The Diary of Heinrich Witt

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Edited by

Ulrich Mücke
Commenced in Lima on the 27th of October 1877 by Mr. James Bryson.

Residence in Lima.

From Friday, 20th to Tuesday, 31st of March 1868. On Friday 20th we returned to Chorrillos, but without our cook Achipe, who under the pretence of indisposition remained in Lima; a countryman of his whom he had recommended in his stead did by no means answer the purpose; perhaps he did not know how to purchase in the market place, perhaps cheated us. At all events the meals which he placed on the table were not such as we had a right to expect from the money we gave him, thus my poor wife was always in hot water, not on her own account, nor on mine, because we were both indifferent about our eating and drinking, but our son Juan was rather particular; also Melchor Velarde and Arthur Heeren came now and then uninvited, and then the mere idea that the dishes might not be to their liking sufficed to put my dear Mariquita momentarily out of humour. The price of provisions was certainly rising in an extraordinary manner, for all such as could, and had the means, came to this place flying from the yellow fever which was committing havoc in Callao, and had shown itself in Lima. Except Sundays and holidays I went to town every day. In the train the yellow fever was the topic of conversation. In Lima I attended to my usual occupations, and one morning I ventured to ascend San Cristoval, though violent exercise was at the time strictly prohibited by medical men.

In the course of these, as well as the preceding days, the Municipality of Lima was beleaguered by great numbers of the lowest classes of the Lima population, all eager to obtain their certificates of citizenship – Cartas de Ciudadania. They were the men of the day, they were the effective members of the clubs, they paraded the streets with military music and banners displayed; they, each paid from four to twelve rials a day, called “el Pueblo Soberano”, were the main voters, the principal electors, and decided the fate of the country!

The last steamer brought the news of Earl Derby’s resign [...] of bad health, and Mr. Disraeli had by order [...] [3] taken his place. In the United States things looked queer. On the 21st of February President Johnson ordered Mr. Stanton, Minister of War, to give up the War Department to General Thomas who occupied an inferior situation in the same department. Stanton refused to obey, and ordered Thomas to go to his post and to do his duty as