

habits and manners to the preceding, and must be considered as a recent addition to our *Fauna*. (To be continued.)

Historical.

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF PERU.

(Concluded from No. 11, page 107.)

Lima is scarcely ever visited by tempests, and knows as little of rain as it does of thunder and lightning. But it is remarkably subject to earthquakes.

They indeed happen so frequently, that the inhabitants are in continual dread of being buried beneath the ruins of their houses. Still they have their presages, one of the principal of which is a rumbling noise beneath the ground, heard about a minute before the shocks are felt, and seeming to pervade all the adjacent subterranean parts. This is followed by the dismal howling of the dogs, who seem to give notice of the approaching danger; while the beasts of burden in their passage thro' streets stop suddenly, as if it were by a natural instinct, and assume the attitude which may best secure them from falling. On these portents, the terrified inhabitants flee from their houses into the streets, forming large assembles, in the midst of which the cries of children are blended with the lamentations of the females.

Since the establishment of the Spaniards in Peru, the first earthquake in this capital happened in 1582; another six years later, another in 1609, another in 1630, another in 1651, another in 1678, another in 1687, between which period and that of the great destruction in 1746 six earthquakes shook the city.

This last-mentioned earthquake commenced at half-past ten at night, and the early concussions were so violent that, in the space of somewhat more than three minutes, the greater part, if not all, of the buildings in the city were destroyed, burying under their ruins such of the inhabitants as had not made sufficient haste into the streets and squares, the only places of safety. At length the horrible effects of the first shock ceased; but the tranquillity was of short duration, the concussions swiftly succeeding each other. The fort of Callao was dilapidated; but what this building suffered from the earthquake was inconsiderable, when compared with the dreadful catastrophe which followed. The sea, as is usual on each occasion, receding to a considerable distance, returned in mountainous waves, foaming with the violence of the agitation, and suddenly buried Callao and the neighboring country in its flood. This, however, was not entirely effected by the first swell of the waves; for the sea, retiring still farther, returned with greater impetuosity, and covered not only the buildings, but also the lofty walls of the fortress; so that what had even escaped the first inundation was totally overwhelmed by these succeeding mountainous waves. Of twenty-three ships and vessels of light burden then in the harbor, nineteen were sunk; and the four others, among which was a frigate, named the *San Firmin*, were carried by the force of the waves to a considerable distance up the country. This terrible inundation extended, as well as the earthquake, to other parts of the coast, and several other towns underwent the fate of Lima. The number of persons who perished in that capital, within two days after the earthquake commenced, on an estimate of the bodies found, amounted

to 1300, beside the wounded and maimed, many of whom survived their tortures but a short time.

Leaving the Palace-square of Lima, and passing over the bridge to the suburb of San Lazaro, we get out into the open country of Peru. The wide plain on which the city is built gradually becomes a narrow tract between high walls of rocks, and so upward, rising higher, and higher, by gorges which sink down precipitously to a frightful depth, amid an ever-changing vegetation, so that at last the banana and the sugar-cane are exchanged for the scrubby bushes of the Puna. Upward, upward, higher, higher, by valleys and by table lands which form new starting-points, till, by and bye, amid the most bleak and desolate scenery, in a basin surrounded by rocks, and thirteen thousand seven hundred and twenty feet above the level of the sea, is the city of Pasco. There an incessant clatter is going on, strangely different from the solemn stillness that reigns around. The mines are opened in all sorts of public places, and we cannot pass many yards without encountering one. Some not more than twenty feet deep, some fifty, some double, some three times that number.

The miners, with some few exceptions, are Indians. They earn about half-a-dollar a day; but when a rich vein is opened, they are paid in ore, and are at such times handsomely remunerated.

At a distance the town presents an agreeable aspect,—“distance lends enchantment to the view;” but a nearer approach shows us that it is chiefly composed of miners' huts. In the town there are plenty of liquor-shops, eating houses, and cafes. The proprietors of these establishments dispose of cooked food to the Indian miners, being chiefly maize bread and slices of beef dried in the sun. Frequently the peace of the town is disturbed by a quarrel and fight among the miners who have assembled in the liquor-houses, and these quarrels are a very dangerous business, for Sheffield has taken care to supply knives of all sorts, terrible weapons, made on purpose for that market, and a quarrel hardly ever occurs without an appeal to the knife. The Indians have a mighty love for the cocoa leaf. This plant somewhat resembles the vine; the leaves at the proper season are stripped and dried, and packed in bags. They have an aromatic, bitter taste. The miners chew them, and they produce the exhilarating effects of opium without drowsiness or stupefaction, but, like all stimulants, debilitate the body, and produce a nervous disorder in the system, which, in its gradual growth, at last overcomes its victim, and he perishes.

The following particulars of this intoxicating plant may not be uninteresting. They are the substance of observations made by Dr. Poepping in his travels in Chili and Peru. The plant is called the coca, but, notwithstanding the similarity of its name, it in no respect resembles, nor is it in any way connected with, the cocoa-nut tree. The coca is a brush from six to eight feet high, somewhat like a blackthorn, which it resembles in its numerous small white blossoms, and the lively bright green of the leaves. These leaves, which are gathered and carefully dried, are an article of brisk trade, and the use of them is as old as the first knowledge of the history of Peru. It is a stimulant, which acts upon the nerves in the same manner as opium. Unhappily, the use of it has degenerated into a vice which seems

incurable. The Indians of America, especially those of the Peruvian Andes, notwithstanding the civilisation which surrounds them, have a vague sense of their own incurable deficiency, and hence they are eager to relieve themselves by violent excitements from such melancholy feelings. This accounts not only for the use of the coca, but also for the boundless love of spirituous liquors, which possesses scarcely any other people in the world in an equal degree. To the Peruvian the coca is the source of the highest gratification; for under its influence his usual melancholy leaves him, and his dull imagination presents him with images which he never enjoys in his usual state of mind. If it cannot entirely produce the terrible feeling of over excitement that opium does, yet it reduces the person who uses it to a similar state, which is doubly dangerous, because, though less in degree, it is of far longer duration. This effect is not perceived until after continued observation; for a new comer is surprised indeed at the many disorders to which the men of many classes of the people are subject in Peru, but is very far from ascribing them to the coca. A look at a determined coquero gives the solution of the phenomenon; unfit for all the serious concerns of life, such an one is a slave to his passion, even more than the drunkard, and exposes himself to far greater dangers to gratify his propensity. As the magic power of the herb cannot be entirely felt till the usual concerns of daily life, or the interruptions of social intercourse, cease to employ the mental powers, the genuine coquero retires into solitary darkness or the wilderness, so soon as his longing for this intoxication becomes irresistible. When night, which is doubly awful in the gloomy forest, covers the earth, he remains stretched out under the tree which he has chosen; without the protection of a fire near him, he listens with indifference to the growling of the ounce; and when, amid peals of thunder the clouds pour down torrents of rain, or the fury of the hurricane uproots the oldest trees, he regards it not. In two days he generally returns, pale, trembling, his eyes sunk, a fearful picture of unnatural indulgence. He who has once been seized with this passion, and is placed in a situation that favors its development, is a lost man: The author heard in Peru truly deplorable accounts of young men of good families, who, in an accidental visit to the woods, began to use coca to pass away the time, soon acquired a relish for it, and from that moment were lost to the civilised world, and, as if under some malignant spell, refused to return to the towns. We are told how the relations at length discovered the fugitive in some remote Indian village, and, in spite of his tears, dragged him back to his home. But these unhappy persons were as fond of living in the wilderness, as averse to the more orderly mode of life in the towns; for public opinion condemns the white coquero, as it does an incorrigible drunkard among us. They therefore take the earliest opportunity of escaping to the woods, where, degraded, unworthy of the white complexion, the stamp of natural superiority, and become half savages, they fall victims to premature death, through the immoderate use of this intoxicating herb.

The mountains of La Plata, so denominated on account of the amount of silver it contains, are chiefly situated in the provinces which were strictly considered as Peruvian.