

they were taken inland to Tarma and on to Cerro de Pasco, the area of the silver mines. The English sailors, however, were not set to work in the mines, but were billeted with various European shopkeepers, etc, for whom they worked for their keep. Choyce regularly planned and executed escapes, accompanied by various numbers of his fellow-prisoners. As even in the jails the prisoners were allowed a great deal of freedom, the actual exit from the prison was not the most hazardous part of the escape; the trouble was in staying out of the hands of the police. Many of these escapes were from seaside jails and ended in long days spent in small crafts drifting along the coast without proper provisions until tired, starved, thirsty, and severely sunburnt, they came ashore in search of food and were recaptured. But one escape, which nearly succeeded, was planned and executed in Cerro de Pasco.

Choyce gives his vivid impressions of the life led in Peru by both Europeans and natives at the close of the eighteenth century, the attitudes they had to foreigners (especially the heathen English), and the conduct of his own countrymen. He also describes earthquakes, llamas, and other phenomena quite novel to him. These descriptions are colourful and detailed, and are clearly those of an observant man. The following excerpt is typical of many: '[At San Matheo] I saw for the first time People rideing on Viccunias or Guanacos these are a very tractable Animal with a long neck and hind quarters like a Camel but the Head and forequarters and all the Feet are like unto those of a Sheep – They have very long fine Wool for which they are much priz'd They are Natives of the Cordelara Mountains and Delight in Snow. They make a noise not unlike the Crowing of a Cock Their Backs are as High as a Donkey but their Heads are much hyher. They Carry a person very well and usually go on a Gallop. They seemed to be shy of us for on our approaching any of them they would stamp with their fore feet and speat at us because We was strangers But the Spaniards usd to tell us it was because We was no Christians.'

Before peace was declared between England and Spain, Choyce was granted a passport and was transported to Panama and across the isthmus to Porto Bello where he was again imprisoned. Later he and others were taken to Carthagena where they were ransomed by a British ship from Jamaica. He was immediately placed aboard an English frigate, where he found the treatment of sailors rather severe; he also resented being forced to fight against the Spanish since, when freeing him, they had warned him not to or he would forfeit his life if captured. Peace was at last declared between Spain and England; Choyce shortly after deserted the British navy near Vera Cruz, and after several adventures found his way to Europe on a Spanish ship, in April 1802. His one desire was to reach England again, but upon arriving there he found most of his relations dead, and decided to