

in abundance. I have actually seen mules carrying to the coast, for transportation to England, a cargo of such cinders. But the first case is much the most curious. The Chilean miners were so convinced that copper pyrites contained not a particle of copper that they laughed at the Englishmen for their ignorance, who laughed in turn, and bought their richest veins for a few dollars. It is very odd that, in a country where mining had been extensively carried on for many years, so simple a process as gently roasting the ore to expel the sulphur previous to smelting it had never been discovered. A few improvements had likewise been introduced in some of the simple machinery; but even to the present day water is removed from some mines by men carrying it up the shaft in leathern bags!

The laboring men work very hard. They have little time allowed for their meals, and during summer and winter they begin when it is light and leave off at dark. They are paid one pound sterling a month, and their food is given them: this for breakfast consists of sixteen figs and two small loaves of bread; for dinner, boiled beans; for supper, broken roasted wheat grain. They scarcely ever taste meat; as, with the twelve pounds per annum, they have to clothe themselves, and support their families. The miners who work in the mine itself have twenty-five shillings per month, and are allowed a little charqui. But these men come down from their bleak habitations only once in every fortnight or three weeks.

During my stay here I thoroughly enjoyed scrambling about these huge mountains. The geology, as might have been expected, was very interesting. The shattered and baked rocks, traversed by innumerable dikes of greenstone, showed what commotions had formerly taken place. The scenery was much the same as that near the Bell of Quillota—dry barren mountains, dotted at intervals by bushes with a scanty foliage. The cactuses, or rather opuntias, were here very numerous. I measured one of a spherical figure, which, including the spines, was six feet and four inches in circum-