

MURRAY'S HOME AND COLONIAL LIBRARY.—
DARWIN'S JOURNAL.

This journal, by Charles Darwin, forms the twenty-second number of that very useful series of publications which Mr. Murray has for some time been issuing. The learned journalist accompanied the scientific expedition that was sent in the year 1831 to explore the coasts of Southern America, and to report on the various phenomena concerning the zoological and geological history of these regions.

Mr. Darwin's account of these matters is clear and concise. His narrative is easy and unembarrassed, and he conveys, in the manner of one completely master of his subject, his knowledge of zoology and botany of the different places which he visited. His descriptions of the physical aspect of these regions, and of the manners and peculiarities of their inhabitants, are peculiarly animate and amusing. As a specimen of the discomfort of their lives, we give his description of one which he met with in a journey from Rio Janeiro.—

"We left our miserable sleeping-place before sunrise.—The road passed through a narrow sandy plain, lying between the sea and the interior salt lagoons. The number of beautiful fishing birds, such as egrets and cranes, and the excellent plants assuming most fantastical forms, gave to the scene an interest which it would not otherwise have possessed. The few stunted trees were loaded with parasitical plants, among which the beauty and delicious fragrance of some of the orchides were most to be admired.—As the sun rose, the day became extremely hot, and the reflection of the light and heat from the white sand was very distressing. We dined at Manditiba, the thermometer in the shade being 84. The beautiful view of the distant wooded hills, reflected in the perfectly calm water of an extensive lagoon, quite refreshed us. As the *ronda* here was a very good one, and I have the pleasant, but rare remembrance, of an excellent dinner, I will be grateful and presently describe it, as the type of its class. These houses are often large, and are built of thick upright branches interwoven and afterwards plastered. They seldom have floors, and never glazed windows, but are generally pretty well roofed. Universally the front part is open, forming a kind of verandah, in which tables and benches are placed. The bedrooms join on each side, and here the passenger may sleep as comfortably as he can, on a wooden platform, covered by a thin straw mat. The *ronda* stands in a courtyard, where the horses are fed. On first arriving, it was our custom to unsaddle the horses and give them their Indian corn; then, with a low bow, to ask the *embor* to do us the favour to give us something to eat. 'Anything you choose, sir,' was his usual answer. For the first few times, vainly I thanked Providence for having guided us to so good a man. The conversation proceeding, the case universally became deplorable. 'Any fish can you do us the favour of giving?' 'Oh! no, sir.' 'Any soup?' 'No, sir.' 'Any bread?'—'Oh! no, sir.' 'Any dried meat?' 'Oh! no, sir.' If we were lucky, by waiting a couple of hours, we obtained fowls, rice, and farinha. It not unfrequently happened that we were obliged to kill, with stones, the poultry for our own supper. When thoroughly exhausted by fatigue and hunger, we unceremoniously hinted that we should be glad of our meal, the pompous and (though true) most unsatisfactory answer was, 'It will be ready when it is ready.' If we had dared to remonstrate any further, we should have been told to proceed on our journey, as being too impertinent. The hosts are most ungracious and disagreeable in their manners; their houses and their persons are often filthy dirty; the want of the accommodation of forks, knives, and spoons is common; and I am sure no cottage or hotel in England could be found in a state so utterly destitute of every comfort. At Campos Novos, however, we dined sumptuously; having rice and fowls, biscuit, wine, and spirits, for dinner; coffee in the evening, and fish with coffee for breakfast. All this, with good food for the horses, only cost Rs. 64. per head. Yet the host of this *ronda* being asked if he knew anything of a whip which one of the party had lost, gruffly answered, 'How should I know?—why did you not take care of it?—I suppose the dogs have eaten it.'"

We shall make another short extract in order to show the degradation to which the inhuman institution of slavery can reduce its victims:—

"While staying at this estate I was nearly being an eyewitness to one of those atrocious acts which can only take place in a slave country. Owing to a quarrel and lawsuit, the owner was on the point of taking all the women and children from the male slaves, and selling them separately at the public auction at Rio. Interest, and not any feeling of compassion, prevented this act. Indeed, I do not believe the inhumanity of separating thirty families, who had lived together for many years, even occurred to the owner. Yet I will pledge myself that in humanity and good feeling he was superior to the common run of men.—It may be said there exists no limit to the blindness of interest and selfish habit. I may mention one very trifling anecdote, which at the time struck me more forcibly than any story of cruelty. I was crossing a ferry with a negro who was uncommonly stupid. In endeavouring to make him understand I talked loud and made signs, in doing which I passed my hand near his face. Ha, I suppose, thought I was in a passion and was going to strike him; for instantly, with a frightened look and half-shut eyes, he dropped his hands. I shall never forget my feelings of surprise, disgust, and shame, at seeing a great and powerful man afraid even to ward off a blow directed, so he thought, at his face. This man had been trained to a degradation lower than the slavery of the most helpless animal."

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The present number of *Murray's Home and Colonial Library* contains the 3d and concluding part of "Darwin's Journal of a Voyage Round the World." The objects of this voyage were exclusively geological, and to all lovers of that great, though immature science, its "Journal" will be a welcomed publication. The quantity of information which it contains is immense; so much so that it is hardly possible to understand how a single mind could have amassed it.
