



More Precious than Gold: The Story of the Peruvian Guano Trade

DAVID HOLLETT

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A few short years after Peru had declared its independence from Spain, the attention of some people in Lima began to focus on a potential source of untold wealth that was to prove more precious than gold. This was guano, which, in its greatest concentration, was found on the diminutive Chincha Islands that lie just off the Peruvian coast, some seventy miles south of Callao. This book covers the story of this international guano trade. It outlines the fate of the unfortunates recruited to cut and load the guano. It also gives full details of the hardships endured by mariners employed in this trade. The story of those who grew rich on the proceeds of this trade is also outlined. Importantly, it explains just how the Peruvian government mismanaged the trade, to the extent that Peru became burdened with debts, rather than prospering on the proceeds of their vast new guano-based income.

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