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**A visit to the South Seas, in the United States' ship Vincennes, during  
the years 1829 and 1830**

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**London, MDCCCXXXII. [1832]**

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich**

Shelf Mark: Rar 32282

Persistent Link: <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-72781>

Letter XVII.

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will yet yield abundantly of the fruits of peace and righteousness, to the praise and glory of God, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold.

If the blessedness of receiving the crown of a true and faithful minister of the gospel of salvation is at last to be mine, I trust that among the few gems "in souls redeemed" that may adorn it, there will be some two or three at least gathered from the moral darkness of these immortal spirits. If so, "not unto me, not unto me, but unto thy name, O Lord, be the praise."

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## LETTER XVII.

### SKETCH OF CALLAO AND RIDE TO LIMA.

Callao.—Common Buildings.—Stage Coaches.—Peruvian Riding Party.—Lady on Horseback.—English and American Sea Captains.—Market Men and Women.—The Almeda, and Entrance to Lima.—Aspect of the City.

Lima, June 23d, 1829.

AFTER dinner with the gentlemen of the Vincennes, I landed at Callao at four o'clock this afternoon to take a coach for Lima. It was the first time I had been on shore, and much as I had heard of the wretchedness of the port, I was disgusted with the poverty, filth, and whole aspect of the place.

The shipping between the anchorage of our squadron and the landing had entirely screened the town from view, except the beautiful castle and fortress by which it is defended; and the strength and good keeping of these greatly deceived me as to the

size and importance of the place. The population amounts to about two thousand, crowded along a single street of half a mile following the curvature of the bay, intersected by two or three others a few rods only in length, except that formed by the road to Lima.

The extent of ground covered is not equal to that at Honolulu, while scarce a habitation in the town has an appearance, externally, of greater civilization and comfort than that of Marini the Spaniard there, and every street presents all the offence to the senses found in the metropolis of the Sandwich Islands.

The houses generally are of one story only, on account of the frequency of earthquakes; and as it scarce ever rains, all the roofs are perfectly flat. The walls terminating abruptly and irregularly above them, without the ornament of a cornice or balustrade, give to the whole the appearance of so many ruins, from which the tops and chimneys have been shaken or blown—an impression not diminished by the shattered and peeled surface of the plaster with which they are covered.

The building of a new house near the coach-office, gave an opportunity of observing the process in putting up a habitation of the common kind. It consists in first planting in the ground upright posts a foot or more in circumference and sixteen or eighteen feet high, at a distance of two or three yards from each other, along lines marking the dimensions of the building. To these, when firmly set, long sticks of bamboo, an inch or more in diameter, are lashed horizontally with thongs of undressed hide,

commencing at the ground, with three bamboos close together, then a space of two or three feet, then three bamboos again, and so on to the top. Through these horizontal layers, sticks of the same, but more slender, are wattled perpendicularly, as closely as possible; forming a basis or lathing for the mud or mortar with which the walls are finished.

The roofs are of cane, wattled in a similar manner, with the addition in some cases of a ceiling of boards or plank. A pavement of large brick constitutes the floor, and the windows, in place of glass, are filled usually with bars or grates of wood or iron, with an outside shutter to be closed at night.

Two or three lines of coaches run twice a day between Callao and Lima. After the peep I had taken of the town, I did not anticipate much from the carriages it might supply; and was agreeably disappointed in the equipages as they drove at the appointed hour to the doors of different public houses in the principal street. One was a handsome English chariot, formerly the property of a British consul; and another, that in which I rode, a low and neatly finished barouche, drawn by four fine and well harnessed horses. I mounted my favourite seat on the box, beside the cocher, a large and talkative Frenchman, and we rolled away under a flourish and crack of whip that would not have been thought unbecoming a departure from a principal hotel in London or Paris.

The towers and domes of Lima, eight or nine miles inland, are distinctly seen from the bay, stretching for a mile or more along the upper line

of a heath-like and desolate looking country, with the Cordilleras in gigantic majesty behind. From the gradual rise of the land, the elevation of the city seems scarce above the site of Callao, but from accurate measurement by Humboldt and others, it is known to be seven hundred feet higher than the level of the sea.

The road, which is wide and straight, strikes from the port across a marshy plain, and for a mile is covered with large pebbles from the beach; but after that distance, consists of the natural soil only, and is in some places quite heavy with sand. Without a fence or hedge, and only a small embankment of earth and sod on either side, to mark its course, while scarce a bush or shrub is in sight, it is for the first three or four miles excessively dreary.

A want of interest in the natural scenery was made up in a degree, however, by the variety and novel appearance of many of the persons and groupes passing in one direction or the other. Soon after leaving Callao, we overtook two Cabelleros in ponchos and high crowned grass hats, the costume of the country, mounted on spirited animals, with English saddles, but using in place of a whip the long platted and knotted ends of the reins, the universal practice along the coast. They looked grave as deacons, and probably owed their sedateness to a large mixture of Spanish blood.

The poncho is an original Indian garment, about two yards in length and one and a half in breadth, with a hole cut in the centre, through which the head is passed, while the ends and sides hang in

loose drapery around the figure. It is made of every variety of material, and of course varies in expensiveness, being formed sometimes of common white or striped cotton only, with a coarse fringe or binding around the neck and edges, but often of the finest cloth, ornamented with rich embroidery.

Shortly afterwards we passed a groupe still more novel and characteristic, having a strong dash of the Indian in the whole. It was a riding party of two males and two females, in the seeming relation of parents and children. The elder male was in a round jacket and pantaloons of brown cloth, and a high conical hat of Guayaquil grass. The caparison of his horse was entirely in the Peruvian fashion. A clumsy saddle, rising high in the pommel in front and behind, and covered with thick rugs, was secured, not only by the usual girths and crupper, but also by a heavy harness of leather about the hams of the horse, with silver buckles and mountings as in that of a carriage. The stirrups were blocks of dark wood carved, with plates of silver at the corners and sides, and having holes behind in which to thrust the feet; rude and awkward things, designed originally, I believe, to protect the feet and ancles in riding through brushwood and bramble. The costume and entire equipment of the young gentleman, of sixteen or eighteen, were European, though himself and companions were all evidently of the mixed blood of the country.

The dress and attitude of the females, both being seated astride like men, the universal fashion here, were calculated to attract more particular attention.

The mother, an uncommonly fine looking woman of thirty-five, tall and straight, appeared to great advantage on a noble and spirited black charger. Her head-dress was a man's hat of Manilla grass, with a narrow black riband for a band, and fastened under the chin by ties of the same, the rim being left unconfined. The upper part of her person was entirely concealed by a poncho of blue, falling to the saddle cloth, and over which her long black hair, in two heavy braids, hung to the horse's back behind. Nothing of the under dress was seen beneath the poncho, except a few inches on either side of a white cambric pantalet, terminating in a white silk stocking and black satin shoe.

The daughter, a delicate and beautiful creature of fifteen, was mounted on a nice dun pony. Though dark, her complexion was sufficiently clear to exhibit the bloom of youth on her cheek and in her lips; while a good-humoured and playful black eye, with a pearly set of teeth exposed occasionally in conversation or by a laugh, combined in testifying to the claims of the Peruvian ladies to beauty. Her dress was similar in style to that of her mother, but more neat and elegant, hat the same, and worn in the same manner; but her hair, in place of being braided, clustered in rich curls about her temples and ears sparkling with jewels, and fell widely over the neck and shoulders upon a poncho of white broadly striped, in a variegated pattern of gay colours. Pantalets of fine muslin, trimmed with lace, falling over a foot of the most delicate mould, playing gracefully

in a silver stirrup, in silken hose and slipper of blue, completed the display.

We had scarce lost sight of these, as they cantered leisurely on in gay laugh and conversation, when we were ourselves overtaken by a couple at full speed, a gentleman in the dress of a Peruvian horseman and a lady, seen at once to be a Briton, not only from the whiteness and bloom of her complexion, but from her attitude, dress, and whole manner. She rode a splendid chestnut horse, with proudly curved neck and flowing tail and mane, in a long habit of blue cloth, with round beaver hat and veil.

Then came a party of English and American sea-captains and supercargoes, more than half intoxicated, racing as for life, and urging their foaming beasts onward by plunging the rowels of their spurs deeply into their bleeding sides, as if madness had seized the hearts of the riders, while dizziness was in their brain. Almost immediately after, as if to prove that vice and folly are unconfined to nation or name, two Peruvian officers rushed by, shouting like Bacchanalians, and so tipsy as scarce to be able to retain their seats, as their horses plunged from side to side of the road, in the unequal guidance of the reins.

Such were some of the parties making their way with us towards the metropolis. Others, of a different character, were as constantly coming from the opposite direction: principally market men and women, carrying all manner of produce to supply the demand of the town and shipping on the coming

morning, not in carts and waggons, as in the United States, but on mules and donkeys, with panniers, &c., on either side, of more or less enormous magnitude. Such touches of the true grotesque, as were occasionally presented, I have seldom before seen. Fancy to yourself a hundred of these mean looking animals in a single drove, as shaggy and unsymmetrical in their whole outline as the ugliest you ever saw, bundled up and encased by all manner of things to a bulk twice the bigness of themselves, and then surmounted by objects, in the human shape, old and young, male and female, black and white, Spaniards and Indians, in a variety of figure and garb, to which the pencil of a Cruickshank could scarcely do justice. To describe the half would be the occupation of a day.

The load of one of these animals, scarce three feet high, was not less than ten sheep, killed and dressed ready for the shambles. Six were tied two and two together by the hind legs, and then thrown across the back of the donkey from the shoulder-blade to the tail, one on either side, so as to balance each other as their trunkless heads dangled almost on the ground; upon these the rest were lashed horizontally, forming a platform of the dead over the living beast, on which various other smaller articles of poultry were fastened, while on the top of the whole, at a very honourable elevation on a dirty cushion sat, *à la Turque*, a most villanous looking old man, in a ragged poncho, with a slouched and greasy hat, and bare arms and legs. Beside him on a similar Rosinante, rode his *carâ spousâ*, an

equally interesting object both in figure and garb, seated in the same attitude, on the top of pannier after pannier, and basket upon basket, of potatoes and beans, cabbage and onions, oranges, bananas, melons, and tomatoes, &c., &c., as if bearing to her customers specimens of the growth of a whole plantation.

Entire families, in two or three instances, were seen on a single beast, seated from the neck to the tail, according to their ages, the younger children and females forward, and the men on the extremity of the back. In two instances, I counted five persons thus mounted: two of whom, in one case, seemed each as well able to carry the donkey, as he the weight of either of them.

The appearance of a drove of a hundred or more, carrying burdens of grass, was, at a distance, very singular. This article is very light and succulent, and was packed round and piled upon the beasts in such enormous bunches, that even when near, nothing but their heads was to be seen in the midst. Crowding together as their habit is, and filling up the whole road for a considerable space, when first seen they had the appearance of a moving mass of vegetation; and at a loss myself to conjecture what it might be, I could think only of the march of

“ Burnam wood to Dunsinane.”

Two miles from Callao, at a short distance on the right, are the remains of the town of Bella Vista; once a large and splendid place, but now a heap of

ruins only; from the combined desolations of war and earthquakes. It was in possession of the patriots during the siege of Callao, in 1825; and received its finishing stroke from the artillery of Rodil, when entrenched at the citadel at the port.

At a church and rancho, or grog shop, called the half-way house, the marshy character of the road side begins to disappear, and something like cultivation here and there, with a house at a distance is to be seen. As we advanced, high bushes and brakes of cane, having in a degree the effect of hedges, skirted the way, interspersed occasionally with lofty mud walls, above which the golden bearings of orange groves, and the leaves of the banana, evidently the growth of a luxuriant soil, began to cheer the eye.

It was not, however, till we arrived within a mile of the city that any change in the scenery, peculiarly interesting, took place: then we entered a fine and beautiful avenue, called the Almeda, imparting a new aspect to all around. On either hand is a double row of handsome trees, a species of the willow, beneath whose deep shade are foot-paths, separated from the carriage-way by a low parapet of brick, plastered and whitened; while lively courses of water murmur along the inner side, communicating freshness and beauty to the groves, and serving to irrigate the gardens and plantations, whose high walls both on the right and left rise to the lower branches of the trees.

Long seats of brick, in the shape of sofas, plas-

tered and whitewashed, are arranged at regular intervals beneath the shade. They have the appearance, when not too closely inspected, of marble or Portland stone, and impart an air of taste and elegance making a pleasing impression, and intimating an approach to the abodes of refinement and luxury.

When about midway in this avenue, the drive may be said to be fine. Behind you, all the dreariness and sterility of the road passed over, is cut off by the perspective of the trees, appearing as if they extended entirely to the bay, which, with the shipping in miniature, and the heights of St. Lorenzo in the distance, is still in reduced, but distinct view; while in front, the vista terminates in what appears a portal of light marble or freestone, becoming the entrance to a magnificent city. But this impression is but momentary: as you approach the gate, you find it to be only a rough plaster of mud, daubed with paint, in wretched imitation of marble; while a glimpse of the city wall and buildings adjoining is by no means calculated to check the downward tendency of the high imaginations you may have indulged.

Lima is said to be the most corrupt city on the continent, so much so that along the whole coast, I am told, the name alone is a proverb of sin. The walks of the avenue, as we drove through the gate, exhibited some specimens of the morals to be expected within, by several intoxicated officers, and three Dominican friars in the garb of their order, in very familiar conversation with persons of rather equivocal,

or perhaps I should say unequivocal appearance ; several of whom, in gay attire, were lounging without protector or attendant on the sofas around.

I scarce ever felt greater surprise than on entering the first street after passing the gate. Instead of "the splendid city," of which, from childhood, I had read with such admiration, I was tempted to think myself in Timbuctoo itself: and I could not avoid exclaiming, "If this be the *city of the kings*, how is the mighty fallen! or how have the credulous been deceived!" Mud houses of one low story, with large doors and grated windows, exposing filth and poverty to view, inhabited only by negroes and mulattoes, thronging in gaping and half naked crowds about the doors and corners, were alone in sight!

By degrees, however, the appearance began to improve. The houses became more neat and lofty, till something like civilization and comfort, if not elegance, was to be seen. But, even in the best streets through which we passed, every thing wore a decayed and shabby appearance; while the covered verandas projecting from the second story, of clumsy architecture and dark colours, threw an air of gloom over the streets.

After two or three turns in the distance of a half or three quarters of a mile, we drew up before an English hotel to which I had been directed, in a street near the Plaza or public square. Mr. Radcliffe, a son of the American consul, whom I had met on board the *Guerriere*, was politely in waiting to receive me. I accompanied him to the consulate,

to a cup of tea ; and after an introduction to his father, have returned to my lodgings to scribble this account of my ride to this noted city.

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## LETTER XVIII.

AUDIENCE WITH GENERAL LA FUENTE',  
PROVISIONAL CHIEF OF PERU.

Recent Revolution.—General La Fuenté.—His Assumption of the Executive.—Political State.—The Palace.—Sala of Assassination.—Cabinet of La Fuenté.—Hall of Independence.—Costume of the Incas.

Lima, June 24th, 1829.

MR. M'Call, of the house of M'Call and Prevost, visited me early this morning. We had met at the dinner-table of Commodore Jones, on board the Brandywine ; and he now kindly proffered his services in accompanying me with letters to various gentlemen in the city. After calling at the residences of Mr. Eldridge, of New York, and of Mr. Sholtz, a principal partner in an English house in the vicinity of the hotel, we were crossing the Plaza, to wait on Mr. Stanhope Prevost, a friend of my boyhood, when we met Commodore Thompson, Captain Sloat, and Mr. Armstrong, just arrived from Callao, also on their way to the establishment of Mr. Prevost.

Commodore Thompson intended waiting on the authorities at the palace at one o'clock, and requested me to make one of his suite, to which I was happy to accede. A bloodless revolution, just achieved, has