

shortest possible time. The northers are greatly dreaded, although I think without much cause. One of them, and the last of any force, I had myself experienced in June, 1822, (whilst in command of a merchant vessel.) In it eighteen sail of vessels were lost. But since that time vessels are much better provided with cables and anchors, and what proved a disastrous storm then, would now scarcely be felt. I do not deem the bay so dangerous as it has the name of being. The great difficulty of the port is its confined space, and in the event of a gale, the sea that sets in is so heavy, that vessels are liable to come in contact with each other, and to be more or less injured. The port is too limited in extent to accommodate the trade that is carried on in it. Various schemes and improvements are talked of, but none that are feasible. The depth of water opposes an almost insuperable obstacle to its improvement by piers. The enterprise of the government, and of the inhabitants of Valparaiso, is, I am well satisfied, equal to any undertaking that is practicable.

From the best accounts, I am satisfied that the harbour is filling up, from the wash off the hills. Although this may seem but a small amount of deposition, yet after a lapse of sixteen years, the change was quite perceptible to me, and the oldest residents confirmed the fact. The anchorage of the vessels has changed, and what before was thought an extremely dangerous situation, is now considered the best in the event of bad weather. The sea is to be feared rather than the wind, for the latter seldom blows home, because the land immediately behind the city rises in abrupt hills, to the height of from eight to fifteen hundred and two thousand feet.

Valparaiso has greatly increased in size and consequence within the last few years, and has become the great seaport of Chili, and, indeed, of the whole coast. Although it labours under many disadvantages as respects its harbour, which is inferior to others on the coast, yet it is the nearest and most convenient port to Santiago, the capital.

I have had some opportunity of knowing Valparaiso, and contrasting its present state with that of 1821 and 1822. It was then a mere village, composed, with but few exceptions, of straggling ranchos. It has now the appearance of a thickly-settled town, with a population of thirty thousand, five times the number it had then. It is divided into two parts, one of which is known by the name of the Port, and is the old town; the other by that of the Almendral, occupying a level plain to the east. Its location is by no means such as to show it to advantage. The principal buildings are the custom-house, two churches, and the houses occupying the main street. Most of the buildings are of one story, and are built of adobes or sun-dried brick.