

barren rock had been a place of resort for ages, for penguins and other aquatic birds; that myriads of them had successively deposited their eggs there, and had subsequently died on the island; and that it had also been a favourite haunt of seals and other marine animals. In working the pit the men occasionally came to a stratum of a light brown colour, and of greater levity than the strata above or below it; and embedded in this stratum they invariably found numerous skeletons of penguins, in the last stage of decomposition, and vast quantities of their eggs. Having worked through this, the men would probably come after a time to another stratum of a much darker brown, and much heavier description; and the substance composing the bulk of this stratum, when rubbed between the fingers, would dissolve like tallow and exude much more oil or fat than the first. Throughout this dark coloured stratum, the men occasionally found many bones and skeletons of seals nearly decomposed, and but very rarely any remains of penguins. The appearance of the stratum suggested to him the idea of a great number of seals having been washed on shore, or having lain down in this spot to die. He adds that the strata were not by any means regular in their alternations; but as a general rule, he did not find both the light and the dark coloured strata in close succession. The pit here referred to was in the centre of the island.

The writer then mentions the following remarkable circumstance: On the forenoon of the 25th of January last, one of the men belonging to the barque Anna, of London, working a pit adjacent to the one which those under the writer's command were excavating, found an old cask stave, which had apparently belonged to a water puncheon. This stave was found not deeply imbedded in the guano itself, but in what is technically termed the "rubbish," which forms a cover or crust for the animated matter, and which, probably, is also guano, but not being in a sufficiently advanced stage of decomposition to be valuable for the purposes of manure, is removed and cast aside before the getting of the guano is commenced, and this "rubbish" is generally found of a thickness varying from three to six feet. This puncheon stave had some letters and figures rudely carved or rather scratched upon the surface, as if cut with a scribe or marking iron, and which were deciphered to be "Columbus Dolano, March 5, 1791," or "1794;" for the unit could not be very clearly discerned. After a little more digging, and at a depth of only three feet ten inches from the surface, the same men found a human skeleton quite perfect. Indeed it was more of a mummy than a skeleton, for the skin was entire and unbroken, and the arms were folded across the breast. The body had on a blue flannel shirt, and was sewed up in a canvass hammock. Both the body and its rude cerements were in the highest state of preservation. The writer observes, that the situation of this body, which had not perished alone and unaided, but had found friendly hands to perform the last offices to a shipmate, and which would doubtless be interred at a decent depth in the only earth the island possesses,—its situation at a depth of only three feet six inches below the surface, proves that either the guano has not accumulated on the island in any considerable quantity during the last half century, or if this hypothesis be rejected, it leaves only the alternative of the inconsistent supposition, that the parties who took such pains to prepare the body of their deceased companion for in-