induce him to stay behind, and he was determined to follow the boats and go down the river, and place himself under the protection of the establishment.' And for this he immediately began in earnest to prepare.

On the 1*st* of *May* the river rose nearly a foot and a half, which Villarino was anxious to make the most of; the Indians, however, on one pretext and another, succeeded in delaying him day after day; they brought him a prodigious quantity of apples of various sorts, all excellent in quality; amongst the rest, of the species known in Spain by the name of repinaldos reales (golden pippins).

On the night of the 2*nd* the river rose as much as three feet.

On the 4*th* the launches got underweigh again, Chulilaquin and the Indians raising their tents at the same time to follow them.

On the 5*th* they reached the island opposite the mouth of the river Encarnacion, having just done in two days what had taken them twenty-one going upwards—and this with neither sails nor oars, more than were just necessary to keep the boats in the stream. A little before reaching the island they passed by the encampment of Chulilaquin* and the Indians, of whom they took their last farewell, cheering each other as long as they were in sight. The snow which had fallen since they ascended the river had given an entirely new aspect to the country, so that with difficulty they recognised most of the places which they had remarked in going up.

On the 6*th*, after collecting specimens of the timber from the river Encarnacion, they proceeded rapidly on their course down the main stream: the river had risen about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet since they passed up, and the boats went down without any obstruction.

The courses of many streamlets, which were dry as they passed up, now emptied their waters abundantly into the Rio Negro.

On the 7*th* they were fairly clear of the lower range of the Cordillera, and arrived at the commencement of the red marl, which discolours the river lower down. Villarino calculated that every hour now he did about what cost him a day's labour against the stream.

On the 8*th* the launches all got a-ground in running through the islands in the pass 'De los Mosquitos:' in the course of the day, however, they made about the same distance as they had done going up in sixteen.

On the 9*th* they reached an island where they had buried part of their provisions, and took them on board again.

The next day, after passing a small stream which enters the Rio Negro on the south side they reached the Giant's Statue, of which mention is made in the voyage up, and soon after they saw

* Chulilaquin adhered to his determination of following the Spaniards to Carmen, in the neighbourhood of which he long remained, and proved himself one of their most faithful allies; Francisco, on the other hand, became so exceedingly troublesome, that after a time it was found necessary to put an end to his insolence, and he perished with all his tribe in an attack made upon him by the governor of Carmen.

an encampment of Indians with about 100 head of cattle. When the Indians perceived them they immediately fled, and Villarino went on shore and examined their tents:—it was evident that they were travelling from the eastward by what they found in them: the Spaniards however touched nothing, and went back to the boats after satisfying their curiosity.

As they receded from the Cordillera they found the temperature daily more mild, and they noticed that in consequence of the rains which had fallen since they went up the river, the banks had put on a very different appearance, being now in many places covered with good pasture where before they were entirely barren and desolate, especially between the Giant's Statue and the Diamante, the mouth of which they reached on the 12*th*. Villarino says it was his intention to have spent some days in the further exploration of this river, but on entering it he found, contrary to his expectation, that there was even less water in it than when he visited it going upwards, and not enough for the launches to go up it.

The lowness of the waters of the Diamante was found to affect the depth of the Rio Negro, which below its junction was considerably lower than when they passed up; they noticed also that as they became further removed from the sources of these rivers the force of the current daily diminished.

On the 14*th* they passed the place where Guchumpilqui had gone off with the deserters.

On the 17*th* they reached Fort Villarino at the Choleechel, where they found the stockade and huts and everything else just as they had left them: there were no signs of its having been since visited by the Indians: but they were much struck with the richness of the vegetation which had grown up about the place; in some places the grass stood a yard high, and many seeds of beans and other vegetables which had accidentally been scattered during their former stay there, had sprung up and were already in a productive state. There were many deer about, and an astonishing quantity of partridges: after passing a day on shore they again started on their voyage, and on the 25th May, just three weeks from leaving Huechum, they arrived safely once more at Carmen, after an absence of just eight months.

[Upon the whole, the results of this expedition were important, though not all that might have been expected, especially as no examination was made of the principal affluent from the north, supposed to be the Diamante:—the great point was established, of the possibility of navigating the main stream of the Negro from its mouth, in the Southern Atlantic, to the very foot of the Cordillera of Chile, within fifty miles of Valdivia, upon the shores of the Pacific: much information was obtained respecting the Indians—the places frequented by them, and

the roads or passages by which they were in the habit of making their predatory excursions into the province of Buenos Ayres; and Villarino points out how easily these marauders might be held in check, if not entirely prevented from further annoying the people of Buenos Ayres, by the establishment of a fort at the great pass of the river Negro, near the Choleechel. It is evident that the Indians were extremely apprehensive that the stoppage of this pass would be one of the immediate results of the expedition, and that the difficulties Villarino experienced when he reached the Cordillera in opening a communication with Valdivia were very much to be attributed to their suspicions on this score:* still he seems to have been more than necessarily timid himself: and his neglect to explore, at any rate, the river Encarnacion upon his return is apparently inexcusable.

He had however many unforeseen difficulties to contend with; the heavy Spanish launches, which were fitted out for the service, proved to be but ill-suited for the purpose; and the time of year appears to have been the worst he could have started in; not only was it the period when the waters were at their lowest, but from an extraordinary drought the bed of the river was even more shallow than usual at the driest season.

In a subsequent excursion, not long after his return, into the territory of the Indians, he was cut off, and barbarously murdered by the savages. W. P.]

---

* After a lapse of more than fifty years, this suggestion has been carried into effect by General Rosas, the present governor of Buenos Ayres; and a military post has been formed (1833) at the Choleechel, which will not only secure the southern parts of the province of Buenos Ayres from the hostile inroads of the Indians, but will in all probability lead to our obtaining, ere long, much new and interesting information respecting a vast tract of country which is totally unknown to us.—W. P.

It will be seen in the following Journal, that the total distance, by the daily courses, will be—

	Leagues.	Miles.
From Carmen to Fort Villarino	71	1
From Villarino to the Diamante	52	0
From the Diamante to the terminating Fork of the Negro .	41	1
Up the Catapuliche, N.N.W.	10	1
	175	0

Villarino says, in a note appended to his Journal, that the bottom of the river, as far as Choleechel, is sand; from thence to the Diamante gravelly, with many pebbles; from the Diamante upwards the bottom is strewed with rounded stones and boulders, which increase in size as the range of the Cordillera is approached. The depth varies much, as well as the current, depending, in some measure, on the more or less width of the bed of the river, and is liable to great changes in the time of the floods, which are periodical, and twice in the year, from the rains in the winter, and the melting of the snow in summer.—W. P.

Distances and Courses noted on Villarino's Voyage up the River Negro.

Date.	Distance corrected by daily reckoning.		True Daily Course.	Distance where given by windings of the river.	Remarks.
1782	Lgs.	Mls.		Leagues.	
From Sept. 28 to Oct. 2.	11	..	N.W.¼W.	. .	Direct distance from Carmen.
5	5	..	W.N.W.	12	
6	..	2	W.N.W.	3	
7	1	1½	N. by W.	4	
8	2	..	W.N.W.	5	
9	2	..	W.N.W.	. .	
10	2	..	N.W.	6	
11	2	1	N. by W.	6	
12	3	1½	N.W.	6½	Indian Road to San Antonio passed.
14	1	..	N.W. by W.	. .	
16	5	1	N.W.	11	
17	1	..	N.W.		
18	2	1	Not given.	. .	Latitude observed 39° 44′ S.
19	1	2	W. by N.		
20	2	2	Not given.		
22	1	..	N.W.		
23	3	..	N.W.		
24	1	..	N.W. by W.	. .	16 islands counted on the 24th
25	1	1	W.N.W.		
26	1	1½	N.W.		
27	5	..	W. by N.		
28	2	..	W.N.W.		
29	1	1½	W.N.W.		
30	2	2	W.N.W.		
31	1	1	Not given.		
Nov. 1	1	2	W.N.W.		
2	1	1½	N. by W.	. .	Beginning of the great island of Choleechel; lat. obs. 39°.
3	..	1½	N.W.		
4	..	2	N. by W.		
5	..	2	W.N.W.		
6	2	..	N.W.	. .	Peninsula passed, to which the boats returned on the 11th and constructed Fort Villarino.
From Carmen to Fort Villarino—leagues	71	1			

Distances and Courses—Continued.

Date.	Distance corrected by daily reckoning.		True Daily Course.	Remarks.
1782	Lgs.	Mls.		
December 20	3	1½	N.W.	From Fort Villarino.
21	2	..	N.W.	
22	1	1½	W.N.W.	
23	2	2	W.N.W.	Passed the end of Choleechel.
24	3	1	N.W.	
25	3	..	W.N.W.	
26	1	1½	W.N.W.	
27	2	1	W.N.W.	
28	1	1	W.N.W.	
29	..	1	Not given.	Latitude observed 38° 52′ S.
30	1	1½	W. by N.	Pass of the Indians across the river.
1783 31	..	2	W.	
Jan. 1				
2	1	1½	W.S.W.	
3				
4	1	..	W. by S.	The Indian road separates from the river side on account of the hills.
5	2	2	W. by S.	
6				
7	1	..	W.S.W.	
8				
9				
10	2	..	W.S.W.	
11	..	1½	W.S.W.	The Indian road joins the river again.
13	1	..	W. by S.	
14	2	..	W.	
15	4	..	W. by N.	
16				
17	4	..	W.N.W.	
18				
20	4	..	W.	
21				
22	3	..	W.N.W.	
23	1	2	W.N.W.	Junction of the Diamante, a league above latitude observed 38° 44′ S.
From Fort Villarino to the Diamante	52	leag.		

Distances and Courses—continued.

Date.	Distance corrected by daily reckoning. Lgs.	Mls.	True Daily Course.	Remarks.
1783				
January 25	1	..	W.	From the junction of the Diamante.
27	4	..	W. by S.	
28	..	1	S. by E.	
29, 30	2	1½	W.S.W.	The river trends to the south.
31	1	..	S.S.W.	Variation of the Compass N. 20° E.
February 1, 2, 3	1	..	S.S.W.	
4	..	2	S.W.	
5	1	1½	W.S.W.	
6	3	..	S.W. by S.	
7	2	..	S.W. by W.	
8	2	..	S.W.	Mouth of the Pichi-Picuntú-Leubú, or "Little River of the North." Latitude 39° 35′ S.
9	..	1	S.W.	Small stream from the north side.
19, 20	2	..	S.W. by S.	The river much intersected by islands.
21, 22, 23, 24	1	1½	S.W. by S.	Shallows at the pass of Musquitoes.
25, 26	2	1	S.W. by S.	A small stream from the S.E.
27	1	1	S.W. by S.	The river divided into four channels by islands
March 1 to 6	1	1½	W.S.W.	
7, 8	1	1½	S.W. by W.	
9	..	1	W.	
10	..	1	S.W.	
12, 13	1	..	S.W.	
14	..	2	S. by W.	The Cerro-Imperial seen about 15 leagues to the N.W.
15, 16	2	1½	S.S.E.	A small stream from the east.
17	1	..	S.	
18, 19	..	2	S. by E.	Latitude observed 40° 2′ S.
20, 21	1	..	S. by W.	
22	1	..	S.W. by S.	
23, 24	2	1	W.S.W.	
25	1	..	W.	An island where the river Negro separates in a fork, one branch coming from the south—the Encarnacion; the other from the north—the Catapuliche, distance from the range of the Cordillera 5 or 6 leagues.
From the Diamante to the end of the river Negro	41	1		