

On receiving the reports of the commanders of the different vessels, active operations were at once begun to refit, replenish our stores, and complete our duties. The necessary changes in officers and men were made, in consequence of my determination to send the Relief home. This I resolved to do on several accounts. I have stated that from the first I found her ill-adapted to the service; her sailing I saw would retard all my operations, and be a constant source of anxiety to me; and I felt that I already had objects enough without her to occupy and engross my attention. The expense was another consideration, which I conceived myself unauthorized to subject the government to, particularly as I found on calculation, that for one-tenth of the sum it would cost to keep her, I could send our stores and provisions to any part of the Pacific.

We found it necessary to have the Relief smoked, in order to destroy the rats with which she was infested, to save our stores from further damage. During this time the repairs of the Porpoise had been completed, and the usual observations for rating our chronometers, and with the magnetic instruments, were made on shore; and such officers as could be spared allowed to visit Lima. The naturalists were also busy in their several departments. We remained at San Lorenzo ten days, during which time its three highest points were measured with barometers at the same time. The result gave eight hundred and ninety-six feet for the southern, nine hundred and twenty for the middle, and twelve hundred and eighty-four for the northern summit. Upon the latter the clouds generally rest, and it is the only place on the island where vegetation is enabled to exist. The others are all barren sandy hills. It is said that the only plant which has been cultivated is the potato, and that only on the north peak. This becomes possible there from the moisture of the clouds, and their shielding it from the hot sun.

The geological structure of the island is principally composed of limestone, clay, and slate. It presents a beautiful stratification. Gypsum is found in some places between the strata, and crystals of selenite are met with in one or two localities. Quantities of shell-fish are found on the shore, and the waters abound with excellent fish.

The burying-ground is the only object of interest here. The graves are covered with white shells, and a white board, on which is inscribed the name, &c. They appear to be mostly of Englishmen and Americans, and it would seem that the mortality had been great. But when one comes to consider the large number of men-of-war which have been lying in the bay, and the period of time elapsed, the number of interments do not seem large.