

WHERE AND HOW GUANO IS OBTAINED.

The *New-York Evening Post* furnishes the following interesting account:—

"An intelligent gentleman, who has been employed in loading a ship with guano at the Chincha Islands, on the coast of Peru, has communicated to us some interesting information with respect to the trade. He has been at the island at three different times, and nearly six months in all. The last time he was there was in the fall and summer of 1855. He says that he found at times five hundred sail of vessels together, loading with guano, generally large ships. One ship was 4,500 tons burden. Not less than three hundred sail of vessels are now at the island, loading for the United States, Spain, Portugal, France, and English and German ports. Some cargoes are sent to Constantinople and some to Russian ports in the Black Sea. This was before the war in the Crimea. The Russian trade will now open again, both from the Black Sea and the Baltic. Freighters are high; £6 10s. are often paid per ton for Liverpool and Hampton Roads. Generally ten shillings more a ton freight is paid to Europe. At the rate at which guano is now shipped from the Chincha Islands, it will be exhausted in six to eight years—not a ton will be left. Twenty thousand tons are sometimes removed from the islands in a single day.

"These islands are about one hundred miles north from Callao. The longest of the group is two miles in length and a quarter of a mile wide, but contains only a small quantity of guano. The most northerly island is the smallest, being about a mile in length by half a mile in breadth. Guano on this island is two hundred fifty feet deep. The island contains a Chinese settlement of Coolies, about a thousand in number, who are employed in digging guano and loading the vessels. A task is given them each day, and if the gang fail to get out the given number of wagon loads, of two tons each, a day, their bondage is continued a longer period, to make it up; so many months or days being added as wagon loads are wanting.

The Coolies are cheated into the belief that they are to be shipped from China to California and the gold diggings, and are further deceived by the offer of a free passage. The knowing Chinese, or the Mandarins, ship them. The ship-master carries them to the Peruvian government for his freight money. All this time the Chinamen are kept in irons and confined below in the ship. The Peruvian government purchase the cargo of living Coolies, paying the Yankee or English captain a round sum for his care, diligence and labor in stealing Chinamen from their homes to be sent into the *guano* mines of Peru for life, or for five to seven years, and to be held in bondage or peonage to pay their passage to the glorious land of the *Meas*.

The guano is hard, and can only be broken up with the pickaxe. It is then broken and shoveled into the wagons, and rolled from the shutes into the vessels.

No person can go upon or come away from the islands without a pass, as they are guarded by more than one hundred armed soldiers belonging to Peru.

The Peruvians send all their prisoners of state into the guano mines, say about two to three hundred, where they are let out to work by day, and at night are shut up in their cells, with only two meals per day. These prisoners are generally provided with wives or female companions, who have been permitted to go to the islands, and hire themselves out for work and prostitution. They are mostly Indians, natives of the country. There is no fresh water on the islands, and each vessel is compelled by law to carry a ton of fresh water there for every hundred tons burden of the ship. The oldest captain in the fleet from each nation is appointed Commodore, and hoists his flag as such on his ship, where all disputes are settled. Indeed the municipal laws of the islands and the fleet are decidedly of Yankee origin.

The islands are about ten miles from the main land, and are composed of new red sandstone. The guano is not all bird dung, but is largely composed of the mud of the ocean, that brought from Peru, is so, at least. When anchors are hoisted into the ship from the holding grounds of vessels along the Peruvian coasts, large quantities of mud of a greenish white color, are brought up, and this mud, when dried, makes guano equally good with the guano taken from the islands.

The birds and seals come upon the island when the people are not at work, but it does not appear that their dung or decayed bodies are more than a foot deep on any of the islands. Fish are taken in great abundance and about these islands, as are also seals, which come there in large schools. Sea lions also abound. The composition taken from the islands, called guano, is stratified, and lies in the same form it did before it was lifted up from the bottom of the ocean.