THE EVENING NEWS.

Tuesday, . . . August 23, 1870.

THE DESERT OF ATACAMA.

Among the Andes, lying near the southwest corner of Bolivia, and at a height of about 4,000 feet, is a plateau called the desert of Atacama, of which S. H. Browne gives this account in the *Independent*.

"The surface consists of a calcareous earth, in which innumerable particles of salt, nitre, &c., are shining with such a glare, under the rays of a torrid sun, as to make it painful to look around. Not a plant grows here; not a bird, or insect, or any other form of animal life is to be seen. The stillness of death reigns everywhere, except for the moaning of the wind, which carries from place to place the powdered sand and lime.

"The only evidence that man has ever been here is that human bodies, as well as those of mules and horses, are scattered about upon the waste—not reduced to disjointed fragments, but dried and shriveled to mummies in the parching atmosphere of this dreary height.

"Day after day the thirsty traveler pursues his journey over such a soil and amid such objects till he reaches Calama, a settlement in the midst of an immense morass, where he rests a little to refresh himself and his jaded mules. This morass, with its brackish and unwholesome water, is the source of a small river, called Lao, which at length becomes the boundary between this portion of Bolivia and Peru. It is so highly impregnated with the lime and other substances which are held in solution that the coarse bulrushes of the morass are quite encrusted, and small channels and trenches for draining are soon filled up with the same deposit.

"Two days journey from Calama, over the dazzling sand and throuh the stifling dust, brings the traveler to Chiu-Chiu, an ancient Peruvian burying-place, still within the bounds of Atacama.

"And here in reserve for him is a spectacle which one might safely affirm has not its like upon the face of the earth. It is called a cemetery, by which we generally understand a place for the interment of the dead. But here the dead are not buried. Seated in a large semi-circle, one beside another, are the mummied remains of an assemblage of human beings—men, women, and children—to the number of five to six hundred, all apparently in the places and attitudes which they first occupied, and which they have kept perhaps for ages. There they sit in the sand, immoveable, as in a solemn council, gazing vacantly, with sunken and dried eyeballs, into the arid waste before them. Nearly all are in the same position, though some are fallen down and partly covered with the sand. The hot, dry air has preserved them as imperishably as the embalming art of the bodies of Egypt.

"What is the explanation of so strange a scene? Who are these that now constitute the ghastly company? Where, and how, and why did they first take their places in this vast semi-circle?

"A thousand questions may be asked, but few answered. The inhabitants of the country who live nearest to the spot have no knowledge on the subject. Some think that the bodies were brought hither and placed in this position after dark, and that such deposit was to serve the purpose of burial. But where could the people have lived who brought their dead to this spot? There is no habitable region at any convenient distance; and no place of similar design is known to exist, to prove that it was a custom common to the aboriginal population.

"Others believe that this may have been the remnant of a native tribe, hunted and pursued by enemies, and driven to the desperate choice between two impending evils—to die by their own act or by the weapons of their foes. There are mothers with infants in their arms, among the mummies, and it is even thought that the dried and sunken countenances retain sufficient expression to indicate that some grievous calamity had overtaken or was about to befall them. It may be their fancy, but travelers aver that grief and despair may be traced upon these shriveled features, and they are ready to believe that their possessors might have been retreating before the conqueror of the country (perhaps from Pizarro himself), and that sooner than submit tamely to the rapacious and cruel invaders, they preferred to hide themselves in this dreary and inaccessible spot, and to suffer the agonies of a voluntary death, sustained by such comforts and hopes as their own simple faith could afford.

"We cannot tell; but there is a spot on the border of this desert called Tucuman, which in the Indian language means 'All is lost.' Perhaps the name commemorates the heroic resolution of these hunted people as they sought the desert for self-immolation.

"It is said, too, by those who have studied the religious ideas of the ancient Peruvians, that they believed in self-sacrifice for their country; that, thus dying, they would be speedily removed to a better land toward the west."

QUICK AND EASY CURE FOR FOUNDER.—Clean out the bottom of the hoof thoroughly—hold up the leg so as to bring the bottom of the hoof upward, holding it firmly in a horizontal position, and pour in, say a tablespoonful of spirits of turpentine, if the cavity of the hoof will hold that much—if not, pour in what it will hold, without danger of running over; touch the turpentine with a red hot iron, (that will set it on fire); hold the hoof firmly in position until it all burns out. Great care must be taken that none runs over on the hair of the hoof, lest the skin be burned. If all the feet are affected, burn turpentine in each of them. Relief will speedily follow, and the animal will be ready for service in a short time. The editor of the *Athens Watchman* says he had a foundered horse treated in the manner above stated one afternoon, and proceeded on a journey with the animal the next morning, without any apparent difficulty of movement. The reader will do well to cut out and preserve this receipt.

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