

not found in Chile; contracts to supply the miners with milk, in parts where there are no cows; machinery, where it could not possibly be used; and a hundred similar arrangements, bore witness to our absurdity, and to this day afford amusement to the natives. Yet there can be no doubt that the same capital well employed in these mines would have yielded an immense return: a confidential man of business, a practical miner and assayer, would have been all that was required.

Captain Head has described the wonderful load which the "Apires," truly beasts of burden, carry up from the deepest mines. I confess I thought the account exaggerated; so that I was glad to take an opportunity of weighing one of the loads, which I picked out by hazard. It required considerable exertion on my part, when standing directly over it, to lift it from the ground. The load was considered under weight when found to be 197 pounds. The apire had carried this up eighty perpendicular yards—part of the way by a steep passage, but the greater part up notched poles, placed in a zigzag line up the shaft. According to the general regulation, the apire is not allowed to halt for breath, except the mine is six hundred feet deep. The average load is considered as, rather more than 200 pounds, and I have been assured that one of 300 pounds (twenty-two stone and a half) by way of a trial has been brought up from the deepest mine! At this time the apires were bringing up the usual load twelve times in the day; that is, 2,400 pounds from eighty yards deep; and they were employed in the intervals in breaking and picking ore.

These men, excepting from accidents, are healthy, and appear cheerful. Their bodies are not very muscular. They rarely eat meat once a week, and never oftener, and then only the hard dry charqui. Although with a knowledge that the labor was voluntary, it was nevertheless quite revolting to see the state in which they reached the mouth of the mine; their bodies bent forward, leaning with their arms on the steps, their legs bowed, their muscles quivering, the per-