

sterling, two mules and a guide to take me to the nitrate of soda works. These are at present the support of Iquique. This salt was first exported in 1830: in one year an amount in value of one hundred thousand pounds sterling was sent to France and England. It is principally used as a manure and in the manufacture of nitric acid: owing to its deliquescent property it will not serve for gunpowder. Formerly there were two exceedingly rich silver mines in this neighborhood, but their produce is now very small.

Our arrival in the offing caused some little apprehension. Peru was in a state of anarchy; and each party having demanded a contribution, the poor town of Iquique was in tribulation, thinking the evil hour was come. The people had also their domestic troubles; a short time before, three French carpenters had broken open, during the same night, the two churches, and stolen all the plate: one of the robbers, however, subsequently confessed, and the plate was recovered. The convicts were sent to Arequipa, which, though the capital of this province, is two hundred leagues distant; the government there thought it a pity to punish such useful workmen, who could make all sorts of furniture; and accordingly liberated them. Things being in this state, the churches were again broken open, but this time the plate was not recovered. The inhabitants became dreadfully enraged, and declaring that none but heretics would thus "eat God Almighty," proceeded to torture some Englishmen, with the intention of afterward shooting them. At last the authorities interfered, and peace was established.

13th.—In the morning I started for the saltpetre-works, a distance of fourteen leagues. Having ascended the steep coast-mountains by a zigzag sandy track, we soon came in view of the mines of Guantajaya and St. Rosa. These two small villages are placed at the very mouths of the mines; and being perched up on hills, they had a still more unnatural and desolate appearance than the town of Iquique. We did not reach the saltpetre-works till after sunset, having ridden all day across an undulating country, a complete and