UP THE ORINOCO & DOWN THE MAGDALENA



H. J. MOZANS

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UP THE ORINOCO AND DOWN THE MAGDALENA
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FOLLOWING THE CONQUISTADO

UP THE ORINOCO
DOWN THE MAGDA

BY

H. J. MOZANS, A.M., Ph.



ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK AND LOND
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D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1910

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Published May, 1910

TO
MY GENIAL
COMPAGNON DE VOYAGE
BRAVE LOYAL
C.

Res ardua vetustis novitatem dare; novis auctoritatem; absoletis, nitorem; obscuris, lucem; fastiditis, gratiam; dubiis, fidem; omnibus vero naturam, et naturae sua omnia. Itaque etiam non assecutis, voluisse abunde pulchrum atque magnificum est. That is to say: It is a dyfficulte thynge to gyue newenes to owlde thynges, autoritie to newe thynges, bewtie to thynges owt of vse, fame to the obscure, fauoure to the hatefull, credite to the doubtefull, nature to all and all to nature. To such neuerthelesse as can not atayne to all these, it is greately commendable and magnificall to haue attempted the fame.

From the preface, addressed to the Emperor Vespasian, of Pliny's Natural History.

FOREWORD

The following pages contain the record of a journey made to islands and lands that border the Caribbean and to the less frequented parts of Venezuela and Colombia. Thanks to our trade relations with the Antilles, and the number of meritorious books that have been written about them during the last few decades, our knowledge of the West Indies is fairly complete and satisfactory. The same, however, cannot be said of the two extensive republics just

south of us. Outside of their capitals and a few of their coast towns, they are rarely visited, and as a consequence, the most erroneous ideas prevail regarding them. Vast regions in both republics are now less known than they were three centuries ago, while there are certain sections about which our knowledge is as limited as it is regarding the least explored portions of darkest Africa.

This is not the place to account for the prevailing ignorance regarding the parts of the New Hemisphere that first claimed the attention of discoverers and explorers. Suffice it to state that, paradoxical as it may seem, it is, nevertheless, a fact.

When we recollect that the lands in question were not only the first discovered but that they were also witnesses of the marvelous achievements of some of the most renowned of the conquistadores, our surprise becomes doubly great that our information respecting them is so meager and confined almost exclusively to those who make a special study of things South American.

Never, perhaps, in the history of our race was the spirit of adventure so generally diffused as it was at the dawn of the sixteenth century—just after the epoch-making discoveries of Columbus and his hardy followers. It was like the spirit that animated the Crusaders when they started on their long march to recover the Holy Sepulchre from the possession of the Moslem. It was, indeed, in many of its aspects, a revival of the age of chivalry. The Sea of Darkness had at last been successfully crossed. That ocean of legend and mystery with its enchanted islands inhabited by witches and gnomes and griffins had been explored. And that strange island of Satanaxio, “the island of the hand of Satan,” where the Evil One was “supposed once a day to thrust forth a gigantic hand from the ocean to grasp a number of the inhabitants” was consigned to the limbo of

mediæval superstitions. A new world was revealed to the astonished Spaniards. Every animal, tree, plant seemed new to them and often entirely different from anything the Old World could show. There was, too, a new race of men, with strange manners and customs—men who told them of a Fountain of Youth, of regions of pearls and precious stones, of cities and palaces of gold in the lofty plateau and in the heart of the wilderness.

Those who first came to the New World acted as if they were in a land of enchantment and were prepared to believe any tale, however preposterous, that appealed to their lust of gold or love of adventure. No enterprise was too difficult for them, no hardship too great. Neither trackless forests, nor miasmatic climates, nor ruthless savages could deter them from their quest of treasure, or quench their thirst for glory and emolument. Hence those extraordinary expeditions in search of El Dorado,—that El Dorado which Quesada hoped to find in Cundinamarca, his brother in Casanare, Orsua among the Omaguas on the Amazon, Philipp von Hutten in the regions of the Meta and the Guaviare, and Cesar and Belalcazar in the territories drained by the Cauca and the Magdalena,—in which were combined the extravagant performances of a Don Quixote with the feats of prowess of a Rodrigo Diaz. The spirit of knight-errantry seemed to revive and to bring with it an age of romance that for hardihood of enterprise and variety of incident surpassed any period that had preceded it. The feats of individual prowess were as brilliant as the success of Spanish arms was pronounced and far-reaching. It was an age of epics, of poetry in action.

Lord Macaulay, in his essay on Lord Clive, writes, “We have always thought it strange that, while the history of the Spanish empire in America is familiarly known to all the nations of Europe, the great actions of our countrymen in the East should, even among ourselves, excite little

interest."

One reason for the difference noted was the absence, in the English conquest of India, of those romantic and picturesque elements that so distinguished the achievements of the conquistadores in the New World, and which so fascinated Leo X, that he sat up all night to read the *Decades* of Peter Martyr. "The picturesque descriptions," declares Theodore Irving, in his *Conquest of Florida*, "of steel-clad cavaliers with lance and helmet and prancing steed, glittering through the wildernesses of Florida, Georgia, Alabama and the prairies of the Far West, would seem to us fictions of romance, did they not come to us recorded in matter-of-fact narratives of contemporaries, and corroborated by minute and daily memoranda of eye-witnesses."

The same can be said with even more truth of the conquistadores of the Spanish Main and of the daring adventurers who first penetrated the trackless forests and scaled the lofty mountains of Venezuela and New Granada. "Their minds," as Fiske well observes, "were in a state like that of the heroes of the Arabian Nights who, if they only wander far enough through the dark forest or across the burning desert, are sure at length to come upon some enchanted palace whereof they may fairly hope, with the aid of some gracious Jinni, to become masters." Thus it was that Cortes, unaided, however, by a gracious Jinni, became the master of the capital of the Aztecs, as Quesada and Pizarro became the masters of the lands and the treasures of the Muiscas and the Incas.

It is impossible for the student of early American history to cruise along the Spanish Main, or sail on the broad waters of the Orinoco, the Meta and the Magdalena, without harking back at every turn to the achievements of some of the early discoverers or conquistadores. Every island,

every promontory, every river has been visited by them and, if endowed with speech, they could tell thrilling stories of daring adventure and brilliant exploit unsurpassed in the annals of chivalry and crusading valor. Every place he goes, he will find that he has been preceded by the Spaniard by three or four centuries, for everywhere he will find traces or traditions of his passage.

It matters not that the Spaniards were lured on by such ever-receding chimeras as Manoa, El Dorado and Lake Parime, that many other objects of their quest were as mythical as that of the Argonauts or as unattainable as the golden apples of the Hesperides. Their expeditions were not for these reasons wholly fruitless. Every one of them, whether for the purpose of exploration or conquest or colonization, contributed to our knowledge of the lands visited and of the tribes inhabiting them, many of whom have long since disappeared. And everywhere one finds towns founded by them, or places, mountains and rivers that still bear the names that were given them at the time of their discovery.

It was always our pleasure, during our wanderings in the tropics, to recall what the first explorers thought of the new lands visited by them while they were still under the spell of the novel and marvelous things that were ever claiming their rapt attention whithersoever they went. We loved to look upon the countries we visited as their first explorers had looked upon them. This we were able to do, for thanks to the old chroniclers, the wonderment of the discovery of the New World has been preserved, as in amber, in all its freshness, and that, too, for all time to come.

Comparatively few people realize how extensive is the literature, especially in Spanish, that relates to the period of the conquest and that immediately following it. And still fewer are aware of its intense interest and importance. In

addition to the well-known classic works of Peter Martyr, Las Casas, Herrera, Oviedo, Garcilaso de la Vega, Cieza de Leon, Gomara, Acosta, and others scarcely less valuable, there are scores of similar annals that have for centuries lain in the archives of Spain and of the various countries of Latin-America which have but recently been published. Many of these—beyond price for the historian—were absolutely unknown until a few years ago, and are still awaiting the artistic pen of a Prescott or an Irving to transmute their contents in masterpieces of literature. It is safe to say that nowhere else will the man of letters find a more fertile and a less cultivated field to engage his talent.

Then there are the works, equally precious, of the early missionaries. Many of them are veritable mines of information respecting the manners and customs of the native inhabitants of the tropics, while not a few of them are the only sources extant of knowledge respecting many interesting Indian tribes that have long since become extinct. Among these deserving of special notice are the works of Simon, Gilli, Caulin, Rivero, Cassani, Gumilla and Piedrahita—not to mention others of lesser note—that treat specially of Venezuela and New Granada, and afford us the truest picture of the condition of these countries during their existence under Spanish domination. Humboldt frequently quotes them in his instructive *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions of America*, and usually with the generous approval and commendation which they so well deserve. To the humble and intelligent and often erudite missionaries of the tropics the illustrious German savant was indebted for much of the success that attended his explorations in the basin of the Orinoco and along the plateau of the Cordilleras.

Worthy of mention, too, in traversing countries where the traveler has not the benefit of a Murray or a Baedeker, are the numerous works of those explorers—German, English,

French, American—who have followed in the footsteps of Humboldt and his *compagnon de voyage*, Bonpland, and who have cast a flood of light upon the fauna and flora of the countries visited, and supplemented the works of the early historians and missionaries by describing the condition of their inhabitants as it obtains to-day.

In the following pages the author has endeavored to give not only his own impressions of the lands he has visited but also, when the narrative permitted or required it, the impressions of others—conquistadores, missionaries and men of science—who have gone over the same grounds or discussed the same topics as constitute the subject-matter of this volume. The rapidly increasing interest of our people in all matters pertaining to South America, and the eagerness now manifested to see closer trade-relations established between the United States and the various republics of Latin America, seemed to justify this course. For the student, as well as for the general reader, it seemed to be desirable, if not necessary, to indicate, at least cursorily, by citations and footnotes, the character and extent of that large class of works, historical and scientific, that occupy so important a position in the annals of discovery and of material and intellectual progress.

In the words of Pliny, quoted on the title page, it has been the aim of the author "to give newness to old things, authority to new things, beauty to things out of use, fame to the obscure, favor to the hateful, credit to the doubtful, nature to all and all to nature." A difficult task truly; how difficult no one can more fully recognize than the author himself. If he has failed in many of the things proposed, he cherishes the hope that the reader's verdict will incline to that contained in the last sentence of the paragraph cited: "To such neverthelesse as can not attayne to all these, it is greatly commendable and magnificall to have attempted the same."

The present book will be followed by a volume to be entitled: “Along the Andes and Down the Amazon.”

The Author.

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UP THE ORINOCO AND DOWN THE MAGDALENA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

EASTER LAND

On a dark, cold day toward the close of January, 1907, the writer stood at a window in New York, observing some score of a mittened army removing the avalanche of snow that cumbered the streets after a half week of continuous storm. He was pondering a long vacation, musing where rest and recreation might be found, at once wholesome and instructive, amid scenes quite different from any afforded by his previous journeys. He was familiar with every place of interest in North America, from Canada to the Gulf, from Alaska to Yucatan. He had spent many years in Europe, had visited Asia, Africa, and the far-off isles of the

Pacific. He cared not to revisit these, much less to go where he must entertain or be entertained. He sought rest, absolute rest and freedom, untrammeled by conventional life. For the present he would shun the society of his fellows for the serene solitude of the wilderness, or the companionship of mighty mountains and rivers. Not that he was a misanthrope or that he wished to become an anchoret. Far from it. Still less did he wish to spend his time in idleness. This for him would have been almost tantamount to solitary confinement. He dreamed of a land where he could spend most of the time in the open air close to Nature and in communion with her—where both mind and body could be always active and yet always free—free as the bird that comes and goes as it lists.

Whilst thus absorbed in thought, and casting an occasional glance at the laborers in the street battling against the Frost-King, whose work continued without intermission, the writer was awakened from his reverie by the dulcet notes evoked from a Steinway grand and the sweet, sympathetic voice of one who had just intoned the opening words of Goethe's matchless song as set to music by Liszt: —

"Knowest thou the land where the pale citron grows,
And the gold orange through dark foliage glows?
A soft wind flutters through the deep blue sky,
The myrtle blooms, and towers the laurel high,
Knowest thou it well?
O there with thee!
O that I might, my own beloved one, flee."

It was La Niña—the pet name of the young musician—that came as a special providence to clear up a question that seemed to be growing more difficult the longer it was pondered. The effect was magical, and all doubt and hesitation disappeared forthwith. La Niña, as if inspired,

had, without in the least suspecting it, indicated the land of the heart's desire. Yes, the writer would leave, and leave at once, the region of cloud and frost and chilling blast, and seek the land of flowers and sunshine, the land of "soft wind" and "blue sky," "the land where the pale citron grows," where "the gold orange glows." It would not, however, be the land of which Mignon sang and which she so yearned to see again. Lovely, charming Italy, with its manifold attractions of every kind, must for once yield to the sun-land of another clime far away, and in another hemisphere.

A few days afterwards the writer, with a few friends, had taken his place in a through Pullman car bound for the Land of Easter—the land of Ponce de Leon. They found every berth in the car occupied by people like themselves hastening away from the rigors of winter and betaking themselves to where

"Trees bloom throughout the year, soft breezes blow,
And fragrant Flora wears a lasting smile."

Some were going for the rest and the amusement promised at several noted winter resorts. Others were in search of health that had been shattered by confinement or over-work. Some were going away for a few weeks only; others for the entire winter. Some were going no farther south than Florida, others purposed visiting some of the Antilles, and even, mayhap, the Spanish Main.

As for the writer, he had no fixed plan, and for this reason he had not even thought of making out an itinerary. He would go to Florida to take up again a line of travel that had been interrupted some decades before. He had always been interested in the lives and achievements of the early Spanish discoverers and conquistadores, and had, in days gone by, followed in the footsteps of Narvaez and de Soto,

of Cabeza de Vaca and Coronado, Fray Marcos de Niza, and Hernando Cortes. And now that he had the opportunity, it occurred to him that he could do nothing better or more profitable than make a reality what had been a dream from boyhood. He would visit the islands and lands discovered by the immortal "Admiral of the ocean sea" and follow in the footsteps of the conquistadores in Tierra Firme. He would explore the lands first made known by Balboa, and Quesada, and Belalcazar and rendered famous by the prowess of the Almagros and the Pizarros. He would visit the homes of the Musicas, the Incas, and the Ayamaras, wander among the Cordilleras from the Caribbean Sea to Lake Titicaca and beyond, and follow in the wake of Diego de Ordaz and Alonzo de Herrera on the broad waters of the Orinoco and in that of Pedro de Orsua and Francisco de Orellana in the mighty flood of the Amazon.

A great undertaking apparently, and, considered in the light of certain reports published about tropical America, seemingly impossible. To say the least, such a journey, it was averred, implied difficulties and privations and dangers innumerable.

"Do you wish to spend the rest of your life in South America? It will require a lifetime to visit the regions you have mentioned. I have myself spent many years in traveling in tropical America, and knowing, as I do, the lack of facilities for travel, the countless unforeseen delays of every kind, and the *mañana* habit that obtains everywhere in the countries you would visit, I have no hesitation in stating that you are attempting the impossible, if you mean to accomplish all you have spoken of in the limited time you have allotted to yourself."

Such were the words addressed to the writer on the eve of his departure by a noted traveler and one who is considered

an authority on all things South American. Not very encouraging, truly, especially to one who was seeking rest and recreation and who was anything but inclined to court hardships and dangers in foreign lands and among peoples that were reputed to be only half-civilized, where-ever they chanced to be above the aboriginal savage that still roams over so much of the territory on both sides of the equator.

But, as already stated, the writer had on leaving home no definite programme mapped out. He left that to shape itself according to events and circumstances. He departed on his journey with little more of a plan than the vague indications of a life-long dream. Still, confiding in Providence, he hoped that he would be able to realize this, as he had, in years gone by, realized other dreams that seemed even less likely ever to become actualities.

LA FLORIDA

Twenty-eight hours after leaving New York, with its snow and ice and arctic blasts, our party found itself wandering among the orange groves and promenading beneath the graceful palms of old, romantic St. Augustine. We could scarcely credit our senses, so complete was the change in our environment. A soft, balmy atmosphere, gentle zephyrs, sweet, feathered songsters without number, all joining in a chorus of welcome to the strangers from the North, made us think that we had been transported to the Hesperides or to the delights of the Elysian Fields. And when, after nightfall, we walked about the grounds and the courts of the famous hostelries that have been recently erected regardless of expense, and provided with every

luxury that money and art can command—all brilliantly illuminated by thousands of electric lights of divers colors—it seemed as if we had, in very deed, suddenly, we knew not how, become denizens of fairyland. To find anything similar to the scene that here bursts upon the view of the delighted visitor one must go to Monte Carlo during the season when thousands are attracted thither from all parts of the world, or betake oneself to the Place de la Concorde when the gay French capital is *en fête*.

St. Augustine, with all its traditions and historic associations, is one of the most restful and interesting of places, especially in winter, and a place, too, where one might tarry for months with pleasure. Nothing can be more delightful than the drives in the pine-forests adjacent to the city,

"Where west-winds with musky wing
About the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and cassias balmy smells."

We could now verify at our leisure what we had been wont to consider as the exaggerated statements of the early explorers of Florida regarding the beautiful forests—"trellised with vines and gay with blossoms"—and the fragrant odors that were wafted from them by the breeze even out to the ships passing along the coast, and "in such abundance that the entire orient could not produce so much." "We stretched forth our hands," writes Lescarbot, in his *Historie de la Nouvelle France*, "as if to grasp them, so palpable were they." All carried away with them the same impression about the "*douceur odoriferante de plusieurs bonnes choses*"—the odoriferous sweetness of many good things—that was everywhere observable.

Nor were their accounts of this grateful feature of the country overdrawn. It is the same to-day as it was four

centuries ago, when the European had just landed on these shores and found so many things—as novel as they were marvelous—to excite his delight and enthusiasm. It is something that is denied to us whose homes are in the North, and, to enjoy it in all its newness and freshness, we must perforce immigrate to tropical and subtropical climes.

But the foregoing is only one of the delectable features of this favored land. As we wander through the groves and gardens and sail on the placid waters of the rivers and lakes through the silent everglades or the dark and mysterious forests, we find at every turn something to charm the ear or delight the eyes. Everywhere we meet with new and beauteous form of animal and vegetable life and realize for the first time, perhaps, how diverse and multitudinous are the forms of animated nature.

If we are to credit Herrera, it was on account of its beautiful aspect, as well as on the day on which it was discovered, that the locality received the name it now bears. The historian says explicitly that Ponce de Leon and his companions “named it Florida because it appeared very delightful, having many pleasant groves, and it was all level; as also because they discovered it at Easter, which, as has been said, the Spaniards call Pascua de Flores or Florida.”[1]

In view of this clear and positive statement of Herrera, one is surprised to see that writers treating the subject *ex professo* have fallen into error regarding the origin of the name Florida. Thus Barnard Shipp writes: “The Peninsula of Florida was discovered by Juan Ponce de Leon on Pascua Florida, Palm Sunday, in the year 1512,[2] and because of the day on which he discovered it, he gave it the name Florida.”[3]

All doubt, however, about the real origin of the name,

about which there has been so much misunderstanding, is removed by the declaration of Peter Martyr, the father of American history. In his delightfully refreshing work, *De Orbe Novo*, which is not so well known as it should be, he asserts in language that does not admit of ambiguity, that Juan Ponce named the newly discovered territory Florida because it was discovered the day of the Resurrection, for the Spaniards call the day of the Resurrection *Pascua de Flores*."[4]

When the French Huguenots some decades later attempted to colonize the country they called it "La Nouvelle France"—New France—a name they also subsequently gave to Canada.

More interesting, however, is the fact that the Spaniards first thought the peninsula to be an island and called it Isla Florida. Ponce de Leon in writing to Charles V calls it an island, and it is figured as such in the Turin map of the New World, circa 1523. But after they learned that it was the mainland, Florida was made to embrace the whole of North America except Mexico. Thus writes Herrera and Las Casas. The latter make it extend from what we now know as Cape Sable to "the land of Codfish" (Newfoundland), "otherwise known as Labrador, which is not very far from the island of England." The present boundaries of Florida, it may be remarked, were not determined until 1795, when they were fixed by treaty with Spain.

But what in more interesting than names and boundaries, and what will, perhaps, be more surprising to the readers of popular works on the subject, is the fact that Ponce de Leon, in spite of all that has been said to the contrary, was not the discoverer of Florida, the fact that it was discovered nearly two decades before Ponce de Leon reached its shores, and the further and more unexpected

fact that it was discovered by that much misrepresented and much abused navigator, Americus Vespucius.

Thanks to the researches of Varnhagen, Harrisse and others, these facts have been apparently demonstrated beyond doubt. In his work on the voyages of the brothers Cortereal, Harrisse has clearly proven that, between the end of the year 1500 and the summer of 1502, certain navigators, whose names and nationality are unknown, but who were presumably Spaniards, discovered, explored and named that part of the coast-line of the United States which extends from Pensacola Bay, along the Gulf of Mexico, to the Cape of Florida, and, turning it, runs northward along the Atlantic coast to about the mouth of the Chesapeake or the Hudson.[5] The maps of Juan de la Cosa—drawn in 1500—and the one made for Alberto Cantino in 1502—maps which have only recently received the attention due them—are overwhelming evidence of the truth of these conclusions.

According to M. Varnhagen, the one who furnished the data for these maps, if indeed, he did not construct the prototype from which they were both executed, was no other than Americus Vespucius, who from now on must receive different treatment from that which has hitherto been accorded him. By marshalling a brilliant array of facts, presented with masterly logic, Varnhagen, silences the detractors of the illustrious Florentine navigator, and disarms those objectors who have been unwilling to accept as true the statements contained in the celebrated Soderini letter regarding his first voyage to the New World in 1497 and 1498. He leaves no doubt on the reader's mind, that Vespucius, after visiting Honduras and Yucatan, sailed thence to and around Florida, and that, if he did not himself actually construct the original of the Cantino map, it was he that supplied the data from which both this map and that of Juan de la Cosa were rendered possible.[6] If

some fortunate student of early *Americana* should eventually ferret out the *Quattro Giornate*—Four Journeys—of which Vespucius frequently makes mention, and in which he gives an account of all his voyages, he would render an incalculable service to the cause of truth, and would be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of even the most exacting critic the extent and importance of the services rendered by the pilot major of Spain to the crown of Leon and Castile—services only second to those which distinguish Columbus himself.

FONS JUVENTUTIS

But whatever may be said about the discovery of the country, Ponce de Leon's name will always remain so closely linked with Florida that it will never be possible to dissociate the two. One may forget all about his enterprise as a navigator and may ignore his claims as a discoverer, but one can never become oblivious of that strange episode with which his name is inseparably connected—the romantic search for the Fountain of Youth.

For the historian, as for the psychologist, the subject possesses an abiding interest, and even the casual visitor to Florida finds himself unconsciously dreaming about the days long gone by when Spaniard and Indian were wandering through forest and everglade in search of the life-giving fountain about which they had heard such marvelous reports. And if his dreams do not consume all his time, he also finds himself speculating on the origin of such reports, or the basis of the legend which started Ponce de Leon and others on a search for what proved to be an

ignis fatuus as extraordinary as was the mythical Eldorado a few years later.

The historian Gomara, referring to this episode in the life of Ponce de Leon, writes as follows: “The gouernour of the Islande of Boriquena, John Ponce de Leon, beinge discharged of his office and very ryche, furnysshed and sente foorth two carvels to seeke the Ilandes of Boyuca in the which the Indians affirmed to be a fontayne or spring whose water is of vertue to make owlde men younge.”

“Whyle he trauayled syxe monethes with owtragious desyre among many Ilandes to fynde that he sought, and coulde fynde no token of any such fountayne, he entered into Bimini and discouered the lande of Florida in the yeare 1512 on Easter day which the Spanyardes caule the florisshing day of Pascha, wherby they named that lande Florida.”7

Antonio de Herrera speaks not only of this Fountain of Youth but also of a river whose waters had likewise the marvelous property of restoring youth to old age. This river was also supposed to be in Florida. It was known as the Jordan and received quite as much attention from both Spaniards and Indians as did the Fountain of Youth.

Fonteneda, who spent seventeen years in the wilds of Florida, as a captive of the Indians, gives more explicit information about the subject than either Gomara or Herrera. “Juan Ponce de Leon,” he says, “believing the reports of the Indians of Cuba and San Domingo to be true, made an expedition into Florida to discover the river Jordan. This he did, either because he wished to acquire renown, or, perhaps, because he hoped to become young again by bathing in its waters. Many years ago a number of Cuban Indians went in search of this river, and entered the province of Carlos, but Sequene, the father of Carlos, took

them prisoners and settled them in a village, where their descendants are still living. The news that these people had left their own country to bathe in the river Jordan spread among all the kings and chiefs of Florida, and, an they were an ignorant people, they set out in search of this river, which was supposed to possess the powers of rejuvenating old men and women. So eager were they in their search, that they did not pass a river, a brook, a lake, or even a swamp, without bathing in it, and even to this day they have not ceased to look for it, but always without success. The natives of Cuba, braving the dangers of the sea, became the victims of their faith, and thus it happened that they came to Carlos, where they built a village. They came in such great numbers that, although many have died, there are still many living there, both old and young. While I was a prisoner in those parts I bathed in a great many rivers but never found the right one."[8]

The poet-historian, Juan de Castellanos, writing in mock heroic style, says that so great were the virtues of the Fountain of Youth, that by means of its waters old women were able to get rid of their wrinkles and gray hairs. "A few draughts of the water and a bath in the restoring fluid sufficed to restore strength to their enfeebled members, give beauty to their features, and impart to a faded complexion the glow of youth. And, considering the vanity of our times, I wonder how many old women would drag themselves to this saving wave, if the puerilities of which I speak were certainties. How rich and puissant would not be the king who should own such a fountain! What farms, jewels, and prized treasures would not men sell in order to become young again! And what cries of joy would not proceed from the women-folk—from the fair as well as from the homely! In what a variety of costumes and liveries would not all go to seek such favors! Certainly they would take greater pains than they would in making a

visit to the Holy Land."[9]

What Castellanos said might be repeated to-day. If the Fountain of Youth or the river Jordan, such as Ponce de Leon, Ayllon and de Soto sought, now existed, Florida would be the most frequented and most thickly populated country on the face of the globe. Vichy, Homburg, Karlsbad and other similar resorts would at once be abandoned, and there would forthwith be a mad rush for the Land of Easter. The Fountain of Youth would be worth more to its possessor than the diamond mines of Kimberley, more than the combined interests of Standard Oil, more than all the stocks and bonds of the United States Steel Corporation. There would be countless numbers who, like Faust, would be ready to sell their souls for a single draught of the life-giving fountain, for a single plunge into the health- and strength-restoring river.

That the simple and ignorant Indians of Cuba and Haiti and adjacent islands should have credited the stories in circulation about the marvelous waters said to exist somewhere in Florida we can understand. The marvelous and the supernatural always appeal in a special manner to the superstitious and untutored savage. We are, however, disposed to smile at the credulity of the enlightened Spaniard who did not hesitate to sacrifice fortune and life in the quest of what could never be found outside of Utopia. But, viewing things in our present state of knowledge, it is easy to judge them rashly and do them a grave injustice. We must transport ourselves back to the times in which they lived and acted, and consider the strange and novel environment in which they suddenly found themselves. A new world had just been discovered —a world in which everything—plants, trees, animals, men—seemed different from what they were familiar with in their own land. And for a people who from their youth had eagerly listened to stories of knight-errantry, and who,

by long association with their Moorish neighbors, were ready to accept as sober facts the wildest statements of oriental fable, a special allowance must be made. They had heard of the adventures of Marco Polo, and of the wonders of Cathay and Cipango, and their minds were full of the oft-told tales about the Fortunate Isles, and the Islands of the Blest—located somewhere in the broad Atlantic, and presumably in the region of the setting sun—and what more natural than that they should expect to find themselves some bright morning in a land of enchantment? The marvelous stories current about the voyages of St. Brendan and his companions, about the island in the Western sea inhabited by Enoch and Elias, about the Garden of Eden moved from the distant East to the more distant West, all contributed to prepare their minds for a ready acceptance of the most extravagant statements. Had not the great Admiral, Columbus, announced that he had located the site of the Terrestrial Paradise, when he sailed by the rushing water of the Orinoco, and had not his views been accepted by thousands of his wondering contemporaries?

Such being the case, is it astonishing that the early explorers should have seriously believed in what we are now so ready to denounce as absurd? The romantic world of the sixteenth century, when Pliny and the *Physiologus* and the *Bestiaries*, were accepted by students of nature as unquestioned authorities; when learned men spent their lives in search of the elixir of life and the philosopher's stone, and believed in the transmutation of the baser metals into gold, was quite different from our prosaic twentieth-century world, when nothing is accepted that cannot pass the ordeal of exact science.

Again, we must not imagine, as is so often done, that a *Fons Juventutis*, such as Ponce de Leon and his contemporaries sought for, was something unheard of in

the history of our race. Stories of miraculously healing fountains have been current from early times and in divers parts of the world—in India, in Ethiopia, and in the isles of the Pacific.

The reader will recall what Sir John Mandeville says about a well of youth he found during his travels in India. It was, he declares, “a right faire and a clere well, that hath a full good and sweete savoure, and it smelleth of all maner of sortes of spyces, and also at eche houre of the daye it changeth his savor diversely, and whoso drinketh thries on the daye of that well, he is made hole of all maner of sickenesse that he hathe. I have sometime dronke of that well and me thinketh yet that I fare the better; some call it the well of youth, for they that drinke thereof seme to be yong alway, and live without great sicknesse, and they saye this, cometh from Paradise terrestre, for it is so vertuous.”[10]

So writes Mandeville, but there is reason to believe that he cribbed this account of the Fountain of Youth from a medieval legend of Prester John, from which, on account of the interest that attaches to the subject, I select the following paragraph:—

“Item aboute this passage is a fonteyne or a conduyte so who of this watere drinked, IIJ. tymes he shall waxe yonge and also yf a man haue had a sykenes, XXX. yere and drynked of thys same water he shall therof be hole and sonde. And also as a man thereof drinked hym semeth that he had occupyed the beste mete and drinke of the worlde, and this same fonteyne is full of the grace of the holy goost, and who sowe in this same water wasshed his body he shall become yonge of XXX. yere.”[11]

Whether these stories had their origin in folklore or not, they found their way into Europe at least two centuries

before the voyage of Ponce de Leon to Florida. Mandeville's work appeared in French, Latin, and English, and such was its popularity, that Halliwell did not hesitate to declare that "of no book, with the exception of the Scriptures, can more MSS. be found at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century."

Such being the case, it would be strange indeed if the Spaniards were not familiar with stories so widely circulated, and stranger still if, on arriving in the New World, and learning from the Indians of the existence of a fountain of youth, and at no great distance away, they should not seek to locate it and test its virtues. Given the state of knowledge at the time, and the credence accorded to the accounts of similar fountains in the Old World, the much ridiculed expedition of Ponce de Leon followed as a natural consequence. It would have been more surprising if the expedition had not been made than that it was made.

The foregoing remarks on the Florida Fountain of Youth and river Jordan would be incomplete without a few words about the probable origin of the traditions concerning them. To attribute their origin to folklore simply may be true, but it explains nothing.

M. E. Beauvois, in a series of interesting articles—very plausible if not conclusive—on the subject, contends that all the traditions regarding the Fountain of Youth and the river Jordan, which proved so attractive to the Spaniards, are of Christian origin. He maintains that the Gaels, as early as 1380, "had established relations with the aborigines from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the tropical zone of North America, and that it is very probable that missionaries accompanied the merchants in their voyages to Florida and the Antilles." He argues that these missionaries baptized the indigenes in some river which, for that reason, they called the Jordan, or that they spoke to

them of a river in their country, on which a Christian mission had been established, and that this fact gave rise to the formation of the tradition of a Jordan situated somewhere at the north of the Antilles.

It remains to show how this tradition came to be confounded with the story of the Fountain of Youth. This confusion was the more natural that the same idea is at the foundation of the two parallel traditions. The one has reference to the regeneration of the soul, the other to the rejuvenation of the body, both being effected by means of vivifying water. In the beginning, but one kind of water was known, that "which saved by its own proper virtue, the water of baptism, which is exclusively spiritual." Subsequently, however, the simple and superstitious Indian attributed to the waters of baptism properties which seemed to him preferable to those spoken of by the missionary—the properties, namely, "of curing diseases of the body, or of restoring youth to the decrepit and of indefinitely prolonging life. From that time the Fountain of Youth had a proper existence and began to play an important role in popular traditions."

How long the tradition of the beneficent waters of Florida existed—and Florida, it must be remembered, meant to the Spaniards of the sixteenth century all the Atlantic coast—M. Beauvois does not determine. It may have been only a few generations, or it may have been several centuries. It may even have dated back to about the year 1008, when Thorfinn Karlsefni was baptized in "Vinland the Good"—Massachusetts—the first Christian, so far as known, born on the American continent. Or it may have originated as far north as New Brunswick—"Great Ireland or Huitramannaland—which had been occupied by a Gaelic colony from the year 1000, or from an earlier date, until the end of the fourteenth century, and where, about the year 1000, the Papas, Columbite monks, the evangelizers

of that region, had baptized the Icelander, Aré Mârsson, who had left his native island before his conversion to Christianity."

At all events, whatever conclusions may be reached as to the time when and the place where the tradition originated, it is manifest that "it could have been propagated in the New World only by Christians and as it was in existence before the arrival of the Spaniards, we must attribute its propagation to other Europeans, to those, for example, whose crosses the indigenes of Tennessee and Georgia had exhumed from their ancient burial places, or to those whom the inhabitants of Haiti had known either *de visu* or by hearsay."[12]

What is here said of the Christian origin of the Florida Fountain of Youth can likewise be predicated of the one mentioned in the legend of Prester John—whence, as we have seen, Mandeville got his story, for it is said, "this same fonteyne is full of the grace of the holy goost," an obvious allusion to the regenerating waters of baptism.

But it is time to resume the thread of our narrative, interrupted by a discussion unavoidably long, but pardonable, it is hoped, in view of its abiding interest and intimate connection with the early history of Florida. Besides, my purpose is not so much to give descriptions of the countries through which we shall pass—something which has in most instances been done before—as to give the impressions of their earliest explorers and to dwell, as briefly as may be, on topics relating to the various regions visited, that possess even for the most casual reader a perennial fascination and importance. In countries like those we shall visit, the impressions of the first explorers are often more interesting and instructive than those of the latest tourist or naturalist, for such impressions have about them a freshness and an originality—often a quaintness

and a simplicity—that are entirely absent from modern works of travel. Another reason for so doing is that much of the ground, over which we shall travel, is practically the same to-day as when it first greeted the eyes of the conquistadores, and many of the towns and cities we shall visit, no less than the manners and customs of the people, differ but little from what they were in the time of Charles V and Philip II. Thus, regarding many things, the statements of the Spanish writers and missionaries of four centuries ago are still as true as if they had been penned but yesterday, and that, too, by the most accurate observer.

From St. Augustine, the oldest city in the United States, the traveler has the choice of two routes to Havana. One is by way of Tampa Bay, called by De Soto the Bay of Espíritu Santo, and by some of the early geographers designated as the Bay of Ponce de Leon. What, however, is now known as Ponce de Leon Bay, is farther south and near the southernmost point of the peninsula. The other route is along the east coast of the state. At the time of our visit the railroad was in operation only as far as Miami, but was being rapidly pushed towards its terminus at Key West.

We chose the eastern route because we could in fancy follow more closely in the footsteps of the conquistadores and picture to ourselves, in the ocean, nearly always visible, that long procession of barks and brigantines which four centuries ago plowed the main, some moving northward, others southward—all manned by brawny, hardy mariners in search of gold and glory. Spaniards, like Ponce de Leon and Pedro Menendez; Italians, like Americus Vespucius and Verrazano; Englishmen, like Hawkins and Raleigh; Frenchmen, like Ribaut and Laudonniere, all passed along this coast—all bent on achieving distinction or extending the possessions of their respective sovereigns. Brave and gallant mariners these,

men whose names are writ large on the pages of story and who occupy a conspicuous place in the records of the heroes of adventure.

From Miami we went by steamer to Key West, which will soon be accessible by rail from St. Augustine. The sea was as placid as an inland lakelet and the voyage to Havana was in every way ideal. We skirted along the Florida Keys —those countless coral islets that are to serve as piers for the railroad under construction, which is to form so important a link between Cuba and the United States. When completed the time consumed in going to the Pearl of the Antilles will not only be greatly lessened, but the former discomforts and terrors of the journey will be entirely eliminated. No longer will the traveler be obliged to encounter the hurricanes of the Bahamas or the heavy seas off Cape Hatteras. He will be able to take his seat in a Pullman car in New York and go, without change, through to Key West and thence to Havana and Santiago de Cuba.

How different was it when the small Spanish craft of four centuries ago navigated these waters on their way from Panama and Vera Cruz to the mother country! Then, as the reader will observe, by reference to the old maps of Florida, the keys or coral reefs along the coast were known as *Los Mártires*—the Martyrs—so named by Ponce de Leon on account of the number of shipwrecks that occurred here, and because of the number of lives that were lost on these treacherous shoals and also, as Herrera informs us, because of certain rock-formations in the vicinity that have the appearance of men in distress.

If we may credit the legends and traditions that have obtained in those parts, many a Spanish treasure-ship has been lost in threading its way through the uncharted shoals and islands of *Los Mártires* and the Bahamas, and many futile attempts have been made to recover at least a part of

the treasure lost, but it was

"Lost in a way that made search vain."

And of the adventurous divers, who braved the dangers of current and wave, one can safely say in the words of Bret Harte

"Never a sign,
East or West, or under the line,
They saw of the missing galleon;
Never a sail or plank or chip,
They found of the long-lost treasure-ship,
Or enough to build a tale upon."

THE PEARL OF THE ANTILLES

Early the morning following our departure from Miami we were aroused from our slumbers by the cry of a mariner, "Land ho! all hands ahoy!" We were on deck without delay, and there before us, under a sky of purest azure, we beheld the hills of Cuba, clad in a mantle of undying verdure. Its resplendent shores were arrayed in hues of glowing beauty and unimagined loveliness. Fragrant groves of orange and pomegranate, luxuriant forests white with clouds of bloom, formed a glorious setting to the refulgent waves that reflected the crimson splendors of the rising sun. Delicious zephyrs, fanning their balmy wings, bathed our brows with dewy freshness, sweet with perfume from ambrosial fruits and tropic flowers. Yes, we were in the Pearl of the Antilles, the "Sweet Isle of Flowers"; in *Gan Eden*—the Garden of Delight—that in the legends of

long ago was reckoned among the Isles of the Blest.

The beautiful pictures before us, however, were but as a fleeting panorama. We had but little time to feast our eyes on them before we were in front of grim, frowning Morro Castle, that for three centuries and more has stood sentinel of the fair city at its feet. Adjoining the Castle are the Cabañas, a vast range of fortifications more than a mile in length, and nearly a thousand feet in breadth. Just opposite, on the other side of the harbor's entrance, is the Bateria de la Punta, and some distance farther beyond is the star-shaped Castle Atares. From a military standpoint Havana is well protected, and, with Morro Castle properly equipped with modern artillery, would be practically impregnable.

Few West Indian cities have greater historic interest than Havana. From the time it was first visited by Ocampo, four hundred years ago, until the raising of the flag of the Cuban Republic in 1904, it has been the witness of many stirring events that have effected the destinies of millions of people in various parts of the world. It was from Havana's port that Cortes, in 1519, sailed on his memorable voyage to Mexico. It was from this port that Pamphilio de Narvaez and Hernando de Soto started on their ill-starred expeditions to Florida. Time and again the city was harassed by Dutch, French and English pirates and Buccaneers. Oftentimes, too, the daring sea-rovers, who so long infested West Indian waters, levied tribute on the unfortunate inhabitants who were unable to defend themselves. Indeed, it was to defend the city from these marauders that the kings of Spain, in the middle of the sixteenth century, began the erection of those fortifications that, since their completion, have excited the admiration of all who have visited them.

Cuba was one of the islands Columbus discovered during

his first voyage. But he thought he had discovered a continent—that he had reached the eastern extremity of Asia. He had set out from Spain to find a western route to the Indies, to offset the discoveries of Bartholomew Diaz and Vasco da Gama. To him Cuba was the land of the Great Khan, far-off Cathay, and Española, discovered shortly afterwards, was Cipango, Japan. Indeed, there is reason to believe that he died in the belief that Cuba, far from being an island, was a part of China, as mapped by Toscanelli and described by Marco Polo. We have no positive evidence that he was ever aware of the circumnavigation of the island by Pinzón and Solís in 1497, and he was dead two years before its insularity was again proved by Ocampo. He never dreamed that he had discovered a new world, nor did any of his contemporaries or immediate successors have any conclusive reason to infer that the lands discovered by the great Admiral in his third and fourth voyages were not a part of the Asiatic continent.

Balboa's discovery of the Pacific Ocean did not supply such reasons, neither did the rounding of South America and the circumnavigation of the globe by Magellan. Nor were the necessary proofs furnished by the explorations of Drake or Frobisher, Davis or Hudson or Baffin.

The final demonstration of the complete separation of America from Asia was a long process and was not given until the noted explorations of Vitus Behring in 1728, more than two centuries after Balboa from the summit of a peak in Darien first descried the placid waters of the great South Sea.[13]

We had desired to visit the northern and southern coasts of Cuba, and to feast our eyes on the beautiful scenes that had so captivated Columbus; to view the hundred harbors that indent its tortuous shores; to see the Queen's Gardens—

now known as Los Cayos de las Doce Leguas—which the great navigator fancied to be the seven thousand spice islands of Marco Polo, but our time was too limited to permit the long and slow coasting that would be required. Besides, we preferred to study the interior of the country, and pass through the sugar and tobacco plantations for which the island is so famous.

Fortunately for the comfort of the traveler, there is now a through train from Havana to Santiago, so that one can make the entire five hundred and forty miles in twenty-four hours, and that, too, if one so elect, in a Pullman car.

Columbus, in writing of his first voyage to Rafael Sánchez and Luis de Santangel, says that all the countries he had discovered, but particularly Juana—the name he gave to Cuba—"are of surpassing excellence," and "exceedingly fertile." "All these islands" he continues, "are very beautiful and distinguished by a diversity of scenery; they are filled with a great variety of trees of immense height, and which I believe retain their foliage in all seasons; for when I saw them"—in November—"they were as verdant and luxuriant as they usually are in Spain in the month of May—some of them were blossoming, some bearing fruit, and all flourishing in the greatest perfection, according to their respective stages of growth, and the nature and quality of each." Again he writes, "The nightingale and a thousand other sorts of birds were singing in the month of November wherever I went. There are palm trees in these countries of six or eight sorts, which are surprising to see, on account of their diversity from ours, but, indeed, this is the case with respect to the other trees, as well as the fruits and weeds. Here are also honey, and fruits of a thousand sorts, and birds of every variety."[14]

The Admiral's delight and enthusiasm at all he saw knew no bounds, and in his diary he gives frequent expression to

the pleasurable emotions he experienced. All was new to him, and all beautiful beyond words to describe. Trees and plants were as different from those in Spain as day is from night, and the verdure and bloom in November were as fresh and brilliant as in the month of May in Andalusia.[15] The great navigator had a poet's love of nature, and artist's eye for the beautiful. Indeed, it may be truthfully said that no one since his time has more correctly and more succinctly portrayed the salient features of these islands, and it may be questioned if any one has more deeply appreciated their beauty and splendor.

That which frequently arrests the attention of the traveler, on the way from Havana to Santiago, is the numerous sugar and tobacco plantations everywhere visible. Sugar cane, as is known, was not found by the Spaniards on their arrival in the New World, but was introduced there a short time after, most probably from the Madeira or Canary Islands.

Tobacco, however, is an American plant, and one of the things that most surprised the Europeans on first coming in contact with the Indians of the newly discovered islands was to find them smoking the dried leaves of this now favorite narcotic.

The first mention of tobacco is in Columbus' diary under date of November 6, 1492. Referring to two messengers he had sent out among the Indians, he writes, "The two Christians met on the road a great many people going to their villages, men and women with brands in their hands, made of herbs, for taking their customary smoke."[16] These, then, were the first cigars of which we have any record. The use of tobacco in pipes was apparently first observed in Florida by Captain John Hawkins during his voyage to the peninsula in 1566. Among many other interesting things he tells us about the inhabitants is that of

their use and love of the pipe.

"The Floridians when they trauel haue a kinde of herbe dryed, which with a cane, and an earthen cup in the end, with fire, and the dried herbs put together do sucke thoro the cane the smoke thereof, which smoke satisfieth their hunger, and therewith they liue foure or five days without meat or drinke, and this all the Frenchmen vsed for this purpose; yet do they holde opinion withall, that it causeth water and flame to void from their stomachs."[17]

The early Italian traveler, Girolamo Benzoni, evidently did not share the views of the Floridians and Frenchmen regarding the value of tobacco. To him it was nothing less than an invention of Satan. Speaking of its evil effects, he says, "See what a pestiferous and wicked poison from the devil this must be."[18]

But it is the good Old Dominican, Père Labat, who has the most to say about the introduction and use of tobacco. His charming, gossipy account of men and things and his *vagabunda loquacitas*, have lost none of their fascination for the curious reader since they were first written nearly two centuries ago.

Among other things he does not hesitate to affirm that the Indians, "by introducing the use of tobacco among their pitiless conquerors, succeeded, in great measure, in avenging themselves for the unjust servitude to which they had been reduced."[19] According to the good father, tobacco proved to be a veritable apple of discord, because it gave rise to a protracted war of words among men of science. In this war a large number of ignoramuses as well as savants participated. And not the last to declare themselves in favor of or opposed to what they understood no better than the serious affairs of the day, in which they had been but too active, were the woman-folk.

Physicians discussed its properties, nature and virtues, as if it had been known all over the habitable world from the times of Galen, Hippocrates, and Æsculapius, and their opinions were as diverse, and as opposed to one another as are to-day the opinions of allopaths and homeopaths, osteopaths and psychopaths. They prescribed when and how it was to be taken and in what doses. They and the chemists of the time soon recognized in tobacco a valuable addition to their pharmacopœa. Nay, more, it was not long before it was proclaimed as a panacea for all the ills that poor suffering humanity is heir to.

Its ashes cured glanders; taken as a powder it cured rheumatism, headache, dropsy, and paralysis. It was a specific against melancholy and insanity; against the smallpox and the plague, against fever, asthma and liver troubles. It strengthened the memory and excited the imagination, and philosophers and men of science could be, it was averred, no better prepared to grapple with the most difficult of abstract problems than by having the nose primed with snuff.

The effects induced by chewing tobacco were said to be even more marvelous, for among other things it was claimed that by thus using it hunger and thirst were allayed or prevented. It removed bile, cured toothache and freed an over-charged brain from all kinds of deleterious humors. It strengthened and preserved the sight. Oil, extracted from tobacco, cured deafness, gout, sciatica, improved the circulation, and was a tonic for the nervous. In a word, it was the great panacea of which physicians and alchemists had so long dreamed, but had hitherto been unable to find.

Finally, however, a reaction came. Books were written against it, and kings and princes forbade its use. On the 26th of March, 1699, the question was seriously discussed before *L'Ecole de Médecine* whether the frequent use of

tobacco shortened life—*An ex tabaci usu frequenti vita summa brevior?* And the conclusion was a demonstration that the frequent use of tobacco did shorten life. *Ergo ex frequenti tabaci usu vita summa brevior.*[20]

But notwithstanding the opinions of learned men and university faculties regarding the alleged deleterious properties of tobacco, and the denunciations hurled against the use of this invention of the Evil One, the smoking of cigars and pipes soon became a general habit the world over, and, it was at times difficult for the supply to meet the demand. How little Las Casas dreamed that this "vicious habit," as he called it, was soon to become universal, and that the time would come when young and old would regard the "fragrant weed," prepared in one way or another, not only as an indispensable luxury, but also as a prime necessity—for rich and poor alike, if life were to be worth living.

And how far was Columbus from imagining, when he saw the Indians taking "their customary smoke," that the leaves which they had so carefully rolled together for this purpose, would eventually prove to be one of the great staples of commerce, and one of the world's most valued sources of revenue. He crossed "the Sea of Darkness" to discover a direct route to the lands of spice and the Golden Chersonese in order to fill the coffers of the land of his adoption. He and his companions explored every island they met in their wanderings in quest of gold and pearls and precious stones and here, in the narcotic plant, that appeared to them as little more than a curiosity, there were treasures greater than those of "Ormus and Ind." In this very island of Cuba, of whose charms he has left us so glowing a picture, was in after years to be developed from the humble plant—*Nicotiana Tabacum*—one of Spain's most important industries—an industry that would, in the course of time, contribute more to the nation's exchequer

than the combined output of the mines of Pasco and Potosí. Such was evidently the thought of the Cuban poet, Zequeira, when, in his much praised Horatian ode, *A La Piña*, he sings

"¡Salve, suelo felíz, donde prodiga
Madre naturaleza en abundancia
La ordorifeva planta fumigable!
¡Salve, felíz Habana!"[21]

Santiago, like Havana, is a historic city, and, from its foundation, nearly four centuries ago, until the memorable siege of 1898, it experienced many reverses at the hands of privateers and pirates. We lingered just long enough to see its chief attractions—there are not many—outside of the Morro—and to get a view of the now famous El Caney and San Juan Hill.

The sun was sinking below the horizon when we boarded the steamer that was to take us to Haiti and Santo Domingo. As we passed under El Morro, that has so long and faithfully guarded the entrance to the placid harbor, and looked towards the setting sun where Cervera's proud fleet was scattered, we could not but recall the prophetic words of Las Casas penned in his last will and testament. Speaking of the Indians, to whose care and protection he had devoted a long and fruitful life, the holy bishop writes: "As God is my witness that I never had earthly interest in view, I declare it to be my conviction and my faith—I believe it to be in accordance with the faith of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, which is our rule and guide—that by all the thefts, all the deaths, and all the confiscations of estates and other uncalculable riches, by the dethroning of rulers with unspeakable cruelty, the perfect and immaculate law of Jesus Christ and the natural law itself have been broken, the name of our Lord and His holy religion have been outraged, the spreading of the faith has

been retarded, and irreparable harm done to these innocent people. Hence I believe that, unless it atones with much penance for these abominable and unspeakably wicked deeds, Spain will be visited by the wrath of God, because the whole nation has shared, more or less, in the bloody wealth that has been acquired by the slaughter and extermination of those people. But I fear that it will repent too late, or never. For God punishes with blindness the sins sometimes of the lowly, but especially and more frequently the sins of those who think themselves wise, and who presume to rule the world. We ourselves are eyewitnesses of this darkening of the understanding. It is now seventy years since we began to scandalize, to rob and to murder those peoples, but to this day we have not come to realize that so many scandals, so much injustice, so many thefts, so many massacres, so much slavery, and the depopulation of so many provinces, which have disgraced our holy religion, are sins or injustices at all."[22]

Were the tragic scenes enacted in these waters and in the harbor of Manila the fulfillment of the prophecy? If we should be disposed to think so, let us not forget, in contemplating the humiliation and punishment of Spain, that we too have sinned as Spain sinned. And let us pray that the blood of the millions of Indians that have been exterminated in our own land may not call down the vengeance of Heaven on our children and our children's children. Nations, like individuals, are punished where they have sinned.[23]

HAITI AND SAN DOMINGO

A short sail eastwards and we found ourselves crossing the Windward Passage. Not far from our port quarter was Cape Maisi, which Columbus, on his first voyage, named Cape Alpha and Omega, as being the easternmost extremity of Asia; Alpha, therefore, from his own point of view, and Omega from that of his Portuguese rivals. On his second voyage Columbus came down through this passage to satisfy himself that he had actually reached Mangi, the land of the Great Khan, and coasted along the island of Cuba, as he reckoned, for a thousand miles. But as fate would have it, he stopped short in his westward course within a few hours' sail of the present Cape San Antonio, the westernmost promontory of the island. If he had only journeyed on a few miles further, he would have detected the insularity of what he considered a continent, and thus have anticipated the discoveries of Vespucius and Ocampo. And he would have done more. He would have reached the shores of Yucatan and Campeachy and had an opportunity of exploring the famous ruins of Chichen Itza and Uxmal. How different, too, it would have been, if, after discovering Guanahuani, he had directed the prow of the Santa Maria slightly to the northwest, when a short sail would have brought him to the coast of Florida! It is interesting to speculate not only how much his own life, but also how greatly the entire course of American history would have been affected by these slight changes in his course on these momentous occasions.

But during his four voyages among these mysterious islands the great navigator was as one groping his way in the Cretan labyrinth. On his return eastward from the Cape of Good Hope—the name he gave to the westernmost point of Cuba attained by him—he found, almost before he was aware of it, that he had actually circumnavigated what he had imagined to be Cipango, the great island of Japan. This surprised and puzzled him beyond expression.

Evidently, either he was mistaken or the authorities on whom he had been relying were mistaken. If the island—Española—was not Cipango, what was it? He soon learned that gold mines existed in the interior of the country and that there was evidence of excavations that had been long abandoned.[24] What more natural, then, than his conclusion that this was the far-famed Ophir whence King Solomon had obtained the gold used in the adornment of the temple of Jerusalem!

Whatever may be said of the Admiral's theory, one thing is certain, and that is that the discovery of gold in Española[25] was directly or indirectly the cause of untold misery to the aborigines, and eventually led up to the present unfortunate condition of this hapless island. It was, as the reader knows, the work in the mines that was the chief factor in the gradual decimation and the final extinction of the Indians in Española. When there were no longer Indians to do the work, negroes were imported from Africa, and thence dates that hideous period of cruel traffic in human beings which, for more than three centuries, was the blackest stain on the vaunted civilization of the Caucasian race. But in this, as in other similar cases, an avenging Nemesis has either already overtaken the offending nations or is giving them grave concern regarding the future. In the black republics of Haiti and Santo Domingo the slave has replaced the master, and there are already indications that the day of reckoning is approaching for the powers that are in control of the other islands of the West Indies. We saw evidences of this during our visit in Cuba, and are convinced that, if it were not for the strong arm of the United States, it would not be long before we should have another black republic at our doors. And what is said of Cuba may be said of all the islands of the Lesser Antilles from Trinidad to Puerto Rico. The race question is one that will have to be met sooner or later. The whites are

decreasing in numbers and the blacks are rapidly increasing and becoming more insistent on what they claim to be their rights, especially to that of a greater representation in government affairs, and to a larger share of the emoluments of public office.

It was only a few years after the colonizing of Española when negro slavery was introduced into the island. The motive was, in some measure, a humane one—namely, to spare the Indians the arduous labor in the mines for which they were physically incapacitated. The African was much stronger and had much greater powers of endurance than the native. According to Herrera, "the negroes flourished so well in Española, that it was thought that if a negro was not hanged he would never die, for no one had ever seen one die of disease. Thus the negroes found, like the oranges, a soil in Española better suited to them than their own country, Guinea."[26]

Monopolies of licenses were granted by the Spanish monarchs for the importation of negro slaves to the West Indies, first to their own subjects, and later on to certain Genoese and Germans, and finally, by a special *asiento*, or contract, the Spanish government conveyed to the English the "exclusive right to carry on the most nefarious of all trades between Africa and Spanish America." The British engaged to transport annually to the Spanish Indies during a term of thirty years, four thousand and eight hundred of what, in trade language, were called "Indian pieces," that is to say, negro slaves, paying a duty per head of thirty-three escudos and one-third.[27] So great was the number of negroes imported into America from 1517, when Charles V first permitted the traffic, until 1807, when the slave trade was abolished by an act of the English Parliament, that it has been computed that their total number was not less than five or six millions. In one single year, 1768, it is said that the number torn from their homes and country

and transported to Spain's new colonies was no less than ninety-seven thousand.[28]

But the inevitable soon came to pass—much sooner than even the wisest statesman could have foreseen. The great Cardinal Ximenes, it is true, realized from the beginning the risk incurred by sending negroes to the Indies. He contended that it was wrong to send beyond the ocean people so "apt in war" as the blacks, who might at any time stir up a servile war against Spanish rule. He insisted that "the negroes, who were as malicious as they were strong, would no sooner perceive themselves to be more numerous in the New World than the Spaniards, than they would lay their heads together to put on their masters the chains they now carried."[29]

The cardinal's prediction soon came true. In all parts of the Indies—in the islands of the sea and on Tierra Firme—there were massacres and uprisings and "servile wars," without number, and both the colonies and the mother country had often occasion to regret the introduction within their boundaries of so dangerous and warlike subjects. But it was too late to rectify the mistake. It was impossible to drive them out of the country, or to return them to the land whence they had been brought against their will. So rapidly had they increased in numbers that they now, in many places, constituted a great majority of the population. Española, to-day constituting the two republics of Haiti and Santo Domingo, was the first island of which they got supreme control. Which will be the next? The question is not an idle one. It is one frequently asked in the West Indies. The unrest and agitation of the blacks are much greater than we in the North imagine. Their ambition is greater and their political aspirations higher than those who have not been among them are prepared to admit. The situation is certainly not one that justifies supine indifference on the part of the governments

now in control, nor is the difficulty one whose solution can be indefinitely postponed. Every lover of law and order must hope that some *modus vivendi* can be arrived at whereby, while all the legitimate claims of the negro are conceded, the world will he spared another "decline and fall" like that which has been witnessed in Española.

We called at several of the ports of Haiti and Santo Domingo but we found little to interest us outside of the capital of the latter republic. Santo Domingo is not only the oldest city in the New World—the early abandoned settlement of Isabella never deserved the name of city—but is, in many respects, the most interesting. Founded by Bartholomew Columbus in 1496, and named Santo Domingo after the patron saint of his father, Domenico, it was, for a while, the seat of the vice-royalty. It was to this place that Don Diego Colon, the son of the Admiral, brought his lovely bride, Doña Maria de Toledo, a daughter of one of the oldest and proudest families of Spain. Here he set up a vice-regal court that excited the envy of his enemies, and was by them made the basis of charges preferred against him that he meditated establishing a government independent of the mother country. Of the viceroy's palace, Oviedo writes to Charles V, it "seemeth unto me so magnificall and princelyke that yowr maiestie maye bee as well lodged therin as in any of the mooste exquisite builded houses of Spayne."[30]

From Santo Domingo radiated the lines of discovery and conquest that culminated in the achievements of Cortes, Balboa and Pizarro. Here Columbus was loaded with chains and imprisoned by Bobadilla. Here was established the first university of the New World. Here, within the walls of the Convent of San Domingo, prayed and labored that noble "Protector of the Indians," Las Casas, and here he planned and began work on his monumental *Historia de las Indias*. Until the last assault by Drake in 1586, it was

the centre of commercial activity in the Indies, for it was the chief port of call to and from Spain and the place where merchants, miners, and planters disposed of their commodities and amassed fortunes.

But Santo Domingo's halcyon days were of short duration. Before the end of the sixteenth century the city began to decline. The theatre of activity, that had hitherto been confined to Española, was transferred to Cuba and Mexico, Panama and Peru, and to-day the once gay and prosperous capital exhibits but a shadow of its pristine glory.

Homenage Castle, the crumbling palace of Don Diego Columbus, and the few churches and monasteries that still, even in their neglected condition, attest the former importance of the place, present a pathetic picture, and tell, in mute but elegant language, of the reverses and evil days that have been the lot of America's first city.

Besides the buildings just named we were especially interested in the Cathedral. It is a noble structure and its interior decorations compare favorably with similar edifices in Spain and Mexico. But there was one attraction there that had for us, as it must have for all Americans, a special interest, and which alone would well repay a pilgrimage to Santo Domingo—the last resting place of the one "who to Castile and Leon gave a new world."

As the reader is aware, there has been a long and spirited controversy as to the location of *los restos*—the remains—of the illustrious discoverer. We have been shown his sepulchre in the Cathedral of Havana, and in that of Seville, yet it has been demonstrated beyond question that his ashes have never reposed in either of these places. Without entering into details, it may now be stated, as facts which no longer admit of any reasonable doubt, that after his death in 1506, the remains of Columbus were interred

in the Franciscan monastery of Valladolid, whence, in 1508, they were transferred to the monastery of Las Cuevas, at Seville. In 1541, at the request of "Doña Maria of Toledo, Vicereine of the Indies, wife that was of the Admiral Don Diego Columbus," Charles V, by a special cedula, granted permission for the transfer of the remains of Christopher Columbus to Española, to be interred in the capilla mayor of the Cathedral of Santo Domingo. Here they have since reposed, with the exception of the short time during which they were kept in the adjoining church, when the Cathedral was undergoing certain necessary repairs in 1877 and 1878. The supposed remains of the first Admiral, that were taken to Havana in 1795, and finally transferred to Seville in 1899, have been shown to be those of his son, Don Diego, who, together with Don Luis Columbus, the third Admiral, and the first Duke of Veragua, was also buried in the capilla mayor of the Cathedral, where the remains of Don Luis still lie near those of his illustrious grandfather.[31]

As our steamer moved out of the water of Santo Domingo our eyes remained fixed on the Cathedral, whose Spanish tiled roof reflected the vermilion rays of the setting sun, and afford shelter for one of the world's greatest heroes and benefactors.

"Hic locus abscondit præclari membra Coloni,"

This place hides the remains of the illustrious Columbus, of him who, in the language of one of the many epitaphs devoted to his memory,

"Dió riquezas immensas á la tierra,
Innumerables almas al cielo."[32]

And then, as the last vestiges of this noble old temple vanished from our vision, we thought of the words of

Humboldt, than whom no one was better qualified to pronounce a fitting eulogy on one of the world's immortals.

"The majesty of great memories," he declares, "seems concentrated in the name of Christopher Columbus. It is the originality of his vast conceptions, the compass and fertility of his genius, and the courage which bore out against the long series of misfortunes, which have exalted the Admiral high above all his contemporaries."[33]

And we dreamed—or was it a telepathic intimation of a future reality?—when the precious remains, that have so long been guarded in this distant and rarely visited island, should be transferred for a third and a last time, but this time where they might be visited and venerated by millions instead of the few hundred that now find their way hither, and where they might occupy a noble sarcophagus, like that which beneath the dome of the Invalides, holds all that is mortal of the great Corsican, and in a temple worthy alike of the man and of the greatest nation in the world. There is one edifice in which all the nations of the hemisphere discovered by Columbus have a common interest, the splendid structure now being erected in Washington, for the special use and benefit of the North and South American Republics. Here in the capital of the nation, in the district named after the discoverer, in sight of the tomb of the "Father of his Country," should the remains of "The Admiral of the Ocean Sea," find an abiding place of sepulture commensurate with the magnitude of his achievements. Alongside and in connection with this Pan-American building, in the heart of what is to be "the City Beautiful," and there alone, let there be erected a mausoleum that, as a monument of art, shall rank, as did those of Hadrian and Mausolus, amongst the world's wonders, and be a fitting culmination of the architectural creations that have been planned for the great

and growing capital of the New World, the world of Columbus.

PUERTO RICO AND CURAÇAO

From Santo Domingo we went to Puerto Rico. As is well known, this island was discovered by Columbus during his second voyage in 1493. Sixteen years later a settlement was founded here by Ponce de Leon. It was from here that he set forth in quest of the "Fountain of Youth," and it is in San Juan, in the Church of Santo Domingo, that he was buried after a poisoned arrow from the bow of an Indian brave had terminated his existence during his second expedition to Florida. Over his tomb was inscribed the following epitaph:—

"Mole sub hac fortis requiescunt ossa Leonis
Qui vicit factis nomina magna suis."[34]

After sojourning a week in Puerto Rico, we called at the little Dutch island Curaçao and spent the greater part of the day in the quaint little town of Willemstad. The harbor is perfectly landlocked and was at one time the favorite rendezvous for pirates and buccaneers. In strolling through its streets, we could easily fancy ourselves in some quiet section of Rotterdam or Amsterdam. The island is known for its much prized liqueur, Curaçao, which, however, strange to say, is not made here but in Holland. Curaçao supplies only the orange rind with which the liqueur is flavored. Willemstad is a popular resort for smugglers, who do an extensive business on the mainland, and the temporary home of a colony of exiled Venezuelan generals and colonels, who here eke out a precarious existence in

the hope that one of their periodical revolutions may soon give them the eagerly desired opportunity of enjoying some of the spoils of office, that, for the time being, are monopolized by their enemies.

ON THE SPANISH MAIN

We arrived in the roadstead of La Guayra early in the morning, after our departure from Curaçao, and our vessel was soon moored alongside a splendid breakwater, which extends out from the shore for more than a half mile, and gives this port a fairly good harbor, which even the largest ships may enter. We were now on the Spanish Main where we had our first view of the great continent of South America.

As the phrase, "The Spanish Main," has been given many and different significations since it was first introduced, I shall employ it, in what was long its generally accepted meaning, as designating the southern part of the Caribbean Sea, and the coast line of what, on the early maps of South America, was known as Tierra Firme—the Firm Land—namely, that part of the present republics of Venezuela and Colombia on which the Spaniards effected their first settlements.

The first thing to attract our attention and that which impressed us most, was the apparently stupendous height of the mountains in the rear of the town. Before us were La Silla and Pico de Naiguata, sheer and precipitous, rising almost from the water's edge and piercing the clouds at an altitude of more than eight thousand and two hundred feet. They are thus apparently higher than any of the peaks of

the Rocky Mountain chain. The summits of the latter are attained only after traveling over a long and gradual incline, that is scarcely perceptible, and after scaling numerous foothills that conceal and dwarf the giants which tower behind and above them. Thus, while the summit of Pike's Peak is more then fourteen thousand feet above sea level, it is less than seven thousand feet above the charming town of Manitou, that nestles at its feet. For this reason, and because the sides of the Colorado peak are not so steep as those behind La Guayra, La Silla and the Pico de Naiguata give an impression of height and majesty that is not experienced even when contemplating the loftiest monarchs of the Alps.

The distance from La Guayra to Caracas, in a straight line, is less than six miles; by rail it is twenty-three. There has been talk of connecting the capital and its port by a tunnel but under the existing conditions of the country it will be a long time before such an undertaking shall be realized.

From sea level to the summit of the range, the railroad is conspicuous for its heavy grade—about four per cent.—its sharp curves, its cuts and tunnels, but above all for the magnificent scenery everywhere visible. From the car window one may look over precipitous cliffs into yawning abysses far below the track on which the train slowly and carefully winds its way. On the beetling rocks above, in the dark and wild gorge below—what a wealth of vegetation, what luxuriance of growth, what a gorgeous display of vari-colored fruit and flower, of delicate fern and majestic palm!

As a feat of engineering the road is quite equal to any of the kind that may be seen in Europe or the United States; but for scenic beauty and splendor it is absolutely unrivaled. On the lofty flanks of the Rockies, and in the deep cañons of the Fraser and Colorado rivers, where the

shrill whistle of the locomotive startles the falcon and the eagle, one can have fully gratified one's sense of the grand and the sublime in nature; but here it is beauty, grandeur, sublimity all combined. And what marvelous perspectives, what delightful exhibitions of color, what superb and ever-changing effects of light and shade—scenes that would be the despair of Claude Lorrain and Salvator Rosa, and as difficult to catch on canvas as the glories of the setting sun.

No where else in the wide world can one find such another picture as greets one's vision when, rising into cloudland, one gets one's last view of the Caribbean circling the mountain thousands of feet beneath the silent and awe-stricken spectator. It is matchless, unique—like Raphael's Madonna di San Xysto, impossible to duplicate.

As we reached this point, the sea disclosed itself as a vast mirror resplendent under the aureate glow of the quivering beams of the departing lord of day. Fleecy clouds of every form and hue flitting over sea and land, by a peculiar optical illusion, magnified both objects and distances, and unfolded before the astonished beholder a panorama of constantly varying magnitude and of surpassing loveliness. On the foreground Nature shed her brightest green, and imparted to flower and foliage the flush of the rainbow. Of a truth,

"Never did Ariel's plume
At golden sunset hover
O'er scenes so full of bloom."

Away and beyond was the boundless, glimmering sea, ravishing in its thousand tints, and in its harmonious dance of vanishing light and color.

So occupied were we in observing the beauties of the everchanging landscape, that, before we realized it, we

were in Caracas. And so momentary was the twilight— a characteristic of the tropics—that the transition from daylight to darkness was almost startling. We found an unexpected compensation, however, in the friendly glow of the electric lights which illumine the street and plazas of Venezuela's capital.

We spent a month in and about Caracas, finding every hour enjoyable. It is, in many respects, a beautiful city and located near the base of the mountains La Silla, the saddle —from its fancied resemblance to an army saddle—and El Cerro de Avila, in a charming valley from one to three miles wide and about ten miles long. The valley was at one time, seemingly, the bed of a lake, and its soil is, consequently, exceedingly fertile, and admirably adapted to cultivation of the farm and garden produce of both tropical and temperate climates.

A friend, who had traveled much, once told us that he regarded Taormina, in Sicily, as the best and most beautiful winter resort in the world. We are familiar with both places, and can say, in all candor, that we prefer Caracas. True, Taormina is one of the beauty spots of the world, but one expects to find more than beauty in a winter resort. Some years before our visit to Caracas we were in Taormina, and during the same time of the winter as marked our visit to Caracas, and we found it so cold that, during our entire stay, we were obliged to have our rooms heated by steam. In the latter place we could leave the doors and windows of our room open day and night, and enjoyed, during all the time we tarried there, the name soft, balmy, fragrant air, and the same equable temperature. The mean temperature we found to be about 70° F., the thermometer seldom rising above 75° F. and rarely falling below 65° F. The only place where we over had a like experience was on the slope of a mountain in one of the Hawaiian Islands, where the temperature is so constant that

the native language has no word to express the idea of weather—what we call “weather” being always the same.

Considering the many natural beauties of the valley of Caracas, its rich, tropical vegetation, its matchless climate, its soft, balmy atmosphere, the rippling brooks and purling rivulets that everywhere gladden the landscape, we can understand how an early Spanish historian, Oviedo y Baños,[35] was in his enthusiasm led to declare this location of the capital of Venezuela to be that of the home of perpetual spring—nay, more, that of a terrestrial paradise. If he could revisit these scenes to-day, he would find but little change in their general physical aspect, but he would see at once that the serpent’s trailing has cast a blight over its former beauty, and that the people, as a whole, have sadly degenerated since his time. Then, as he tells us, the stranger that had spent two months in this Eden would never wish to leave it. Alas, that one cannot say this now![36]





On the Coast Range, Venezuela.

After a month's sojourn in Caracas we felt the *Spiritus movendi* again upon us, urging us onward, we knew not whither. We were under the spell of what the Germans so aptly call the *Wanderlust* and it did not make much difference what direction we took so long as the road we traveled enabled us to enjoy new scenes and visit peoples whose manners and customs were different from our own.

Having thoroughly rested and recuperated the strength we so much needed, we felt that we should like to take a trip to the Orinoco, in order that we might have an opportunity of studying the fauna and flora of its wonderful valley and of meeting some of the many Indian tribes that rove through its forests. In spite of all our efforts, however, we could find no one who could give us any satisfactory information about the best means of reaching the river or the time that would be required to make the journey. We consulted government officials and merchants that had business relations along the Orinoco, but their information was vague and contradictory.

We purposed going first to San Fernando de Apure, on an affluent of the Orinoco, and thence by water to Ciudad Bolivar and the Port-of-Spain. We were told that there were steamers plying between San Fernando and Ciudad Bolivar—the chief city on the Orinoco—during the wet season, our summer, but not during the dry season, our winter. That meant that if we went to San Fernando we should be obliged to use a canoe to reach Ciudad Bolivar, and this implied a long, tiresome, and somewhat dangerous voyage under a burning sun and in what we were assured

was a malarious region. The time necessary to reach the river on horseback varied, according to our informants, from one to two weeks. One well known general, it was stated, had by an extraordinary *tour de force* made the trip the preceding year in four days. Some assured us we could go by carriage the entire distance. Others were equally positive that there was nothing more than a trail connecting the points we wished to visit, and that mules would be better than horses for such a journey. Outside of one or two small towns, there were no hotels along the route. But this did not matter. We had our camping outfit with us, and rather preferred to live in our tent to risking our night's rest in such uninviting *posadas*—lodging houses—as we should meet with in the way.

Finding that we could not get in Caracas the information we desired, we resolved to go to Victoria, an interesting town southwest of the capital, and accessible by rail in a few hours. But our success in Victoria was no better than it had been in Caracas. In spite of all our efforts we could elicit no information that would warrant us in starting on so long a journey as that to the Orinoco, and one that might involve many hardships and dangers without adequate compensation.

Yet, notwithstanding our ill success so far, we did not for a moment think of abandoning our contemplated trip to the valley of the Orinoco. Far from it. The more we thought of it the more fascinating the project became. Now that we had gone so far, we were determined to see the famous river at all hazards. If we could not reach it by one route we would go by another. We accordingly concluded to continue our journey by rail to Puerto Cabello, and thence go by steamer to Trinidad. Once there, we felt reasonably sure we should find some means of attaining our goal—the grassy plains and vast forests of the Orinoco basin. As proved by subsequent events, it was for us a most fortunate

occurrence that we did not adhere to our original plan of reaching the Orinoco by San Fernando de Apure, as our change of programme enabled us to see far more of South America and under more favorable auspices, than we had before deemed possible.

Instead of going directly to Puerto Cabello, we spent a week at the quiet old city of Valencia, Nueva Valencia del Rey, as it was originally called, and which, according to the Valencianos, should be the capital of the republic. It was begun in 1555, by Alonzo Diaz Moreno, twelve years before Santiago de Leon de Caracas—the original name of the capital—was founded by Diego de Losada. As a matter of fact, Valencia was designated as the capital of Venezuela at the time of the revolt against Spain, and congress was actually in session there at the time Caracas was destroyed by an earthquake in 1812. Five years after its foundation, Valencia was captured by the infamous Lopez de Aguirre and his sanguinary band, who treated its inhabitants with the greatest atrocity. Near by, on the plains of Carabobo, was fought the decisive victory which resulted in Venezuelan independence.[37]

As a port of entry, Puerto Cabello is incomparably superior to La Guayra, and has one of the finest harbors on the Caribbean. The climate, however, is far from salubrious. Situated, as it is, in low, marshy ground, surrounded by countless pools of stagnant water, it is not surprising to find that malarial fevers are prevalent here, and that *El vómito*—yellow fever—is a frequent visitant. The "nymphs that reign o'er sewers and sinks" can here count more fetid effluvia and putrefactive ferments than in any place we had so far seen in Venezuela.

THE PEARL COAST

A most delightful voyage was ours from Puerto Cabello to the Port-of-Spain, the capital of Trinidad. The sea was as placid as an inland lake on a windless day, and the air as balmy as in a morning of June. The coast of the mainland was nearly always in sight, and at times the peaks of the Coast Range rose far above the fleecy clouds that encircled their lofty flanks. The days were beautiful but the nights were glorious. All our youthful dreams about the delights of sailing on southern seas, amid emerald isles, and under bright starlit skies, where soft spice-scented zephyrs blow, were here realized. The serenity and transparency of the azure vault of heaven, with its countless shooting stars, had their counterpart in the smooth, unruffled Caribbean, to whose water millions of Noctilucæ imparted a phosphorescent glow which rivaled that of molten gold. We were at last in the favored home of the chambered nautilus, happily, dreamily gliding along on an even keel

"In gulfs enchanted, where the siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise from crystal springs
To sun their streaming hair."

Yes, we were skirting along the Pearl Coast,[38] celebrated in legend and story—darkened by deeds of barbarous cruelty and resplendent in records of heroic achievement. I shall not tell of our second visit to La Guayra and of the day we spent at Macuto or describe the present conditions of the historic old towns of Barcelona, Cumana and Carupano, which lay on our course. Much might be said of all these places, distinguished, since their foundation, both in peace and war.

I cannot, however, pass this part of the Pearl Coast without recalling the fact that it was near Cumana that the earliest

settlements in Venezuela were effected and that here it was that one of the first—if not the first—permanent colonies on the mainland of the New World was established. Columbus, during his fourth voyage, attempted to make a settlement in Veragua, that might serve as a base of future operations, but the attempt resulted in complete failure. Similar efforts had been made by Alonso de Ojeda and others, but without lasting results. Panama was not founded until 1516 or 1517. Nombre de Dios, it is true, was founded somewhat earlier, but in the beginning was little more than a blockhouse. But here, as early in 1514, on the Rio Manzanares, then the River Cumana, only "a cross-bow-shot" from the shore, the zealous Sons of St. Francis had erected a monastery, and a short time subsequently the Dominicans established another monastery, not far distant, at Santa Fe de Chiribichi. Here they gathered the simple children of the forest around them, and soon had the beginnings of flourishing missions.[39] The trusting and unspoiled Indians welcomed these apostles of the gospel of peace and love, and soon learned to regard them as friends and fathers. So peaceful did all this land become under the influence of the benign teaching of the gentle friars, that, according to Oviedo and Las Casas, a Christian trader could go alone anywhere without ever being molested.[40]

It was to the Pearl Coast that Las Casas came, after he found, by sad experience, that his efforts in behalf of the Indians in Cuba, Española and Puerto Rico were frustrated by influences he was unable to control. It was here, aided by Franciscans and Dominicans, who had preceded him by only a few years, that he purposed laying the corner stone of that vast Indian commonwealth, for which he had secured letters patent from Charles V.

For this great experiment in colonization, the greatest the world has ever known, he had received a grant of land

extending from Paria to Santa Marta, and from the Caribbean Sea to Peru. In his colossal undertaking he planned to have the coöperation of an order of knights—the Knights of the Golden Spur—specially created to aid him in the work of civilizing and christianizing the Indians. It was his dream to bring within the fold of the Church all the Indians of Central and South America, and to establish for their behoof and benefit an ideal Christian state such as a century and a half later was realized in the fertile basins of the Parana and Paraguay.[41]

If the noble philanthropist had been properly supported by the rich and the powerful, the entire course of subsequent events in South America would have been altered, and the historian would have been spared the task of penning those dark annals of injustice and iniquity which, for long centuries, were such a foul blot on humanity. But from the time he set foot on the Pearl Coast, in pursuance of his noble plan, he found himself beset by untold difficulties, and his designs thwarted at every turn, and that, too, by his own countrymen. Blinded by lust of gold and pleasure, they left nothing undone to insure the failure of his project, and in the end succeeded in their nefarious purpose.

Abandoned by those on whose coöperation he fully relied, he was, in its very inception, forced to relinquish his heroic enterprise, and return to Española. Discomfited and heartsick, but not crushed, he sought an asylum in the monastery of Santo Domingo. There for eight years he devoted himself to prayer and study, and, true Christian athlete that he was, he was always preparing himself for a final struggle in a new arena. When his enemies least expected it, he came forth from his retirement, and, clad in the habit of a Dominican, proclaimed himself again the champion of the downtrodden Indian. And from that moment until the day of his death, at the advanced age of ninety-two, whether as a simple monk or as the bishop of

Chiapa,[42] his voice was always raised in behalf of the children of the forest, and against their enslavement by cruel, soulless seekers after fortune.[43]

He was, if not the first, the world's greatest abolitionist, and if there are still many millions of red men in the New World to-day who have escaped the bond of servitude, it is mainly due to their illustrious protector, Bartolomé de Las Casas.[44]

THE PEARL ISLANDS

Within sight of the land where Las Casas went to lay the first foundation-stone of his ideal commonwealth is a group of islands which had a special claim on our attention —islands which, during four centuries, have been the scene of many a romance and have been stained, no one can tell how often, by the blood of tragedy.

These islands are Coche, Cubagua and Margarita. They were discovered by Columbus during his third voyage, and the larger of the two was called Margarita—pearl—from the number and beauty of the pearls found in the waters that wash its shore. Even before he had left the Gulf of Paria, between Trinidad and the mainland, he had observed that the aborigines of Tierra Firme were decked with bracelets and necklaces of pearl, and soon discovered, to his great satisfaction, that these much-prized gems could be obtained in great abundance, and that many of them were of extraordinary size and beauty. Peter Martyr, as translated by Eden, tells us, "Many of these pearls were as bygge as hasellnuttes, and oriente (as we caule it), that is lyke unto them of the Easte partes."[45] During the first third

of the sixteenth century the value of the pearls sent to Europe was equal to nearly one-half of the output of all the mines in America.[46] In one year—1587—after the pearl fisheries of the Gulf of Panama had been discovered, nearly seven hundred pounds weight of pearls was sent to the markets of Europe, some of them rivaling in beauty of sheen and perfection of form the rarest gems ever found in the waters of Persia or Ceylon. It was from these fisheries of the New World that Philip II obtained the famous pearl, weighing two hundred and fifty carats, of the size and shape of a pigeon's egg, mentioned by the early chroniclers.

So great was the commercial activity among these little islands, especially in Cubagua, that the Spaniards built a town there, which they called New Cadiz, although the site chosen was without water, and so sterile that the Indians had never lived on it. Toward the end of the sixteenth century the pearl fishery in these parts diminished rapidly, and in the early part of the century following, the industry, according to Laet, had died out altogether, and the islands of Coche and Cubagua fell into oblivion. But while it lasted, sad to say, it meant untold misery for the thousands of Indian and Negro slaves who were forced, at the sacrifice of their health and often of their lives, to enrich their cruel masters by work that was almost as fatal as that in the mines of Española.

For more than two hundred years the pearl fisheries in the waters around these islands were practically abandoned. Even during the last century comparatively little work was done to develop an industry that, during the sixteenth century, contributed so much to the coffers of Spain. About the year 1900, however, a French company secured a concession from Venezuela to fish in the neighborhood of these islands. According to agreement, it is to pay the government ten per cent. royalty, and to employ divers and

diving apparatus so as to select only the larger oysters and avoid the destruction of those that are immature.

From the estimates available, about $600,000 worth of pearls are annually sent to the Paris market from Margarita. While a large proportion of them are cracked and of poor color, there are, nevertheless, many of the finest orient, and these find ready purchasers. As for ourselves, we saw few of large size, and none of great value. Even in Caracas, where we made diligent inquiry about them, we did not find a single one from these waters that would attract attention for either size or lustre.[47]

The weather could not have been more delightful than it was during our all too brief cruise among these islands around which at one time, as has been truly remarked, “all the wonder, all the pity and all the greed of the age had concentrated itself.” They are now shorn of all their former glory, and there is little to indicate their pristine importance. They are practically deserted, with the exception of Margarita, which, on account of the arid and unproductive soil, is but sparsely inhabited. And yet, as they lay clustered there on the calm bosom of the Caribbean, without a ripple to disturb its mirror-like surface, they possessed a certain undefinable beauty that defied analysis. Besides, there was still hovering over and around them the glamour of days long past, when they were visited for the first time by the great Admiral of the Ocean Sea, and later on, by Cristobal Guerra and Alonzo Niño, and by Francisco Orellana, after his memorable voyage down the Amazon.

The sun was sloping down to his ocean bed—the air was glimmering with a mellow light, as we drifted from these waters over which Merlin seemed to wave his enchanting wand. As the orb of day touched the distant horizon, and sank into the crimson mist that floated above the placid

sea, it assumed strange oval and pear-shaped figures that grew larger in their waning splendor. The rainbow hues that steeped in molten lustre the receding shores seemed to float on clouds from spirit-land.

A scene it was to swell the tamest bosom, a fairy realm where Fancy would

"Bid the blue Tritons sound their twisted shells,
And call the Nereids from their pearly cells."

Below us, beneath the dark depths of the crystal sea, illumined by the lamps of the sea-nymphs, were living flower beds of coral, the blooms and the palms of the ocean recesses, where the pearl lies hid, and caves where the gem is sleeping, the gardens, fair and bewildering in their richness and beauty, of Nereus and Amphitrite. It was indeed such a scene as the poet has painted for us in these charming verses:—

"Wherever you wander the sea is in sight,
With its changeable turquoise green and blue,
And its strange transparence of limpid light.
You can watch the work that the Nereids do
Down, down, where their purple fans unfurl,
Planting their coral and sowing their pearl."

1

Dec. 1, Lib. IX, Cap. 10. ↑

2

1513 is the date given by Garcilaso de la Vega, and Peschel, in his *Geschichte des Zeitalters der Entdeckungen*, p. 521, has proved that this is the date that should be accepted. ↑

3

The History of Hernando de Soto and Florida; or Record of the Events of Fifty-six Years, from 1512 to 1568, p. 111, 78 and passim, Philadelphia,

1881. ↑

4

"Floridamque appelaverat quia Resurectionis die eam insulam repererint; vocat Hispanus pascha floridum resurectionis diem." Dec. IV, Cap. 5. ↑

5

Les Cortereal et leur Voyage au Nouveau Monde, pp. 111, 151. ↑

6

Le Premier Voyage de Amerigo Vespucci, par F. A. de Varnhagan, Vienne, 1869, p. 34. ↑

7

Historia General de las Indias, Tom. XXII *de Autores Españoles*, Madrid, M. Rivadeneyra, Editor, 1877—I have reproduced the passage in the quaint translation of Richard Eden, as given in *The first three books on America*, p. 345, edited by Edward Arber, Westminster, 1895. ↑

8

Colección de documentos inéditos del archivo de Indias, Tom. V, pp. 536, 537. ↑

9

Elegias de Varones Ilustres de Indias, in the *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, Tom. IV, p. 69, *Collection Rivadeneyra*, Madrid, 1850.

In spite, however, of the scepticism of Martyr and of the ridicule of Castellanos and the denunciation of Oviedo, the quest for the Fountain of Youth was, according to Herrera, continued until the end of the sixteenth century, and probably longer. ↑

10

The Voiage and Travayle of Sir John Maundeville Knight, chap. LII. ↑

11

Richard Eden, op, cit., p. 34. ↑

12

For an illuminating discussion of this subject, with citation of authorities, see M. Beauvois' article, *La Fontaine de Jouvence et le Jourdain dans les Traditions des Antilles et de la Floride, Le Muséon*, Tom. III, No. 3. ↑

13

"By projecting our modern knowledge into the past," to employ a favorite phrase of John Fiske, many, even among recent writers, speak as if the early explorers knew for a certainty that the land discovered by Columbus was actually distinct from Asia. None of them, however, go to the extreme of Lope de Vega, who, in one of his dramas, *El Nuevo Mundo Descubierto*, makes the Genoese mariner, in a talk with his brother

Bartholomew, ask why is it, that I, “a poor pilot, broken in fortune, yearn to add to this world another and one so remote?”—

“Un hombre pobre, y aun roto,
Que casi lo puedo decir,
Y que vive de piloto
Quiere á éste mundo añadir
Otro mundo tan remoto.”

[14]

Writings of Columbus, edited by P. L. Ford, New York, 1892. [15]

Relaciones y Cartas de Cristobal Colón in the *Biblioteca Clásica*, Tom. CLXIV, Madrid, 1892. [16]

Relaciones y Cartas, ut sup., pp. 57, 58. [17]

Hakluyt’s Early Voyage, Vol. III, p. 615, London, 1810. The introduction of tobacco into England is by some attributed to Hawkins rather than to Lord Raleigh, who is generally supposed to have introduced it. [18]

“Vedete che pestifero e maluagio ueleno del diaulo e questo.” *La Historia del Mondo Nuovo*, p. 54, Venezia, 1555. [19]

Nouveau Voyage aux Isles de L’Amérique, Vol. II, p. 120, par Jean Baptiste Labat, à la Haye, 1724. [20]

Even royalty took part in the controversy. In *A Counterblaste to Tobacco* King James concludes his argument against the use of the weed as follows:—

“A custome loathsome to the eye, hatefull to the nose, harmfull to the braine, dangerous to the lungs, and in the blacke stinking fume thereof, neerest resembling the horrible Stigian smoke of the pit that is bottomlesse.” *The Works of the Most High and Mightie Prince James, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britaine, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc.*, p. 222, London, 1616. [21]

“Hail, happy soil, whence Mother Nature lavishes in abundance the odoriferous, smokable plant! Hail, happy Havana.” [22]

Vida y Escritos de Don Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, Obispo de Chiapa, por Don Antonio Maria Fabié, Tom. I, pp. 235, 236, Madrid, 1879. ↑

23

Fray Bartolemé de las Casas, Sus Tiempos y Su Apostolado, por Carlos Gutierres, pp. 351, 352, 368, 369, Madrid, 1878. ↑

24

Étude sur les Rapports de L'Amérique et de L'Ancien Continent avant Christophe Colomb, par Paul Gaffarel. p. 124 et seq., Paris, 1869. ↑

25

The diminutive of España, and signifying little Spain. Also known by the Latinized name Hispaniola, and as Isabella, in honor of the illustrious patron of the discoverer. Haiti is an Indian word meaning "craggy land," or "land of mountains." ↑

26

Historia de las Indias, Dec. II, Lib. 3, Cap. 14. ↑

27

Southey's *History of Brazil*, Vol. III, Chap. XXXIII. ↑

28

Sir Clements R. Markham in his introduction to *Hawkins' Voyages*, says, speaking of this subject, "It is not therefore John Hawkins alone who can justly be blamed for the slave trade, but the whole English people during 250 years, who must all divide the blame with him." ↑

29

The Spanish Conquest in America, by Sir Arthur Helps, Vol. I, p. 350, London and New York, 1900. See also Girolamo Benzoni, *Historia del Mondo Nuovo*, p. 65, Venezia, 1565, in which he says many Spaniards of Española predicted that the island would surely, within a short time, fall into the hands of the blacks. "Vi sono molti Spagnuoli que tengono per cosa certa que quest' Isola in breue tempo sara posseduta da questi Mori." ↑

30

Eden's *First Three English Books on America*, p. 240. ↑

31

For a complete discussion of this subject, see *Christopher Columbus, His Life, His Works, His Remains*, pp. 507–613, by J. B. Thatcher, New York, 1904. According to this author, very small portions of the precious ashes of the great discoverer exist in the Vatican, in the University of Pavia, where Columbus was a student, in The Municipal Hall of Genoa, in the Lenox Library, New York, and in the possession of four different private individuals whom he names. ↑

32

"To Earth he gave immense riches, to Heaven souls innumerable." ↑

33

Histoire de la Géographie du Nouveau Continent, par Alexander de Humboldt, Vol. V, pp. 177, 178, Paris, 1839. ↑

34

"This narrow space is a sepulchre of the man who was a Lion in name and much more one in deed." ↑

35

Historia de la Conquista y población de la Provincia de Venezuela, Tom. II, p. 36, Madrid, 1885. ↑

36

The Romans declare that those who cast a coin into the fountain of Trevi are sure to return to the Eternal City. The Caraquenians have a similar saying, viz., that he who drinks of the water of the Catuche, a stream flowing through the city, will return to Caracas. *El que bebe de Catuche vuelve á Caracas.* ↑

37

Historia de las Indias, Dec. II, Lib. 3, Cap. 14. ↑

38

The Pearl Coast extends from Coro to the Gulf of Paria, a distance of more than five hundred miles. ↑

39

Padre A. Caulin, *Historia coro-grafica, natural y evangelica de la Nueva Andalucia*, Madrid, 1779, and *Conversion en Piritu de Indios Cumanogotos y Palenques*, por el P. Fr. Matias Ruiz Blanco O. S. F. seguido de *Los Franciscanos en las Indias*, por Fr. Francisco Alvarez de Vilanueva, O. S. F., Madrid, 1892. ↑

40

Even Captain John Hawkins, "an atrocious slave dealer," is forced to pay his tribute of praise to the gentle and peaceful character of the Indians of this part of Venezuela, for of them he writes: "The people bee surely gentle and tractable, and such as desire to liue peaceablie, or else had it been vnpossible for the Spaniards to haue conquered them as they did, and the more to liue now peaceable, they being many in number, and the Spaniards of few." Op. cit., Vol. III, p. 28. ↑

41

F. A. MacNutt's *Bartholomew de las Casas, His Life, His Apostolate and His Writings*, Chaps. VIII, XI, XII, New York, 1909. ↑

42

Antonio de Remesal, *Historia de la Provincia de Son Vicente de Chyapa*, 1619. ↑

43

In his last will he writes "Inasmuch as the goodness and the mercy of God, whose unworthy minister I am, called me to be the protector of the inhabitants of the countries, which we call the Indies, who were once the lords of those lands and kingdoms, ... I have labored in the court of the Kings of Castile, going and coming from the Indies to Castile and from Castile to the Indies many times for about fifty years—i. e., from the year 1540, for the love of God alone and through compassion seeing those great multitudes of rational men perish, who originally were approachable, humble, meek and simple, and well fitted to receive the Catholic faith and practice all manner of Christian virtues." Fabié, op. cit., Tom. I, pp. 234, 235. ↑

44

"In contemplating such a life," writes Fiske, "as that of Las Casas, all words of eulogy seem weak and frivolous. The historian can only bow in reverent awe before a figure which is in some respects the most beautiful and sublime in the annals of Christianity since the Apostolic age. When now and then in the course of the centuries God's providence brings such a life into this world, the memory of it must be cherished by mankind as one of its most precious and sacred possessions. For the thoughts, the words, the deeds of such a man, there is no death. The sphere of their influence goes on widening forever. They bud, they blossom, they bear fruit, from age to age."—*The Discovery of America*, Vol. II, p. 482. ↑

45

Dec. 1, Book 8. The same writer informs us that the sailors of Pedro Alonzo Niño, on leaving Curiana to return to Spain, "had three score and XVI poundes weight (after VIII vnces to the pownde) of perles, which they bought for exchange of owre thynges, amountinge to the value of fyve shyllinges." ↑

46

Of these gems of the ocean, "tears by Naiads wept," one could then repeat, as well as now, the words of Pliny, "The richest merchandise of all, and the most soveraigne comoditie throughout the whole world, are these perles."—*Naturalis Historia*, Lib. IX, Cap. 35. ↑

47

The Venezuelan pearl-oyster—*Margaritifera Radiata*—is related to the Ceylon species, *Margaritifera vulgaris*, and ranges in color from white to bronze and, sometimes, black. It is slightly larger than the Ceylonese gem, and is occasionally of excellent quality.

About three hundred and fifty boats, each manned by five or six men, are

now engaged in the pearl fishery of Venezuela. Most of them are from the ports of Cumana, Juan Griego and Carupano.

The reader who is interested in the pearls of Margarita and of the Pearl Coast, may consult with profit the very elaborate work, *The Book of the Pearl*, by George F. Kunz and Chas. H. Stevenson, New York, 1908, and *The Pearl*, by W. R. Castelle, Philadelphia and London, 1907. ↑

CHAPTER II

TRINIDAD AND THE ORINOCO

"The
battle's rage
Was like the strife which currents
wage,
Where Orinoco, in his pride,
Rolls to the main no tribute tide,
But 'gainst broad ocean urges far
A rival sea of roaring war;
While in ten thousand eddies driven,
The billows fling their foam to heaven,
And the pilot seeks in vain,
Where rolls the river, where the
main."[1]

—Scott.

THE ISLAND OF THE BLESSED TRINITY

The morning following our departure from the Pearl Islands we were delighted to find our good ship anchored in the beautiful Gulf of Paria. Thus, almost before we were

aware of it, we found ourselves reposing on the waters of the famed Orinoco which we had made such futile efforts to reach from Caracas and Victoria. The Gulf of Paria, as is known, is just north of several of the largest estuaries of the Orinoco and the line of demarcation between the salt water of the Atlantic and the fresh water of Venezuela's great river is usually quite marked. As we entered the gulf, through the Dragon's Mouth, we had the mainland on our starboard and the island of Trinidad on our port quarter. Although the waters of the Orinoco now enter the Atlantic through two channels—the Boca del Draco and the Boca de la Sierpe—there is no doubt that Trinidad was in recent geological times a part of the mainland of South America and that the Orinoco, instead of reaching the ocean, as it now does, flowed almost directly across the island through a depression which is still quite conspicuous. It will thus be seen that during long geologic ages there has been an intimate physical connection between Trinidad and the Orinoco as there has been a close commercial connection between the two ever since the Spanish conquest.

Owing to the shallow waters of the harbor of the Port-of-Spain, the capital of Trinidad, our steamer had to anchor about a mile from the quay. When we were prepared to go ashore—and we lost no time in getting ready—we were surrounded by a motley crowd of sable, shouting, importunate boatmen, all clamoring and gesticulating and sounding the praises of their canoes, and calling attention to their fantastic names, as if this were a guarantee of their safety and comfort. In a few moments we were seated in one of these gayly decked craft, with our baggage beside us, on our way to the customhouse. Here we were delayed only a few minutes, for the English in their colonies, as in the mother country, rarely subject the traveler to those delays and annoyances that constitute so disagreeable a feature in certain other countries. "What a contrast," we

said to ourselves, “between the conduct of the officials here and that of the officious inquisitors at La Guayra!”

After we had been comfortably located in our hotel—there are several good hotels in the city—our first thought was about our journey up the Orinoco. To our great delight we learned that there would be a steamer going to Ciudad Bolivar in about a week. This accorded with our plans perfectly, as we thus had ample time to visit the chief points of interest—and there are many—of the island, and enjoy at least a passing view of the wonderful and varied floral display for which Trinidad is so famous.

Trinidad, as the reader will recollect, was discovered by Columbus during his third voyage, and given the name it still bears in honor of the Blessed Trinity. In his letter to Ferdinand and Isabella, describing this voyage, he says he started from San Lucar in the name of the most Holy Trinity, and after two months at sea, during a portion of which time all aboard suffered intensely from the heat,[2] they saw to the westward three mountain peaks, united at the base, rising up before them. Here, then, was to them the symbol of the Triune God—the Three in One—in whose name all had left their native land, and what more natural than that it should be named Trinidad—the Trinity? “Upon this,” writes the pious admiral, “we repeated the ‘Salve Regina,’ and other prayers, and all of us gave thanks to our Lord.”

What a grateful change it was from the extreme heat which they had endured, to the delightful climate of the newly discovered island. “When I reached the island of Trinidad,” I again quote from the Admiral’s letter, “I found the temperature exceedingly mild; the fields and the foliage were remarkably fresh and green, and as beautiful as the gardens of Valencia in April.”[3]

What so deeply impressed Columbus on his arrival at Trinidad was what likewise most impresses the visitor today—its mild climate and the beauty and luxuriance of its vegetation. Although the island is but little more than 10° from the Equator the mean annual temperature is not more than 77° F. In the mornings and evenings of the cooler season the thermometer is about 10° lower. During our sojourn of some weeks in Trinidad we never suffered from the heat. On the contrary, during our morning and evening drives, especially in the mountains, we found the ocean breeze delightfully refreshing.

Columbus was also much impressed by the natives of the island. They had a whiter skin—he had expected to find them very black—than any he had hitherto seen in the Indies and were very graceful in form, tall and elegant in their movements.

With the exception of a few scattered families, of more or less mixed descent, the visitor will find no evidence of the former existence here of that splendid type of Indian of whom the great navigator speaks so highly, and of whose race there were then on the island many thousands of souls. Here, as on the other islands of the West Indies, the aborigines have disappeared, never to return.

In their place we find the most cosmopolitan agglomeration of people under the sun—English, Germans, Spaniards, French, Chinese, Hindoos, and Negroes from the darkest Senegambian to the fairest Octaroon. About one-half of the population is composed of Negroes, one-third of Coolies, and one-sixth of whites of various nationalities and shades of color. As we contemplated the motley crowds which always throng the streets of the Port-of-Spain we could not but recall Lopez de Gomara's curious reflections on the divers colors of the different races of men. We give his remarks in Richard

Eden's translation:

"One of the marueylous thynges that god ... vseth in the composition of man, is coloure; whiche doubtlesse can not bee consydered withowte great admiration in beholding one to be white and an other blacke, beinge coloures vtterlye contrary. Sum lykewyse to be yelowe whiche is betwene blacke and white; and other of other colours as it were of dyuers liueres. And as these colours are to be marueyled at, euen so is it to be considered howe they dyffer one from an other as it were by degrees, forasmuche as sum men are whyte after dyuers sortes of whytnesse: yelowe after dyuers maners of yelowe: blacke after dyuers sortes of blacknesse: and howe from whyte they go to yelowe by ... discolourygne to browne and redde: and to blacke by asshe colour, and murrey sumwhat lyghter then blacke: and tawnye lyke vnto the west Indian which are all togyther in general eyther purple, or tawny lyke vnto sodde quynses, or of the colour of chestnuttes or olyues: which colour is to them natural and not by theyr goynge naked as many haue thought: albeit theyr nakednesse haue sumwhat helped thereunto. Therfore in lyke maner and with suche diuersitie as men are commonly whyte in Europe and blacke in Affrike, euen with like varietie are they tawny in these Indies, with diuers degrees diuersly inclynynge more or lesse to blacke or whyte."[4]

The Coolies interested us immensely, in whatever part of the island we met them—and they are to be seen everywhere—and were for us the subject-matter of constant study. They occupy an entire suburb of the Port-of-Spain, and, for those who are interested in sociological and economic questions, no place is more worthy of a visit. Day after day, when the delicious evening breezes began to sweep in from the ocean, we found ourselves directing our course towards the "Indian Quarter," as it is called, and we always found something new to arrest our attention or

excite our admiration. It required no effort whatever of the imagination to fancy ourselves in the crowded streets and markets of Benares or Madras.

Port-of-Spain, whose population is about 50,000, rejoices in quite a number of large and handsome public buildings and churches. Among the latter the Roman Catholic Cathedral is conspicuous. The homes of the people in the better quarters of the city—surrounded by a rich profusion of tropical flowers, and shrubs and trees covered with blooming climbers—are frequently models of architectural excellence, and betoken refinement, comfort and even affluence.

To us the most attractive part of the city was the Botanical Garden, adjoining the residence of the governor. This spot is justly famous not only in the West Indies, but the world over. Here have been collected from every tropical clime all the plants and shrubs and trees that are admired, for beauty of bloom, richness of fragrance, or grace and majesty of form.

Here we see the hibiscus shrub, with large, flaming, crimson flowers; the poinciana, aglow with a bloom of yellow and orange, scarlet flowered balisiers, and the poui tree decked with a rich robe of saffron. Alongside them are oranges and lemons, pineapples, guavas, mongosteens, nutmegs, tamarinds, and scores of other kinds of tropical fruits. A little further on we meet with tea shrubs, the clove and the cinnamon tree, the rubber tree, and the *Bertolettia excelsa*, laden with nuts, each of which contains from ten to twenty seeds. Then there are the curious cannon-ball tree, stately samans, the leopardwood tree, the trumpet tree and others equally attractive. Besides all these there are those princes of the forest—the palms—from every quarter of the tropics, with every variety of trunk and leaf—date, fern, talipot, Palmyra, and groo-groo palms, the tall

traveler's-tree with its graceful plantain-like leaves, and the *Oreodoxa speciosa*, "the glory of the mountains." On and among them are rare orchids, and parasites of countless species, climbing ferns, and convolvuluses of every hue.

And to complete this scene of beauty, we behold at almost every step, fluttering across our path, brilliant heliconias and other butterflies that contribute such life and charm to the forest glories of tropical lands. And then the humming birds—those lovely animated gems that flit from bush to bush, and flower to flower—flashing all the fire of the opal, and emitting in rapid succession all the brilliant hues of the topaz and the sapphire, the ruby and the emerald. They are not as numerous now—more is the pity—as they were formerly, when the aborigines gave the name Iere—humming bird—to this island on account of their great numbers and when they protected and venerated them as the souls of departed Indians. But one still meets them in one's strolls through the gardens and the forest, and always with a new sense of wonder and delight.

Here, of a truth, were realized, nay, eclipsed, all the marvels of the garden of Alcinous, for here

"There was still
Fruit in his proper season all the year.
Sweet Zephyr breath'd upon them blasts that were
Of varied tempers. These he made to bear
Ripe fruits, these blossoms. Time made never rape
Of any dainty there."[5]

It is, indeed, worth a visit from afar to see and study these marvels of plant and vine, and bush and tree of the Botanic Garden. But the whole island is, at least for the stranger from the North, one vast botanic garden. Go where we will, we are astonished and bewildered by the novelty and

the exuberance of the vegetation that surrounds us.

If we drive over the broad and well-kept roads along the western coast, we pass under shady avenues of cocoa palms bending under their burden of fruit. If we go to the cacao groves—and they are large and numerous here—our eyes are gladdened by the vermilion bloom that covers the protecting *Erythrina umbrosa*.[6] In a glen hard by is a giant ceiba, transformed, by the countless number of creepers and epiphytes to which it has given hospitality, into a vast air-garden. Along the streams and mountain torrents are lovely canopies formed by the plume-like foliage of bamboos—seventy to eighty feet high—affording retreats of rarest sylvan beauty. Again it is in the *Rosa del Monte*, with its crimson bloom, the purple dracona, the yellow croton, the night-blooming cereus, the angelim, covered with purple tassels, the carmine poinsettia, the sweet-scented vanilla, festoons of purple flowered lianas, and gray candelabra of a giant cereus. Beyond it all, as a felicitous background to this gorgeous display and at the same time an adequate enclosure for Flora's fairy palace, there is such a profusion of vegetable tracery and arabesques "as would have stricken dumb with awe and delight him who ornamented the Loggie of the Vatican."

Further on we have the comely bread-fruit tree, with its deeply-lobed leaves and its massive fruit, the many-rooted and many-branched mangrove,[7] and not far distant is a clump of royal palms, with their smooth pearl-gray columns and coronals of verdure. Or there is a group of kindred growth—jagua palms—whose crown of pinnated leaves, each full twenty-five feet long, caused Humboldt to declare that on this truly magnificent tree "Nature had lavished every beauty of form." While standing by one of the pillar-stems of the jagua palm, beneath its emerald ostrich plumes, we were quite prepared to share Kingsley's enthusiasm for palm trees in general. "Like a Greek statue

in a luxurious drawing-room," he writes, "sharp-cut, cold, virginal; shaming by the grandeur of mere form the voluptuousness of mere color, however rich and harmonious; so stands the palm of the forest; to be worshipped rather than to be loved."[8]

It would tire the reader to attempt a description of the many pictures of interest of this charming island, of its delightful drives in every direction, of its beauteous cascades and waterfalls, one of which, Maracas Falls, three hundred feet in height, is a reproduction of Bridal Falls in the Yosemite, with the added setting of tropical verdure. No pen can picture the exquisite charm of the Caura or Maraval valleys, of Blue Basin and Macaripe Bay, or of the Five Islands—real gems of the ocean—with their cozy and inviting cottages. When in Egypt years ago we fancied that we should like to spend the rest of our days on the island of Philæ, ever in the presence of its matchless ruins. When we spent a happy day—how fleeting it was—on one of these five islands—it was the largest and fairest—we felt that we had at length found that inland home—far away from noise and strife, from

"Fever and fret and aimless stir"

of which we had so often dreamed, and in which we had so often longed to dwell.

The people of Trinidad think their island the most beautiful of all the West Indian group. Having visited, at one time or other, all the chief islands comprising the Greater and Lesser Antilles, we should hesitate to dispute their claim. It is certainly very beautiful, and possesses many attractions that are either entirely absent from the other islands or are found only in a lesser degree. Puerto Rico and Jamaica equal it in many respects, and in others surpass it, but in some important features the American possession is

inferior to those of the British.

I have said nothing of La Brea, the wonderful pitch lake for which Trinidad has been celebrated since the time of Raleigh,[9] and which for some decades past has supplied us with much of the asphalt used in the United States. This curious phenomenon has been described so often that there is no call for further comment. Suffice to say that it, together with the sugar plantations and the cacao groves, constitutes the chief source of the revenue of the island.

Like Curaçao, Trinidad is a favorite resort of Venezuelan revolutionists, expatriated generals and colonels and their sympathizers. As a rule, they are an impecunious set, and rarely interesting. Crespo and Guzman Blanco both started from here on their way to the presidential chair in Caracas. So did the unfortunate Paredes, shortly before our arrival in Venezuela, but he had scarcely set foot on the soil of his native country, which he had promised to liberate from the evils of Castroism, before he, with his followers, was shot down in cold blood.

On account of its proximity to the mainland and commanding, as it does, the entire Orinoco basin, Trinidad should enjoy an extensive trade with Venezuela. And this she would undoubtedly have were it not that Venezuela imposes an extra *ad valorem* duty of thirty per cent. on all merchandise that comes from or by way of Trinidad. This is in retaliation for the island's harboring smugglers and revolutionists. One of the results of this policy is smuggling on a most extensive scale, at which many of the customs officials connive. This means a great loss to the Venezuelan government, for it is estimated that it thus loses a greater part of the duties that should go to the national treasury.

Another temptation to smuggle arises from the excessively

high tariff on certain necessary articles of consumption. Thus salt, which is a government monopoly, costs sixteen times as much in Ciudad Bolivar as it does in Trinidad. The natural consequence is that there is a large contraband traffic in this important commodity. In some cases the smugglers elude the vigilance of the government officials and pay nothing whatever in the way of duties. In others they have an understanding with the officials, and pay *por composicion*—that is, only a portion of the tax—the other portion being divided between the official and the smuggler.

Contraband trade, however, is nothing new in this part of the world. It dates back to the sixteenth century when, according to Fray Padre Simon, the learned author of *Noticias Historiales de las Conquistas de Tierra Firme*, religion and policy prohibited all commercial relations between Spaniards and foreigners, especially the Dutch and the English.

As an *obiter dictum*, however, it may be remarked that it was this restricted and short-sighted trade policy that, more than anything else, led to the enormous losses that Spain suffered during so many decades from corsairs and buccaneers, and that eventually resulted in the wars of independence in the Spanish colonies of the New World.

THE DELTA OF THE ORINOCO

We were still reveling in the countless beauties of forest and field—quite oblivious of the passage of time—when we were informed that our steamer would, in a few hours, start for Ciudad Bolivar, the chief city on the Orinoco, and

distant about two days' sail from the Port-of-Spain.

Eager as we were to explore the wonders of the famed and mysterious Orinoco, it was with great reluctance that we tore ourselves away from the cherished home of flowers and humming birds—sweet Iere. In Trinidad, thanks to the kind and considerate hospitality of its people, we had enjoyed all the comforts of home and the same freedom of movement as if we had been given the keys of the city.

Our steamer was scheduled to leave at two o'clock in the afternoon, but, as a matter of fact, did not weigh anchor until some hours later. This, however, we did not regret, as it gave us an opportunity to have "one last lingering look" at the island beautiful from the upper deck of the vessel. Besides this, we could by means of our field glasses take a survey of the Gulf of Paria—for it is famous in history, this Gulf of Paria—and has been visited by men whose names are writ large in the annals of the world's heroes.

Its waters were visited in 1805 by England's one-eyed, one-armed sailor-man, while in pursuit of the French and Spanish warships which he had chased from Gibraltar to the Caribbean Sea and thence back to Trafalgar, where Spain lost its navy and England her greatest admiral. "Had Nelson found the hostile squadron under the lee of Trinidad, the delta of the Orinoco would now be as famous in naval history as the delta of the Nile."

It is, however, the imposing figure of Spain's great admiral, Cristobal Colon, that looms highest in these parts. He it was that gave the chief promontories of island and mainland, and the channels that separate the one from the other, many of the names they still bear.

Far down to the south is *La Boca de la Sierpe*—the Serpent's Mouth—the channel that separates the

southwesternmost point of Trinidad from Venezuela. It was through this channel that Columbus passed when he entered the gulf in which we now are, and from which he got his first view of the mainland of the New World. But he did not realize at first the magnitude of his discovery. Thinking the land he saw on his port quarter was an island —for during his two preceding voyages he had seen nothing but islands, outside of Cuba, which he fancied to be the eastern part of Asia—he named it Isla Santa, or Holy Island. A short distance to the northwest of us is *La Boca del Draco*, the Dragon's Mouth, through which the great navigator

"Push'd his prows into the setting sun,
And made West East."

The names Serpent's Mouth and Dragon's Mouth were given to the two straits mentioned on account of the strong currents found there and on account of the danger Columbus experienced in taking his ships through them. His letter to Ferdinand and Isabella contains a graphic description of the dangers he encountered while passing through the Serpent's Mouth. "In the dead of night," he writes, "while I was on deck, I heard an awful roaring, that came from the south, toward the ship; on the top of this rolling sea came a mighty wave roaring with a frightful noise, and with all this terrific uproar were other conflicting currents, producing, as I have already said, a sound as of breakers upon rocks. To this day I have a vivid recollection of the dread I then felt lest the ship might flounder under the force of that tremendous sea; but it passed by, and reached the mouth of the before-mentioned passage, where the uproar lasted for a considerable time."[10] He had similar difficulty in making his exit through the Dragon's Mouth.

No wonder that the frightened sailors of Columbus

imagined that they were the sport of the Evil One. “Being in the region of Paria,” writes Navarrete, “the Admiral asked the pilots what they made their position to be; some said that they were in the sea of Spain, others that they were in the sea of Scotland, and that all the seamen were in despair, and said the Devil had brought them there.”[11]

Columbus, as has been stated, at first considered the land on his port side to be insular in character, but before he left the Gulf of Paria he was evidently convinced by the raging surges of fresh water that had nearly swamped his ships, that he had discovered a land of continental dimensions. In his letter to the Spanish sovereigns he writes, “This land, which your highnesses have sent me to explore, is very extensive, and I think there are many other countries in the south of which the world has never had any knowledge.”

He had observed that a very large river debouched from the land of Gracia and he at once “rightly conjectured that the currents and the overwhelming mountains of water which rushed into these straits with such an awful roaring, arose from the contest between the fresh water and the sea. The fresh water struggled with the salt to oppose its entrance and the salt water contended against the fresh in its efforts to gain a passage outward. And I formed the conjecture, that at one time there was a continuous neck of land from the island of Trinidad and the land of Gracia, where the two straits now are.” All these conclusions have been confirmed by the observations of subsequent explorers.

What, however, will most interest the curious reader are the speculations into which Columbus was led by the various phenomena observed in the Gulf of Paria. The most fantastic, from our modern point of view, were his theories regarding the form of the earth and the location of the Terrestrial Paradise.

Before his arrival in the Gulf of Paria, he had been a firm believer in the sphericity of the earth, but in this part of the world he had observed so many new and unexpected features—"so much irregularity," as he phrased it—that he came "to another conclusion respecting the shape of the earth, namely: that it is not round, as they describe, but of the form of a pear, which is very round except where the stalk grows, at which part it is most prominent."

It is very easy for us, in the light of all the advance in scientific knowledge since his time, to smile at his hypotheses, and the reasonings by which he arrived at his conclusions. What seemed plausible then appears preposterous now. But we must remember that the proofs of the rotundity of the earth before his time were quite empirical, and were far from having the demonstrative force of those that are now adduced. All the epoch-making work in physics and astronomy by such men as Galileo and Kepler, Newton and Laplace, Huyghens and Foucault, and the French academicians, bearing on the form of our globe, has been accomplished since his time. If we now know that the earth has the form of an oblate spheroid and not that of a pear, it is in consequence of the progress of physical astronomy during the four centuries that have elapsed since Columbus sailed the western seas.

Before his time the learned had located the earthly paradise in various parts of the eastern hemisphere. Some contended that it was in Mesopotamia, others that it was in Ethiopia near the head waters of the Nile, but all agreed that it was somewhere in the East. Now Columbus, who imagined he had reached the eastern part of Asia, by sailing westwards from Spain, thought he had incontrovertible evidence for locating the Garden of Eden in the newly discovered land of Gracia.

"I do not suppose," he writes, "that the Earthly Paradise is

in the form of a rugged mountain, as the descriptions of it have made it appear, but that it in on the summit of the spot which I have described as being in the form of the stalk of a pear; the approach of it from a distance must be by a constant and gradual ascent; but I believe that, as I have already said, no one could ever reach the top"—except "by God's permission," as he asserts elsewhere. "I think also that the water I have described may proceed from it, though it be far off, and that, stopping at the place which I have just left, it forms this lake. There are great indications of this being the Terrestrial Paradise, for its site coincides with the opinions of the holy and wise theologians whom I have mentioned; and moreover, the other evidences agree with the supposition, for I have never either read or heard of fresh water coming in so large a quantity, in closer conjunction with the sea. The idea is also corroborated by the blandness of the temperature, and if the water of which I speak does not proceed from the Earthly Paradise, it appears to be still more marvelous, for I do not believe there is any river in the world so large or so deep."[12]

Besides Nelson and Columbus, a third celebrated seaman visited this part of the world. This was Sir Walter Raleigh, of whom we shall have more to say as we proceed.[13]

Our parting view of the forest-clad mountains of Trinidad we shall never forget. The sun was setting on the mainland —the land of Gracia of Columbus—but before disappearing below the horizon he tinged Iere's mountains with a parting smile and enveloped them in a

"—soft and purple mist
Like a vaporous amethyst;"

reminding one of the azure haze that veils Hymettus as the sun sinks behind Parnassus in an evening in June—

something that only the gifted Greek poet has ever been able adequately to describe.

The shades of night had fallen long before we reached the Serpent's Mouth, which we were obliged to pass before entering the Macareo, one of the numerous channels of the Orinoco delta. We were thus deprived of the opportunity of getting a good view of the huge billows that are produced by the meeting of river and sea, of which Columbus has given us so graphic a description.

Those of the passengers that were disposed to become seasick retired to their staterooms before we arrived at the Macareo bar, where the sea is roughest, and where the ground-swells are most unpleasant. For half an hour or more the steamer tossed considerably, reminding one of the English Channel in stormy weather. But the impact of surge against surge, of which Columbus speaks, was much less than we had been led to anticipate, and there was little indication of the forcible eddies of the "violentlie swift Orinoco," which caused Raleigh so much embarrassment.

This was easily accounted for, as the rainy season had not yet set in, and the waters at the various estuaries were, therefore, comparatively little agitated. Columbus, however, arrived here towards the end of the rainy season, when the floods of the Orinoco were at their height, while Raleigh came after the rainy season was quite well advanced. Again, ours was a fairly good-sized steamer and better adapted to stem wave and current than were the fragile barks of Columbus, or the frail wherries and cock-boats of Raleigh. When the floods of the Orinoco were at high-water mark, we can well understand that the early navigators had reason to be deeply impressed by the dangers that confronted them in these seething and roaring waters, and that, to their exalted imaginations, the realities of their surroundings were in nowise short of the fancies of

the poet as indicated in the verses at the head of this chapter. Indeed, so great were the supposed difficulties, and so dangerous the climate in these parts, that sailors were wont to say,

"Quien se va al Orinoco,
Si no se muere, se vuelve loco."[14]

When it comes to navigating the less known rivers and caños—channels—which, like a network, intersect the delta in every direction, the difficulty and danger are even now so great that the most skilled Indian pilots often become bewildered. When this occurs nothing remains but to follow the current until one reaches the gulf, and then enter a branch with which one is familiar. Sir Walter gives such a graphic account of the difficulties he experienced in reaching "the great riuer Orenoque," that I reproduce in his own words a part of a paragraph bearing on the subject.

After telling us how his Indian pilot had gotten lost in the maze of caños through which he was trying to grope his way, he says: "If God had not sent vs another helpe we might haue wandred a whole yeere in that laborinth of riuers, ere we had found any way, either out or in, especiallie after we were past the ebbing and flowing, which was in fower daies: for I know all the earth doth not yeeld the like confluence of streames and branches, the one crossing the other as many times, and all as faire and large and so like one to another, as no man can tell which to take: and if we went by the Sun or compasse hoping thereby to go directly one way or other, yet that waie we were also carried in a circle amongst multitudes of Islands, and euery Island so bordered with high trees as no man could see any further than the bredth of the riuer, or length of the breach."[15]

Exaggerated as this account seems, it does scant justice to

the reality. Raleigh had no opportunity to explore the delta, and to acquire definite notions of its immensity, or he would have had much more to add to the foregoing description of its extent and marvels. Even to-day we have no map of this region, which is, in many respects, as unknown as the least explored part of Central Africa. As yet our knowledge of land and river is limited only to its most salient features, but this is quite sufficient to excite our wonder. Suffice it to say that the area of the delta is greater than that of Sicily; that its base, from its main branch at the Boca de Navios to the embouchure of the Manamo, is nearly two hundred miles in length; that the Orinoco, at the bifurcation of its two principal branches, is twelves miles in width; that there are no fewer than fifty branches conveying the waters of the mighty river into the Atlantic; that the lowlands of the delta are divided into thousands of islands, and islets, by a network of rivers diverging in fan-shape towards the sea, and by innumerable caños and bayous, some with stagnant water, others with strong currents, ramifying in every direction in straight lines and in curves, so that escape from their intricacies by any one, except an experienced pilot, would be as impossible as would have been an exit from the Cretan labyrinth without the clew of Ariadne.

When we arose the morning after leaving Trinidad, our steamer had already advanced quite a distance on its way through the Macareo. This *brazo*, or branch, is chosen not because it is the largest or the deepest, but because it affords the shortest and most direct route between the Port-of-Spain and Ciudad Bolivar. Although the distance to this latter place from the mouth of the Macareo is only two hundred and sixty miles, it usually required nearly two days, counting the stops on the way, for the trip up the river, so strong is the current The return trip, however, can be made in much less time.

We shall never forget our first view of the Orinoco and of the impressions we then received. Was it that we were at last sailing in the placid waters of the one river of all the world that we had from our youth most yearned to behold, or was it that we had been dreaming of the site and beauties of the Terrestrial Paradise, as fancied by Columbus to exist in these parts, or was it because of both these elements combined? We know not, but one thing is certain, and that is that our first view of the Orinoco and its forest-shaded banks, festooned with vines and flowers, recalled at once those musical words of Dante,

"Sweet hue of eastern sapphire, that was spread
O'er the serene aspect of the pure air,
High up as the first circle, to mine eyes
Unwonted joy renewed."[16]

and brought vividly back to memory his inimitable description of his entrance into the Garden of Eden, where he was to meet again his long-lost Beatrice.

To emphasize the illusion, there suddenly appeared under a noble moriche palm on the flower-enameled bank of the river and only a few rods from where we were standing, two children of the forest—a young man and a young woman—bride and groom, we loved to think—who were as Columbus found the American, as Adam and Eve were after the fall, when, in the words of Milton,

"Those leaves
They gathered, broad as Amazonian targe,
And with what skill they had, together sewed
To gird their waist."

Handsome was the youth and beautiful was the maiden, strong as Hiawatha, fair as Minnehaha—both fit models for sculptor and painter, and such as the poet dreams of

when depicting his heroes and heroines of the forest primeval.

Were they the king and queen of their tribe? Fancy said, "Yes." But whether they were or not, one could say with truth that the tan-colored maid was like the one Raleigh met along this very same river and who, in his own words, "was as well fauored and as well shaped as euer I saw anie in England."[17]

Near this interesting young couple, both in the heyday of youth, lay a cluster of plantains, which was doubtless to contribute to their morning repast. But what a coincidence that, even in this trifling circumstance, we should find an additional reminder of the Earthly Paradise! Have not men of science named the plantain *Musa Paradisaica*, in allusion to the tradition, which has long obtained, that it was the plantain, and not the apple, that was the forbidden fruit in Eden?[18] It was there to fill out the picture as an artist in the tropics would wish to see it painted.

But there was still something wanting. While we were yet under the spell of our environment, and lost in the contemplation of the Edenic beauties around us, we were awakened from our reverie by a plunge and a splash before the prow of our vessel—and there, greatest surprise of all in our series of coincidences, was a giant anaconda, full thirty feet long, vigorously plowing its way to the opposite bank of the river. It was like the water-snakes in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

"Blue, glossy, green and velvet black,
It coiled and swam,
And when it reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes."

So startling was this strange apparition that we could

scarcely credit our senses, and, had it not been for exclamations of surprise by several of the passengers near by, we should have thought, for a while, that it was all a dream.

The picture was now complete. There was the serpent in this paradise of delights, as in the paradise of our first parents. And what added to the strangeness—the uncanniness—of the appearance of the serpent at this particular juncture was the extraordinary rarity of such an occurrence. One of the officers of the steamer told us that he had been sailing up and down the Orinoco for twenty years and had never seen one of these boas before. And more wonderful still, it was the first and last we ourselves saw, although we subsequently traveled many thousands of miles on tropical rivers along which such serpents have their habitat.[19]

All in all, our first view of the Orinoco fully met our fondest expectations so far as they related to variety and exuberance of vegetation and beauty of scenery. The entire delta of the Orinoco may aptly be described as one of Nature's choicest conservatories, in which Flora has collected together the fairest growths of garden and forest, and where the charm of foliage and flower is enhanced by the presence of countless species of the feathered tribe of richest plumage and of dazzling hue.

A distinguished German traveler, Friedrich Gerstäcker, writing of his impressions of the delta of the Orinoco, does not hesitate to declare that "there is not in the world anything more glorious in vegetation than is to be seen on the banks of the Orinoco," and that there is no place more attractive to the tourist.[20]

To form some conception of the wonderful variety of vegetable life to be seen in the delta, it will suffice to

observe that a third of a century ago botanists had counted in the forests of Guiana no fewer than 132 families of plants, 772 genera and 2,450 distinct species. Of the genera more than sixty were indigenous.

Although we saw many things in the delta of the Orinoco that possessed intense interest for us, we saw none of the natives living in houses built on the summits of trees, about which some recent writers, following Raleigh, Humboldt and others, still entertain their readers. To tell the truth, we did not expect to find such dwellings, as it has been demonstrated beyond question that they do not now exist, and probably never did exist in these parts outside of the fertile imaginations of Raleigh and Gumilla. Humboldt never visited the delta, and hence, what he says on the subject in *Personal Narrative of Travels to the Equinoctial Regions*, is based on reports received from others.[21]

Cardinal Bembo, writing in the first half of the sixteenth century, speaks of them, and Benzoni, his contemporary, who spent fifteen years in traveling in the New World, illustrates by an engraving what he has to say about the Indian houses built on the tops of trees.[22]



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Ferdinand Columbus, who, although a mere youth, had accompanied his father on his fourth voyage, writes, that when in the Gulf of Uraba, “We saw people living like birds in the tops of trees, laying sticks across from bough to bough, and building their huts upon them; and though we knew not the reason of the custom, we guessed that it was done for fear of their enemies, or of the griffins that are in this island.”[23]

Peter Martyr, who most likely got his information about these strange dwellings from Ferdinand Columbus, tells us that the trees on which they were built were of "suche heighth, that the strength of no mane's arme is able to hurle a stone to the houses buylded therein." He adds, however, that the owners of the houses have "theyr wyne cellers in the grounde and well replenysshed." And he vouchsafes the reason for not keeping the wine, with "all other necessayre thinges they haue, with theym in the trees. For albeit that the vehemencie of the wynde, is not of poure to caste downe those houses, or to breeke the branches of the trees, yet are they tossed therwith, and swaye sumwhat from syde to syde, by reason therof, the wyne shulde be muche troubeled with moouinge.... When the Kynge or any of the other noblemen, dyne or suppe in these trees, theyr wynes are brought theym from the celleres by theyr seruantes, whyche by meanes of exercise are accustomed with noo lesse celeritie to runne vppe and downe the steares adherete to the tree, then doo owre waytynge boyes vppon the playne grounde, fetche vs what wee caule for from the cobbarde bysyde owr dynynge table."

As to the size of the trees the same writer avers, "Owr men measuringe manye of these trees, founde them to bee of suche biggnes, that seuen men, ye sumetymes eight, holdinge hande in hande with theyr armes streached furthe, were scarcely able to fathame them aboute."[24]

Raleigh had evidently read some of these accounts about people living on tree tops, but not satisfied with the Munchausen tales of his predecessors, he proceeds to entertain his readers with stories as marvelous as those of Sindbad the Sailor.

Writing of the Indians of the delta, he says: "In the winter they dwell vpon the trees, where they build very artificiall

towns, and villages, ... for between May and September, the riuer Orenoke riseth thirtie foote vpright, and then are those Ilands ouerflowen twentie foote high aboue the leuell of the ground, sauing some few raised grounds in the middle of them.... They neuer eate of anie thing that is set or sowen, and as at home they vse neither planting nor other manurance, so when they com abroad the refuse to feede of ought but of that which nature without labor bringeth foorth."[25]

Of the Waraus, the Indians who inhabit the delta, the missionary, Padre Gumilla, writes that when their islands are periodically inundated by the rise of the Orinoco, they erect their huts on piles—not on trees, as Raleigh states—above the water. Furthermore, he tells us that these huts are made of the moriche palm, which grows abundantly in these islands, and are covered with the leaves of it. From the fibres of the leaf, they make their hammocks and their cords for fishing and for bowstrings.

Around the pulpy shoot that ascends from the trunks is a web-like integument that serves them for the slight covering they wear. On the productions of this tree, also, they entirely subsist. The pulpy shoot is eaten as cabbage, and the tree bears a fruit like the date, but somewhat larger. When the inundation ceases, the tree is cut down, and being perforated, a palatable juice exudes, from which they make a drink. The interior substance of it is then taken out and thrown into vessels of water and well washed and the ligneous fibres being removed, a white sediment is deposited, which, dried in the sun, is made into a very wholesome bread.[26]

Accepting the foregoing statements as true, Humboldt philosophizes as follows: "It is curious to observe in the lowest degree of civilization the existence of a whole tribe depending on a single species of palm tree, similar to those

insects which feed on one and the same flower, or on one and the same part of a plant."[27]

Yet, notwithstanding all that has been written about the Indians of the Orinoco delta living on the tops of trees, and depending on only the moriche palm for food and raiment, it is certain that they do not do so now, and it is almost equally certain that they have never done so in the past. Truth to tell, these stories seem to repose on little better foundation than those so long circulated and credited regarding Lake Parime, and the great city of Manoa—the home of El Dorado.

Raleigh had no time or opportunity to explore the delta, and there is reason to believe that in this, as in other matters, he gave free reign to his fancy to satisfy his reader's desire for the marvelous. Gumilla, apparently, got his information regarding these particular subjects at secondhand. He spent many years on the middle Orinoco and some of its affluents, but there is no evidence that he was ever in a position to verify the stories so long current regarding the manner of living of the inhabitants of the delta.

The fact is, no one, so far as known, ever made any attempt to explore the interior of the delta until more than two centuries after Raleigh's time and until nearly a half century after Humboldt's visit to the valley of the Orinoco. As a consequence, all that had been reported by earlier writers was exaggeration and guesswork, if not pure invention.

Sir Robert Schomburgk, who, as Her Majesty's commissioner to survey the boundaries of British Guiana, explored the delta in 1841—and some months of his sojourn there was during the rainy season—states explicitly, that not in a single instance did he find Indians

dwelling on trees. “We can well suppose that the numerous fires which were made in each hut, and the reflection of which was the stronger in consequence of the stream of vapor around the summit of trees in those moist regions, illuminated at night the adjacent trees; but the fire itself was scarcely ever made on the top of a tree. The inundation rises at the delta seldom higher than three or four feet above the banks of the rivers;”—not twenty or thirty feet, as Raleigh asserts—“and if the immediate neighborhood of the sea and the level nature of the land be considered, this is an enormous rise.”[28]

Herr Appun, who visited the delta some years subsequently to Schomburgk’s sojourn there, declares, “I have lived more than a year and a half among the Waraus of the Orinoco delta, and those of the east coast of South America, from Cape Sabinetta to Cape Nassau, at the mouth of the Pomeroon river in British Guiana, both during the dry and the rainy season, and never have I beheld any of the aerial dwellings that have been described.”[29]

The one, however, who has most thoroughly explored the interior of the delta is Sr. Andres E. Level, who spent several years among the Waraus, or Guaraunos, as they are called by the Spaniards. His investigations have completely exploded the false notions so long entertained regarding the delta and its inhabitants. The land is not all an impassable swamp. Much of it is so elevated above the river that it is never reached by the high floods of the Orinoco.

Its soil is even more fertile than that of the Nile valley and produces every tropical fruit and tree in the greatest profusion. Game is abundant, and the Indians have extensive *rancherias*—plantations—which supply them grain, fruits and vegetables of all kinds. In the rivers near

by they have the greatest variety of fish, besides turtle that would be the delight of the epicure.

As the Waraus of the interior are a timid people and have long since learned to distrust the white man, they remain, as a rule, concealed in the depths of forests that are impassable. They are, however, a quiet, industrious, home-loving people, and are famous among the tribes in this section of Guiana for their beautiful *curiaras*, or canoes—made from a single log of the cedar, or of a tree called Bioci. Some of these dugouts—the *monoxyla* of the Greeks—are full fifty feet long and from five to six feet broad and find a ready sale as far south as Demerara.

Far from being a dismal swamp, inhabited only by poor, starving savages, condemned to live on tree tops, and to find food and clothing in a single palm, Sr. Level[30] shows us that the delta is a garden of exceeding richness and that the Indians, if the government did its duty towards them by developing the marvelous resources of their land and by giving its inhabitants, so long neglected, some measure of attention and assistance, would eventually make efficient contributors to the national revenue, and become desirable citizens of the republic.

1

Rokeby, Canto I, 13. ↑

2

"The wind then failed me, and I entered a climate where the intensity of the heat was such that I thought both ships and men would have been burned up, and everything suddenly got into such a state of confusion that no man dared go below deck to attend to the securing of the water-cask and the provisions. This heat lasted eight days; on the first day the weather was fine, but on the seven other days it rained and was cloudy, yet we found no alleviation of our distress; so that I certainly believe that if the sun had shone, as on the first day, we should not have been able to escape in anyway."—*Writings of Christopher Columbus*, ut sup., pp. 113, 114, and Irving's *Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, Chap.

XXIX. ↑

3

Op. cit., p. 136. ↑

4

Eden's *First Three English Books on America*, p. 338. ↑

5

Chapman's *Odyssey*, Bk. VII. ↑

6

Called *Bois immortelle* by the French, and in Spanish bearing the appropriate name of *madre de cacao*, mother of cacao. ↑

7

It was upon the "boughs and spraies" of these trees that Raleigh found "great store of oisters, very salt and wel tasted." A species of edible oyster is still found on this tree—the *Rhizophora Mangle* of Linnæus—but, although served on the table in the West Indies, it is far from being as luscious as our "Blue Points" or as large as our "Lynn Havens." ↑

8

At Last, p. 79, London, 1905. ↑

9

"At this point called Tierra de Brea or Piche," writes Raleigh, "there is that abondance of stone pitch, that all the ships of the world may therewith loden from thence, and wee made triall of it in trimming our ships to be most excellent good, and melteth not with the sunne, as the pitch of Norway, and therefore for ships trading in the south partes very profitable."—*The Discovery of Guiana*, pp. 3 and 4, published for the Hakluyt Society, London, 1848. ↑

10

Writings of Columbus, op. cit., pp. 120, 121. ↑

11

Coleccion de los Viajes y descubrunientos que hiaeron por mar los Españoles desde fines dil siglo XV. Tom. III, p. 583. ↑

12

See the aforementioned letter of Columbus to Ferdinand and Isabella for the quotations above given. The whole letter will well repay perusal. See also *Relaciones y Cartas de Cristobal Colon*, Tom. CL, XIV, *de la Biblioteca Clasica*, Madrid, 1892, p. 268 et seq.

Americus Vespucius shared with Columbus the belief in the existence of the Terrestrial Paradise in the newly-discovered lands near the equator. Writing to his friend, Lorenzo de Medici, giving him an account of his

second voyage, he declares “In the fields flourish so many sweet flowers and herbs, and the fruits are so delicious in their fragrance, that I fancied myself near the terrestrial paradise,” and again, “If there is a terrestrial paradise in the world it cannot be far from this region.”—*The Life and Voyages of Americus Vespucius*, pp. 197 and 214, by C. Edwards Lester and Andrew Foster, New York, 1846. ↑

13

The curious reader will be interested in learning that Sir Walter Raleigh, as well as Columbus and Vespucius, speculated about the probable site of Paradise. In his *History of the World* he devotes a long chapter to the subject, and several pages to the discussion “Of their Opinion which make paradise as high as the moon; and of others which make it higher than the middle region of the air,” Chap. III, Oxford, 1829. ↑

14

He who goes to the Orinoco dies or becomes crazy. ↑

15

The Discovery of the Large, Rich and Beautiful Empire of Guiana, p. 46, edited by Sir Robert Schomburgk, printed for the Hakluyt Society, London, 1848. ↑

16

Purgatorio, Canto 1, vv. 13–16. ↑

17

Sir Robert Schomburgk is no less enthusiastic in his praise of the tawny beauties of this part of South America. Commenting on Raleigh’s opinion, just quoted, he writes as follows:—

“During our eight years’ wandering among the tribes of Guiana, who inhabit the vast regions from the coast of the Atlantic to the interior, between the Cassiquiare and the upper Trombetas, we have met with many an Indian female who in figure and comeliness might have vied with some of our European beauties. Although they are rather small in size, their feet and hands are generally exquisite, their ankles well turned, and their waists, left to nature and not forced into artificial shape by modern inventions, resemble the beau ideal of classical sculpture.”—*The Discoverie of Guiana*, ut sup., p. 41. ↑

18

The reader, I am sure, will be interested in the following paragraph from Peter Martyr on the plantain.

Speaking of the fruit of the Cassia tree (as he calls the plantain), he, in Michael Lok’s translation, says,—

“The *Egyptian* common people babble that this is the apple of our first created Father *Adam*, whereby hee ouerthrewe all mankinde. The

straunge and farraine Marchantes of vnprofitable Spices, perfumes, *Arabian* Yseminating odours, and woorthlesse precious stones trading those Countries for gaine, call those fruites the *Muses*. For mine owne part I cannot call to minde, by what name I might call that tree or stalke in Latine," p. 273. *De Novo Orbe, the Historie of the West Indies*, comprised in eight Decades whereof three haue beene formerly translated into English by R. *Eden*, whereunto the other fiue are newly added by the industrie and painfull Trauaile of M. Lok, Gent., London, 1612. ↑

19

The Anaconda is called by the inhabitants of Guiana, La Culebra de Agua, or Water Serpent. It is also named El Traga Venado—Deer Swallower—while in British Guiana it is known as the Camoudi. Mr. Waterton, speaking of it, says, "The Camoudi snake has been killed from thirty to forty feet long; though not venomous, his size renders him destructive to the passing animals. The Spaniards in the Oroonoque positively affirm that he grows to the length of seventy or eighty feet, and that he will destroy the strongest and largest bull. His name seems to confirm this; there he is called 'matatoro,' which literally means 'bull-killer.' Thus be may be ranked among the deadly snakes; for it comes nearly to the same thing in the end, whether the victim dies by poison from the fangs, which corrupts his blood, and makes it stink horribly, or whether his body be crushed to mummy, and swallowed by this hideous beast."—*Wanderings in South America*, First Journey. ↑

20

Neue Reisen, p. 698, Berlin. Cf. *Wandertage eines Deutschen Touristen im Strom und Küstengebiet des Orinoko*, Chap. XXXIII–XXXV, von Eberhard Graf zu Erbach, Leipzig, 1892. ↑

21

"The navigator," writes the illustrious savant, "in proceeding along the channels of the delta of the Orinoco at night, sees with surprise the summit of the palm trees illumined by large fires. These are the habitations of the Guarons (Titivitas and Waraweties of Raleigh), which are suspended from the trunks of trees. These tribes hang up mats in the air, which they fill with earth, and kindle, on a layer of moist clay, the fire necessary for their household wants. They had owed their liberty and their political independence for ages to the quaking and swampy soil, which they pass over in the time of drought, and on which they alone know how to walk in security to their solitude in the delta of the Orinoco; to their abode on the trees, where religious enthusiasm will probably never lead any American stylites. Vol. III, Chap. XXV. ↑

22

History of the New World, printed for the Hakluyt Society, pp. 237, 238. ↑

23

Historia del Almirante de las Indias, Don Cristobal Colón, Escrita por Don Fernando Colón, p. 178, Madrid, 1892. ↑

24

Dec. II, Bk. IV. Eden's translation. ↑

25

Op. cit., pp. 50, 51. ↑

26

With reason does the pious missionary call the moriche palm—*Mauritia flexuosa*—"nuevo arbol de la vida, y milagro del Supremo Autor de la naturaleza"—a new tree of life, and a miracle of the Author of Nature—for this tree alone furnishes the Indian with victum et amictum—food and raiment.—*Historia Natural Civil y Geografica de las naciones situadas en las Riberas del Rio Orinoco*, Vol. I, Cap. IX, Barcelona, 1882. Compare the following lines of Thomson's Seasons:—

"Wide o'er his isles, the branching Oronoque
Rolls a brown deluge, and the native drives
To dwell aloft on life-sufficing trees,
At once his home, his robe, his food, his arms."

↑

27

Op. cit., Vol. III, p. 9. ↑

28

Discoverie of Gviana, p. 50. ↑

29

Unter den Tropen, Erster Band, p. 521, Jena, 1871. ↑

30

El Delta del Orinoco tomado de la esploracion al alto bajo Orinoco y central en 1850, por Andres E. Level, Vol. III, de la *Memoria de la Dirección General de Estradistica al Presidente de los Estados Unidos de Venezuela*, en 1873. ↑

CHAPTER III

THE GREAT RIVER

"What a wide river!" was the exclamation of a fellow-passenger as our steamer passed out of the Macareo and turned the apex of the delta. It was, indeed, very wide, and the bank of the Orinoco on our port-quarter was almost invisible. Here, even during the dry season, this mighty water course is no less than four leagues in width. We now, for the first time, fully realized that we were sailing on the broad waters of one of the world's master rivers. After the Parana and the Amazon, it is the largest waterway in South America, and, for the volume of water it carries into the ocean, it ranks with the Mississippi, the Congo, Yang-tse-Kiang, and the Brahmaputra. Well have the natives of the lands through which it flows named it the Great River—for it is great in every way—great in the immense basin it drains; great in the tribute it carries to the ocean, and great in the number and magnitude of the rivers it counts among its affluents from the distant Cordilleras.

As along the Macareo, so here along the Orinoco, one never tires of gazing at the magnificent forest trees and the dense shrubbery with which the banks are fringed. At one time it is the wide-branched ceiba, covered with bright-blooming epiphytes; at another a clump of graceful

moriche palms, whose tremulous plumes are given an added beauty by the presence of a bevy of multicolored parrots and macaws. The foliage of tree and shrub is here ever fresh and luxuriant and retains always that delicate hue so characteristic of the leafage of our northern woodlands in the early days of spring.

Most of the trees, large and small, are literally weighed down with parasites and epiphytes. Among the latter growths are orchids of countless variety and rarest beauty, such as are seldom seen in our northern floral conservatories. And the way in which the trees are held together by those strange forms of vegetable life—so abundant in the tropics—the *bejucos* or bush ropes! Sometimes they are as thick as a man's arm, sometimes they are like a ship's cable, sometimes they may be mistaken for telegraph wires—so long and fine are they. They extend from the ground to the tops of the highest trees, or drop from the summits of the loftiest monarchs of the forest to the earth beneath, sometimes singly, sometimes by scores. Then again they cross one another from tree to tree and form a trelliswork that at times is next to impassable. And these bejucos, or lianas, as they are also called, are, like the trees, burdened with air-plants of various species, at one time large masses of leaves, at another long spikes of the richest blossoms.

At almost every turn the vision is delighted by lovely arboreal groups and charming natural bowers, all graced with the most gorgeous combinations of emerald foliage and ruby bloom—interspersed with delicate tufts of lilac, pink and canary—and illumined by gleams of flitting sunshine which bring out a glorious play of color effects with which the eye is never tired. "A dryad's home," we heard an enthusiastic señorita exclaim, as we passed one of these flower-decked bowers, on which glittered the checkered sunlight. And so well it might be, it was so rare

a gem of sylvan loveliness.

While passing up this majestic river and admiring the ever-varying panorama of rarest floral beauty, we recalled a couple of paragraphs in Darwin's *Journal of Researches*, in which he refers to the futility of attempting to describe, for one who has never visited the tropics, the wonders of the scenery there and above all the marvels of the vegetable world. He expresses himself as follows:

"Such are the elements of the scenery, but it is a hopeless attempt to paint the general effect. Learned naturalists describe these scenes of the tropics by naming a multitude of objects, and mentioning some characteristic feature of each. To a learned traveler this possibly may communicate some definite ideas; but who else from seeing a plant in an herbarium can imagine its appearance when growing in its native soil? Who from seeing choice plants in a hothouse, can magnify some into the dimensions of forest trees, and crowd others into an entangled jungle? Who, when examining in the cabinet of the entomologist the gay exotic butterflies, and singular cicadas, will associate with these lifeless objects, the ceaseless harsh music of the latter, and the lazy flight of the former—the sure accompaniments of the still, glowing noonday of the tropics? It is when the sun has attained its greatest height, that such scenes should be viewed; then the dense, splendid foliage of the mango hides the ground with its darkest shade, whilst the upper branches are rendered, from the profusion of light, of the most brilliant green. In the temperate zones the case is different—the vegetation there is not so dark or so rich, and hence the rays of the declining sun, tinged of a red, purple, or bright yellow color, add most to the beauties of those climes.

"When quietly walking along the shady pathways, and admiring each successive view, I wished to find language

to express my ideas. Epithet after epithet was found too weak to convey to those who have not visited the intertropical regions, the sensation of delight which the mind experiences. I have said that the plants in a hothouse fail to communicate a just idea of the vegetation, yet I must recur to it. The land is one great wild, untidy, luxuriant hothouse, made by Nature for herself, but taken possession of by man, who has studded it with gay houses and formal gardens. How great would be the desire in every admirer of Nature to behold, if such were possible, the scenery of another planet! yet to every person in Europe, it may be truly said, that at the distance of only a few degrees from his native soil, the glories of another world are opened to him. In my last walk I stopped again and again to gaze on these beauties, and endeavored to fix in my mind for ever, an impression which at the time I knew sooner or later must fail. The form of the orange tree, the cocoa-nut, the palm, the mango, the tree-fern, the banana, will remain clear and separate; but the thousand beauties which unite these into one perfect scene must fade away; yet they will leave, like a tale heard in childhood, a picture full of indistinct, but most beautiful figures."[1]

While the flora of the Orinoco, near the apex of the delta, is so varied and exuberant, but little is seen of its fauna, notwithstanding all that has been said and written to the contrary. In a recent work, for instance, written by one who pretends to have made the trip from Trinidad, is a sentence that will equal any of the extravagances of Jules Verne's *Le Superbe Orénoque*.

"The jaguar," says the author, "will stop drinking, or the tapir look up from browsing on the grass, and the monkey pause in swinging from tree to tree, as the boats hurry noisily by, while the drowsy alligator or manatee floats lazily on, his head half out of the water, until perhaps a conical bullet from a Winchester rifle or from a revolver,

which everyone carries, rouses him to a knowledge that it is not good to trust too much to mankind."

It is quite safe to say that neither the author of the work quoted nor any one else has ever seen a jaguar, or a tapir or a manatee under the circumstances mentioned. They are all timid animals and are never seen from the deck of noisy steamers.

Although we saw no quadrupeds like those just mentioned, there were countless birds, large and small. Those that were most conspicuous were ibises, flamingoes and herons of various species. So numerous at times were the flamingoes that, to borrow an idea from Trowbridge, the sunrise flame of their reflected forms actually crimsoned "the glassy wave and glistening sands." Of the herons, the largest species is named by the natives *soldado*—a soldier—so called both from its size and the stately attitude it assumes, which, at a distance, gives it the appearance of a sentry on duty.

A flock of these tall, white birds, seen feeding in an everglade in Cuba was, during the second voyage of Columbus, taken for a party of men clad in white tunics, and led the Admiral to believe that they were inhabitants of Mangon, a province just south of Cathay. Indeed, so striking is their resemblance to men posted as sentinels that, according to Humboldt, "the inhabitants of Angostura, soon after the foundation of their city, were one day alarmed by the sudden appearance of *soldados* and *garzas*, on a mountain towards the south. They believed they were menaced with an attack of *Indios monteros*, wild Indians, called mountaineers; and the people were not perfectly tranquilized till they saw the birds soaring in the air and continuing their migration towards the mouths of the Orinoco."[2]

Our first stopping place was Barrancas, a small and squalid village of mud, palm-thatched huts. It is situated in the centre of one of the finest grazing regions of Venezuela and under a wise and progressive government, would soon become a place of considerable importance.

In the time of the Franciscan Missions here, suppressed nearly a century ago, the herds that roamed the beautiful undulating prairies on both sides of the Orinoco counted no fewer than one hundred and fifty thousand cattle, and with the markets that could easily be had for beef and hides, this number could, under favorable conditions, be greatly increased. As it is, however, it is known rather as a favorite rendezvous for that numerous class of revolutionists for whom the country is so noted, that have been born insolvent, but who, by grandiloquent *pronunciamientos*, and through the coöperation of hungry spoil-seekers like themselves, hope one day to improve their financial condition.

Near Barrancas we were shown the spot where General Antonio Paredes and his confiding followers were shot in cold blood, a few days before our arrival, in pursuance of an order, we were told, that President Castro had issued from his sick bed in Macuto. This speedy, albeit unconstitutional, disposition of the leaders of what was heralded as a great popular reform movement was designed to put a quietus on other revolutionists who were making or preparing to make *pronunciamientos* in various parts of the republic. It did not, however, seem to have the desired effect, as during our sojourn in the country two other revolutions cropped out when least expected. For a while one of these gave the government very grave concern but was finally suppressed; not, however, until the country had suffered by anticipation many of the miseries of internecine strife.

Before our departure from Caracas, we tried in vain to get some information not only about the dates of sailing of the Orinoco steamers but also about their character. After leaving the capital, some of our friends tried to dissuade us from our projected trip to Ciudad Bolivar, assuring us that the only craft plying up and down the river were filthy cattle boats unfit for a white man to enter. Imagine our surprise, then, when we found that our vessel, far from being the unclean, poorly-provisioned boat that had been pictured to us, was in every way fairly comfortable, and with a cuisine and service that were far from bad. In construction and general arrangement, it was not unlike the smaller double-decked steamers on the Hudson river or on our northern lakes. Our cabins were spacious, with broad berths, and clean bedding and furniture. Indeed, we have often had cabins in our large transatlantic steamers in which there was less of comfort and convenience than were afforded by our cabin in this unpretending boat on the Orinoco.

As to the passengers, they were quite a cosmopolitan crowd. Among them were some Europeans and several Americans, but the greater number were Venezuelans—most of them bound for Ciudad Bolivar. Of the Americans there were two men in quest of fortune in the celebrated Yuruari mining district in southern Guiana.

The upper deck of the boat was reserved for the first-class passengers, while the lower one was occupied by those of the second-class, and by such freight as was carried up and down the river. On returning to the Port-of-Spain, the steamer usually carried about two hundred head of cattle for the Trinidad market. When these were taken on board at night, as sometimes happened, sleep was impossible. What with the tramping and bellowing of the affrighted brutes below us and the shouting of the cattlemen and crew, there was a veritable pandemonium which continued

the greater part of the night.

Frequently there are not enough cabins for the passengers. But this makes very little difference to the Venezuelan. He simply swings his *chinchorro*—hammock—between two stanchions of the vessel and is soon calmly reposing in slumberland. Indeed, many of the inhabitants of the tropics prefer a hammock to a bed, and do not apply for a stateroom when traveling on the rivers of equatorial America.

The second-class passengers sleep in their hammocks if they happen to have them; if not, they lie down anywhere they can find room and are soon fast asleep. Many of them have no beds at home, except a mat, a rawhide, or the lap of Mother Earth, and the absence of a bed or hammock is no appreciable privation to them.

There is no more curious sight than is presented at night on a crowded river steamer in the tropics. One sees scores of hammocks swung in every conceivable place. All davits and stanchions, all uprights and crosspieces are provided with hooks and rings, so that hammocks, when necessary, may be attached to them. In saloons and passageways, on forward-deck and after-deck, wherever there is any available space, there is stretched on the floor, or snugly ensconced in his chinchorro, some quietly sleeping or loudly snoring specimen of humanity. Sometimes one will see several persons stowed away in a single hammock. It is not an unusual thing to see two persons in the same chinchorro, and one may now and then see a mother and three children serenely reposing in one of these aerial cots. How they do it, it is difficult to say, but the fact is that they do it, and there is apparently not a budge in the hammock's occupants until they are awakened in the morning by the call of the birds—Nature's alarm clocks in the tropics.

A place of more than passing interest between Barrancas and Ciudad Bolivar is Los Castillos, formerly Guayana la Vieja, founded by Antonio de Berrio in 1591. It was here, in 1618, that young Walter Raleigh, the son of the Admiral, lost his life in an encounter with the Spaniards who had possession of this stronghold. It was near here, also, that Bolivar, at a critical hour during the War of Independence, saved his life by hiding in a swamp near the village.

About ten leagues further up the river, at the mouth of the Caroni, and opposite the island of Fajardo, Diego de Ordaz —the officer under Cortes who got sulphur out of the crater of Popocatepetl—found in 1531 a settlement called Carao during his exploration of the Orinoco. This was afterwards named Santo Tomé de Guayana, and was for a short time a missionary centre—the first on the Orinoco. It was, however, destroyed in 1579 by the Dutch under Jansen. There is little now at this point to interest the traveler except the beautiful *Salto*—cataract—of the Caroni river, so celebrated for its picturesque scenery, and the wealth of orchideous plants with which the adjacent trees are clothed. Raleigh in describing these falls says that so great was the mass of vapor due to the fury and rebound of the waters that "we tooke it at the first for a smoke that had risen ouer some great towne," and Padre Caulin, in his description of it, says the roar of the cataract is so great that it can be heard at a distance of several leagues. Both these accounts are quite exaggerated. The falls are very beautiful and romantic, but by no means so grand or so imposing as they have been depicted.

Near the confluence of the Caroni and the Orinoco is the straggling little town of San Felix. At this point our mining party left us for their long journey of one hundred and fifty miles on mule-back to Callao. They gave us a cordial invitation to accompany them, but we had other plans, and,

although we should have enjoyed exploring this famous mining district of southern Guiana, we felt constrained to continue our course westwards.

For a number of years the Yuruari mining district promised to equal, if not surpass, the most famous gold fields of Nevada and California. One of the mines, the Callao, rivaled the great Comstock mines of Virginia City, and for "a considerable period," we are assured, "original shares of 1,000 pesos produced dividends of 72,000 pesos yearly." In 1895, however, the main lode was lost, and since that time, owing to lack of funds, little has been done in any of the mines in the district. The owners of the Callao mine still hope to find the lost lode, and it was to investigate the condition of this mine, and of certain others in the neighborhood, that our American friends undertook their long trip southwards. If the outlook justifies it, they purpose improving the present wretched cart-road, which connects the mines with San Felix, and putting on suitable traction engines for the transportation of freight, which has hitherto been carried on the backs of burros and in carts of the most primitive type.

During the halcyon days of the Callao mine, when all eyes were directed towards this quarter of the world, a certain syndicate tried to secure from the government a concession for building a railroad from the Orinoco to the Yuruari gold fields. The then president of Venezuela was quite willing to grant the concession, but insisted, it is said, on having by anticipation a much larger share of the prospective profits of the road than the company was willing to give. Had the railway been constructed, there is no doubt that many other valuable mines would have been developed, and that southeastern Guiana would soon have become one of the most productive regions of the republic. The road would have benefited not only the mining interests but would have led to a rapid development of the

grazing and agricultural industries, which, in this part of Venezuela, could, under favorable conditions, be second only to those of the llanos of the Apure, and of the fertile plains of the states of Bermudez and Bolivar.

Aside from the interest that attaches to this part of South America, on account of its many scenic attractions and its varied natural resources of forest and field and mine, it will always possess an added interest by reason of its connection with Raleigh's ill-fated search for El Dorado. When his purse became depleted, and he had fallen from the favor of Queen Elizabeth—who for a while was so "much taken with his elocution" that she "took him for a kind of oracle"—he bethought him of retrieving fortune and favor by the discovery and conquest of a second Incaic empire, and, with this end in view, he projected his famous voyage to

"Yet unspoil'd
Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons
Call El Dorado."

It is beside my purpose to comment on the "cruell and blood-thirsty Amazones," and the race of people who "haue their eyes in their shoulders, and their mouths in the middle of their breasts,"[3] about whom Raleigh writes in his remarkable book, so often quoted, *The Discoverie of Gviana*, and which caused Hume to brand the work as being a tissue of "the grossest and most palpable lies." We are here interested only in what he says about the finding of gold in the region bordering the Caroni and in his fantastic tales regarding El Dorado.[4]

Whether Raleigh himself really believed in the existence of El Dorado, such as he has described it, or whether he wished to work on the imaginations of his countrymen, who were as credulous and as great lovers of the

marvelous as were their contemporaries on the continent of Europe, cannot be affirmed with certainty. It is probable that he possessed a full share of the credulity of his age, and that, if he embellished his accounts of what he saw or exaggerated the reports which he received from the aborigines, he really gave credence to the leading features of the extraordinary stories that were then current regarding the fabulous riches of the great city of Manoa.[4]

And he was most likely in earnest when he declared that "whatsoeuer Prince shall possess it"—Guiana—"that Prince shal be Lorde of more gold, and of a more beautifull Empire, and of more Cities and people, then eyther the King of Spayne, or the great Turke," and was probably honest in the belief that he who should "conquerere the same," would "performe more than euer was done in Mexico by Cortez, or in Peru by Pacaro."

The New World was, for the people of the Old, still a land of mystery and enchantment, and the great majority of the adventurers in the newly discovered lands were quite ready to credit the wildest tales, and follow the most elusive phantoms, provided they gave indications, however slight, of the possibility of satisfying that *auri sacra fames* which consumed the poor and rich alike.

The remarkable thing about Raleigh is that he actually found gold and gold-bearing quartz in the land watered by the Caroni, and located the capital of El Dorado near where the great Callao mine was discovered nearly three centuries later. And not only did he discover gold-bearing quartz, but he found a variety of gold quartz essentially the same as that which occurs in the Yuruari districts. It is interesting to speculate what effect the actual discovery by him of the Callao mine would have had on his subsequent career and on England's schemes of expansion in the Western Hemisphere. One thing is certain. He would have

recouped his lost fortunes, and his head, in all probability, would never have fallen on the block in Old Palace Yard.[5]

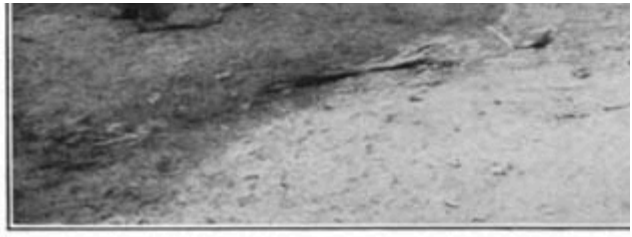
The following is Raleigh's résumé of the riches and marvels of Guiana and the Orinoco valley, and at the same time a sample of the stories then current regarding the land of El Dorado—stories which those to whom the writer appealed, found little difficulty in accepting as unquestioned expressions of unvarnished truth:

"For the rest, which my selfe haue seene I will promise these things that follow and knowe to be true. Those that are desirous to discouer and to see many nations, may be satisfied within this riuer, which bringeth forth so many armes and branches leading to seuerall countries, and prouinces, aboue 2000 miles east and west, and 800 miles south and north: and of these, the most eyther rich in Gold, or in other merchandizes. The common soldier shal here fight for gold, and pay himselfe, in steede of pence, with plates of halfe a foote brode, wheras he breaketh his bones in other warres for prouant and penury. Those commanders and Chieftaines, that shoote at honour, and abundance, shal find there more rich and bewtifull cities, more temples adorned with golden Images, more sepulchers filled with treasure, than either *Cortez* found in *Mexico*, or *Pazarro* in Peru, and the shining glorie of this conquest will eclipse all those so farre extended beames of the Spanish nation. There is no countrey which yeeldeth more pleasure to the inhabitants, either for these common delights of hunting, hawking, fishing, fowling, and the rest, then *Guiana* doth. It hath so many plaines, cleare riuers, abundance of Phesants, Partridges, Quailes, Rayles, Cranes, Herons, and all other fowls: Deare of all sortes, Porkes, Hares, Lyons, Tygers, Leopards, and diuers other sortes of beastes, eyther for chace, or foode."[6]

Although we were intensely interested in the fauna and

flora of the Orinoco, and never tired of the magnificent prospects, which, like an ever-changing panorama, were constantly presented to our view, we found time to observe the native population, especially the Indians, who are seen in considerable numbers along the entire course of the river. In the Delta and in its immediate neighborhood, they are represented chiefly by the Waraus, Aruacs, and Caribs.





An Indian Home on the Orinoco.

The Waraus have a slightly darker complexion than either the Aruacs or Caribs. Owing to their lack of personal cleanliness, and the amount of oil with which they besmear their bodies, their hue becomes so dark, that, were it not for their straight hair, it would at times be difficult to distinguish them from negroes. In consequence of their careless habits regarding their persons and places of abode, and the way in which they neglect their children, they are despised by the neighboring tribes. Their rude huts, often no more than a little palm thatch supported by a few uprights, afford them but little protection from sun and rain. With these, however, they seem to be quite satisfied.

The Aruacs found here belong to that great group of Indians that, at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards in the New World, inhabited all the large islands of the Antilles. According to ethnologists, their original home was probably on the eastern slopes of the Bolivian Cordilleras. Thence they migrated towards the north and east and constituted for a time one of the most powerful races in the Western Hemisphere.

They are also one of the oldest of the great South American tribes. They were the first Indians with whom the Spaniards came in contact and are to-day, as they were in the time of Columbus, a friendly, good-natured, peace-loving people, in spite of all the harsh treatment their forefathers received from their cruel conquerors. They are fairer than either the Waraus or the Caribs, and their women are reputed the most beautiful of all the native Guianians.[7] Their hair is occasionally so long that it

reaches the ground, and, although they sometimes do it up and in the most tasteful manner, they usually allow it to fall over their shoulders. They anoint it daily with Carapa nut oil, and seem to realize as fully as do their white sisters in the north, that “a woman’s glory is in her hair.”[8]

The Caribs here referred to belong to that dread race of whom Columbus heard such blood-curdling stories from the peaceful inhabitants of Cuba and Española. They are, too, among the youngest of the great migratory races of South America, and their original abode seems to have been in the upper basins of the Xingu and Tapajos, two of the great affluents of the Amazon.

Descending these rivers, they took possession of the greater part of the continent bordering the Atlantic from the mouth of the Amazon to the Caribbean sea, which is named from them. Subsequently, in large fleets of canoes, in making which they excelled, they pushed their way up the Orinoco and its principal tributaries, spreading death and destruction wherever they went. And not satisfied with their conquests on land, they eventually extended their dominion over the islands of the Lesser Antilles as far as St. Thomas. Had it not been for the timely arrival of the Spaniards, there is no doubt that they would have driven the peaceful Waraus out of the Greater Antilles, as they had forced them from their other homes in the islands to the southeast and on the mainland of South America.

They were the terror of all the tribes with whom they came in contact. They enslaved the women, and celebrated their victories by devouring the men. They were the cannibals who so strenuously opposed the Spaniards on many a bloody field, and who, it is alleged, celebrated their victory over the white invader by serving up, at their savage banquets, the captives taken in ambush or in battle. Indeed, the word cannibal is but a corruption of the word Carib.[9]

For many generations they preyed on the peaceful Indians of the missions of the Orinoco basin and elsewhere, and time and again the zealous missionary saw the work of years undone in a few moments by the sudden onslaught of these dread and ruthless visitants.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of the Spanish Franciscans, the Caribs who inhabit the eastern part of Venezuela were eventually civilized and Christianized, and converted from wild nomads into peaceful and useful citizens, having their own towns and villages. They were chiefly engaged in the breeding of cattle and in agriculture.

A century ago there were in the territory bounded by the Caroni, the Cuyuni and the Orinoco no fewer than thirty-eight missions, with sixteen thousand civilized Indians. But by decrees promulgated by the Republic of Colombia in the years 1819 and 1821 these missions were suppressed and to-day one sees scarcely a vestige of their former existence. The Indians are not only much less numerous than formerly, but most of them have returned to the mode of life they led before the advent of the missionary.

They are, as a rule, peaceful and harmless, but as they have been so long neglected by the government, their social status is but little above that of their savage ancestors. More is the pity. The suppression of the missions here was followed by the same consequences as resulted from the suppression of the missions in Paraguay and elsewhere—the relapse of the Indians into savagery and the loss to the state of thousands of useful and worthy citizens. It is difficult to see the wisdom of thus eliminating from the body politic elements so prolific of good and so essential to the public weal.

Père Labat, referring to the language of the Caribs, writes as follows:—"The Caribs have three kinds of language.

The first, the most ordinary, and that which every one speaks, is the one affected by the men.

“The second is so proper to the women, that, although the men understand it, they would consider themselves dishonored if they spoke it, or if they answered their women in case they had the temerity to address them in this language. They—the women—know the language of their husbands, and must make use of it when they speak to them, but they never use it when they talk among themselves, nor do they employ any language but the one peculiar to themselves, which is entirely different from that of the men.

“There is a third language, which is known only by the men who have been in war, and particularly by the old men. It is rather a jargon than a language. They use it in important assemblies of which they desire to keep the resolutions secret. The women and young men are ignorant of it.”[10]

This statement was for a long time discredited, and classed among those fables regarding the New World that were unworthy of the attention of serious men. Later on it was discovered that the *victoriosa loquacitas* of the charming monk was based on fact. But the next thing was to explain the fact. On investigation it was found that something similar exists among other Indian tribes of South America, as, for instance, among the Guaranis, the Chiquitos, the Omaguas and the Quichuas.

In explanation of this strange phenomenon, it was then suggested “that women, from their separate way of life, frame particular terms which men do not adopt.” Cicero observes that old forms of language are best preserved by women, because, by their position in society, they are less exposed to those vicissitudes of life, changes of place and

occupation, which tend to corrupt the primitive purity of language among men.[11]

This suggestion, ingenious though it be, was far from satisfactory to philologists and ethnologists. The quest, therefore, for a solution of the strange problem, was continued with renewed interest, and with the result that the mystery was at length completely solved. As has been stated, it was the custom of the Caribs in their wars with other Indian tribes to massacre the men and reduce the women to servitude. In some instances many of the women and not infrequently the majority of them became the wives of their conquerors. But even after this enforced alliance, the women retained their own language. The consequence was that, in families thus constituted, there were two languages spoken—that of the conqueror and that of the conquered.

While, however, the general accuracy of Père Labat's statements were thus put beyond further doubt, it was discovered, by a comparative study of the languages of the Caribs and those of the tribes which they had subjugated, that it was not strictly true to assert that the language of the women was entirely different from that of the men—*totalement different de celui des hommes*—as the good Dominican had affirmed. They were entirely different in the words of daily use and of most frequent occurrence, but the difference extended in reality only to the minor part of the vocabulary actually employed. But the difference was quite sufficient to justify the interest it had so long excited among men of science, and to stimulate the researches which have only in recent years been crowned with success.[12]

The night before arriving at Ciudad Bolivar, while dreamily reclining in a steamer chair, I was awakened from my musings by a vivacious senorita, of pronounced

Castilian type, rushing up to her father, near by, and exclaiming in an excited manner, “Mira, padre, mira, la Cruz del Sur!” Look, father, look—the Southern Cross! And sure enough, there, in the constellation Centauri, was the “Croce Maravigliosa,”—the marvelous cross—of the early navigators, the “Crucero” of incomparable beauty and brightness, the celestial clock of the early missionaries in the tropical lands of the New World. The cloud-veiled skies of the preceding nights had prevented us from getting a view of these “*luci sante*”—holy lights—but now we were privileged to behold them in all their heavenly splendor. At once we recalled that well-known passage of Dante, which the lovers of the great Florentine have applied to this constellation:—

“To the right hand I turned, and fixed my mind,
On the other pole attentive, where I saw
Four stars ne’er seen before save by the ken
Of our first parents. Heaven of their rays
Seemed joyous. O, thou northern site! bereft
Indeed, and widened, since of these deprived!”[13]

We never suspected it at the time, but as subsequent events proved, the señorita’s Cruz del Sur was to be our timepiece for many subsequent months. During long wanderings over mountain and plain and in many changing climes, it was the Southern Cross that served as our guide, and marked the hours of night, in lieu of Polaris and Ursa Major, which had disappeared below the horizon.

Toward noon, the second day after leaving the Port-of-Spain, we got our first view of Ciudad Bolivar, founded in 1764 by Joaquin Moreno de Mendoza, and since that time the capital of Guiana, now the great State of Bolivar. Situated upon an eminence, on the right bank of the river, it presents a very imposing appearance and seems much larger than it is in reality. The white stone walls of the

houses, and the brownish-red tiles of the roofs, together with the delicate green crowns of lofty palms that dot every part of the city, enhance in a marked degree the beauty of the picture as seen under the brilliant light of the noonday sun. The cathedral, and the government buildings around the plaza in the higher part of the town, loom up with splendid effect. Indeed, it would be difficult to find a more beautiful picture of a city, when seen at a distance, than is that of Ciudad Bolivar.

As one approaches this metropolis of the Orinoco basin, the details of the city come gradually into view. Parallel with the river bank is the principal business street—La Calle del Coco—which is at the same time the most delightful promenade in the place. Here is the custom-house, the American and other consulates, and a number of large mercantile establishments, controlled chiefly by Germans, Americans and Corsicans.

From a broad waterway, from two to three miles in width, the river here contracts to a narrow channel which, at low water, is not more than a half mile in width. According to Codazzi,[14] the mean depth of the river at this point is sixty feet. Towards the end of the rainy season, however, the water rises from forty to fifty feet above low-water mark. Sometimes it rises considerably higher. In 1891 the flood was so high that the stores and dwellings of the part of the city fronting the river were inundated to a height of several feet. Then the inhabitants were obliged to have recourse to canoes in passing from house to house. Then, too, stray alligators were seen in the streets and it was possible to catch enough fish for a meal in the *patio*—court-yard—of one's residence.

The original name of the city was Santo Tomé de la Nueva Guayana—the third place on the river to bear this name. The first, it will be remembered, was situated at the

confluence of the Caroni and the Orinoco and was destroyed by the Dutch in 1579. The second, now known as Los Castillos—formerly Guayana la Vieja—was founded by Antonio de Berrio in 1591, and is famous in the history of this part of Venezuela for its vigorous resistance to Sir Walter Raleigh, whom Spanish writers designate as the "great pirate Gualtero Reali." As the inhabitants found the first name of their city inconveniently long they called it Angostura—the Narrows—from the contraction of the river at this point. The name was so appropriate that it is a pity it could not have been retained. In 1819, however, Congress gave it the name of Ciudad Bolivar, in honor of Simon Bolivar, the Liberator of South America.

As our steamer neared the steep bank in front of the city our attention was arrested by a large, dark, granitic mass—*La Piedra del Medio*—looming up in the middle of the river. Like the celebrated Nileometer at Cairo, this rock, which may appropriately be called an Orinocometer, serves as a gauge of the annual rise of the flood. As we passed it, we could see distinctly the height to which the waters had risen the preceding year.

If ever the long-talked-of railroad from Caracas to Ciudad Bolivar shall be constructed, this rock, almost midway between the latter city and Soledad, a small town on the opposite side of the river, will serve as an invaluable pier for the bridge that is planned to span the Orinoco at this point. Until, however, the country shall have a more stable government than it has now, and until foreign capital shall have more confidence in the future of the republic than it has at present, it is quite safe to say that there will be neither bridge nor railroad, although both are very much needed to develop the vast resources of this section of Venezuela.

In its location and surroundings, Ciudad Bolivar possesses all the essential elements of a beautiful and prosperous metropolis. It controls the trade of the immense Orinoco basin, and the amount of business transacted here should, under favorable conditions, be many times what it is at present. But, at the time of our visit, everything was in a state of abandonment that was sad to behold. The streets, parks and public buildings, which could easily be made the most attractive features of the city, were in a neglected condition, and the number of vacant houses in certain sections, some crumbling into ruins, showed the inevitable effects of protracted misrule and periodic turmoil.

When I asked one of the prominent merchants of the city the reason for the deplorable state referred to, he replied: —"*No hay dinero. Hay tantas revoluciones.*" ("There is no money. There are so many revolutions.") And when I sought a reason for the business lethargy everywhere manifested, a similar reply was forthcoming. "*Somos pobres, estamos arruinados. Hay tantas guerras y el gobierno es malísimo.*"—("We are poor, ruined. There have been so many wars and the government is very bad.") Merchants, tradesmen, day-laborers, professional men—all, except government employees, who were interested in retaining their positions as long as possible, had the same pitiful story to relate.

Oppressive taxes, exorbitant prices for many of the necessaries of life, intolerable monopolies, controlled by leading government officials or their favorites, had reduced the majority of the population to a condition bordering on despair. No encouragement was given to foreign capital for the exploitation and development of the immense natural resources of the country. On the contrary, foreigners were looked upon with suspicion, while Castro and his henchmen were openly antagonistic to them. Nor was it only in Ciudad Bolivar and in other parts of the Orinoco

valley that this lamentable condition of things obtained. We found the same business depression, the same hopeless outlook in Caracas, Valencia, Puerto Cabello, and other commercial centres of the republic. Small wonder, then, was it that the discouraged, downtrodden people were longing and praying for a change in the administration.

The long desired change came at last, and in a way that no one could have foreseen. The dramatic downfall of Castro suddenly and unexpectedly opened the way to an amelioration of conditions that had become intolerable, while the accession of Gomez to power has inspired all patriotic and peace-loving Venezuelans with the hope that their long distracted country is about to enter upon a new era—an era of social progress and business prosperity—an era of amity with other nations accompanied by a spirit of comity which was so long conspicuous by its absence.

Notwithstanding the comparatively large number of vessels that come to this place, there is no wharf, and people here say that the great rise and fall of the river make it impossible to construct one. Fortunately, it is not a prime necessity, as the water, even in the dry season, is so deep that the largest vessels can approach so near the bank that both freight and passengers can be discharged by an ordinary gangplank.

Our steamer, like all the others there, was moored head and stern by cables leading to the venerable Ceiba trees that lined la Calle del Coco high above us. The inclination of the bank, where merchandise is landed, amounts in places to almost 45°, and yet no machinery of any kind is used for transferring even the heaviest kinds of freight from the vessel to the top of the acclivity. All is carried on the shoulders of men, usually mestizos and negroes.

We spent a week in and around Ciudad Bolivar, and,

during this time, we had ample opportunities to study the manners and customs of its people. The population of the city is not more than twelve or thirteen thousand—a small number for the entrepot of the immense Orinoco basin. Under less untoward conditions it would be many times as great.[15]

To this place are brought the products of the forests and plains of the upper Orinoco and its numerous tributaries. Among the most important articles of export are hides, rubber—especially the coarser variety known as balata—cacao, coffee, and tobacco from Zamora, pelts of the jaguar and other wild animals, tonka beans, copaiba and feathers.

The last item is amazing, when one considers what a slaughter of the feathered tribe it implies. We met a Frenchman here who was just packing for shipment to Paris several hundred thousand egrets, the result of a three-years' hunt in the forests and plains of the Orinoco basin. But he was not the only one engaged in this wholesale slaughter of birds. There were many others, and their work of despoiling the tropics of their most attractive ornaments extends to all the vast regions on both sides of the equator.

The small egret—*Ardea candidissima*—which supplies the most valuable plumes, and the large egret—*Ardea garzetta*—which produces a coarser feather, are the principal victims. As only a few drooping plumes from the backs of the birds are taken, one can readily see what a terrific slaughter is required to meet the demands of the markets of the world.

The worst feature about the business is that the birds are killed during the mating and breeding season. Already the result is manifest in the rapidly diminishing numbers of egrets that frequent the *garceros*—the name given to the places where they nest and rear their young.

"The beauty of a few feathers on their backs," writes one who, if not a misogynist, is evidently in sympathy with the aims and purposes of our Audubon society, "will be the cause of their extinction. The love of adornment common to most animals is the source of their troubles. The graceful plumes which they doubtless admire in each other have appealed to the vanity of the most destructive of all animals. They are doomed, because the women of civilized countries continue to have the same fondness for feathers and ornaments characteristic of savage tribes."[16]

The houses of Ciudad Bolivar, built on a hill of dark, almost bare hornblende-schist, are in marked contrast with those of the Port-of-Spain. In Trinidad's capital each residence—usually frame—is provided with numerous doors, and jalousied windows, and surrounded by gardens, with a profusion of the most beautiful tropical flowers and trees. Here, on the contrary, the houses, generally only one story high, have but one door, with all the external windows crossed by heavy iron bars, not unlike those of our jails.[17]

This, however, is not peculiar to Ciudad Bolivar, but obtains throughout Latin America, as it obtains in all the parts of Spain formerly occupied by the Moors. Yet these windows, which are in themselves so forbidding, are in the cool of the evening the most attractive parts of the house. Here bevies of bright, well-dressed señoritas, who, during the heat of the day remain secluded in their rooms or some shady corner of the *patio*, congregate to enjoy the fresh air that is wafted to them on the wings of the trade-winds, to listen to the daily gossip and to exchange confidences with those of their companions who may have called to spend the evening. Here and there one will observe some philandering caballero, dressed as faultlessly as Beau Brummel, exchanging vows with some languishing Dulcinea behind the bars. So absorbed are they in each

other that they are totally oblivious of all else in the world, and utterly unconscious of the attention they attract from the passers-by. For the time being they themselves are the world and for them everything else is nonexistent.

We were sitting one evening in the beautiful plaza of Ciudad Bolivar, listening to the music of the military band which plays here several times a week. The élite of the city were there. Beautiful, dark-eyed señoritas, adorned with their graceful mantillas, were promenading with their fathers and mothers, and gay young cavaliers were following at a discreet distance, *á la Española*. The tropical trees and flowers, which gave to the plaza the aspect of a botanical garden, were beautifully illuminated, and, without any effort of the imagination, one could easily imagine one's self in fairyland. Hard by, a young lady from Trinidad, on whose finger was a sparkling solitaire, was recounting, in a more audible tone than she imagined, the pleasures of her voyage up the Orinoco. In the glow of her enthusiasm she declared to her confidant, "I am going to come to the Orinoco during my honeymoon. Don Esteban"—evidently her fiancé—"will just have to bring me here. I cannot imagine a more delightful trip anywhere."

This young lady, who had traveled extensively, in this inadvertent publication of her secret but expresses the impression that would be reiterated, I fancy, by the majority of her sex under the same circumstances. The Orinoco is, indeed, beautiful, and a sail on its placid waters, if not "the most delightful excursion one could take," as Miss Trinidad declared, is certainly one of the most delightful.

The day before we were to return to the Port-of-Spain, while chatting with a friend on the upper deck of our steamer—which we had made our hotel, because the

lodging houses of the city were so poor—we saw a small vessel coming down stream under a full head of steam. On inquiry we found it to be a boat from Orocué, a small town in Colombia, on the river Meta. We immediately called upon the captain of the craft, and, as a result of our interview, determined to accompany him on his return trip to this distant point.

When we left Trinidad, we had no intention of going further up the river than Ciudad Bolivar, but we had enjoyed everything so much, that now that an occasion thus so unexpectedly presented itself, we rejoiced that we should have an opportunity of seeing more of the great Orinoco, and of sailing on the waters of its great tributary, the historic Meta.

Dreams of the past began at once to flit before us as possible realities in the near future. If we once got to Orocué, what was to prevent us from going further up the river—as far as its waters were navigable? Then by crossing the llanos of eastern Colombia, and the Cordilleras of the Andes we would be in far-famed Bogotá, the Athens of South America.

We had had, it is true, visions of this trip, but rather as something greatly to be desired than as even a remote possibility. And now, in a few moments—after a brief conversation with the captain of the boat that had just moored alongside our own, the journey was decided on, and nothing remained but to make the necessary preparations.

As, however, the steamer would not be ready to go to Orocué for about two weeks, we concluded to return to the Port-of-Spain and come back the following week. This would give us an opportunity of studying more in detail several interesting features of the lower Orinoco that we

had only gotten a glimpse of during the upward trip, and of seeing by daylight parts of the river that we had before passed during the night. We would also be able to spend a few more days in the beautiful island of Trinidad, and feast our eyes on its thousand beauties which greet one at every turn.

It was, indeed, providential for us that we returned to Trinidad as we did, for while there—was it chance or was it our usual good fortune?—we found, what above all else we needed in this juncture—a good, brave, enthusiastic companion for the long and arduous trip before us. Our *compagnon de voyage*, who would fondly affect the ways and dress of a dapper young caballero, and whom, therefore, we shall call C.—caballero—was a professor of languages. He had traveled extensively, was interested in the Spanish language and literature and the peoples we were about to visit. He was, like ourselves, fond of adventure, and was not averse to its being accompanied by an element of danger. This only gave additional zest to what were else rather tame and prosaic. Our plans were soon made, and, before the steamer was ready to return to Ciudad Bolivar, we were fully equipped with everything necessary for our long trip across the continent.

1

Chapter XXXI. ↑

2

Op. cit, Vol. II, pp. 255, 256. ↑

3

The Ewaipanomas, to whom Othello, in his address to the fair Desdemona, refers in the following passage:—

"... the cannibals that each other eat,
The anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders."

Captain Keymis, who served under Raleigh, tells us, as we read in Hakluyt, of people "who have eminent heads like dogs, and live all the

day-time in the sea, and they speak the Carib language." ↑

4

John Hagthorpe, a contemporary of Raleigh, writes about the matter as follows: "Sir Walter Rawley knewe very well when he attempted his Guayana businesse, who err'd in nothing so much,—if a free man may speak freely,—as in too much confidence in the relations of the countrie: For who knowes not the policy and cunning of the fat Fryers, which is to stirre up and animate the Souldiers and Laytie to the search and inquisition of new Countries, by devising tales and coments in their Cloysters where they live at ease, that when others have taken payne to bringe in the harvest, they may feed upon the best and fattest of the croppe?"—*England's Exchequer, or A Discourse of the Sea and Navigation with Some Things Thereunto Coincident Concerning Plantations*, London, 1625. ↑

5

Kingsley in *Westward Ho!* speaks of Columbus and Raleigh as "the two most gifted men, perhaps, with the exception of Humboldt, who ever set foot in tropical America." Spanish writers, it is safe to say, would strongly demur to this statement so far as Raleigh is concerned. ↑

6

Elsewhere he tells us of the thousands of "vglie serpents," which he calls *Lagartos*, the Spanish word for lizards, that he saw everywhere along the Orinoco. They were what are now known as crocodiles and caymans, the former of which, according to Schomburgk, are seldom more than six to eight feet long, while the latter are said sometimes to attain a length of twenty-five feet. We saw several of them every day but their number was far from being as great as is usually represented.

Of the armadillo, which is prized as a delicacy in Guiana, Raleigh says "it seemeth to be barred ouer with small plates like to a *Renocero* with a white horne growing in his hinder parts, as big as a great hunting horne which they vse to winde in steed of a trumpet." Op. cit., p. 74. ↑

7

According to Sr. F. Michelenena y Rojas, *Exploracion Oficial*, p. 54, the palm for physical superiority and intelligence is to be awarded to the Caribs. He says the Carib race is without doubt ... the most beautiful, the most robust and the most intelligent of all those in Venezuela. Not only this; he seems inclined to consider them the superiors of all the Indians in South America. Vespucci speaks, too, of them as "*magnae sapientiae viri*"—men of superior intelligence—as well as men of superior strength and valor. ↑

8

Raleigh gives the following graphic description of the wife of an Indian

chief whom he met during his voyage to this region:—

"In all my life I haue seldome seene a better fauored woman: She was of good stature, with blacke eies, fat of body, of an excellent countenance, hir haire almost as long as hir selfe, tied vp againe in pretie knots, and it seemed she stood not in that aw of hir husband, as the rest, for she spake and discourst, and dranke among the gentlemen and captaines, and was very pleasant, knowing hir owne comelines, and taking great pride therein. I haue seene a Lady in England so like hir, as but for the difference of colour I would haue sworne might haue beene the same." Op. cit., p. 66. ↑

2

Peter Martyr says of them:—"Edaces humanarum carnium novi helluones anthropophagi, Caribes alias Canibales appellati."

Notwithstanding all that has been said on the subject since the discovery of America, it is still a moot question with many serious investigators whether the Caribs of Tierra Firme were ever cannibals, as is so generally believed. That the Caribs of certain of the West Indian islands were addicted to anthropophagy there can, it seems, be little doubt. The concurrent testimony of the earlier writers, including Peter Martyr and Cardinal Bembo and others, have apparently placed the matter beyond controversy. It was the cruelties and anthropophagous habits of the Caribs, as reported to Spain, that provoked the law which was promulgated in 1504 in virtue of which every Indian, who could be proved to be of Carib origin, might be enslaved by the Spaniards. This law, however, although designed by its framers to eliminate a practice that was a disgrace to humanity, opened the door to evils almost as great —if not greater in some instances—as those it was expected to suppress. Selfish, soulless colonists had but to circulate the report that certain Indians, whom they coveted for slaves, were cannibals, in order to justify themselves before the law for tearing them from their homes and keeping them in servitude. Thus it happened that, shortly after the promulgation of the law aforesaid, the Caribs of the Mainland, as well as those of the West Indies, were classed as cannibals. They were accordingly hunted like wild beasts, and countless thousands of them—the same innocent, gentle, inoffensive creatures that so strongly appealed to Columbus—were sold into slavery and met with a cruel death in the mines of Española. So successful were the atrocious slave-dealers of the time in fixing the stigma of cannibal on the Indians of the Mainland that Herrera felt authorized to declare that there was in every pueblo of Venezuela a slaughter house in which human flesh could be obtained—*en cada Pueblo havia Caneceria publica de carne humana* (Dec. VIII, Lib. II, Cap. XIX).

Direct and specific as is this charge, it is quite safe to assert that it is utterly devoid of foundation in fact. The most charitable construction we can put on Herrera's statements is that he was misled by the false reports

of those whose interest it was to have it believed that the Caribs of Venezuela, as well as those of the West Indies, indulged in the horrid practice of devouring their enemies. Humboldt was among the first to raise his voice in defense of the Indians of the Mainland and to assert that it was only the Caribs of the West Indies that had "rendered the names cannibals, Caribbees and anthropophagi, synonymous." (*Personal Narrative*, Vol. II, p. 414.)

A recent Venezuelan writer, Tavera-Acosta, declares that it is "an incontrovertible fact that so far the anthropophagy of which they have been accused by their ferocious and ignorant executioners has never been proved" against the Caribs. Their sole crime was that they took arms against their ruthless invaders in defense of their homes, and relying on their numbers and conscious superiority over other tribes endeavored by all possible means to preserve their independence. (*Anales de Guayana*, p. 320, Ciudad Bolivar, 1905.)

There can be no doubt that the Indians, during the period of the conquest and subsequently, were the victims of gross misrepresentations and had in consequence to endure untold hardships and miseries. Not content with denouncing them as cannibals, their relentless persecutors—Dutch, Germans, English, French and Portuguese, as well as Spaniards—insisted on regarding them as mere animals—like a species of chimpanzee or orang-outang—that had no souls and no rights any one was bound to respect. It required the bull—*Sublimis Deus*—of Pope Paul III to define the status of the hapless Indians, to make it clear that they are not "dumb brutes created for our service," but that they "are truly men"; that "they are by no means to be deprived of their liberty or the possession of their property"; that they are not "to be in any way enslaved"; and that "should the contrary happen, it shall be null and of no effect."

What has been said of the cannibalism of the South American Indian in times past may with even greater truth be iterated of it to-day. In spite of what has been written to the contrary, even by so distinguished an explorer as Rafael Reyes—ex-president of Colombia—it may well be doubted if there is a single tribe in South America that can justly be accused of cannibalism. Some of them, owing to their miserable social condition, or because they have for generations past been the victims of the injustice and cruelty of the whites, may be ferocious and vindictive, but, that even the worst of them are cannibals, is yet to be proved. Compare *Oviedo y Baños*, op. cit., II, p. 377 et seq., and *Across the South American Continent, Exploration of the Brothers Reyes, Paper Read at the Pan-American Conference, by General Rafael Reyes, the Delegate for Colombia, Dec. 30th, 1901*, Mexico and Barcelona, 1902. ↑

10

Nouveau Voyage aux Isles de l'Amérique, Vol. VI, pp. 127, 128, Paris, 1743. ↑

11

"Facilius enim mulieres incorruptam antiquitatem conservant, quod multorum sermonis expertes ea tenent semper, quæ prima didicerunt."—*De Orat.*, Lib. III, Cap. XII, 45. ↑

12

See, among other works on the subject, *Du Parler des Hommes et du Parler des Femmes dans la Langue Caraïbe*, par Lucien Adam, Paris, 1879, in which the author makes the following statement:—

"Le double langage se réduit, au point de vue de la lexicologie, à cette singularité que, pour exprimer environ 400 idées sur 2,000 à 3,000, les hommes invariablement, et les femmes seulment entre elles, se servaient de mots différents."

See also *Introduction à la grammaire Caraïbe*, du P. R. Breton, and the *Dictionaire Caraïbe*, of the same author. ↑

13

The Purgatorio, Canto I, vv. 22–27.

The poet is not to be taken too literally in this last verse. In consequence of the precession of the equinoxes, the constellations are ever changing their position with reference to any given point on the earth's surface. There was a time, in the distant past, when the Southern Cross was visible in the very land in which Dante penned his immortal poem. "At the time of Claudius Ptolemæus," says Humboldt, "the beautiful star at the base of the Southern Cross had still an altitude of 6° 10′ at its meridian passage at Alexandria, while at the present day it culminates there several degrees below the horizon.

"In the fourth century, the Christian anchorites in the Thebaid desert might have seen the Cross at an altitude of ten degrees." And again, "The Southern Cross began to become invisible in 52° 30′ north latitude 2900 years before our era, since, according to Galle, this constellation might previously have reached an altitude of more than 10°. When it disappeared from the horizon of the countries on the Baltic, the great pyramid of Cheops had already been erected more than five hundred years. The pastoral tribe of the Hyksos made their incursion seven hundred years earlier. The past seems to be visibly nearer to us when we connect its measurement with great and memorable events."—*Cosmos*, Vol. II, pp. 288–291, New York, 1850.

For an interesting discussion of Dante's "quattro stelle," four stars, with references, see *Vernon's Readings on the Purgatorio*, Vol. I, pp. 10, 11, third edition. Compare also Ramusio, *Delle Navigazioni e Viaggi*, Vol. I, pp. 127 and 193, Venetia, 1550, and Oviedo, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias*. Lib. II, Cap. 11, pp. 45 and 46, Madrid, 1851. ↑

14

Geografia Statistica de Venezuela, p. 461, Firenze, 1864. ↑

15

It was here that the well-known brand of Angostura bitters was first prepared by Dr. Siegert. The women of the city, however, maintain that its discovery was due to a *Venezolana*, who was the wife of the German doctor. Owing to the exactions of the Venezuelan government, the manufacture of this widely used infusion was long ago transferred to the Port-of-Spain, where it now constitutes one of the city's chief industries. ↑

16

A Naturalist in the Guianas, p. 65, by Eugene André, New York, 1904. ↑

17

In the quasi-suburb, known as morichales, from the number of moriche palms found there, the homes of the well-to-do people are not unlike those we so much admired in Trinidad. Some of them are delightful arbors, surrounded by gardens filled with the rarest shrubs and blooms. Here truly, in the language of Pliny, flowers are the joy of trees, and they vie with one another in the brilliance of their colors, and in the exuberance of their growth. ↑

CHAPTER IV

IN MID-ORINOQUIA

At last we were ready to start on our long journey up the Orinoco and the Meta, and then across the llanos of Eastern Colombia, and the Cordilleras to far-off Bogotá. For several days the swarthy stevedores of Ciudad Bolivar had been busy in transferring to our little steamer the freight that had here been accumulating for her during the preceding six months.

For several days, too, our friends and acquaintances had been endeavoring to dissuade us from what one and all pronounced a rash and dangerous undertaking. All meant well, but all were prophets of ill. No one, we were assured, had ever gone to Bogotá by the route we purposed taking,[1] and we were solemnly warned time and again that we were surely risking our health if not exposing our lives. Everything, it was averred, was against the successful termination of our journey, and it would be a miracle if we ever reached Bogotá alive.

First of all, there were the steaming, miasmatic exhalations in the Orinoco and Meta valleys, from which they were never free, and the ever present danger of yellow fever and other malignant diseases. Even people who were

thoroughly acclimated incurred the greatest risk in traveling through this pestiferous, germ-laden atmosphere. How much more then should we, who had so recently come from the chilly north, be exposed, if we still persisted in our foolhardy venture? And then, if we fell sick, as we surely must, we should be in a trackless wilderness, among savages, and far away from medical aid of any kind.

Then there was the torrid climate to take into account. By reason of the intense heat, it would be impossible to travel by day. We should then perforce be obliged to travel by night. And this implied new dangers—dangers of straying from a poorly defined trail, or of falling into ravines, or quagmires, and dangers from wild animals of all kinds, with which the forests and plains were always infested. There was the jaguar, always prowling about, seeking whom he might devour; the labairi and boaquira, serpents whose envenomed fangs bring certain death to their victims, and the dread boa that was pictured as hanging in untold numbers from the branches of the trees in the forests through which we should pass.

A torrid climate, a reeky, malarial atmosphere, a region infested with venomous serpents—all this was bad enough, but this was far from being the sum total of the pests and plagues we should encounter.

There was that ever-present pest—whose name is not legion, but billion—on which travelers in South America have exhausted their supply of adjectives in the vain attempt adequately to express their sentiments. I refer to what the Spaniard has so aptly called the *plaga*—the plague—the cloud of mosquitoes of many species that constantly torment the traveler, and give him no rest night or day. We had read what various writers on the equinoctial regions had to say of the murderous onslaughts of the mosquito from the time of the early missionaries

down to our own, and such reading was far from calculated to reassure one who was about to form a more intimate acquaintance of the *plaga* in question.[2]

In a work written on the Orinoco in 1822, Mr. J. H. Robertson, referring to this matter, declares that "the biting, blistering, and intolerable itching" which is produced by clouds of mosquitoes is "indeed enough to make a man mad." He says that they made the passengers —blacks as well as others, that were on the boat with him, "almost roar with agony," and that in the morning the "whole body exhibited one mass of small blisters from millions of bites we had received during the night."[3]

In a more recent book, by another Englishman, it is stated that the Orinoco is the "paradise of mosquitoes, and the hell of travelers. There, insects of unusual size, and speckled in an ominous and snake-like manner, issued from the bush in millions and assailed every square inch of the exposed skin.... Moreover, they stung through the boots, coat and waistcoat, and drew blood wherever they penetrated."[4]

On looking over these works again, we found that the miseries referred to were endured chiefly in the delta of the Orinoco, and not so much in the river above. Yet, strange to say, our experience, so far at least, was the very contrary of all this, although we had passed through the delta three times. On none of these occasions had we ever been molested by a single mosquito or had we ever thought of using a mosquito net. As a matter of fact, nobody ever used such a protection against insects, as there was no call for it. Our natural inference was that the reports about this *plaga* of the Orinoco were much exaggerated, and we had reason to suspect that the same was true about the terrific heat against which we had so repeatedly been warned.

We had been twice in La Guaira, which Humboldt declared to be one of the hottest places on earth, and had not suffered so much from the elevated temperature there as we had frequently suffered from the sweltering heat that so often oppresses one in New York and Washington. We remembered, too, that another German writer had characterized Ciudad Bolivar, on account of the intensity of the heat prevailing there, as "the exit of hell, as La Guaira is its entrance." And yet during our sojourn of nearly two weeks in the Orinoco city, we never experienced the slightest discomfort from the temperature, nor did the thermometer ever rise within ten degrees of the temperature often registered in some of our North Atlantic coast cities during the months of July and August.

The truth was, we were beginning to grow quite sceptical about the much vaunted dangers of equatorial travel. From our experience in traveling in other lands, we had learned how prone the majority of those who do not travel are to exaggerate—unconsciously, perhaps—dangers with which they have no personal acquaintance, and how inclined certain travelers are to magnify slight discomforts and trifling occurrences into dangerous and trying adventures, especially when their imaginary deeds of prowess are performed in countries rarely visited, and, therefore, beyond the control of a truthful recorder.[5]

The little heed we gave to all the dire predictions that had been so freely volunteered and our persistence in going forward on our journey, as we had planned it, evidently led one of our friends to suspect our scepticism, and he accordingly resorted to what he honestly believed to be conclusive evidence of the futility of our purpose and the danger of our undertaking. This was an article that had recently been published in an English magazine which had just reached Ciudad Bolivar. The article was entitled, *Adventures on the Orinoco*, and contained the following

paragraph:—

"For many reasons the Orinoco is one of the most dangerous rivers in the world. Not only are there countless physical dangers in the shape of sunken rocks, wrecks and tree trunks, huge sand banks, ever-changing channels and bewildering currents, but also many living, though often hidden, perils in the form of man, beast or reptile. The higher one ascends, and the farther one penetrates beyond the Maipures rapids into the heart of the Alto Orinoco, the wilder the scene, and the more perilous the river. Sparsely populated as is the vast region above and immediately below the rapids, it is often the home of anarchy and misrule, and always a domain where the passions of men know not the restraints of law, and civilization is still a dream."

To clinch his argument, our friend assured us that the Meta region—whither we were bound—was far worse than that of the Upper Orinoco. The banks of the Meta were always infested by hordes of savage Guahibos, the terror of eastern Colombia. Hiding in the dense underbrush that skirts the river, the first indication of their presence would be a shower of well-directed, poisoned arrows against the daring intruder into their jealously guarded domains. Only a few months before, a steamer like ours had been attacked near the mouth of the Meta by several hundred Indians and outlaws, and we were exposed to a similar assault from the same quarter, unless we would listen to reason, and desist from our hazardous and reckless enterprise. "Besides," he added finally, "it is by no means certain that your boat will be permitted to reach its destination. As you know, the government is now engaged in quelling the revolution led by one Peñalosa. Only a few days ago a large steamer was dispatched to San Fernando, laden with arms and ammunition, and orders have been issued for your boat to call at Caicara and Urbana and be subject to the orders of

the army officers there awaiting instructions from the scene of war. If the steamer shall be needed by the government, as now seems more than probable, you will be left wherever the boat happens to be commandeered, and then you will have no means of returning hither except in a dugout, if you are fortunate enough to find one. To continue your course up the river in an Indian canoe, at this season of the year, at the beginning of the rainy season, is, of course, impossible."

We were not frightened by the thought of meeting the Indians. We had met them before in many places, and had never found them so dangerous as depicted. The thought, however, of being put ashore, in case the government should need our boat, and of being compelled to make our way back to Ciudad Bolivar in an Indian dugout was something that caused us to ponder, but not to hesitate. We had been in similar quandaries before, and, relying on our good luck, which has never failed us in our wanderings, we determined to take our chances. We had faith in our star, and we instinctively felt, in spite of the untoward outlook, that we should in due course arrive safe and sound at Orocué. We recalled and were encouraged by Minerva's words to Ulysses:—

θαρσαλέος γὰρ ἀνὴρ ἐν πᾶσιν ἀμείνων
ἔργοισιν τελέθει, εἰ καί ποθεν ἄλλοθεν ἔλθοι.[6]

Finally, long after the hour scheduled for our departure from Ciudad Bolivar, our boat slipped her moorings, and she was soon out in mid-river with her prow directed toward the setting sun. It was the last week in April and the rainy season had already set in—much earlier than usual. The river had been rising rapidly for several days, and we, therefore, had no reason to apprehend danger on the score of shallow water. The usual time for the opening of navigation to the Upper Meta was anticipated by more than

a month. This was a favorable omen to begin with. By starting thus in advance of the usual time we should be able to reach the river Magdalena before its high waters would begin to subside. This was of prime importance to us, as it would enable us to escape those long and embarrassing delays that are so frequently occasioned in this river during the dry season.

The word season has been frequently used in these pages, but, strictly speaking, there are in the tropics no such things as seasons as we know them in higher latitudes. In the equatorial regions it is always summer and verdure and bloom are perennial. For the sake of convenience the natives speak of two seasons, the rainy season, known as winter, and the dry season which is called summer. The winter season in the valleys of the Orinoco and the Meta begins about the first of May and lasts until October. The remaining months, constituting the winter and a part of the spring of regions farther north, is known as summer.

Sir Walter Raleigh's account of the seasons in these parts is so pertinent and so accurate in the main that I give it in his own words. "The winter and the summer," he writes, "as touching cold and heate differ not, neither do the trees euer, senciblie lose the leaues, but haue alwaies fruite either ripe or green at one time: But their winter onelie consisteth of terrible raynes, and ouerflowings of the riuers, with many great storms and gusts, thunder, and lightnings, of which we had our fill, ere we returned."[7]

Our boat was a double-deck stern-wheeler of very light draft—about two feet—and capable of carrying about fifty tons. Her chief cargo was salt, groceries and dry-goods, most of which was destined for Orocué.

Outside of the crew there were but few passengers—not more than eight or ten all told. Among the most congenial

were a Colombian from Bogotá, and a young German, who was traveling in the interest of a large commercial house in Ciudad Bolivar. The crew was a motley one. The majority of them were Venezuelan mestizos. Besides these, there were three or four West Indian negroes, and six or seven full-blooded Indians from the Upper Meta. The latter had come down the river only a few days previously and were now returning with us to their homes. They had been engaged to perform some menial services aboard, for which they received a trifling compensation. They all belonged to the ferocious tribe of Guahibos, about whom we had heard such frightful stories, but these particular members of the tribe we found to be very quiet and harmless. One of them spoke Spanish fairly well, and through him we were able to learn much about the manners and customs of his tribe. He was quite intelligent and took pleasure in telling us about the mode of life and occupations of his people. Later on, especially in Orocué, where we spent ten days, we were able to verify his statements. All his companions aboard, although below the average height, were broad-shouldered, well-formed, and possessed of extraordinary strength and endurance. Judging from the work we saw them do, we were not surprised to learn that they are considered among the best warriors among the savage tribes in this part of South America.

The first place of any special interest on the Orinoco above Ciudad Bolivar is what is known as *La Puerta del Infierno* —The Gate of Hell. It is nothing more than a contraction of the river where the current is unusually strong, and where, on account of the large rocks in the river bed, there are numerous eddies and whirlpools. From what we had been told, the passage at this point was more difficult and dangerous than shooting the rapids of the St. Lawrence, and the scenery was represented as grand beyond

description. The scenery was wild and interesting, but far from sublime or awe-inspiring. The current, it is true, was quite rapid, and our little craft made but slow progress through the surging, seething waters, but there was never any danger. For small sloops or schooners, and especially for *curiaras*, or dugouts, the passage would doubtless be difficult and somewhat perilous. It is, however, important that the pilot and helmsman should exercise considerable care so as to avoid striking the massive rocks with which the bed of the river is so thickly studded.

Considering the fertility of the soil, and the splendid grazing lands on the north bank of the Orinoco, one is surprised at the sparseness of the population. It is only at long intervals that one sees any signs of human habitations, and then they are of the most primitive character. Mapire and Las Bonitas are two straggling villages whose inhabitants are chiefly engaged in stock-raising. The latter place was also at one time the centre of the tonka bean industry, but most of this trade has been transferred to Ciudad Bolivar.

Of the people of Las Bonitas, the noted explorer Crevaux writes as follows: “Every man here has a cabin, a mandolin, a hammock, a gun, a wife and the fever. These constitute all his wants.”[8]

Near the confluence of the Apure with the Orinoco is the town of Caicara, with a population of six or seven hundred souls. It is something of a distributing centre for this section of the country. Besides stock-raising and agriculture, which receive considerable attention here, there is quite a trade carried on with the Indians of the interior, who bring into the town certain much valued articles of commerce. Among these are hammocks, made from the leaf of the moriche palm, and ropes made from the fibres of a palm called by the natives *chichique*—

attalea funifera—which are highly prized for their strength, durability, and above all, on account of their being less affected by water and moisture than ropes made from other materials. Large quantities of sarrapia or tonka beans are brought here from the neighboring forests. They are much esteemed as an ingredient of certain perfumes and for flavoring tobacco.



In the Llano



Indians of M

The town has a splendid location, and under a stable and enterprising government would be the centre of a large inland trade. Towering about a hundred and fifty feet above the town is a hill of gneissic granite, on the summit of which are the ruins of a Capuchin monastery, which has been abandoned since the War of Independence.

Our party was here augmented by a Venezuelan hide and cattle merchant. He was a sociable fellow, and reminded us

very much of a Colorado or New Mexican cowboy. He left us at Urbana, the last town of any importance, between Caicara and Orocué.

We arrived at Urbana, a town of about the same size and importance as Caicara, shortly after six o'clock in the evening, and were surprised that there was no one at the landing place to meet us. At every other place at which we had stopped, every man, woman and child was out to see us. It is only five or six times a year that a steamer calls at this place, and then only during the rainy season, when the river is high. The place was as silent as the grave, and seemed absolutely deserted. There was not even a dog bark to break the oppressive stillness, and not a single light was to be seen in house or street. On enquiry we were informed that everybody had retired for the night. The sun had just set only a few minutes before, but like the domestic fowl in the back yard, all the denizens of the town had sought rest with the approach of darkness, and, under ordinary circumstances, would not have been seen before dawn the next day. This custom impressed us at first as being very extraordinary, but we afterwards learned that it is not unusual in small interior South American towns. In fact, we soon found ourselves imitating the example of the natives. Shortly after sunset—there is scarcely any twilight in this latitude—we sought our berth or our hammock, and rarely awoke before the caroling of the birds announced the break of another day. Of course, we often had a special reason for retiring as early as we did. A lighted lamp, especially on the Orinoco and the Meta, became at once the centre of attraction for a cloud of insects of all kinds—some of which emitted a most offensive odor. But aside from this we soon became quite accustomed to early slumbers. The ever warm climate seems to predispose to sleep, and, even after a good night's rest, one would welcome an hour's siesta after luncheon.

After the steamer whistle had blown several times, and set all the dogs in town to barking, the male population was aroused and came straggling one by one to where we were moored. We were in need of a new supply of provisions, as what we had brought from Ciudad Bolivar was almost exhausted. After making the round of the town, our steward was able, but not without difficulty, to get some eggs, chickens, and a *novilla*—heifer. This would last us a few days, at the expiration of which we hoped to find a new supply further up the river.

Much, however, as we were concerned about our commissariat, our interest was just then centered in the result of a confidential interview in progress between the captain and an army officer, who was to decide whether we should be permitted to proceed on our journey, or whether our boat should be appropriated for use in the campaign against the revolutionists, who were said to be heading towards the llanos of the Apure. This contingency had, like the sword of Damocles, been hanging over us ever since we left Ciudad Bolivar. Only a few days before, we had met a steamer returning from San Fernando de Apure, whither it had been dispatched with arms and ammunition, and there were grave reasons, so we were informed, for believing that we should be obliged to disembark at Urbana. If we could only reach Orocué, we had every reasonable hope of making the remainder of our transcontinental journey without any special difficulty or danger. If, however, the steamer were now required for military service, we should be obliged to remain in Urbana for an indefinite period, and perhaps—the thought was almost maddening—be forced to abandon entirely an enterprise on which we had so set our hearts.

The suspense, which did not last more than a half-hour—although it seemed a whole day—was finally relieved by the joyful announcement that we should be permitted to

continue our journey to Orocué. No one who lives in a country like ours can realize what good news this was to all of us. In the United States, if we miss a train, we can get another a few hours later. There, on the contrary, far off in the wilderness, where the means of communication are so rare, the permission to proceed was like the commutation of a sentence for a long term of imprisonment into the granting of immediate liberty.

After this happy decision had been conveyed to us, we wished to start without a moment's delay. Hitherto, thanks to the bright moonlight with which we had been favored, we had been able to travel night and day. Now, for the first time, the sky became clouded, and we were obliged, as a precautionary measure, to remain where we were, until the clouds disappeared. To attempt to navigate the river in these parts, where the channel is ever changing, where there are so many sand bars, and so many floating trees and obstructions of all kinds, would be extremely dangerous, and might mean the wrecking of our vessel when we least expected it. Fortunately, the clouds soon passed by, and we were again on our way rejoicing, and rejoicing as only those can realize who have been placed in circumstances similar to ours at that critical juncture.

The scenery along the Orinoco between Ciudad Bolivar and Urbana is quite different from that of the delta. There we have one of Nature's hothouses on an immense scale, with a luxuriance of vegetation that is not surpassed in any part of the known world. Further up the river there is less variety and richness, and the trees are smaller and fewer in number. One soon observes, also, a marked contrast between the vegetation on the right as compared with that on the left bank. On the right bank the forest land still continues, while on the left bank, for the greater part of the distance, we have the llanos or plains—for many reasons so celebrated in Venezuelan annals. On both sides the land

is comparatively low and flat, although here and there, especially on the right bank, there are highlands, and occasionally, when the forest fringing the river permits it, one can see hills and mountains towards the south.

The part of Venezuela south of the Orinoco—known as Venezuelan Guiana—is still practically an unknown land. Humboldt, Michelena y Rojas, Schomburgk, and others, it is true, have explored portions of the upper Orinoco and some of the tributaries, but the impenetrable forest lands through which these rivers pass are still quite unknown.[9] As to the territory north of the Orinoco and the Arauca it has been quite well known since the times of the early mission period of Venezuela. Much of it, indeed, was explored by the conquistadores.

The llanos extend southward from the mountain range bordering the Caribbean to the Orinoco and its great tributary, the Meta. They have an area more than four times as great as that of the state of New York and are, in many respects, the most valuable lands of this part of tropical America. And strange as it may appear, they are the most neglected and most undeveloped. Their population and products are less than they were in the days of the early missionaries, and, from present indications, there is little probability that there shall soon be any change for the better. Everywhere are immense savannas, in which are numerous clumps of trees and groves, swamps and lagoons, all teeming with multitudinous forms of animal life. Here—especially along the Apure—bird-life is particularly conspicuous. It is here that occur the most extensive *garceros* in Venezuela, if not in South America, and it is here that the annual slaughter of the egret is greatest.

Tens of thousands of square miles of the llanos are inundated during the rainy season. Then certain parts of the

country present the appearance of immense inland seas. The rivers overflow their banks, and the floods rise almost to the tree tops of the nearly submerged forest. The landscape then is not unlike what it must have been during the Carboniferous Period—immense stretches of dense, luxuriant woodlands in a vast fresh-water sea. It is then that it seems "an unfinished country, the mountains not yet having lent enough material to the llanos to keep them out of water during the entire year."

For centuries past the llanos have been famous for their immense herds of cattle and horses. It is said that Gen. Crespo, one of the presidents of Venezuela, had no fewer than two hundred and fifty thousand cattle[10] on his *hatos*—ranches—and we were told of an old bachelor who now has a *hato* that counts a hundred thousand head of cattle, not to speak of an immense number of horses.

During the War of Independence the wild horses and cattle were in some parts "so numerous as literally to render it necessary for a party of cavalry to precede an army on the march, for the purpose of clearing the way for the infantry and guns."[11] And only a few decades ago, we were assured, the number of cattle was so great that they were slaughtered for their hides alone. During recent years, however, owing to the number of revolutions, and the little encouragement afforded by the government to stock raisers, the herds on the llanos have greatly dwindled in size and number.[12]

Under favorable conditions they could with ease greatly be multiplied, and be made to contribute materially to the world's beef supply. The unlimited pampas, with their rich, succulent grasses, ten to twelve feet high, are capable of supporting millions of cattle, and there is no reason why they should not be made available for the European and North American markets at much lower prices than the

beef that is shipped from Argentina and Australia. Specially constructed cattle boats, of light draft, could be made to ply the Orinoco, the Apure, the Arauca and the Meta at all seasons of the year. Under a settled and progressive government the grazing industry should be the chief source of revenue of the Venezuelan republic. But, as conditions now are, cattle raising is in a most deplorable state. When we asked the Llaneros—people of the plains—along the Orinoco and the Meta why they did not have larger herds on their magnificent savannas, they invariably replied: "What is the use? We get a large herd, and then there is a revolution. The army comes along and appropriates our cattle, and we never get a penny for them."

During our trip up the Orinoco we tried at a *conuco*—small farm—to purchase some chickens, but were told by the proprietor that, although he usually had large numbers for sale, he did not then have a single one left. "I heard yesterday that the revolutionists were coming this way"—he had heard of the Peñalosa outbreak—"and I at once killed all my chickens and gave my family and friends a great chicken feast. If the soldiers had come they would have taken all and would not have given me anything for them."

There are no better horsemen in the world than the Llaneros of Venezuela and Colombia. They have often been called the Cossacks of South America, and the name is not undeserved. In daring feats of horsemanship their only rivals are the cowboys of our western plains, and the intrepid Gauchos of the pampas of Argentina.

And no one has a greater love for horses than has the Llanero. Like the Arab, he would rather part with his most cherished possessions than dispose of a favorite steed. For one who has met this modern Centaur, or who is familiar

with his mode of life, the reason is evident. As the Llanero spends the greater part of his life on horseback, his faithful charger is to him, as to the Arab, not only a companion, but his dearest and most reliable friend. Hence one need not be surprised to hear him exclaim in the words of a llano bard:—

"Mi mujer y mi caballo
Se murieron a un tiempo;
Que mujer, ni que demonio,
Mi caballo es lo que siento."[13]

"All his actions and exertions," declares Páez, "must be assisted by his horse; for him the noblest effort of man is when, gliding swiftly over the boundless plains and bending over his spirited charger, he overturns an enemy or masters a wild bull."

Like the character described by Victor Hugo, "He would not fight except on horseback. He forms but one person with his horse. He lives on horseback; trades, buys and sells on horseback; eats, drinks, sleeps and dreams on horseback."

Give the Llanero a horse, and the equipment of a lance and a gun, a poncho and a hammock, and he is independent. With these he is at home wherever the setting sun may happen to find him. The hammock serves him for a bed, and the poncho for a protection against sun and rain, while with his lance and gun he can easily secure the food he may require. Having these things, he is happy, and although he may be poor in all other worldly goods, he is ever ready merrily to sing

"Con mi lanza y mi caballo
No me import a la fortuna,
Alumbre o no alumbre el sol

Brille o no brille la luna."[14]

It was the Llaneros who during the war with Spain contributed so much towards achieving the independence of both Venezuela and New Granada. Under their leader, Páez, they allowed the Spanish army no peace day or night. Armed with their long lances, they seemed to be ubiquitous and pursued their enemies with unrelenting fury. And the novelty of their methods of warfare—an anticipation of those so successfully employed by the Boers in their recent war with England—were such as quite to disconcert those who rigidly adhered to the tactics in vogue in Europe. On one occasion Páez dislodged a large detachment of Spaniards by driving wild cattle against them, and then, burning the grass by which they were surrounded, utterly destroyed all of them. How like De Wett's methods in the Transvaal![15]

On another occasion it was necessary for Bolivar's army to cross the Apure, near San Fernando, in order to engage Morillo, whose headquarters were then at Calabozo. But Bolivar had no boats, and the Apure at this point was wide and deep. Besides, the Spanish flotilla was guarding the river at the point opposite to which the patriot forces were marching. Bolivar was in despair. Turning to Páez, he said, "I would give the world to have possession of the Spanish flotilla, for without it I can never cross the river, and the troops are unable to march." "It shall be yours in an hour," replied Páez. Selecting three hundred of his Llanero lancers, all distinguished for strength and bravery, he said, pointing to the gun-boats, "We must have these *flecheras* or die. Let those follow Tio[16] who please." And at the same moment, spurring his horse, he dashed into the river and swam towards the flotilla. The guard followed him with their lances in their hands, now encouraging their horses to bear up against the current by swimming by their sides and patting their necks, and shouting to scare away

the crocodiles, of which there were hundreds in the river, till they reached the boats, when mounting their horses, they sprang from their backs on board them, headed by their leader, and to the astonishment of those who beheld them from the shore, captured every one of them. To English officers it may appear inconceivable that a body of cavalry with no other arms than their lances, and no other mode of conveyance across a rapid river than their horses, should attack and take a fleet of gun-boats amidst shoals of alligators; but strange as it may seem, it was actually accomplished, and there are many officers now in England who can testify to the truth of it.[17]

The islands between Urbana and the cataracts of Atures have long been famous for the number of turtles that annually congregate on them. During the dry season they come to these islands by hundreds of thousands, and deposit their eggs in the *playas*, or sand banks, which are here quite extensive. So great is their number, says Padre Gumilla, that "It would be as difficult to count the grains of sand on the shores of the Orinoco as to count the immense numbers of turtles that inhabit its margins and waters. Were it not for the vast consumption of turtles and their eggs, the river Orinoco, despite its great magnitude, would be unnavigable, for vessels would be impeded by the enormous multitude of the turtles."[18]

Humboldt estimated the number which, in his time, annually deposited their eggs on the banks of the middle Orinoco to be nearly a million. Owing to the abandonment of the system of collecting the eggs, that prevailed in the time of the missionaries, the number of turtles is not now so great as formerly. The amount of oil, however, that is still prepared from turtle eggs, is sufficient to constitute quite an important article of commerce. The time of the *Cosecha*—egg harvest—always brings together a large crowd of Indians of various tribes, besides a number of

pulperos—small traders—from Urbana and Ciudad Bolivar.

To our great disappointment, we arrived a few days too late for the harvest. We were able to see no more than a few belated turtles here and there and the abandoned palm-leaf huts that served to protect the Indians from the sun during their temporary residence on these sand banks which have been the favorite resorts of countless turtles from time immemorial. Our steward was fortunate enough to get a large fine turtle, weighing fully fifty pounds, and we had turtle steak and turtle soup that would delight the most confirmed epicure. Our *chef*, we may add in this connection, took pride in his work, and his skill and attention contributed not a little to the pleasure of our fortnight's voyage on the little steamer which he served so well.

A matter of ever-increasing astonishment to us was the continued great width of the Orinoco, after we had passed such immense tributaries as the Caroni, the Caura, the Apure, and the Arauca. Near Urbana, six hundred miles from its mouth, it has a breadth of more than three miles. This peculiar feature of the great river has attracted the attention of travelers from the earliest times.

Padre Gilli, a learned missionary, who spent more than eighteen years in the Orinoco region, thus writes of the great river in his informing *Saggio de Storia Americana*, "One cannot understand how the external appearance of the Orinoco remains practically uniform, except near its source, whether the waters of other rivers are or are not added to it."[19] Depons tells us that the inhabitants attribute to the waters of the Orinoco "many medical virtues, and affirm that they possess the power of dispelling wens and such like tumors."[20] As for ourselves, we made no experiments in this direction. We found the water so

muddy from the delta to the Meta, that if a tumbler full of it were set aside for a while, the bottom of the glass became covered with quite a thick layer of yellow sediment. We did not find it to possess the offensive, disgusting odor, due to dead crocodiles, turtles and manatees of which many travelers have complained, but we did take good care never to drink any of it without having it carefully filtered.

On leaving Ciudad Bolivar we had a limited supply of ice in a small refrigerator. This was a real luxury while it lasted. At first we thought it would be difficult to become accustomed to drinking the warm water of the river—it had a temperature of 82° F.—but we soon became quite used to it, and rarely, if ever, thought of the absence of ice.

We had spent nearly two months in Venezuela and were about to enter the neighboring republic of Colombia. During that period we had visited most of the chief cities of the coast and of the interior, and had come into contact with all classes of people. We had talked with them about matters religious, educational, social, economic, political, and only rarely did they manifest any disinclination to express their honest opinions about men and things. Apart from a certain class of professional revolutionists—who have everything to gain and nothing to lose from internecine strife—we found that the great majority of the population is, in spite of what has been said to the contrary, peace-loving and thoroughly sick of the turmoil of which they have so long been the helpless victims. The better element—old Venezuelan families of Spanish descent—which should be the ruling element, but which is too often kept in the background by ambitious adventurers and unscrupulous spoilsmen, have lofty ideals for their country, and long to see it become the home of peace and industry, of progress and culture.

For few, if for any of the countries of South America, has Nature done more than for Venezuela.

She has in the first place the dominating advantage of location. She is nearer to Europe and the United States than any of the other South American republics, and should, under a strong and stable government, enjoy corresponding trade advantages. From her numerous ports on the Caribbean sea, as well as from points on the Orinoco and its affluents, freight can be transferred in a few days to our ports on the Gulf and Atlantic coast, while from La Guaira to Cadiz the distance is but little greater than it is from New York to London.

And what a great commercial future there is for this at present hapless and neglected country when it shall be blessed by wise and progressive rulers! It has soil of marvelous fertility and possesses mineral deposits of all kinds and of untold value. It has tens of thousands of square miles of the best grazing land in the world, capable of supporting millions of cattle. In the lowlands all the productions of the tropics are found and their annual yield could be enormously increased. In the plateaus of the mountain chains are produced the fruits and cereals of the temperate zone—of the best quality and in surprising abundance. Then there are the rare and beautiful woods of its interminable virgin forests; sources of wealth yet untouched and all but unknown, except to the few who have explored this land of marvelous natural resources.

Such are some of Nature's gifts to Venezuela. But the extent of her bounty is as astonishing as its variety. How few are there who have an adequate conception of the extent of this country? It is a land that is scarcely known to the general reader except in connection with one of its periodic revolutions. And yet it has an area almost seven times as great as that of Great Britain and nearly ten times

as great as that of the whole of New England. In extent of territory it equals France, Germany and Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands, Ireland and Switzerland all combined.

And yet, incredible as it may appear, its total population, including Indians—savage as well as civilized—is less than that of New York City. If the population of Venezuela were as dense as that of Belgium the country would count three hundred and fifty-eight million inhabitants.

Sparse as is the population, it is rather a matter of surprise that the number of inhabitants is so great rather than that it is so small. During a period of seventy years there have been no fewer than seventy-six revolutions. During sixty of these years the country has seen two armies almost continually in the field. The poor soldiers, mere puppets of soulless adventurers, rarely knew what they were fighting for. Against their will, they were torn from their homes and families to enable ambitious leaders to get control of the government. The death-rate has been appalling—at times greater by far than the birth-rate. Some of the revolutions, it is estimated, have caused the loss of more than a hundred thousand lives. For this reason, there has been a decrease in the population during the last fifty years instead of an increase. Indeed, it may be questioned whether there are as many inhabitants in the country to-day as there were before the war with Spain, or even at the time it was first visited by Europeans.

It would be difficult to name another country, except possibly Haiti, where, in proportion to the population, war has wrought greater ravages and counted more victims. A country that should be a land of peace and plenty has for generations been an armed camp of contending factions, in which the worst elements have come to the front and in which justice and innocence and respectability have been trampled under foot. With all this were the usual

concomitants of such a condition of affairs—atrocities that the pen would fail to describe, deaths from famine and pestilence, deaths from the machete and from imprisonment in dark and foul dungeons.

Like northern Italy, after the death of Frederick II, Venezuela, in the words of Dante, has been for nearly a century

"Full
Of tyrants, and the veriest peasant lad
Becomes Marcellus in the strife of parties."[21]

And there was the consequent stagnation of business and paralysis of industry of every kind, and the destruction of property on a scale that seems incredible. Such has been the fate of Venezuela since the time of Bolivar, whom its people hail as the Liberator, as the Washington of South America.

But pitiful as has been the country's lot, unfortunate as it is to-day, the future is not without hope. Only one thing is necessary to change the present lamentable condition of affairs, and convert Venezuela into a great and happy country. That one thing is a man—a ruler of strong arm and stout heart, who is a patriot in deed as well as in name; a president who, forgetful of self, will devote himself entirely to the development of the country's resources and to the happiness of his people; a statesman, who will be intelligent enough and forceful enough to bring order out of chaos, and give to a long-suffering people those blessings of civilization which, for generations past, they have known only by name.[22]

The task is difficult, very difficult, but it is not impossible. It is only a few decades ago since Mexico was as turbulent a country and as noted for *pronunciamentos* and

revolutions as Venezuela is to-day. Lawlessness was rampant, credit was gone, commerce languished and the only railroad was a short one extending from Vera Cruz to the national capital. Within a single generation this has been all changed, and through the efforts of one man—Porfirio Diaz. Under his wise and beneficent guidance, Mexico has emerged from that state of confusion and anarchy from which she had so long suffered, and now occupies an honored position among the nations of the world. Give Venezuela a statesman and a patriot of the stamp of Garcia Moreno or of Diaz, or of our own Roosevelt, and she, too, from being a comparative waste, will be made to bloom as the rose, and, from being a byword among the peoples of the earth, will be enabled to attain to that commercial and economic eminence which is hers by nature and manifest destiny.

1

Sr. Pérez Triana, the son of a former president of Colombia, was in 1893 obliged to flee from his country, and as the seaports were watched he and his companions were forced to escape by way of the Meta and the Orinoco. He tells us in his charming book, *De Bogotá al Atlantico*, p. 3, of the dread inspired by the thought of "*lo incierto del viaje, que emprendiamos hacia regiones desconocidas, acaso nunca holladas par la planta del hombre civilizado*," "the uncertainty of the journey we were undertaking to unknown regions, probably never trod by the foot of civilized man."—*Segunda Edición*, Madrid, 1905.

Mr. Cunninghame Graham, in his introduction to this book, remarks that "The voyage in itself was memorable because, since the first conquerors went down the river with the faith that in their case, if rightly used, might have smoothed out all the mountain ranges in the world, no one, except a stray adventurer, or india-rubber trader, has followed in their footsteps," p. 13, English edition, London, 1902.

Another Colombian, Sr. Modesto Garces, had made the same journey eight years before, a record of which he has given us in his little work, *Un viaje á Venezuela, Bogotá*, 1890. But neither he nor Sir Pérez Triana saw the lower Meta, for they left this river a short distance above Orocué, and voyaged to the Orinoco by way of the Vichada.

Three years subsequently to Pérez Triana's trip the same journey, with

slight modifications, was made by a German naturalist, Dr. Otto Bürger. He has given us a record of it in his *Reisen eines Naturforschers im Tropischen America*, Leipzig, 1900.

So far as I am aware, no writer has made the journey up the river from Ciudad Bolivar to Bogotá. In a certain limited sense it was, therefore, probably true that we were the first to undertake the journey described in the following pages. ↑

2

The *plaga*, as understood by the natives, has special reference to the insects known to them as *mosquitoes*, *zancudos* and *jejenes*. What they call mosquitoes we call gnats. The zancudo is our mosquito. The jejen is a small fly whose bite is quite as painful as that of the zancudo. Sometimes the term zancudo is applied to all these pests indiscriminately.

Besides these insects, that are often the cause of much suffering to the traveler in low woodlands, there are others that are sometimes included under the general designation of the *plaga*. These are a very small red insect known as the *coloradito*, and the *nigua*, or jigger—*pulex penetrans*—which, on account of the misery they occasion, are often more dreaded than serpents or the wild beasts of the forest. They usually bury themselves under the toe nails, where they lay their eggs. If not immediately removed they cause painful and often dangerous sores. It is related of Sir Robert Schomburgk that a negress once extracted from his feet no fewer than eighty-three jiggers at one sitting.

The *coloradito*, called by the French *bête-rouge*, and in some places known as the red tick, is almost invisible to the naked eye. It is found everywhere in the equatorial lowlands, especially during the rainy season. Its bite causes an intolerable itching, and when one has been exposed to the combined attacks of many of these microscopic insects, the result is as painful as the burning produced by the poisoned tunic of Nessus. Schomburgk, in describing his personal experience, declares that “the bite of this insect drives by day the perspiration of anguish from every pore, and at night makes one’s hammock resemble the gridiron on which St. Lawrence was roasted.” Simson informs us that the intense irritation produced by the bites of the bête-rouge at times drove him almost to the verge of madness. “Notwithstanding every effort of self-control,” he writes, “to bear the itching sensation, I have many times awoke in the night to find myself sitting up in the bed, and literally tearing the skin off my legs, where most of the insects collect, with my nails.” Mosquitoes and the zancudos are bad enough, but, as a pest, the *coloradito* is far worse. Truth to tell, our greatest suffering in the tropics came from the *coloradito*, but it was in great measure due to our lack of precaution. Had we exercised more care we should have avoided many painful hours. The best way to allay the pain is to rub the part affected with rum or lemon juice.

Padre Gumilla assures us that leaving the Gulf of Paria and entering the Orinoco, or any of the tropical rivers, is tantamount to engaging in a fierce and continued warfare, day and night, with countless insects of all kinds. Of certain mosquitoes, he tells us, their sharp, uninterrupted noise is more to be dreaded than their piercing proboscis.

So trying and difficult did Raleigh consider a voyage up the Orinoco that he declared it a task "fitter for boies," than for men of mature years, although, when he visited Guiana, he was nearly three lustra younger than was the author of the present work when he made the journey herein described. ↑

3

Journal of an Expedition 1400 miles up the Orinoco and 300 up the Arauca, pp. 62 and 66, London, 1822. ↑

4

Adventures Amidst the Equatorial Forests and Rivers of South America, p. 63, by Villiers Stuart, London, 1891.

Accepting as true these and similar exaggerated statements made by travelers from the time of Gumilla to our own regarding the insect pests of tropical America, the reader will no doubt be inclined to agree with Sydney Smith that it is better for one to become reconciled to the trials of our northern climate than to expose oneself to the still greater trials in the lands bordering the equator. In a characteristic article in the *Edinburgh Review* on Waterton's *Wanderings*, the genial humorist has the following paragraph:—

"Insects are the curse of tropical climates. The bête-rouge lays the foundation of a tremendous ulcer. In a moment you are covered with ticks. Chigoes bury themselves in your flesh, and hatch a large colony of young chigoes in a few hours. They will not live together, but every chigoe sets up a separate ulcer, and has his own private portion of pus. Flies get entry into your mouth, into your eyes, into your nose; you eat flies, drink flies, and breathe flies. Lizards, cockroaches, and snakes, get into the bed; ants eat up the books; scorpions sting you on the foot. Everything bites, stings, or bruises; every second of your existence you are wounded by some piece of animal life that nobody has ever seen before, except Swammerdam and Meriam. An insect with eleven legs is swimming in your teacup, a nondescript with nine wings is struggling in the small beer, or a caterpillar with several dozen eyes in his belly is hastening over your bread and butter! All nature is alive, and seems to be gathering all her entomological hosts to eat you up, as you are standing, out of your coat, waistcoat, and breeches. Such are the tropics. All this reconciles us to our dews, fogs, vapours, and drizzle—to our apothecaries rushing about with gargles and tinctures—to our old, British, constitutional coughs, sore throats, and swelled faces." ↑

5

"In a region," says Humboldt, "where travelling is so uncommon, people seem to feel a pleasure in exaggerating to strangers the difficulties arising from the climate, the wild animals and the Indians." Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 361. ↑

6

"More bold a man is, he prevails the more,
Though man nor place he ever saw before."

—*The Odyssey*, Book VII, vv. 50, 51. ↑

7

Op. cit., p. 87. ↑

8

Voyages dans l'Amérique du Sud, p. 578, Paris, 1883.

Major Stanley Patterson, writing in the *Royal Geographical Journal*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, p. 40, 1899, of the Venezuelans living on the Orinoco, declares that "All are avaricious, thriftless, independent, faithless, untruthful, lazy, capable of hard work, quick-tempered, vindictive, changeful and full of laughter. If there are clouds these children of the sun see them not; nothing is really serious to them." Certain of his adjectives may apply to some of the inhabitants but they surely cannot truthfully be applied to all of them. We found many good people among them and retain the pleasantest recollections of their kindness and hospitality. ↑

9

As to the flora of the forests of Venezuelan Guiana one can truthfully say what Richard Schomburgk affirms of the flora of British Guiana. In his *Reisen in British Guiana*, Vol. II, p. 216, speaking of the plants in the country around Roraima, he writes as follows: "Not only the orchids, but the shrubs and low trees were unknown to me. Every shrub, herb and tree was new to me, if not as to the family, yet as to the species. I stood on the border of an unknown plant-zone, full of wondrous forms which lay as if by magic before me.... Every step revealed something new."

As an evidence of the variety of plant life in this part of the world, it suffices to state that Bonpland, the companion of Humboldt in his memorable journey to South America, discovered no fewer than six hundred species of new plants on his way to the Cassiquiare, and that, too, in spite of the fact that his investigations were necessarily confined entirely to the banks of the river along which he passed. There are still many large tracts in Venezuela and Colombia that have never been visited by the botanist. ↑

10

S. Pérez Triana, op. cit., p. 309. ↑

11

Campaigns and Cruises in Venezuela and New Granada from 1817–1830, Vol. I, p. 119, London. ↑

12

In his *Travels and Adventures in South and Central America*, Don Ramon Paez, the son of the first president of Venezuela, writes as follows of a certain cattle farm in the llanos: "Its area, would measure at least eighty square leagues, or about one hundred and fifty thousand acres of the richest land, but which under the present backward and revolutionary state of the country is comparatively valueless to the owner. The number of cattle dispersed throughout the length and breadth of this wide extent of prairie land was computed to be about a hundred thousand head, and at one time, ten thousand horses; but what with the *peste*, revolutionary exactions, and skin hunters, comparatively very few of the former and none of the latter have been left." Pp. 202, 203, New York, 1864. ↑

13

"My wife and my valued horse
Died both at the same time.
To the devil with my wife,
For my horse do I repine."

↑

14

"With my lance and horse, I care not for fortune, and it matters not whether the sun shines or the moon gives light." ↑

15

For valuable information regarding the llanos and their inhabitants, the Llaneros, the reader may consult, besides Páez, already quoted, *Aus den Llanos*, von Carl Sachs, Leipzig, 1879, and *Vom Tropischen Tieflande zum Ewigen Schnee*, von Anton Goering, Leipzig. ↑

16

Uncle, a name by which Páez was frequently addressed by the Llaneros. ↑

17

Recollections of a Service of Three Years during the War of Extermination in the Republics of Venezuela and Colombia, pp. 176, 178, London, 1728. ↑

18

El Orinoco Ilustrado, Cap. XXII. ↑

19

Op. cit., Cap. VIII. ↑

20

Tom. I, p. 2. ↑

21

Purgatorio, VI, 124–126. ↑

22

The unstable and turbulent condition from which the country has so long suffered cannot be attributed to a defective constitution or to impracticable laws. The constitution of Venezuela is modeled after that of the United States, and the laws are largely based on the best legislation of other countries. But this is not sufficient. Of this unhappy country, and especially of its rulers, one may exclaim in the words of the great Florentine poet:—

"Laws indeed there are,
But who is he observes them? None."

During our wanderings through this country, which Nature has so highly favored, we often thought that the interests of the people and of humanity would be subserved by adopting a method of government that, for a while, was deemed necessary in Florence. To quell sedition and dissension and break up the factions that had so long made law and order impossible, rulers were brought in from outside—men who had no affiliations with either the Bianchi or the Neri, Guelphs or Ghibellines, and who could, therefore, be counted upon to execute the laws with strict impartiality, regardless of family or party.

Unless those responsible for the government of the country shall soon give evidence of being able to guarantee peace and tranquillity and give the people an opportunity of developing the resources of the country—something in which the whole civilized world is becoming daily more interested—the time may come when the great powers will find it necessary, in the interests of international expediency, to appoint some one who may be counted upon to keep the peace, and foster the commercial and social development that is so greatly needed and is so essential to national progress and prosperity. ↑

CHAPTER V

EL RIO META

"Yendo de la manera que refiero
Habiendo muchos dias navegado,
Dieron en la gran boca del estero
De Meta sumamente deseado:
Alegrose cualquiera compañero,
Pensando ser concluso su cuidado,
Pues aunque de poblado no ven cosa,
La tierra se muestra mas lustrosa."

—Juan de Castellanos.[1]

"Having traveled many days in the manner above described, we finally reached the mouth of the much desired Meta. Every one rejoiced, thinking their gravest solicitudes were at an end. And although no human habitations were visible, nevertheless the land was of a bright and cheerful aspect."

Thus, in sonorous *octava rima*, does the illustrious historiographer of Tunja[2] give expression to the joy which Alonso de Herrera and his companions experienced on their arrival at what they fondly hoped was the goal of their long and daring expedition. It was now more than a year since they had left the mouth of the Orinoco. Before starting on their adventurous journey, they had to construct

flat-bottomed boats and make other preparations indispensable for a voyage so replete with danger and of such uncertain duration.

Herrera was the second of the conquistadores to reach the Meta by the Orinoco. He was drawn thither by the reports of vast amounts of gold existing in the province of the Meta. But the reports proved to be as misleading in his case as they had been in that of so many other valiant leaders of expeditions in search of another Mexico or Peru. He had scarcely reached what he was led to believe was the land of gold and precious stones when, in a fight with Indians, his life was cut short by a poisoned arrow.

Unlike Herrera, we were glad of our arrival at the Meta, not because we were in hopes of finding treasure in its neighborhood, but because we were at last sure that our boat would not be commandeered for military purposes. True, we had been told at Urbana that there was nothing to apprehend on this score, but we were not entirely satisfied with the assurances given. When, however, we had entered the Meta, we were in Colombian territory and away from Venezuelan telegraphs and dispatch boats. After this we had no further anxiety, for we had every reason to believe that we should arrive in due course at our destination—Orocué.

Although Herrera's voyage to the Meta took place as early as 1535, he was not the first Spaniard to explore this part of South America. Diego de Ordaz, a captain under Cortes in Mexico, had preceded him to this region by four years. Instead of continuing his journey up the Meta, as he had been advised by his Indian guides, who assured him that toward the west he would find an abundance of gold, he endeavored to go towards the south on the Orinoco. He found his plans thwarted by the great rapids he encountered—probably those of Atures or Maipures—and

was compelled to return without having accomplished anything more than making a general reconnoissance of the country through which he had passed.

I refer especially to the expedition of Diego de Ordaz because it was the first of those famous expeditions made on the great rivers of the New World by the conquistadores. He anticipated Orellana's marvelous voyage down the Amazon by nearly ten years.

I have also another reason—a personal one—for alluding to it. Twenty-five years before my arrival at the juncture of the Orinoco and the Meta I had made the ascent of Popocatepetl and explored the same crater from which, more than three and a half centuries before, Diego de Ordaz, to the great amazement of the Indians, had taken out sulphur for the manufacture of gunpowder. When scaling this lofty volcano, I had frequently thought of the courage and endurance of this dauntless Spaniard in accomplishing a task which was then far more difficult than it is now. According to Herrera it was then in action, and the smoke and flames rendered the ascent next to impossible. To the Indians the crater was the mouth of hell in which tyrants had to be purified before they could enter the abode of the blest.

But difficult and hazardous as was the ascent of Popocatepetl, the voyage up the Orinoco was, in the days of Ordaz, far more so. Not so to-day, when the trip can be made in a steamer with comparative ease and comfort. But it did seem strange—passing strange—that we two should have visited two such unlikely places and so widely separated from each other in time and space. It was almost like having a rendezvous with an old friend. I confess that I not only thought of Ordaz, but imagined that I felt his presence.

The great conquistador should have been permitted not only to wear a burning volcano on his armorial bearings—as was allowed him by Charles V—but he should also have been granted the privilege of having depicted on his coat of arms one of the great rapids of the Orinoco—La Puerta del Infierno—for instance, which he had so successfully passed. His achievements have been eclipsed by many of his contemporaries, but in enterprise and daring he is second to none.

As I have said, we were glad—very glad—to reach the Meta, but I personally felt a pang of regret on leaving the Orinoco. Nothing would have pleased me more than to have continued on the waters of this great river until we should have reached the wonderful Cassiquiare, which connects the Orinoco with the great Rio Negro and with the still greater Amazon. I consoled myself with the thought that possibly I might be able to make this journey later on, and then probably extend it through the Madeira, Mamoré, Pilcomayo and Parana to Buenos Ayres. This had long been a fond dream of mine. Will it ever be realized? In the language of one of my Spanish companions, *Dios verá*—God will see—for it is not impossible.

I say it is not impossible, because a part of the journey—from the Orinoco to the Amazon—has often been made and is still frequently made every year by traders, missionaries and others. And contrary to what is often asserted, it is not an undertaking of any particular difficulty or danger. The same may be said of the journey from the Amazon to the Parana.

There is reason to believe that the first to make the journey between the Amazon and the Orinoco, by way of the Cassiquiare, were Lópe de Aguirre, the traitor, and his companions, who went from Peru to the northern coast of Venezuela in 1561. The first white man to pass from the

Orinoco to the Rio Negro by the Cassiquiare was the missionary, Padre Román. He made the round trip from his mission near the mouth of the Meta to the Rio Negro in about eight months, and at a time when some of his associates—Padre Gumilla among the number—were endeavoring to prove that there was no connection between the Orinoco and the Amazon, and that, consequently, a journey from one to the other by boat was impossible.[3]

After Padre Román's time the journey between the Amazon, the Orinoco and vice versa was a very ordinary occurrence for missionaries and traders. It was made in 1756 by the Spanish commission sent to settle the boundary line between Brazil and Venezuela, by Humboldt and Bonpland, Michelena y Rojas and numerous other explorers who have left us accounts of their travels.

Since the missions have been suppressed the Indian population between Urbana and San Fernando de Atabapo has greatly diminished and, as a result, the traveler at times finds great difficulty in securing boats and rowers. In Humboldt's time the trip was comparatively easy. There were flourishing missions along the entire course of his travels—through New Andalusia and Barcelona, through the llanos of Venezuela, along the Orinoco from Angostura to Urbana and from Urbana to the Brazilian frontier on the Rio Negro.

Now all this is changed. If he could return to the scene of his famous explorations he would not be able to locate even the site of many of the missions where he was so kindly entertained and of whose hospitality he writes in terms of such unstinted praise. From Ciudad Bolivar to San Carlos on the Rio Negro—a distance of nearly a thousand miles—he would not find more than one or two at most. Even San Fernando de Atabapo, that in Humboldt's time was the capital of a province and an important missionary

centre, is to-day without a pastor. A priest from Ciudad Bolivar goes to this distant place—more than seven hundred miles away—once a year to look after the spiritual welfare of the few inhabitants that still remain there. The other missions, of which the illustrious savant gives us such interesting accounts, have long since disappeared, and the places they occupied are now covered with a dark, impenetrable forest growth. Most of these were suppressed at the time of the War of Independence, or died out during the countless revolutions that have since desolated the country.

In the kindly and hospitable *padres* in charge of these missions, Humboldt always found counselors and friends, and in some of his longest and most difficult journeys they also proved to be his best and most intelligent guides. It was through them, too, that he was able always to obtain food, boats and boatmen—three essentials that the traveler of to-day often finds it extremely difficult to procure.

Shortly before entering the Meta we passed through the Raudal de Cariben, a swift and foaming cataract, which rushes between immense masses of black granite that stand like sentinels on both sides of the river to warn the navigator against the perils of further advance.

The forms of the rocks are bizarre in the extreme. Some of them are columnar in structure and resemble the sombre pillars of a Hindoo temple. Others are more fantastic in shape and would easily pass for a Sardinian noraghe in ruins. From one point of view the rocks present the appearance of a dismantled fortress with its bastions, parapets and embrasures; its glacis, scarps and counter-scarps.

But the most singular spectacle of all is a formation on the right bank of the river that seemed, for all the world, to be

a petrified battleship—just such a man of war as might have been fashioned by the hammer of Thor and used by a race of Titans. The celebrated Garden of the Gods in Colorado does not exhibit more grotesque or diversified rock formations than does the Raudal of Cariben and it is entirely devoid of that wonderful setting given the Orinoco by the luxuriant tropical forest and a cataract that resembles in many respects the rapids above the Falls of Niagara.

One is not surprised to learn that the Indians have woven many legends about this cataract, which is almost as picturesque as are those of Atures and Maipures further up the river. And still less is one surprised to read of the accounts given by the early missionaries of the difficulties and perils attending the passage of these rapids. For small craft, especially canoes, it is necessary to keep them near the shore and punt them, or pull them along by ropes. With our stern-wheeler we never felt that there was any danger, but our progress was exceedingly slow. At times we were actually at a stand still and once or twice it looked as if we were going to be carried down stream, so great was the force of the current. But finally, after a long and determined struggle, we passed the cataract in safety. To be frank, we all experienced a feeling of relief when we saw that all the reefs and *remolinos*—whirlpools—were behind us, and that we were again once more in placid and safe water.

"*Este raudal es muy maluco*,"[4]—this cataract is very bad—said our pilot to us after the strain was over. "It is much more difficult to steer a boat through it than through *La Puerto del Infierno*, near Ciudad Bolivar." Fortunately for all concerned, he knew his business well and was as conscientious as he was skillful. He had been navigating the Orinoco and the Meta for nearly twenty years and was thoroughly familiar with every feature and peculiarity of

both of them. He had never had an accident and was justly proud of his record. He had the eye of a hawk and could judge of the relative depths of the water by differences of color that were quite imperceptible to the ordinary observer. Only once, during our entire journey, did we graze a sandbar, and that was only for a moment. But it was quite sufficient to make a young Ethiopian among our crew think that his last day had arrived, and that we were surely going to the bottom. Greatly frightened, he turned to us and remarked, "It am very unwholesome to travel in dis ribber. Dat am certain."

It was at the mouth of the Meta, according to certain alarmists whom we had met in Ciudad Bolivar, that we should be exposed to grave danger from savages. A band of murderous Guahibos, led by a certain sambo[5]—a refugee from the llanos of Venezuela—had for some time, we were assured, been stationed at this point, where they attacked every vessel that passed by, and where they had already robbed and killed a large number of people who had ventured too near the outlaw's lair. The first intimation of their presence, we were told, would be a shower of poisoned arrows from the dense underbrush where the enemy would be concealed. But this report, like so many others regarding the dangers of our journey, proved to be unfounded. There was not a Guahibo, much less a sambo leader to be seen anywhere. Everything was as quiet as on the proverbial Potomac.

Speaking of the Meta, Padre Gilli says: "Its width is greater than that of a dozen Tibers, and in the summer season, when the wind is high, the waves become very large."[6] Far from being an exaggeration, as might appear to the reader, this statement is rather an underestimate of the reality, at least as regards its breadth. In places it is fully two miles wide—almost as broad as the Orinoco near the delta. And this is not because of the shallowness of the

river. According to Humboldt, its mean depth near its mouth is thirty-six feet, and it sometimes attains to more than twice this depth.

One of the chief affluents of the Meta from the north is the river Casanare. We were much interested in this on account of its historical associations. It was down this river that Don Antonio Berrio, the son-in-law of the famous adelantado, Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada, came on his celebrated expedition from Bogotá to Trinidad. He was the first white man to undertake this long journey, and, considering the difficulties of travel at that time, through an unknown land, and often through the territory of hostile savages, his finally attaining his destination was, indeed, a wonderful achievement, comparable, in some respects, with that of Orellana down the Amazon a few decades before.

For a long time the Casanare river was the favorite route of the missionaries who went from Bogotá to evangelize the various tribes who dwelt in the valley of the Meta and in the valleys of many of its chief tributaries. Indeed, for a long time some of the most flourishing missions in New Granada were in the country through which we are now passing. But after the religious orders in charge of the missions were withdrawn or suppressed, the Indians returned to their native wilds, and gradually reverted to their original savage condition.

Much as we tried, we could not discover even a vestige of any of the former missions on the Meta. And not only have the former villages and towns disappeared, but even the Indian tribes who, at one time, were so numerous on both sides of the river, seem to have vanished also. We sailed an entire week on the Meta without seeing or hearing a single human being. In some cases the Indians have, for greater security, retired into the depths of the forest. In others, war

and disease have done their work and whole tribes, as in other parts of South America, have been exterminated. The names of the mission villages and towns along the Meta still figure on the maps, but the traveler is unable to find the slightest trace of even the sites on which they were located.

About the least favorable place in the world for cultivating literature would, one would think, be in a rude hut in an Indian village on the Meta. And yet, strange as it may seem, one of the most interesting and valuable works that have ever been written on the missions of South America, on the manners, customs, and languages of the various Indian tribes of the plains and forests of Colombia, was produced on the banks of the Meta.

Its author was the zealous and scholarly Padre Juan Rivero, who spent sixteen years as a missionary in this part of the New World. He wrote many works on doctrinal subjects in their own language for the benefit of the Indians. Besides this he gave to the world what are probably the most useful grammars in existence of several of the more important languages and dialects spoken by the various tribes among whom he labored with such marked success.

The work, however, to which I specially refer, is his *Historia de las Misiones de los Llanos de Casanare y los Rios Orinoco y Meta*.[7] It has been the basis of many other works on the same subject—Gumilla's *El Orinoco Ilustrado* for example—but, notwithstanding the numerous books that have been written since then on the Indians of the Orinoco and its tributaries, Rivero's is still *facile princeps*, and must always be consulted by one who desires accurate knowledge regarding the condition, character, rivalries and wars of the divers savage tribes to whom he preached the gospel of peace and brotherly love. Besides this, he gives us exact information concerning the

geography of the country through which he passed and affords us entertaining accounts of its fauna and flora. He supplies us, too, with rare and curious data of great scientific value to the historian and ethnologist, and gives us the benefit of his unique experience as to the best means of civilizing and Christianizing the savage hordes that in his day—1720 to 1736—wandered over the plains and through the woodlands of northern South America.

It was indeed in consequence of the recognized importance of his work, as a contribution to the solution of certain social and economical difficulties, that confronted the Colombian government some decades ago, that it was finally published in 1883, after lying in the dust in manuscript for nearly a hundred and fifty years.

For several years some of the Indians of eastern Colombia had given great trouble to the whites in the more distant settlements. Robberies and massacres and atrocities were becoming daily more frequent and the numerous savage hordes threatened to extend their incursions toward the villages and towns of the interior. The inhabitants were in consternation and called upon the government to devise immediate means for their safety and protection. The authorities were willing to do anything in their power but did not know what steps to take. They had to deal with a foe about whose character, numbers and home they were almost entirely ignorant.

It was then that someone, by a happy inspiration, suggested calling in as adviser one who knew more about the Indians than any of the officials of the government, one who had long lived among them and had won their confidence and affection, one, consequently, who would be better able to counsel in the emergency that confronted the government than any one else that could be named.

The adviser and expert was one who had been dead nearly a century and a half—the sainted missionary Padre Juan Rivero. He could not testify orally, but his great manuscript work on the Indians was in the archives of Bogotá, and it was decided to print it at once, and in this wise give the public the benefit of the great missionary's advice and utilize his knowledge of a wild and untractable race that had already become a serious menace to the peace and prosperity of the country.

When published, the book was found to be so modern in many of the views expressed, so well adapted to supply information then sorely needed, that it appeared to be written expressly to meet recent difficulties and throw light on questions that modern legislators and political economists had been discussing, but without sufficient knowledge or the necessary data. Both the data and the knowledge were furnished by Padre Rivero of happy memory.

In the preface to his work the author tells us of the difficulties under which he labored in its production. "The banks of the Meta," he writes, "have been the workshop in which this work has been forged. Here the inconvenience of the house in which I live, the concourse of Indians with their importunate demands, the visits of the heathen Chiricoas, who are the most noisy chatterers conceivable, and various other disturbances, which would require time to recount, have been the retirement which I have enjoyed, and the quiet which has been allowed me for such an undertaking."[8]

Speaking of the Indians who inhabited the llanos and the banks of such rivers as the Casanare and the Meta, he declares they were as numerous as the sands of the seashore and the stars of heaven. During more than three weeks spent in the valley of the Meta, we saw but one

small encampment of wild Indians—*Indios bravos*—about midway between Cariben and Orocué. They greeted us in a friendly manner and seemed to be a very harmless people. They were Guahibos, those merciless savages who, we were assured, would be lying in ambush awaiting our arrival, prepared to assail us with a shower of poisoned arrows, preparatory to serving us up at one of their cannibalistic feasts.

As to the monkeys, skipping from tree to tree along the Meta, and exciting the admiration of the traveler by their antics and grimaces, he avers that their number is an embarrassment to the arrows directed against them. Yet, although we were daily on the lookout for these interesting animals, as well as for others popularly supposed to exist in countless numbers along the rivers and in the forests of Venezuela and Colombia, we never got a glimpse of even a single specimen of any of the quadrumanous tribes.[9]

Padre Rivero was probably the first to give an account of that curious custom—the *Couvade*—which prevailed among the Indian tribes with whom he was acquainted. As is known, this extraordinary custom has, at one time or another, obtained in all quarters of the globe—in Asia, Africa, in Europe as well as in North and South America. Marco Polo found evidence of it during his travels in the Orient. It is, however, in South America that it is most prevalent and where the prescriptions connected with it are most scrupulously observed. And it was the early missionaries who have furnished us with the most interesting data regarding this widespread custom, and which, according to recent travelers, is still as prevalent in certain parts of South America as it was generations ago.

“It is a ridiculous thing,” says Rivero, “of which I am about to speak, but it is nevertheless a reality. It is this. When a woman gives birth to a child, it is the husband that

is to receive the care and attention given on such occasions and not the miserable woman. Scarcely is the child born, when the husband, with the behavior of one who has escaped from a grave mischance, goes to bed complaining as if he were ill. The wife then bestows on him the most tender care, as if on this the welfare of the home depended. As a reason for these superstitious practices and ridiculous ceremonies, they assert that, if during this time they should go walking, they would trample on the head of the infant; if they should chop wood, they would cleave the child's head; if they should shoot birds in the mountain, they would infallibly shoot the newly born. And so is it with other foolish things of a similar character which they firmly believe."[10]

The time during which the father must keep to his bed, or hammock, varies from a few days to several weeks. In some tribes it is longer than in others. During this season and even for months afterwards some articles of food are quite tabooed. He must then abstain from certain kinds of birds or fish, "firmly believing that this would injure the child's stomach, and that it would participate in the natural faults of the animals on which the father had fed. If, for example, the father ate turtle, the child would be deaf and have no brains, like this animal; if he ate manatee, the child would have little round eyes like this creature." Again, if he eats the flesh of a waterhaas—Capybara—a large rodent with very protruding teeth—the teeth of the child will grow like those of this animal; or if he eats the flesh of the spotted labba, the child's skin will become spotted. Among some tribes the father is forbidden to bathe, to smoke, or to use snuff, or even to scratch himself with his finger nails. In their place he must employ "for this purpose a splinter, specially provided, from the mid-rib of a cokerite palm."

Dobrizhoffer, a noted missionary in Paraguay, in his very

interesting *History of the Abipones*, is even more explicit about this superstitious practice. “No sooner,” he says, “do you hear that the wife has borne a child, than you will see the Abipone husband lying in bed, huddled up with mats and skins, lest some rude breath of air should touch him, fasting, kept in private, and for a number of days abstaining religiously from certain viands. You would swear it was he who had had the child.... They are fully persuaded that the sobriety and quiet of the father is effectual for the well-being of the new-born offspring and even necessary.... And they believe, too, that the father’s carelessness influences the new-born offspring, from a natural bond and sympathy between both. Hence if the child comes to a premature end, its death is attributed by the women to the father’s intemperance, this or that cause being assigned. Among these would be that he did not abstain from meat, that he had loaded his stomach with waterhog, that he had swum across the river when the air was chilly, that he had neglected to shave off his long eye-brows, that he had devoured underground honey, stamping on the bees with his feet, that he had ridden till he was tired and sweated. With ravings like this the crowd of women accuse the father with impunity of causing the child’s death and are accustomed to pour curses on the unoffending husband.”[11]

The whole subject of the couvade opens up many interesting questions for the ethnologist, and its careful study may be productive of much valuable information regarding the early races of mankind. For the student of linguistics and folklore, there is still among the little known tribes of Eastern Colombia a broad and rich field for research concerning the languages, customs and traditions of these people, and the works of the early missionaries are replete with the most precious data respecting them.[12]

As we quietly sailed up the broad forest-clad Meta, we could not help harking back to the distant past, when, ever and anon, along its banks were to be seen the smiling homes and villages of happy Indians under the watchful eye and protecting arm of their "father priest," and comparing it with the present desolate and deserted land that for days at a time does not exhibit the slightest trace of a human habitation.

Then, in the beautiful language of Colombia's great lyric poet, D. José Joaquin Ortíz, "One clime and one region was not sufficient for the ardor that inflamed the breasts of the holy disciples of Christ. They will go to enkindle the pure flame of love in the breast of the savage, at the same time teaching him the arts of peace in the immense solitudes which are fertilized by the Arauca, and the Meta and the Casanare and the torrential Upia. They will scale the ever-precipitous throne of the deafening storm, and will finally hear the canticle sounding in praise of the redeeming cross, in as many tongues and by as many tribes as people my native land from the West to the East."

And then, too, was to be seen one of those charming gatherings so beautifully pictured by our own Longfellow in "The Children of the Lord's Supper"—"Thus all the children of the Mission hasten, at the sound of the bell, to gather about the cross, which is raised on high, and to approach near the venerable man who with his silver locks towers above so many infantile heads. Oh, neither Plato nor Socrates, famous in the annals of knowledge, after long years of continuous vigils, ever knew what these poor, ingenuous children learnt from the tremulous lips of the old man at the foot of a tree-trunk in the forest."[13]

Much, however, as we were disposed to linger on the glories of the past, and to regret the absence of what, in days gone by, possessed such an intense human interest,

we were not insensible to the marvelous natural beauties of river and forest that defiled before our admiring gaze from morning until night.

At one time it is a colossal *Bombax ceiba*[14] that claims our attention. This tree is remarkable alike for the height it often attains and for the wonderful expanse of its branches. To support such a giant of the forest, Nature has made a special provision. It is supplied by large buttresses, from six to twelve inches thick and from ten to twenty feet above the ground, which project like rays from all sides of its lofty trunk. Were it not for these peculiar stays the tree would be uprooted by the first violent wind to which it might be exposed.

At another time it is a huge fig tree that we admire, or a tall and graceful *Candelero*, so named from its resemblance to an ornate candlestick. In both cases we observe the same peculiar, buttressed roots that are so characteristic of the ceiba and some other giants of the forest.

But more wonderful far than the ceiba is a tree called by the natives by the expressive name of *Matapalo*—Tree-Killer. It is a species of fig tree, known to naturalists as the *Ficus dendroica*. It is at first but a feeble, climbing shrub, sometimes resembling a vine, but it soon spreads itself over the tree on which it has fastened itself and eventually encloses it in a tubular mass. It is a veritable boa constrictor of the vegetable world, for it sooner or later crushes the life out of its victim.

“After the incarcerated trunk has been stifled and destroyed, the grotesque form of the parasite, tubular, corkscrew-like, or otherwise fantastically contorted, and frequently admitting the light through interstices like loopholes in a turret, continues to maintain an independent existence among the straight-stemmed trees of the forest—

the image of an eccentric genius in the midst of a group of sedate citizens."[15]

Another remarkable tree seen in the tropics is the cow tree, the *palo de vaca*, or *arbol de leche*—the milk tree of the natives. Its sap resembles milk in taste and appearance, and is extensively used as an aliment, especially by the negroes and mestizos. In referring to this strange specimen of plant life, Humboldt remarks: "Amidst the great number of curious phenomena which I have observed in the course of my travels, I confess there are few that have made so powerful an impression on me as the aspect of the cow tree.... It is not here the solemn shades of forests, the majestic course of rivers, the mountain wrapped in eternal snow, that excite our emotion. A few drops of vegetable juice recall to our minds all the powerfulness and the fecundity of nature. On the barren flank of a rock grows a tree with coriaceous and dry leaves. Its large woody roots can scarcely penetrate into the stone. For several months of the year not a single shower moistens its foliage. Its branches appear dead and dried; but when the trunk is pierced there flows from it a sweet and nourishing milk. It is at the rising of the sun that this vegetable fountain is most abundant. The negroes and natives are then seen hastening from all quarters, furnished with large bowls to receive the milk, which grows yellow and thickens at the surface. Some empty the bowls under the tree itself, others carry the juice home to their children."[16]

After leaving the Orinoco we made no attempt to travel at night. The ever-changing bed of the river, the sand banks, the large trunks of trees that were hurried along by the current, eddies and rapids and rocks and islands unnumerable, made sailing at night quite impossible. For this reason, at nightfall we sometimes moored at the river's bank, attaching our boat by a rope to the nearest tree, but, more frequently, in order to escape mosquitoes and other

insects, we dropped anchor in mid-river.

The night was always tranquil, and we were never disturbed by any of those noises—the howling of monkeys and the cries of jaguars—which, in tropical forests, are usually supposed to be so pronounced a feature. Nor were we ever troubled by mosquitoes during our entire trip of two weeks from Ciudad Bolivar. And never did we deem it necessary to take the precaution of putting up our *mosquiteros*—mosquito nets—to protect ourselves from the *plaga*—plague—which we had been assured would be a nightly visitant during our entire journey.

We had been told, too, that the intense heat of the atmosphere would be another cause of continual suffering—day and night. But we did not find it so. At no time did the thermometer rise higher than 86° F., and it frequently sank as low as 66° F., when we were glad to put on wraps of some kind. We observed that a variation of a few degrees was more appreciable than the same variation in our northern latitudes. A drop of two or three degrees below 70° F. produced a greater sensation of cold than a fall to 50° would produce in New York.

As a matter of fact, one need not remain long in the tropics before he becomes affected by very slight changes of temperature. And another fact is soon impressed on the observer, which is that the heat in the tropics is not so much greater than that in more northern latitudes, as measured by the thermometer. It is the almost uniform temperature, day and night, the whole year through, that eventually becomes so depressing and so difficult to endure.

At no time, either on the Orinoco or the Meta, did we ever see the thermometer rise within fifteen degrees of the intense heat one frequently experiences during the summer

in New York and Washington. The nights, although usually warm, were never unpleasant. A sheet was generally sufficient covering, but we sometimes found it necessary to use a blanket. Only once were we annoyed—and that for but a short time—by insects, and that was because we moored near the bank under large, overhanging trees, which seemed to be alive with certain bugs of a very noxious odor.

Once or twice during each day it was necessary to stop to take on wood, which was usually ready and piled up on the bank. Sometimes, however, the owner would demand more than the captain was willing to give, and that meant that the crew was then obliged to go into the forest and cut fuel sufficient to take us to the next wood-pile further up the river. Fortunately, we were not often obliged to cut the wood ourselves. Each time we did so meant an extra delay of three or four hours.

Besides stopping for wood, it was at times necessary to call for provisions, fruits, chickens, eggs, and a certain *queso á mano*—hand-made cheese—of which the Llaneros are very fond and which we found very palatable.

On one occasion our supply of beef became exhausted, and it was necessary to stop—about noon—at a *hato* along the river to get a heifer for our next meal. Unfortunately, the owner of the ranch was not at home. He was out among his herds several miles distant. Our steward, nothing disconcerted, started in search of him, but before he had found the proprietor of the herd, and had gotten the desired *novilla*—heifer—on board, it was dark. There was then nothing to do but tie our boat up near the house in which we had spent most of the afternoon, and wait until the following morning before continuing our journey.

At first, it would appear that such delays would prove very

annoying, but this was very far from being the case. On the contrary, it was most interesting, as it gave us an opportunity of getting acquainted with the people, and of familiarizing ourselves with their mode of life and occupations, and enjoying many interesting conversations with them about matters in which they were most concerned. We always found them very hospitable and very entertaining. They always gave us a cordial welcome to their humble home, and rarely allowed us to depart without giving us something from their simple store. Sometimes it was a brace of chickens, at other times a basket of fruit, a calabash of eggs, or generous piece of *queso á mano*—which was made by the mistress of the house herself.

Here we were among people who lived the simple life, and appeared all the happier for it. We saw no evidences of suffering anywhere. The only thing that seemed to concern them was the instability of the government. True, Colombia had been in the enjoyment of peace for several years past, but every now and then some gossip-monger would circulate reports about another uprising in some part of the country, and about the imminent danger to which the men were exposed of being drafted into the army, and of being torn away from their families, to whom they are devotedly attached.



Occasionally, while the crew was cutting wood, we were able to make a collection of orchids, of which there are along the Meta many wonderfully beautiful species. At one time our deck was a veritable bower of all kinds of orchids of the most brilliant colors and of the strangest imaginable forms. Some of them possessed a most delicate fragrance, while others emitted a delightful perfume that spread over the greater part of our deck.

Linnæus knew only about a dozen exotic orchids, and expressed it as his opinion that when the world was fully explored by botanists, it might probably yield a hundred species all told. How surprised he would be if he could now return to the world and find that the species of this curious plant are actually counted by thousands! To English horticulturists alone some thousands of species are known. Even some of the many genera of this extensive order contain hundreds of species. Of odontoglossums there are more than a hundred species catalogued. Of oncidiums more than two hundred and fifty species have been described. Of dendrobiums between three and four hundred species are known, while the genus *Habenaria* counts more than four hundred species. Then there are the countless hybrids—and their number is rapidly increasing—that, during the last few years, have been produced in the conservatories of Europe and America.

Orchids are found in all parts of the world; in the marshes and groves of the lowlands and in the lofty plateaus of mountain ranges. But it is in the warm and humid regions of the equator that they occur in the greatest variety and profusion. Twenty years ago the number of species known in Venezuela alone exceeded six hundred. In Colombia the number is probably greater. It is here, too, that some of the choicest specimens have their habitat. From this country tens of thousands of plants are shipped annually to the florists of Europe and the United States. As an illustration of the extent of this industry it suffices to state that a single firm has under cultivation no fewer than one hundred thousand Odontoglossums, for of this species alone hundreds of thousands of plants are marketed annually. Other species are scarcely less popular. To supply the ever-increasing demand for them, there is now a small army of men continually engaged in the tropical forests in the work of collecting and preparing them for shipment. We met

several of them in both Venezuela and Colombia.

In the forests along the Meta we could within a small area easily have collected more orchids than were known to Linnæus. They were everywhere—in the forks of trees, on their branches, on decaying trunks, on the lianas stretching from one tree to another, and, forming with the flowering epiphytes[17] with which they were laden, the most beautiful tapestry, beside which the most exquisite Gobelin masterpiece would pale into insignificance. In other places they grew on bare, precipitous rocks, where they were quite inaccessible, on prickly cactus plants, near beautiful cascades, or clumps of arborescent ferns. We found them flourishing near the ocean shore and near the limits of perpetual snow on the crests of the Cordilleras.

Everywhere they were attractive and worthy of study—some on account of their bizarre forms, mimicking insects and butterflies, others on account of their delicate fragrance, and others still on account of their gorgeous colors, which fairly rival those of the rainbow.

The odors of orchids are almost as diverse as their colors and forms. While most of them have an agreeable scent, there are some that have an unbearably fetid odor. Some emit a faint and delicate perfume; others possess a fragrance which, although delicious, is almost overpowering. In some the fragrance is perceptible only in the morning, in others solely in the evening. Some have a scent like that of violets, others like that of musk or noyeau, and others again like that of angelica or cinnamon. More wonderful still, “some species,” we are told, “give out different scents at different times, such as *Dendrobium nobile*, which smells like grass in the evening, like honey at noon, and has in the morning a faint odor of primroses.”[18]

It was a fortnight, almost to the hour, since we had left Ciudad Bolivar, when, one bright day, as the sun was approaching the zenith, our captain, pointing to a tongue of land in the river ahead of us, said, in a cheerful tone of voice, "*A la vueltá esta Orocué*." Orocué is beyond that point.

And so it was. In a few minutes more we had the town in full view. We had finished another stage of our journey and that, too, without an untoward incident of any kind whatsoever. The entire voyage had been made with comfort and pleasure, and we actually regretted to leave the boat on which we had spent so many delightful and happy hours. It was indeed an experience of a lifetime, one of enchanting panoramas, such as can be witnessed only along the great water courses of the equator. The flora, the fauna, the people, the lands, so rich in romance and so celebrated for the achievements of the conquistadores—those of the cross as well as those of the world—all fascinated us and enchained our interest during every moment of our wakeful hours. Yes, it was a memorable, never-to-be-forgotten experience, one of those experiences that necessarily exalt the lover of Nature and bring him near to Nature's God.

All the inhabitants in Orocué—men, women and children—were gathered on the bank to witness the arrival of our little steamer. So rarely does anything larger than a small sailboat come here that the arrival of a steamboat is regarded as an event of paramount interest and importance. Most grateful to us, for it was so unexpected, was the welcome accorded us by a number of the leading citizens of the town. They had been advised by telegraph of our coming, and had prepared most comfortable quarters for our reception and entertainment. Escorting us to our temporary home—which was not only well furnished but a model of neatness—we were told, with true Castilian

politeness, accompanied by an air of simplicity and sincerity that made us feel at home from the first moment, "*Aquí están Uds. en su casa. Estamos todos á sus órdenes.*" "Here you are in your own home and we are all at your disposition." The keys of the house were then handed us, and with them we were accorded the freedom and hospitality of generous, never-to-be forgotten Orocué.

1

Juan de Castellanos, *Varones Ilustres de Indias*, Primera Parte, Elegia, XI, Canto II. ↑

2

Castellanos was for a while a soldier and afterwards an ecclesiastic, enjoying a benefice in the town of Tunja, New Granada. Like Pope, he had an extraordinary faculty for versification, and, like him, "He spoke in numbers for the numbers came." This does not, however, detract from his authority as a historian. Having taken an active part in many of the campaigns, which he describes, and, knowing intimately many of the earlier conquerors of that vast territory now known as the Republic of Colombia, few writers were better qualified than he to record the events so graphically depicted in his *Elegias*, or to portray the characters of those conquistadores who figure so prominently among his *Varones Ilustres de Indias*. The first part of his work was published in 1589. The second and third parts were published in 1850 by Rivadeneyra in the *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*. The fourth part, discovered only a few years ago, was issued by D. Antonio Paz y Melia in 1887 under the title of *Historia del Nuevo Reino de Granada*. In his introduction to this work, Sr. Melia gives an able résumé of all that is known or conjectured regarding Castellanos. For a critical estimate of the author of *Las Elegias de Varones Ilustres*, consult Jimenez de la Espada, in his study, *Juan de Castellanos y su Historia del Nuevo Reino de Granada*, in the *Rivista Contemporanea*, Madrid, 1889. ↑

3

Padre Caulin, *Historia Coro-Grafica, Natural y Evangelica*, Lib. I, Cap. X, p. 79, 1779. ↑

4

Maluco, a word frequently used in Venezuela for *malo*, bad. ↑

5

"A sambo," writes Depons, "is the offspring of a negress with an Indian, or of a negro with an Indian woman. In color he nearly resembles the child of a mulatto by a negress. The sambo is well formed, muscular, and

capable of supporting great fatigue; but unfortunately, his mind has a strong bias to vice of every kind. The word sambo signifies, in the language of the country, everything despicable and worthless, a knave, a drone, a drunkard, a cheat, a robber, and even an assassin. Of ten crimes committed in this district, eight are chargeable on this villainous and accursed race."—*Travels in South America*, p. 127, London, 1806. ↑

6

Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 43. ↑

7

Compare Cassani, J., *Historia de la provincia de la compañia des Jesus del Nuevo Reino de Granada en la America, descripción y relación exacta de sus gloriosas missiones en el reino, llano, meta, y rio Orinoco*, etc. Con 1 mapa. Folio. Madrid, 1741. ↑

8

P. 14. How like the labors and cares of the bishops of the early Church were those of the missionaries among the children of the forest! Both were continually called upon to act as *causarum examinatores*—arbitrators—and to settle difficulties that were ever arising among the flocks entrusted to their care. St. Augustine, the great bishop of Hippo, refers frequently to "the burdensome character of this kind of work, and the distraction from higher activities which it involved"—"Quantum attinet ad meum commodum," he writes in his *De Opere Monachorum*, XXIX, 37, "multo mallem per singulos dies certis horis, quantum in bene moderatis monasteriis constitutum est, aliquid manibus operari, et ceteras horas habere ad legendum et orandum, aut aliquid de divinis litteris agendum liberas, quam tumultuosissimas perplexitates caussarum alienarum pati de negotiis secularibus vel judicando dirimendis vel interveniendo præcidendis." ↑

9

Every reader is familiar with the story that has long been in circulation regarding monkey bridges, and, in his youth, was, no doubt, entertained by pictures of such imaginary bridges. It is quite safe to say that no one ever saw such bridges in any part of South America or elsewhere. And yet the tale regarding their existence has had currency since the time of Acosta, who visited the New World in 1570. "Going from Nombre de Dios to Panamá," he writes, "I did see in Capira one of these monkies leape from one tree to an other, which was on the other side of a river, making me much to wonder. They leape where they list, winding their tailes about a braunch to shake it; and when they will leape further than they can at once, they use a pretty devise, tying themselves by the tailes one of another, and by this means make as it were a chaine of many; then doe they launch themselves foorth, and the first holpen by the force of the rest takes holde where hee list, and so hangs to a bough and helps all the

rest, till they be gotten up." *Historia Natural y Moral de las Indias*, Bk. IV, Chap. 39, Grimston's Translation, London, 1604.

The fable about the monkey bridge belongs to the same class as those that obtain in certain parts of South America regarding the "great devil," or "man of the woods," a near relative of Waterton's "Nondescript."

Kingsley, in the following passage from *Westward Ho!*, referring to some of the things seen and heard by Amyas Leigh and his companions during their voyage up the Meta, paints a picture that is doubtless before the mind's eye of most people when they think of the forest-fringed banks of this river, but which is about as far from the reality as could well be imagined. "The long processions of monkeys," he writes, "who kept pace with them along the tree tops and proclaimed their wonder in every imaginable whistle, and grunt and howl, had ceased to move their laughter, as much as the roar of the jaguar and the rustle of the boa had ceased to move their fear." Chap. XXIII. ↑

10

Op. cit., p. 347. ↑

11

Historia de Abiponibus, Vol. II, p. 231 et seq., Vienna, 1784. "Attention has recently been called to a group of peasant superstitions that have made their appearance in Germany, which are closely analogous in principle to the couvade, though relating not to the actual parents of the child but to the god-parents. It is believed that the habits and proceedings of the god-father and god-mother affect the child's life and character. Particularly, the god-father at the christening must not think of disease or madness lest this come upon the child; he must not look round on the way to the church lest the child should grow up an idle stare-about; nor must he carry a knife about him for fear of making the child a suicide; the god-mother must put on a clean shift to go to the baptism or the baby will grow up untidy," etc., etc. See E. B. Tylor's *Researches into the Early History of Mankind and the Development of Civilization*, p. 304, Boston, 1878.

For further information on *La Couvade*, the reader is referred to Brett's *Indian Tribes of Guiana*, p. 355; Max Muller's *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vol. II, p. 281; Spix and Martius's *Travels in Brazil*, Vol. II, p. 247; Du Tertre's *Histoire Générale des Antilles habitées par les Francais*, Vol. II, p. 371; Gilli's *Saggio di Storia Americana*, Vol. II, p. 133; Tschudi's *Peru*, Vol. II, p. 235; Tylor's *Researches into the Early History of Mankind and the Development of Civilization*, p. 293, et seq; and Lafitau's *Moeurs des Sauvages Americains*, Vol. I, p. 259. ↑

12

One of the peculiarities of some savages is the decided objection they manifest to having their photographs or portraits taken. They imagine that

they lose somewhat of their own life by having their likeness transferred to paper or other material. And the more perfect their likeness the greater, they fancy, is the loss which they personally sustain. Having had some experience with the Indians of North America regarding this matter, I was not surprised to find that there are in South America certain Indians who entertain similar notions regarding the danger of having their pictures taken. Some, to avoid having their photographs taken, will at once avert their faces; others will run away to escape the impending danger. Cf. *On the Origin of Civilization and the Primitive Condition of Man*, by Lord Avebury, London, 1902, and *The Indians of North America*, Letter 15, by George Catlin, Edinburgh, 1903. ↑

13

For the benefit of those who are familiar with Spanish I give this touching quotation in the original. It is quite impossible to reproduce in a translation the verse and rhythm of the sonorous Castilian of the poet.

"Así de la Mision todos los niños
Corren en torno de la cruz que arranca
Enhiesta al aire y cercan al anciano,
Que entre tantas cabezas infantiles
Descuella allí con su cabeza blanca.
Oh! ni Platon, ni Socrates, famosos
En los anales del saber, supieron
Tras largos años de velar continuo
Lo que estos pobres niños, candorosos,
De los tremulos labios del anciano,
Al pié del leño rústico aprendieron."

—From his ode *Los Colonos*. ↑

14

Known in the West Indies as the god-tree and greatly venerated by the native negroes. The ceiba is one of the few tropical trees that ever shed their foliage. The erythrina, when it exchanges its leaves for flowers, is another. ↑

15

G. Hartwig, *The Tropical World*, p. 137, London, 1892. ↑

16

Op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 47 et seq.

As early as 1640 the Dutch writer Laet refers to a milk tree which was evidently the same as the one that so impressed Humboldt. He says: "Inter arbores quae sponte hic passim nascuntur, memorantur a scriptoribus Hispanis quaedam quae lacteum quemdam liquorem fundunt, qui durus admodum evadit instar gummi, et suavem odorem de se fundit; aliae quae liquorem quemdam edunt, instar lactis coagulati, qui in cibis ab

ipsis usurpatur sine noxa."—*Descriptio Indiarum Occidentalium*, Lib. XVIII. ↑

17

In Venezuela and Colombia the word *parasita*—parasite—is usually employed to designate all orchids, no matter what may be the species or genus. This is a mistake. Orchids are not parasites which, like the dodder or mistletoe, obtain their nourishment from the plant or tree on which they grow. They are epiphytes, that get their nourishment from the surrounding atmosphere, and use the branches and trunks of trees merely as supports or resting-places. The Old World genus *Aërides* is especially remarkable in this respect. One of the species, *Aërides odoratum*, "has this wonderful property, that, when brought from the woods, where it grows, into a house, and suspended in the air, it will grow, flourish and flower for many years without any nourishment, either from the earth or from water." For this reason the orchid is appropriately called *Flos aëris*, or Air Flower. ↑

18

Orchids: Their Culture and Management, p. 20, by W. Watson and H. J. Chapman, London, 1903.

Peter Martyr must have had some of these orchids in mind when he wrote the following sentence as translated by Michael Lok:—"Smooth and pleasinge words might be spoken of the sweete odors and perfumes of these countries, which we purposely omit because they make rather for the effeminatinge of mens minds than for the maintanance of good behavior." Dec. IV, Cap. 4, p. 161.

For colored figures and descriptions of the rare and beautiful orchidaceous plants found in Venezuela and Colombia, the reader is referred to *The Orchid Album*, 12 vols., conducted by Messrs. Warner, Williams, Moore and Fitch, London. ↑

CHAPTER VI

APPROACHING THE ANDES

"Aqui la selva secular, ornada
De festones de variada enredadera
De bellos y vivísimos colores,
Y la extensa pradera
De fraganciosas flores alfombrada,
Forman el templo augusto que levanta
La creacion a Dios, á quien ofrece
Deliciosos perfumes por incienso,
Y por ofrenda el fruto delicado
Que el estival calor ha sazonado."

"Here the forest secular, decked with festoons of divers climbers, of beautiful and brilliant colors, and the broad meads carpeted with fragrant flowers, form an august temple, which creation raises to God, to whom it offers delicious perfumes for incense, and, as an oblation, brings the delicate fruit matured by the summer's sun."

In these words of the Bolivian poet, D. Manuel José Cortés, might aptly be described the extensive forests and plains of which Orocué is the centre. Everywhere is that same exuberance of vegetation and profusion of vari-colored bloom that are so characteristic of the basin of the Meta. While lost in silent admiration of the countless floral beauties that on every side met our delightful gaze, we

could but compare the scene to a ruined Eden,

"Where the first sinful pair
For consolation might have weeping trod,
When banished from the garden of their God."

In the garden adjoining our house were citrus trees laden with golden fruit, bananas of many varieties and a large mango tree, whose branches were bending under the weight of its richly tinted, luscious drupes. Near by was a noble old ceiba, while but a short distance away was a tall *Jacaranda*—of the trumpet-flower family—literally enveloped in a reddish-violet mantle of papilionaceous flowers, and filling the air round about with perfume not unlike that of the orange blossom or the jasmine. Everywhere we went some new floral display was awaiting us. All along our path we found an unending variety of laurels and myrtles; trees and shrubs and herbs of the *Rubiaciæ* family. There were splendid representatives of the genera *Cassia* and *Mimosa*, and clumps of the ever-present moriche, together with other species of palm equally attractive and majestic. Frequently these were joined by delicate festoons of liana, many of which were weighted down with orchids and epiphytes of the rarest beauty and fragrance.

Orocué is the capital of the district of that name in the National Territory of the Meta, and the seat of a prefecture. It is located on the left bank of the Meta, on an eminence about thirty feet above the surface of the river, and sufficiently high to guarantee it against inundations during the rainy season. Being less than five degrees from the equator, the climate is warm but, during our stay, it was never uncomfortable, and at no time did the thermometer ever rise above 82° F. The population is about six hundred. The place is healthful, and malignant fevers are rare. The streets are wide, and some of the houses are well-built and

comfortable. Most of them are constructed of bamboo plastered over with clay. The roof is thatched with the broad leaves of the moriche palm or preferably with those of the *palma de cobija*, also known as the *palma de sombrero*—hat palm. This is what scientists call *Copernicia tectorum*, and is preferred to any other leaf because it is not readily inflammable. Such a roof lasts ten or twelve years, and is impervious to water. During our sojourn in Orocué it rained regularly for several hours every day and, although the downpour at times was very heavy, never once did we observe a single drop of water to pass through the roof. Everything in our rooms remained as dry as if the roofs had been made of tile or slate.

Many of these bamboo-palm houses are constructed without the use of a single nail. Studs and cross beams, laths and rafters, are tied together and held firmly in place by bejucos, those wonderful natural cords and cables which are found in such profusion in every tropical forest, and which, in the hands of the natives, serves such an endless variety of purposes.

Some years ago the town possessed what the inhabitants considered a large and beautiful church. It was constructed of the same materials as the other buildings of the town and occupied a conspicuous position on the plaza. In consequence of recent revolutions and other disturbances, it had been greatly neglected, and, at the time of our visit, was rapidly falling into ruins. The people had not had a pastor for some years, but were hoping to have one soon. They, however, received every few months the ministrations of a priest from a neighboring mission, and longed for the time when they could have a resident pastor and see their church restored to its pristine condition.

There was a small school for boys, attended by about twenty young mestizos, but none for girls. There was a

movement on foot to secure the services of some nuns to teach the girls, and the mothers of the children awaited their arrival with the greatest impatience. The *monjas*—nuns—have a wonderful influence over the children, and young and old are thoroughly devoted to them.

Orocué has an *aduana*, or customhouse, and is the centre of a flourishing grazing district, in which there are numerous *hatos* and *fundaciones*,[2] containing from two to twenty thousand head of cattle. Cattle, hides and rubber, together with the coffee, which is brought from the foothills of the Andes, constitute the principal articles of export.[3]

The neighboring Indians manufacture large and beautiful hammocks from the leaves of the *Cumare* and other palms and bring them here and exchange them for anything that may strike their fancy. Although I had brought a German hammock with me, I procured one of these Indian *chinchorros*, and found it during the remainder of my journey in South America the best investment I could have made. Nothing contributed more to my comfort when I desired a siesta, and when I wished to escape the filth and insect pests to which, in my wanderings, I was so frequently exposed.

Of the many objects brought to Orocué for barter by the Indians few had greater interest for us than the weapons employed by them in the chase and in war. Among these the chief ones were their poisoned arrows and blowguns. A friend made us a present of some of them, but owing to the inconvenience of transporting them, we were unable, much to our regret, to take them with us.

For a long time the mystery connected with the virulent poison, known as curare, urari woorali, etc., with which the Indians poison their arrows, remained unsolved,

notwithstanding the efforts of men of science to determine its source and composition. Early travelers gave the most fantastic accounts of its composition and manufacture. According to them it was a concoction more uncanny than that prepared from

"Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog.
Adder's fork and blind worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and owlet's wing."

Indeed, so carefully did the Indians engaged in its manufacture guard the secret of its preparation that it was not until a few decades ago that the true character of this deadly compound was first understood. Boussingault suspected but did not prove the existence of strychnine in curare.[4] Humboldt was probably the first to suspect its true nature.[5] It is now known that neither snake's teeth nor stinging ants form its active principle, as was formerly supposed, but that its venomous properties are due to the presence of curarine, a bitter crystalline alkaloid obtained from the plant *Strychnos toxifera*, or other plants of this genus, found throughout equatorial America. Its virulence is manifested only when it is administered through the skin. It then paralyzes the motor nerves, and, if the poison be sufficiently strong, it produces death by suffocation.

The Indians in Orocué, as everywhere else along the Meta and Orinoco, were a subject of never-ending study for us. Most of the inhabitants of Orocué are Indians or mestizos, and it would be difficult to find anywhere a gentler or more peaceful people. The town was founded by the Salivas Indians, whose nasal language the early missionaries found so difficult to master, but whose gentle nature and amiable disposition were ever the subject of the highest eulogies. Remnants of this tribe are still found in this territory, as are also representatives of the Piapocas, Tunebos, Yaruros,

Cuivas, and the once powerful yet friendly Achaguas.

The tribe, however, that counts the greatest numbers, is the Guahibos, whom certain imaginative travelers would have us believe are as fierce as pumas or jaguars. The truth is, however, that, although some of them are more or less nomadic in their habits, and decline to live with the *racionales*—whites—they are, as a rule, peaceful and industrious. Sr. Jorge Brisson, an engineer for the Colombian government, who a few years ago thoroughly explored this country—the Casanare—speaks of them as being *muy agricultores y muy trabajadores*—hard-working tillers of the soil.

That they are peaceful and harmless is evidenced by the fact that the owners of the scattered *conucos* along the Meta are rarely, if ever, disturbed by these much maligned Indians. In many of the isolated habitations, which we visited on our way up the river, we found only women and children. The men were occupied elsewhere, and were sometimes absent for weeks at a time. This, certainly, would not be the case if the Guahibos were the cruel, relentless savages they are so often represented to be. Not once in our journeyings up the Meta and its affluents did we hear of any atrocities committed by these Indians, or even of any complaints against them, although we took particular pains to inform ourselves about the matter. All the reports about their robberies and murders were confined to those we had heard a thousand miles down the river and from people who probably never saw a Guahibo in their lives, and who would not recognize one if they were to see one.

It is true that now and then a cow or a calf may disappear from some of the *Conucos* and *fundaciones* and that their disappearance is always credited to the Indians. Even if this suspicion were verified, an occasional theft of this kind

—all the circumstances considered—should not be so surprising. We do not need to go beyond the boundaries of our own country to find cases of cattle stealing. And the poor Indian, often cheated and wronged, may, without being a casuist, easily persuade himself that he is justified in seeking occult compensation. This is often his only safe method of making reprisals for damage done him in person and property, and he would be more than human, if he did not occasionally resort to it if he thought he could do so with impunity.

"The fact is," says Brisson, "the poor creatures have heretofore been very badly treated by those who claim to be civilized, and flee in terror when they see a white man. The question now is not to civilize them but to win their confidence. The problem would easily be solved if this delicate task were confided to the missionary priests. They would bring it to a successful issue much sooner than could government officialdom."[6]

Contrary to what is often imagined, the Indians who visit the settlements along the Meta and the Orinoco are always decently if but scantily clad. In their forest homes, however, their raiment usually consists of a simple lap-cloth. On occasions of feasting or public rejoicing they make an addition to their toilet. This consists in painting their bodies with various dyes, but chiefly with the yellowish-red annatto, which is obtained from the pulp of the fruit of the arnotto tree, *Bixa Orellana*. They frequently cover their persons with the most fantastic designs. Indeed, it is only when thus decorated that the true children of the forest consider themselves properly dressed. They would be ashamed to appear before strangers otherwise.[7]

"Tigers and serpents," observes Mr. Brisson, "are bug-bears of the same family as *Indios bravos*"—savages. It is certain that the tiger—jaguar—is fond of heifers and

calves. But herdsmen will tell you, that in order to get rid of one, it is at times necessary to follow him for a fortnight before being able to find and kill him. This is sufficient to prove that the tiger is never the first to attack a man in the llanos of Casanare, where it has food in abundance. "Serpents are met with only casually."[8]

I was glad to find one writer, who is so familiar with the country as is Sr. Brisson, to speak thus of the wild beasts most dreaded and of the still more dreaded *Indios bravos*, for it harmonized perfectly with my own experience.

We were one day talking with our host in Orocué about the stories told by travelers and writers regarding the jaguars of the South American forests. He smiled, and said, "I have lived in this country thirty-five years. I have several *hatos* in various parts of the country, which I visit frequently. In doing this I am obliged to travel much through the forests and plains. I have often journeyed up and down the Orinoco, and the Meta from Trinidad to Bogotá, and, believe me, during all these years, I have never seen but one jaguar and that was in passing." How different his experience from that of those who, after a short excursion into the interior of South America, where they rarely leave the beaten track used for centuries, have, nevertheless, such wonderful adventures to relate; such miraculous escapes from savage beasts and more savage Indians!

Our host was a Venezuelan of Spanish descent, and a splendid type of the old Spanish school. He had spent a part of his youth in Germany, and was a man of education and refinement. He was untiring in his delicate attentions to us during our sojourn in Orocué, and made us quite forget that we were so far from home and what we so often fancy are the indispensable necessities of civilization. He had been eminently successful in business. Besides owning

the largest business house in Orocué—which is a distributing point for the great Casanare territory—he is the proprietor of several of the largest *hatos* in the country and counted his cattle by tens of thousands. In addition to all this, he has various other interests that yield him a handsome income. He enjoys the reputation of being a millionaire, and the reputation is apparently justified.

How he could content himself to live in this isolated quarter of the world—"six months from everywhere," as one of his clerks expressed it—when he could enjoy all that money could command in the capitals of the Old or the New World, was a mystery to us, and yet he seemed to be perfectly happy here, and to have no desire to live elsewhere. Was it the ever dominant feeling that "There is no place like home," that made him prefer Orocué to Paris or London? *Quien sabe?*

The only Europeans living here were three Germans. Two of them had arrived but a few months before our visit, while the third had been here for nearly twenty years. This latter was also as much attached to Orocué as was our host. The year before he had visited his family and friends in Hamburg and Berlin. "But," he said, "I had *heimweh*—got homesick—for Orocué, and came back much sooner than I intended. The noise and bustle and hurry and high-pressure of Europe were quite unendurable, and I was more than delighted when I got back to dear old Orocué." He, too, had realized that there is no place like home. And he, also, like our host, was educated and cultured; was interested in science and literature and passionately fond of music. He had several musical instruments in his house—among others a piano—on all of which he was a skillful performer.

"What wonderful men these Germans are!" I said to myself, when I saw these three men in the prime of life

burying themselves away off here in the wilderness, so far away from friends and country. But this is not an unique instance of young Germans going to distant lands to engage in business and to contribute thereby towards that wonderful development of trade and influence for which the *Vaterland* is becoming so famous. In every part of Venezuela which we visited, we found it the same. The greatest and most successful business houses are in the hands of Germans.

In all parts of South America you will find Germans, and find them, too, successful in their enterprises, and often getting more than their share of the trade of this vast continent. But they deserve success, for they have earned it, and know how to make sacrifices when they are necessary to attain it, or to reach the goal for which they are striving—to become the dominating commercial power of South America. If the United States would display but a tithe of the energy and enterprise exhibited by Germany, it would not now occupy in the southern continent the humiliating position it does among the great mercantile nations of the world, and among our friends of the great Latin American republics. It is not too late to retrieve our loss, but, to do so, we must change our policy and our methods of doing business, and conduct them along the lines recommended by such alert and far-seeing statesmen as Blaine, Root and Roosevelt.

After a delightful week spent in Orocué we were ready to start for Barrigon or Puerto Nuevo on the Rio Humea, an affluent of the Meta. To go there by a *bongo*[9] during the rapidly rising water, would require from fifteen to twenty days. It would be necessary to pole it—or pull it along by ropes in certain places—the entire distance. Besides this, owing to its limited quarters, such a boat would be extremely uncomfortable. Fortunately for us, and thanks to the kind offices of our host, we were able to have the use

of a fine and commodious petroleum launch, which would convey us to our destination in a week.

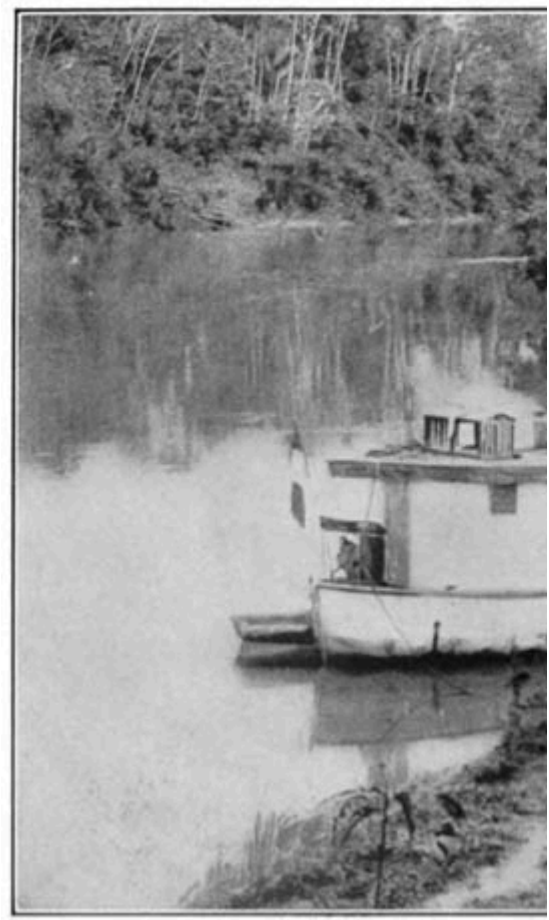
It was with genuine regret that we said *Adios* to the good people of Orocué and to the kind friends who had made our sojourn there so pleasant and profitable. They were all at the landing to see us off, and speed the parting guests with the touching words, *Vayan Uds. Con Dios*—May you go with God. To these fervent words of farewell came from our little crew the cordial response, *Y con la Virgen*, and with the Virgin Mother.

Our captain was a bright and courteous and most obliging young Colombian from Bogotá. The pilot was a Venezuelan half-breed from the town of Barcelona. This "son of Barcelona," as he described himself, had fled from his native country, on account of the continued revolutions, to seek peace in Orocué. The cook was also a mestizo, while his assistant was a strong, broad-shouldered Guahibo, who, far from being an unfeeling savage, was one of the kindest and most thoughtful persons one could meet. He was ever ready to serve us and was never more happy than when he observed that his delicate attentions were fully appreciated.

The launch's commissariat consisted of a liberal supply of *tasajo*—salt, dried beef—cassava bread, coffee, *panela*[10] and various kinds of fruit. Anticipating our needs at this part of our journey we had, before leaving the Port-of-Spain, laid in a supply of claret and canned goods of various kinds. Aside from the butter and condensed cream and some of the fruit preserves, the canned goods were a disappointment. Although they were guaranteed to be fresh from the factory, they were unfit for use. What we really enjoyed more than anything else, and always found fresh and wholesome, was our supply of coffee, sugar and crackers. For our *café* in the morning nothing more was

desired.

Coffee was always served on the launch, when we were ready to start on the day's journey, which was usually at sunrise. *Desayuno*—breakfast—we took at about ten o'clock. For this we always landed, as it was more convenient and more agreeable to do our cooking on shore than aboard. It was, indeed, quite romantic to have one's breakfast served under a broad-spreading ceiba, or in the midst of a clump of stately palms, or in the shade of a group of graceful bamboos. And not the least picturesque feature about it was Antonio—our ever-active and obliging Guahibo.



"La

Whenever possible, we stopped for *desayuno* and *comida* —dinner—at a hut or cottage on the river's bank. We ordinarily passed several of them in the course of the day, for the banks of the upper Meta count many more inhabitants than does the lower part of the river. Usually there was only a single cottage, but occasionally we passed a *caserio* consisting of five or six cottages. But whatever the number they were always of the simplest construction

possible. Sometimes the house was nothing more than a palm-thatched shed, composed solely of a roof, with eaves extending almost to the ground, resting on short supports. Sometimes the owners of these humble habitations were Indians, sometimes mestizos. But whether Indians or mestizos, we were cordially received and invited to make ourselves comfortable in the best hammock in their possession. With them the *hamaca* is the one indispensable article of furniture in every dwelling, even the poorest. It takes the place of our rocking-chair, sofa and bed. According to the Colombian poet, Madrid, the hammock was invented by the Indians—

"Gente
Dulce, benigna y mansa,"

—a race suave, gentle and benign—and even when all else fails them they have their hammock to comfort them in misfortune, banishing their trouble in its oblivious embrace. The poet, like many others, evidently shares the Indian's fondness for the hammock, as the best verses he ever wrote was his poem *La Hamaca*.[11]

There were several reasons for stopping at one of these native huts when we could conveniently do so. We were thus enabled to get fresh fruit, eggs and chickens, and have them cooked as well. We had no complaint to make of our own cooks, but we soon discovered that the Indian and mestizo women were far better. I shall never forget our surprise and pleasure at the manner in which a young Indian woman prepared for us roast chicken, and that, too, in a remarkably short time. I never tasted a more tender or better flavored fowl in the best restaurants of New York or Paris. And she had no stove or oven in which to roast it. Her sole utensil was a wooden spit over a few coals surrounded by three stones about seven or eight inches in diameter. And all was as clean as it was enjoyable.

All the furniture of the house is as primitive as the fireplace on which the meals are cooked. Often the only utensils of metal are a pot, or kettle, and a machete, which takes the place of a knife in cutting. When the hammock is not used one sits on the ground or on a log that serves as a bench. Occasionally we were offered the carapace of a large turtle in lieu of a chair. When the hammock is not used, an ox hide, or a rush mat, or a large palm leaf serves as a bed. Often the poor people sleep on the bare ground.

Aside from the single metal kettle above mentioned, all other culinary utensils are made from the fruit of the calabash tree. It is the species known to botanists as *Crescentia Cujete* and is called by the natives *totumo*. The fruit is used at various stages of its growth according as it is employed for making small or large utensils. The younger and smaller fruits are fashioned into spoons, those of medium size serve for drinking vessels, while the largest full-grown fruits—often eight inches in diameter—are used for dishes and platters.[12] They also furnish a kind of musical instrument resembling the castanet. But marvelous to relate, they are also employed for lanterns of a most original kind. After the shell is pierced with a large number of small holes it is filled with those wonderful *Cocuios*—fireflies—that are found in such numbers in the tropics. Such a lantern seen at a distance is not unlike the familiar Chinese lantern, and, considering the nature of the illuminant, gives a surprising amount of light.

A house, such as the one just described, is the lodging place of the dogs, and poultry, and not infrequently of the pigs also. The poultry roost upon the crosspieces immediately under the roof. The other animals occupy their own corner, and no one seems to be molested by their presence. Benzoni, in speaking of the habits of the Indians he saw, remarks in his quaint fashion: “They all sleep together like fowls, some on the ground and some

suspended in the air."[13]

Every house is surrounded by a number of fruit trees. Among these the *platano* and the banana are the most conspicuous, and are never wanting, for they supply a large part of the food of the inhabitants of the tropics. Equally important are maize and yuca.[14] The latter is used for making bread. In certain parts of the tropics no other kind of bread is obtainable. To me it has a very insipid taste, somewhat like that of bran or cellulose. Schomburgk considered that it had a deleterious effect on the stomach, but there are few, I think, that share his view. Certain it is, that its use as food is universal in the tropics, and it is one of the three plants—yuca, maize and the platano—that one is always sure to find in every conuco—even that of the poorest Indian. These three articles are his staff of life. The natives also eat fish and flesh of various kinds, it is true, but as the three plant products named are quite sufficient to sustain life, and as they require little care after they are once planted, many people make little or no effort to secure other kinds of food. They are content with little and seem to enjoy the living of the simple life fully as much as some of our friends in the North enjoy talking and writing about it.

Often, too, where one would least expect it, one will find beautiful flower gardens around the most unpretentious habitations. Of the flowers that we in the North are most familiar with—not to mention countless peculiarly tropical species—those we most frequently observed were roses, jasmines, dahlias, pinks, violets, dracenas, gladioli and gardenias. The large rose bushes, or rather rose trees—they are so huge—one sometimes sees in the hot, dry climate of the tropics are truly remarkable. They sometimes attain a height of twenty feet, and one may count on a single bush as many as a thousand buds. From such a bush one may pluck a hundred beautiful roses every day in the year

without any apparent diminution in the number on the parent stem.

While journeying up the Orinoco and Meta, we several times tried our luck at fishing, but our efforts were always attended with the most ignominious failures. Outside of a few minnows we caught absolutely nothing. One of our crew once caught a fish about two feet long resembling a pickerel and this was the only time that we ever tasted fresh fish all the time we were on the river.

No sooner had the hook sunk into the water than the bait was taken. There was a momentary nibble, and presto! the bait had disappeared. On investigation we found that we had to deal with the terrible Caribe—that voracious little fish about which so many extraordinary stories are related. In crossing rivers the natives dread the attacks of this serrasalmonine marauder more than they do the gymnotus, the stingray or the cayman. They have very sharp, trenchant teeth, usually swim in schools, and, when attracted by blood, will attack men and the larger animals without hesitation. And so fierce and rapid is their combined action that their attack usually means death to the victim.

We had often heard and read of their snapping fishhooks in twain but had classed this statement among the stories of the monkey-bridge class—stories that entertained us during our early school days, and which, I doubt not, still perform the same function for the rising generation in certain parts of the world.

But, while pondering our ill success with rod and line, we discovered one evening, after vainly trying for an hour to get at least one specimen of the finny tribe—and exhausting all our bait in the attempt—that our hook—a good-sized one, too—was snapped in two as neatly as if it

had been cut by a pair of pliers. We examined the part of the hook that remained attached to the line and we found that it was actually cut, not broken on account of defective material.

On further inquiry, I found that several men of science who had visited these parts, and had, presumably, investigated the matter, had positively stated that the Caribe was capable of severing fishhooks with the greatest ease. Thus Mr. H. M. Myers does not hesitate to affirm that the Caribe is "able to sever ordinary hooks as if they were but slender threads,"[15] and Dr. Carl Sachs declares that "even thick steel fishhooks do not withstand their teeth."[16]

Both in the Orinoco and in the Meta we saw quite a number of porpoises—*toninas*, the Spaniards call them—quite as large and as playful as any we ever saw in the ocean. The natives say they are the friends of man, and defend him from caymans when he happens to be in the river.[17] One thing is certain and that is that caymans and crocodiles both quickly make their escape when the porpoise appears. It is probably, because the sluggish and indolent caymans, ferocious as they are by nature, have an instinctive dread of the noisy and impetuous evolutions of these delphinine cetaceans, especially when they move in schools.

We were often surprised by the large flocks of ducks, of many different species, which we saw along the Meta. They seemed to be most numerous near sunset when, occasionally, they flew across the river by thousands. So great, indeed, was their number at times that we could compare them only with the immense flocks of pigeons that, during our boyhood days, used to darken the sky during their season of migration. Many of these ducks, as articles of food, compare favorably with our mallard and canvasback. Truth to tell, the only time we regretted not

having a shotgun with us was when we saw these clouds of edible birds passing over our heads within easy reach. This was particularly the case when our food supply was running short, or when we desired a change of diet, or something different from *carne frita*—fried beef that has been salted and dried—and sancocho.[18]

Among the singing birds peculiar to the tropics are two that deserve special mention. There are the campanero or bellbird, and the flautero or flute bird.

Of the bellbird, Waterson writes as follows: “He is about the size of a jay. His plumage is white as snow. On his forehead rises a spiral tube nearly three inches long. It is jet black, dotted all over with small white feathers. It has a communication with the palate, and when filled with air, looks like a spire; when empty it becomes pendulous. His note is loud and clear, like the sound of a bell.

. . . . . .

“With many of the feathered race, he pays the common tribute of a morning and an evening song; and even when the meridian sun has shut in silence the mouths of the whole of animated nature, the campanero still cheers the forest. You hear his toll, and then a pause for a minute, then another toll, and then a pause again, and then a toll, and again a pause. Then he is silent for six or eight minutes and then another toll, and so on. Acteon would stop in mid-chase, Maria would defer her evening song and Orpheus himself would drop his lute and listen to him; so sweet, so novel, and romantic is the toll of the pretty snow-white campanero.”[19]

So closely indeed does the note of the campanero resemble the sound of a bell that the traveler can easily fancy that

there is a chapel in the depths of the forest, and that the faithful are being called to prayer. The bellbird has a near relative in the herrero, or blacksmith bird, whose note is like that produced when an anvil is struck by a hammer.

The flautero, or flute bird, is quite small and of a grayish color. Its notes are surprisingly sweet and mellow, and closely resemble those of a sweet-toned flute, whence its name. One who hears this feathered songster for the first time would easily believe that he is listening to a skillful flute player, and not to the song of a tiny bird. The refrain of its song is fairly well expressed in the following notes:



Unfortunately for us, we were often obliged to listen to sounds that were not so agreeable as those of the flautero or campanero. These were the raucous, discordant, never-ending noises produced by frogs and toads. In Orocué they always began their cacophonous serenade at nightfall, and kept it up uninterruptedly until the following morning. I could then realize that Padre Rivero had good cause for regarding them as among the greatest nuisances with which he had to contend. Their confused, strident notes—base, tenor, contralto, soprano—kept up the entire night were, he assures us, enough to split one's head. Some of these amphibians we heard at Orocué were on the opposite side of the river from us, more than half a mile distant. They were in very truth what Lowell has so well characterized as

"Old croakers, deacons of the mire,
That led the deep batrachian choir."

The wonderful depth and fertility of the dark, loamy soil in the valley of the Meta was ever a source of wonder to us. Along the river banks it usually formed a layer of four or five feet, and not infrequently seven or eight feet. And the vegetation was everywhere an evidence of this fertility. At Platanales, a *conuco* at which we spent a night, we saw a grove of several acres of the largest and most prolific bananas and plantains we had ever encountered anywhere. At another *conuco*, farther up the river, where we stopped for breakfast, we saw several acres of corn that was rapidly maturing. And what corn! Never did I in Kansas or Nebraska see such ample stalks or so large ears and grains. It was a revelation to us, and exhibited in a most striking manner the wonderful, future possibilities of this marvelously fertile, yet unknown land.

Near every dwelling, however humble, along the Meta, we observed a large cross made of tastefully and often artistically plaited palm leaves. The material was yet quite fresh and the crosses had evidently been erected only a few days before we passed by. In design and workmanship they reminded us of those seen in parts of Italy on Palm Sunday. On inquiry, we found that they had been erected on the third of May, the feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross.

"Why is this cross placed here?" I asked of an Indian woman, while she was preparing our *desayuno*. "*Para que no nos pegue el chubasco*,"—in order that the *chubasco*—wind squall—may not strike us, she replied without hesitation. I asked many others at divers places the same question and invariably received a similar reply.

These poor people were not able to erect the beautiful shrines one so frequently sees in the Catholic countries of Europe, and so their simple faith found expression in these palm-leaf crosses, on which they had evidently put their

best and most careful work, of which they often seemed justly proud.

On passing by a particularly large and beautiful cross of this kind my mind reverted to a shrine near the lighthouse of Savona, an ancient town near Genoa. Here there is a statue of the Madonna, twelve feet high, under which are inscribed two Sapphic verses, expressing in rhythmic numbers the same idea that was uppermost in the mind of the good Indian woman when she braided and placed in position this symbol of redemption. The verses were composed by Gabriello Chiabrera, "the prince of Italian lyric poets," who was a native of Savona. They are remarkable in that they are both "good Latin and choice Italian," and have the same meaning in both languages. They read as follows:

"In mare irato, in subita procella,
Invoco te, nostra benigna stella."[20]

The only place of any importance between Orocué and Barrigón is Cabuyaro, a small town of about two hundred inhabitants. It cherishes the hope of becoming the eastern terminus of the long-projected railroad from Bogotá to the Meta. This would no doubt be a good terminal point, as the town is favorably located, and the river is sufficiently deep to permit the passage of good-sized vessels. As at the other towns we passed, the steamer may moor within a few feet of the river's bank.

Cabuyaro, however, is not the only place ambitious to become the terminus of the Bogotá Eastern railroad. It has several rivals, some of which are little more at present than rude huts in the wilderness. Among these is Barrigón, which also rejoices in the high-sounding name of Puerto Nuevo. It has, certainly, an advantage over Cabuyaro in that it is much nearer the capital. When this railway, which

has been in contemplation for many years, shall have been completed, it will be possible to go from Bogotá to the Meta in ten hours. At present it takes six days to make the trip, and a very trying and tiresome one it is.

While our cooks were preparing *comida*—dinner—we visited the town. As we were passing a neat-looking house on the plaza, next to the church, a woman standing at the door, surrounded by her family, observing that we were strangers, insisted on our partaking of the hospitality of her home. She gave orders at once to have dinner prepared for us, and was deeply disappointed when she learned that our captain had made arrangements for us to dine elsewhere. She then said: "You must do us the honor of taking at least a cup of coffee in our humble home. We cannot let you depart without something." Before she had finished speaking, one of her daughters, a bright, modest girl of about sixteen, had started to boil the water, and in a short time we were served with as good coffee as we had ever tasted anywhere during our journey.

The kindness and simplicity of these good people were admirable. They were much interested in our journey, and could not understand what could induce us to undertake such a long trip. They were most eager to hear about our own country, and showed an intelligent interest in persons and things that quite surprised us. Soon a number of their neighbors called and each one was duly presented to the *viajeros*—travelers—and served also with a cup of the aromatic beverage which our hostess knew so well how to prepare. Although we had become accustomed to the generous hospitality of the good people we had everywhere met along the Meta, the cordial reception given us by the people of Cabuyaro during our short stay among them impressed us in a special manner, and made us feel that it is particularly among primitive peoples, among those in the depth of the forest, or in the solitude of

the desert, that hospitality is not only regarded as a duty but is also esteemed a pleasure.

How often, when partaking of the simple fare of our kindly hosts in tropical America, were we forced to compare their never-failing hospitality with that of the Greeks of Homeric times! Then nothing was too good for the honored guest, for he might be a god in disguise, or, if not a god, he was at least a friend of the gods. Like the early Christians, who treated their guests as if they might be angels who had come upon them unawares, our Meta hosts always gave us the best at their disposition, and expressed their regret that they were unable to do more. Their home was ours as long as we chose to remain, and their every act showed that they were pleased to be honored—as they expressed it—by the strangers' visit.[21]

Before leaving Orocué, we had telegraphed to Villavicencio to have saddle and pack mules ready for us on our arrival in Barrigón, which, as planned, was to be the morning after our arrival at Cabuyaro. As, however, we had been delayed a day by trouble with the engine, and loss of our anchor, we could not hope to reach our destination without traveling all night. Fortunately, there was a full moon and a cloudless night. And our crew, the captain notably, were ready and willing, regardless of their own comfort, to do anything in their power to enable us to reach Barrigón at the appointed time.

Never shall I forget our last night on the Meta. C. and I were sitting on the prow of our launch, which was moving merrily along the broad river—as broad as ever, apparently—which, under the bright rays of the moon, shone like molten silver. There was no murky vapor to obscure the fair face of the queen of night, or dim her glowing form. Surrounded by the myriad stars of heaven, she reigned supreme. Then, more truly than ever before in our lives,

could we say with Saint Augustine, that we saw “the moon and stars solace the night.”[22]

The air was balmy and impregnated with sweetest perfumes and rarest balsamic odors, wafted from the dark, impervious forest walls that rose in silent majesty on either shore. The sleeping mimosas that had folded their leaves for the night, the ethereal jambos, figs, and laurels, the dark crowns of the jaca and the manga, the slender shafts of bamboo tufts, the dim crests of the palm, trellised vines and liana festoons, defiled before us in rapid succession, and, in the shades of night, assumed the most fantastic shapes and magic combinations.

As we glided along the glassy stretches of the river there was nothing to mar the perfect stillness that pervaded the scene, except the muffled pulsations of our engine, too feeble to wake an echo from the neighboring banks. The time, the place, the freshness of earth and the splendor of heaven lent themselves to reverie, and stirred the fancy to unwonted activity. Frequently on the Orinoco we had amused ourselves by watching the odd and whimsical shapes assumed by the clouds, especially before or after a *chubasco*, or at the time the sun was dropping below the horizon. Then the imagination, quickened to action, would discover, in the rapidly changing clouds, animal forms varying from the bear and the eagle to the griffin and the dragon.

And so it was now. At one time we could see, in a curiously arranged clump of trees and vines, the ruins of a Rhenish castle, at another the shattered towers and merloned walls of an enchanted palace. Now it was a rustic chapel by the wayside, and a moment later, as we peered into the darkness of the inner wold, and noted the huge dark tree trunks, it was the massive pillars of a Hindoo shrine. Here it was a Druid trysting-place, there a

mermaid's grot and there again a dryad's bower or the home of a fairy queen. That Titania was not far distant was evidenced by the swarms of fairies—matter-of-fact scientific men would doubtless call them *Pyropheri*—fireflies—that, like a thousand stars, flitted through the bloom and the foliage, illuming with their soft radiance the favorite haunt of fairyland.

How we enjoyed the mystery of these vast solitudes! How exquisite the ever-changing chiaroscuro; the wondrous play of light and shade; the warmth, depth and softness of the noble pictures that, at every turn, ravished our delighted gaze! How it all elevated the soul and enjoined recollection of spirit! The impression was in an eminent degree like that experienced beneath the sombre arches of a Gothic cathedral. And why not? Were we not beneath the starry vault of heaven, in the depth of the dark, majestic tropical forest, in the most inspiring temple of the Most High?

When in Orocué, we were told that, on a bright, clear day, the Andes were visible from that place. But owing to the clouds and the mists and the forests that had constantly obstructed our view, we had not yet gotten even a glimpse of this world-famed chain of mountains. Of course, we had seen one of its spurs in the coast range of Venezuela. But this range was not the Cordillera of our boyhood dreams. We longed to see that massive chain that extends in unbroken continuity from Panama to Patagonia. And day by day, as we moved westward, our wistful eyes were ever peering through broken forest or over grass-covered glade, to catch the first view of *La Cordillera de los Andes*.

While silently sitting on the prow of our launch admiring the countless, ever-changing beauties of that marvelous moonlight night—our last on the Meta,—giving free rein to our fancy, and shifting our course as the meandering

river demanded, behold! Suddenly like a vision, the Andes stood before us in all their majesty and glory, looming up to the very heavens. So instant was the apparition that, for a while, we were quite speechless from admiration and awe. “The Andes!” one of us ejaculated, and we were then completely under their magic spell. So agreeable was our surprise and so great our emotion that for a time it was impossible to find words to express our feelings of delight and wonder. We realized, as probably never before, what a feeble instrument language is for conveying one’s innermost thoughts, and how inadequate to express what deeply stirs the soul.

Our adjectives and exclamations were little more than the Indian’s grunt, and less devotional than the Moslem’s phrase, “Allah is great!” Coming from the cold and tame nature of the North to that of the glorious and marvelous equator, we were like Plato’s men, bred in cavern twilight, and then suddenly exposed to the bright effulgence of the noonday sun. We saw things wonderful and unspeakable, but all our superlatives were inarticulate and feeble, matched with the scene before us.

“But what are those lights on the mountain summit, a little to the left?” inquired C., finally breaking the long-sustained silence. On the very crest of the Cordilleras and extending for a considerable distance, was a large number of brilliant lights, like so many electric arcs. It was as if the long rows of arc lamps that illumine the Bay of Naples, as one sees them from an incoming steamer, were raised skyward far above the cone of Vesuvius; or as if the resplendent “White Way” of New York were lifted into cloudland.

At first we thought it was a forest fire, but it was so different from the unsteady, yellowish-red flame of burning trees and vegetation. We had seen such fires along the

Orinoco and Meta—as well as elsewhere—and were quite familiar with their appearance. It could not be due to volcanic action, for there were no volcanoes in that direction, unless of extremely recent origin. Besides, the lights before us were quite different from the fitful reflections that molten lava produces from swirling masses of vapor. Might they not actually be the electric lights of Bogotá or of some other city of the Sierras? No, for Bogotá was on the west slope of the mountain range, and there was no town of any size on the eastern declivity. Still less could the lights be due to reflection from the sun, for it had set hours before.

What then was this "midnight gloom still blossoming into fire"? Our curiosity was excited to a high degree, but the apparition seemed to defy all attempts at explanation. We thought of the gleaming light seen by Robert Bruce from the turrets of Brodick Castle, in the isle of Arran, before his landing in Carrick.

We recalled a similar phenomenon, observed by Humboldt on the Cerro del Cuchivano in Venezuela, in which he thought the luminous display observed might be due to the burning of hydrogen and other inflammable gases.[23]

The Indians who live among or near the mountains, relate many wonderful stories about strange lights that are occasionally seen on or in the vicinity of the loftier peaks. "It is a curious thing," writes Im Thurn, regarding a phenomenon of this kind, seen in the mountains of British Guiana, "that, as I have seen, there actually is an appearance, as of fire, to be seen sometimes up in these mountains, nor was I ever able to form any theory as to its cause."[24]

Sir Martin Conway records a more remarkable case of this character. "Long after the sun had set and darkness had

come on, Illampu glowed red like fire, and all the people in town saw it. Such a sight none had ever beheld. In great terror they ran to the church and the bells were rung. They thought the end of the world had come."[25]

My own conclusion regarding the luminous phenomena, that occupied our attention for at least an hour, during the night to which I refer, is that they were of electric origin. The mountain in front of us seemed to be a vast condenser from which the electricity was escaping by a silent glow or brush-discharge on an immense scale. The color and the steadiness of the lights, as well as their durability, were evidence of this. They were probably of the same nature as the corposant of St. Elmo's fire, sometimes seen on the spars or yards of a ship.[26]

We slept little that last night on the Meta. Earth and sky were so beautiful, and there was so much to engage our attention that it was a late hour before we sought repose.

Early in the morning we left the Meta and entered the Humea, passing the Rio Negro on our left. In Europe or America these two affluents of the Meta would be considered good-sized rivers. Both of them are navigable for some distance, but like hundreds of other rivers in South America, are practically unknown, except to those who live in their immediate vicinity.

About nine o'clock our pilot blew a loud, prolonged blast on his conch which served him for a horn or call-instrument, and, looking ahead of us, we saw gathered on the banks the entire population of Barrigón—a negro woman, her three daughters and a young man, likewise a negro. We expected, of course, to see also our mules and our arrieros—muleteers—but they were nowhere visible. They evidently had not arrived. To describe our disappointment and dismay would be impossible. We felt

as if we were about to be marooned, or left in a penal colony. What did it all mean?

1

Named after the astronomer Copernicus. ↑

2

In eastern Colombia, if a cattle farm contains more than a thousand head of cattle it is called a *hato*; if it counts less than this number it is known as *fundacion*. A plantation in the hilly country is called a *hacienda*, in the plains a *conuco*, and if it have a sugar-mill, it is named a *trapiche*. ↑

3

The steamer on which we had come to Orocué, took, on her return to Ciudad Bolivar, among other articles of freight, nearly three tons of orchids, of many species, collected from divers parts of Colombia. They were intended for certain New York florists, and were shipped directly to their greenhouses in New Jersey. They were gathered by one of the many orchid collectors that are constantly engaged in tropical America in making collections for florists in the United States and Europe.

Sometimes they come across new species of rarest beauty. This means a treasure-trove for the lucky finder. Not long before our visit to Colombia a truly magnificent specimen had been discovered by one of these collectors. It was sold in London for a thousand pounds sterling. And we heard of others that fetched prices quite as extravagant as any that were ever paid for tulip-bulbs during the period of the tulipomania in Holland in the early part of the seventeenth century. ↑

4

Viajes Cientificos á los Andes Ecuatoriales, p. 29, Paris, 1849. ↑

5

Personal Narrative, up. sup., Vol. II, p. 438 et seq. ↑

6

Casanare, p. 11, Bogotá, 1896. ↑

7

Writing of the juice of the arnotto berries, “that die a most perfect crimson and carnation,” Sir Walter Raleigh declares, “And for painting, al France, Italy or the east Indies yield none such. For the more the skyn is washed, the fayer the cullour appeareth, and with which euen those brown and tawnie women spot themselues and cullour their cheekes.” Op. cit., p. 113.

Peter Martyr, referring to certain painted Indian warriors, encountered by the Spaniards in the West Indies, declares, “A man wold thinke them to

bee deuylles incarnate newly broke owte of hell, they are soo lyke vnto hell-houndes." Op. cit., p. 91. ↑

8

Ibid. ↑

9

Bongo, *falca*, and *curiara* are names given in Colombia and Venezuela to the dugouts or canoes fashioned from a single tree-trunk. They are sometimes large enough to hold from twenty to twenty five persons. Usually, however, their capacity is limited to five or six persons. The curiara is smaller than the bongo or falca. The bongo is generally provided with a covering in the centre called a *toldo* or *carroza*. This is made of lattice-work with palm leaves to shelter the traveler from the sun and rain. It is steered and urged backwards and forwards by a man standing at the stern, who uses a kind of oar—*canalete*—very much as a Venetian gondolier handles his oar for steering and propelling his gondola. When the current does not permit the use of oars those standing near the prow urge the boat forward by poles called *palancas*. The boatmen are called *bogas* and the ropes with which they sometimes pull their canoes forward are called *sogas*. The bongo, especially when the river is high, is a very slow means of locomotion. And owing to the very limited space of the toldo, even in the largest canoes, traveling in a bongo is, at best, very confining and uncomfortable. A journey any distance in one of these long, narrow, crank dug-outs—more unstable than a shell—is a trying experience, and one that all travelers in equatorial America avoid whenever possible. The treacherous craft is liable to capsize when one least expects it. Even a skilled Oxford or Harvard sculler would at times have great difficulty in keeping his balance in one of them. ↑

10

Also called *papelon*—cane-syrup boiled down, without being clarified, and cast into molds. The only kind of sugar obtainable here. ↑

11

A stanza from this poem will show what value the author placed on the hammock. It expresses, at the same time, the opinion of it entertained by all travelers in tropical countries.

"Mi hamaca ea un tesoro,
Es mi mejor alhaja;
Á la ciudad, al campo,
Siempre ella me acompaña.
Oh prodigio de industria!
Cuando no encuentro casa,
La cuelgo de los troncos,
Y allí esta mi posada.
'Salud, salud doe veces

Al que invento la hamaca!'"

Mention is made of hammocks by Vespucci and Alonso de Ojeda as early as 1498. They are made on hand-looms from the fibres of various species of palm and bromelia or from cotton thread. In their manufacture the Indian women often display considerable skill and taste. This is particularly true of the hammocks made in the regions of the upper Rio Negro, which are beautifully decorated with the feathers of parrots, toucans and other birds of brilliant plumage.

"The hammock," as Schomburgk well observes, "is the most indispensable article in the Indian's house, or for an Indian's journey. On his travels it is carried folded up and slung round his neck; the greatest precaution is used to prevent its getting wet. Where a halt is made, be it of ever so short a duration, the first object sought for is a convenient tree from which he can suspend it. It is a compliment paid to the stranger, if the host takes the hammock from him on entering the house and slings it for his guest, and it is the duty of the wife to do this service for her husband. The common hammocks of the Indians are generally open, that is, not closely woven, and colored red with roucou or arnotto." Op. cit., p. 66. ↑

12

Peter Martyr, writing of the West Indies, informs us that "In all these Ilandes is a certeyne kynde of trees as bygge as elmes, whiche beare gourdes in the steade of fruites. These they vse only for drinkynge pottes, and to fetch water in, but not for meate, for the inner substance of them is sowrer then gaule, and the barke as harde as any shelle." Eden, op. cit., p. 76. ↑

13

"Tutti dormono insieme come i polli, chi in terra, chi in aria sospeso."—*Historia del Mondo Novo*, In Venetia, 1565. ↑

14

Often misspelled yucca, which is the name of a genus of plants belonging to the lily family. The Spanish bayonet—*Yucca albifolia*—is a familiar example. ↑

15

Life and Nature in the Tropics, p. 98, by H. M. and P. V. M. Myers, New York, 1871. ↑

16

Aus den Llanos, p. 147, Leipzig, 1840. ↑

17

Of the tonina, as of the dolphin that befriended Arion, one could say in the words of an ancient writer: "Of man, he is nothing afraid, neither

avoideth from him as a stranger; but of himselfe meeteth their ships, plaieth and disporteth himselfe, and fetcheth a thousand friskes, and gambols before them. He will swimme along by the mariners, as it were for a wager, who should make way most speedily, and alwaies outgoeth them, saile they with never so good a forewind." ↑

18

The national dish of Venezuela, also much esteemed in Colombia. It is a kind of ragout composed of meat and vegetables, or fish and vegetables, highly seasoned with *aji*, or red pepper. ↑

19

Wanderings in South America, Second Journey.

Referring to Waterton's account of the bellbird and the distance at which it can be heard, Sydney Smith expresses his scepticism in the following fashion:—

"The description of the birds is very animated and interesting; but how far does the gentle reader imagine the campanero may be heard, whose size is that of a jay? Perhaps 300 yards. Poor innocent, ignorant reader! unconscious of what Nature has done in the forests of Cayenne, and measuring the force of tropical intonation by the sounds of a Scotch duck! The campanero may be heard three miles!—this single little bird being more powerful than the belfry of a cathedral, ringing for a new dean—just appointed on account of shabby politics, small understanding, and good family!

"It is impossible to contradict a gentleman who has been in the forests of Cayenne; but we are determined, as soon as a campanero is brought to England, to make him toll in a public place, and have the distance measured." ↑

20

"In angry sea, in sudden storm,
I thee invoke, our star benign."

↑

21

Compare the reception of Ulysses by Eumæus, in the fourteenth book of the *Odyssey*, where the old servant of the wandering hero is made to say to his unknown master:—

"Guest! If one much worse
Arrived here than thyself, it were a curse
To my poor means, to let a stranger taste
Contempt for fit food. Poor men, and unplac'd
In free seats of their own, are all from Jove

Commended to our entertaining love,
But poor is th' entertainment I can give,
Yet free and loving."

Crevaux, op. cit., p. 556, remarks anent this subject: "On pratique largement l'hospitalité dans les grandes solitudes." ↑

22

"Videmus lunam et stellas consolari noctem."—*Confessionum*, Lib. XIII, Cap. XXXII. ↑

23

Codazzi also refers to this and other similar phenomena in his *Geografia Statistica di Venezuela*, pp. 29 and 30, Firenze, 1864. ↑

24

Among the Indians of Guiana, p. 384, by Everard T. Im Thurn. ↑

25

The Bolivian Andes, p. 201, London and New York, 1901.

Padre Figueroa, in his *Relaciones de las Misiones en el País de los Maynas*, writes of similar phenomena observed among the Andes near the Amazon. ↑

26

Since writing the above I have discovered that both Antonio Raimondi of Lima, Peru, and Col. Geo. E. Church had arrived independently at a similar conclusion to my own. "The Andes," writes Col. Church, "at least within the tropics, are at times a gigantic electric battery, and so highly charged that they are very dangerous to cross."—*The Geographical Journal*, pp. 341, 342, April, 1901. ↑

CHAPTER VII

THE LLANOS OF COLOMBIA

No sooner had our launch reached the landing place, than we bounded ashore, eager for information about our mules and their drivers. We asked the sable matron who, with her equally sable daughters, waited at the brink to greet us, if the mules had come. She replied laconically, “No, Señor.” “Have you heard anything about them?” “No, Señor.” “Is there anyone here,” and I glanced at the swarthy youth hard by, “that would be willing, if well rewarded, to go forward and hasten the arrival of men and mules?” “No, Señor.”

What was to be done? We could not continue our journey alone and afoot, even if we were disposed to leave our baggage behind us. And it soon became evident that it would not be safe to remain long at Barrigón. There was but one rude hut there, and that was surrounded by mud and pools of water covered by “Spawn, weeds and filth and leprous-scum”—certainly not a very inviting place to abide any length of time.

Besides, the family had nothing to eat, at least they said they had not, except a few platanos, and these they required for their own use. We had almost exhausted the

supply we had brought from Trinidad, and the little that was still left, we intended for our three-days trip to Villavicencio. We were not sure that we could get anything on the way, and we did not wish to run any risk of being without food where it might be most needed.

Something had to be done, and that quickly, if we did not wish to expose ourselves to the pangs of hunger and the danger of fever in that filthy, miasmatic hole. In the dry season, we might return to Cabuyaro, where we could secure horses or mules, and go thence to our next objective point, Villavicencio. During the rainy season, however, this was impossible. We had been told the night before, that several of the caños and rivers between Cabuyaro and Villavicencio were quite impassable, as there were neither bridges nor ferries, and that the currents were so swift that it was quite out of the question for man or beast to cross them by swimming.

We were certainly in a quandary, if not in a very serious predicament. It was useless to go backwards, unless we wished to return to Orocué, and thence to Trinidad. Even if we returned to Orocué, we could not get a steamer down the river for several months, and to make the long trip to Ciudad Bolivar in a bongo was not to be thought of. We were confronted by the first really grave difficulty of our journey, and when we considered all the circumstances, it was enough to depress the stoutest heart.

“But why had not our men and mules arrived,” we asked ourselves time and again? Our telegram ordering them had been received and satisfactorily answered. Just before leaving Orocué we had sent a second telegram advising our vaqueano—guide—when he should meet us but we had not awaited a reply, taking it for granted that there would be no hitch in our plans. It now occurred that we had acted unwisely in not waiting for a response to our

second telegram, so as to be sure that it had been received and was properly understood.

The telegraph line to Orocué had only recently been put up —just a few weeks before our arrival there—and had never been in satisfactory working order. In fact, owing to a break in the wire, which lasted a fortnight, we had not been able to get into communication with Villavicencio—the place whence our mules were to come—until a few days before we started for Barrigón. Might there not have been another interruption in the line after we sent our second message? And did this message ever reach its destination? It is true that a week had elapsed since our departure from Orocué, and, if the line had been severed, it might have been repaired.

But then again this was far from certain. The wire passed through dense and interminable forests—where there were no roads of any kind—and it might require several days to reach the break after it was located. And then after our vaqueano got our telegram it would require three days for him to go from Villavicencio to Barrigón, supposing that he had the mules and saddles in readiness. If they were not ready there would be another delay in starting. Altogether the outlook was far from reassuring. Our animals and men might arrive at any hour, and then again we might be obliged to wait for them for weeks.

While occupied in these far from comforting reflections, we remembered that the mail from Bogotá to Orocué was due. The men who would bring it would also bring a certain amount of freight for various points on the Meta. Here, then, was a ray of hope. If our own men and animals should fail us, we might be able to prevail on the mail carriers to give us the necessary means of transportation for ourselves and baggage. This consideration tended to relieve somewhat the suspense which was the most

unpleasant feature of our hapless situation. We resolved, accordingly, to take a more optimistic view of things, and to trust to our star which, so far, had ever been in the ascendant.

What had greatly contributed to the gloominess of the outlook on our arrival at Barrigón was the thought that we should be obliged to leave our launch—where we were so comfortable—for the dismal, steaming pest-hole on the river's bank. We did not for a moment think of asking for shelter in the filthy shack occupied by the negro family. That would be tantamount to courting *paludismo*—malarial fever—in its worst form. Fortunately, we had a good tent with us, and in this we could be shielded from sun and rain, and, at the same time, escape some of the unsanitary features that rendered this spot so forbidding and dangerous. It was really the first place that we had yet visited from which we instinctively shrank and from which we wished to depart at the earliest possible moment.

While thus preoccupied and devising ways and means for rendering our enforced detention at this spot as endurable as circumstances would permit, our captain, God bless him! observing our distress, came to us, and with a kindness and courtesy we can never forget, said, "*No se preocupen, Señores, la lancha quedará aquí hasta que vengan las bestias.*" Do not worry, gentlemen, the launch will remain here until the arrival of your animals.

What a relief this kind and considerate act was—performed when and where it counted for so much to us—only those can realize who have been placed in similar situations. Everything was now as well provided for as might be, except food. Where that was to come from was a mystery, as we did not wish to draw on the very limited supply we had brought with us.

Our first meal consisted of plátanos—some boiled and some fried—with a cup of black coffee. I had never eaten a dozen bananas in any form before coming to South America, but I gradually became accustomed to them, although I never relished them. Here, however, there was nothing else in sight, except two or three ducks that were quacking about the green, miasmatic pools that surrounded the negro shanty. We endeavored to purchase these, but, although we offered the old dame several times what they were worth, she would not part with them. No African ever held on more tenaciously to his fetish or rabbit-foot than did this swart Ethiopian hag of Puerto Nuevo to her prized webfeet.

For our dinner we fared better. Fortunately and quite unexpectedly, someone succeeded in landing a large and delicious fish, which was quite sufficient to furnish a meal for ourselves and crew. A new source of food-supply was now indicated, but try as we would, it was impossible to catch another fish—large or small. The impetuous current of the muddy river was decidedly adverse to our rising piscatorial hopes. But we determined not to worry on account of our lack of success as anglers. “Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.” Providence, we were sure, would provide for the morrow. Probably our men and mules would arrive. If not, the mail carriers would undoubtedly come, and then no *Deus ex machina* would be necessary to extricate us from our embarrassing situation.

A dreary day passed and a more dreary night. What with the suspense and the lack of proper food, and the confinement to a disagreeable spot in the impenetrable forest, our position was such as not to encourage slumber by night or rapturous admiration of tropical flora during the day. Nevertheless, we still instinctively felt that relief would not be long in coming.

The second morning we had our usual desayuno of black coffee and plátanos. And to our amazement, there was added to this simple fare a fine roast chicken. Where did it come from? We had seen no chickens anywhere about the premises, and could not have been more surprised if it had dropped from the blue sky. I asked the captain, and he quietly replied with a smile, "*Un poco de diplomacia. Nada mas.*" A little diplomacy. Nothing more. Ever considerate about our comfort and needs, he had instituted a search for provisions, and learned that the *la vieja*—the old woman, as he called her—had some chickens concealed not far from the house, and, whether by persuasion or threats, he would not say, he induced her to part with one of them, and intimated that the same diplomacy he had employed in getting the first, would, if necessary, avail in securing others. The outlook was still brightening, and we now felt more than ever that our deliverance was near.

Shortly after midday, while we were taking our usual siesta in the launch, we were suddenly startled by an unearthly noise. All the dogs and whelps of the place and all the "curs of low degree"—and there were many of them—began to bark at once. And then in the forest near by there was such shouting and screaming on the part of men and boys, accompanied by the neighing of horses and the braying of mules, that it seemed that a troop of guerrillas was bearing down upon us. Never before had we heard anything like it, except possibly a Sioux or Navajo war whoop. They seemed to desire to frighten us to death before attacking us *vi et armis*. But no music could have been more grateful to our ears than were those discordant notes emitted by man and beast. We knew at once what it all meant, and, almost before we could reach the top of the bank, our animals and men were all gathered in the small free space in front of the cabin, and with them were the

bearers of the Bogotá mail. There were about thirty mules and horses, and more than a dozen men.

We had telegraphed for mules only, as we did not think we should be able to get horses, but to our delight we found that we were to have two good saddle horses for our personal use, besides the mules destined for our baggage. As, however, both men and animals needed rest, after their long tiresome trip from Villavicencio, it was deemed best to defer our departure until the following morning. The animals were then turned loose to browse on whatever they could find to appease hunger, and their masters were soon ensconced in their hammocks, slung wherever they could find a suitable place for them.

It was arranged with our vaqueano that we should all be ready for our journey across the llanos *de madrugada*—at early dawn—the following morning. We had a long day's ride before us, as the nearest stopping place, where we could hope to find food and shelter, was at a place called Barrancas, where was the house of the owner of a large *hato*—cattle farm.

Bright and early, then, the next morning, our peons and vaqueano were busy saddling our horses and packing our baggage on the backs of the mules. The mail bongo from Orocué—which had left that place ten days before we did—arrived a few hours before our departure, and all mail matter was hurriedly put on the backs of other mules by those in charge of the mail destined for Bogotá and intervening points.

It was not without a pang that we bade farewell to our devoted crew, who had done so much to render our voyage on the Meta and Humea as pleasant as it was memorable. From the ever-courteous and thoughtful captain to our good-natured and obliging Guahibo, we were always the

recipients of delicate attentions of every kind. We might travel far before again meeting with men so kind and so sympathetic as were those four whom it was our good fortune to meet in an isolated village of far-off Colombia. "God bless you all!" we said in parting. "Nothing is too good for you."

During the first hour after starting we had to struggle through what the natives call the *montaña*. It had nothing mountainous about it, as the name would seem to indicate, but was a dark, nearly impervious wood almost on a level with the waters of the Humea. In the dry season, I doubt not, the path through this forest would present no difficulty, but during the rainy season it was next to impassable. Everywhere there was deep, sticky mud and deeper pools and dirty stagnant water. Often our horses sank to the saddle-girths in the tenacious slime, and it was only by the greatest effort that they were able to extricate themselves. At times, where the mud and water were unusually deep, we were forced, for short stretches, to make our way through the pathless forest. Then every step was impeded by branches and lianas and progress was next to impossible. Finally, with great difficulty for the animals and not a little danger to ourselves, we succeeded in effecting our exit from this terrible montaña, and, before we were aware of it, we found ourselves on high and dry ground on the edge of a beautiful, smiling prairie of apparently limitless extent.

What a relief it was to get once more into the open—into the broad llanos of Colombia—where we could have an unimpeded view for miles in every direction. We had been in the depths of the forest so long, getting only occasional glimpses of the llanos on our way up the river, that we felt like a prisoner given his liberty after a long term of confinement. Not that we had not enjoyed the forests while we were in them. Far from it. We had enjoyed every

moment of the time spent in studying their richness and beauty. But now that we had reached the llanos, to which we had so long looked forward, and were no longer confined to the limited quarters of our launch; now that we were on our willing steeds and could move as we chose in any direction and as far afield as fancy might suggest, we experienced a sense of freedom and agility that surprised ourselves. We felt as if we had suddenly been transferred to another world, so different was our new environment from that in which we had spent so many weeks.

Never did the earth seem so green or the sky so blue, or the sun so bright; never did the face of nature appear so ravishingly beautiful as on that glorious May morning near the picturesque Humea. And away to the west, partly veiled by haze and cloud, loomed up higher than ever those vast mountains of majesty and mystery that seemed to overhang the world. Yes, we were slowly but surely approaching the Andes, and in a few days more, *Deo volente*, we should be scaling its dizzy heights and exulting in the splendid panoramas that would be presented to our enchanted gaze.

The landscape before us was indeed beautiful, entrancing as a vision, fair as the Happy Valley of Rasselas. Exulting in a new sense of freedom, and stirred by many overmastering emotions, we could but exclaim with Byron,

"Beautiful!
How beautiful is all this beautiful world!
How glorious in its action and itself!"

I have called the part of the llanos we were then entering a prairie, but it was far more beautiful than any of our plains known by that name. It was more like the palm-besprent delta of the Nile than the tame and almost treeless reaches

of land which characterize so much of our western prairies. Here and there were coppices of graceful shrubs made melodious by feathered songsters whose notes were new to us, but everywhere, at no greater distance from one another, were our old friends that had accompanied us all the way from the mouth of the Orinoco—the ever-attractive moriche palms.

We saw also several other species of palm that excited our interest, but none more so than the strange corneto palm. Like various species of the *Oenocarpus* and *Iriartea*, it is remarkable for its adventitious or secondary roots, which, springing from the trunk in large numbers, lift it above the ground, and give it the appearance of a large column supported on a cone of smaller columns inclined to it obliquely. These roots vary from a fraction of an inch to several inches in diameter. They have at times a length of from six to ten feet and embrace a space of ground from five to eight feet in diameter. They are frequently covered by vines and parasites so as to form a natural bower which is used as a retreat by wild animals. Even the Indians have recourse to these fantastic arbors as a place of refuge during rain storms.

Here, as in the land of the Aruacs, the moriche palm is not only a thing of beauty, but, for the Indians, a source of comfort and joy. This and other palms, notably a kind of date palm, and the *Cumana*, which bears a fruit similar to the wild olive, supply the Indians, during certain months of the year, with all the food they consume. Speaking of the palm, Padre Rivero declares it to be “the earthly paradise of the Guahibos and Chiricoas. It is their delight, their general larder, their all. It is the subject matter of their thoughts and conversations. About it they dream, and without it life would possess no joy for them.”[1]

Like the cocoa palm, “By the Indian Sea, on the isles of

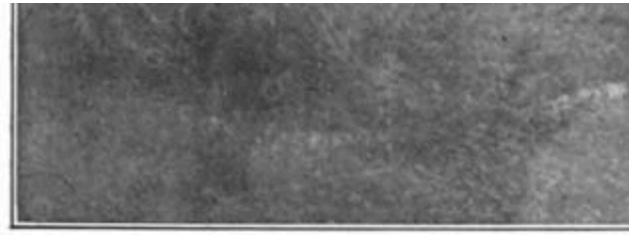
balm," of which Whittier so sweetly sings, the palm on the Meta and its affluents, as well as on the lower Orinoco, is for the child of the forest

"A gift divine,
Wherein all uses of man combine,—
House and raiment and food and wine."

When contemplating the bountiful provisions of Nature in favor of the inhabitants of the tropics, as evinced in various species of food-producing palms, we are forcibly reminded of the statement of Linnæus that the first home of our race was somewhere in the tropics. "Man," says this illustrious botanist, "dwells naturally within the tropics, and lives on food furnished by the palm tree; he exists in other parts of the world and subsists on flesh and cereals."[2]

The llanos in places are quite level, and intersected by numerous caños and streams. Some of them are so large that they could easily be converted into navigable canals for small craft. In other places the plains are undulating and are ideal grazing lands during the rainy season. There is always an abundance of water, even in the dryest summer, and the numerous groves and clumps of trees suffice to furnish shade at all times for the largest herds.





A Traveler's Lodge in the Llanos of Colc

We had not proceeded far when we met a large herd of cattle in care of herdsmen quietly reposing beneath some umbrageous moriche palm or singing some favorite Llanero song. Contrary to what we expected, the cattle were not so wild as those we had seen in Venezuela and, although we passed within a few yards of them, they barely noticed us. They were quite as tame as any one would find in the pasture lands of an Illinois farm.

But what a fine breed of cattle they were and in what splendid condition! They were as fat, sleek and large as any we had ever seen on the plains of Texas or Nebraska, and would, I am sure, command as high prices in the stockyards of Chicago.

We were deeply impressed with the future possibilities of the Venezuelan grazing lands, but we are now convinced that even a greater future awaits the llanos of Colombia when properly exploited. To extend the Cucuta railway so as to place Casanare and Villavicencio in connection with Lake Maracaibo would be a far less difficult and costly undertaking than many other railroad enterprises in South America that have been carried to a successful issue, and that, too, when the traffic hoped for was far less than it would be in this instance. Such an extension, which would not need to be more than two or three hundred miles in length, would put the Colombian llanos in direct communication with the chief ports of the United States and Europe. By using fast steamers, freight could then be carried from the heart of the llanos to Mobile or New York in a week. What an immense development of the cattle

industry this would at once effect is beyond calculation. It would be a greater source of revenue to the Republic of Colombia than all its mines combined.

At the first blush this project may appear Utopian to those who are unfamiliar with the country or who have never given thought to the feasibility of the enterprise. Colombia, to most people in the United States, is little better known than the territory of the Congo. Even to the Colombians themselves, the llanos—*la parte oriental*, as they call it—is a *terra incognita*. Outside of the Llaneros—cattle men—who have interests there, it is rarely visited by any one connected with the administration of the government. To reach the llanos from Bogotá means a long and tiresome journey across the eastern Cordilleras, and few are willing to undertake such a trip out of curiosity or for the purpose of informing themselves about the resources of this distant and neglected part of their country.

And yet, far away as they may seem, the llanos are not half so distant from the United States as England is, and, with the steamship and railway facilities above indicated, they could be brought as near to New York in time as is London at the present.

Probably a more economical way of reaching the llanos would be by the Orinoco and the Meta. During the rainy season, as we have seen, boats of light draft, but of considerable tonnage, can safely traverse these rivers as far as Cabuyaro or Barrigón. A few hundred tons of dynamite judiciously applied would effect a wonderful change for the better in the beds of the two rivers named, and would render navigation quite safe for the whole, or at least a greater part of the year.

When we note the magnitude of the beef trade between Australia and the Argentine and the different ports of

Europe, we are amazed to observe that so little has been attempted towards developing a similar but a more profitable trade with regions that are comparatively at our doors. If these fertile and favored lands, instead of belonging to a country long known, and looked at askance by capitalists and business men, were a new discovery, there would be as great a rush towards them on the part of colonists as there has frequently been to those Indian lands that have, from time to time, been opened to white settlers in Oklahoma and elsewhere in the West.

Now that our people are beginning to realize that the cattle in the United States are not increasing in proportion to the demands of its rapidly-growing population, they may be induced to turn their eyes towards the vast plains of our two sister republics of Colombia and Venezuela, where there is, all the year round, abundant pasturage of the richest kind for millions of cattle. There are vast fortunes awaiting those who are willing to venture into these long-neglected fields.

According to the reports of our Bureau of Animal Industry, the United States has been for some years past suffering from fever ticks and other plagues an annual loss of more than sixty million dollars. This fact, coupled with the increasing demand for beef, renders it imperative to seek for an adequate supply elsewhere. The cheapest and best place in which to secure this extra supply is, *me judice*, in the marvelous llanos so near our own country, which should, in the manner indicated above, be brought much nearer than they are at present.

I know that people will hesitate about investing in countries whose governments are as unstable as those of the two nations mentioned, and where foreign investors have found so little encouragement and sympathy. There is, however, reason to believe that the age of revolutions is

coming to an end, and that it will, in the near future, be succeeded by the reign of law. Peace congresses, arbitration agreements, the spread of education, and the construction of railroads have produced splendid results in other parts of the world, where progress had long been unsatisfactory, and who will say that we may not hope to see the same beneficent results realized in Venezuela and Colombia? If all else fail, it is quite certain that our government will know how to safeguard the rights of those of its citizens who may have interests in these countries about whose validity there can be no question. Now that all are so desirous of seeing improved commercial relations established between the United States and the various countries of Latin America, it would seem to be a matter of prime importance not any longer to ignore the golden opportunities that in the regions bordering the Caribbean have so long eluded American energy and enterprise.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when we arrived at Barrancas. We found here a good-sized house with an open shed—*enramada*—near by. This latter structure is used as a shelter for farming implements, harness, saddles, etc., and as a place where peons and herdsmen may swing their hammocks and sleep during the night. The house, to our surprise, had a tile roof, the first we had seen since leaving Ciudad Bolivar.

The proprietor of the *hato*, whose home and family were in Bogotá, received us cordially and did everything in his power to make us comfortable. He also gave us his own room, which had a board floor, another novelty to us. We were soon provided with a frugal repast, after which we were entertained by our host's experiences on the llanos. He was one of eighteen children of the same mother. He and his eleven brothers own a number of ranches and have many thousand cattle in different parts of the republic.

"During the last war," he said, "the soldiers appropriated a thousand of our steers." "Did you put in a claim to the government for damages?" I asked. "Yes," he replied, "but it did no good. I never got a *centavo* and never expect to. If I had been a foreigner, especially if I had been an American, I should have received compensation for my loss. The government always pays foreign claims when just, but the citizens of the country must be satisfied with promises. It always promises to reimburse us for any losses sustained during revolutions but the fact is that we never get anything more substantial than promises."

The labor problem was as serious with him as with a Kansas farmer during harvest time. "*Es muy dificil conseguir brazos aquí*,"—it is very difficult to secure laborers here—he told me in a tone of sadness. "So many men lost their lives during the last war, that the country is now suffering for a lack of working men."

And yet, notwithstanding his losses and his troubles, our host was a thoroughly loyal Colombian. He loved to talk about his country, its marvelous resources, and the great future in store for it. He spent most of the year in the capital, coming to Barrancas only for a few weeks at a time, and that only when business demanded his personal supervision.

I was curious to learn from him, a Llanero, and therefore an expert horseman, the shortest possible time in which the trip could be made to Bogotá from Barrigón. Some books I had read stated that the distance from the head of navigation on the Meta—and we had reached that point—to Bogotá was only twenty miles, while certain Venezuelans I had met had assured me that the trip could be made in two days. His answer was conclusive. "The shortest possible time without a relay of horses," he said, "is four days. To attempt to cover the distance in less time

would be fatal to the horse. I never try to reach Bogotá from here in less than four days, and even this means hard riding."[3]

"But what brings you up the Orinoco and the Meta at this season of the year," he enquired. "You are certainly the first Americans to come here—*rio arriba*—up the river. Others may have come to the llanos from the capital, but, if they did, I am not aware of it. And why did you select the rainy season for your journey? Why did you not wait until summer, when it is dry, and when the roads are in better condition?" We then explained to him that no boats ascended the Meta during the summer season and that we were thus forced to come during the winter. Strange as it may appear, this had never occurred to him. And yet he was an intelligent man and well informed about his country and presumably about the means of communication with the countries adjacent.

The Colombian Llanero is a most interesting character. He is absolutely unique among his countrymen. The only people with whom he can be compared are the inhabitants of the Apure plains and the Gauchos of the Argentine pampas. Like these he regards as "fortunate the man who has received from heaven the means of safeguarding life and property—a good horse and a good lance."[4] Having these two essentials of defense and offense, he is happy and independent.

This is readily understood from his manner of life, which is quite akin to that of the Arabian nomad. The desert in which he lives and his eternal struggle against a physical environment that is as savage as it is grandiose; his occupation as a herdsman and his roving life in the boundless plain, have given the Llanero a character that is as original as it is interesting.

As a son of the desert, he is a lover of music and poetry, and will spend an entire night or several consecutive nights dancing, playing his rude guitar, scarcely larger than the hand that twangs it, or a huge banjo, and singing verses either of his own composition, or those of some other poet of the plains. For strange as it may appear, poets abound in the llanos as scarcely anywhere else. They may be unable to read or write but they are nevertheless able to produce songs—*tonos* or *trovas llaneras*—that are frequently marked by rare beauty and depth of feeling. Considering their limitations, their faculty for versification is often really remarkable, and it is not unusual to find among them a singer that will improvise with as much facility as an Italian improvisatore.

The Llaneros have a poetry of their own which they never abandon. They compose what they sing and sing what they compose. And, although they cannot as yet point to one of their poets who has had the advantages of education and culture, they can, nevertheless, point with pride to many of their number who have produced metrical compositions of marked excellence and power of expression. The pity is that so far we have no anthology of these poets of the plains. There is certainly a rich field here for research awaiting some lover of the fresh and the novel in literature and it is to be hoped that some one may soon explore a domain that is so promising in results.

Their favorite compositions are ballads or rhymed romances, called *galerones*, which are sung as recitatives. They closely resemble the popular rhymed romances of Spain, and refer generally to deeds of prowess performed by their own heroes in their constant struggles with the wild and unsubdued nature in which their life is cast. In these *galerones* valor and not love is the protagonist. Love, in the metrical compositions of the plains, is always a secondary character.

Two stanzas from a poem entitled *En Los Llanos*—On the Plains—will exhibit the character of these poems, and show, at the same time, that the Llanero has a keen eye for the beautiful and sublime in nature and that his heart is open to the sweetest sentiment and the deepest piety and reverence.

"Lejos, muy lejos del hogar querido
Paréceme que estoy en un desierto,"

"Far, far away from my hearth," he laments, "meseems I am in a desert." And he gives his reason.

"Cuando entre vivo rosicler la aurora
Muestra la fresca faz en el Oriente
En vano busco a mi gentil señora,
En vano á la hija que mi alma adora,
Para besarlas ambas en la frente."[5]

For the Llanero a view of the beauty and grandeur of his surroundings is a call to prayer, as is evinced by the following lines:

"O que prodigios! que beldad! El hombre
Debil se siente y pobre en su presencia.
No hay nada aqui que el corazón no asombre,
En todo escrito está de Dios el nombre,
Todo pregona aquí su Omnipotencia."[6]

Before daylight next morning, the vaqueano knocked at our door, announcing that it was time to rise, as we had another long ride before us and must start early. Coffee was soon ready for us and also a roast chicken. The latter, however, was prepared in such a way that we did not relish it. Then it was, indeed, that we missed our Indian cooks of the Meta. We asked for some milk for our coffee, but although surrounded by large herds of cattle, there was not

a drop of milk in the house. When we expressed surprise at this, the cook replied: “We never milk the cows here. We leave the milk for the calves.”

I had often had a similar experience in the large ranches of the trans-Missouri region and was not, therefore, specially surprised at the answer. However, a little persuasion induced one of the peons to secure us a calabash of milk, although his task was not an easy one. The cows, unaccustomed to being milked, refuse to stand still, and in this instance, the peon had to tie one of them to a tree. Even then, he was obliged to call in the aid of an assistant before he could get the milk we craved.

On the cattle farms of Venezuela, where the cows are quite wild, it is necessary to throw a noose around the horns of the animal to be milked, and for one of the dairymen to hold it secure by a long pole, while another does the milking in the usual way. Our peon, fortunately, was not obliged to resort to such a drastic, time-consuming method.

Although it had rained heavily the greater part of the night, there was no indication that the downpour would soon cease. On the contrary, it looked as if it were to continue raining all day. Fortunately, we were provided with good waterproof ponchos, and were prepared for any *aguacero* —heavy shower—that Jupiter Pluvius might choose to send from the heavy, lowering clouds that, pall-like, overcast the sky.

Before we left Orocué, at the suggestion of the prefect of the place, we had telegraphed to Villavicencio for a couple of *bayetones*—a special kind of poncho—and these our vaqueano had delivered to us at Barrigón.

To the inhabitants, especially the Indians of South America, and more particularly those living in the

Cordilleras, the poncho is what a mantle was to an Irishman in the days of the poet Spenser. “When it rayneth it is his pent howse; when it blowes it is his tent; when it freezeth, it is his tabernacle. In sommer he can weare it loose, in winter he can weare it close; at all times he can use it, never heavy, never cumbersome.” In a word, this “weede is theyr howse, theyr bedd, and theyr garment.”[7]

The poncho or bayeton,[8] usually made of wool, in fully six feet square with a hole in the centre to admit the head. Our bayetones—called “nabby-tonys” by C.—were really double ponchos, made by sewing together two blankets, one red, the other blue. When the weather is damp and cloudy, the blue side is exposed, whereas it is the red that is kept outside when the sun is shining. The wearers of this useful garment have learned by experience that these two colors are differently acted upon by heat and light and they accordingly adjust it so as to secure the maximum of comfort. The *manta* is a lighter covering made of white linen and is sometimes highly embroidered. It is used when the sun’s rays are more intense, because it reflects the solar rays better than the red woolen garment. It is, however, rather an ornament than a necessity, and its use is confined almost entirely to the better classes.

Provided with a poncho, a hammock and a many-pocketed saddle—which are almost as indispensable as his horse—the Llanero is always at home. The two former, he carries in a bundle behind his saddle, where they are always ready for him at a moment’s notice. In camping out he slings his hammock in any convenient place, and, if it be in the open, the poncho is, by means of a rope, held over it in such wise that he can defy the most violent storm of the tropics, and sleep as soundly and be as well protected from the rain as if he were under his own roof-tree.

Our trail was one of the numerous cattle paths that

intersect the llanos in every direction. The one we followed was a narrow ditch filled with from one to two feet of water. Our vaqueano, who was in the lead, trotted along as if we were following a dry path, and we had to keep up with him or be lost. It was then that we realized the impossibility of traveling over these extensive plains without a guide, especially on a cloudy day during the rainy season. As well might one try to cross the ocean without a compass as attempt to make one's way over the llanos without a vaqueano. There was so many caños—those natural channels, like deep ditches, connecting streams and rivers—and morasses to cross that were quite impassable except in certain places known only to the Llaneros, who are thoroughly familiar with the country, that a stranger traveling alone would soon find progress quite impeded.

To attempt to reach one's destination by relying on the oral directions of a Llanero would be quite hopeless. They would, probably, be worded somewhat as follows:

"Continue your course over the savanna—*arriba, arriba*—up, up, until you reach that bunch of cattle you see yonder. You see them, don't you?" queries the Llanero. They are some cows and young bullocks, lost in the distance. Not having an Indian's keenness of vision you discern absolutely nothing, and yet, unwilling to admit the fact, you declare that you distinguish them perfectly. Your informant then vouchsafes further information which, if you carefully heed and are able to follow, will without fail, conduct you to your desired goal. "Then," he continues, "go to a clump of algarroba trees, but leave that aside and veer towards a group of palms which you will see from there. When you reach the palm group, coast along the foothills, across the Caño del Cayman, for that is the name of the caño, until you come to the Caño del Tigre. Next, you come to a copse of bamboos, and then after that to the

Caño de Chaparro Negro. Near it you will find the Paso del Caño. Cross it and you will come to a *morichal* at your left, but leave it behind, and continue a little to the right for half an hour, and you will see the place you are looking for."

Years ago I had received similar directions from an old woman in the mountains of Conamara, but there, all I had to do was to keep on the road, and stop at the place I was seeking when I reached it. In the llanos, where there are no roads, outside the hundreds of cattle paths extending in every direction, it would be natural for the traveler, depending on directions like the above, promptly to lose himself.

Fortunately, we had a good vaqueano, one who knew every cowpath and caño and clump of trees between Barrigón and Villavicencio, and we felt thoroughly at ease under his guidance. At times, it is true, we found it somewhat difficult to keep up with him. He seemed to have reserved the speediest animal for himself, or he knew better how to keep up a sustained trot than we did. But, be that as it may, we managed never to permit him to vanish from sight.

As we were riding over the plains we observed a large number of vultures—Gallinazos—on a tree near our path. Hard by was the carcass of an ox, that had just died, on which a single king vulture—*Sarcoramphus Papa*—like the one we fancied that preyed on the liver of Tityus—was making his morning repast. The Gallinazos appear to stand in awe of the king vulture, and were patiently waiting till he was satiated before making any attempt to appease their own voracious appetites. The two species are never seen to feed on the same carcass together. We saw several other such vulture banquets on our way, but never did we see so many of these scavengers congregated around the same

carrion.

After six hours of hard riding, most of the time in a heavy rain, we reached Los Pavitos. It consisted of a small bamboo hut and a number of sheds. Here we dismounted for our midday meal, which consisted of a few boiled eggs, and a cup of *café à la llanera*—that is, coffee without milk or sweetening of any kind—*sin dulce*—as the natives phrase it—and some crackers that we had in an improvised haversack.

The family living in the hut consisted of three persons—man, wife and their little daughter, a sweet child of about four years of age. Both mother and child were neatly dressed, and had a genteel appearance that was in marked contrast with their surroundings. The child wore a tidy pink dress, tastefully ornamented, and seemed as if she had just come from the class-room of a convent school. The family impressed us as having seen better days, and had evidently not lived always so far away from their fellows.

Near the house stood a large calabash tree, bearing the largest fruit of the kind we had yet observed. Some of the specimens of this tree looked not unlike green pumpkins, and were fully from ten to twelve inches in diameter. It is well named the crockery tree, because, in the tropics, it supplies to a great extent the kitchen utensils which are elsewhere made from clay.

Within a few steps of the tree mentioned was a broad, murmuring stream—shaded on both sides by large, overhanging trees—of pure crystal water. It was the first time in many weeks that we had seen clear, flowing water, and then was brought home to us, as never before, the truth of old Captain John Hawkins' expressive words that there is nothing "so toothsome as running water." While on the Orinoco and the Meta, we always had with us large

earthenware filters, for it was not safe to drink the muddy waters of these rivers, often containing more or less decaying animal matter.

The last thing we did before leaving our launch was to fill our canteen with filtered water. But more than a day had elapsed since then, and our supply was exhausted. We accordingly proceeded to replenish our canteen with water from the neighboring stream, but, as soon as the lady of the house saw what we were about, she begged us to permit her to render us this little service. “I know where the water is best,” said she, and, taking the canteen, she waded out almost to the middle of the stream and in a few moments returned with a new supply of water fresh from the Andes.

As we prepared to leave, mother and child—the father was sick abed with malaria—both expressed their regret that we could not remain longer. “We feel greatly honored,” the good woman said, “by your visit, and, if you ever come this way again, you must be sure to come to Los Pavitos. *Dios guarde á VV. y feliz viaje.*” May God protect you and may you have a happy journey.

Such were the parting words of this gentle soul in the wilderness, words of tenderest charity and sweetest benediction. For hours afterwards her touching accents seemed like music in our ears, and the image of her lovely child, her darling *niñita*, nestling by her side, with her little hands waving us a fond adieu, was before our eyes long after we had left the llanos far behind us.

What was it in these gentle creatures, whom we saw for only a few moments, that appealed to us so strongly? Was it that secret bond of sympathy—highly intensified by circumstances and environment—that makes all the world akin? Was it the same sentiment that touched the artistic soul of Raphael, when, on passing through an Italian

village, he saw the mother and child whom he has immortalized in his *Madonna della Sedia*. Or were we just then in the mood that impelled Goethe to indite his soul-subduing ballad *Der Wanderer*? Perhaps. Let the reader judge from the following stanza:—

"Farewell!
O Nature, guide me on my way!
The wandering stranger guide,

"To a sheltering place,
From north winds safe!

"And when I come
Home to my cot
At evening,
Illumined by the setting sun,
Let me a woman see like this,
Her infant in her arms!"

After leaving Los Pavitos, we still had a three-hours ride ahead of us before reaching Las Palmas, where we purposed stopping for the night. Fortunately, it had ceased raining and our trail was now in a much better condition than it had been since leaving Barrancas.

It contributed much to our comfort, too, that we were able to complete our day's journey under sun-proof clouds. So far we had not suffered the slightest inconvenience from the exaggerated heat of the plains. Some of our Ciudad Bolivar friends had told us that the heat of the llanos was so intense that it would be necessary, if we would avoid sunstroke, to travel by night. As a matter of fact, the

temperature was never above 80° F. During the greater part of the time it was several degrees below this figure. Besides, to attempt to cross the llanos in the rainy season, during the pitch-dark nights that usually prevail, would be like trying to find one's way through a Cimmerian bog. Not even the most experienced vaqueano would venture on such a foolhardy journey.

We arrived at Las Palmas just as the rays of the setting sun were beginning to throw a veil of crimson and purple over the distant summits of the Cordilleras. Here we met with the same cordial reception as elsewhere on the llanos. As, however, there was not room enough in the small *choza* and *enramada* for our entire party, we had recourse to our portable tent, which we always had with us for such emergencies. When we enquired of our host what he could offer us for *comida*, he sadly replied he had nothing but bananas, which were at our disposition. There were no eggs or chickens, and, although there were herds of cattle all around us, it was quite impossible to get a draught of milk. The cows would not permit anyone to milk them.

We then remembered that we yet had in our haversack a small tin box, still unopened, of sliced Chicago bacon. This, with some crackers, was all that was left of the little store of provisions that we had brought with us. It was not without grave misgivings that we proceeded to open this remnant of our food-supply. We had, on several former occasions, found that our canned goods were unfit for use, and what if the contents of this last box should be spoiled? It meant that we should be reduced to extremely short rations until we should reach Villavicencio, and there was no certainty when that would be. We had still another *montaña* to pass, many rivers and caños to cross, and, above all, the terrible Ocoa, which, on account of the floods that had been overflowing its banks during the past week, our vaqueano said, might delay us for several days.

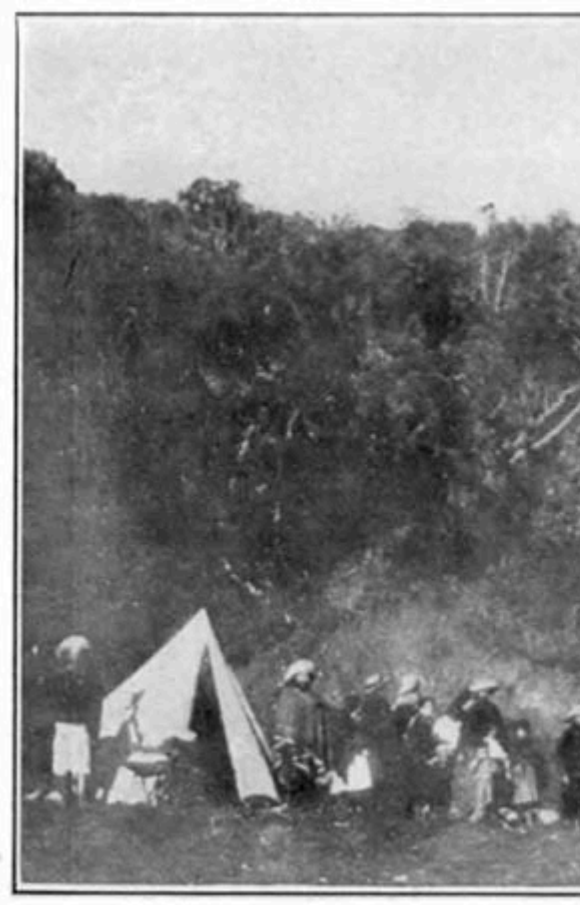
But the good God, who takes care of the birds of the air and clothes the lily of the field, had not forgotten us. We found the contents of the box as fresh and wholesome as when first enclosed in the far-off metropolis on Lake Michigan, and very pleasant was it, as the reader can imagine, for us, who had so long fared on chicken, eggs and bananas, to have a change in our aliment, in the form of sweet, nutty, breakfast bacon and that, too, from the glorious land of the Stars and Stripes.

Early the next morning we were again in the saddle. Before bidding us adieu our kindly host expressed his regret that he was unable to give us better entertainment. He wished us to understand that it was through lack of means and not of good will. "*Dispense la mala posada*," excuse our poor lodging house, he said—and his wife and daughter, a fair young girl just entering her teens, re-echoed his apologies and in accents that left no doubt as to their sincerity.

During the latter part of the night at Las Palmas, there was a genuine tropical *aguacero*—the heaviest downpour that we had yet witnessed. When we started from there the next morning it was still raining heavily, and with no indication that there was to be a change until late in the day, if then. Now, more than ever, we congratulated ourselves on having secured our bayetones just when they were so much needed. They were all they had been represented to be and more. Although we had already spent many hours in continuous rainfalls, not a drop of moisture had yet reached our persons, and we had remained as dry as if we had traveled under a cloudless sky. The raincoats we had brought with us, although guaranteed to be the best waterproofs made, would never have served the purpose that our bayetones answered so admirably.



A Shelter on th



Our Cam

After about an hour's ride, we entered a montaña similar to the one near Barrigón, but greater in extent. The mud was not so deep, but there were more caños and streams to cross. Some of them were quite deep, and in a few instances, the current was so strong that our horses had difficulty in keeping themselves on their feet. Several times we turned to our vaqueano to enquire if a particularly large stream was the much-dreaded Ocoa. "*No, Señores*," he always replied; "*El Ocoa es más grande*"—the Ocoa is

larger.

We noticed that he was quite pensive and apparently as much preoccupied about the Ocoa as we were ourselves. He then informed us that he had learned at Las Palmas that the Ocoa had been impassable for several days past, and he feared we should be detained there for some time. Just then we came to the largest and widest torrent that we had yet met. We effected the passage of this with the greatest difficulty, and not without considerable risk to both mount and rider. After we had safely gotten across I turned again to our guide and said: "That is surely the Ocoa, is it not?" "*No, Señor, el Ocoa es todavia más grande y más bravo.*" No, Sir, the Ocoa is still larger and more turbulent.

Finally, after we had been about three hours in the montaña, the rain continuing all the while without cessation; after we had narrowly escaped being mired several times, or being carried away by several of the impetuous water courses that obstructed our path—there were by actual count more than thirty of them; after a long struggle against the dread that was so greatly depressing our vaqueano, and trying to take an optimistic view of our situation, we had our attention directed to a loud roaring noise immediately in front of us. We knew at once what that meant, and did not need the information then volunteered by our guide, "*He aquí el Ocoa, Señores*." That is the Ocoa, Sir.

A few minutes more and we were on its banks. Swollen to an unusual height by the recent heavy rainfalls in the Andes, it was now a raging, roaring mountain torrent that had attained the magnitude of a tumultuous river which swept everything before it. It must have been such a torrent that the poet Schiller had before his mind's eye when he wrote *The Diver*, of which the following stanza is a part:—

"And it seethes and roars, it welters and boils,
As when water is showered upon fire;
And skyward the spray agonizingly toils
And flood over flood sweeps higher and higher,
Upheaving, downrolling, tumultuously,
As though the abyss would bring forth a young sea."

C., who had never witnessed in Trinidad such exhibitions of storm and flood, was in despair. Our peons, finding their worst forebodings an actuality, were distressed and disconsolate. If they could but reach the other side of the river, they would be almost in sight of their homes from which they had been absent for more than a week.

"How long shall we be obliged to wait before we can cross?" someone timorously inquired. "If it does not rain any more," the reply came, "we may get over to-morrow evening. If there is another *aguacero* in the mountains, *Dios sabe*,"—God knows—"how long we may be detained here." Just then, one of the peons who claimed superior knowledge about the behavior of such *rios bravos* as the one before us, gave it as his candid opinion, that, even if there were no further rain, it would be quite impossible to effect a passage inside of three days.

To one unfamiliar with the suddenness with which mountain streams become raging torrents,[9] and the quickness with which they subside, these declarations of opinion were depressing enough. I had, however, spent many years among the Rocky and Sierra Madre mountains, and had often had occasion to study the *modus operandi* of the cloud-bursts that are there of so frequent occurrence. Besides this, while our peons were disputing among themselves as to what was best to be done in our embarrassing situation, I had been carefully observing the height of the water line and found, to my great delight, that it was gradually becoming lower. After making a few

measurements, I found that, if there were no further rainfall, we should be able to cross to the other side before sundown.

As it was now long past noon, and we had had nothing to eat since early morning, it was suggested that we take a little luncheon, while waiting for the river to become fordable. Suiting the action to the word, a fire was started, our kit of kitchen utensils was drawn from its sack, and in a short time we had a large cup of fragrant, black coffee, and the remnant of our breakfast bacon fried in a manner to do credit to a New York *chef*. We still had a few soda crackers, and these, together with the coffee and bacon, furnished us with a repast that left nothing to be desired.

Having no doubt about our ability to reach Villavicencio before nightfall, we gave all the remaining eatables to our vaqueano and peons. They thankfully partook of the coffee and crackers, but a mere taste of the bacon quite satisfied them. They had evidently never eaten any before and, far from relishing it, found it positively distasteful. They had yet to acquire a taste for bacon as others acquire a taste for snails and frogs' legs. They still had with them a few platanos—their staff of life—which they roasted, and with these and the crackers and coffee we gave them they fared even better than usual.

After luncheon was finished, it was found that the river had fallen enough to justify an attempt to cross it. Great caution, however, was necessary to prevent any possible mishap. First, the largest and strongest mule in the drove was relieved of his burden and forced to cross the river alone. He examined it very suspiciously and at first hesitated about entering the water. But he was so belabored with sticks and clubs that the poor beast had no alternative. After he had started towards the other side the peons all kept up such an unearthly yell that he was afraid to venture

back. After a terrific struggle he succeeded in reaching the opposite bank.

The current was evidently still too strong to warrant another experiment of this kind. So we waited about a half an hour, when a second mule—a smaller one—was driven into the water. He had barely reached the middle of the river when he was lifted off his feet, and carried some distance down stream. It looked, for a few moments, as if he was going to be lost, but, by vigorous exertion, he got on his feet again, and stood in mid-river breasting the full force of the current and looking piteously towards his masters for assistance. But they merely jeered at him vociferously and asked him if he wished to return to Barrigón.

Seeing no help forthcoming, the terrified brute made a supreme effort and succeeded in getting back to the bank from which he had started. There he stood for a while panting heavily, after the strenuous efforts he had made, but all the while looking wistfully at his companion on the opposite bank of the Ocoa. After he was somewhat rested, and before any one realized what he was about to do, the mule was again in the water, making, of his own accord, a second attempt to reach the other side of the river, where his companion was awaiting him. After battling with the current for some minutes, he was successful in his venture, for which he received the unstinted applause of his masters. No sooner had he emerged from the water than he gave a long, loud bray of victory which awoke the echoes in the woods for miles around. The whole performance was so comical that it provoked roars of laughter from our entire party. As an illustration of mule-headedness in a good cause, in face of apparently insuperable difficulties, it was superb.

Having proved the fordableness of the river by mules, the

peons determined to match their own strength against the still-impetuous current. Accordingly, one of their number, a giant in strength, taking the end of a hundred-foot lariat between his teeth, carefully entered the water, and, after successfully buffeting the angry billows, landed on the opposite bank, whence the two mules had watched his struggles with apparent interest and sympathy.

Now that the lariat was firmly stretched between the two banks, and that the river was still falling, it was a matter of only a short time to transfer the remaining mules and the baggage to the other side.

The *jurungos*[10]—a Llanero epithet for strangers—were the last to cross. Elevating our feet as much as possible, to avoid getting wet, we were soon in mid-stream. The motion of the water in one direction while our horses were struggling in the other, had a tendency to induce vertigo, but as we had to be on the alert every instant, in order to preclude all danger of miscarriage, we soon found ourselves happily landed, with the dread Ocoa at last in our rear.

It was now only a short ride to Villavicencio, over comparatively dry and slightly rising ground. Ere the sun had dropped behind the Andes we had alighted before our lodging house near the plaza on the main street of the town. Our host, who was awaiting us at the door, gave us a most cordial greeting, but seemed to be much surprised and embarrassed. He then explained that he had misunderstood the telegram that he had received from Orocué announcing our arrival and requesting him to have *piezas*—rooms—reserved for us. “I inferred from the telegram,” he said, “that you were Colombians and never, for an instant, dreamed that I should have the honor of entertaining foreigners. Had I known whom I was to have as my guests, I should have made more elaborate

preparations for your reception. As it is, I can offer you only an unfurnished room. It is the best I have, and I trust you will excuse my not making better provisions for your comfort during your sojourn in our midst. We have no hotels here, and our people, when traveling, are accustomed to lodge with their friends, or take an apartment like the one reserved for you."

The good man's explanation was quite unnecessary, as we were more than satisfied with our room. It was large and airy, and, although devoid of furniture of every kind, it had a clean board floor, and that was a great deal for travelers, who, like ourselves, had been roughing it on the Meta and the llanos.

He was much relieved when he saw how easy it was to satisfy his guests, and without more ado, he proceeded to order dinner for us without delay. While dinner was preparing we had our dufflebags brought into our apartment, and, in a very short time, our camp chairs were unfolded and our cots and bedding arranged for the night. A table was next brought in from an adjoining house, and soon a young Indian maid arrived to make the necessary preparations for our evening repast. Our meals, it had been arranged, were to be served from a restaurant a few doors away. The señora in charge, and her daughter, who belonged to an old Colombian family, now in reduced circumstances, left nothing undone to insure the most satisfactory service possible.

A bountiful dinner, such as we had not had since leaving Orocué, was soon on the table. There were meats, vegetables and various kinds of fruits and, what we found specially agreeable, good wheaten bread. Besides all these viands, there was an additional and unexpected luxury in the form of a quart bottle of generous old Bordeaux. It goes without saying that we showed due appreciation of

the señora's culinary skill. Never did the dishes of a Parisian restaurateur seem more inviting. Now came to us with special force the old saying that "appetite is the best sauce," and that for travelers like ourselves, "*Il vaut mieux découvrir un nouveau plat qu' un nouveau planète*," it is better to discover a new dish than a new planet.

As we had resolved to remain a few days in Villavicencio before essaying the trip across the Cordilleras, we felt a sense of relief, by anticipation, in the thought that we should not, before daybreak the following morning, be obliged to hearken, as hitherto, to the usual announcement of our vaqueano, "*Vamonos, Señores*—Gentlemen, it is time to start."

As we were both quite fatigued, we did not delay long in seeking repose on our ever-restful cots. And it was but a very short time before at least one of the travelers was in the land of dreams. And one of the visions that appeared to him was that of a little child in a pink frock, standing beside her mother under a totuma tree, near a crystal stream in the llanos, waving her tiny hand and lisping a sweet *Adiosito* to two strangers from beyond the sea, whose course was towards the western sky, where the giant Andes stood to salute the approaching lord of day.

1

Op. cit., p. 4. ↑

2

"Homo habitat inter tropicos, vescitur palmis, lotophagus; hospitatur extra tropicos sub novercante Cerere carnivorus."—*Systema Naturæ*, Vol. I, p. 24.

Besides the fruit-yielding palms there are others, like the palmetto or cabbage Palm, that also afford nutritious food. "The head of the Palmito tree," says Hakluyt, "is very good meate, either raw or sodden; it yeeldeth a head which waigheth about twenty pound, and is far better than any cabbage."—*Early Voyages*, Vol. V, p. 557. Schomburgk informs us that during his exploration of Guiana it was for weeks his chief sustenance. ↑

3

It is surprising what erroneous notions have been and are still entertained regarding the distance of Bogotá from the head of navigation on the eastern side of the Andes. Many recent writers place the distance at twenty miles. Michelena y Rojas, in his *Exploración Oficial*, p. 293, makes it but four leagues. Schomburgk, in an article in the *Journal of the Geographical Society*, Vol. X, p. 278, assures us that by way of the Meta there is uninterrupted navigation to within eight miles of Sante Fe de Bogotá! The fact is that the nearest point to Bogotá to which vessels of even light draught may ascend by the Meta is Barrigón, more than one hundred and fifty miles from Colombia's capital. Small flat boats and canoes may, through some of the affluents of the Meta, approach considerably nearer. During the rainy season they may even reach the foothills of the Andes at the base of which Villavicencio stands. But from here, the nearest point to the capital which even the smallest craft can reach to Bogotá, the distance is still ninety-three miles at the lowest estimate. To navigate the Rio Negro, as Rojas and others imagine can be done, from the llanos to Caquesa—thirty-seven hundred feet higher than the plains—would be no more possible than it would be to row or sail up an Alpine torrent. From Caquesa to Bogotá is not four leagues, as Michelena estimates, but full twenty-five miles. ↑

4

"Dichoso aquel que alcanza
Como rico don del Cielo,
Para defender su suelo
Buen caballo y buena lanza."

↑

5

"When roseate Aurora shows her fresh face in the East, in vain I seek my gentle spouse, in vain I look for the daughter my soul adores, to imprint a kiss on their brows." ↑

6

"O what prodigies! What beauty! Man feels weak and poor in their presence. There is nothing here that does not amaze the heart. In everything is inscribed the name of God. Everything proclaims His omnipotence." ↑

7

A View of the Present State of Ireland. ↑

8

Also called *cobija* and *ruana*. ↑

9

The Chagres river, it is said, occasionally rises twenty-five feet in a few hours. ↑

10

The term *Jurungo* has much the same signification among the Llaneros as has “tenderfoot” in Australia and the western part of the United States. *Guate*, another word of similar import, frequently heard in the Llanos, is employed to designate a *Serrano*—a highlander or mountaineer—while jurungo refers more specifically to a stranger from Europe or the United States. Like the word tenderfoot, these two epithets are used in a certain depreciative sense. ↑

CHAPTER VIII

THE CORDILLERA OF THE ANDES

"To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood
and fall,
To slowly trace the forest's shady
scene,
Where things that own not man's
dominion dwell,
And mortal feet hath ne'er, or rarely
been;
To climb the trackless mountain all
unseen.

"This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms, and
see her stores unrolled."

—Byron.

Villavicencio, the capital of the National Territory of the Meta, is situated at the very foot of the Andes, and is an attractive town of about three thousand inhabitants, many of whom are Indians. Its altitude above sea level, according to our barometer, is slightly less than fifteen hundred feet. It is a little more than ninety-three miles from Bogotá and has an average annual temperature of 83°

F. During our sojourn in the place the thermometer never rose above 76° F. in the shade, and it was occasionally several degrees below this point. And, although little more than seventy-five miles north of the equator, it was so cool at night that we always used our blankets.

A handsome church is located on one side of the spacious green plaza. Not far distant is a well-conducted convent school in charge of nuns recently expatriated from France, in consequence of the laws enacted against religious orders. The people are never tired sounding the praises of these good sisters and telling the visitor of the wonders they have accomplished in behalf of their children. Here, as elsewhere, "The stone which the builders rejected; the same shall become the head of the corner."

Villavicencio, like Cabuyaro, and other places in the llanos, is eagerly looking forward to the day when it shall be connected by rail with the national capital and the Meta. For nearly a century and a half a commercial route connecting Bogotá with the Meta and the Orinoco has been talked of but nothing has been done to make it a reality.

In 1783 the archbishop of Sante Fe, Monsignor Cabellero y Gongora, then viceroy of New Granada, caused a map to be made of the course of the Meta and the Orinoco to the Atlantic, with a view of developing commerce by that route, but the all-powerful opposition of Santa Marta and Cartagena nullified his efforts. Several times since that date the project has been resumed but each time it had to be abandoned in favor of the Magdalena, owing to the pressure brought to bear on the government by the merchants of Cartagena and Santa Marta. There is no doubt that the route *via* the Meta and the Orinoco would, in some respects, possess many advantages over that of the Magdalena, aside from developing much country now practically neglected.

Unlike Venezuela, Colombia favors free navigation of her rivers by all nations, and would welcome foreign craft on the Meta as she does on the Magdalena. Venezuela, however, favors monopolies, and, claiming absolute control of the Orinoco, has closed the Meta and the other affluents of the Orinoco to all steamers except those belonging to the one company which has a monopoly of the trade of the Orinoco and all its tributaries. How detrimental such a monopoly is, not only to Colombia but to Venezuela as well, can be seen at a glance. Some of the greatest resources of both countries are left undeveloped and progress in any direction is quite impossible.

This matter was taken up at the International Congress of Mexico in 1901, in connection with a plan to render navigation possible through the interior of the continent of South America from the Orinoco to the River Plate, but so far nothing has been accomplished.

The greater part of the eastern portion of Colombia is still isolated from the rest of the world, and will remain so until Venezuela shall recognize the fatuity of its short-sighted policy, or until the great commercial nations shall demand that the navigation of the Orinoco and its tributaries, like that of the Amazon and its affluents, be free to all vessels, no matter under what flag they may sail. And as soon as commerce shall awaken to the fact that an immense field of untold riches is closed to her activities in the forests and plains of the Orinoco basin—and that must be ere long—a demand will be made not only in the interests of South America but also in that of the entire civilized world.

As an illustration of how Colombia has been made to suffer by the arbitrary policy of Venezuela regarding waterways, of which both the sister republics should be beneficiaries, a single instance will suffice.

Shortly before our arrival in Villavicencio, a company was formed to supply electricity to the city. As there are no roads between Bogotá and Villavicencio, which would permit the transportation of the necessary machinery, the only way available for the introduction of such heavy freight was by the Orinoco and the Meta. It was accordingly planned to have the dynamos and other requisites brought by this route, but, when all was ready for shipment, the projectors of the enterprise learned that the Venezuelan government—that is, President Castro—would refuse to grant the necessary permission for the transportation of the merchandise in question. The idea, then, of lighting the city by electricity had to be abandoned, and the capital of the Meta territory is, as a consequence, forced to remain content with tallow candles and kerosene lamps.

The people of Villavicencio, as elsewhere in Colombia, we found to be extremely courteous and hospitable. They were eager to hear about America, and in turn were quite willing to afford all possible information about their own country, and especially about the llanos and Llaneros. We soon became acquainted with all the leading officials and business men, and recall with pleasure the many delicate attentions they showed us while in their midst. We were invited to visit their country estates and to examine some new industries—yet in their infancy—which gave promise of a bright future.

One of these was the rubber industry. Not content with the trees that grow spontaneously in the forests in this part of the country, a certain general—one of many we met here—conceived the idea of cultivating the rubber tree and had, accordingly, during the preceding year, set out no fewer than a half million small trees, and had it in purpose to plant many times this number in the near future. He said all that he had already planted were doing well, and he had no

doubt about the success of the enterprise. He was most sanguine about the future of eastern Colombia, and expressed it as his belief that in a few years Colombia would be as favorably known for her rubber as she is now for her cacao, coffee and tobacco.

There is no reason why the scientific cultivation of the rubber tree should not be attended with as good results in Colombia as have so signalized its culture in Ceylon and the Malay Peninsula. In view of the destructive system of treating the rubber trees in Brazil and other parts of South America in collecting the latex, and the increasing demand for rubber in our various rapidly expanding industries, it would seem that the rubber plantations, like the one above mentioned, are sure to yield their owners a handsome profit.

Nothing better illustrates what may be expected in this direction than the experiment made a few decades ago in India with the cinchona tree. Previously to the introduction of this tree into India, where there are now many extensive plantations under cultivation, the sole source of supply of Peruvian bark was from the tropical slopes of the Andes. Now, in consequence of the vigorous competition with India, the cinchona industry in the Andean regions is only a fraction of what it formerly was, and, unless something can be done to arrest its rapid decline, it will soon have lost its importance as an article of export from the Cordilleras.

We spent three days in Villavicencio and enjoyed every hour of the stay among its kindly people. We had thus an opportunity of securing much needed repose, and of preparing ourselves for our arduous trip across the cloud-reaching Andes. We might have continued, without interruption, our journey from the plains to Bogotá, but it would have been highly imprudent to make the attempt. A sudden change from the lowlands to Andean heights, and

from the heat of the llanos to the frigid blasts of the paramos, is something of which the native has an instinctive dread. He accordingly makes his journey by slow stages, so as to become acclimated on the way. In driving cattle from the llanos to Bogotá several weeks are deemed necessary, as otherwise many of them would expire on the road. They appear to be much more affected than man by rapid changes of altitude and temperature.

We had been warned time and again by well-meaning persons about the risk we incurred by so soon attempting to cross the Cordilleras, after spending so much time in the lowlands of the Orinoco and the Meta. "You should," we were told, "spend several weeks on the road, stopping a few days at each posada on the way. Only in this wise can you become acclimated, and render your system proof against the certain dangers of violent changes of temperature and altitude. As you approach the summit of the Andes you will see the sides of the trail strewn with the bleached bones of cattle and horses that have succumbed to the cold and the rare atmosphere of this elevated region. More than this, you will see hundreds of crosses by the wayside marking the spots where over-venturesome travelers were *emparamados*—frozen—by the arctic cold of the paramos, and where they found their last resting place. And so strong is the wind on the *cumbre*—the summit—of the mountain range that people are sometimes blown into the yawning chasm that adjoins the dreadful pass."

To confirm their statements they reminded us of the fearful losses in men and animals sustained by Bolivar when he led his army from the plains of Varinas to the lofty plateau of Cundinamarca; how hundreds of men and horses perished from the intense cold on the elevated pass through which they vainly tried to force their way, and how the entire army was exposed to extermination by the combined

action of arctic cold and hurricane blasts.

We made no reply to these well-meant warnings, but we could not help recalling similar words of caution before we started on our journey up the Orinoco and the Meta. Then the dangers to be apprehended were from the climate—from intense heat and a pestiferous atmosphere; from wild animals and wilder men. Now it was danger of an opposite kind—danger from cold, of being frozen, or of contracting pneumonia, which in those great altitudes is certain death.

Aside from a few uncomfortable nights—which, with a little care, might have been obviated—caused by the active *zancudo* and the *coloradito*—we had escaped all the predicted dangers of the lowlands, and we now felt reasonably sure that we should be equally fortunate in eluding those that were said to await us in the regions of everlasting snow. We were better equipped for making the trip than the poor, ill-clad natives from the llanos, and we could regulate our vesture to suit the temperature. Snow and frost had then no terrors for us, and as we had been accustomed to sudden changes of altitude, without experiencing any evil effects, we felt we had nothing whatever to apprehend.

On the third morning after our arrival in Villavicencio we were ready to start for Bogotá, and expected to make the journey of ninety-three miles in three days. We had secured mules that were used to mountain travel. Those that we had in crossing the llanos would never have answered our purpose. Our vaqueano and peons were *serranos*—mountaineers—thoroughly familiar with the route we were to take. They all seemed to be good, reliable young men, and we felt that the last stage of our journey, before reaching Bogotá, would be quite as enjoyable as any that we had already completed.

After many cordial expressions of good wishes on the part of the crowd assembled to witness our departure, and repeated exclamations on all sides of "*Felíz viaje!*"—a happy journey—and "*Dios les guarde á VV!*"—God protect you—we said our last adios to all and turned toward the Andes. "*Vamos con Dios*," ejaculated our vaqueano. "*Y con la Virgen*," was the response of the peons and the bystanders.

From the moment we left the door of our temporary lodging, our road was up grade. As we passed along the street that terminates at the foot of the mountain, it seemed that all the women and children of the place were at the doors to get a last view of the *jurungos*—foreigners—whose arrival from the eastern sea by the great river had been commented on as a more than ordinary event.

As soon as we had passed the last house of the city, there was a sudden marked increase in the grade of our trail, and we then felt, for the first time, that we were in sober earnest beginning the actual ascent of the Andes. In two hours we had reached Buena Vista, a lovely spot, eleven hundred and forty feet above Villavicencio.

We had frequently been told in Orocué and elsewhere that we should have a beautiful view of the llanos from Buena Vista, and that we would do well to tarry there for a while to enjoy the panorama that would be visible from this elevated spur of the mountain.

When a South American—especially one familiar with the mountains—speaks in terms of praise of any particular bit of scenery, one may be sure that he does not exaggerate. He is so accustomed to splendid exhibitions of tropical beauty and mountain grandeur that he passes unnoticed what we of the North should describe as superb, magnificent, glorious. Such scenes are to him as common

as the gorgeousness of the setting sun and the sublimity of the starlit heavens are to us and fail to move him for the same reason that the splendors of sun and sky rarely affect us as they would if but occasionally visible. They are everyday objects and the pleasure they should afford palls accordingly.

We were not disappointed in our anticipations regarding the view from Buena Vista. On the contrary, it far exceeded anything we had imagined. The sky, with the exception of a few fleecy clouds flitting athwart it, was clear and the sun was almost in the zenith. Far below us, and extending away—north, east, south—towards the dim and distant horizon, were the llanos, every feature of which was brought out in bright relief by the brilliant noonday sun.

In the foreground was the montaña through which we had passed just before reaching Villavicencio. Farther afield was a limitless sea of verdure, interspersed with groups of trees, which offered their grateful shade to the countless herds that reposed beneath their wide-spreading branches. In every direction the green savannas were intersected by caños and rivers which looked like streams of molten silver. It was, indeed, a panorama of surpassing beauty and loveliness—of its kind unique in the wide world. It was the boundless plain in eternal converse with the heavens above. It was the abode of liberty, and the trysting-place of life—life palpitating in the sunshine and beneath the emerald borders of the sliver-like water courses that were all hastening with their tribute from the Andes to the Meta, which, far off in the southeast, seemed like a line of union between earth and sky.

We have nothing in our country that can bear comparison with the matchless picture seen from Buena Vista. The view of the delta of the Nile—just before harvest time,

with its numberless canals and water courses—from the summit of Cheops, contains some of the elements of soft tropical beauty so conspicuous in the Buena Vista landscape; but it lacks the variety, the sweep, the coloring, the harmonious effects of light and shade, the immensity, and above all the wondrous setting afforded the latter prospect by the Titanic Cordilleras.

But the measureless expanse of grassy plain that lies before us is but an insignificant fraction of the llanos. They extend from the southern slopes of the Coast Range of Venezuela to the base of the Parime uplands and the Rio Guaviare; from the Andes to the delta of the Orinoco. They are thus almost conterminous with the Orinoco basin. They, indeed, constitute one of the three immense districts into which the whole of South America is divided. The other two are the Selvas of Brazil and the Pampas of Argentina, separated from each other and from the llanos of the north, by low transverse ridges running east and west from the Atlantic to the Cordilleras.

To geologists these vast lowlands have a special interest, as they were at one time the bed of an inland sea more extensive far than the present Mediterranean. Even now, during the rainy season, certain parts of this immense expanse are covered by fresh water lakes thousands of square miles in extent. A subsidence of a few hundred feet would again bring the whole of this illimitable territory down below sea level and cause again the formation of the great tropical sea that existed in prehistoric times.

To the student of history a special interest attaches to the llanos of western Venezuela and eastern Colombia. It was across these plains and swamps, under the most trying difficulties, that Bolivar led his half-clad, half-famished army, during his memorable march across the Cordilleras, before achieving the independence of New Granada in the

famous battle of Boyacá.

But great as was the feat accomplished by Bolivar in traversing the llanos, great as were the difficulties he had to contend with, they pale into insignificance when compared with the hardships and achievements of the early *descubridores*—explorers—of these then unknown wilds. Bolivar and his men traveled through a country that had been long settled, and were among friends and compatriots. The early explorers and conquistadores were, on the contrary, in an unknown land, among murderous, relentless savages armed with poisoned arrows. They were in a region where it was often impossible to procure food, and where several times starvation was imminent. For months at a time they wandered through dark, tangled forests, cutting a road as they went, lured on by the hope of fame and fortune. Then they had to feel their way through deep and treacherous morasses, in which they had to confront even greater dangers than in the obscure woodlands. But notwithstanding dangers and difficulties of every kind, they kept moving forward through woods and swamps, across rivers and mountains, ever in pursuit of gold and precious stones, and of the fabulous riches of the Meta and the treasure city of Manoa.

Among these famous *descubridores* was the German, George Hohermuth, whom the Spaniards called Jorge de Spira. Starting from Coró, on the Caribbean, with three hundred and sixty-one men and eighty horses, he directed his course southwards, where, he was assured, were inexhaustible treasures of every kind. Crossing the llanos of Venezuela and New Granada, he must have passed near the present site of Buena Vista.

During our journey we certainly crossed his line of march, which in this latitude was probably near the base of the Cordilleras. Spurred on by an ever-receding *ignis fatuus*,

he continued his march until he reached the Japura, an affluent of the Amazon, and but a short distance from the equator. During this frightful journey he crossed the Arauca, the Apure, the Meta, the Guaviare and other broad and deep rivers. Of the countless difficulties he encountered in his long and painful march, no one who is unfamiliar with the character of forest and plain in the tropics, particularly during the rainy season, can have the faintest conception. They far transcend anything experienced by Stanley, or Mungo Park, or any other African explorer. After more than three years of unheard-of sufferings, he finally returned to Coró with but a small fraction of the brave men that had originally formed part of his expedition.

Hohermuth was followed by Philip von Hutten, in 1541, on a similar expedition, who traveled over almost the same ground as his predecessor. He, too, must have passed near where Buena Vista now stands. His undertaking was quite as fruitless as that of Hohermuth and his losses were greater. He spent more than four years in the llanos and Cordilleras and, before he could return to his starting point, he died at the hands of an assassin.

More remarkable still, in some respects, was the expedition of Nicholas Federmann, who, like Hohermuth and Von Hutten, was in the service of the Welsers, concessionaires of a large German colony near Lake Maracaibo. Crossing the llanos, and the numerous rivers that flow through them, he eventually found himself on the banks of the Meta. Thence he proceeded west and crossed the Cordilleras, not, however, without numerous victims—both men and horses—from the intense cold on the mountain summits. He finally reached the fertile plain of Bogotá, where occurred that famous and unexpected meeting of Belalcazar, who had come with another expedition from Quito, and Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada who, a short time previously,

had arrived with a third expedition from Santa Marta.

It would be interesting to know what was Federmann's itinerary after leaving the banks of the Meta, and the exact spot where he crossed the Cordilleras. This we can only conjecture, as there is no record of it, but we loved to think, while crossing the Andes on our way to Bogotá, that we were still following the conquistadores, and that ours was the same route that had been taken by Federmann and his brave men more than three and a half centuries before.[1]

After leaving Buena Vista, we were exposed to a heavy tropical downpour that lasted the greater part of the day. Fortunately the rain did not affect us in the slightest. Our bayetones and waterproof boots kept us perfectly dry and, as the rain was not chilly, we rather enjoyed the experience.

Our path during the greater part of the day lay through forests and along rivers and over mountain torrents. At times it was high up on the mountain side, thousands of feet above the water courses surging and foaming at its base. Again it was along the edge of a dizzy precipice, where a single false step of our mule would have meant instant death to its rider.

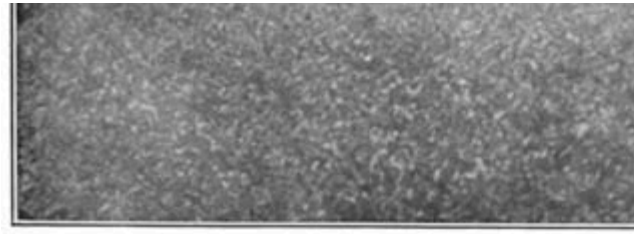
What gave us grave concern at first was the fact that our mules always persisted in keeping on the side of the track next to the ravine, no matter how deep or threatening it might be. We tried, until we were exhausted, to keep them on the opposite side of the trail, but it was useless. They seemed bent on courting danger, and on seeing how near they could keep to the verge of the chasm without plunging into its abysmal depths.

Unfortunately for our peace of mind, we did not then know the Andean mule as well as we do now. Had we

understood him as well at the beginning of our journey as we did at the end, we should have given him a free rein, and thereby spared ourselves many nerve-racking moments and many futile efforts to correct his persistent aberrations. Why a mule prefers to walk on the brink of a precipice, whenever it has an opportunity of doing so, rather than keep to what we humans should consider the safer side of the path, is a mystery I do not profess to fathom. I simply state the fact. I leave its explanation to experts in mule psychology.

The country through which we passed was fairly well populated, and we were never long out of sight of a habitation of some kind. Sometimes the dwellings were of stone, but more frequently they were of bamboo daubed with clay and thatched with palm leaf. The people, usually Indians or half-breeds, were in humble circumstances but we never saw any evidences of actual want or suffering. "*Nunca se muere de hambre aqui*"—No one ever dies of hunger here—an Indian woman once informed us, when we made inquiry about the subject. If one should happen to have nothing to eat, his friends and neighbors supply him with food. They are ever willing to assist one another, and we were often surprised to see how ready they were to share their limited store with others, whether in want or not.





Stopping for Luncheon in the Lower Cordi

A more friendly people we never met than the good people who dwell on the eastern slopes of the Colombian Cordilleras. They always have a kindly greeting for every one they meet. No one, not even the youngest child, will pass you on the road without a cordial "*Buenos dias*," "*Buenas tardes*," or "*Buenas noches*"—Good day, Good evening, or Good night—as the case may be. These cheering salutations, that were always forthcoming, whether we met one or a score, young or old, made us forget that we were in a foreign land, far from home and friends, and quite reconciled us to any little discomforts we might experience along our steep and rugged path. Here among these simple, unspoiled people the brotherhood of man is not an empty rhetorical phrase, or a vain poetical figment, but a living, every-day reality.

How often during our journeyings in the savannas and highlands of Colombia did we not recall the beautiful couplet of Castellanos regarding the primitive inhabitants of New Granada!—

"Gente llana, fiel, modesta, clara,
Leal, humilde, sana y obediente."[2]

They are the same to-day, especially when removed from the baleful influence of those who, instead of aiding them, would drag them down to the lowest depths of degradation and servitude.

But obliging and honest as we always found these people to be, they, nevertheless, invariably failed us in one

particular. We could never, except occasionally by accident, get from them a correct or satisfactory answer about the distance from one place to another.

Never shall we forget our experience during our first day's journey in the Cordilleras. Our objective point was San Miguel, where we were told we should find a good lodging house—one of the best on the road, we were assured—and, as the distance was great, it was necessary to make extra good time in order to arrive there before nightfall. The heavy, long-continued rains had made our trail extremely heavy, and in places almost impassable. The hours passed and we found ourselves advancing much more slowly than was desirable. The lowering clouds were massing on the mountain slopes, and the rain began to fall in torrents. It then began to dawn upon us that we might not be able to reach our destination in the limited time yet remaining of the fast-departing day.

Further progress along our dangerous path in the impenetrable gloom, that would immediately follow sunset, we knew to be impossible. We knew or thought we knew, about how far we were still from San Miguel, but we wished to be certain about the distance.

It was now about four o'clock in the afternoon, and it was imperative for us to reach our posada by six o'clock, if we were to arrive there at all that day. We accordingly inquired of one of the many peons we met, who were returning to their homes from their day's labor in the fields, how far it was to San Miguel. "*Tres leguas, Señores*"—three leagues, Sirs—was the answer to our question.

This was disheartening. Our mules were now exhausted, and could not possibly make three leagues in two hours over the terrific track we were traveling. But there was

nothing to do but push on. At the end of an hour we asked the same question of another peon. "*Quatro leguas, Señores*"—four leagues, Sirs, was the reply. This answer was confirmed by several other peons, whom we also questioned. Matters were becoming serious, but we continued on in silence, hoping against hope.

About a half hour later we again renewed our query. "*Una legua, Señores*"—one league, Sirs—said a bright boy, who was driving a heavily-laden donkey. It was now dusk, and as dusk in the tropics lasts but a few minutes, we knew that we should soon be enveloped in total darkness.

A little further on, a woman, with a child in her arms, informed us that San Miguel was "*cerca*"—near. This was too ambiguous for us, as it might mean one league or several leagues. Asking her how near it was, she replied *muy cerca*—very near. This was still unsatisfactory. She then assured us that it was "cerquita," "cerquitita"—diminutives of cerca—[3] meaning that the place was extremely near, only a few steps farther. "*Dando la vuelta de la esquina*"—around the corner there—she said, "is San Miguel, the second house you come to." Peering into the darkness before us, we could barely discern what appeared a projection from the mountain side. We had to be satisfied with this answer as, try as we would, we could elicit nothing more definite from our informant.

The darkness was now so dense that we were unable to see even as far as our mules' ears. There was then nothing to be done but to give our animals the rein and trust them to carry us to our destination. As if guided by a peculiar instinct, they carefully picked their way through the mud, but we thought they should never get around that corner towards which we had been directed.

We were now quite exhausted, as we had eaten nothing

since morning, and longed for a place of shelter, where we could find repose. Only once before, in all my travels, did it seem to take so long to get around a mountain spur. Years ago, in the mountains of the Peloponnesus, I had a similar experience, but then the road was good and the moon was shining. Here there was only a wretched, dangerous trail, and it was pitch dark.

At the long last, we saw a light glimmering in a hut by the roadside. This was something. The next house, which was said to be bard by, should be the long-desired San Miguel.

To reassure ourselves, we asked a woman who was standing at the door of the cot, where was San Miguel. She did not know. She had never beard of such a place. It might be at the other side of the mountain, or we might already have passed it; she could not tell.

"But is there not a posada near here," I queried, "or a place where we can remain over night?" "Oh! yes," the woman replied, "there is a very good posada just across the road—that large building right in front of you. You are looking for la Señora Filomena's house. That is what we call it here." And so it was. A few rods away was San Miguel, at last. Only the tired, famished traveler in a strange land can realize how glad we were that the day's journey was finally at an end.

We spent a very uncomfortable night at San Miguel, and were glad when we found ourselves, early the following morning, again in the saddle, bound for Caqueza, the capital of a district near the summit of the Cordilleras. "We must make better time than yesterday," I said, on starting, to our vaqueano. "*Si, Señor*." "We shall arrive at Caqueza by four o'clock, shall we not?" "*Es imposible, Señor*. It is impossible, Sir." "Well, then, we shall arrive by five, shall we not?" "*No se puede, Señor*. It cannot be done, Sir." "At

all events, we must reach Caqueza before dark." "*Tal vez, no*—Probably not," was his final reply, and we had to let it go at that.

The scenery along our route between San Miguel and Caqueza was much like that which we had so much admired during the preceding day. The country was, however, much more thickly populated and we met many more people on the way. There was always that same cordial greeting, that had before touched us so deeply, and the same disposition to oblige us in any way possible.

At one place on the roadside, we saw a young couple, neither more than eighteen years of age, erecting a little bamboo cot. They were evidently just entering upon house-keeping, and seemed to be very happy. The labor involved in the construction of their future home was little and the expense was nothing. All would be in readiness for occupancy in a day or two after work begun. Then their little plot of ground, planted with maize, yuca, plantains and bananas, together with a few domestic animals, would supply them with all the food required and enable them to enjoy an idyllic existence far away from the maddening crowd, and quite removed from

"The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan."

It was evidently some such Arcadian scene that was before Tennyson's vision when he, in Locksley Hall, penned the beautiful lines,

"Ah, for some retreat,"

where

"Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer

from the crag—”
“Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—”

and where are

“Breaths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.”

Further on we met another young couple, radiant with the glow of youth and present happiness, carrying all their household goods with them. These were few and simple. The man carried a machete, and a few rush mats; the woman a few simple culinary utensils consisting mainly of a metal pot and a few calabash cups and dishes. They were evidently looking for a site for a home, and probably, a few hours later had, like the first couple we saw, their simple habitation well under way.

Of these good people one can repeat what Peter Martyr said of the aborigines shortly after the discovery of America:

“A fewe thinges contente them, hauinge no delite in suche superfluites, for the which in other places men take infinite paynes and commit manie vnlawfull actes, yet are neuer satisfied, whereas many haue to muche, and none inowgh. But emonge these simple sowles, a fewe clothes serue the naked; weightes and measures are not needefull to such as cannot kyll of crafte and deceyte and haue not the vse of pestiferous monye, the seede of unnumerable myscheues. So that if we shall not be ashamed to confesse the truthe, they seeme to lyue in that goulden worlde of the whiche owlde wryters speak so much; wherin men lyued simplye and innocentlye without inforcement of lawes, without quarrellinge. Iudges and libelles, contente onely to satisfie nature, without further vexation for knowledge of thinges

to come."[4]

Later on in the day we came across more home-builders, but of quite a different kind from those above mentioned. Toward noon, we noticed some distance ahead of us, what appeared to be a greenish black ribbon, extended along our path. It was about a foot wide and several hundred feet long. We could not imagine what it could be until we were within a few yards of it. It proved to be an army of ants on a foraging expedition. There were millions, if not billions of them. Those on one side were carrying pieces of leaves about the size of a sixpence. They formed the green part of the ribbon that we had seen from a distance. Those on the other side, moving in an opposite direction, constituted the black part. They were all engaged in getting material for thatching their curious dome-like homes, which are often of extraordinary dimensions. Sometimes they are fully thirty or forty feet in diameter.

We regretted that time did not permit us to examine the length of their line of march, from their marvelous dwellings to the trees they were stripping for roofing material. They have been known to go a mile or more for material suited to their purpose and to deprive scores of trees of all their leaves in a single day.

To one unfamiliar with the tropics, the depredations committed by these destructive insects appear incredible. Of an unknown number of species, they are among the greatest enemies of man in the equatorial regions. They spare nothing. Gardens and orchards, coffee and sugar, cassava and banana plantations disappear as quickly before them as before blight or frost.

In the early part of the sixteenth century, according to Herrera,[5] their numbers in Española and Puerto Rico were so great and their devastations so extensive and irresistible,

that they threatened to depopulate the islands. Various parts of South America have also at different times suffered from the same plague—rivaling the seven plagues of Egypt in the distress and destruction which marked their path. Had we not had here, and elsewhere in the tropics, ocular evidence of their prodigious numbers, and been witnesses of the magnitude of the works due to their united efforts, we should have classed the accounts left us by the early chroniclers of the extent of the ravages of the ant plague among works of fiction rather than records of authentic history.[6]

The scenery along the mountain ascent was an ever-changing panorama of rarest beauty and sublimity, such as no pen could describe or brush portray. It exhibited all the tropical luxuriance of the llanos together with the wild picturesqueness characteristic of Alpine heights.

At times we wended our way along the banks of a noiseless river, which, in solitary grandeur, was sweeping through verdant meads and beneath arcades of sylvan green, carrying its vivifying waves to the broad, expectant plains below. The placid scene, dotted with human habitations, and variegated by bright pastures, the home of contented flocks and herds, offered to the enchanted gaze, in a single picture, all the fabled beauties of the glens of Tempe and the dales of Arcady.

As we mounted higher up on our way, our route was along the verge of deep, headlong torrents mantled in the shade of overhanging bamboos, or obscured by the jutting crags and huge beetling rocks of the earthquake rift mountain. Ever and anon, our ears caught the muffled but incessant roar of thunderous waterfalls, which plunged from dizzy precipices high above our heads, both to the right and to the left of our upward path.

Scarcely had the deafening notes of these tumultuous floods, which awakened a thousand echoes in the sombre caves and yawning gulfs of the countless windings and abrupt breaks of the mountain ravines, died away, before we found ourselves in presence of some murmuring cascade that might well have adorned the grove around the grotto of Calypso. In the gleaming crystal basin at its foot, embowered in vernal bloom and eternal verdure, which diffused an aromatic breath over the passer-by, was tremulously reflected the plumed crown of the palm tree under which the weary traveler sought a moment's rest for his weary frame. At every turn in our steep and devious path, our eyes were delighted by some wild, struggling brook, that fretted its way through a labyrinthine gorge, pranked with verdurous gloom, or charmed by some wanton rivulet leaping over rocks or forming limpid pools, canopied with foliage and flowers of rarest fragrance and brightest hue, that

"Forever gaze on their own drooping eyes,
Reflected in the crystal calm."

It is not an exaggeration to say, that in our journey from the foot to the summit of the Andes, we passed in rapid review some of earth's grandest and most entrancing prospects. Sometimes I was reminded of the mountains and valleys of the Alps, at others of the peaks and cañones of the Rocky Mountains. Some cataracts recalled the waterfalls seen leaping from the lofty precipices of Alaska; others, those that add such a charm to the manifold wonders of the Yosemite and the Yellowstone.

But the Andean views can always claim a superiority over all northern scenes of a similar character, in the marvelous setting afforded by the ever-verdant and exuberant vegetation of the tropics. How often did we not wish, during this memorable trip, that we could command the

brush of a Turner or a Poussin or a Claude Lorrain, in order to bring home with us copies of some of those wonderful pictures that Nature exhibited to our admiring gaze in her great art gallery of the Oriental Cordilleras!

The higher we ascended above the lowlands the less dense became the forests and the less luxuriant the vegetation. At times there were extended reaches of land that were quite treeless; at others the surface of the soil was covered with scrubby growths that were in marked contrast with the splendid sylvan exhibitions to which we had been so long accustomed. But although the giants of the forest were no longer visible, there was little diminution of the splendor of the floral display along our path. In one place, particularly, we were surprised beyond measure to find the whole side of a mountain spur covered with a glorious mantle of immaculately white lilies. The scene was not unlike one of the large lily fields of Bermuda, that supply our Easter altars with their choicest decorations.

We were greatly delighted to find in the tropics representatives of the feathered tribe that we were familiar with in the far North. Large flocks of them annually leave North America and Europe to spend the winter season in South America and as regularly return to their northern homes the following summer. Some of them come from far-off Alaska and extend their flight as far south as Tierra del Fuego. Others spend the summer in southeast Siberia and then, on the approach of winter, migrate by way of North America to South Brazil. Among the most numerous of these marvelous birds of passage are certain species of sandpipers, plovers and lapwings. The bobolink, known along the Chesapeake as the reedbird, and dreaded as the ricebird in the rice fields of the South, extends its migrations as far into South America as southeastern Brazil. Many of our familiar warblers and sparrows are to be seen during the winter months in Venezuela and

Colombia, while certain cliff and barn swallows penetrate as far south as Paraguay. On the Orinoco and the Meta, we recognized many species of ducks that were familiar to us in the United States, among which were the pin-tail, bald-pate, golden-eye and blue-winged teal.

"The plovers, sandpipers and kindred species," writes Knowlton, "take migratory journeys often of extraordinary length. Thus the American golden plover, *Charadrius dominicus*, breeds in arctic America, some venturing a thousand miles north of the Arctic Circle, and migrates through the entire length of North and South America to its winter home in Patagonia, and, curiously, its spring and fall routes are different. After feasting on the crowberry in Labrador, they seek the coast of Nova Scotia, where they strike out to sea, taking a direct course for the easternmost islands of the West Indies, and thence to the northeastern coast of South America. In spring not one returns by this route, but in March they appear in Guatemala and Texas. April finds their long lines trailing the prairies of the Mississippi Valley; the first of May sees them crossing our northern boundary, and by the first week in June they appear in their breeding grounds in the frozen north. The little sanderling, just mentioned, is almost cosmopolitan in distribution, breeding in the arctic and sub-arctic regions and migrating in the New World to Chile and Patagonia, a distance of eight thousand miles, and in the Old World along the shore of Europe, Asia and Africa. The Bartramian sandpiper, *Bartramia longicauda*, nests from eastern North America to Nova Scotia and Alaska, and goes south in winter to southern South America. The solitary sandpiper, *Totanus solitarius*, breeds mainly to the north of the United States, and winters as far south as Brazil and Peru. The buff-breasted sandpiper, *Tryngites subruficollis*, rears its young in the Yukon district of Alaska and from the interior of British Colombia to the

Arctic coast, and journeys in winter well into South America. The turnstone, *Arenaria interpres*, a little shore bird, about the size of the song thrush of Europe, is also cosmopolitan, breeding in high northern latitudes and at other times of the year found along the coasts of Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, South America to the Straits of Magellan, Australia and the Atlantic and Pacific islands. It is one of the species mentioned as making the wonderful flight from the islands in Bering Sea to the Hawaiian Islands."[7]

By what miraculous instinct are they guided in these semi-annual migrations across half the globe? Who bids them, asks Pope,

"Columbus-like, explore
Heavens not their own, and worlds unknown before?
Who calls the council, states the certain day.
Who forms the phalanx, and who points the way?"

Have they a special "sense of direction," or is their "homing" faculty or power of orientation, something that is tantamount to a sixth sense?

We now know far more about the migrations of birds than was known only a few decades ago. We are able to locate many of them during the various seasons of the year, and are quite certain that they never, as an ingenious writer of the early seventeenth century maintained, spend the winter in the moon, where they have no occasion for food; but we have yet much to learn regarding the causes of their periodic migrations, and the nature of that instinct that enables them to pass, with unerring precision, from the arctic to the antarctic regions, and from the Old World to the New. We are accumulating daily new facts regarding the distant flights of the birds of passage, but, notwithstanding the many theories, some of them more

fantastic than scientific, that have been advanced to explain the cause of the migrations of birds; why such migrations were undertaken in the beginning, why they are still continued, and how birds are able to find their way, during their marvelous flights from the arctic to the antarctic—we are still in the dark about many questions connected with those mysterious migrations, which have excited the interest of even the most casual observer since the prophet Jeremiah wrote: "The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed time; and the turtle and the crane, and the swallows observe the time of their coming."[8]

Almost before we were aware of it, the sun had begun to paint the crest of the Andes with bright vermeil and soft purple, and we were still far from Caqueza—the goal of our day's journey. With the exception of the half-hour we had tarried for luncheon at an attractive posada, called Media Luna, we had been in the saddle all day, and had pushed forwards as rapidly as the strength of our animals would permit. We had left our vaqueano and peons in the rear early in the day, and it was not at all likely that they would be able to reach Caqueza before the following forenoon.

After a delightful, sunshiny day, the sky, towards sunset, suddenly became overcast with dark, threatening clouds, and presently it began to rain. One thing, however, was in our favor, and that was the trail. It was in a far better condition than that of the preceding day, but it lay along the breast of a precipitous mountain slope, at the foot of which, within ear-shot, coursed an impetuous mountain torrent. The greater part of the way was quite safe, and we could trust our mules, even in the dark, to keep to the path. But here and there were treacherous places—loose ground, and landslides caused by recent rains—which rendered traveling, even in the daytime, sufficiently difficult. In the darkness, that was every moment becoming more dense,

locomotion was positively dangerous. There was no house on the way in which we could find shelter for the night. Our tent, with our other baggage, was in the hands of our dilatory peons. The only alternatives, then, were pressing on to Caqueza, despite darkness and danger, or standing still in our trail, where there was not even a shrub to temper the ever-increasing downpour. We elected to trust our lives again to our mules, as we had done the previous night. This seemed to be the lesser of the two evils that confronted us.

We then recalled the hesitating answer that our vaqueano had, in the morning, given to our query about reaching Caqueza before nightfall. His "*Tal vez, no*"—perhaps not, was a gentle prognostic that it was impossible, at least for the baggage mules. As a matter of fact, they did not arrive until towards noon the next day. Their mules had given out, and the vaqueano and peons had to make shift to spend the night as best they could under an inclement sky.

The last objects of interest that we descried in the deepening gloom were a number of peasant cots perched high upon the mountain sides—much like so many cottages in the higher Alps—and the junction of two rivers —the Rio Blanco and the Rio Negro. The rivers specially attracted our attention, as the color of the waters of the one, the Blanco—white—was in such marked contrast with the waters of the other, the Negro or black river. The one owed its color to the white clay soil through which it passed. The other was rendered black—like the well-known bog-tinctured, "black waters" of Ireland—by the presence of organic material. Even long after the waters of the two tributaries had entered their common channel, they kept quite separate—the black flowing along one bank and the white along the bank opposite.

It would take too long to enumerate the many difficulties

we encountered, during our long ride in the darkness, before we finally arrived at Caqueza. Suffice to say that it was several long hours after nightfall, and that we were both quite exhausted, both by hunger and fatigue. We never felt time to pass so slowly, as during the last hour of the day's journey, when there was danger in every step forward from the ever-threatening ravine, along the edge of which our path lay, and we were quite ready to exclaim with Shelley,

"How like death-worms the wingless moments crawl."

In the posada where we purposed spending the night, which was recommended as the best in town, we found sufficient to appease the pangs of hunger, but we were soon made to realize that we had another sleepless night before us. In San Miguel our quarters were damp and our blankets wet, owing to some carelessness on the part of our peons. In Caqueza the rooms assigned us—and particularly the beds—could best be described by a single word—insectiferous. They were a veritable insectarium that served no scientific or economic purpose. It is but just, however, to record that this was our first experience of the kind during our journey thus far in the tropics. Under the circumstances, there was nothing left for us to do except resignedly to exclaim with the pious native—*Sea por Dios*—may it be received by God in atonement for sin.

1

The reader who is interested in the famous expeditions of Hohermuth, von Hutten and Federmann, about which there is little in English that is satisfactory, is referred to Castellanos, *Varones Ilustres de Indias*, Partes II and III; Herrera, *Historia de las Indias*, Dec. VI; Oviedo y Baños, *Conquista y Poblacion de Venezuela*, Lib I and III; Oviedo y Valdéz. *Historia General y Natural de las Indias*, Tom. II, Lib. XXV; Ternaux—Compans, *Voyages, Rélations et Memoires Originaux pour servir à l'histoire de la découvarte de l'Amérique*, Tom. II, Paris, 1840; Klunzinger, *Antheil der Deutschen an der Andeckung von Süd-Amerika*,

Kap. VI, IX and XII, Stuttgart, 1857; Schumacher, *Die Unternehmungen der Augsburger Welser in Venezuela*, Kap. IV, IX and XII, in Tom. II, of a work published in Hamburg, 1892, *Zur Errinnerung an die Endeckung Amerikas*; Topf, *Deutsche Statthalter und Konquistadoren in Venezuela*, pp. 18, 19, 33–42, 48–55; Tom. VI, of the *Sammlung gemeinverständlicher wissenschaftlicher Vorträge*, Hamburg, 1893; Humbert, *L'Occupation Allemande du Venezuela au XVI Siècle, Période dite des Welser*, 1528–1556, Bordeaux, 1905. The last-named work is illustrated by a valuable map. The subject possesses an added interest from the fact that it refers to the only attempt at colonial occupation ever made by Germans in South America. How different would now be the condition of Venezuela and Colombia if the Welser colony had been permanent and successful! ↑

2

"Plain folk and faithful, modest and frank,
Loyal, humble, sane and obedient."

This is particularly true of Indian children. Writing of them, a Dominican missionary, who had lived among them, and knew them well, expresses himself as follows:—

"Je ne sais rien d'aimable, de gracieux, de docile et d'intelligent comme le jeune Indien"—"I know nothing so amiable, so kindly, so docile and so intelligent as the young Indian."—*Voyage d'Exploration d' un Missionaire Dominicain chez les Tribus Sauvages de l'Equateur*, p. 310, Paris, 1889. ↑

3

The people of Venezuela and Colombia are very fond of using diminutives, and one must confess that it often gives to their conversation a peculiar charm and expressiveness. Thus from *todo*, all or every, they form *todito*, *toditico*; from *cerca*, near, they derive *cerquita*, *cerquitita* or *cerquitica*. Instead of *Adios* they will say *Adiosito*, and instead of *Yo voy passando bien*, one hears *Yo voy passandito bien*.

I once gave a young mother a medal for a child she was holding on her lap, and she at once said, "*Muchisimas gracias, hijito, yo pondre la medallita lueguito al cuellito de la queridita que va andandito asi, no mas*." "Many thanks, little son"—I was old enough to be her grandfather —"I shall immediately put the little medal on the little neck of the little darling, which is in rather delicate health." ↑

4

Richard Eden, op. cit., p. 71. ↑

5

Historia de las Indias Occidentales, Dec. II, Lib. III, Cap. 14. ↑

6
The town of Santa Rosa, in Ecuador, had to be abandoned because of the swarms of ants that invaded the place. It is now known as Anagollacta—place of ants. ↑

7
Birds of the World, Chap. IV, New York, 1909. ↑

8
So fixed are the periods of migration, and so punctual is the feathered tribe in starting on its semiannual flights, that “The Arabs are said to have been helped in the compilation of their calendars, by noting the times of the arrival and departure of migratory birds; and the Redskin in the far Northwest has received much the same aid from the birds of another continent.”

All things considered, Professor Newton was probably right when he declared that the migration of birds is “perhaps the greatest mystery which the whole animal kingdom presents.” ↑

CHAPTER IX

IN CLOUDLAND

"Knowest thou the track that o'er the
mountain goes,
Where the mule threads its way
through mist and snows,
Where dwell in caves the dragon's
ancient brood,
Topples the crag, and o'er it roars the
flood,
Knowest thou it well?
O come with me!
There lies our road—oh, father, let us
flee."

—Mignon.

Our plan, on leaving Villavicencio, was to reach Bogotá in three days. This we could easily have accomplished, had there not been a mistake in the telegram ordering horses to be in readiness for us on our arrival at Caqueza. The morning after arriving there, when we inquired for our mounts, we were surprised to learn that we were not expected until a day later, and that it would not be possible for us to get animals until the following morning.

"Travelers usually take three days to make the trip from

Villavicencio to Caqueza," said Sr. N., who was to furnish the horses, "and I did not think you would attempt to make such an arduous journey in two days. However, everything will be ready early to-morrow morning. Besides a day's rest here, preparatory to crossing the paramo, will do you no harm. Most people coming up from the llanos consider it necessary."

Not desiring to remain longer in the insectarium, in which we had spent so wretched a night, we removed to an *asistencia*—boarding house—in another part of the town. Here we found clean and comfortable quarters and had reason to congratulate ourselves on our involuntary detention in this interesting town. We were both quite jaded from the long ride of the previous day, and really needed some repose more than we at first realized.

"But why did we not," it may be asked, "continue our journey through to Bogotá on our mules? Are they not the best and surest-footed animals in the steep mountain trails?"

The reply is best given in the words of our host at Villavicencio, Sr. N.: "It would never do for such distinguished travelers as you are—*personas tan amables y tan honorables*—to enter the national capital on such lowly animals as mules. Only common people do this. Custom here makes it *de rigueur* for people of the better classes to travel on horseback. More than this. Our people usually send word ahead to have a carriage meet them in the suburbs of Bogotá, as they do not care to enter the city even on horseback. Permit me to order a carriage to meet you at Santa Cruz, some distance this side of the capital."

We thanked him for his kind offer, but replied that, while we should be glad to defer to the custom of the country, by exchanging our mules for horses, we should forego the

usual formality of entering the city in a carriage. We were simple, plain travelers and wished to remain such till the end of our journey.

Caqueza, fully twenty-five miles from Bogotá, is the capital of a district of the same name and, in location, is not unlike that of many of the higher mountain towns of Colombia or Switzerland. It is surrounded on all sides by beautiful mountain ridges and is about five thousand and six hundred feet above sea level. The temperature at seven o'clock p. m., the day before our departure, was 72° F., but at no time during the day was it much higher. In temperature, elevation and the beauty of the surrounding mountains it is much like Caracas, and when the long-projected railroad from Bogotá to the llanos shall have been completed, it will become a commercial centre of considerable importance. The climate is salubrious and as equable as that of Bermuda, and the town, counting about two thousand inhabitants, is just such a place as the traveler from the lowlands would delight to tarry in, if he were always master of his own time.

Early the second morning after our arrival in Caqueza, we had bidden adieu to this interesting town and its hospitable people and were on our way to the crest of the Andes. Just outside of the town we crossed the Rio Caqueza, over what looked like the Devil's Bridge in ruins. Fortunately, we had grown quite accustomed to such shaky structures, although, in the beginning, we approached them with the greatest misgivings. Near San Miguel, for instance, we had to cross a raging torrent, in a dark, deep ravine, over what was but the semblance of a bridge, that threatened every moment to collapse. It was in reality nothing more than three logs laid side by side and covered with loose twigs and earth. It had no railings or balustrades at the sides, and the abutments at the two ends had become so loosened by the heavy rains that it seemed every moment on the verge

of tottering into the abyss below. Even our mules balked at the treacherous structure. However, after taking a good look at the tumultuous Rio Negro, that was coursing through the wild gorge beneath, and stretching their long ears toward the opposite bank, as if to determine thereby what chance there was of a successful passage, they finally ventured on the bridge, but it was with fear and trembling. And how light was their step and how they actually felt their way until they reached *terra firma*! From that moment the much-abused mule rose high in our estimation. He may be obstinate, but he instinctively avoids danger. And when he concludes to go forward, you may be sure that the danger is more apparent then real. Subsequent experience only confirmed us in the impression that we then formed of him.

From the time we crossed the Rio Caqueza, our path was ever upward towards cloudland. *La cumbre*—the summit —of the Andes, where we were to cross it, is about midway between Caqueza and Bogotá, and is nearly a mile higher than the makeshift of a bridge over the Rio Caqueza.

We had left Caqueza only a few miles behind us when we found a large number of market women—young and old—on the road. They were mostly Indians, all carrying heavy burdens from seventy-five to a hundred pounds, and, to our surprise, they were all *en route* to Bogotá. I do not think we met one going to Caqueza. They were loaded down with chickens, eggs, fruits and all kinds of garden produce for the Bogotá market.

But think of carrying such burdens more than twenty miles, and that, too, over the lofty Cordilleras! And think, too, of the slight pittance that was often to reward the expenditure of such energy! Nevertheless, all of these poor people seemed to be quite happy. They were constantly

chatting and singing, as they trudged along the rough, stony path, and rarely stopped to rest. They were clad in a rough, dark-colored tunic, something like the peplum or chiton of the ancient Greeks. Most of them were barefooted, although we saw some who wore *alpargatas*, a kind of sandal made from the fibres of the aloe, which flourishes everywhere in the uplands of Colombia. As in Mexico, so also here, this plant has from time immemorial furnished the natives many articles of daily use.

What specially attracted our attention was the number of chickens and eggs these humble folks carried with them to the market. When we observed this and noted the number of cattle, horses and other domestic animals we had seen along our route, and the variety of fruits and vegetables that were under cultivation, we could not but recall what Herrera has to say about the absence of these and other things in pre-Colombian times.

"In the other hemisphere" (America), he writes, "there were no dogs, asses, sheep, goats, swine, cats, horses, mules, camels, nor elephants. They had no oranges, lemons, pomegranates, figs, quinces, melons, vines, nor olives, nor sugar, wheat nor rice. They knew not the use of iron, knew nothing of firearms, printing or learning. Their navigation extended not beyond their sight; their government and politics were barbarous. Their mountains and vast woods were not habitable. An Indian of good natural parts being asked what was the best they had got by the Spaniards, answered: The hen's eggs, as being laid new every day; the hen herself must be either boiled or roasted, and does not always prove tender, while the egg is good every way. Then he added: The horse and artificial light, because the first carries men with ease and bears his burdens, and by means of the latter (the Indians having learned to make wax and tallow candles and oil), *they lived some part of the night*! and this he thought to be the most

valuable acquisition from the white people."[1]

At the time of the arrival of the Spaniards in South America, there were no domestic animals except the llama, the alpaca, the guinea pig and the alco, and these were found only within the limits of the empire of the Incas.

There was a time, however, long anterior to the advent of Europeans—during the Pleistocene epoch—when horses[2] and the larger members of the camel tribe roamed over the vast plains of South America, notably in the parts now known as Argentina and Southern Brazil. It was at this period, too, that flourished in the same regions those gigantic creatures, now extinct, known as the mylodon, the ground sloth, the glyptodont, the mastodon, the toxodont and peculiar sabre-toothed tigers, vast quantities of whose remains have been found and carefully stored away in our museums. Not far toward the west of us, at the *Campo de los Gigantes*[3] in the Savanna of Bogotá—not to speak of those found in the bluffs along the valley of the Zulia—abundant fossil remains have been discovered of horses, taxodonts, glyptodons, and megatheriums. It is, indeed, a remarkable fact that the South American continent, which has enriched the Old World with so many valuable medicinal and economic plants, has not given to it a single useful animal.

After traveling some hours we reached Chipaque, an interesting mountain town fully half a mile higher above sea level than Caqueza. Our attention was attracted by an unusually large and beautiful stone church, which was then undergoing repairs. A great bell, imported from Europe, had just been put in one of the towers. It was the gift of Gen. Reyes, then president of the republic, and the good people were not only proud of their bell but were loud in their praises of the generous donor.

But where did the money come from for the erection of such a noble structure? The people all seemed very poor, and quite unable to keep such an edifice in repair after its completion, not to speak of supplying the means for building it. We frequently found ourselves asking this same question in other parts of South America, when contemplating the large and beautiful ecclesiastical structures that are often met with where one should least expect to find them. The builders of them evidently belonged to those ages of faith that have bequeathed to us those marvels of architecture—the great cathedrals of Europe.

Something that always afforded us great comfort, and that was rarely far away, after we left Villavicencio, was the telegraph line. For weeks we had been far away from it, and, in case of need, it could not have been reached. It was then that we really felt that we were indeed a long way off from home and friends. To communicate with them by letter would then have required the best part of a year, for there was no regular postal service to which we could have had recourse. With the friendly and willing telegraph ever near, it was quite different. By its means we could, in a few hours at most, convey a message to the most distant parts of the world.

When leaving any given place in the morning our whole party—peons with baggage, mules included—would be together. But it was not long until we were far in advance of the vaqueano and peons, whom we would not again see until evening or, as it sometimes happened, until the following morning. There was rarely any danger of losing our path, for the simple reason that there was, as a rule, only a single path from one place to another. We had, therefore, nothing to do but to keep to the trail. Occasionally, however, we would come to a point where it was necessary to choose between two diverging trails.

Then it was that the telegraph line was an invaluable guide. We followed the trail which it paralleled, and in so doing we never went astray.

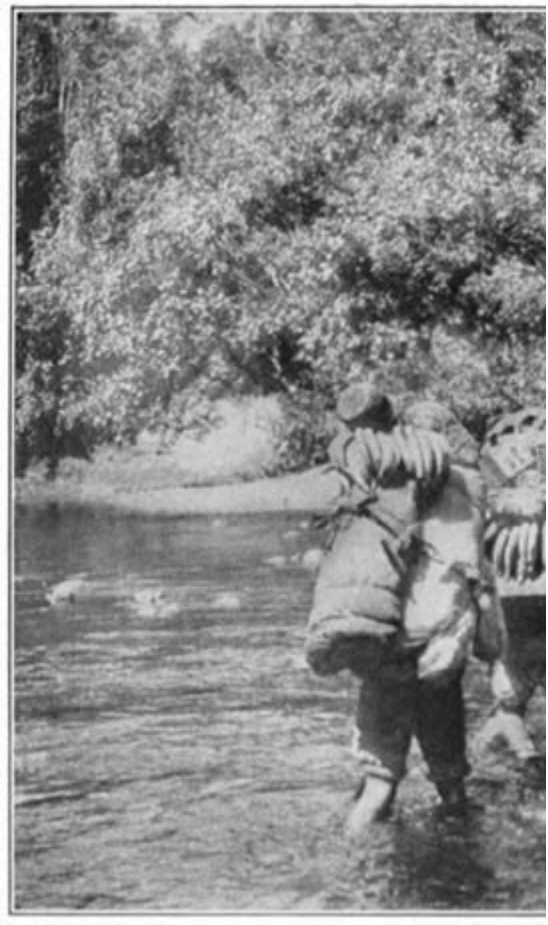
It was now several months since we had received a letter from home. We had not even seen a newspaper of any kind, and were, consequently, in utter ignorance of what was occurring in the great and busy world we had left behind us. But strange as it may seem, the traveler in Nature's wilds seems soon to grow indifferent to the world's doings. Even those who at home consider the morning and evening papers indispensable necessities, seem to forget that there are such things. Nay, they even experience a sense of relief that they have gotten beyond the reach of post and telegraph, and that, for once in their lives, they can call their time their own. Indeed, the absence of the daily paper, with its countless dispatches, far from being a privation, soon impressed us as a positive blessing.

We enjoyed a sense of freedom—the freedom of the child of the forest—we had never known before. We were beginning to see how easy it was to dispense with many things that are so often regarded as essentials to pleasure and comfort. If we had been unavoidably detained at some Indian encampment for a few months or found it necessary to tarry a year or so in one of the little bamboo cottages on the eastern slope of the Andes, we should not have regarded it as an unmixed evil. Even as I pen these lines, I have a vivid recollection of a score of tiny cots along the Rio Negro and the Rio Caqueza, near a purling brook or a musical cascade, shaded by palms and surrounded by smiling citrus trees, where it would be a delight to live and commune with Nature at her best.

I can fully sympathize with Waterton's longing for the wild and his love of tropical life. Every lover of nature,

who has spent some time in the heart of the equatorial forests, is affected in the same way. The *wanderlust* and *abenteuergeist*—the love of travel and adventure—grows on one, it seems, in the wilds of South America more than elsewhere. Is it because the conquistadores and other early explorers have impregnated the atmosphere with their spirit, or because the environment of itself has the power of inoculating the visitor from the north with the microbe of a life-long *wanderleben*? *Dicant Paduani.*

Recording his impressions of travel in Andean highlands a writer in the early part of the last century says: “A sense of extreme loneliness and remoteness from the world seizes on his,” the traveler’s mind, “and is heightened by the dead silence that prevails; not a sound being heard but the scream of the condor, and the monotonous murmur of the distant waterfalls.”[4]



This, undoubtedly, like many similar impressions, is a question of temperament. As for ourselves we never, for a single moment, experienced anything even approaching a feeling of loneliness or remoteness from the world. Probably, like Scipio Africanus, we are among those who never felt less alone than when alone. Far from feeling lonely while crossing the Cordilleras, we congratulated

ourselves that we were far away from the beaten track of personally conducted tourists.

We could not help comparing the splendid panoramas around us with the noted show places of Switzerland. In the Andes it was the forest primeval, or the humble cot, or the picturesque village of the unspoiled and simple people of eastern Colombia, where a foreigner is rarely seen, but where he is always sure of a cordial welcome. There were here no tourist resorts, no palatial hotels or restaurants, no sumptuous chalets or villas—seats of opulence and luxury—but Nature alone in all her beauty and sublimity, as she came forth from the hands of her Creator. We were far away from the land of inclined railroads, leading to every peak, and from macadamized thoroughfares, along which reckless drivers and wild chauffeurs are constantly claiming the right of way, regardless of the safety or convenience of the ordinary wayfarer.

The uplands of the Andes should be the last places in the world where the thoughtful mind should experience a sense of loneliness, or be oppressed with tedium or listlessness. There, if anywhere, such a thing as ennui should be impossible. There is so much to excite the imagination, and so much to gratify every sense, so much to exhilarate the weary spirits and to elevate the mind, that one feels oneself in a kind of mountain elysium, where every moment spent is one of unalloyed delight.

Never shall we forget the morning preceding our first crossing of the Cordilleras. The weather was ideal—neither hot nor cold—and the scenery at every turn was magnificent beyond compare. While the vegetation was quite different in character from that of the lowlands, it was, nevertheless, equally attractive and fragrant. Our route at times lay through a narrow defile with wild beetling steeps on both sides of us. Ever and anon we

passed by natural bowers, sculptured in the solid rock and entwined with odorous plants and flowers, that might well serve as trysting places of fays and elves, or be the favorite resorts of Titania and Oberon. Farther on our way we descried a dark and romantic chasm which we could fancy might, under a waning moon, be haunted "by a woman waiting for her demon lover." And higher up on a lofty peak, tinged with the roseate hues of quivering sunlight, C.'s fancy told us was the home of that race of Oreads

"That haunt the hill-tops nearest the sun."

"Small wonder," said C, "that the lively fancy of the Indian should have peopled these romantic spots with the creatures of his imagination, and that he should have woven legends about objects and phenomena that had specially attracted his notice. Even we, who see these things for the first time, find ourselves under the spell of the *genius loci*. Considering the beautiful arbors here formed by tree and vine and flower, the fantastic shapes assumed by rock and mountain spur, the mysterious natural phenomena that frequently obtrude themselves on his attention, and his proneness to refer to supernatural agency everything that his untutored mind is unable to explain, it would be a greater wonder if such legends did not exist, and if the numerous physical features, that have so often excited our interest, were left unpeopled by creatures of the Indian's fancy."

The Indian of Colombia may know nothing of our elves and fairies; sylphs, undines and salamanders; gnomes, kobolds and hobgoblins, but his fertile imagination has, nevertheless, found similar beings to people plain and forest and mountain peak. Now, as in the days of their pre-Colombian ancestors, the Indian loves to regard stones and rocks and trees of peculiar form or extraordinary size as the abode of certain spirits, or as being in some way

identified with them. Like the Scandinavians of old, they see their deceased ancestors in the dense clouds that veil the neighboring hill tops. And like the peasant in the Hartz mountains, who has a superstitious dread of the spectre of the Brocken, they quail before a similar apparition frequently seen in the summits of the Cordilleras. They venerate the rainbow, and see in volcanoes the abode of beings of power and destruction.

To them, as to peoples of other parts of the world, the owl is a bird of ill omen. One of them, called from its cry *ya acabo, ya acabo*—it is finished, it is finished—is, when heard fluttering around the house, regarded as a harbinger of death. Another, the *pavita*, is considered as the spirit of some departed relative who, like the Irish banshee, would warn his kindred against death or some imminent calamity.

The Llaneros, fearless as they are in most respects, entertain the greatest dread of *espantos*, ghosts or apparitions. The *bola de fuego*, or the light of Aguirre, the Tyrant, is one of these ghosts. It is in reality nothing more than a kind of *ignis fatuus*, produced by the decomposition of organic matter, but to their minds, ignorant of the true nature of such gaseous exhalations, it is the soul of the infamous traitor, Lope de Aguirre, who, in punishment for his atrocities, has been condemned to wander through the broad forests and savannas that were the witnesses of his blood-stained crimes.

In their *duendes*, if they have not the analogues of pucks and brownies, they certainly possess a shrewd and knavish sprite, somewhat like the English Robin Good-Fellow. Among the Llaneros he is noted for the mischievous pranks he plays in the corrals, when occupied by horses and cattle, and, if one is to credit the stories of those who live on the plains, these particular *duendes* give the owners of live stock a world of trouble.

The Serranos—mountaineers—have even more wonderful stories to tell than the inhabitants of the llanos. The most remarkable of them are connected with certain caves, which are so numerous in the Eastern Andes, and certain lakes in which, the Serrano assures one, are occasionally observed phenomena of an extraordinary character.

They are firmly convinced, for instance, of a certain witch or malignant sorceress, called Mancarita, who carries away lonely travelers, or those who may have lost their way in the mountains. And they rehearse the tale of an Indian who concealed a bag of silver under a certain water fall near a well-known lake. This is guarded by a serpent or a dragon, but if one will, on St. John's day, travel in a state of complete nudity, the paramo of Novagote from one end to the other, he will be able to get possession of the hidden treasure. In all these legends, and there are many of them, the Indian has as much faith as have the children of the North in the fairy stories they hear in the nursery.

Then there is that "strange, harrowing, long-drawn cry, human in its tones," alleged sometimes to be audible in the depths of the tropical forests, for which no satisfactory explanation has as yet been given. The Indians say it is "The Cry of a Lost Soul." The poet Whittier refers to it in the following verses:—

"In that black forest where, when day is done,

. . . . . .

A cry as of the pained heart of the wood,
The long, despairing moan of solitude
And darkness and the absence of all good,
Startles the traveller with a sound so drear,
So full of hopeless agony and fear,

His heart stands still, and listens with his ear.
The guide, as if he heard a death-bell toll,
Crosses himself, and whispers, 'A Lost Soul.'"

Some of their stories, however, seem to have some foundation in fact. Almost every *paramero*—inhabitant of the paramo—has a story to tell about seeing lightning or hearing thunder issue from certain lakes or wells as he was passing by on a clear night when there was not the slightest indication of rain or storm. At such times the waters of the lake may become violently agitated without any apparent cause. One's vaqueano, on being asked the reason of such a phenomenon, simply replies, "*Está brava la laguna*," or "*Truena la laguna*—the lake is disturbed, or thunders."

The Indian's answer explains nothing, but the phenomenon seems to lend itself to an explanation which is as simple as it is natural. If we suppose these lakes, as we well may, to be in the craters of extinct volcanoes, in the bottoms of which, owing to slight earth tremors, rents are made in the rocks that permit the escape of imprisoned gases, the mystery is at least partially solved. The escape of gas, in large quantity under great pressure, would account for the violent agitation of the water. If these gases should become ignited by the action of the electricity with which, as we have learned, the summits of the mountains are often very highly charged, we should have in the flash of the ignited gas what the Indian takes to be lightning, and in the resulting explosion what he thinks is thunder.

I suggest this view merely as a tentative one, and hope that the phenomena in question, like those referred to in chapter nine regarding the luminous displays in the mountain summits, may eventually receive an explanation that men of science will accept as conclusive. But while awaiting the final word of empirical science regarding these, and

similar mysterious manifestations of nature, we may, with the simple Indian, give free rein to our fancy and people the cascades and lakes, caverns, forests and colossal rock masses with all kinds of preternatural beings and invest them with the most extraordinary powers.

To be frank, we were not sorry to get away from the atmosphere of science, and find a land where the legends and traditions of the people were akin to those that were the delight of our childhood. For, much as we love science, we have never been willing to renounce the pleasure of indulging our imagination, as we did in years long gone by, when the fairy tale and the myth so captivated our youthful mind. We confess it freely, we were glad to be among the simple, primitive people of the Andes, and were deeply interested in their peculiar folklore. It afforded us, in another form, the pleasure we derived from our first acquaintance with the creations of Homer, Hesiod and Ovid; and with such productions as the Niebelungen Lied, Sakuntala, the Knights of the Round Table and Cid Campeador. All the science, history and philosophy in the world could not diminish the pleasure we still find in these creations of fancy. We cherish them as much, if not more, to-day, as we did when they first became a part of our intellectual life. For this reason, if for no other, the reader will conceive our unalloyed delight in being beyond the reach of the reports of physical and psychological laboratories, wherein nothing is admitted that has not the imprimatur of Baconian science or Comtian philosophy, both of which lay an absolute interdict on all the most charming creations of poetry and romance.

The vista towards the east, as we finally drew near the *cumbre*—the long desired summit of the Andes—was beautiful in the extreme. Below us, to the right and to the left, were a succession of mountain ridges, some still forest-covered, while others exhibited the smiling gardens,

verdant pastures and humble dwellings of the inhabitants. Here and there was a picturesque little village of white-washed stone houses in place of the bamboo dwellings of the llanos and foothills. On all sides were multitudinous streams and torrents, that had their birth in the snow fields and ice pinnacles of the highest points of Sumapaz, and which were vying with one another in their long race for the broad emerald plains of Casanare and San Martin.

Above was the clear sapphire-blue sky, save where it was flecked by fantastic fleeces of glimmering clouds that floated voluptuously among the lofty peaks of the Cordilleras, and mantled them, in passing, with their quivering vapors. Then, as if by enchantment, all was changed with a suddenness that was positively startling. We had reached the limit of the *alisios*—trade winds—for the Andes form a rampart which they never pass. Here they are forced to part with the last drop of the moisture that they have brought from the distant Atlantic. But, on the occasion of our passage, they seemed determined to make one last desperate effort to cross the rock-ribbed barrier. As if marshaled by Æolus himself, the bright, white, cumulous clouds, those fair flocks of the west wind, were in a moment transformed into dark, ominous nimbi.

"Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes," which, gathering their forces, dashed with the fury of the hurricane against the adamantine crest of the Cordilleras. The tempest lasted but a few minutes, and then all was as bright and serene as before, and, if anything, more radiantly beautiful.

Here, in a region empyreal, far away from the noise and turmoil of our marts of commerce, we breathed an air of purity, and experienced a sense of freedom that are unknown in the dank, foul and malarial atmosphere in which so many struggling millions pass the greater part of

their wretched lives. But above all, what most impresses one in these ethereal heights is the sense of the proximity of God. We could almost fancy some one breathing into our ear the words of Tennyson:—

"Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

Traveling from the foothills to the summit of the Cordilleras is like going from the equator to the arctic circle. One has every variety of climate peculiar to the torrid, temperate and frigid zones, and the fauna and flora vary with the altitude as they change with the climate.

The inhabitants of the Andean regions have long recognized three distinct climates, known as those of the *tierra caliente*—hot land; the *tierra fría*—cold land; and the *paramo*. Men of science have, for the sake of convenience, added a third climate, that of the *tierra templada*, or temperate land. The altitudes at which these climates are found vary with the latitude and with certain meteorological conditions, but in Colombia and near the equator they are quite fixed and accepted as fair approximations to the truth.

Tierra caliente embraces a zone extending from sea level to a line one thousand meters higher up. It is pre-eminently the land of palms, ceibas and milk trees; of totumos and tamarinds, of the vanilla and ipecacuanha; the algarroba and white cedar; the sarrapia—*Dipteryx odorata*—and the poisonous curare—*strychnos toxifera*—from which the Indians make the deadly compound that renders their arrows such certain messengers of death. It is also the favorite zone for many tropical fruits such as plantains, bananas, mameys, nisperos, mangos, zapotes, oranges, lemons, pineapples, and scores of others found only in the

lowlands of the equinoctial regions.

The upper limits of the *tierra caliente* are indicated by the disappearance of the cacao tree and certain plants that do not flourish at an altitude beyond one thousand meters above sea level. The *tierra caliente* and the *tierra templada* are connected by such well-known plants and trees as sensitive mimosas, bamboos, cinchonas and tree ferns, although these representatives of the vegetable world do not attain their full importance until higher altitudes are reached.

The *tierra templada* comprises a zone extending from one thousand to twenty-four hundred meters above sea level. It is in the lower part of this zone that the bamboo, the most delicate and graceful of tropical plants, attains its greatest development and gives its greatest charm to the landscape.

The numerous plants, shrubs and trees of the bean and myrtle families are seen at their best in the lower half of the *tierra templada*. It is here, too, that one meets with the largest and most beautiful specimens of tree ferns. So gigantic, indeed, are they that at a distance they are easily mistaken for a moriche palm. Only in the islands of the Pacific have I ever seen anything to compare with them in size and luxuriant loveliness.

In this zone the cultivation of coffee replaces that of cacao in the zone below. I have never seen larger or finer berries anywhere than we found on the shrubs grown on the eastern declivity of the Cordilleras near San Miguel. And yet, strange to relate, only a short distance from this spot, we found it impossible to get a cup of coffee, although we asked for it at several places. There was chocolate and chicha in abundance, but no coffee, where it would be, one would think, the most common beverage. Its absence here reminded us of the difficulty we found in getting a

calabash of milk on the great cattle farms of the llanos.

At twelve hundred meters above sea level the palm family begins to lose its importance, although graceful representatives continue to charm the traveler until he reaches much higher altitudes. But one is, in a measure, reconciled to the disappearance of palms, that so delighted one in the lowlands, by the marvelous display made on all sides by countless species of the convolvulus and gesnerwort families. Nothing can exceed their exuberance, or their gay and brilliant flowers, as they mantle the shrubbery by the wayside or peep out from under the forest trees along one's path.

The flora comprehended in the zone extending from eighteen to twenty-four hundred meters above the sea is in reality transitional in its nature, and partakes of the character of both that of the *tierra templada* and the *tierra fría*. The various species of cinchona render this zone notable, for it is here and in the *tierra fría* that was formerly obtained most of the quinine of commerce.

Tierra fría extends from twenty-four hundred to three thousand meters above sea level. Its vegetation, as would be expected, is entirely different from that of the hot plains and temperate valleys of the lowlands. One no longer sees the elegant forms of the plantain and the bamboo, nor the majestic palm and ceiba, nor the graceful and flexible bejucos and creepers of hotter climes. But, notwithstanding the absence of all these charming representatives of Flora, it cannot be said of the vegetation of *tierra fría* that it is either poor or devoid of importance. Its dark hardy foliage, may, if you will, give it the impress of solemnity and melancholy, but the herbs, shrubs and trees are remarkable, not only for the number of their species, but also for the beauty of their inflorescence and the variety and importance of their products. Here flourish the noble red

cedar and the white caoutchouc tree that supplies to commerce the highly valued rubber known as the *Virgen del Para*.

The products of our northern lands, such as wheat, barley and potatoes, and such fruits—all of foreign origin—as the peach, pear, cherry and apple, together with a number of valuable garden vegetables, are cultivated in this zone, and with marked success.

The most important, and in some respects the most remarkable plant of the tropics is Indian corn—*zea mais*. It is cultivated in all the zones from the hot plains of *tierra caliente* to the upper regions of *tierra fría* and constitutes, in one form or another, the chief food-supply of the inhabitants. There is, however, a striking difference in the time required for the plant to reach maturity at the different altitudes. In the hot climates it is often ready for the harvest in two months after planting—when several crops a year are obtainable—whereas in the cold uplands it requires nearly a year to mature.

All the land between the *tierra fría* and the region of perpetual snow is called the paramo. It corresponds to the puna of Peru, Bolivia and Northern Chili. In some parts of Colombia the paramos are bleak, treeless plains, often enveloped in dark, cold fogs, or swept by keen blasts of almost arctic severity. In other parts, they are covered by a hardy Alpine vegetation, together with grasses and mosses of different species. The most interesting growths are strange-looking ferns and the woolly Frailejon—Espeletia grandiflora—which Sievers well designates as the character-plant of the paramos. The name, Frailejon, signifies a big monk, and was given the plant by the inhabitants on account of the fancied resemblance of its felt-like covering to a monk's hood. It is usually from six to eight feet high, but it frequently attains a much greater

altitude. It is one of those odd forms of vegetation that once seen are never forgotten.

No mere account, however, of the wonderful changes witnessed in passing from lower to higher altitudes can give any idea of the effect produced on the traveler. Every hour—yea, every minute—on his upward journey, he is greeted by new forms of vegetable life and must needs at the same time bid farewell to others that may not accompany him beyond their own proper zones. But, although Flora's children are ever changing, they are always beautiful and it would be difficult for the botanist to say where they challenge the most admiration—in the hot plains of the Orinoco and the Meta or high up on the cheerless and inhospitable paramo.

What we found most astonishing in our three-days journey from the llanos to the crest of the Cordilleras was the extraordinary number and diversity of forms of plant life. While we, in our northern woodlands, do well if we can find a score of different species of trees in the space of a square mile, we may, within the same limits in a tropical forest, count species by the hundred. Every few rods, on our way from Villavicencio to the *cumbre* of the Andes, we noted the appearance of some new species of plant, shrub or tree; some strange vine or epiphyte; some fruit or blossom which we had not observed before.

Great as were the physical and meteorological changes observable between the *tierra caliente* and the paramo, those of the vegetable world were still greater. At times, during our rapid ascent from lower to higher altitudes, from llanos to paramo, the changes in species were so rapid and kaleidoscopic, the transitions so sudden and unexpected, that our brains were in a whirl and we had to give up in despair the attempt to keep anything approaching a record of the order of sequence of the

countless vegetable forms encountered along our path. Considering solely the successive changes in flora and temperature, our experience in climbing the Cordilleras was like that which would result from a three-days journey overland from the sultry valley of the Amazon to the gold-bearing strands of the Yukon or to the distant shores of the Arctic Ocean.

It was a little after midday when we finally reached the paramo of Chipaque—that dread paramo of which we had so frequently heard so many and so extraordinary tales. It was, we had been told, a place of eternal frost and snow, and of blasts so tempestuous that both men and animals were sometimes picked up bodily and hurled into a yawning gorge near the dizzy height which we were obliged to pass. We soon discovered, however, that most of the stories we had heard of this and similar paramos, had but little foundation in fact, or were greatly exaggerated.[5]

To begin with, we found neither frost nor snow. As a matter of fact, snow rarely falls in this paramo. All about us there was an abundance of vegetation that little comported with the region of arctic temperature. We found there a number of peasants' huts and a large drove of cattle, that were on their way from the llanos to the Bogatá market. It took them more than two weeks to make a journey that we had made in three days. But both the cattle and their drivers—*vaqueros*—were more sensitive to cold than we were. For this reason, they had to proceed slowly to accustom themselves to the lower temperature and the higher altitude. The peasants living on the paramo, although lightly clad, did not seem to be affected by the cold. The vaqueros, however, who had come from the lowlands, seemed to suffer greatly. But no wonder. They made no provision for so great a change of climate. They wore the same light garments—probably they had nothing

else—in crossing the Cordilleras, that they had used in the ever-heated llanos. It was not strange, then, that they should give exaggerated accounts of the cold of the paramo or of the suffering it induces. It would be surprising if it were otherwise.

It requires less than half an hour to cross the paramo—so limited is it in area—and reach the Boquerón[6]—the name given the short artificial cut, only a few rods in length—through the crest of the Andes. At this highest point our thermometer registered 48° F., and the aneroid, a fine compensated instrument, indicated an altitude of ten thousand five hundred and sixty feet. This is but little higher than Leadville, Colo., and considerably lower than some of the railway passes over the Rocky Mountains. The temperature, owing to the light atmosphere, was so mild, that we did not even think of throwing our ponchos over our shoulders, as a protection from the cold that the poor Llanero felt so keenly.

As we were passing through the Boquerón we were joined by a young hacendado who had a cattle farm in the neighborhood. After a friendly greeting he remarked, "*Está sumamente fría*"—It is extremely cold. And then, thinking we were too lightly clad, he said almost pleadingly, "*Cubranse con sus bayetones, otramente se saca una pulmonia*." Put on your bayetones, otherwise you will get pneumonia. Then he related how, the preceding year, he had crossed this pass in a snow storm, contracted pneumonia, was confined to his bed for months, and barely escaped a premature death.

While he was thus addressing us, a number of Llaneros passed by on their way from Bogotá to their homes in the warm plains near Villavicencio. In addition to the usual covering for the head they had their ears and face protected by a kind of kerchief and seemed to suffer more from the

cold than our hardy northerners would in a Dakota blizzard. Poor fellows! We pitied them. They were shivering, their teeth were chattering and they were evidently in great distress. But the reason was manifest at a glance. Aside from their head gear, they had nothing on except a pair of short trousers of flimsy material and a light poncho. They were barefooted, and, to judge from their wan and pinched features, they were suffering from hunger as well as from cold.

We had now discovered the origin of the reports so generally accepted as true in the llanos, regarding the intense cold of the paramos and of the various Andean passes. Those poor, shivering, ill-clad, half-famished peons explained all. The same causes evidently operated in occasioning the great mortality suffered by Bolivar's army when it passed, in 1819, from the llanos of the Apure to the *altiplanicies*—high tablelands—of New Granada.[7]

The paramo of Pisva, through which the Republican army invaded the enemy's country, is less than thirteen thousand[8] feet above sea level, and the passage, therefore, of the Cordilleras, at this point, was not in itself the difficult undertaking it is so often represented to have been. The frightful loss of life, usually attributed to the intense cold of Pisva Pass, was, in reality, due to the fact that Bolivar's followers were not properly prepared for the campaign in which they were engaged. They were half-naked and half-starved and the wonder is that the hapless army did not suffer far greater losses than those actually recorded.

"The army endured many sufferings in the passage of the paramo," writes Vergara y Velasco, "but it is a grave error to compare them with those incurred in the passage of the Alps by Hannibal and Napoleon or in the passage of the Chilean Andes by San Martin, for in Pisva there is no

snow, neither is the altitude so great as that of many frequented places in our Cordilleras. The expedition, without having the romance of the others, nevertheless equals them in results and for the same reason—the ineptitude of the enemy."[9]

The first thing that attracted our attention, on reaching the western end of the Boquerón, was the large number of flowers, of divers species, that bedecked both sides of our path. They constituted a carpet of the most brilliant hues that, with a lovely green boscage, extended to the very summit of the mountain crest. In form and beauty they were not unlike the charming blooms that gladden our forests and meadows in May and June. There was this difference, however, that the number of species in a given space was far greater than is ever found in the same space in our northern climes. Does this close juxtaposition of so many species in the tropics contribute to the more rapid formation of varieties and new species than is possible in higher latitudes, where species are fewer and more widely separated from one another? It would seem so.

We shall never forget the panorama that burst upon our vision as we made our exit from the Boquerón. It was in such marked contrast with the view which we had so much admired on the eastern side. On the east side all was verdure, bloom, and grateful shrubbery, with occasional clumps of trees. On the western declivity, with the exception of a narrow reach, already mentioned, near the mountain crest, all was as treeless and as bare and arid as the sandy plains of Nevada or Arizona.

But the entire western slope and distant plateau was bathed in bright sunshine. Not a single cloud flecked the azure canopy above us, and not a single sound, except the muffled footsteps of our horses, disturbed the quiet and serenity of our exalted outlook. We were standing on the

crest of the Eastern Cordillera—the range to which the people of the country have long given the poetical name of Suma Paz—Supreme Peace.[10] Owing to its proximity to the capital, where it is always in view, it doubtless impressed the popular fancy more than did the more distant, although loftier and more imposing, snow-capped masses of Ruiz and Tolima. Seen from Bogotá, this beautiful range, when tinged with the golden crimson rays of the setting sun, might well appear as an Olympus, the abode of the gods in the enjoyment of eternal peace.

There are some geographers who contend that the Cordillera of Suma Paz is the continuation of the principal chain of the Andes, but, as it terminates in the adjoining Republic of Venezuela, it seems more reasonable to maintain that the Western Cordillera is entitled to this distinction. It is the western range, which, after passing through the Isthmus of Panama, reappears as the Sierra Madre of Mexico and as the Rocky Mountains of North America, and continues its course, almost without interruption, to Bering's Strait.

It is, however, the Sierra de Suma Paz which separates the two great hydrographic basins of the Orinoco and the Magdalena. We saw tiny rivulets, almost at the instant of their birth, and only a few spans from one another, beginning simultaneously their long journey to the broad Magdalena to the west and to the mighty Orinoco in the distant east. Some were to visit the lands which we had already traversed, others were to pass through a country that still lay before us, but which we hoped to explore in the very near future.

Although Suma Paz had long been one of the objective points of our peregrinations, we could not leave it without mingled feelings of regret and sadness. It stood between us and many delightful scenes and marked the passing of

many delightful days that could never return. There was also, of course, a feeling of relief experienced, for we had happily completed the most arduous part of our journey and that, too, without encountering a single one of the many difficulties and dangers that had been predicted when in Trinidad and Ciudad Bolivar we announced our intention of going to Bogotá over the route whose last lap we were completing.

From the spot where we halted to pluck a few flowers at the mouth of the Boquerón, as a souvenir of our first passage of the Andes, we could almost catch a glimpse towards the northwest, of the churches and public edifices of Colombia's capital. There was one of the celebrated camping-grounds of some of the most noted of the Conquistadores and thither we would hasten with the minimum of delay. We loved to think that Federmann had crossed the Cordilleras just where we did. It is certain that, if he did not cross them at this point, it was not far distant from it.[11] All the way from Villavicencio we felt that we were following in his footsteps, as we had been following in the footsteps of other conquistadores from the time we had trod the romantic soil of Tierra Florida. We had, near the foothills of the Cordilleras, in the neighborhood of Buena Vista, crossed the path of Hernan Pérez de Quesada, who almost made the circuit of New Granada in his memorable quest of El Dorado, and we were likely to cross it again before reaching Bogotá, for on his return from his expedition, he, as well as Federmann, must have entered the city near where we did ourselves.

Before leaving our posada at Caqueza we asked a certain Colombian general how long it took to make the trip to Bogotá. His reply was, "*Cinco horas sin mujeres*"—Five hours without women. To our surprise the women present made no protest against this unchivalrous reflection on their horsemanship. Probably, not being accustomed to

riding, they felt that his statement was true, and that it was unwise to call it in question. Had some of our dashing American horsewomen been present, it is most likely that the implied challenge would have provoked a spirited retort.

But whatever the women present may have thought, we subsequently had reason to believe that the man was wrong, but for a reason different from the one he had given. After leaving Caqueza we had pushed forward towards the Boquerón as rapidly as our horses—and they were good animals—could make their way over the terrible path up the mountain, and it took us more than five hours to reach that point. Judging from our experience it would have required an extraordinary strong and spirited horse to carry a man, over such a road as we had to traverse, to Bogatá in five hours even *sin mujeres*.

Our path, during the first few miles down the western declivity of the Suma Paz, was quite as bad as it had been anywhere on the eastern slope. After, however, we had reached the plateau, about fifteen hundred feet below the Boquerón, the road became much better and our mounts could make far better time than was before possible. Notwithstanding the energy expended in crossing the crest of the Andes, they were still in fine fettle, and it was only necessary to give them a loose rein to have them break into a lively gallop, which they seemed to be able to keep up indefinitely with but little effort.

There was not much of interest to note on this part of the way except, perhaps, some remarkable effects of erosion near the road a short distance from the capital. The hard, compact earth was here carved by the action of rain and running water into the same fantastic forms, often resembling dolmens and cromlechs, that characterize the Badlands of South Dakota. We regretted that we were

unable to take some photographs of them, as a number of the formations were of special geological importance.

The first indication of our near approach to Bogatá was a two-wheeled cart, drawn by a yoke of oxen, which we passed near the suburbs of the city. It was the first wheeled vehicle we had seen since leaving Ciudad Bolivar. Further on we were startled—and, I may add, delighted—by the piercing sound of a locomotive whistle. It came from an engine on one of the short railroads that centre in Bogotá.

At last we were getting back—I will not say to civilization—but to where the material evidences of civilisation were more numerous than they had been anywhere on our journey since we had taken our departure from the Port-of-Spain. As we got still nearer the city, we met a cavalcade of horsemen who were out for their evening ride. It was here that we saw, for the first time in Colombia, a thoroughfare worthy of the name. Our bonny steeds, trusty and true, seemed to appreciate the improvement in the road as much as we did ourselves. And, as if put on their mettle by the curveting steeds we had just passed, they, like the fleet mules of Nausicaa, "gathered up their nimble feet," and almost before we realized it we were in the streets of Bogotá.

It was then a matter of only a few minutes to our hotel, where we found comforts and conveniences to which we had long been strangers. It was just eight hours since we had left our modest posada in Caqueza, with its simple fare and hard board cot, and now we suddenly found ourselves installed in richly furnished apartments, with brilliant electric lights and an excellent cuisine. The sudden change in our environment seemed like an incident in the *Arabian Nights* rather than a reality in which we were personally concerned.

"How were you ever able to make such a trip?" queried a German traveler, shortly after our arrival. I had made all arrangements to go with a friend from Bogotá to Ciudad Bolivar, but after all was ready, I was dissuaded by my friends from undertaking a journey on which I had so long set my heart. They assured me that the trip would be so difficult and beset with so many dangers of all kinds that I would run the risk of losing health, and even life, if I persisted in my purpose. Only at the last moment, when they told me that the roads were absolutely impassable at this season of the year, did I give up a project that I had so long cherished. How I envy you. But it is too late now for me to reconsider my plans, as I must return to Germany in a few days, and with the knowledge that, against my better judgment, I was forced to forego the most interesting part of my itinerary."

Yes, we had indeed been fortunate in our wanderings. In the expressive language of a West Indian negro servant, whom we had for a while in Venezuela, we had always been "good-lucky, never bad-lucky." We had no adventures to record and never once felt that we were in presence of danger. We never carried weapons of any kind and at no time was there any need for them. During our entire journey, through plains and among mountains, we felt quite as safe as if we had been taking a promenade down Broadway or Fifth Avenue, New York. Roughing it agreed with us perfectly and, far from suffering from exposure or fatigue, we found ourselves in the enjoyment of better health at the completion of our journey than at the beginning. Despite all predictions to the contrary, we had escaped all

"The ministers of pain, and fear,
And disappointment, and mistrust and hate,
And clinging crime."

and had reached Colombia's capital, ready, after a few days' rest, to enter upon even a longer and a more arduous journey than the one that we had just so happily terminated.

"But did you not fear sickness on your way?" asked another German, who had gone over some of the ground we had just traversed, and who seemed to entertain anything but pleasant recollections of his experience. "When I traveled in the interior, far away from doctors and medical assistance of every kind, I was continually haunted by the thought of contracting fever or some other dread tropical disease. What would you have done if you had been stricken with the vomito or berriberri or the bubonic plague?" Modesty forbade us replying to this question by saying that "The Lord takes care of his own," so we answered in the words of Lucan,

"Capit omnia tellus
Quae genuit; coelo tegitur qui non hubet urnam."[12]

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[1]

Historia de las Indias, Dec. 1, Cap. V. ↑

[2]

"Certainly it is a marvelous fact in the history of the Mammalia," says Charles Darwin, "that in South America a native horse should have lived and disappeared, to be succeeded in after ages by the countless herds descended from the few introduced with the Spanish colonists!"—*Journal of Researches into the Natural History and Geology of the Countries Visited during the Voyage of H. M. S. "Beagle" round the World*, Chap. VII. ↑

[3]

According to the Chibchas, the fossil remains found here were the bones of a race of giants, hence the name given the locality. Humboldt and Cuvier, at the beginning of the last century, showed that the larger bones found were the remains of the *Mastodon angustidens*. Similar fossils found in other parts of South America have given rise to like fables. Cieza de Leon devotes an interesting chapter to a race of giants whose remains

were found at Point Santa Helena, near Guayaquil. And on the tradition of a race of giants, that at one time landed at this place, a certain Mr. Ranking, in 1827, published a fantastic book entitled *Researches on the Conquest of Peru and Mexico by the Mongols, accompanied with Elephants*. See *La Cronica del Peru*, Cap. LII, of Cieza de Leon. ↑

4

Campaigns and Cruises in Venezuela and New Granada from 1817–1830. ↑

5

"According to what the inhabitants told me," wrote Mollien, in the early part of the last century, "when the *paramo se pone bravo* is out of humor, then the greatest dangers threaten the traveler; a wind laden with icy vapors blows with tremendous violence; thick darkness covers the earth and conceals every trace of a road. The birds which, on the appearance of a fine day, had attempted the passage, fall motionless. The traveler seeks to shelter himself under the stunted shrubs which here and there grow in these deserts; but their wet foliage obliges him to find another covert. Worn out with fatigue and hunger, in vain urging on his mules, benumbed with cold, he sits down to recover his exhausted strength. Fatal repose! His stomach soon becomes affected as when at sea, his blood freezes in his veins; his muscles grow stiff, his lips open as if to smile, and he expires with the expression of joy upon his features. The mules, no longer hearing their master's voice, remain standing, till at length tired, they lie down to die."—*Travels in the Republic of Colombia*, pp. 96, 97, London, 1824. ↑

6

Signifying a large hole, or a wide opening. ↑

7

The author of *Campaigns and Cruises*, already quoted, writing of the pass where Bolivar's army crossed the Cordillera describes it as "strewed with the bones of men and animals, that have perished in attempting to cross the paramo in unfavorable weather. Multitudes of small crosses are fixed in the rocks by pious hands, in memory of former travelers, who have died here; and along the path are strewed fragments of saddlery, trunks and various articles that have been abandoned, and resemble the traces of a routed army." Vol. III, p. 165. ↑

8

The *Guia de la Republica de Colombia*, p. 301, por M. Zamora, Bogotá, 1907, places the altitude at three thousand and nine hundred metres. ↑

9

Nueva-Geografia de Colombia, Tom. I, p. 985. ↑

10

According to Vergara y Velasco, the name Suma Paz is of Indian, and not of Spanish origin. If this be true, the name should be written as one word —Sumapaz. Personally, I prefer to think the name is Spanish. For this particular range it is a most appropriate epithet. ↑

11

Padre Simon says that Federmann, after crossing the Cordillera, tarried for a while in the province of Pasca. Castellanos declares it was in the pueblo of Pasca, a small town a short distance south of our route. According to Vergara y Velasco, the adventurous German conquistador entered "the Sabana of Bogatá by way of Pasca and Usme." Usme is a village that is on the road along which we passed. Col. Joaquin Acosta tells us the Cordillera was crossed in the broadest and most rugged part, "where even to-day the most daring hunters scarcely ever venture. Neither before nor since Federmann have horses scaled the craggy crests of Pascote and crossed the heights of Suma Paz and descended thence to Pasca in the valley of Fusagasuga." Oviedo informs us that it required twenty-two days to cross the *paramos*, which was so extremely cold that sixteen horses were frozen to death. But whether Federmann crossed Suma Paz where we did or, as some think, at a point farther south, it is reasonable to suppose that his route from Villavicencio to Bogatá was practically the same as our own. ↑

12

"Earth receives againe,
Whatever she brought forth, and they obtaine
Heaven's couverture, that have no urnes at all."

—Lucan's *Pharsalia*, Lib. VII, vv. 319 et seq. ↑

CHAPTER X

THE ATHENS OF SOUTH AMERICA

In the beginning of August, 1538, Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada, the conqueror of Cundinmarca, and his followers, after one of the most remarkable campaigns ever conducted in the New World, assembled on the present site of Bogatá. Here Quesada dismounted from his charger, and plucking up some grass by the roots, he announced that he took possession of that land in the name of the Emperor Charles V. Having remounted his steed, he drew his sword, and challenged any one to oppose this formal declaration, which, he declared, he was prepared to defend at all hazards. As no one appeared to contest his action, he sheathed his sword, and directed the army notary to make an official record of what had just been accomplished.

Bogotá was then but a rude village, or, rather, a camp, of a dozen hastily constructed huts which barely sufficed to shelter the intrepid sons of Spain. Besides these twelve huts—erected in memory of the twelve apostles—there had also been constructed a small wooden, thatch-covered church, on the very site occupied by the present imposing cathedral of Colombia's fair capital. The first mass was said in this church the sixth day of August, a few days after

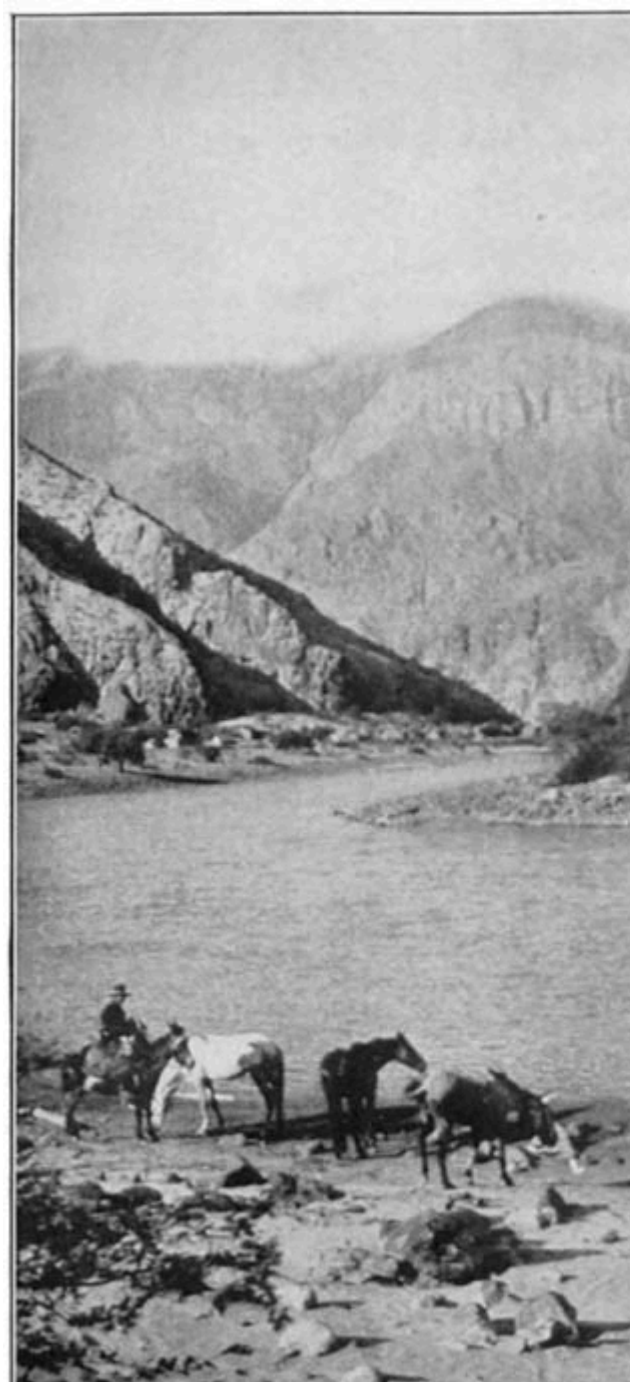
the ceremony of occupation just mentioned—and this is regarded as the legal date of the foundation of Bogotá. It was then that the work of the conquest was technically considered as finished. The work of colonization was to follow without delay.

It was then that Quesada gave to the future city the name of Santa Fé.[1] Being from Granada, he named the country he had discovered and conquered Nuevo Reino de Granada —the New Kingdom of Granada—an appellation it retained until after the War of Independence, when it received the name it now bears.

There is, indeed, a striking similarity between the elevated plateau, watered by the Funza, and the charming vega of Granada, fertilized by the romantic Genil. To one looking towards the west, from a spur of the mountain at the foot of which Bogotá is situated, as Granada is located at the foot of its hills, the ridge of Suba is seen towards the northwest, just as the sierra of Elvira is seen with respect to the old Moorish capital. And so it is with the relative positions of Santa Fé en la Vega and the pueblo of Fontibon. The illusion is complete, and the similarity between these two famous places in Spain and Colombia must have impressed themselves on the receptive mind of the illustrious conquistador with peculiar force. Even the heights of Suacha, in aspect and position, recall the famous hill which is known as the *Suspiro del Moro* from the lament of Boabdil, the last king of Granada, whose tears evoked from his mother, the intrepid Sultana, Ayxa la Horra, the caustic words, "*Bien hace en llorar como mujer lo que como hombre no supo defender*."[2]

Santa Fé, also known as Santa Fé de Bogotá, was for a long period the capital of the Viceroyalty of New Granada. After the War of Independence the name was changed to Bogotá—from Bacatá—the name of the old Chibcha

capital, where the zipa, the most powerful of the Indian caciques, at the arrival of the Spaniards, had his official residence. The city is nearly two miles in length and of varying breadth. Its present population is nearly one hundred and twenty-five thousand. It is situated on a western spur of the great Cordillera of Suma Paz at an elevation, according to Reiss and Stübel, of eight thousand six hundred and sixteen feet above sea level—more than half a mile higher than the summit of Mt. Washington, the highest point in New England.





A Valley in the Cordilleras.

The mean annual temperature is 60° F., but, owing to the rarity of the atmosphere, and to its being shielded from the wind by the mountains at whose base it is situated, it seems to be higher than this. During certain seasons of the year one may experience a penetrating cold, as long as one remains in the shade, but when one passes into the sunshine it becomes almost uncomfortably warm. During the rainy season, the newcomer feels the cold very keenly, but, after a short residence in the city, one becomes acclimated and then fancies that he is in the enjoyment of perpetual spring.

We were in Bogotá in the early part of June, during which time it rained every day. Coming directly from the *tierra caliente*, we suffered considerably, especially at night, from the low temperature and the dampness that prevailed. We were, however, informed by the natives that the season was unusually severe, and that such bad weather as we encountered was quite unusual: Velasco y Vergara —a Colombian—tells that it rains the greater part of the year, and that the sky is almost always covered by clouds.[3] For this reason, the houses suffer from humidity, and rheumatism and kindred complaints are very prevalent. Otherwise the climate is considered salubrious.

Bogotá—called by the aborigines Bacatá—is a city in a state of transition. It has lost, almost entirely, the mediæval, monastic, mozarabic aspect that characterized it while it was the tranquil court of the viceroys. But, great as has been the change that it has undergone during the last few decades, it preserves much of the quaintness of

colonial times. Indeed, it is not difficult, in certain parts of the city, to fancy oneself carried back to a typical Spanish town of the time of Charles V or Philip II. As a whole, however, the Bogotá of to-day does not differ materially in appearance from a city of the same size in Spain or Mexico. All Latin-American cities are similar in their leading features, and when you have seen one you have seen all.

The city is adorned by a number of broad and beautiful streets and several plazas and parks. Aside from a few government buildings, the edifices that attract most attention are the monasteries and churches. The cathedral is a noble building and compares favorably with any similar structure in South America. The interior had just been artistically painted and gilded, at the time of our visit, and it reminded us somewhat of the exquisite finish of St. John Lateran, in Rome. An object of interest to the traveler, within these sacred precincts, is the tomb of the illustrious conquistador, Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada.

The residences of the people are usually two stories high, with a balcony on the second story facing the street. All of the older houses, as well as many of the modern ones, are of the well-known Moorish style of architecture, with a single large entrance—*porton*—and a *patio*—courtyard—or two, on which the rooms open. This style of building is well adapted to tropical climates. It is comfortable and secures the maximum of privacy. It is in reality, as well as in fiction, the owner's castle.

We were surprised to see the number of foreign flowers grown in these patios. One would naturally expect to find representatives of the rich and beautiful Colombian flora, but the ladies of Bogotá seem to prefer the exotic blooms of the temperate zone. We found roses, camellias, pinks and geraniums in abundance, but rarely any of those floral

beauties that had so frequently excited our admiration on the way from the llanos to the capital. Our hotel, however, was a notable exception to this rule. Here we were delighted with a veritable exhibition of orchids of many species and of the most wonderful forms and colors. Among them were some truly splendid specimens of oncidiums, cattleyas and odontoglossums. It was then we thought of some of our orchid-loving friends of New York, who would have fairly reveled in such marvels of Flora's kingdom.

As nearly all the streets are paved with cobblestones, driving is anything but a pleasure. As a matter of fact, the only passable drive in the city is the one that leads to the charming little suburb of Chapinero. This is one of the show places of Bogotá, and its houses are in marked contrast with those found in the older part of the city. Most of them are entirely different in style from the enclosed Moorish structures of which mention has been made. Here one is introduced to cozy Swiss chalets in the midst of delightful flower gardens and picturesque French chateaux, that carry one back to the Seine and the Loire.

Aside from the churches and monasteries, many of which have been converted into government offices, there were two buildings that possessed a special interest for us. One of these was the old Colegio del Rosario—now known as the School of Philosophy and Letters—founded in 1553, nearly a hundred years before the University of Harvard. This institution has long been fondly spoken of by the people of Bogotá as the country's special glory—*la gloria de la patria*. The other building was the astronomical observatory—the first intertropical structure of the kind—erected in 1803. After the observatory of Quito, it is said to be the highest in the world.

Some of the streets and houses have been recently lighted

by electricity, but as yet horses or mules are used as the motive power for the few street cars that traverse the principal thoroughfares. It were easy to count the number of private carriages in the city. The only ones we saw were those of the archbishop and the president of the republic. Indeed, so rough are the streets that most people prefer walking to using cabs, except in cases of necessity.

The first two objects to arrest our attention, as we approached Bogotá from the south, were the chapels of Guadalupe and Monserrate, the former nearly twenty-two hundred feet above the city, and the latter about two hundred feet lower. Perched high upon the flanks of two picturesque mountain peaks, they are conspicuous objects from all parts of the Savanna. Both of these sanctuaries are reached by a foot path, but, as yet, no attempt has been made to connect them with the city by a carriage road. Owing to the altitude above sea level of these places, a pilgrimage to them is quite a task—especially to the newcomer, who is unaccustomed to the rare atmosphere of the locality. But the magnificent view afforded one from either of these elevated shrines well repays all the effort required to reach them. It is, in some respects, the most beautiful to be found in the whole of Colombia. And then, there are besides certain historical features connected with the panorama spread out before one that make it doubly interesting.

Standing in front of the church of Guadalupe, we have before us the beautiful Savanna of Bogotá[4]—a fertile plain, nine hundred square kilometers in area. Humboldt, whose opinion has been adopted by many subsequent writers, regarded this level stretch of land as the bottom of a lake that formerly existed here, but recent investigators have called this view in question. Strangely enough, the Chibcha Indians, at the time of the conquest, had a tradition that the Savanna was at one time occupied by a

lake, but that Bochica, child of the sun, drained its waters by giving them an exit through the celebrated falls of Tequendama.[5] The general appearance of the plain, as well as certain geological features, seemed to confirm this tradition, and it was not until quite recently that any one ventured to express a doubt about the tradition, or the long-accepted opinion of the great German savant.

In the morning, when the Savanna is covered by a mist, as often happens, the observer from Monserrate or Guadalupe does indeed seem to be looking down upon a vast lake. The hills, which here and there rise above the fog, look like islands and strengthen the illusion. But this effect is all dissipated as soon as the sun makes his appearance above the crest of Suma Paz. One then has before him one of the most lovely panoramas in the world. The wide verdant expanse is intersected with rivers and streams, all tributaries of the Funza, and dotted with towns and hamlets and haciendas, lakes and lakelets, large herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, troops of horses, mules and burros. All this is enclosed by lofty ramparts of gneiss and granite, which shield the inhabitants of city and plain from the tempestuous moisture-laden winds that would otherwise often sweep over the Savanna with the fury of a Kansas cyclone.

Aside from the Eucalyptus and Humboldt oak—*Quercus Humboldtii*—there are no large trees in the Savanna of Bogotá. The Eucalyptus, however, is everywhere visible, in the streets and in the gardens of the capital, along the thoroughfares of the country and around every house, however humble, and quinta, as far as the eye can reach. These trees were introduced from Australia only a few decades ago, and now one finds them in all parts of the republic. We saw them all along our route from the llanos to Bogatá. The people, especially those living on the eastern slopes of the Oriental Andes, are firmly convinced

that their presence wards off *paludismo*—malaria—and, as a consequence, they are considered as indispensable around the house as the plantain or calabash tree.6

There is nothing more delightful than a stroll along the Rio San Francisco, which flows between Monserrate and Guadalupe and thence through the city of Bogotá. The scenery is thoroughly Alpine in character and, at times, picturesque beyond description. As one follows the narrow path, always near the musical, crystal waters of the impetuous stream, one is delighted at every step by the appearance of some new flower of brightest hue, or some strange shrub of richest foliage. The ground is fairly carpeted with anemones, hepaticæ, gentians, valerians, geraniums, campanulæ, lupines and buttercups. Like similar plants on the Alps, and on the heights of our Rockies, their stems are very short and they seem like so many rosettes attached to the earth, or the rocks that rise up on both sides of our narrow path.

One sees well illustrated here the dividing line between the flora of the paramo and that of the *tierra fría*. The plants of the latter creep up timidly from the Savanna until a certain point, and then, as if afraid to venture further into the region of frost, halt on the lower edge of the paramo. In a similar manner the plants of the higher altitudes cautiously descend to the upper belt of the *tierra fría* and there come to a standstill. They meet on a common zone in limited numbers, but this zone is often extremely narrow. One of the agreeable surprises to the traveler in the Andes is to note the sudden and extraordinary changes in the character of the vegetation as he ascends or descends the mountain near the line of demarcation between two zones.

The plateau of Guadalupe is the home of two remarkable tree ferns. One of these is the *Cyathea patens*, from ten to twelve feet high, with a beautiful, umbrella-shaped crown.

The other is the *Dicksonia gigantea*, which, according to the naturalist, Karsten, is probably the most vigorous and luxuriant tree fern in South America. Its massive, columnar trunk bears forty and more dark-green fronds, from three to four feet wide and from six to seven in length. To get a close view of even one of these noble cryptogams fully repays one for the arduous climb up to its favorite habitat.

Any city in the United States or Europe, having in its immediate vicinity such attractions as has Bogotá, would immediately put them within easy reach of the public. Thus both Monserrate and Guadalupe would, without delay, be connected with the city by a funicular railway, and near by would be a number of restaurants and pleasure resorts.

An electric railway would also be constructed to the great water falls of Tequendama—the largest in Colombia and among the most celebrated in South America. Although only thirty-six feet wide, the main fall is three times the height of Niagara Falls.[7] But the volume of water carried over the precipice of Tequendama is incomparably less than that which plunges into the colossal whirlpool of Niagara. In appearance it somewhat resembles Vernal Falls in the Yosemite Valley, or the lower fall of the Yellowstone. What, however, gives to the Colombian cataract a beauty all its own is its setting of luxuriant tropical vegetation. In this respect our northern waterfalls, however attractive they may be in other respects, cannot be compared with Tequendama.

Incredible as it may seem, but few Colombians have ever seen the falls of Tequendama. Although the people of Bogotá love to talk about them, as among the greatest wonders of their country, it is rarely that one is found who has actually visited them. And yet they are not more than twelve miles from the capital. Even the peons living on the

plains only a few miles from the cataract can give the traveler little or no information as to the best way to reach them. How different this would all be if the place were easy of access, and if the visitor, on arriving there, could find the creature comforts to be obtained in similar places in the United States and Europe!

I have alluded to the interesting historical associations connected with the city and plateau of Bogotá. It will suffice to speak of but one of them; but this one is so remarkable that it is like a chapter taken from the *Arabian Nights*. I refer to the meeting of the three distinguished conquistadores, Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada, Nicholas Federmann and Sebastian de Belalcazar.

Quesada had left Santa Marta in 1536, having under his command, according to Oviedo, eight hundred men and one hundred horses. He went part of the way by land and part by the Rio Grande, now known as the Magdalena. After reaching the Opon, he followed that river as far as it was navigable, and eventually made his way to the plateau of Bogotá—the land of the Chibchas.

His march was, in some respects, the most difficult and remarkable in the annals of the conquest. He had to contend against relentless savages, dismal swamps and almost impenetrable forests, where he had to cut his way through the tangled vines and bushes, and where it was often impossible to make more than a league a day. His men were decimated by disease and starvation. When he at last arrived at the Valle de Alcazares, near the present site of Bogotá, he could count but one hundred infantry and sixty cavalry. But with this handful of men he had conquered the Chibcha nation, numbering, according to the old chroniclers, one million people and having twenty thousand soldiers in the field.

Scarcely, however, was his campaign against the aborigines successfully terminated, when information was conveyed him of a new danger in the person of a German competitor, who had just arrived from the llanos.

Five years previously, Federmann, in the service of the Welsers, had left Coro in Venezuela, with four hundred well-armed and well-provisioned men. After wandering over trackless plains and through dark and almost impenetrable forests, enduring frightful hardships of all kinds, he finally got word of the Chibchas and of their treasures of gold and precious stones. He forthwith changed his route and crossed the Eastern Cordilleras, where the traveler André assures us it is now absolutely impossible to pass.[8]

Thus, almost before Quesada was aware that Federmann was in the country, he was constrained by policy to receive him and his one hundred ragged and famished followers—these were all that remained of his gallant band—as his guests. The Spanish conquistador knew that the German leader would put in a claim for a part of the territory that they had both been exploring, and which, until then, each of them had regarded as his own by right of conquest. He was then naturally eager to effect a settlement with his competitor on the best terms possible, and get him out of the country with the least possible delay. Federmann agreed to renounce all his claims in consideration of his receiving himself the sum of ten thousand pesos, and of having his soldiers enjoy all the rights of discoverers and conquistadores accorded to those of Quesada.

Scarcely, however, had these negotiations been happily terminated, when another and a more formidable rival appeared on the scene, on his way from the distant South. This was Sebastian de Belalcazar,[9] the famous lieutenant of Francisco Pizarro. He was then governor of Quito and

the conqueror of much of the territory now included in Ecuador and Southern Colombia. Hearing casually of El Dorado and of the marvelous riches this ruler was reputed to possess, the Spanish chieftain lost no time in organizing an expedition to the country of gold and emeralds, of fertile plains and delightful valleys. Setting out with the assurance of an early and easy victory, and of soon becoming the possessors of untold wealth and all the enjoyment that wealth could command, the soldiers, in quest of El Dorado, exclaimed with unrestrained enthusiasm:

"Nuestros sean su oro y sus placeres,
Gocemos de ese campo y ese sol."[10]

But anticipation is not fruition. This the Spaniards soon learned to their sorrow. Like Quesada and Federmann and their followers, Belalcazar and his men had to endure frightful hardships during the long and painful march of many months from Quito to the plateau of Bogotá. According to Castellanos, who wrote while many of these adventurers were still living, and who had received from them directly an account of their privations and sufferings and the countless obstacles that at times rendered progress almost impossible, their journey was made through mountains and districts that were inaccessible and uninhabitable, through gloomy forests and dense, tangled underbrush; through inhospitable lands and dismal swamps, where there was neither food nor shelter for man or beast.[11]

This extraordinary and accidental meeting of the three conquistadores, coming from so great distances, from three different points of the compass, is one of the most interesting episodes in the history of the conquest. It was a critical moment for the Europeans. If they had failed to agree, and had turned their arms against one another, those

who would have escaped alive would have been at the mercy of the Indians, who would at once have rallied their forces to repel the invaders. But, fortunately, wise councils prevailed and a clash was averted.

"While the clergy and the religious," writes Acosta, "were going to and from the different camps endeavoring to prevent a rupture, the three parties of Spaniards, coming from points so distant, and now occupying the three apices of a triangle, whose sides measured three or four leagues, presented a singular spectacle. Those from Peru were clad in scarlet cloth and silk, and wore steel helmets and costly plumes. Those from Santa Marta had cloaks, linens and caps made by the Indians. Those, however, from Venezuela, like refugees from Robinson Crusoe's island, were covered with the skins of bears, leopards, tigers and deer. Having journeyed more than thirteen hundred leagues through uninhabited lands, they had experienced the most cruel hardships. They arrived poor, naked, and reduced to one-fourth of their original number.

"The three chiefs," continues Acosta, "were among the most distinguished men who ever came to America. Belalcazar, son of a woodman of Extremadura, attained by his talents and valor the reputation of being one of the most celebrated conquistadores of South America and was endowed in a degree far above the other two with political tact and observing genius. As soon as he became aware of the agreement entered into between Quesada and Federmann, he nobly waived his rights, and declined to accept the sum which Quesada offered him. He stipulated only that his soldiers should not be prevented from returning to Peru, when they might desire to do so, or when Pizarro should demand them, and that Captain Juan Cabrera should return to found a town in Neiva, a territory which, along with Timana, was to be under the government of Popayan, which it was his intention to

solicit from the Emperor. In the meantime he agreed to accompany Quesada to Spain."[12]

The three went to Spain together, as had been arranged, each of them confident of receiving from the Spanish monarch a reward commensurate with his labors and services to the crown. Each one aspired to the governorship of New Granada and used all his influence to secure the coveted prize.

The net result of their efforts was a sad experience of the vanity of human wishes. All were disappointed in their expectations. The guerdon all so eagerly strove for was awarded to another, who had taken no part in the conquest that had rendered the three aspirants to royal favor so famous.

Only Belalcazar received any recognition whatever. He was made adelantado of Popayan and the surrounding territory. As for Quesada and Federmann, they fell into disfavor. The latter soon disappeared from public view entirely, but long afterwards, Quesada was able to return to the land where he had won so many laurels. And it was fitting that, after his death, his remains should repose in the noble cathedral that adorns the capital of which he was the founder.[13]

In adventure and achievement, the three conquistadores above mentioned take rank with Cortes, Pizarro and Orellana. Given a Homer, their wanderings and deeds would afford themes for three Odysseys of intense and abiding interest. Given even an Ercilla, we should have a literary monument, which, in romantic episode and dramatic effect, would eclipse the *Araucana*, the nearest approach to an epic that South America has yet produced.

The Bogotános have long claimed for their city the

distinction of being the Athens of South America. And considering its past and present culture, and the attention which the arts, the sciences and literature have always received there since the foundation of the capital, few, I think, will be disposed to impugn the justness of this claim.

Bogotá's first man of letters was none other than the licentiate Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada himself—a man who could wield the pen with as much skill as the sword. Indeed, the detailed knowledge that we have of many features of his memorable campaigns we owe to his fertile pen. He is really the first and, in some respects, the most important chronicler of the events in which he took so conspicuous a part. How unlike, in this respect, is he not, to Pizarro and Almagro, who were unable to sign their own names?

Among the other early writers of New Granada was Padre Juan de Castellanos, the poet-historiographer, who has been so frequently quoted in the preceding chapters. The extent of his work may be gauged by the fact that it contains one hundred and fifty thousand hendecasyllabic verses—more than ten times as many as are in the *Divina Commedia*—and more than are found in any other metrical work, except the Hindu epic known as the Mahabharata, which contains no fewer than one hundred and ten thousand couplets.

It is interesting to note that in Colombia, as in Spain, Portugal and Mexico, the nun in the cloister has found time to devote to literature as well as to contemplation and works of charity. Among these successful imitators of St. Theresa, whose works, both in prose and verse, have long been the admiration of the literary world, may be mentioned Sor Francisca Josefa de la Concepcion, of Tunga. Although she wrote in prose, she, by her purity of language and delicacy of sentiment, is entitled to rank with

such distinguished ornaments of the cloister as Sor Junana Ines de la Cruz, of Mexico; Sor Maria de Ceo, of Portugal; Sor Gregoria de Santa Teresa, of Seville; and Sor Ana de San Jeronimo, of Granada, Spain.[14]

The names of the poets and prose writers of Colombia, that have achieved distinction, make a long list. Many of them enjoy an international reputation, and their productions compare favorably with the best efforts of the writers of the mother country—Spain.[15]

In science, too, Colombia counts many sons who have contributed greatly to our knowledge of nature. It suffices to recall the names of such savants as Francisco Antonio Zea, Francisco José de Caldas and the illustrious Mutis, whom Humboldt called "the patriarch of the botanists of the New World," and whose name Linnæus declared to be immortal—"*nomen immortale quod nulla aetas unquam delebit*."

There were at one time no fewer than twenty-three colleges in New Granada. The first of these was founded in 1554, for the education of the Indians. The following year another one was established for the benefit of Spanish orphans and mestizos. In one of the colleges was a special chair for the study of the Muisca language. The Royal and Pontifical University began its existence in 1627, thirteen years before the foundation of Harvard College. In 1653 the Archbishop D. Fr. Cristobal de Torres founded the celebrated College del Rosario, which, by reason of its munificent endowment, was able to render such splendid service to the cause of education, and was long recognized as the leading institution of learning in New Granada.

Although the Viceroyalty of Santa Fe was behind Mexico[16] and Lima in the introduction of the printing press, it claims the honor of establishing the first

astronomical observatory in America, as Mexico was the first to have a botanical garden, a school of mines, and a school of medicine. It was also among the first, if not the very first, of the capitals of the New World to open a public library.

The number of public and private libraries now existing in the city of Bogotá contribute greatly towards justifying its claim to being the chief centre of South American culture. Another evidence of the intellectual atmosphere that obtains there is the number of secondhand book stores. In browsing among these storehouses of old and precious tomes I quite forgot, for the time being, that I was so far from the busy world of action, and could easily fancy myself among the book shops of Florence, Leipsic or Paris. Indeed, some of the most prized volumes in my Latin-American library I picked up on the book stalls of Bogotá.

Mr. R. B. Cunninghame Graham, in his preface to Sr. Triana's work, *Down the Orinoco in a Canoe*, says the capital of Colombia "is in a way a kind of Chibcha Athens. There all men write, and poets rave and madden through the land, and only wholesome necessary revolutions keep their number down." Again, he declares: "Bogotá to-day is, without doubt, the greatest literary centre south of Panama. Putting aside the flood of titubating verse which, like a mental dysentery, afflicts all members of the Spanish-speaking race, in Bogotá more serious literary work is done during a month than in the rest of the republics in a year."[17]

Mr. W. L. Scruggs, sometime American minister to Bogotá, writes in the same sense. "Most of the educated classes," he says, "have, or think they have, the literary faculty. They are particularly fond of writing what they call poetry, and of making post-prandial speeches. The

average collegian will write poetry[18] by the yard or speak impromptu by the hour. He never shows the least embarrassment before an audience, and is rarely at a loss for a word. The adjectives and adverbs flow in sluices of unbroken rhythm, and the supply of euphonious words and hyperbolic phrases seems inexhaustible. He always gesticulates vehemently, and somehow it seems to become him well; for no matter how little there may be in what he says, somebody is sure to applaud and encourage him."

In Colombia there seem to be as many "doctors," that is, men who have the degree of Doctor of Laws, as there are generals in Venezuela. Most of them are politicians, or contributors to the various newspapers of the country, or "professors"—there are no pedagogues—in the numerous educational institutions of the Republic.

The number of newspapers published in Bogotá is surprising—more than there are in Boston or Philadelphia. Of course, their circulation is extremely limited. They are mostly partisan organs—an independent paper being unknown—or literary journals remarkable, the majority of them, for long poems, verbose editorials and translations of the latest French novels.

On the way down from the chapel of Guadalupe, near the opening of the gorge between the peaks of Monserrate and Guadalupe, one passes what was once the Quinta Bolivar, a gift to the Liberator by one of his wealthy admirers. It is now the property of a thrifty Antioquenian, who has converted it into a tannery. As we pass along the north side of San Carlos' palace, which contains the office of the ministry of foreign affairs, we observe the historic window from which, as a memorial tablet informs us, Bolivar escaped assassination, Sept. 25th, 1828. In the centre of the principal plaza, called the Plaza Bolivar, is a bronze statue of the Liberator by Tenerani, a pupil of Canova.

Everywhere in Colombia, as in Venezuela, we are reminded of Bolivar and find monuments to his memory. In Ciudad Bolivar and in Valencia and elsewhere there are statues of him. In Caracas there are several, among them a large equestrian statue which is a replica of one in Lima.

But the people, in their desire to honor their hero, have not been satisfied with statues alone. Coins bear his name and image, towns and states are named after him. More than this, his name has been given to one of the South American republics—Bolivia—a republic, formerly a part of Peru—Upper Peru—which owes its very existence to him.

But who was Simon Bolivar, one will ask, and what has he done to achieve such distinction and to command recognition in such diverse ways and in regions so widely separated?

His admirers say that he was the Washington of South America—the one who secured the independence of the Spanish colonies, after three centuries of misrule and oppression. According to them, he was one of the world's greatest geniuses in military science, a genius in state-craft, a genius in everything required to make a great and successful leader of men.

Sr. Miguel Tejera does not hesitate to characterize him as one who was "Bold and fortunate as Alexander, a patriot like Hannibal, brave and clement like Cæsar, a great captain and a profound statesman like Napoleon, honorable as Washington, a sublime poet and a versatile orator, such was Bolivar, who united in his own mind all the vast multiplicity of the elements of genius. His glory will shine in the heaven of history, not as a meteor that passes, and is lost in the bosom of space, but as a heavenly body, whose radiance is ever-increasing."[19]

Even more extravagant are the claims made for his hero by Don Felipe Larazabel in his bulky two-tome *Vida de Bolivar*.

"A noble and sublime spirit, humane, just, liberal, Bolivar was one of the most gifted men the world has ever known; so perfect and unique that in goodness he was like Titus, in his fortune and achievements like Trapan, in urbanity like Marcus Aurelius, in valor like Cæsar, in learning and eloquence like Augustus....

"He was a poet like Homer, a legislator like Plato, a soldier like Bonaparte.... He taught Soublett and Heres diplomacy, Santander administration, Gual politics, Marshal Sucre military art.

"Like Charlemagne, but in a higher degree, he possessed the art of doing great things with ease and difficult things with promptness. Whoever conceived plans so vast? Whoever carried them to a more successful issue? A quick and unerring glance; a rapid intuition of things and times; a prodigious spontaneity in improvising gigantic plans; the science of war reduced to the calculation of minutes, an extraordinary vigor of conception, and a creative spirit, fertile and inexhaustible, ... such was Bolivar.

"'Deus ille fuit, Deus, inclyte Memmi.' He was a god, illustrious Memmius, he was a god."[20]

Col. G. Hippisley, who served under Bolivar in the War of Independence, does not give such a flattering estimate of the Liberator. "Bolivar," he writes, "would willingly ape the great man. He aspires to be a second Bonaparte in South America, without possessing a single talent for the duties of the field or the cabinet.... He has neither talents nor abilities for a general, and especially for a commander-in-chief.... Tactics, movements and manœuvre are as

unknown to him as to the lowest of his troops. All idea of regularity, system or the common routine of an army, or even a regiment, he is totally unacquainted with. Hence arise all the disasters he meets, the defeats he suffers and his constant obligations to retreat whenever opposed to the foe. The victory, which he gains to-day, however dearly purchased ... is lost to-morrow by some failure or palpable neglect on his part. Thus it is that Paez was heard to tell Bolivar, after the action at Villa del Cura, that he would move off his own troops, and act no more with him in command; adding, 'I have never lost a battle wherein I acted by myself, or in a separate command; and I have always been defeated when acting in connection with you or under your orders.'"[21]

Gen. Holstein, who was the Liberator's chief-of-staff and who was, therefore, in a position to have intimate knowledge of the man, is even more pronounced in his strictures on the character and capacity of the commander-in-chief of the patriot forces.

"The dominant traits in the character of General Bolivar are ambition, vanity, thirst for absolute, undivided power and profound dissimulation.... Many of his generals have done far more than he has to free the country from the Spaniards.... The brightest deeds of all these generals were performed in the absence of Bolivar. Abroad they were attributed to his military skill and heroism, while, in fact, he was a fugitive a thousand miles from the scenes of their bravery, and never dreaming of their success.... General Bolivar, moreover, has never made a charge of cavalry nor with the bayonet; on the contrary, he has ever been careful to keep himself out of danger."[22]

Elsewhere in his work, Holstein claims to "prove that Bolivar, the Republic of Colombia and its chieftains, are indebted to strangers and their powerful support for their

existence, if not as a free, at least as an independent people." There were, according to some estimates, fully ten thousand European soldiers in the republican army, and among the officers were Englishmen, Germans, Irishmen, Poles and Frenchmen. It was, according to Holstein, the Irish legion that gained the great battle of Carabobo, which secured the independence of Venezuela.[23] It was the British legion, declares the same writer, that won the decisive victory of Boyacá, which broke the power of the Spaniards in New Granada. Sucre, the victorious general in the battle of Pichincha, which liberated Ecuador, was also the victor in the battles of Junin and Ayacucho—the Waterloo of colonial rule in South America—which gave freedom to Peru. Bolivar had the honor of gaining both victories, although he was ill during the battle of Ayacucho, and a hundred miles from the field of action during the struggle on the plateau of Junin.

In view of all this, Holstein does not hesitate to declare that Bolivar rules "with more power and absoluteness than does the autocrat of Russia or the Sultan of Constantinople," and that, compared with George Washington, Simon Bolivar was but a Liliputian. Sr. Riva Aguero, the first president of Peru, goes farther and assures us that the terrible characterization, given by Apollocorus, of Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, is but a true portrait of the Liberator Bolivar.

These estimates of Bolivar, so different from those of Tejera and Larrazabel and many of Bolivar's other biographers—remind one of what Montesquieu says about the contradictory accounts which partisan writers have given us regarding certain potentates of antiquity. As instances he cites Alexander, who is described as the veriest poltroon by Herodian, and extolled as a paragon of valor by Lampridius; and Gratian, who by his admirers is lauded to the skies and by Philostorgus compared to Nero.

"But, how is it possible, the question naturally arises, that General Bolivar should have liberated his country, and preserved to himself the supreme power, without superior talent?"

"If by liberating his country," replies Gen. Holstein, in answer to his own question, "it be meant that he has given his country a free government, I answer that he has not done so. If it be meant that he has driven out the Spaniards, I answer that he has done little towards this; far less certainly than the meanest of his subordinate chieftains. To the question, How can he have retained his power without superior talent? I answer, in the first place, that the *reputation* of superior talent goes a great way.... The stupid management of the Spanish authorities has facilitated all the operations of the patriots. The grievous faults of Bolivar and some of his generals have been exceeded by those of his adversaries. It is not strange, therefore, that Bolivar should have been able to do all he has done with very limited talents."[24]

Such a marked divergence of views respecting the character of Bolivar and the position he should occupy among the great chieftains of history admits of an explanation, but such an explanation would of itself require a volume. It is safe to say, however, that no reliable biography of the Liberator has yet appeared, and that, when it does appear, it is most likely that Bolivar will occupy a position much below that claimed for him by some of his over-enthusiastic eulogists and above that assigned to him by those who have manifested less admiration for his policy and achievements.

To write a definitive biography of Bolivar will not be an easy task. It will require a man of broad sympathies; one entirely free from all national antipathy and religious bias; one with a judicial mind, who can sift and weigh evidence

without prejudice, and render a verdict strictly in accordance with the facts in the case. Most, if not all, who have hitherto written about Bolivar, have exhibited a partisan spirit and allowed themselves to be swayed by political and other considerations, which have so greatly detracted from the value of their work that it cannot be accepted as authentic history.

To do full justice to the subject in all its bearings will require impartial judgment, ripe and varied scholarship, and above all, a keen and comprehensive historic sense. The writer will have to discuss the relation of Spain to her colonies, and consider various social, political, racial, economical and religious questions that are as difficult as they are complicated and conflicting. He must have an intimate and accurate knowledge of the character and aspirations of the different peoples with whom Bolivar and his lieutenants had to deal. He must be familiar with the history and traditions of the various South American presidencies and viceroyalties and captaincies-general, and take note of the passions and prejudices and jealousies that have been the cause of so many sanguinary revolutions and have contributed so much to retard intellectual progress and material advancement. Only when such an one appears, and completes the colossal task, shall we have a definitive life of Simon Bolivar, and an authentic record of the War of Independence.

Before closing this chapter some reference seems necessary to what cannot escape even the most casual student of South American history, but what, to the observant traveler, seems to be a matter of special moment. I refer to Bolivar's policy of dividing and weakening Peru, and to his uniting under one flag the three northern countries of the continent. The separation of Upper Peru—Bolivia—from Lower Peru seems, in the light of events since the change, to have been a fatal mistake and

detrimental to the best interests of Bolivia as well as to those of Peru.

I think, however, he exhibited unusual wisdom and foresight in combining in one republic—Gran Colombia—the provinces of Quito, New Granada and Venezuela. I know Gen. Mitre has denounced the idea as an absurdity—*como un absurdo*—[25] but, if this distinguished writer had had an opportunity to study actual conditions, as they present themselves to the traveler to-day, and to consult the wishes and welfare of the large mass of the people at present dwelling within the confines of Greater Colombia, I think he would have been disposed to accept Bolivar's plan for a great nation, extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, as the best for all concerned.

Had the destiny of Colombia, after the union, been entrusted to the direction of wise and unselfish patriots, as was the infant Republic of the United States of North America, one may well believe that the history of this part of South America, during the last three-quarters of a century, would have been quite different from what it has been, and that it would have been spared those countless internecine wars that have deluged the country in blood and rendered civilization, in its higher sense, impossible.

The geographical features of the country, and the diverse interests of its different sections, were, pace Mitre, no more opposed to the formation of a great and stable republic on the Caribbean than they were in that vast commonwealth to the north of the Gulf of Mexico, where the Stars and Stripes have so long been the symbol of peace, prosperity and national greatness. The people in the southern continent, were not, it is true, so well prepared for a democratic form of government as were their brethren in the north, but if, instead of being cursed with selfish and destructive militarism, they could have enjoyed the

blessings of competent and far-seeing statesmanship, it is safe to affirm that the Great Colombia, as Bolivar conceived it, would, ere this, have developed into a flourishing and powerful republic—worthy of taking a place among the great nations of the world.[26]

But, sad to relate, Bolivar's creation was short-lived. After a precarious existence of only eleven years, disintegration took place, and the Liberator, fallen into disfavor and condemned to exile, was forced to be a witness of the collapse of the structure that had cost him so much labor, and which he had fondly hoped would be his greatest and most enduring monument.

Shortly before his death at the hacienda of San Pedro, near Santa Marta, where he perished alone,

"Maligned and doubted and denied, a broken-hearted man," he wrote to General Flores, of Ecuador, a letter in which occur the following remarkable statements:—

"I have been in power—*yo he mandado*—for nearly twenty years, from which I have gathered only a few definite results:—

"1. America for us is ungovernable.

"2. He who dedicates his services to a revolution plows the sea.

"3. The only thing that can be done in America is to emigrate.

"4. This country will inevitably fall into the hands of the unbridled rabble, and little by little become a prey to petty tyrants of all colors and races.

"5. Devoured as we shall be by all possible crimes and

ruined by our own ferociousness, Europeans will not deem it worth while to conquer us.

"6. If it were possible for any part of the world to return to a state of primitive chaos, that would be the last stage of Spanish America."[27]

Was the Liberator gifted with a seer's vision when he penned these prophetic words? It would seem so, for even if he had open before him the scroll in which has been recorded the chief events of the history of South America during the past three-quarters of a century, he could scarcely have spoken with greater truth and precision. Certain it is, as Mitre well observes, that none of his designs or ideals have survived him. His political work died with him and all his fond dreams of a vast Andean Empire vanished like mist before the rising sun.

This is not the place to account for the turmoil and anarchy which have so long devastated one of the most fertile quarters of the globe. Considering its immense natural resources and its many advantages of climate and geographical position, it should be one of the most prosperous regions of the earth, and its inhabitants among the happiest and most advanced in culture and the arts of peace. Let it suffice to reproduce the following paragraph from the work, already cited, of Sr. Perez Triana:—

"As to the topsy-turviness of things Spanish and Spanish-American, the story is told that Santiago, the patron saint of Spain, being admitted into the presence of God, asked and obtained for the land of Spain and for its people all sorts of blessings; marvelous fertility for the soil, natural wealth of all kinds in the mountains and the forests, abundance of fish in the rivers and of birds in the air; courage, sobriety, and all the manly virtues for men; beauty, grace and loveliness for the women. All this was

granted, but on the point of leaving, the saint, it is said, asked from God that he would also grant Spain a good government. The request was denied, as then, it is said, the Lord remarked, the angels would abandon heaven and flock to Spain. The story has lost none of its point."

1

It was made a city by Charles V in 1540 with the title of "*muy noble y muy leal*," very noble and very loyal. ↑

2

"You do well to weep like a woman for what you failed to defend like a man."—Irving's *A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada*, Chap. LIV. ↑

3

Op. cit., Appendice B., p. 10. ↑

4

Called by Colombians la Sabana, or la Sabana de Bogatá. ↑

5

"In the remotest times," writes Humboldt, following Quesada and Piedrahita, "before the moon accompanied the earth, according to the mythology of the Muysca or Mozca Indians, the inhabitants of the plain of Bogatá lived like barbarians, naked, without agriculture, without any form of laws or worship. Suddenly there appeared among them an old man, who came from the plains situate on the east of the Cordillera of Chingasa; and who appeared to be of a race unlike that of the natives, having a long and bushy beard. He was known by three distinct appellations, Bochica, Nemquetheba, and Zuhe. This old man, like Manco-Capac, instructed men how to clothe themselves, build huts, till the ground, and form themselves into communities. He brought with him a woman, to whom also tradition gives three names, Chia, Yubecayguaya, and Huythaca. This woman, extremely beautiful, and no less malignant, thwarted every enterprise of her husband for the happiness of mankind. By her skill in magic, she swelled the river of Funza, and inundated the valley of Bogatá. The greater part of the inhabitants perished in this deluge; a few only found refuge on the summits of the neighbouring mountains. The old man, in anger drove the beautiful Huythaca far from the Earth, and she became the Moon, which began from that epoch to enlighten our planet during the night. Bochica, moved with compassion for those who were dispersed over the mountains, broke with his powerful arm the rocks that enclosed the valley, on the side of Canoas and Tequendama. By this outlet he drained the waters of the lake of Bogotá; he built towns, introduced the worship of the Sun, named two chiefs,

between whom he divided the civil and ecclesiastical authority, and then withdrew himself, under the name of Idacanzas, into the holy valley of Iraca, near Tunja, where he lived in the exercise of the most austere penitence for the space of two thousand years."—*Vues de Cordillères et Monuments des Peuples Indigènes de l'Amérique*, par Al. de Humboldt, Paris, 1810. Compare Piedrahita's *Historia General de las Conquistas del Nuevo Reino de Granada*, Cap. III, Bogotá, 1881. Piedrahita, following other authors, was of the opinion that Bochica was no other than the Apostle Bartholomew, who, according to a widespread legend, preached the gospel in this part of the world. ↑

6

"Why do you plant these eucalyptus trees around your houses?" I asked of a peon one day. "*Para evitar la fiebre, Sumerced*," to prevent fever, your honor. The "Sumerced," in this reply, is only one of many indications of deference on the part of the common people in their intercourse with strangers, or with those whom they regard as their superiors. It is an echo of the courtly language employed in the days of the viceroyalty. ↑

7

The height of the falls, according to Humboldt's measurements, is one hundred and seventy metres. Before his visit they were supposed to be much higher. Piedrahita calls them one of the wonders of the world and declares that their height is half a league. Around the top of the falls are seen oak, elm and cinchona trees; at the bottom are found palms, bananas and sugar-cane. Colombans always refer to these facts when they wish to impress the stranger with the extraordinary height of Tequendama, as compared with that of other great falls. By a single plunge, they proudly tell us, its waters pass from *tierra fria* to *tierra caliente*. ↑

8

Le Tour du Monde, Vol. XXXV, p. 194. ↑

9

Not Benalcazar, as is so often written. He took his name from his native town, Belalcazar, on the confines of Andalusia and Estremadura. ↑

10

"Ours be his gold and his pleasures,
Let us enjoy that land, that sun."

↑

11

Op. cit., Parte III, Canto 4. ↑

12

Compendio Historico del Descubrimiento y Colonization de la Nueva Granada, p. 168, Bogotá, 1901. ↑

13

Piedrahita, op. cit., Lib. VII, Cap. 4, Bogotá, 1881. See also *Noticias Historiales de las Conquistas de Tierra Firme en las Indias Occidentales*, por Fr. Pedro Simon, Tom. IV, p. 195, Bogotá, 1892. ↑

14

Antologia de Poetas Hispano-Americanos, publicada por la Real Academia Española, Tom. III, Introduccion, Madrid, 1894. ↑

15

A peculiar phenomenon, which has been frequently commented on, is that the early prose writers of Latin America exhibited more true poetic feeling and enthusiasm in their productions than did those who expressed themselves in verse. *La Araucana*, the so-called epic poem of Ercilla, pronounced an Iliad by Voltaire and considered by Sismondi a mere newspaper in rhyme, is a case in point. Nowhere, in this long work of forty-two thousand verses, "has the aspect of volcanoes covered with eternal snow, of torrid sylvan valleys, and of arms of the sea extending far into the land, been productive of any descriptions that may be regarded as graphical." It exhibits, it is true, a certain animation in describing the heroic struggle of the brave Araucanians for their homes and liberty, but, aside from this, the higher elements of poetry—especially of epic poetry—are entirely lacking.

The same observation can be made with still greater truth of the *Arauco Domado*, of Padre Oña; of the *Argentina*, of Barco Centenera; the *Cortés Valeroso*, and the *Mejicana*, of Laso de la Vega; and the oft-quoted *Elegias de Varones Ilustres de Indias*, of Juan de Castellanos. All of these, with the exception of the last-mentioned work, have long since been buried in almost complete oblivion. The influence of the Italian school is everywhere manifest in these productions—an influence which, while it may have contributed to purity, correctness and elegance of expression, was quite destructive of the vigor, freshness and originality so characteristic of the great masters of Spanish verse. Compare Humboldt's *Cosmos*, Vol. II, Part I; and *Historias Primitivas de Indias*, por Don Enrique de Vedia, Tom. I, p. 10, Madrid, 1877, in the *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles desde la Formacion del Lenguaje hasta Nuestros Dios*.

Those who are interested in the literature of Colombia will find the subject ably discussed in *Historia de la Literatura en Nueva Granada*, by Don José Maria Vergara y Vergara Bogotá, 1867. ↑

16

The first printing press seen in the New World was brought to the city of

Mexico by its first bishop, the learned Franciscan, Fray Juan de Zumarraga, shortly after the conquest by Cortes. ↑

17

The people of some of the other South American capitals would, I am sure, take exception to the claims here made in favor of Bogotá. I myself think them greatly exaggerated. ↑

18

The Colombian and Venezuela Republics, p. 101, Boston, 1905. ↑

19

Compendio de la Historia de Venezuela desde el Descubrimiento de America hasta Nuestros Dias, p. 213, Paris, 1875. ↑

20

See especially introduction and Cap. I, Vol. I, Quinta Edicion, New York, 1901. ↑

21

A Narrative of the Expedition to the Rivers Orinoco and Apure, pp. 462–464, London, 1819. ↑

22

Memoirs of Simon Bolivar, Vol. II, pp. 3, 236, 257 and 258. ↑

23

After the battle was over the survivors of this decisive conflict were saluted by Bolivar as *Salvatores de mi Patria*—Saviors of my country. ↑

24

Op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 249, 250. ↑

25

“Colombia had been an efficient war machine in the hands of Bolivar by which the independence of South America was secured, but was an anachronism as a nation. The interests of the different sections were antagonistic, and the military organization given to the country only strengthened the germs of disorder. Venezuela and New Granada were geographically marked out as independent nations. Quito, from historical antecedents, aspired to autonomy. Had Bolivar abstained from his dreams of conquest, and devoted his energies to the consolidation of his own country, he might, perhaps, have organized it into one nation under a federal form of government, but that was not suited to his genius. When his own bayonets turned against him, he went so far as to despair of the republican system altogether and sought the protection of a foreign king for the last fragment of his shattered monocracy.”—*History of San Martin*, p. 467, by General Don Bartolome Mitre, translated by W. Pilling, London, 1893. ↑

[26]
After writing the above paragraphs, I was glad to learn from Mr. W. H. Fox, the American Minister to Ecuador, that General Alfaro, the present chief executive of that republic, is, like many distinguished patriots and statesmen of Colombia and Venezuela, an ardent advocate of the restoration of Bolivar's great Republic of Colombia. "I would," said he to Mr. Fox, who has given me permission to publish this statement, "rather be governor of Ecuador, as one of the states of such a great republic, than be its president, as I am now."

All friends of Greater Colombia, and their number among enlightened and far-seeing statesmen is rapidly increasing, hope the day is not far distant when Bolivar's plan can once more be put into effect, but this time on so enduring a basis that it cannot again be affected by the machinations of the jealous military rivals and self-seeking politicians, by whom so many hapless countries in Latin America have so long been cursed. ↑

[27]
Quoted by F. Hassaurek, formerly United States Minister to Ecuador, in his *Four Years Among Spanish Americans*, p. 209, New York, 1868. ↑

CHAPTER XI

THE MUISCA TRAIL

Our sojourn in Bogotá was much briefer than we could have wished it to be. Its intellectual atmosphere impressed us deeply, and the culture and refinement of its people charmed us beyond expression. During our journey, we had visited many places in which we would have desired to tarry longer, had it been possible, but so far no place had so completely captivated us as Colombia's famous metropolis—no place from which we were so loath to depart.

"What a pity," we said, "that Colombia and Colombians are not better known in our own country! It would be better for them and better for us." With special truth can one reiterate of the inhabitants of this little-known republic what Senator Root has said of the people of South America in general:—

"Two-thirds of the suspicion, the dislike, the distrust, with which our country was regarded by the people of South America, was the result of the arrogant and contemptuous bearing of Americans, of people of the United States, for those gentle, polite, sensitive, imaginative, delightful people."

The Senator, as President Roosevelt's representative, did much, during his visit to our sister continent, to remove misunderstandings and establish more cordial relations between the United States and Latin America. And the Bureau of American Republics is contributing much towards completing and extending his work. It is, therefore, to be hoped, that soon "the suspicion, the dislike, the distrust" will be eliminated forever and succeeded by an era of mutual respect and indissoluble friendship.

Our luggage—small in amount, be it said—was conveyed from our hotel to the depot, a few blocks distant, by a good-natured Chibcha Indian. He asked for his service the sum of forty dollars, which, to his great delight, was paid promptly and without question. "*Muchisimas gracias, mi amo. Que Vd vaya bien!*" Many thanks, my master. Farewell! were his parting words, as he passed out of the station with his hat in his hand and a smile lighting up his face.

"Forty dollars for carrying a little luggage a few squares! Why, that," one would say, "was down-right robbery." Not at all, when you are accustomed to paying such prices, and we had become quite accustomed to them, ever since we had entered Colombian territory. As a matter of fact, we found the peon's bill very moderate.

In the beginning, however, it must be confessed that we were surprised at some of the bills presented us for payment. The first one was for the washing of some linen in a town on the Meta. The work was done by an Indian woman, for which a charge was made of two hundred and forty-five dollars. This bill, large as it was, did not frighten us as much as one that Mark Twain tells of in his *Innocents Abroad*, when during his visit to the Azores, one of his traveling companions was charged some thousands of milreis for a modest repast. We should have paid it without

comment, but found that the articles in question had been washed only and not ironed. When we remarked upon this apparent forgetfulness or neglect, the tawny laundress informed us that it was not the custom there for the same person to do both washing and ironing, and referred us to a neighbor of hers as one quite competent to complete the work she had begun. Unfortunately, as it had been raining continuously for several days, and our laundress had no way of drying the things she had washed, except in the sun —which had obstinately refused to appear—and as we were obliged to take our departure without delay, the wearing apparel aforesaid was neither ironed nor dried.

But the washer-woman's bill, which seems exorbitant, requires an explanation. It was all a mere matter of the rate of exchange, which, in Colombia, during the time of our visit, was ten thousand. That means that the *peso*—dollar —had a value of just one *centavo*—one cent. Some years ago the rate of exchange was much higher. Now, however, there is a well-founded hope, that the financial condition of the country will soon be on a more satisfactory basis, and that before many years elapse, it can be put on a gold basis. The present legal tender of the country is paper currency and gold coin. Outside of the large cities one never sees anything but paper money. I have known the peons in several cases to refuse coin because they thought it was counterfeit—so long is it since gold coin has been in circulation.

The present financial condition of the republic is a striking commentary on the havoc wrought by the numerous revolutions that have devastated the country and ruined its credit. One of the most difficult of the many difficult tasks that confront the administration is that of restoring the nation's credit, and of getting the rate of exchange back to par. It is, however, making a noble effort, and all well-wishers of Colombia trust its endeavors will be crowned

with success.

As one may imagine, it is necessary for the traveler to carry with him quite a bulky package of bills in order to live in even the most modest fashion. A mule or a cart was not, however, required to transport our funds, as Hazard, in his work on Haiti, says was indispensable in that ill-fated land, where a hundred dollars in gold was exchanged for several sacks of bills—huge bags—not unlike bundles of rags or waste paper.

To us it was always interesting to hear the peons talk of their fortune of hundreds or thousands of dollars. It seemed to give the poor fellows special satisfaction to deal in large figures and to speak of large sums, as if they were all rising millionaires. The monetary crisis had this redeeming feature, if no other, that it afforded the beggar in the street the pleasure of seeing dollars in his alms where, before the revolution, he would have found only so many cents. The sturdy market women we saw on the way from Caqueza to Bogotá talked in a most happy way of their prospects of realizing forty dollars a piece for their chickens and fifteen dollars a dozen for their eggs, while their husbands were rejoicing in the thought that they would receive a thousand dollars for a heifer and two thousand or more for a milch-cow. They never used the words “cents”; it was always “*pesos*”—dollars. Happy people, who find such delight in names and appearances!

There are but few railroads in Colombia, and their total mileage at the time of our visit was less than five hundred miles. Many roads are projected and have been for decades past, but the numerous revolutions have prevented their construction. The one from Bogotá to Facatativá, our first objective point on the way to the Magdalena, is only twenty-five miles in length. There is, however, a well-grounded hope that this can at an early day be connected

with the line that is building from Girardot.[1] When this shall have been accomplished it will be possible to reach Bogotá without the long overland ride on horse- or mule-back that has been necessary since the time of Quesada.

But far from regretting the lack of a through train to the Magdalena, we were rather glad that we were obliged to have recourse to a less expeditious mode of locomotion. It required more time, it is true, to make the trip, and was more fatiguing, but it gave us an opportunity of seeing the country to greater advantage and of getting better acquainted with its people. Indeed, the journey down the Cordillera from Bogotá to Honda was but the proper complement of that from the llanos up to the Sabana that lies at the foot of the nation's capital. It gave us an opportunity of comparing conditions on the eastern slope of the Oriental Andes with those prevailing on the western, and we have always considered ourselves fortunate in having been able to explore from the saddle the interesting country that lies between the Meta and the Magdalena. As I now think, it was, in many respects, the most delightful and instructive part of our wanderings in South America.

The track and rolling-stock of the Sabana railway are, as might be expected, of the most primitive kind. The roadbed has received little attention, and the cars and engine are scarcely fit for service. But all this can be condoned when one is familiar with the untoward conditions that, for so many years, have militated against improvements of all kinds. The transportation of the rails, cars and locomotives from Cambao, on the Magdalena, to the plateau, when the cart road between the two points was little better than a bridle-path, was in itself a Herculean task, and as we journeyed to Honda, it never ceased to excite our wonder. Great improvements, however, are promised as soon as connection shall be made with the branch, now approaching completion, from Girardot. Then

the transportation of heavy freight will be a trifling task in comparison with what it has been hitherto.

The Sabana of Bogotá resembles somewhat the plain of Caracas except that it is far more extensive than the Venezuelan plateau. Both have been regarded as the beds of lakes that have long since disappeared. Whatever may be said about the existence of a lake in the vale of Caracas, it seems now quite certain that there never was any great body of water, such as has so long been imagined, occupying the region now known as the Sabana de Bogotá.[2] Recent investigations appear to have decided this much-debated question against Humboldt and those who accepted his views regarding this matter.

We were much interested in the haciendas through which the train passed, as well as in the homes of their owners and in the picturesque villages along the road. There were broad acres devoted to the cultivation of wheat, barley, maize and potatoes, and extensive pastures, over which roamed large flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. These cattle, so we fancied, were the lineal descendants of those brought to Española by Columbus at the time of his second voyage. And the swine we saw—there could be little doubt about it—could claim, as their ancestors, those which Belalcazar had brought with him from Quito, as the hens, that cackled and clucked as we sped by, were the offspring of those carefully guarded by Federmann during his famous expedition from Coro to Santa Fe de Bogotá.[3]

Aside from the Humboldt oak, with its majestic crown of ever-green foliage, and the ubiquitous Eucalyptus, there are no trees of any magnitude in the Sabana. Its flora, however, is particularly rich in shrubs and plants. Among them were the beautiful passion flower, *Passiflora Antioquensis*, blossoming the year round, and a peculiar species of blackberry—*Rubus Bogotensis*—ever clothed

with a vari-colored mantle of snow-white bloom and ripening fruit, realizing Shelley's idea of the millennium, where

"Fruits are ever ripe, and flowers ever fair."

The meadows are carpeted with various species of clover and succulent grasses, and, along the hedges and walls, one finds an endless variety of fuchsias, verbenas, mallows, asters, buttercups, lupines, lilies, lobelias, irises, morning-glories and passion flowers. The last two plants and certain varieties of roses are great favorites in the garden and around the house, as are also violets, pinks, jasmines and heliotropes. We observed several habitations, some of them the humble cots of poor Chibchas, that were almost concealed in magnificent bowers of climbing clematis, passion flowers and morning-glories.

On the eastern slope of Suma Paz, we frequently had occasion to admire the wealth and brilliancy of bloom around some of the homes which we passed, or when we enjoyed the hospitality of their courteous inmates, but nowhere did we see more beautiful floral exhibits than greeted us on the Sabana de Bogotá.

Much, however, as we were interested in the fauna and flora of this region, and the people who now inhabit it, we found our minds constantly reverting to pre-Colombian times, and picturing to ourselves the condition of this plain and its inhabitants at the period of the arrival of the conquistadores.

When Quesada and his intrepid followers reached this beautiful plateau, they found it inhabited by a tribe of Indians to whom they gave the name Muiscas, because they frequently heard them pronounce this word, or

Moscas, a Spanish word, similar in sound, signifying flies, because they said these Indians were as numerous as flies.[4]

They occupied the tablelands in the central part of New Granada. The territory under the jurisdiction of their zipas —chiefs—was elliptical in form and equaled in area the kingdom of the Netherlands. They numbered about one million inhabitants, and, according to the early chroniclers, they counted no fewer than a hundred and thirty thousand warriors. The number of fighting men was doubtless far below this figure. It seems certain, however, that at the date of the arrival of the Spaniards they were in the apogee of their power, and were making progress towards a condition of culture approaching that of the Aztecs and Incas.

The dominions of the last zipas of Bacatá extended from Simijaca to Pasca and from Zipacon to the llanos. Although united by ties of language and beliefs, customs and laws, similar in character and revealing a common origin, they formed an aggregation of small states, generally independent, rather than a compact and well-organized commonwealth.

The Chibchas, or Muiscas, were preëminently an agricultural people. They had no domestic animals, except the dog—not even the llama. Their chief articles of food were maize, potatoes[5] and quinoa, which the natives of Colombia have long since discarded for rice. Besides these staples they had many other vegetables peculiar to the country and a great variety of luscious and wholesome fruits. They also had game in abundance.

They cultivated cotton, from which they made their clothing, the material of which often exhibited various colored designs. In this respect they were far in advance of the surrounding tribes, who had no more to cover them

than have the wildest children of the tropical forest to-day.

Their houses were of wood, with thatched roofs not unlike many of those we saw along our route from the llanos to the Magdalena valley. When the Spaniards arrived they had just begun to use stone in the erection of a few of their buildings, presumably temples, which apparently were never completed.

As might be surmised, their commerce was limited. They bartered to some extent with the neighboring tribes, especially those west of the Magdalena. From these they obtained gold in exchange for salt, emeralds and textile fabrics. With the Chimus of Peru, they were the first to use gold as a medium of exchange. Their currency consisted not of stamped coins, but of disks of the precious metal without any kind of marking. They had a limited intercourse with the people of Quito and had some slight knowledge of the great Inca kingdom farther south.

Regarding the culture of the Chibchas, we can say what the Marquis de Nadaillac says of the people in general—"We know very little."[6] But we know enough to be warranted in affirming that many erroneous notions have long prevailed concerning them, and that the claims that have been made for them as a civilized people have been greatly exaggerated.

According to Duquesne—to whose fanciful theories the great Humboldt unfortunately gave his support—and to the school that for a century made Duquesne's views their own, the Chibchas were acquainted with the use of the quipus, and had a system of numbers and hieroglyphics and a complicated calendar. Their priests were represented as the depositaries of astrological and chronological science, and as experts in astronomical and meteorological observations. The people were lauded for their advanced

knowledge of architecture and praised for their courts of justice. In the temple of Sogamuxi, they would have us believe, were preserved the national annals and the chronicles of their civilization. Their general material progress and intellectual status was commented on as something quite comparable with the best that obtained in Mexico or Cuzco.

We have but two sources of information respecting the much-debated question of Chibcha culture. These are a comparative study of the early chronicles—no one or two of them will suffice—and an examination of the few stone monuments the Chibchas have left us, together with their pictographs, ceramic ware and objects of gold and copper found in their places of sepulture. The chronicles that we must rely on are those left us by Quesada, Castellanos, Padre Simon and Piedrahita, all of which have already been quoted, together with those left us by Padre Bernardo Lugo, Juan Rodriguez Fresle, a son of one of the conquistadores, and Fray Alonso de Zamora, of Bogotá.

As a result of a critical study of these chronicles and monuments, the distinguished Colombian writer, Don Vicente Restrepo, has demonstrated that most of the claims that have been made for Chibcha culture are utterly devoid of foundation in fact. His conclusions, which can be given in a few words, are:—

“The Chibchas had no stone buildings and their knowledge of architecture was therefore limited to the erection of the simplest structures of wood.

“They had no quipus, like that of the Incas, no alphabet, and no writing of any kind, either figurative, symbolic or ideographic. Neither had they any chronology or archives.

“The petroglyphs and pictographs found in limited[7]

numbers in various parts of the country, far from recording the migrations and hunts of the aborigines and the cataclysms which they are supposed to have witnessed, are nothing more than rude geometrical designs and fantastic figures which are repeated in the most confused manner, according to the infantile caprice of the one who carved or painted them."

Concluding his discussion of these meaningless figures, which certain writers have so long insisted were true hieroglyphics, awaiting some Champollion or Rawlinson to decipher, Sr. Restrepo does not hesitate to assert that the rude "attempts at drawing these ill-formed figures of animals, and these pothooks, similar to those traced by an inexperienced child, can reveal nothing to historic science. They never exhibit that order and sequence which are the certain index of genuine writing. They never reproduce even the simplest scenes of Indian life, such for example as a religious ceremony, the chase, or warriors fighting.

"Mute by reason of their origin, and condemned to eternal silence by the unconscious hand that traced them, the magic wand of science will never be able to make them speak."[8]

If we accept the classification and definitions of the various grades of culture, as given by Morgan in his great work on *Ancient Society*,[9] as many profound thinkers do, we shall be forced to conclude not only that the Chibchas were not civilized, but that they had not even reached the upper status of barbarism.

Civilization implies the existence of a phonetic alphabet or, at least, of hieroglyphics akin to those of the Egyptians, and the use of these in the production of written records. The Chibchas, as we have seen, had neither an alphabet nor written records of any kind.

Neither had they any knowledge of the process of smelting iron ore. As the use of iron is the chief characteristic of the third, or upper, period of barbarism, the Chibchas, according to Morgan, should be considered as representatives of the middle status of barbarism, like the Zuñis and the Mayas, or like the lake-dwellers of ancient Switzerland, or the early Britons before they learned the use of iron from their more advanced neighbors in Gaul.[10]

It took us two hours to make the run from Bogotá to Facatativá, the western terminus of the Sabana railway. Here we took luncheon. For a place that has so long been the centre of traffic between the capital and the Magdalena, the town has no reason to boast of its restaurants or hotels. They are about as poor in every way as could well be imagined. A town in Italy or Switzerland, frequented by so many travelers as Facatativá, would have not one but several hostelries where its patrons would have every convenience and comfort. Let us hope that Colombia will soon witness an improvement in this respect, not only in this place but all along the chief lines of travel. It is much needed, and along no route more than that connecting Bogotá with Honda.

At the time of the conquest, Facatativá was a Muisca stronghold, and what are said to be the ruins of an old Indian fortress are still shown to the curious visitor. One may also see some rocks on which are carved certain figures long supposed to be Chibcha hieroglyphics. We have already learned what value is to be ascribed to these and similar inscriptions in other parts of the country.

After luncheon we prepared to start for Chimbe, where we intended to pass the night. We had telegraphed the day before to our *arriero* to have in readiness the necessary saddle and sumpter mules. They were waiting for us on our arrival and we were much gratified to find that both

animals and peons were all that could be desired. Those who have traveled in the Andes know how important it is to have good mules and servants, and how much it adds to the comfort and pleasure of one's journey.

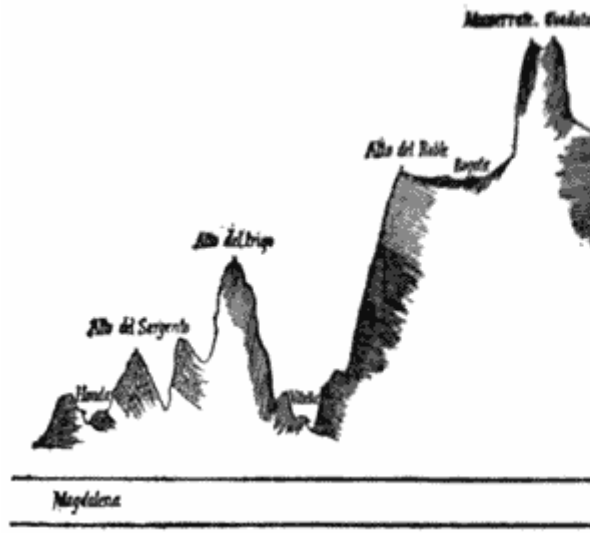
From the time we had left our launch on the Meta, we had been singularly fortunate in always having good animals and honest, reliable men to take care of them and attend to our wants on the way. To our devoted and watchful muleteers and their assistants we owed much of the enjoyment that was ours during our wanderings over mountain and plain, and we shall always hold their obliging disposition and prompt service in grateful remembrance.

It affords me special pleasure to render them this tribute, as they are often, I have reason to believe, much misunderstood, especially by people who are not familiar with their language, and frequently held responsible for delays and contretemps of which they are in no wise responsible. Judging by our own experience, the arieros and peons of South America are, as a class, far better than they are usually represented and are deserving of more recognition and better treatment than is usually accorded them by those who require their humble but often too poorly recompensed services.

The saddle generally used in the mountains closely resembles the McClellan saddle and is called a *galápago*. For obvious reasons an English hunting saddle—*silla*—could not be used where the roads are constantly leading up and down steep mountains—*bergauf*, *bergab*, as a German traveler phrases it—and where even on a cavalry saddle it is at times extremely difficult for one to retain one's position.[11]

The saddle is usually covered by a *pellon* or shabrack,

made either of sheepskin, or horsehair dyed black and neatly braided at the ends. Attached to the saddle are several bags or pockets—*bolsas*. These are of the greatest convenience for carrying many things necessary on long journeys. In them the natives stow away cheese, cakes of maize, *papelon*, and the never-forgotten supply of *aguardiente*, without which a journey of any length is considered impossible.



Cross section of the Oriental Andes from

The stirrups are curiosities. They are usually of brass or bronze in the shape of a shoe, but frequently they are in the form of the basket hilt of a claymore. The stirrups of one of the saddles I used were curiously embossed, and as large as a good-sized bell. But whatever their design, they are admirably adapted for service in the mountains where the paths are so narrow that one is frequently exposed, without such protection, to having one's feet crushed when his mule approaches too near the rocky wall that flanks one side of the road. The danger is especially great when one

meets a herd of cattle or a caravan of pack-mules. Then the rider suddenly finds his mule crushing him against the steep rocks on one side of the path, to avoid being thrown over a precipice which is yawning beneath him on the other side along which the approaching animals pick their way with a skill that is marvelous. We often had reason to be thankful that our feet were protected by these fantastic and cumbersome *estribos*—stirrups—as otherwise we should have suffered serious bodily injury. Like the leather hoods of wooden stirrups, such *estribos* also keep the feet dry.

The riding equipment, however, of a Colombian horseman is not complete without huge brass or bronze rowel-spurs —*espuelas*—and a pair of *zamoros*—bag-trousers—often made of leather or goatskin. They are not unlike the chaparejos[12] of a New Mexican cowboy, and serve as a protection against rain and mud, and the thorns of the shrubs and brush along the wayside.

From Facatativá to El Alto del Roble, some miles to the west, the road slightly rises. At the latter point, nearly five hundred feet above Bogotá, one has a glorious view of the Sabana, of the chain of Suma Paz, and of the Central Cordillera away beyond the Magdalena.

From El Roble—the oak—so named from the number of ever-green oaks seen there, the descent towards Chimbe is marked by quite a steep grade. A good *carretera*, or carriage road, extends from Factativá to Agua Larga, and this much-needed highway is to be prolonged as far as the Magdalena. The present plan is to construct the road in such wise that traction cars can be used on it for the transportation of both freight and passengers, and at the time of our passage the road, under the direction of English engineers, was being pushed forward towards completion with a display of energy that augured well for ultimate

success.

Only a few minutes after we began our descent on the western declivity of El Roble we observed a change in the temperature. We were passing from the *tierra fría* to the *tierra templada*, and a thermometer was scarcely necessary to indicate our rate of progress towards lower altitudes. Aside from the marked change in the atmosphere, there was a corresponding one in the flora.

Near the summit of El Roble we were gratified in finding large patches of strawberries. They were sweet reminders of home, as they were of the same species as our own fragrant *Fragaria*. These slender mountain runners did not, however, bear the large fruits afforded by our Illinois or Florida plants, but rather the small scarlet, but richly flavored, berries one meets in an uncultivated state in Italy and Russia.

Further on our way we came across another reminder of our own country. This time it appeared in the form of long, dark-gray tufts and festoons of that curious epiphyte—*Tillandsia usneoides*—popularly known in the Gulf States as Spanish moss and in Jamaica as old man's beard. The natives in Colombia call it *barba de palo*—tree-beard—a much more picturesque epithet than any of those mentioned, and another one of countless instances of the wonderful faculty the Indian has of giving expressive names to the objects that specially strike his fancy.

As we reached a still lower level, our attention was arrested by the beauty and luxuriance of the palms and tree ferns that graced our path. The fern trees were as remarkable for their size as for the delicacy of their plume-like fronds. The trunks of some of them were twelve to fifteen feet high and the leaves of their wondrous crowns—like veritable leaves of emerald gauze—were at times as

long as the trunk was high. Gazing at these bizarre forms of vegetable life, with their dark, rough, leaf-scarred trunks, so unlike those of surrounding trees, we could easily imagine ourselves in a forest of those giant paleozoic Sigillariæ and Lepidodendrons that contributed so largely towards the formation of the lower coal measures.

We never made any attempt to enumerate the divers species of palms that were ever in view from the paramo to the ocean. But wherever we saw them, whether on the elevated Andean plateau or in the humid valleys of the Orinoco and the Magdalena, they were for us, as they were for Linnæus, "the princes of the vegetable world." Decked with a mantle of eternal youth, with smooth, straight trunks like the marble shafts of Athens or Palmyra, they were not only the glory of forest and savanna, but they were also for us, as for Martius, a symbol of immortality.

At Agua Larga our road bifurcated, the new and better branch veering off to the right at a slight angle, and the old one continuing with a similar turn to the left. Although a bright young señorita, who happened to be near the parting of the ways, declared that the old road was the one that led to Chimbe, our objective point, we chose the new one, and for the first time since we had left the Meta, we went astray. We did not discover our error until we had gone several miles, when an old man, who was repairing his humble cot by the wayside, corroborated the señorita's information.

There was then nothing left for us but to retrace our steps. The mistake was quite a blow to the topographical instinct of one of our party, who had, during our long trip, particularly prided himself on the unerring indications of his organ of locality, which rendered, he said, the assistance of a guide superfluous. At the same time, it was

quite trying to the patience of all of us, as we were tired, hungry, and wished to arrive at Chimbe before sundown. It was now quite evident that we could not possibly reach our destination before nightfall. We then realized to our sorrow the truth of Balboa's words, when writing to the King of Spain—"*Llega el hombre hasta donde puede y no hasta donde quiere*"—One goes as far as one can and not as far as one wishes to go. And, recalling what the señorita had told us, we had likewise a forcible reminder of the verity of Sancho Panza's saying: "Though a woman's counsel isn't worth much, he that despises it is no wiser than he should be."

After getting back to the bifurcation of the road, we found that the older branch, which we should have taken, was little better than a rough, rocky stairway, the steps of which had been rendered extremely slippery by a heavy rainfall a few hours before. C., our dashing and debonair cavalier, was still suffering from the effects of this downpour, for having lost his waterproof *sombrero*, specially designed for travel in the tropics, he had nothing left but a light straw hat, which afforded the head no more protection than a sieve.

Truth to tell, he was suspected of intentionally discarding his waterproof headgear, as, in his estimation, it did not comport with the dignity of a caballero who would trace his lineage back to one of the noblest grandees of Spain, and who, during his journey from Trinidad, had been the recipient of special attention from young and old as well. He seemed to be the special favorite of well-to-do matrons, particularly in the towns and cities in which our sojourn was somewhat protracted. Was it that they would fain have seen in the handsome young traveler a prospective son-in-law? Not being a mind reader, I must leave the question unanswered. As a veracious narrator of occurrences by the way I can only state facts and let the reader draw his own

conclusions.

But what a road it was, that now lay between us and Chimbe! To us, in the declining rays of the setting sun, it appeared like a cobblestone track after it had passed through a dozen earthquakes and had then been set at an angle of forty-five degrees with the horizon.[13] Even our mules, which were usually prepared for any kind of a path where they could find a foothold, frequently balked at the more difficult sections of this much-neglected highway. Comparing the part we were now traversing with the more improved road we had left at Agua Larga, we could not but recall the words of an Irish engineer, regarding certain highland roads, as recorded in Scott's *A Legend of Montrose*:—

"Had you but seen those roads before they were made,
You would have held up your hands and blessed General Wade."

And yet this was the *camino real*, the royal highway from the Magdalena to the national capital. President Reyes was doubtless right when he publicly stated, some years ago, that it was now in a worse condition than it was before the War of Independence.

But it was also, and this afforded us some compensation for our discomfort, the Muisca trail—the same that the subjects of the Zipa of Bacatá and those of the Caciques of Hunsa and Sugamuxi made use of during their bartering expeditions to the tribes beyond the Magdalena. Along this trail they, for generations, carried their stores of salt, textile fabrics and emeralds, and brought back, in exchange for them, from the placers of what is now known as Antioquia, those treasures of gold that so excited the cupidity of the conquistadores, and which, by many of them, were considered as an adequate reward for all the hardships they

had endured to secure their possession.

Finally, after a long, tiresome breakneck ride over that "royal" but infinitely rugged road—

"Arduus, obliquus, caligine densus opaca,—"[14]

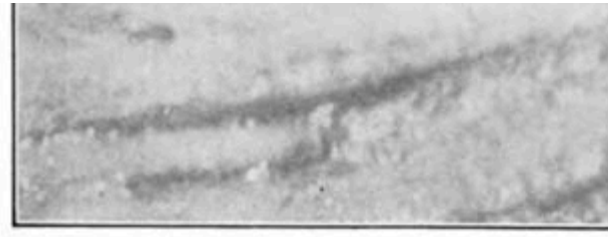
We arrived at Chimbe where, fortunately, we found an appetizing repast, and what we were then willing to consider clean and comfortable beds, awaiting us.

Early the next morning, after a refreshing sleep, we were again in the saddle and on our way to Guaduas, where we purposed spending the night. After a brisk ride of a few hours through a picturesque country, we reached the town of Villeta, situated in a charming and fertile valley. Here we had a hasty breakfast and were then on our way up the prolonged and precipitous slopes of Cune and Petaquero.

The Muisca trail, like the path we followed from the llanos to the Sabana de Bogotá, was to us an interesting example of the manner in which the Indians traced out their roads. Having neither blasting powder nor dynamite, they were perforce obliged to go around the rocks that were in their way. But in spite of this, owing to their thorough familiarity with the country, they always succeeded in finding the shortest routes from one point to another. They made it a rule, however, never to get far away from a water supply, and, for this reason, their roads nearly always kept close to the water courses of the regions through which they passed. The conquistadores, who had to be always on the alert against the Indians, and who took every precaution against surprise and ambuscade, avoided swamps and lowlands, and kept rather to the commanding ridges of the country on their line of march. As a consequence, the best roads in Colombia to-day are those

traced out by the old Muisca traders and by Quesada in the north and Robledo, Almaguer and Belalcazar in the west and south.





Road Between Bogotá and

On our way to Guaduas from Chimbe, we observed a number of small plantations of sugar cane, and near by there was usually a *trapiche*, a primitive contrivance for extracting the juice from the cane. It consisted of a thatched shed under which was a cumbersome, creaking machine consisting essentially of three vertical cylinders of wood which were kept in motion by a span of mules or a yoke of oxen driven by a boy. The cane was fed into the machine by a couple of women, and the juice was received into a wooden trough. From this it was transferred into a boiler, if *panela*—crude sugar—was desired. More frequently, however, it was conveyed to a still, in order to be converted into *aguardiente*, a crude distillate, rich in alcohol, of which the natives, the country over, consume large quantities.

But fond as the inhabitants are of aguardiente, and *guarapo*, the fermented juice of the sugar cane, or a mixture of sugar and water which has undergone fermentation, the most popular drink, especially among the poorer classes, is *chicha*. This is to the greater part of South America what pulque is to Mexico and beer to Germany—the national beverage. It has been so from time immemorial. Chicha was as much esteemed by the Muiscas, before the arrival of the Spaniards, as it is to-day; for then, as now, no festivity or celebration was considered complete without a liberal supply of this enlivening potation.

Padre Rivero, referring to the love of drink, especially of chicha, among the Indians, says, “Drink is their life, their

glory, and the acme of their happiness." The earlier historians have much to say of the frightful orgies, as the result of over-indulgence in chicha, that obtained among all classes on the occasions of national festivals, or the celebration of a victory over an enemy. It is said to be used to excess to-day, as much as in former times, but of this I cannot speak from personal observation. All the way from Villavicencio to Honda, we saw countless *estancos* and *estanquitos*—licensed bars—of the type of our lowest dram shops, where chicha is the principal drink sold; but, although we saw many people, men and women, congregated about these places, we never saw a single case of drunkenness or any serious disturbance of any kind. This was not because no one had been drinking while we were present. All had been imbibing more or less freely, but they seemed so accustomed to the use of their favorite beverages that they were no more affected by them than are the people of France and Italy by the drinking of the wines of their respective countries.[15]

From what, the reader will ask, and how, is chicha prepared? It is made from Indian corn and by an extremely simple process. It is, indeed, the same method as was employed before the conquest.

First of all, the grains of maize are moistened by water and allowed to sprout, just as barley is treated in the manufacture of beer. After this the product is dried and roasted in a large earthen jar. Then by means of a *piedra de molar*—a kind of crude mortar—like the *metate*, which the Mexican uses for reducing maize to meal, the grains are ground, and then put into hot water and allowed to ferment. As a result of germination and the action of hot water, the starch of the maize is converted into sugar. This, by fermentation, is next changed into alcohol, which gives to chicha its intoxicating property. This is less noxious than that which is produced by boiling the maize and

adding to the chicha thus obtained a certain amount of *panela*, or molasses.[16]

When properly prepared, it is an agreeable and wholesome drink, not unlike cider or light beer. I have frequently seen it used at meals by the best families—people who would never think of serving at their table a harmful or intoxicating beverage. Bürger, I know, condemns it, because he asserts it is rich in fusel oil, and because, he maintains, it has a brutalizing effect on those who use it as a beverage. Not having seen a reliable chemical analysis of chicha, I am not prepared to accept his view of the subject. The same writer, it may be remarked, decries cassava bread, because, he will have it, it is composed for the most part of cellulose.

On our way from Villeta to Guaduas, we were obliged to pass two lofty mountain crests, El Alto del Trigo and El Alto del Raizal. It was then again for the hundredth time that we admired the sagacity of the mule, and the importance of having one that is familiar with service in the mountains. If the camel deserves the epithet—"ship of the desert," the mule is entitled to being considered the aeroplane of the mountains. For the way he scales the highest peaks, almost rivaling the condor in the altitudes he is capable of attaining, and the manner in which he, with perfect security, glides along the narrow, dizzy paths of the precipitous mountain slopes, is a matter of ever-increasing wonder. We never, I confess, became quite reconciled to the habit all mules have of keeping on the side of the path next to the precipice—except when they meet animals coming from the opposite direction, when they instinctively crowd closely to the over-hanging mountain —but we soon learned that the mule had as much care for his safety as we had for our own, and then the danger, we at first so much dreaded, became more apparent than real. It is curious, but a fact, that a mule left to himself will

almost always follow in the footsteps made by his predecessor, and no persuasion can induce him to deviate from the beaten path. So regular and so constant is his pace that one could almost determine in advance the number of steps he will make from one point to another.

He rarely stumbles and still more rarely does he fall. And no matter how deep may be the chasm along whose brink he carefully feels his way, he never suffers from vertigo nor makes a false step. Certain travelers tell us blood-curdling stories about their mules losing their balance and plunging headlong into dark, deep ravines, but during all my travels among the Andes, I never heard of such a thing and, from what I know of the supreme carefulness of the mule when in dangerous places, such an accident seems most unlikely. If he is overloaded, he files a protest by lying down and refusing to rise until relieved of a part of his burden. Occasionally, too, when he reaches a suitable level spot, he may take it into his head to have a roll, and he incontinently proceeds to gratify this inclination before his rider is aware of his intention.

I recall particularly how disconcerted and disgusted C. was on one occasion, when his mule, on arriving at a specially dusty place in the road, lay down without giving the slightest notice of his purpose and proceeded to take a roll, before his rider was able to extricate himself from his uncomfortable position. For a proud caballero who, when he happened to be the cynosure of a group of admiring señoritas and faded dames of quality, would fain pose as a scion of Castilian nobility, this was an indignity that merited condign punishment. The consequence was that whenever, thereafter, C. noticed a suspicious movement in his mount, he forthwith proceeded to ply him with a tough, pliable rod from a coffee bush, which had the effect of distracting, at least temporarily, the mule's attention to matters of greater moment.

Among the many objects that were to us a source of constant wonder and delight in the tropics were the butterflies. We met them in countless species in the most unexpected places, especially during our journeyings in the lower altitudes. Here we found them of the most brilliant hues and of every color of the spectrum. In some districts, as for instance between the Nevada de Santa Marta and the sea, there are at times clouds of them, and their number is then comparable only with the millions of medusæ that people certain parts of the ocean. At times owing to their prodigious numbers and their gorgeous colors, one could, without a great stretch of the imagination, fancy one's self gazing at fluttering bits of a shattered rainbow. The largest and most beautiful is the *Morpho Cypris*, having an expanse of wing of fully six inches, a bright cobalt-blue above, and ocellated underneath.

According to Hettner,[17] the people around Muso, where the celebrated emerald mines are located, will have it that there is a mysterious relationship between the mineral emeralds buried in the earth and "animal emeralds" that flit through the air. How like the fancy of the aborigines of Trinidad—that the glittering colibris formerly occurring in such numbers in that island were the souls of departed Indians!

Quite rivaling the butterflies in splendor and adornment are the beauteous humming birds that are met with from ocean level to mountain summit. Poets and naturalists have essayed in vain to portray their marvelous richness of coloring and their magic evolutions as they dart from flower to flower, or balance themselves above some bright fragrant corolla while drawing from it its precious nectar. As well might the painter try to transfer to canvas the glories of the setting sun as to copy the iridescent hues of such glowing mites of the feathered tribe as the Ruby Throat or the Fiery Topaz. Truly, they as well as the noted

paradiseines of New Guinea should come under the expressive designation of birds of Paradise.[18]

After a hard day's ride we reached Guaduas just as the sun had dropped behind the mountain to the west. Guaduas in Spanish signifies bamboos, and the town was given this name on account of the large number of these giant, tree-like grasses that formerly grew in and about the place. Even now numerous clumps of bamboo may be seen here, especially along the many water courses which intersect the delightful valley in which the town is located.

It is really remarkable for how many purposes the bamboo is used in the equatorial regions. It is employed in building houses, bridges, rafts, fences, for making planks, beams, rafters, bedsteads, benches, tables, buckets and small vessels for holding molasses, aguardiente and other fluids, and for various other domestic utensils too numerous to mention. Indeed, to the poorer classes of the Colombian Andes, it is almost as useful as is the banana plant to the native of Uganda, who contrives to get from it everything he uses except meat and iron.

In the plaza of the town there is a monument erected to the patriotic heroine, Policarpa Salavarrieta, who was shot in Bogotá during the War of Independence, by order of the viceroy, for the part she took in assisting those who were fighting against the mother country. Throughout Colombia her memory is held in benediction, and the story of her tragic death has been a favorite theme for poet and historian as well.

Our first view of Guaduas, in its charming setting of perennial verdure, illumined by the crimson glow of the setting sun, was a picture of surpassing charm. It bodied forth all the tranquillity, verdancy and loveliness which Humboldt found in Ibague than which

"Nil quietius, nil muscosius, nil amœnius."

The spell was broken, however, when we entered the town. We then found to our regret that it was another of so many instances where

"Distance lends enchantment to the view."

So favorably situated and with so agreeable a climate, it could easily be made one of the most delightful places of residence in the republic. Let us hope that this is what it shall be in the approaching dawn of a new era.

Before leaving Bogotá, we had been told by a noted English traveler to be on the lookout for a remarkable view towards the west, from the summit of El Alto del Sargento. "Be sure not to miss it," he said, "for from that point you will behold one of the most magnificent panoramas in the world." We were at first inclined to regard this statement as the usual exaggeration of the tourist, but were, nevertheless, eager to contemplate a prospect so famed for beauty and sublimity.[19]

In order to reach the crest of the mountain, before the clouds gathered about El Sargento, which usually occurs about midday, we made an early start from our posada, where we had found commodious and fairly comfortable quarters, and were soon on our way up the last of the *Serranias*—mountain ridges—that separated us from the Magdalena valley.

It was about eleven o'clock when we arrived at the summit of El Sargento. We had just rounded a tree-covered eminence, that concealed the view towards the west, when all of a sudden, there burst upon our vision, what was, to me at least, the most superb spectacle I had ever contemplated. C. and I instinctively stood still in silent

rapture. As the picture appeared to us, it surpassed by far all that had been said in its praise. Not even half the truth had been told. Our emotion was too great for words, and, as we paused in mute admiration, one of us at least recalled a similar experience enjoyed by three other travelers in the Guadarrama mountains of Spain. It is thus recorded in Longfellow's *The Spanish Student*:[20]

"Victorian. This is the highest point.
Here let us rest.
See, Preciosa, see how all about us,
Kneeling, like hooded friars, the misty mountains
Receive the benediction of the sun.
O glorious sight!
Preciosa. Most beautiful indeed!
Hypolito. Most wonderful!"

In the foreground beneath our feet, was the wooded slope of El Sargento. In the distance, near the mountain's base, were the picturesque towns of San Juan and Ambalema. Further on, like an immense opalescent band, was the meandering Magdalena. Beyond it were the broad plains of Mariquita, which extended as far as the foothills of the Central Cordillera. Over and above these, veiled in an azure haze, and piercing the clouds, were the snow-crowned mass of Ruiz and the Mesa de Herveo, and slightly to the left, but towering above all the neighboring peaks, was Tolima, the giant of the Colombian Andes.[21]

But it was not merely the physical features just mentioned, that produced the admirable picture that held us spellbound. It was the marvelous combination of light and shade, the position of the sun in the heavens, and the strange optical illusions caused by the bright and fleecy clouds that constantly swept over the landscape. These factors gave rise to an ever-changing perspective, and at times, exaggerated distances and magnitudes in the most

extraordinary manner. Each change developed a new picture and each one was, if possible, more beautiful than that which it replaced. It seemed as if the genius of the Andes wished to give us, as we were leaving his domain, a series of dissolving views on a stupendous scale. View succeeded view with kaleidoscopic rapidity, all distinguished by color-schemes of supreme delicacy and splendor. At one time we caught a glimpse of a cloud-grouping that recalled Raphael's *Disputa*. Perhaps in his Umbrian home Nature had gladdened the great artist's soul with a similar view. Perhaps he had caught it from some lofty peak of the Apennines while gazing at the apparition of the morning sun from beneath the blue waters of the Adriatic.

Who can tell? What we do know is that he has reproduced in the exquisite creations of his transcendent genius just such cloud-effects as rejoiced our vision on that memorable day when we bade adieu to the Eastern Cordilleras. Never before had mountain scenery occasioned us keener delight. Only once before had it been my privilege to contemplate a vista at all approaching the one that unfolded itself before us in the picturesque valley of the Magdalena. That was long years ago, as I stood on the summit of Mt. Parnassus. It was a balmy morning in summer. "Rosy-fingered dawn" was just making her appearance beyond the plain where Troy once stood, and was hastening to gladden by her smile the islands of the Ægean and the one-time famous land of Hellas. Then I beheld, spread out before me, the greater part of Greece, together with the countless islands that engirdle it. It was a panorama which I then thought was unequaled in the wide world. But beautiful, sublime, glorious as it undoubtedly was, it has since yielded the palm to the unrivaled vista that greeted us from the summit of El Sargento.

"How Turner and Ruskin," we exclaimed, "would have

reveled in such scenic splendor! How it would have delighted the heart of Claude Lorrain, the painter of idyllic scenes and the master of aerial perspective! What ecstatic joy would not Gaspard and Nicholas Poussin, Ruysdael and Corot, have experienced in the presence of such exuberant vegetation, such sparkling streams and fleece-like clouds, such grandiose mountains with their spotless mantles of eternal snow!"

And how such a spot as El Sargento would have appealed to the esthetic soul of St. Benedict or to such lovers of wild nature as St. Bruno, or St. Francis, the *poverello* of Assisi! Had they found such a place, it would undoubtedly have been chosen as a site for a temple, like our Lady of the Angels, or a monastic retreat like that of Monte Casino or the Grande Chartreuse.[22]

We were still under the spell of the matchless pictures engraved on our memories long after we had started on our way down the mountain. Before we had realized it, we had passed from the *tierra templada* to the *tierra caliente*. We were again in the dense and luxuriant forests of the lowlands—in a region of perpetual summer, like unto that which we had left behind us in the valleys of the Meta and the Orinoco. We had left the habitat of the coffee plant and the oak and were now in the territory of the cacao and the tolu tree, the vanilla vine and the moriche palm. Far above and behind us, on lofty mountain peaks where sunbeams "glide apace with shadows in their train," were the favorite haunts of the fleet and sporting Oreades. Our path was now through a dense, gloomy forest where Silence and Twilight,

"Twin sisters keep
Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades,
Like vaporous shapes half seen."[23]

It was in such a sombre forest as this, we fancied, where, under the influence of a fertile soil, perpetual warmth and humidity, the teeming earth, in later geologic time, fed the countless monsters that depended on her bounty. It was amid such surroundings that they were wont to hold high carnival, or engage in that struggle for existence which resulted in the survival of the fittest, until finally all were swept away by some fatal agency of which we know so little. Had we seen a megatherium or a mylodon or a megalonyx crossing our path, or observed a mastodon pushing his bulky form through the dense underbrush; had we seen a screaming pterodactyl passing over our heads, or beheld a giant iguanodon floundering in the morass by the wayside, or browsing on the succulent crowns of the *Mauritia flexuosa*, we should have regarded it all as in perfect keeping with our environment.

Our reveries were suddenly disturbed by the soft, dulcet notes of the *tiple*. Only a short distance ahead of us, reclining against a mango tree, was an amorous young mestizo, who was fondly gazing on his dusky *querida*, while thrumming his instrument. She, during the serenade[24] of her ardent suitor, sat on the door-sill of a bamboo dwelling with a palm-thatched roof, having seemingly no thought beyond satisfying the cravings of two little nude, paunchy, bananniverous urchins, apparently her brother and sister—Pablo and Julia by name—who, like ebony statuettes, were standing at her knee and clamoring for another banana from a bunch suspended from a rafter above the cabin door.

Farther on was another cabin, from which issued coarser notes of shouts and laughter. It was a *chicheria*, and the chicha there served was evidently the cause of the good nature and general merriment that prevailed. We then discovered that we were on the outskirts of a small pueblo, just across the river from the goal of our day's journey.

Our long, yet delightful ride across the oriental Andes was at an end. Crossing a steel suspension bridge, the noblest structure of the kind in the republic—which here spans Colombia's great waterway—we were in Honda, the head of navigation for the lower Magdalena.

1

Since writing the above the connection has been made. ↑

2

Vergara y Velasco, *Nueva Geografia de Colombia*, p. 253. ↑

3

Castellanos, in his *Historia del Nuevo Reino de Granada*, Tom. II, pp. 61, 62, in referring to the delicacies Don Alonso Luis de Lugo and his half-famished companions found on their reaching the Sabana de Bogotá, after their dreadful journey through the "pluvious, swampy, impassable, dismal" sierras of the Opon, makes mention, among other things, of well-cured hams and capons that were provided for their entertainment.

"Cuantidad de jamones bien curados,
Porque tenian ya buenas manadas
De puercos desque vino Benalcazar
Que trajo los primeros de la tierra.
Hubo tambien capones y gallinas,
Que se multiplicaron desque vino
Nicolao Fedriman de Venezuela,
Que al Nuevo reino trajo las primeras."

↑

4

Fray Bernardo Lugo, in his *Gramatica de la lengua Mosca*, published in 1619, and Padre Simon, in his *Noticias Historiales*, written shortly after, were the first to state that the language spoken was the Chibcha. Muisca is a Chibcha word signifying person. ↑

5

The Chibchas, like many people living on the Andean plateaus to-day, derived their chief sustenance from potatoes and maize, both of which are indigenous to South America. Oviedo speaks of the potato as their principal aliment, as it was always served with whatever else they ate. According to Castellanos, it was a favorite article of diet with the conquistadores, as well as with the Indians.

Maize afforded them meat and drink, for out of it they made bread and

their highly-prized beverage, *chicha*, which is still so popular among their descendants. Of the paramount importance of this article of food among the aborigines of the New World, John Fiske, in his valuable work, *The Discovery of America*, writes as follows:—

"Maize or Indian corn has played a most important part in the history of the New World, as regards both the red men and the white men. It could be planted without clearing or ploughing the soil. It was only necessary to girdle the trees with a stone hatchet, so as to destroy their leaves, and let in the sunshine. A few scratches and digs were made in the ground with a stone digger, and the seed once dropped in took care of itself. The ears could hang for weeks after ripening, and could be picked off without meddling with the stalk; there was no need of threshing or winnowing. None of the Old World cereals can be cultivated without much more industry and intelligence." Vol. 1, pp. 27, 28. M. Alphonse de Candolle, in his learned work, *Origin of Cultivated Plants*, seems to regard Colombia as the original home of maize, while he inclines to the opinion that Chile was the point of departure of the potato—*Solanum tuberosum*. ↑

6

Prehistoric America, p. 460, London, 1885. ↑

7

It is saying more than the facts will warrant to assert, as does Ameghino, that "En Nueva Granada las inscripciones geroglificas se encuentran a cada paso"—that hieroglyphic inscriptions are found everywhere. Cf. his *La Antiguedad del Hombre*, Vol. I, p. 92. ↑

8

Los Chibchas antes de la Conquista Española, p. 176, Bogotá, 1895. Cf. also *El Dorado, Estudio Historico, Etnografico y arqueologico de los Chibchas, Habitantes de la Antigua Cundinamarca y de Algunas Otras Tribus*, por el Doctor Liborio Zerda, Bogotá, 1883, and *Nouvelle Géographic Universelle*, par *Elisée Reclus*, Tom. XVIII, pp. 292 et seq., Paris, 1893. ↑

9

Chap. I, New York, 1877. ↑

10

Compare Fiske, op. cit., Vol. I, Chap. I. ↑

11

Crossing a mountain range like the Oriental Cordilleras, is not, as is so frequently imagined, a gradual and uninterrupted ascent to the summit, and then a similar continuous descent to its base. Far from it. It is literally an ever-recurring journey "up the hill and down the dale," from the foothills on one side of the range to the foothills on the other. The

accompanying diagram from Karsten's *Géologie de l'Ancienne Colombie Bolivarienne*, gives a good idea of the eastern range of the Andes along our route from the Meta to the Magdalena. ↑

12

Commonly called "chaps." ↑

13

Notwithstanding the statements, frequently made by travelers, about their mules climbing roads inclined at angles varying from 30° to 45°, it can safely be affirmed that the maximum angle is but little, if any more than 20°, as actual measurement will show. When the inclination becomes greater than this the mule will always take a zigzag course, so as to reduce the grade as much as possible. ↑

14

"Heavy, tortuous and dark."—Ovid. ↑

15

I do not pretend to deny that drunkenness exists in Colombia. Even Colombian writers would be the last to do this, for they are fully aware of the extent of the ravages of the drink evil. They will tell you frankly that the inhabitants of certain parts of the country are addicted to intoxication, or, as one of them expresses it, that they are "*muy amigos de embriagarse*"—fond of getting drunk. And no one, I think, will deny that the prevalence of the drink habit is one of the country's greatest curses. A good old padre, learned and patriotic, wrote a book some decades ago, in which he contended that Colombia, by reason of its favored geographical position and its wonderful natural resources, should rank among the richest and most prosperous countries of the New World. And it would be, he insisted, were it not for three drawbacks. These, in his estimation, were *borracheria*, *holgozaneria* and *politiqueria*, to-wit, drunkenness, indolence, and the habit, so universally prevalent, of its people dabbling in questionable politics. We have no equivalent in English for the expressive word, *politiqueria*, although we should have frequent use for it if it existed. It means, literally, the methods and occupation of a politicaster—an individual who is as much of a drawback to the best interests of our own country as is the *politicastro* to Colombia.

To the great amount of chicha sold in these estancos, usually kept by women, is undoubtedly traceable the origin of the saying, *Toda chichera muere rica*—Every chicha vender dies rich. ↑

16

According to Franz Keller and other travelers in South America, the Indian women in certain parts of the continent prepare chicha by masticating the maize, just as some of the Polynesians prepare kava and certain other of their favorite beverages by mastication. They claim that

when thus prepared it has a far more agreeable flavor than when prepared *artificialmente*, that is, by the method above described. See *The Amazon and Madeira Rivers*, p. 164 et seq., London, 1874.

Spix and Martius' *Travels in Brazil*, Vol. II, p. 232, London, 1824, say, "It is remarkable that this mode of preparing a fermented liquor out of maize, mandioca flour or bananas, is found among the various Indian tribes of America, and seems peculiar to this race."

Sir Robert Schomburgk, referring to the intoxicating drink, paiwori, made from cassava bread, writes as follows:—

"The women, who prepare the beverage, assemble around a large jar or other earthen vessel, and having moistened their mouths with fresh water, they commence chewing the bread, collecting in the vessel the moisture which accumulates in the mouth. This is afterwards put into a trough, called canaua, or in large jars, in which a quantity of the charred bread has been broken up, over which boiling water is poured; and it is then kneaded, and portions which are not of an even consistency are again carried to the mouth, ground with the teeth, and returned into the earthen pot. The process is repeated several times, from the idea that it conduces to the strength of the beverage. The second day fermentation begins, and on the third the liquor is considered fit for use. We have seen a whole village, young and old, men and women, occupied in this disgusting process when it was contemplated to celebrate our unexpected arrival among them; otherwise, for common use, the females alone employ themselves *ex officio* with the preparation. Their teeth suffer so much from this occupation that a female has seldom a good tooth after she is thirty years old.... The taste of the paiwori is very refreshing after great fatigue, and not unpleasant to the taste; if offered as the cup of welcome by the Indian, it would be a great offense to refuse it."—*The Discovery of Guiana*, ut sup., pp. 64, 65. ↑

17

Reisen in den Columbianischen Anden, Leipzig, 1888. ↑

18

The usual name given the humming bird by the people of Venezuela and Colombia is colibri. It is also known as the *pajarito-mosca*—little bird fly—or *pica-flor*—flower-nibbler. But the most beautiful and most picturesque names are those in use by the Indians, who seem to have a particular faculty for inventing appropriate epithets for whatever specially strikes their fancy. By them humming birds are called "The rays of the sun," "The tresses of the day-star" and "Living sunbeams." The poet Bailey has incorporated the last of these names in the couplet,

"Bright Humming-bird of gem-like plumeletage,
By western Indians Living Sunbeam named,"

Audubon was but imitating the children of the forest when he called humming birds “Glittering fragments of the rainbow.” ↑

19

Even the Colombian writer, Vergara y Velasco, who, like South Americans generally, is slow to grow enthusiastic over natural scenery, refers to the view from El Sargento as a “Sitio pintoresco si los hay”—a picturesque place if there be any. ↑

20

Act III, Scene VI. ↑

21

According to Karl Fauehaber, the explorer of the Quindio Cordillera, Tolima has an altitude of 20,995 feet. ↑

22

“With Francis of Assisi and his *Hymn to the Sun*,” we are informed by a recent writer, “the love of wild nature became more articulate.” As an illustration of the effect of Nature-love on sensitive souls, we are told that the poet Gay, after visiting the Grande Chartreuse, declared that if he had lived in St. Bruno’s day, he would have been one of his disciples. “It was,” he said, “one of the most solemn, the most romantic and the most astonishing scenes I ever beheld.” ↑

23

Shelley’s *Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude*. ↑

24

The negroes of Colombia are often of a highly poetical nature, and, like those of our Southern states, are passionately fond of music, singing and dancing. Their voices are often marvelously elastic, expansive and harmonious. Their favorite air and dance is the *bambuco*, of African origin, to which Jorge Isaacs refers in his charming Caucan novel, *Maria*, and of which Vergara y Vergara in his valuable *Historia de la Literatura en Nueva Granada* (Parte primera, p. 513, Bogotá, 1867) gives us so glowing an account. It is the latter writer that assures us that if a negro were to play a *marimba* in the forests of the South Coast, he could be certain that wild beasts and serpents would listen to him in silent ecstasy. ↑

CHAPTER XII

THE VALLEY OF THE MAGDALENA

"Salud, Salud, majestuoso rio!...
Al contemplar tu frente coronada
De los hijos mas viejos de la tierra,
Lleno solo de ti, siento mi alma
Arrastrada en la espuma de tus olas,
Que entre profundos remolinos
braman,
De aquel gran ser que el infinito
abraza."[1]

—Manuel M. Madiedo.

While in Guaduas we met a Scotch engineer, who was superintendent of a gold mine in the mountains west of Honda. Desiring to know the truth about the excessive temperature of this place, about which we had heard so many reports, we asked him if it was really true that the heat in Honda was as intense as represented.

"You will," he said, "find it the hottest place you have ever visited. It is certainly the most torrid place I know, and I have been something of a globe-trotter in my time. Hades, if I have caught the meaning of the word, as used in the

Revised Version, is quite temperate in comparison with it. Business frequently calls me to Bogotá, and, on my way thither, I must necessarily pass through Honda, but I never stop there longer than is absolutely necessary, and I always try to avoid being there in the daytime. If I must stop there for a few hours, I time my journey so as to arrive there at night, and make it a point to leave before morning. Hot? I think it is the hottest and most suffocating spot on earth. It has always been a mystery to me how people can live there at all. I know of nothing to compare it with except one of the burning pits of Dante's Inferno."

Had we not learned by long experience how to discount such statements, the prospect of spending some days in a town with such a reputation for grilling the stranger within its gates, would have been anything but inviting. But we had heard similar reports about the llanos and the valley of the Orinoco, and had found, on arriving in these regions, that the temperature said to prevail there had been greatly exaggerated. The same we found to be true of Honda. During our sojourn there, our thermometer never registered more than 86° F. in the shade. Of course, around midday it was uncomfortable in the sun, but I have been in many places in the United States where I suffered more from the heat than I did in Honda.

The town is about seven hundred feet above sea level and counts nearly four thousand inhabitants. It is separated into two parts by the river Guali, which here enters the Magdalena. Being the centre of traffic for Bogotá, the upper Magdalena, and the mining district round about Mariquita, it is a place of considerable importance. As soon, however, as the Colombian National Railway, now nearing completion, shall have connected Girardot with Bogotá, Honda will lose the commercial supremacy it has maintained for nearly three centuries. There will then be little reason for a town in this place, and it will lapse into a

straggling village similar to many others along the river.

And the Muisca Trail, over which we had so delightful a ride, will be no longer needed, and will soon disappear in the dense and rank vegetation through which it passes. Then, too, will disappear those long and picturesque mule-trains, that so often crowded us to the roadside on our way from Bogotá, and which have been almost the sole means employed for the transportation of freight and passengers since the capital was founded by Quesada nearly four centuries ago. We shall always congratulate ourselves that we were able to make the trip on mule-back rather than by a railway train. We can thus feel that we have, to a great extent, seen the country as it was in colonial times—before its character was modified by the innovations of modern progress and the introduction of modern inventions.

In 1805 Honda was visited by a terrific earthquake, from the effects of which it has never recovered. Everywhere are evidences of the frightful cataclysm. Some of the largest and most important structures are still in ruins. Nor has any attempt ever been made to restore certain quarters of the town to their prior condition.

After a few days' halt at Honda, we were ready to continue our journey towards the Caribbean. The rapids of the Magdalena make it impracticable for steamers to ascend the river as far as the town. For this reason, it is necessary to go by rail to La Dorada, eighteen miles northwards. But, although the distance is so short, it takes two hours for the train to make the run. The road, however, passes through a picturesque country and time passes pleasantly and quickly. Before one realizes it, one is at La Dorada, where the transfer is made to the steamer bound for Barranquilla.

There are several lines of steamboats plying between La Dorada and Barranquilla and intermediate points. But all

the boats, which are stern-wheelers, are quite small. The largest of them will not carry more than four hundred tons. Usually the tonnage is much less—not more than one or two hundred tons.[2] Our boat, which was recommended as the best and the most comfortable on the river, was one of the largest and newest, but, if it was the best, it is difficult to conceive what the others must have been.

A glance was sufficient to convince us that the craft on the Magdalena are in every way inferior to those on the Orinoco and its affluents. The Venezuelan boats are larger, and with incomparably better equipment and appointments. They are clean, well kept, and the service is good. Their cabins are commodious and well ventilated. They are, besides, provided with all necessary furniture and the berths are as comfortable as could be desired.

But how different is it on the Magdalena boats! In the cabins, in place of berths with neat bedding, there is a bare cot, usually of questionable cleanliness. Each passenger is supposed to supply his own bedding. As to lavatories and bathrooms, those that we saw were filthy beyond description. Our stewards were half-dressed, barefooted, slovenly, unwashed negro boys, who seemed to have been picked up on the streets at random, just before the boat left its moorings. The cuisine and service were in keeping with everything else, and left very much room for improvement. The natives, having nothing better, seemed to be satisfied with the conditions that obtained. The foreigners, however, and there were representatives of several nationalities aboard, could never become reconciled to the lack of so many things essential to comfortable traveling, and were always glad when their river experiences were at an end.

For ourselves, who had been roughing it so long, the trip down the river was not so trying as it was for many others. We were, besides, better prepared for such a journey than

the other passengers. We had our camping outfits with us, together with clean bedding, which had received the attention of the laundress before we left Bogotá. We had, besides, good cumare hammocks, and mosquito nets, so that we had nothing to apprehend from filth, vermin or insects. Thus equipped, we really enjoyed our voyage on the Magdalena, but we were probably the only ones who did.

After we had gotten fairly started down stream, and could contemplate at our leisure the rich tropical vegetation that fringed both banks, our minds reverted to the first trip made down this river by Europeans. The travelers were the celebrated conquistadores, of whom mention has already been made, viz., Quesada, Belalcazar and Federmann. They embarked with a number of soldiers at Guataqui, a short distance above Honda. But they had scarcely started on their downward course, before they encountered the rapids at the mouth of the Guali. They were then obliged to unload their two brigantines and canoes and transport their contents to the lower part of the cataract, whence, after reloading, they were able to proceed again on their long journey to Cartagena.

It was while passing this point that Quesada learned from his Indian boatmen of the existence of gold in the valley of the Guali. In consequence of this information, the town of Marquita was founded without delay, and has ever since been a mining centre of considerable importance. It was in this place that Quesada died after his return from Spain. From here his remains were transferred to the Cathedral of Bogotá, where they still repose.

According to Padre Simon, Quesada and his companions were frequently, during their journey down the river, attacked by Indians, “who came out to salute them and speed their way with a shower of poisoned arrows.” “With

the help of God," he continues, "joined to eternal vigilance, their own valor and a liberal supply of powder and firearms with which the soldiers of Belalcazar were provided, they were able finally to arrive at Cartagena, and give the first information regarding the great campaign in which Quesada and his followers had achieved such signal success."[3]

The Magdalena, like many other water courses in South America, was at first known as the Rio Grande—the great river. It was subsequently given the name it now bears in honor of St. Mary Magdalene.[4] At times it is comparatively narrow and deep. Then navigation is easy and without danger. At other times,

"Shallow, disreputable, vast
It spreads across the western plains."

Then progress is difficult, and the boat may run into a sand bar at any moment. And if the river should then be falling, it may be impossible to get the craft free until the water rises. Only a short time before our trip one of the steamers had been held in a sand bank for forty days. As it was not near any place where provisions could be obtained, the passengers suffered greatly from hunger, not to speak of the suspense and enforced detention on an uncomfortable boat.

Owing to the shallowness of the river, the boat was, during the first part of the voyage, always tied up for the night at the first tree or stump that might be found on the bank at sunset. The following morning we were supposed to resume our journey at daybreak, but, as the firemen did not begin to get up steam before that time, it was usually an hour after sunrise before we were under way. We stopped at every village and warehouse along the river, sometimes to deliver the mail, often consisting of only a single letter

or package, or to take on a passenger. Two or three times a day, also, we halted to take on wood to supply the furnace with fuel, for here, as on the Meta, coal is not used. Fortunately, we were never obliged, as on the Meta, to delay until the wood could be cut. Large wood piles are found every few miles all along the river. They usually belong to a negro, who has a hut or shed near by, together with a small garden and a few domestic animals which supply him and his family with food in their sequestered home.

We stopped at several large warehouses, many of them constructed of corrugated iron from the United States. This seems strange in a land where timber is so abundant. But there are no sawmills in the Magdalena valley. South of Barranquilla—where but little lumber is produced—imported lumber would be more expensive and less durable than iron. At these places the chief articles of merchandise are coffee, cacao, hides and vegetable ivory. This last product, also called ivory nuts, is the fruit of a species of palm known as *Phytelephas macrocarpa*,[5] and constitutes, in this part of Colombia, an important article of commerce. For many things it is a good substitute for elephant ivory, which it rivals in whiteness, beauty and solidity, and collecting it for shipment gives occupation to quite a number of the poor inhabitants of the Magdalena valley.

We usually went ashore at the different landing places to see the people and familiarize ourselves with their mode of life. It was generally as simple and primitive as possible—almost as primitive, in some instances, as we conceive it to have been in the Quaternary period or in the days of the Troglodytes. Often their dwellings were little more than palm-thatched sheds—barely sufficient to shield their occupants from sun and rain. A *tulpa*, consisting of three stones, served them in lieu of a stove, and on this they

broiled the fish caught in the river, or prepared their *arepas* —corn cakes—or their *sancocho*, a kind of ragout, as popular in some parts of Colombia as it is in Venezuela.

We were surprised to see in the houses and shops along the Magdalena valley—what we had often observed in various parts of Colombia and Venezuela—the large number of illustrated circulars of Spanish, English and French proprietary medicines. The insides of certain houses were sometimes quite plastered over with them. But what was more surprising was the number of lithographs we saw of the German Emperor. Sometimes he was represented alone, at others he was depicted as surrounded by the members of his family. In several places we saw pictures not only of the emperor and his family, but also those of his father and grandfather and Bismarck. And the remarkable thing about it was that, in some cases, there were no Germans living within hundreds of miles of where we came across these pictures. Had some enthusiastic Teuton tried to start a propaganda in favor of the Vaterland by distributing broadcast these engravings of the imperial family? I know not, but, judging solely from the number of their pictures we came across in Venezuela and Colombia, one would be led to suppose that the Hohenzollern rulers are the most popular of potentates, at least in this part of South America.

While stopping to take on some rubber at a certain small village, we had a remarkable illustration of the rapidity with which the bed of the river is sometimes changed, even when the water is comparatively low. We had scarcely reached the landing place when there was a terrific crash, occasioned by the falling in of a large section of the bank on which the village was built. Soon afterwards another section gave way, and then a third and a fourth. The whole bank seemed to be undermined by the river, and, although the warehouse was fully fifty feet away from the water

when we arrived, so much of the bank had been carried away in less than half an hour, that not only the contents of the building, but also the building itself had to be hurriedly removed in order that it and the merchandise stored within might not be borne away by the resistless current. As the structure was of light bamboo, and put together with a view to such an emergency, the transfer was not a difficult task. When we started to continue our course, it looked as if the eroding action of the river would necessitate the changing of the site of the entire village before nightfall.

Such changes in the course of the river are not uncommon. They are going on all the time in some part or other of the valley. One may frequently see immense masses of earth suddenly detached, which are a serious menace to the champans[6]—large covered flat-boats—and other small craft that happen to pass by at the time. Sometimes the giants of the forest are thus wrested from their footholds, and may be seen drifting down stream together with masses of vegetation attached to them. At times, too, masses of earth, like floating islets, are visible, and may travel a long distance down stream before their course is arrested by an island or a sand bar.

Ordinarily the changes in the river bed are gradual and occasion little danger to life or property. Sometimes, however, during the rainy season, and when the flood is unusually high, widespread devastation is the result. Whole villages are swept away by the deluge; and towns, that were before important commercial centres, are suddenly isolated and left far from the navigable part of the river. Places that before were favorably situated are, after the flood, found to be in the midst of pestiferous morasses. Such has been the fate of many places along the waterways of Colombia, but more notably in the great island of Mompos, near the confluence of the Cauca and the Magdalena. Here several places that were at one time

centres of industrial and agricultural activity, have long since either ceased to exist or lost entirely their pristine importance.



The town of Mompos is probably the most remarkable example of this kind. Founded in 1539 by Alonso de Heredia, it is one of the oldest towns in the republic, and was for generations the most important commercial centre

between Cartagena and Honda. But owing to a displacement of the main channel of the river, and the filling in of the branch of the river on which the town was built, it is now practically deprived of its former means of communication with the rest of the country, and is rapidly verging towards extinction.

The Magdalena, as a commercial highway, has been much neglected. As a consequence, no one can calculate when leaving Honda, how long it will take him to reach Barranquilla. It may require five or six days, or it may demand twice that much time. All depends on the shifting bed of the river, or the blocking of the channel by sand bars and accumulations of floating timber. By reason of these obstructions and the ever-varying depth of the main channel, navigation is usually impossible at night, except below the island of Mompos, where the volume of water is swelled by the tribute of the mighty Cauca.

If the Magdalena were under the supervision of a corps of competent engineers, having at their disposal the necessary dredges and other appliances for keeping the main channel in prime condition, a properly constructed boat would easily make the trip from Honda to the mouth of the river in two days, and traverse the same course up stream in three days at most. It is really a pity to see such a splendid water course so neglected. If cared for as it should be, it could easily be rendered an artery for inland commerce of the first importance. As it is, transportation, as now carried on, is always slow and uncertain, and never free from danger and disaster.

As a serviceable means of communication with the outside world we were constantly contrasting the Magdalena with the Meta. From our observations, we should consider the Meta, from its junction with the Orinoco to Cabuyaro or even to the mouth of the Humea, as a safer waterway than

the Magdalena. Only twice did our boat graze a sand bank in the Meta, but it continued its course without a moment's stoppage. In the Magdalena, however, we frequently ran into sand bars, or shallow water, and, on several occasions, had difficulty in extricating and floating our craft. Once we were delayed for some time, and began to fear that, owing to the falling water, we should be stranded for weeks, as other boats had been not long before.

When peace shall have been firmly established in Colombia, and its finances shall have been placed on a satisfactory basis, the patriotic and far-seeing statesmen of the republic, will, I am convinced, see the necessity of carrying out the plan of the former Archbishop and Viceroy of New Granada—Don Antonio Caballero y Gongora—and connecting Bogotá with Europe by means of the Meta and the Orinoco. It will not be a difficult feat of engineering to build a railroad from the capital to a suitable point on the Meta, and the length of such a road need not exceed one hundred and fifty miles at most. This will bring Bogatá within eight or ten hours of the head waters of navigation, and develop the most valuable and most productive grazing section of the country.

The highest point the road need reach in crossing the Eastern Cordilleras will be less than that of several passes in Colorado, where the Rocky Mountains are scaled by the iron-horse with a long train of cargo behind him. The pass of Chipaque, by which we entered the *altiplanicies* of Bogotá, is several thousand feet lower than the heights crossed by the railways leading from the waters of the Pacific to Lake Titicaca, and to Argentina by way of Cumbre Pass, and is nearly a mile lower than the point where the Galera tunnel pierces the Cordillera on the way from Lima to Oroya.[7]

What Colombia really needs is the betterment of both its

great waterways—the Meta for the eastern and the Magdalena for the western part of the republic. Until they shall both have been put in such condition as to be navigable during the entire year, it will be impossible fully to develop the marvelous resources of this extensive country. River traffic will always remain cheaper than traffic by rail, and, on account of many physical difficulties, it is highly improbable that certain valuable sections of territory will ever be tapped by railroads. When, however, these two main arteries of commerce shall have received the attention they deserve and shall have been put in communication with the rich grazing, mining and agricultural regions by the various lines of railway that are contemplated or in course of construction, Colombia will at once take a position among the richest and most flourishing republics of South America. Only those who have traveled through it can fully realize its wonderful natural riches, or form an adequate conception of its vast extent. Sufficient to state that its area is more than ten times as great as the state of New York, or as great as that of France, Germany and the British Isles combined.

As to the great Pan-American line which has been projected to connect New York with Buenos Ayres, that is talked of in Colombia as well as in the United States. But when one contemplates the enormous engineering difficulties to be encountered in the construction of the section extending from Costa Rica to the frontier of Ecuador, one is compelled to regard the project as a much more arduous undertaking than some of its enthusiastic promoters would have us believe. Railway communication will soon be complete from Buenos Ayres to Central Peru, and, judging by work now being accomplished in Ecuador, steel rails will soon span the country from the northern to the southern boundaries of this republic. But with all this work completed, the most difficult part of the colossal

enterprise will still remain untouched. Even should the road eventually be completed, as is possible, it is still doubtful whether long stretches of it would ever pay even a nominal interest on the investment.

The part of the Magdalena valley between Honda and the island of Mompos is but sparsely inhabited. Most of the inhabitants are Indians, mestizos, or negroes, the descendants of former slaves.[8] On account of the heat and malaria that always prevail in the lowlands, but few white men are found here, and their sojourn, as a rule, is only temporary. But near the confluence of the Cauca and the Magdalena, and thence to the Caribbean, there are rich and extensive *esteros*—grazing lands—covered with succulent Para and Guinea grasses, several feet high. In these broad plains, there are no fewer than half a million cattle, not to speak of large numbers of horses, mules and other domestic animals. Some of the cattle we saw reminded us of the fat, sleek animals we had seen on the llanos watered by the Rio Negro and the Humea. Under more favorable conditions the number could greatly be increased.

The scenery along the Magdalena is much like that along the Meta and the Orinoco, except that along the western river one sees more of the mountains, especially in the southern part. The vegetation is similar in character and quite as varied and exuberant. On both sides of the river trees and bushes are so massed together as to form an impenetrable wall. Everywhere there is a veritable maze of creeping plants, of bromelias, bignonias, passifloras. And everywhere, too, are lianas—aptly named monkey-ladders —which bind tree to tree and branch to branch. Usually they are single, like ropes—whence their name bush ropes —but often they are twined together like strands in a cable. Frequently they are seen descending from the topmost part of a tree to the ground, where they forthwith strike root and present the appearance of the stays and shrouds of a ship’s

main mast. And where there is air and sunshine, these lianas, which often form bights like ropes, are loaded with epiphytes of all kinds, and decorated with the rarest and most beautiful orchids. Indeed, the regions on both sides of the Magdalena have long been favorite resorts for the orchid hunters in the employ of the florists and merchant princes of the United States and Europe. From here these bizarre vegetable forms are shipped by thousands. One enthusiastic English collector tells us how he secured, as the result of two months' work about ten thousand plants of the highly prized *Odontoglossum*. But to obtain these orchids he was obliged to fell some four thousand trees.

"The most magnificent sight," he writes, "for even the most stoical observer, is the immense clumps of *Cattleya Mendelii*, each new bulb bearing four or five of its gorgeous rose-colored flowers, many of them growing in the full sun, or with very little shade, and possessing a glowing color which is very difficult to get in the stuffy hothouses where the plants are cultivated. Some of these plants, considering their size and the slowness of growth, must have taken many years to develop, for I have taken plants from the trees with five hundred bulbs, and as many as one hundred spikes of flowers, which, to a lover of orchids, is a sight worth traveling from Europe to see."[9]

It is when contemplating the marvelous variety and luxuriance of intertropical flora—of which one in our northern climes can have no adequate conception—that one is tempted to exclaim with Wordsworth:—

"It is my faith, that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes."[10]

And if the extraordinary claims which Professors Wagner, France and G. H. Darwin make for plants be true, viz., that they have minds and are conscious of their existence, that

they feel pain and have memories, then, indeed, should we be disposed to regard the exuberant and wondrously developed plants of the equatorial world as occupying the highest plane in the evolutionary process of vegetable life.

Passing the embouchure of the Opon, on the right bank of the Magdalena, evoked, in a special manner, memories of Quesada and his valiant band. It was here they left the Magdalena during that memorable expedition that made them the undisputed masters of the country now known as Colombia. More than eight months had passed since they had started from Santa Marta on their career of discovery and conquest. The difficulties they had to encounter and the sufferings they had to endure were extreme. Mosquitoes, wasps, ants and other insects; reptiles and jaguars gave them no rest, day or night. Certain kinds of worms, the old chroniclers tell us, buried themselves in the flesh of the exhausted and half-famished men and caused them untold agony. Indians everywhere laid ambush for them, and assailed them with poisoned arrows from every point of vantage. Even the elements seemed to conspire against them. There was a continual downpour of rain, so that it was impossible to light a fire for any purpose. Their arms were almost destroyed by rust, and they were left without a single dry charge of powder. Their provisions became exhausted and starvation stared them in the face. To preserve life they devoured their sword scabbards and every article of leather they had with them. There was incessant thunder, unchanging gloom, eternal horror, and other features of the pit infernal. Their course was through dense underbrush and pestiferous swamps and up precipitous acclivities, whither they had to drag their weakened horses by long lianas that served the purpose of ropes.[11]

Finally, after the most heroic efforts, they came to a place where they found provisions—a veritable land of promise

for the suffering but intrepid Spaniards. They had left behind them the inhospitable sierras of the Opon, and were on the verge of the fertile plateau of Cundinamarca, that constituted the home of the Muiscas. Here they found maize, potatoes,12 yucas, beans, tomatoes and, as Padre Simon phrases it, "a thousand other *chucherias*—titbits—of the aborigines." Well could they, in the language of Castellanos, exclaim, with thanksgiving:

"A good land! A good land! A land which puts an end to our suffering, a land of gold, a land of plenty. A land for a home, a land of benediction, bright and serene."

It was then that the enthusiastic soldiers, whose courage would often have faltered, had it not been for the determination and perseverance of their invincible leader, gathered around Quesada to congratulate him on the successful issue of his great undertaking, and to assure him of their undying loyalty in any future enterprise in which he might require their services.

And well they might render the noble licentiate the meed of praise he so well deserved, for had it not been for him, the expedition would have been a failure, and they would undoubtedly have perished before they could have returned to Santa Marta, as had so many of their companions, who had turned back before the ascent of the Cordillera was begun. To some of his officers who, in view of the unheard-of difficulties they had to encounter, recommended that the expedition be abandoned, he replied that he would regard as a personal enemy any one who, in future, would make such a pusillanimous proposal and one so foreign to Spanish valor.

All in all, he was one of the bravest and most humane of the conquistadores, and successfully performed a task before which a less valorous commander would have given

up in despair. His achievements obscure by their brilliancy and daring those of Amadis and Roldan and are in no wise inferior to those of any of the conquistadores. They may truthfully, in the words of Bacon, written anent a performance of Sir Richard Grenville, be styled as "memorable beyond credit, and to the height of some heroical fable."

Quesada has taken his place in Valhalla among the greatest of the world's heroes, and his memory will endure as long as splendid deeds of prowess shall stir the souls of men. Of him and his gallant companions one can say what Peter Martyr wrote of their countrymen in general:—

"Wherefore, the Spanyardes in these owre dayes and theyr noble enterpryses, doo not gyue place eyther to the factes of Saturnus, or Hercules, or any other of the ancient princes of famous memorie, which were canonized amonge the goddes cauled Heroes for theyr searchinge of newe landes, and regions, and bringinge the same to better culture and ciuilitie."[13]

Lower down the Magdalena, on the left bank of the river, we approached the scene of the exploits of another of the distinguished conquistadores—Pedro de Heredia, the founder of Cartagena. After he had reduced to submission the Indians who had been victorious over Ojeda, he started towards the Magdalena, where he collected such immense treasures of gold that when it was divided, each soldier received no less than 6,000 ducats. This was the equivalent of $48,000 in gold at the present valuation of this metal, and was the largest apportionment of spoil, at least, so far as private soldiers were concerned, made during the conquest.[14] He afterwards made a similar expedition to the territories drained by the San Jorge and the Nechi, affluents of the Cauca, in search of the rich veins whence the Indians extracted their gold. He did not find the objects of

his quest, but came across several rich cemeteries, in which the dead had been interred with their jewels, and a sanctuary with idols adorned with plates of gold. From these he secured treasures to the amount of more than $3,000,000 of our money.[15]

Strange as it may seem, the method Heredia resorted to of securing gold, the rifling of the *huacas*—burial places—of the aborigines, has been continued until the present day. There are still men in Colombia, notably in Antioquia—*huaqueros*, they are called—who gain a livelihood by searching for huacas and extracting from them the gold and emeralds they frequently contain.

The year before our trip there appeared in an English magazine, the following paragraph in an article purporting to give a picture of the Magdalena valley and its life:—

"Anchored in the forest at midnight, the traveler hears the deep growl of the jaguar, the sharp squeal of the wild cat, the howl of the howler monkey, the long moan of the sloth, and the last scream of the wild pig, pierced by the claws of some patient but ferocious animal ambushed during the past hour, with many other sounds of life, terror and conflict that fall strangely on the European ear, and, if he waits and watches until the dawn, he may see the alligator dragging his ugly bulk out of the water, crowds of turtles trailing on the sands, the deer and the tapir coming down to drink, thousands of white cranes on the branches nearest to their prey, thousands of gray ones already wading leg-deep, and many more thousands of other birds clouding the dim horizon, all waiting for the light ere they begin their work of life and slaughter.... With the alligators in shoals at the bottom of the river, and the millions of birds above its surface, one wonders how any fish are left, yet the river is always literally teeming with fish, as though conscious of the demands it has to meet."

Although we were always on the alert, so as to miss nothing of interest, especially anything that concerned the animal life of the tropics, we must confess that in all our experience we never heard growls, squeals, howls, moans, screams, or other sounds of terror and conflict, either along the Magdalena or anywhere else in South America. And we spent nearly a year in the country, and often traveled weeks at a time in the wild virgin forest, far away from human habitations of every kind. Nor did we ever perceive any of the animals that certain tourists would lead one to believe can be seen in such numbers everywhere, even from the deck of a passing steamer. Nowhere along the Orinoco, the Meta, the Magdalena, or elsewhere, did we ever catch even a glimpse of a jaguar or a puma, a manati or a sloth, a wild cat or a wild pig. More than this, not once, during our entire trip through Venezuela and Colombia, through forests and plains, did we ever see a single monkey, except two or three that were kept as pets by the natives. This may seem an incredible statement. I would have believed such an experience as ours to be absolutely impossible, especially in view of what writers and travelers in South America have told us regarding the immense number of wild animals of all kinds everywhere visible in equatorial wilds. But I am stating a fact that I am quite unable to reconcile with the contrary experiences of others who, according to their own admission, have seen but little, compared with what we saw, of the lands through which we passed. I have seen more large game on the plains of New Mexico and Wyoming, from the window of a Pullman car, in a single trip to and from the Pacific coast, than I ever saw in the wilds of South America during nearly a twelvemonth.

Nor did we ever see along the Magdalena, or anywhere else, the “thousands of white cranes on branches,” nor the “thousands of gray ones wading leg-deep,” nor the “many

more thousands clouding the dim horizon," of which the writer of the above-mentioned article professes to have been the fortunate spectator. We rarely saw more than a few dozen cranes at a time—never a hundred, and I have reason to believe we enjoyed very favorable opportunities, at least during a portion of our long journey, for seeing what was to be seen. At no time did we ever observe as many birds in the air at one time as I have frequently seen in the United States. I feel safe in asserting positively that the number of wild pigeons I have frequently noted in a single flock in the United States, would more than equal that of all the birds combined that we saw while in the tropics.

Mr. F. Lorraine Petre evidently had an experience somewhat similar to ours. In his recent work on Colombia, he tells us frankly that one sees little of animal life on the Magdalena, that "of the mammalia one sees and hears little.... Of the jaguars, the pumas, the sloths, the peccaries, the deer, the tapirs, and other animals, dangerous or harmless, we saw or heard as little as we did of the bears which inhabit the hills beyond. It is surprising that, tied up, as we often were, right against the forest, we should not have heard the night call of the carnivora, or the sharp bark of the frightened deer, but truth compels us to admit that we did not, and, moreover, that the cry of even the howling monkey did not salute us."[16]

The number of birds observed along the Magdalena was not greater than I have frequently seen in the valleys of the Missouri or the Columbia. Most of these were parrots and macaws. Always noisy and restless, always flying and climbing about, except when eating fruit or cracking nuts, one is at times tempted to describe them as feathered relatives of the monkey. The parrots are sometimes seen in flocks, and their piercing cries are at times almost deafening. They are a sociable bird and are usually seen in

considerable numbers. The macaws are remarkable for always flying in pairs, and for their brilliant colors. Their body is flaming scarlet, their wings are tinged with various shades of red, yellow, green and blue, while their tail is bright blue and scarlet. They, too, like parrots, are very vociferous, and, although they may occasionally be found in large numbers, they always fly two and two.

The large animals most frequently seen along the Magdalena, as along other tropical rivers, are those horrid monsters, "ambiguous between sea and land," the cayman and "the scaly crocodile." But even they are not so numerous as certain travelers would have us believe. The largest number we ever saw at one time was fifteen. They were sunning themselves on a *playa*—sand bank—below the island of Mompos. On the Orinoco and the Meta we never beheld more than eight at any one time—unless we were to count a number of little ones, just hatched, which Luisito, our colored boy, caught one day while we were taking on wood on the lower Meta.[17]

The early Spaniards called all these saurians by the general name of *lagartos*—lizards. The English afterwards spoke of a single animal as a lagarto, whence the present name alligator. Modern writers speak of them indiscriminately as alligators or crocodiles. As a matter of fact, several species of both alligators and crocodiles are found in the equatorial regions. But, notwithstanding all that has hitherto been written about them, their distinction and definition, their classification still remains a matter of difficulty. Some specimens have been found whose classification is so perplexing that naturalists are still undecided whether to regard them as crocodiles or alligators. In this respect they are much like Shakespeare's two lovers, "Two distincts, division none."

The name cayman is employed in Venezuela and

Colombia to designate any of these saurians. Following the classification adopted in the British Museum the cayman is distinct from both alligator and crocodile. More than this. According to the British system of classification, there are no alligators at all in South America, while, in the waters of Colombia and Venezuela, there are two species of crocodile and three species of cayman.

Probably more fabulous accounts have obtained about crocodiles than about any other animal. In spite of the old saying to the contrary, they never shed tears. And notwithstanding the fact that the ancient Egyptians gave the crocodile divine honors, because, being tongueless, it was made in hieroglyphical writing, a symbol of the Divinity, it is now known that the tongue of this erstwhile god is quite large, except at the tip. Similarly, all the stories that have so long been current about the impenetrability of the animal's hide, are quite without foundation. How often have we not been told that it is impossible to kill a crocodile, with even the best Winchester, unless the ball enter the eye or strike under the soft, fleshy parts of the front legs? Their plated skin is easily pierced by an ordinary rifle or revolver, and a mortal wound ensues whenever a vital part is penetrated.

Not less erroneous are the ideas that so widely prevail regarding the ferocity of the crocodile and the cayman. On the contrary, they are, in their native state, very timid animals, and rarely exhibit hostility towards man, except when cornered. Then, like most other animals, they will fight with great fierceness. They make for the water as soon as they see one approach them, and it is often far from easy to get near them. We often saw the natives enter rivers frequented by crocodiles and caymans, something they surely would not have done if the danger were as great as ordinarily imagined. In Venezuela the Indian or mestizo has a much greater dread of the ray or carib fish

than of the cayman.[18]

Some attempts have been made, both on the Orinoco and the Magdalena, to secure the hides of crocodiles and caymans for commercial purposes, but the expense of preparing them for the market proved to be so great that the work had to be abandoned.[19]

The early explorers of the New World had many stories to tell about the cayman and the crocodile, and many of them have apparently survived among the natives until the present day. But there were many other animals that made even a greater impression on them. It will suffice to reproduce Peter Martyr's quaint account of two of these representatives of the American fauna. The first is the tapir, of which he writes as follows:—

"But there is especially one beast engendered here, in which nature hath endeuoured to shew her cunnyng. This beaste is as bygge as an oxe, armed with a longe snoute lyke an elephant, and yet no elephant. Of the colour of an oxe and yet noo oxe. With the houfe of a horse, and yet noo horse. With eares also much lyke vnto an elephant, but not soo open nor soo much hangying downe: yet much wyder then the eares of any other beaste."[20]

The other animal that excited the wonder of Martyr and his contemporaries was the sloth, of which he says:—
"Emonge these trees is fownde that monstrous beaste with a snowte lyke a foxe, a tayle lyke a marmasette, eares lyke a batte, handes lyke a man, and feete lyke an ape, bearing her whelpes abowte with her in an owtwarde bellye much lyke vnto a greate bagge or purse. The dead carkas of this beaste, you sawe with me, and turned it ouer and ouer with yowre owne handes, marueylynge at that newe belly and wonderful prouision of nature. They say it is knownen by experience, that shee neuer letteth her whelpes goo owte of

that purse, except it be eyther to play, or to sucke, vntyl suche tyme that they bee able to gette theyr lyuing by them selues."[21]

The part of the valley below the confluence of the Cauca and the Magdalena was quite different from that above. The country contained more inhabitants, and the dense forests that had hitherto bordered the river gave place to broad savannas, on which grazed thousands of cattle, so buried in the Para and Guinea grasses, that frequently we could discern only their horns. Along the river banks were the estates of well-to-do *haciendados*—some of them foreigners—and the villages, that before were extremely rare, became more numerous. The aspect of the country was less wild than that through which we had just passed, and betokened a certain measure of prosperity, at least so far as the grazing interests were concerned.

We could now travel day and night, for the river was so deep that sand bars were no longer to be apprehended. And then we had the most delightful moonlight nights. The air was balmy and laden with an exquisite fragrance,

"Mild as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,"

a constant invitation to repose and *dolce far niente*. The surpassing loveliness of the scene, the magic stillness of the vast solitude through which we were so peacefully gliding, the broad expanse of one of the world's great rivers, the weird silhouettes cast by the passing palms on the moonlit waters—all these things contributed towards rendering our last night on the river a fitting finale to the others—all of which were in the highest degree enjoyable. Seated on the forward deck of our steamer, we could exclaim in the words of the choric song of Tennyson's *Lotos-Eaters*:—

"How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!

Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel."

The following morning—our last day on the Magdalena—found us at Calamar. Here some of our fellow-passengers disembarked to take the train to Cartagena, sixty-five miles to the westward. From Calamar to Barranquilla, the chief northern terminus of river navigation, is sixty-six miles. This distance we expected to make in a few hours, but for reasons presently to be given, we were unexpectedly delayed within sight of Barranquilla, the goal that marked the completion of another important stage in our journey.

Our last day on the Magdalena was a bright balmy one in June. We spent the entire time on the forward part of the upper deck, fanned by the delightful breezes that were wafted from the Caribbean. The river here has about the same width as has the Mississippi at New Orleans, but the scenery is far more attractive. It flows through a broad, level, grass-covered savanna, which extends beyond the limits of vision, and which is dotted here and there with small villages and flourishing haciendas. Some of the houses near the river banks have a most cozy appearance. They are almost embowered in a mass of flowers of every hue, and surrounded by lofty palms whose lovely emerald coronals were each a picture of rarest beauty.

"These princes of the vegetable world" always had a peculiar fascination for us, no matter where we saw them. And during our long journey from the delta of the Orinoco they were never absent from view even for a single hour. When one species disappeared it was replaced by another,

and thus they followed us from the Atlantic wave to the lofty crest of Suma Paz. The ocean-loving cocoa gave place to the moriche, and this was in turn succeeded by the corneto of the llanos and the wax palm of the Sierras.22

It is quite impossible for the inhabitants of our northern climes to have anything approaching an adequate conception of the grace and beauty and surpassing loveliness of the omnipresent palms of the equatorial world. Away from heat and sunshine, they are quite devoid of the luxuriance and stateliness that characterize them in the tropics. In Europe, for instance, there is but a single palm that is indigenous—the *Chamærops humilis*. The date palm was introduced from the East. In the tropics, however, about eleven hundred species of palms are known, and there is reason to believe that, when this part of the world shall have been thoroughly explored, many new species shall be discovered.

The habits as well as the habitats of palms were a source of unfailing interest to us. Some are solitary and are rarely found forming groups with other trees of their species. Others, like the date palm, are quite gregarious and often form extensive clumps. Others still are said to be "social," because they occupy extensive tracts almost to the entire exclusion of other kinds of trees. Various species of *Mauritia*, *Attalea*, *Cocoa* and *Copernicia* are social palms, and the *palmares*—palm groves—formed by them constitute the most attractive features of tropical landscapes.

We once saw near the river's bank a grove of this kind composed of palms of unusual height and beauty. It had been selected as the last resting place of the denizens of a neighboring village, and was, to our mind, the most beautiful cemetery in the world. Could we have our choice, we should prefer, by far, to repose under one of those

noble frond-bearing shafts to being shelved away in the costliest marble vault of Père Lachaise.



Certain palms affect the open savanna, others seek the solitudes of the forest, while still others are most frequently found midway between these two—that is, on the belt of land that separates forest from plain. Some palms, like the cocoa, seem to require an atmosphere that is slightly saline, and thrive best near the ocean's shore.

Others apparently attain their greatest development in marshes and lowlands, while others again demand the arid plain or the lofty mountain plateau.

In spite of their noble appearance and their aspect of perennial youth, palms, as a rule, are short-lived. None of them ever attain the age of the venerable patriarchs of our northern forests. According to Martius, the span of a palm's life never exceeds that of a few generations of men. The areca catechu runs its course in forty or fifty years, the cocoa attains an age of one hundred or one hundred and twenty years at most, while the date palm, which probably lives the longest, usually rounds out its existence within the period of two centuries.

Some palms, like the *Metroxylon*, for instance, never survive fructification. It fruits but once, and then, as Martius so graphically expresses it, "*nobilis arbor mox riget, perit et cadit*"—the noble tree presently withers, perishes and falls. But, continues the same writer, "there is pleasure and solace in the thought that palms never die without yielding fruit, thereby insuring the continuance of the species." And then, as is his wont when opportunity offers, he takes occasion from this circumstance to moralize as follows: "To labor, to flourish, to fructify is granted not only to the palm but to man also."[23]

In the foregoing pages I have mentioned some of the countless uses made of palms, especially by the inhabitants of the tropics. It would, however, require a large volume to enumerate all the purposes for which they are employed. It can, however, safely be asserted that no family in the great vegetable kingdom more completely meets the necessities of millions of people than does that of the noble and ever-beautiful Palmaceæ.

Like Martius, we always found in the contemplation of the

palm a source of special joy and peace. To him the palm was what literature was to Cicero, a consolation in trial and affliction, and the delight and inspiration of maturer years. In the palm we always found something to elevate the mind, something that fascinated us and stirred our emotions in a manner that often surprised us. For us, as for myriads of others who have lived and struggled and attained the goal of the heart's desire, the palm was the emblem of victory, of a higher and better life beyond the tomb, of a happy, glorious immortality.

As we gazed in silent delight at the broad expanse of the green-carpeted savanna, adorned with the graceful, columnar shafts and feathery fronds of the ever-beautiful, ever-majestic palm, we could easily fancy ourselves in the valley of the Euphrates or in the plains of Babylon, as described by Herodotus and Xenophon. And, without any effort of the imagination, we could descry, in a palm-shaded village in the vista before us, Jericho, as Moses saw it, when the Land of Promise was a land of palms, as well as a land of milk and honey, and when Judea was so prolific in palms that one of its representatives was chosen as the symbol of the country.[24] We dreamed of Zenobia's fair capital, Palmyra—the city of Palms—of the land of the Nile, where Isis and Osiris carried palms as the symbol of their fecund power. We recalled the enthusiastic words of the ancient poets—Hebrew and Greek—in praise of the gracefulness and magnificence of the palm, and the plaintive elegy of Abdul Rhaman, first calif of Cordoba, who, exiled from Damascus, his home, thus addresses the date palm, that reminds him of the land of his birth: "Thou, also, beautiful palm, art here a stranger. The sweet zephyr of Algaraba descends and caresses thy beauty. Thou growest in this fertile soil and raisest thy crown to the skies. What bitter tears thou would'st shed, if, like me, thou hadst feeling!"[25]

While thus musing on the glories of the past and contemplating the splendors of the present, which were passing in rapid succession before our enchanted vision, we instinctively repeated the words of the reverent poet-naturalist, Martius, who, contemplating the marvels of the tropical palm-world, expressed the depth of his emotion by the two words, *Sursum corda*—hearts heavenward!

Just then our reveries were suddenly and unexpectedly interrupted.

We had, early in the day, been congratulating ourselves on making our voyage down the river without delay and without accident. We were now within sight of Barranquilla and expected to land in less than an hour. We were in the full enjoyment of one of those delightful day-dreams that we always loved to indulge in, whenever Flora displayed before us, as she did then, her choicest treasures, when suddenly, without premonition of any kind, there was a violent lurch of the boat, a creaking and a crushing noise abaft, a quick stoppage of the engine, all of which indicated that something unusual, if not serious, had befallen our ill-fated craft. A hasty examination showed that the steamer had collided with a sunken tree, and that several of the float-boards of the stern-wheel had been loosened, or partially wrenched from their places. After considerable delay the boatmen were able so to repair the damage that we were able to continue on our journey, although at a reduced speed.

Very shortly afterwards there was a second and a much severer crash. We had encountered another hidden tree. This time several of the float-boards were carried away from the wheel entirely, and the wheel itself was so racked that repair, while on the river, was quite impossible. Fortunately, as we were going down stream, we were able to float to the entrance of the canal that leads to the docks

of Barranquilla. Here a crowd of stevedores from the town soon congregated. These men, mostly negroes, agreed, after some parleying, to haul the boat to the landing place. They, accordingly, took hold of a long rope, which was thrown ashore, and soon the disabled steamer was being conveyed to her moorings in the same fashion as a canal boat is drawn along by mules in tandem. We reached the wharf the fifth day[26] after leaving Honda, just as the sun was setting, and when the customs officers were about to close their office for the night. They, however, kindly allowed us to disembark and we were soon on our way to a hotel.

"How fortunate," C. exclaimed, "that this accident did not occur midway up the river!" Such a mishap would have entailed much suffering and might have delayed our arrival at Barranquilla, for days, if not for weeks. And considering our happy escape from the detentions and disasters from which so many others had suffered, and the peculiar episode that characterized our last hours on the Magdalena, we were forcibly reminded of the words of Dante:—

"Let not the people be too swift to judge.

For I have seen
A bark, that all her way across the sea
Ran straight and speedy, perish at the last
E'en in the haven's mouth."[27]

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[1]

"Hail, hail, majestic river!... Contemplating thee, adorned by the eldest of Earth's sons; full only of thee, I feel my soul carried on by the foam of thy waves, which in deep whirlpools roar, absorbed in the giant works of that Being which embraces the infinite." ↑

[2]

The reader will be surprised to learn that the aggregate capacity of all the boats—champans included—at present plying on the Magdalena—proudly named by the people the Danube of Colombia—is not more than eleven thousand tons, about half the tonnage of one of our great transatlantic steamers. ↑

3

Op. cit., 3a Noticia, Cap. IX. ↑

4

The first mention, apparently, of the Magdalena, as distinguished from the Rio Grande, occurs in Benzoni's work, already cited. ↑

5

Called by the natives *Cabeza de Negro*—Negro-head—from the globular form of the spathe enclosing the nuts. ↑

6

The introduction of the steamboat on the Magdalena will soon suppress the rude yet picturesque craft known as the champan. With it will disappear that interesting type of negro known as the *boga*. The boga is tall and robust, with the habits of a savage. He spends the greater part of his time in the champan, and his life as a punter is a strenuous one and full of danger. He speaks a barbarous jargon—*currulao*—composed of Spanish and of certain African and Indian dialects. His ideas of honor and honesty are not unlike those of similar people in other parts of the world. One can safely trust him with money and clothing, but, if the traveler have liquor of any kind with him, the boga will be sure to purloin it at the first opportunity. He is simple, frank, and brave. He sings during good weather, even while struggling against the current or fighting caymans, but he swears like a trooper during rain and thunder storms, especially when the lightning strikes near him. For him death is a very simple matter. A dead man to him is like a champan damaged beyond repair—something to be carried away by the all-devouring river. ↑

7

The exact altitudes of the points named are as follows:—Cumbre Pass, between Chile and Argentina, 12,505 feet; Crucero Alto, between Arequipa and Lake Titicaca, 14,666 feet; Galera Tunnel, 15,665 feet. At Urbina, on the recently-completed railroad between Guayaquil and Quito, the height above sea level is 11,841 feet. ↑

8

In Colombia, the white race, composed of the descendants of the conquistadores, most of whom have intermarried with the indigenous tribes, constitutes fifty per cent of the population. The negroes compose thirty-five and the Indians fifteen per cent. In Venezuela the descendants of Europeans are in the minority, while in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia the

indigenes make up nearly two-thirds of the inhabitants. *La Republique de Colombie*, p. 44, par Ricardo Nuñez et Henry Jalahay, Bruxelles, 1898. ↑

9

Albert Millican, *Travels and Adventures of an Orchid Hunter*, p. 118, London, 1891. ↑

10

The noted English botanist, Spruce, expresses a similar idea when he writes, "I like to look on plants as sentient beings, which live and enjoy their lives—which beautify the earth during life, and after death may adorn my herbarium."—*Notes of a Botanist, and the Amazon and Andes*, Chap. XXXIX, by Richard Spruce, London, 1908. ↑

11

The route followed by Quesada from the Magdalena to the plateau of Bogotá has remained impassable for horses since the time of the conquest. To one familiar with the difficulties of the way, it seems impossible that so small a body of soldiers should ever have been able to take sixty horses with them and bring them all, with a single exception, in safety to the plains above. It may be safely doubted if such a feat could be accomplished now. But "there were giants in those days." ↑

12

The fact that the Spaniards found potatoes here on their arrival, and the further fact that there was never any communication, so far as known, between New Granada and Chile before the conquest, would seem to indicate that the *Solanum tuberosum* may have been, contrary to the opinion of Humboldt and De Candolle, indigenous to Colombia. ↑

13

Op. cit., Dec. I, Book X. ↑

14

Quesada's infantry received as their share of the spoil, which had been secured, the equivalent of about $1,000. The cavalry received twice this amount. ↑

15

In the province of Sinu the amount of treasure in gold and jewels secured in one day amounted to $300,000. Not without reason, then, was this part of the New World designated by the early geographers, *Castilla del Oro*—Golden Castile. ↑

16

The Republic of Colombia, p. 59, London, 1906.

Nothing is farther from my mind than to call in question the veracity of distinguished naturalists and travelers regarding any statements they may have made concerning the vast numbers of animals and birds seen by

them in the equinoctial regions of South America. But my experience proves at least one thing and that is that one may travel a long time in the very heart of the tropics, and see very little of its fauna, even in those parts in which it is generally supposed that there are always representatives of many kinds and that, too, in great numbers. ↑

17

The following sentence affords an interesting commentary on the occasional rarity of certain animals which are usually supposed to be always visible in large numbers, especially in the Magdalena.

"I have read much of the number of alligators on the Magdalena, but have not seen one."—*The Journal of an Expedition Across Venezuela and Colombia*, p. 264, 1906–7, by Hiram Bingham, New Haven. 1909.

Raleigh says he saw in Guiana thousands of these "vglie serpants" called *Lagartos*. ↑

18

Mr. R. L. Ditmars, Curator of Reptiles in the New York Zoological Park, in his interesting work, *The Reptile Book*, writes as follows of the crocodile: "The sight of a child will send a twelve-foot specimen rushing from its basking place for the water, and a man may even bathe in safety in rivers frequented by the species. The dangerous 'man-eating' crocodiles inhabit India and Africa." P. 91. Compare Schomburgk, in *Raleigh's Discovery of Guiana*, p. 57. ↑

19

If the slaughter of the alligator in the Gulf States continues for a few years longer, at the rate which has prevailed during the past few decades, the reptile will be exterminated. According to the *Bulletin of the U. S. Fish Commission*, XI, 1891, p. 343, it is estimated that 2,500,000 were killed in Florida between 1880 and 1894. ↑

20

Dec. II, Book 9. ↑

21

Dec. I, Book 9. ↑

22

The *Ceroxylon andicola* and the *Kunthia montana* grow at altitudes of from 6,000 to 9,000 feet, and, according to Humboldt, palms are found in the Paramo de Guanucos, 13,000 feet above sea level. ↑

23

Historia Naturalis Palmarum, Tom. I, p. 156, Lipsiæ. 1850. ↑

24

The countries here mentioned, especially Palestine, are now

comparatively bare of palms. ↑

25

According to a legend, this was the first date-palm seen in Spain, and was planted by the calif himself, in front of his palace, as a souvenir of his early home. ↑

26

Quesada and his companions made their celebrated voyage from Guatiqui to the mouth of the river, a distance of nearly seven hundred miles, in twelve days. Considering that they had only rudely-constructed brigantines and dugouts, their trip, compared with ours made in a steamboat under the most favorable conditions in but little less than half the time, was truly remarkable. ↑

27

Paradiso, Canto XIII, 130 et 136–138. ↑

CHAPTER XIII

IN THE TRACK OF PLATE-FLEETS AND BUCCANEERS

"O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
Our thoughts are boundless and our souls as free,
Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,
Survey our empire and behold our home!
These are our realms, no limits to their sway,
Our flag the sceptre all who meet obey.
Ours the wild life in tumult still to range
From toil to rest, and joy in every change."

—Byron, *The Corsair*.

Barranquilla, a city of about sixty-five thousand inhabitants, is notable for being the chief port of entry of Colombia. It is estimated that two-thirds of the commerce of the republic converges at this point. To us, coming from the interior of the country, where comparatively little business is transacted, the place seemed to be a marvel of

activity and business enterprise. It counts a large number of important business houses, the chief of which are controlled by foreigners. It is provided with tram-ways, electric lights, telephones, a good water supply and, in many respects, reminds one of our progressive cities on the Gulf Coast. Many of the private residences, especially in the more elevated quarters of the city, are models of comfort and good taste. The average annual temperature is 80° F., but the refreshing breezes from the Caribbean make it seem less. At no time during our sojourn of more than a week in the city, had we reason to complain of the excessive heat of which so much has been said and written.

Although Barranquilla was founded in 1629, it is only within the last third of a century that it has come to the front as the leading entrepot of the republic. Before this time, Cartagena and Santa Marta were Colombia's principal ports and busiest marts. This change in the relative importance of these three ports was effected by the construction of a great pier at Savanilla and connecting it with Barranquilla by rail. After this both Cartagena and Santa Marta rapidly dwindled in importance as distributing centres, while the growth of Barranquilla was correspondingly rapid. Were it not for the banana industry, controlled by the United Fruit Company, an American corporation, Santa Marta's trade would now be little more than nominal.

But why, it will be asked, do not ocean vessels dock at Barranquilla instead of unloading so far away from the city? The usual answer given, and in a way the correct one, is that the Magdalena is not deep enough to permit the passage of so large vessels. We saw one venturesome ocean liner stranded near the mouth of the river on a sand bar, where it had been washed and pounded for nearly two years. Many attempts had been made to float her but without success, and it seemed as if she was destined to

remain a captive of the treacherous shoal that had so long held her in its unyielding grasp. The real reason, however, for not having the landing place where it should be—in the city itself—is the lack of the capital that would be required to dredge the river, and enlarge the canal, and keep them both in a condition that would insure the safe passage of vessels of heavy draft. Given an engineer like James B. Eades, of Mississippi jetties fame, and the necessary capital, the improvement would soon be effected.

Before leaving Bogotá we had planned to reach Barranquilla in time to take an English steamer from Savanilla—Puerto Colombia—to Colon. We then flattered ourselves that, after reaching the mouth of the Magdalena, we should have no difficulty in making connection for any part of the world, and that delay in continuing our journey was the last thing to be apprehended.

But alas and alack! Where we least expected it, we were doomed to disappointment. We had crossed the continent without a single failure to connect, as we had anticipated, except at Barrigón, where we were detained a day, and had not experienced a single disagreeable delay, and now, when we had reached the world lines of travel, we were informed that the steamer we had intended to take had been laid up for repairs, and that we should be obliged to wait a week before another would arrive.

There was nothing to do but resign ourselves to the inevitable. Barranquilla is not a place where a traveler would care to remain long as a matter of choice, but we managed to make ourselves comfortable. The time passed more quickly and pleasantly than we anticipated, but, just as we began to make preparations for our departure, we found ourselves the victims of a new disappointment. The steamer that we were to take was forbidden to land at Savanilla, in consequence of having stopped at Trinidad,

which was then reported to be infected by the bubonic plague.

"Truly," we said, "we are getting into the region of *mañana*—delay and disappointment—just at the moment when we thought we were leaving it."

We had been so fortunate thus far, and that too in lands where, we had been assured, everything would be against us and where the best-laid plans would be frustrated, that we were ill prepared for delay where it was least expected. Happily for us, however, a steamer, having a clean bill of health, but belonging to another line, was due in a few days, and this we determined to take, for we did not know when we should be able to get another one. When once the plague appears in the West Indies, or on the mainland bordering the Caribbean, quarantine regulations are strictly enforced, and the luckless traveler may find himself a prisoner for weeks, and even months, in a place that is practically destitute of the commonest comforts and conveniences of life. Then, indeed, his lot—especially if he is not familiar with the language of the country—is far from enviable. I have met with many people who, under such untoward conditions, had to endure the greatest privations and sufferings.

By the greatest good fortune, it seemed to us, we finally got aboard a good, comfortable vessel. It was not, however, bound for our objective point—Colon—but for Puerto Limon, in Costa Rica. This, although we did not know it at the time, was a blessing in disguise. Had we gone directly to Colon, we should have been obliged to spend some time in quarantine. By going to Costa Rica, we escaped this and were able, during a week, to combine *utile dulci*—study with pleasure—under the most favorable and delightful circumstances.

From Puerto Colombia we went directly to Cartagena—a city that, in some respects, possessed a greater interest for us than any we had hitherto visited in South America. We entered this famous harbor, large enough to hold all the navies of the world, early in the morning, just as the sun was beginning to impart a subdued roseate glow to the tiled roofs of the loftier buildings of the once flourishing metropolis of New Granada.

The picture of Cartagena, as it first presented itself to our view, was one of rarest loveliness. As we then saw it, it was not unlike Venice as seen from Il Lido or from the deck of a steamer arriving from Trieste. From another point as we advanced into the placid bay, we discerned in it a resemblance to Alexandria, as viewed from the Mediterranean. As Venice has been called the Queen of the Adriatic, so also, and justly, did the beauteous city of Pedro de Heredia long bear the proud title of *Reina de las Indias y Reina de los Mares*, Queen of the Indies and Queen of the Seas.

One of the first cities built on Tierra Firme, it was also, for a long period, one of the most important places in the New World. Its fortifications and the massive walls that girdle it have long been celebrated. Even now these are the features that have the greatest attraction for the visitor. Stupendous is the only word that adequately characterizes them. Their immensity impresses one like the pyramids of Ghizeh, and this impression is fully confirmed when one learns their cost and the number of men engaged in their construction. It is said that from thirty to one hundred thousand men were employed on this titanic undertaking, and that it cost no less than fifty-nine million dollars—a fabulous sum for that period. This reminds one of what historians relate regarding the building of the pyramid of Cheops, the greatest and most enduring of human monuments, as the walls of Cartagena are the grandest and most imposing

evidence of Spanish power in the western hemisphere. So great was the draft made on the royal exchequer by the construction of these massive walls that Philip II, so the story runs, one day seized a field glass and looking in the direction of Cartagena, murmured with disenchanted irony: "Can one see those walls? They must be very high, for the price paid?"

No wonder that Charles V was always in need of money, and that, to secure it, he was forced to mortgage a large tract of land in Venezuela to the Welsers, the German bankers of Augsburg. No wonder that Philip II, despite the stream of gold and silver that flowed into his coffers from his vast possessions beyond the sea, was, during the second half of his reign, forced to see his royal signature dishonored by bankers who refused him further credit!

Cartagena in Colombia was named after Cartagena in Spain, as the Spanish city, founded by Hasdrubal as an outpost to serve in future Punic campaigns, was named from the celebrated Tyrian emporium that was so long the rival of Rome. And when the sons of the Caribbean Carthage sailed up the Cauca to establish new colonies and extend the sphere of Spanish influence and enterprise, they commemorated their triumph, and exhibited their loyalty to the land of their birth, by founding still another Carthage—the Cartago of the Upper Cauca.

And what an eventful story is that of the Caribbean Cartagena! What changes has she not witnessed! What fortunes of war has she not experienced! What disasters has she not suffered! Like her African prototype, whose very strength caused her rival on the Tiber to decree her downfall, Cartagena seemed to be singled out for attack by all the enemies of Spain for long generations. Her cyclopean walls, that seemed to render her impregnable, did not save her. Time and again she was assaulted by

pirates and buccaneers, who levied heavy tributes and carried off booty of inestimable value. Drake, Morgan, Pointis[1] and Vernon attacked and ravaged her in turn, but unlike the Carthage of the hapless Dido, she still survives. And notwithstanding the four long sieges she sustained and the vicissitudes through which she passed during the protracted War of Independence, when she was hailed as *La Ciudad Heroica*—The heroic city—her walls, after three and a half centuries, are still in a marvelous state of preservation and evoke the admiration of all who behold them.

Everywhere within the city, which during colonial times enjoyed the monopoly of commerce with Spain, are evidences of departed grandeur. Churches, and palaces and monastic institutions, beautiful and grandiose, still retain much of the glamour of days long past. In the charming plazas, shaded by graceful palms and adorned with richest tropical verdure and bloom; along the narrow streets flanked by spacious edifices and ornamented with multi-colored balconies and curiously grated windows, one feels always under the spell of a proud and romantic past, of an age of chivalry of which only the memory remains. The architecture of many of the buildings, erstwhile homes of wealth and culture and refinement, is Moorish in character and carried us back to many happy days spent in fair Andalusia in its once noble capitals, Granada and Seville.

Strolling along the grass-grown pavements of Cartagena, we note in the former flourishing metropolis what Wordsworth observed in Bruge's town,

"Many a street
Whence busy life has fled."

But we also discern unmistakable signs of an awakening to a new life, and of the dawn of a new era of prosperity and

mercantile greatness. Notwithstanding the venerable years in which she is at present arrayed, we can, without being horoscopists, safely presage that the benignant stars are sure to bring

"What fate denies to man,—a second spring."

To enjoy the best view of Cartagena, one must ascend an eminence to the east of the city called La Popa, from its fancied resemblance to the lofty stern of a fifteenth century ship. There, seated under an umbrageous cocoa palm, fully five hundred feet above the beautiful iris-blue bay that washes the walls that encircle the city, one has before him one of the most charming panoramas in the world; one which during more than three centuries, was the witness of some of the most stirring events in history. In the broad, steep harbor, protected on all sides by frowning fortresses, the Spanish plate-fleets long found refuge from corsairs and sea rovers. It was here, when pirates and buccaneers made it unsafe to transport treasure by the Pacific, that gold and silver were brought from Bolivia to Peru, Ecuador and New Granada by way of the Andean plateau and the Cauca and Magdalena rivers.

One is stupefied when one considers what an expenditure of energy this implied. Think of transporting gold and silver ingots a distance of more than two thousand miles, over the arid deserts of Bolivia and Peru, and across the chilly punas and paramos of the lofty Cordilleras; of securing it against loss in passing along dizzy ravines, across furious torrents, through the almost impenetrable forests of New Granada, often infested by hostile Indians. And remember, that, for a part of this long distance, these heavy burdens had to be carried by human beings, for no other means of transportation were available.

And when one considers the amount of the treasure thus

transported from points as distant as the flanks of Potosi and the auriferous deposits of the distant Pilcomayo, the wonder grows apace. According to the estimates of reliable historians, the amount of gold and silver imported into Spain from her American possessions from 1502 to 1775 was no less than the colossal sum of ten billion dollars.[2] Nearly two billions of this treasure were taken from the famous silver mines of Potosi alone. The greater part of the bullion from Peru was shipped by the South Sea to Panama and Nombre de Dios and thence carried to Spain in carefully guarded plate-fleets. But after the pirates and buccaneers became active along the western coast of South America, the ingots of the precious metals, yielded by the mines between Chile and the Caribbean were transported overland and deposited in carefully guarded galleons awaiting them in the harbor of the Queen of the Indies.

But even then the treasure was not safe. It was, indeed, much more exposed on the way from Cartagena to Palos and Cadiz than it had been from the time it had been dispatched from the smelter until its arrival at the great stronghold on the Caribbean. For then, suddenly and without warning, like a flock of vultures that had scented carrion from afar, there gathered from all points of the compass English buccaneers, French filibusters, and Dutch freebooters and harassed the galleons until they succumbed. So successful did these daring sea robbers eventually become that no galleon dared to venture alone on the waters of the Indian seas, and only strongly guarded plate-fleets could hope to escape capture by their alert and venturesome enemies, who swarmed over the Caribbean from the Lesser Antilles to Yucatan, and terrorized the coast of the Spanish Main from one end to the other.

One loves to conjecture what might have been if Charles V or Philip II had been endowed with the genius of a Napoleon or a Cæsar. Masters of the greater part of

Europe, and undisputed sovereigns of the major portion of the Western Hemisphere, with untold wealth continually pouring into their treasury, then was the time—the only time, probably, in the history of the modern world—to realize Dante's fond dream of a universal monarchy. But neither Charles nor Philip had the genius required, and the one opportunity, that ever presented itself, of making Spanish possessions coextensive with the world's surface, was lost and lost forever.

The sun was rapidly approaching the western horizon when we took our departure from the beautiful and picturesque harbor of the Queen of the Seas. In a short time the coast of what was once known as Castilla del Oro —Golden Castile—had disappeared from our view and the prow of our vessel was directed towards the historic land of Costa Rica—the Rich Coast—discovered by Columbus during his fourth voyage.

The night following our visit to Cartagena was an ideal one, a night for wakeful dreams and the sweet delights of reverie. There was scarcely a ripple on the waters, and the stars of the firmament seemed to shine with an unwonted effulgence. All was peace and tranquillity, and everything seemed to proclaim the joy of living.

How different was old Benzoni's experience in these same waters and during the same season of the year! "In consequence of contrary winds," he tells us, "we remained there seventy-two days, and in all this time we did not see four hours of sunshine. Almost constantly and especially at night, there was so much heavy rain, and thunder and lightning, that it seemed as if both heaven and earth would be destroyed."[3]

The experience of Columbus was even more terrifying. In a letter to Ferdinand and Isabella, giving an account of his

fourth voyage, the great navigator informs them that, so great was the force of wind and current, he was able to advance only seventy leagues in sixty days. During this time, there was no "cessation of the tempest, which was one continuation of rain, thunder and lightning; indeed, it seemed as if it were the end of the world.... Eighty-eight days did this fearful tempest continue, during which I was at sea, and saw neither sun nor stars."[4] The name Cape *Gracias á Dios*—Thanks be to God—which he gave to the easternmost point of Nicaragua and Honduras, still remains to attest his gratitude for his miraculous escape from what for many long weeks seemed certain destruction.

It was our good fortune, during all our cruising in the Caribbean, to enjoy the most delightful weather, but we never appreciated it so much as we did during our voyage from Cartagena to Puerto Limon, and more especially during the first night after our departure from the Colombian coast. We were then sailing in waters that had been rendered famous by the achievements of some of the most remarkable men named in the annals of early American discovery and conquest, where every green island and silent bay, every barren rock and sandy key, has its legend, and where, at every turn, one breathes an atmosphere of romance and wonderland.

At one time we were following in the wake of the illustrious Admiral of the Ocean; at another we were in the track of Amerigo Vespucci and Juan de la Cosa, that brave Biscayan pilot who was regarded by his companions as an oracle of the sea. Rodrigo de Bastidas, Alonso de Ojeda and Diego de Nicuesa passed this way, as did Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, the discoverer of the Great South Sea, who, his countrymen declared, never knew when he was beaten, and who, according to Fiske, was "by far the most attractive figure among the Spanish adventurers of that time."[5] The Pizarros and Almagro sailed these waters,

before embarking at Panama on that marvelous expedition which resulted in the conquest of Peru. And so did Orellana, the discoverer of the Amazon, and Belalcazar, the noted conquistador and rival of Quesada and Federmann. And then, too, there was Gonzalez Davila, the explorer of Nicaragua, and Hernando Cortes, the conqueror of Mexico.

And last, but the best and noblest of them all, was the gentle and indefatigable Las Casas, the protector of the aborigines and the Apostle of the Indies, whose memory is still held in benediction in all Latin America. His voluminous writings, making more than ten thousand pages octavo, much of which is devoted to the defense of the Indians, constitute a monument which will endure as long as men shall love truth and justice. But his greatest monument—one that is absolutely unique in the history of civilization—is his former diocese of Chiapa, which is just northwest of the land towards which we are sailing. When he went to take possession of it, it was occupied by savage warriors who had successfully resisted all attempts made by the Spaniards to subdue them. It was considered tantamount to certain death to enter their jealously-guarded territory. But Las Casas, armed only with the image of the Crucified and the gospel of peace, soon had these wild children of the forest prostrate at his feet, begging him to remain with them as their father and friend. So successful was his work among them that the land which, before his arrival, had been known as La *Provincia de Guerra*—The Province of War—was thereafter called *La Provincia de Vera Paz*—The Province of True Peace—a name it bears to the present day. And more remarkable still, this particular part of Guatemala is said to have a denser Indian population, in proportion to its area, than any other part of Latin America. Truly, this is a monument worthy of the name, and one that would have appealed most strongly to

the loving heart of the courageous protector of the Indians.[6]

But discoverers and explorers, conquistadores and apostles, were not the only men who have rendered this part of the world forever memorable. There were others, but many of them were of a vastly different type. I refer to the pirates and Buccaneers, who so long spread terror in these parts and ultimately destroyed the commercial supremacy of Spain in the New World, and contributed so materially to the final extinction of her sovereign power. Many of them have written their names large on the scroll of history and often in characters of blood. Many of them were pirates of the worst type, who flew at every flag they saw, who recognized no right but might, and whose sole object was indiscriminate robbery on both sea and land. These outlaws, however, have no interest for us now.

Besides these unscrupulous and sanguinary pirates, there was another class of men whom their friends and countrymen insist on grouping in a class by themselves. The majority of these were Englishmen, of whom the most distinguished representatives, along the Spanish Main, were Raleigh, Hawkins and Drake. When these men did not act under secret commissions from their government, they relied on its tacit connivance in all the depredations for which they are so notorious. In the light of international law, as we now understand it, they were as much pirates as those who attacked the ships of all nations, and as such they have always been regarded by Spanish writers. All three of the men just mentioned made their raids on Spanish possessions while England was at peace with Spain. Thus the two nations were at peace when Drake sacked Panama in 1586, as they were at peace when Raleigh attacked Trinidad in 1595. These sea rovers lived up to the old forecastle phrase, “No peace beyond the line”[7] and recognized, at least in the Spanish territory in

the New World, no law of nations except that

"They should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can."

"The case," as old Fuller quaintly puts it in his *Holy and Profane State*, "was clear in sea-divinity; and few are such infidels as not to believe doctrines which make for their own profit."

So far as England acquiesced in, or connived at what the Spaniards always denounced as downright piracy, it was doubtless ever with the view of weakening the menacing power of the dominant Spanish empire. She was also actuated by "an aggressive determination to break down the barriers with which Spanish policy sought to enclose the New World and to shut out the way to the Indies." In this determination England had the sympathy of France and often its active coöperation. For a similar reason Dutch sea rovers swarmed over the Caribbean Sea. All were aware of the magnitude of the struggle in which they were engaged, and realized that their existence as nations depended on their crippling their common enemy by striking at the sources of his power in the Western Hemisphere.

Much might be said of the reckless audacity, brilliant achievements and skillful seamanship of these privateers or pirates—whatever one chooses to call them—that read more like fable or romance than sober chronicles of authentic fact, but space does not permit. Besides, we are more interested in another class of sea rovers of a later date, whose names and exploits are inseparably connected with the West Indies and the great South Sea. I refer to the Buccaneers, or, as they called themselves, the Brethren of the Coast.

Our knowledge of these extraordinary adventurers is derived mainly from themselves. Of English Buccaneers the most interesting narratives have been left us by Sharp, Cowley, Ringrose and Dampier. The Frenchman, Ravenau de Lussan, has also left us a record of value. The most popular work, however, and the one that gives us the truest insight into the manners and customs of the Brethren of the Coast, and recounts with the greatest detail their deeds of daring and cruelty, is that given to the world by the Dutchman Esquemeling. It was entitled *De Americaensche Zee Rovers* and was, on its appearance, immediately translated into the principal languages of Europe. The fact that Esquemeling was with the Buccaneers for five years, and was with them, too, on many of their most important expeditions, gave him unusual opportunities for collecting facts at first hand and studying the methods of procedure of his reckless and often brutal associates.

By the Spaniards, the Brethren of the Coast have always been regarded as pirates—for the same reason as Raleigh, Drake and Hawkins and their associates were regarded as pirates—because they conducted their lawless operations when England and Spain were at peace. But there was the same difference between Buccaneers and ordinary pirates as there was between the corsairs just mentioned and ordinary pirates. The latter attacked vessels of every nation, while the Buccaneers, like Drake and his compatriots, confined themselves to preying on Spanish shipping and sacking Spanish towns and strongholds.

Some became Buccaneers because they had a grievance, real or imaginary, against the Spaniards, others because they chafed under the monopolizing policy of the Spanish government, and wished to secure a part of the ever-increasing trade with the New World, while others still joined the ranks of the Brethren because they relished the life of excitement and adventure it held forth, or because

they found it the easiest means of gaining a livelihood.

Esquemeling was among the last of these classes. After being twice sold as a slave, he finally obtained his liberty when, to use his own words, “Though like Adam when he was first created, that is, naked and destitute of all human necessaries, not knowing how to get my living, I determined to enter into the Order of the Pyrates or Robbers at Sea.”[8]

The cradle of the extraordinary “Order of Pyrates,” of which Esquemeling was to be the most distinguished chronicler, was Tortuga, a small, rocky island off the northwest corner of Haiti. It was visited by Columbus during his first voyage, and, from the number of turtles found there, was called Tortuga—the Spanish for turtle—the name it still retains. But small as it was, it was destined to become “the common refuge of all sorts of wickedness, and the seminary, as it were of pyrates and thieves.”[9]

The name Buccaneer is derived from “bucan,” a Carib word signifying a wooden gridiron on which meat is smoked. Originally, the term Buccaneer was applied to the French settlers of Española, whose chief occupation was to hunt wild cattle and hogs, which roamed over the island in large numbers, and cure their flesh by bucaning it, that is smoking it on a bucan.[10] When they were driven from their business of bucaning by the Spaniards, they took refuge in Tortuga, where they were soon joined by many English adventurers. Here they combined to make war on Spain in her American colonies, and for more than a half century they carried terror and destruction to every part of the Caribbean archipelago.

But, notwithstanding their change of occupation, their old name of Buccaneer clung to them, and, as such, they are still known in history. Like the bold Vikings of the North,

who were so long the scourge of western and southern Europe, the Buccaneers were the scourge of Spanish America from Tortuga to Panama and from California to Patagonia. They warred against but one enemy—the one that had harassed and driven them from their peaceful avocation of bucaning, or had persecuted and oppressed their brethren in the peaceful pursuit of commerce, when the lands of their birth, or the countries to which they owed allegiance, were unable or unwilling to protect them.

Like the archpirate Drake, as the Spaniards called him, "They swept the sea of every passing victualler, and added the captured cargoes to the stores of game and fish it was their delight to catch. At intervals along the coast and amongst the wilderness of islands, magazines were hidden, and into these were poured the stores that had been destined for the great plate-fleets. The shark-like pinnaces would suddenly appear in the midst of the trade-route no one knew whence, and laden with food, as suddenly disappear no one knew whither."

Compared with the Spaniards, they were usually in a small minority. But in their case, as in so many similar ones, it was not numbers, but their skill and courage, that gave them possession of rich galleons and placed the well-guarded plate-fleets at their mercy. At times the Buccaneers had only simple canoes—mere dugouts—but these, according to Esquemeling, were so fleet that they might well be called "Neptune's post-horses." In these they went out to sea for a distance of eighty leagues and attacked heavily-armed men of war, and, before the Spanish crew had time to realize what the daring sea rovers were after, their vessel was in the possession of their irresistible foe.[11]

They were strangers to fear, and no undertaking was too arduous, if the booty promised was sufficiently great.

Danger and difficulty seemed only to whet their appetite for gold and fan their passions to a blaze. Their endurance of hunger and thirst and fatigue was as remarkable as their hardihood was phenomenal. They were loyal to one another and divided the spoils they secured in strict accordance with the agreement they had entered into beforehand. “Locks and bolts were prohibited, as such things were regarded as impeaching the honor of their vocation.”

They were religious after their own fashion. Thus it was forbidden to hunt or cure meat on Sunday. Before going on a cruise, they went to church to ask a blessing on their undertaking, and, after a successful raid, they returned to the house of God to sing a hymn of thanksgiving. We are told of a French captain who shot a filibuster for irreverence in church during divine service, and we also read of Captain Hawkins once throwing dice overboard when he found them being used on the Lord’s day.[12]

How all this reminds one of the conduct of that pitiless old slaver, John Hawkins, who frequently enjoined on his crew to “serve God daily,” and who, after escaping a heavy gale on his way from Africa to the West Indies, whither he was bound with a shipload of kidnapped negroes, sanctimoniously writes, “The Almighty God, who never suffereth His elect to perish, sent us the ordinary breeze.”

Although the Buccaneers frequently came into possession of immense sums of money, they would forthwith proceed to squander it in all kinds of dissipation and debauchery. “Such of these pyrates,” writes Esquemeling, “will spend two or three thousand pieces of eight in a night, not leaving themselves a good shirt to wear in the morning.”

At first, the Buccaneers confined themselves to depredations on sea, but their unexpected successes on

water soon emboldened them to attack the largest and richest towns on the Spanish Main. When these were once in their power, they exacted from their inhabitants a heavy tribute, and if it was not paid without delay, the hapless people, regardless of age or sex, were subjected to the most cruel and unheard-of tortures. Puerto Principe, Maracaibo, Porto Bello, Panama and other places were captured in turn, and some of them, when sufficient ransom was not obtained, were burned to the ground. And so great and so hideous were the atrocities committed in some of these places that even Esquemeling has not the heart to do more than allude to them. They equaled, if they did not surpass, anything recorded of the pirates of Barbary or Malabar, and showed what fiends incarnate men can become when carried away by insatiate greed or the spirit of rapine and carnage.

The two Buccaneer leaders who most distinguished themselves for their diabolical ferocity and viciousness were L'Olonnois and Morgan. "L'Olonnois," says Burney, "was possessed with an ambition to make himself renowned for being terrible. At one time, it is said, he put the whole crew of a Spanish ship, ninety men, to death, performing himself the office of executioner, by beheading them. He caused the crews of four others vessels to be thrown into the sea; and more than once, in his frenzies, he tore out the hearts of his victims and devoured them."[13]

This "infernal wretch," as Esquemeling calls him, "full of horrid, execrable and enormous deeds, and debtor to so much innocent blood, died by cruel and butcherly hands," for the Indians of Darien, having taken him prisoner, "tore him in pieces alive, throwing his body, limb by limb, into the fire, and his ashes into the air, that no trace or memory might remain of such an infamous, inhuman creature."[14]

Of Henry Morgan, who sacked Maracaibo and pillaged

and burnt Panama, the same authority declares he "may deservedly be called the second L'Olonnois, not being unlike or inferior to him, either in achievements against the Spaniards or robberies of many innocent people."[15]

He did not, however, share the fate of L'Olonnois. Having found favor with King Charles II, he was knighted and made deputy governor of Jamaica, when he turned against his former associates, many of whom he hanged, while he delivered others up to their enemies, the Spaniards.

From the time the Buccaneers made Tortuga a base of operations until the Peace of Ryswick, in 1697, when they were finally suppressed, was more than half a century. From this little island they spread over the entire Caribbean sea and had places of rendezvous in Jamaica, Santa Catalina, the sequestered coves of the Gulf of Darien and in many secret places along the Spanish Main. Their distinctive mark during all this time, from which they never deviated, as it had been the distinctive mark of pirates and privateers of England, France and Holland during nearly a century and a half before, was their incessant and relentless war against Spain; their determination to break her power and destroy that trade monopoly which she was so determined to retain.

So numerous and powerful did they eventually become that some of their leaders, notably Mansvelt and Morgan, dreamed of establishing an independent state. They had selected the small island of Santa Catalina—now known as Old Providence—just a short distance north of the course along which we are now sailing—as a starting point and, had they undertaken this project while the French and English Buccaneers were still united, they might have been successful.[16]

To us of the twentieth century, with our ideas of law and

order, it seems strange that the pirates and Buccaneers of the West India islands and the Main should have been able to continue their nefarious operations for so long a period, and that they were so numerous. But, when we remember how they were countenanced and abetted by their respective governments, how they were provided with letters of marque and reprisal, how they were openly assisted by the English[17] and French governors of the West Indies, how they were assisted even by their own sovereigns,[18] the wonder ceases. Considering the love of adventure that distinguished this period of the world's history, and the princely fortunes that rewarded the successful raids of the daring sea rovers, it is surprising that the number was not greater. If the same conditions now obtained, it is safe to say that the seas would swarm with similar adventurers. It is interesting to surmise what would now be the condition of the Western Hemisphere if the Buccaneers, instead of confining themselves to capturing treasure ships and sacking towns, had, like the bold Vikings, their antitypes, set out to conquer and colonize.

Whatever else may be said of the Buccaneers, there can be no doubt that it is to them that England owes her proud title of Mistress of the Seas. They gave birth to her great navy, and developed that great merchant marine whose flags are to-day seen in every port of the world. They distinguished themselves in the destruction of the Spanish Armada, and closely followed Magellan in circumnavigating the globe. They had a hand in the formation of the East India Company and were "Britain's sword and shield for the defence of her nascent colonies."

Of the occupation of the Buccaneers one can assert what James Jeffrey Roche writes of that of the filibusters of the middle of the last century—that it "is no longer open to private individuals. The great powers have monopolized

the business, conducting it as such and stripping it of its last poor remnant of romance, without investing it with a scrap of improved morality."[19]

And one can also say of them, what Byron writes of his *Corsair*, that they left a

"Name to other climes
Linked with one virtue and a thousand crimes."

1

The amount of loot and tribute obtained by de Pointis was, according to some estimates, no less than forty million livres—an enormous sum for that period. ↑

2

W. Robertson, *The History of America*, Vol. II, p. 514, Philadelphia, 1812. ↑

3

History of the New World, pp. 124, 125, printed for the Hakluyt Society, London, 1857. ↑

4

Writings of Christopher Columbus, p. 202, edited by P. L. Ford, New York, 1892. ↑

5

The Discovery of America, Vol. II, p. 370. ↑

6

John Boyd Thacher declares that Las Casas was "the grandest figure, next to Columbus, appearing in the Drama of the New World. Against the purity of his life, no voice among all his enemies ever whispered a suggestion. If the Apostle Peter was a much better man, the story is told elsewhere than in his acts. If the Apostle Paul was braver, more zealous, more consecrated to the cause of humanity, which alone can ask for Apostleship, Las Casas was a consistent imitator. The Church has never passed a saint through the degree of canonization more worthy of this signal and everlasting honor than Bartolomé de las Casas, the Apostle of the Indies."—*Christopher Columbus, His Life, His Work, His Remains*, Vol. I, pp. 158 and 159, New York, 1903. ↑

7

The line here referred to is not the equator, but the tropical line. The

phrase practically signified that European treaties did not bind within the tropics; that, although Spain might be at peace in the Old World, there could be no peace for her in the New. ↑

8

The History of the Buccaneers of America, Vol. I, p. 22, fourth edition, London, 1741.

Esquemeling, as the reader will observe, does not apply to his associates the euphemious term Buccaneers, but calls them "the Pyrates of America, which sort of men are not authorized by any sovereign prince. For the Kings of Spain having on several occasions sent their ambassadors to the Kings of England and France to complain of the molestations and troubles those pyrates often caused on the coasts of America, even in the calm of peace, it hath always been answered that such men did not commit those acts of hostility and pyracy as subjects to their Majesties, and therefore his Catholick Majesty might proceed against them as he should think fit. The King of France added that he had no fortress nor castle upon Hispaniola, neither did he receive a farthing of tribute from thence. And the King of England adjoined that he had never given any commission to those of Jamaica to commit hostilities against the subjects of his Catholick Majesty." Op. cit., p. 58, Vol. I. ↑

9

Here, says Sir Frederick Treves, in his charming work. *The Cradle of the Deep*, "In defiance of the ban of Spain, a strange company began to collect.... They came across the seas in obedience to no call; in ones and twos they came. Frenchmen, British, and Dutch, and, led by some herding instinct, they foregathered at this wild trysting-place. Some were mere dare-devil adventurers, others were wily seekers after fortune; the few were in flight from the grip of justice, the many had roamed away from the old sober world in search of freedom.

"There was a common tie that banded them together, the call of the wild and the hate of Spain. They formed no colony, nor settlement, but simply joined themselves together in a kind of jungle brotherhood. They found a leader as a pack of wolves finds theirs, not by choosing one to lead but by following the one who led." P. 250, London, 1908. ↑

10

For awhile the term Buccaneer was applied to the English, who had nothing to do with the bucan, as well as to the French adventurers. Subsequently the French sea-rovers became known as flibustiers, the French sailors' pronunciation of the word freebooter, while the English corsairs appropriated the name Buccaneers. As their occupations were the same—making war on the Spaniard—the two terms came eventually to be regarded as synonymous. All the freebooters, whether English, French, or Dutch, as an indication of their being banded against a common

enemy, the Spaniards, assumed the name Brethren of the Coast. The members of this brotherhood must not be confounded with such cutthroats as Kidd, Bonnet, Avery and Thatch, who was known as Blackbeard and, for a while, terrorized the Atlantic Coast from the West Indies to New England. ↑

11

Thus, the French Flibustier, Pierre le Grand, with only a small boat and a crew of but twenty-eight men, surprised and captured the ship of the vice-admiral of the Spanish galleons as she was homeward bound with a rich cargo. ↑

12

When John Watling, the successor of the deposed Captain Edmund Cook, began his captaincy, he ordered all his crew to keep holy the Sabbath day. "With Edmund Cook down on the ballust in irons," writes Masefield, and William Cook talking of salvation in the galley, and old John Watling expounding the Gospel in the cabin, the galleon, 'The most Holy Trinity,' must have seemed a foretaste of the New Jerusalem. The fiddler ceased such prophane strophes as 'Abel Brown,' 'The Red-haired Man's Wife,' and 'Valentinian.' He tuned his devout strings to songs of Zion. Nay, the very boatswain could not pipe the cutter up but to a phrase of the Psalms." (*On the Spanish Main*, p. 263, London, 1906.) ↑

13

History of the Buccaneers of America, Chap. V. ↑

14

Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 115. ↑

15

Ibid., p. 117. ↑

16

Referring to this matter, George W. Thornsburg writes:—

"Anomalous beings, hunters by land and sea, scaring whole fleets with a few canoes, sacking cities with a few grenadiers, devastating every coast from California to Cape Horn, they needed only a common principle of union to have founded an aggressive republic as wealthy as Venice and as warlike as Carthage. One great mind and the New World had been their own."—*The Monarchs of the Main, or Adventures of the Buccaneers*, preface, p. 10, London, 1855. ↑

17

Thus Esquemeling tells us that Morgan's fleet, before his raid on Maracaibo, was, by order of the governor of Jamaica, strengthened by the addition of an English vessel of thirty-six guns. This was done to give the ruthless Buccaneer "greater courage to attempt mighty things." Op. cit., p.

147. ↑

18

The Spaniards accused Queen Elizabeth of aiding Drake, and it is known that she lent John Hawkins one of her ships. “The great Queen,” as Mowbray Morris observes, “had a most convenient way of publically deprecating the riotous acts of her subjects, when she found it expedient to do so, and roundly encouraging them in private. She was fond of money, too, and ... had found a share in these ventures uncommonly remunerative. Unqueenly tricks, as they seem to us, and apt to confuse the law of nations, they were, as things went then, extremely useful to England.”—*Tales of the Spanish Main*, p. 131, London, 1901.

Père Labat cleverly hits off the policy of France and England towards the Buccaneers in a single sentence, “On laissoit faire des Avanturiers, qu on pouvoit toujours desavouer, mais dont les succes pouvoient être utiles”—they connived at the actions of the Adventurers, which could always be disavowed, but whose successes might be of service. ↑

19

By-Ways of War, The Story of the Filibusters, p. 251, Boston, 1901. ↑

CHAPTER XIV

THE RICH COAST

"But oh! the free and wild
magnificence
Of Nature in her lavish hours doth
steal,
In admiration silent and intense,
The soul of him who hath a soul
to feel.

"The river moving on its ceaseless
way,
The verdant reach of meadows
fair and green,
And the blue hills that bound the
sylvan scene,—
These speak of grandeur, that defies
decay,—
Proclaim the eternal architect on high,
Who stamps on all his works his own
eternity."

—Longfellow.

The afternoon preceding our arrival at Puerto Limon, the captain of our steamer called our attention to a wonderful mirage due south of us. High above the water—apparently

midway between the sea and the sky—was suspended one of the islands of the Caribbean that stand off from the Panama coast. So far away was it from our course that, had it not been for the peculiar atmospheric conditions then prevailing, it would have been quite invisible, even with the aid of the most powerful glass. A beautiful, fantastic shape it exhibited as, seen through the trembling and shimmering air, it seemed to float in the hazy atmosphere. At first it was of a pearly-gray tint, then of a fustian-brown, and finally, as it became more distinct in outline, it shaded into a dark olive green. The apparition lasted for nearly an hour, when it gradually disappeared.

"The Vanishing Island of St. Brendan," exclaimed a young Celt who had been admiring the scene. And then he read for us what John Sparke, a companion of Hawkins in the voyage of 1564, writes:

"Certaine flitting ilands, which haue beene oftentimes seene, and when men approched neere them they vanished, ... and therefore it should seeme hee is not yet borne to whom God hath appoynted the finding of them."[1]

The flitting islands that Sparke refers to were, it is true, supposed by him to be in the neighborhood of the Azores. But their location was uncertain, at least the one named after the seafaring Irish monk, for divers positions have been assigned it by cosmographers and mediæval writers. Among other peculiarities possessed by this island was that it had an apparent motion towards the west—a motion that was quite sufficient to have carried it at the beginning of the twentieth century to the westernmost part of the Caribbean.

"In this motion westward," said C.—as our representative of classical lore—"the Island of St. Brendan would have but followed the example set by the Elysian Fields and the

Isles of the Blessed. Pindar and Hesiod placed them in the Western Ocean, but much farther west than Homer had located his Elysium. As the years rolled by, the Fortunate Islands and the Gardens of the Hesperides, for these were but synonyms of the Isles of the Blessed, were also found, like St. Brendan's, to have moved towards the region of the setting sun. Subsequently, birth was given to legends respecting a Transatlantic Eden and a Mexican Elysium somewhere in the Gulf of Mexico or among the beauteous isles of the Caribbean Archipelago."

"Very true, very true," said one of our party, a good-natured German privat-docent, who was perched hard by on what seemed to be the first reclining chair ever devised. It was a cumbersome structure about four feet high, apparently modeled after one of those lofty bedsteads once the vogue in certain parts of the Vaterland, and vastly different from the modern reclining chair so popular with ocean travelers, and so rickety that it threatened every moment to collapse and deposit its portly occupant—for he was a man of weight, physically as well as intellectually—on the hard floor of the hurricane deck. "You are quite right, Sr. C. The Isles of the Blessed, like the Island of St. Brendan, are quite as ubiquitous and elusory as is the Terrestrial Paradise described in Genesis. For learned men who have written about it have located it, at one time or another, in almost every part of the earth's surface. Some maintain it was somewhere in the valley of Mesopotamia, others that it was east of the Ganges, or near the head waters of the Nile. Columbus imagined it was nigh the source of the Orinoco, while an American author—a Bostonian, I believe—some decades ago published a work in which he endeavoured to prove that the seat of Paradise was the North Pole. As for myself, I have never ventured to formulate a theory on any of these interesting subjects. They are out of my line. *Davus sum non Œdipus.*"

Just then there was a crash. Like the "wonderful one-hoss shay," the tottering old chair had collapsed and the docent lay sprawling under the ruins.

"*Caramba, donnerwetter!*" These two exclamations, so dear to the Spaniard and the German, when they wish to express surprise and disgust, were emitted with an explosive violence that left no one present in doubt as to what thoughts were uppermost in the mind of our friend as he was endeavoring to extricate himself from the entangling frame. With the aid of some of the bystanders he finally regained his feet, but he manifested no desire to continue the conversation so suddenly interrupted.

"*Carajo, donnerblitz!*"—two expressions even more vigorous than the preceding—constituted the finale to the performance that afforded amusement to all except the leading character, who disliked exceedingly the undignified position in which he had momentarily been placed. Fortunately, the last call for dinner had been given just a few moments previously, and we accordingly adjourned to the dining saloon, where other matters absorbed the attention of the unlucky docent as well as the spectators of his ungainly tumble.

The morning following the little episode just referred to, we were in sight of Costa Rica[2]—that rich coast—discovered by Columbus during his eventful fourth voyage. The wooded lowlands, bordering the sea, are clothed in a mantle of rich tropical verdure. A short distance behind them arise the escarpments of the Central American Cordillera, that is the scene of the activity of such noted volcanoes as Poas, Irazu and Turialba. Owing to the proximity of the Sierra to the sea, it appears much higher than it really is, and, when the weather is clear, it presents a picture of rare magnificence. This is particularly the case when it is seen at sunrise, the time it first met our

view. Then we had before us the violet expanse of the summer sea canopied by the splendid azure vault of heaven, while before us stood up in all its majesty the gentian blue peak of the Cordillera that gradually melted into crimson and then into gold.

Owing to the reports that had been received at Limon regarding the plague at Trinidad, and the fear that it might already have reached the Spanish Main, none of the passengers were allowed to land until they had passed, on the part of the health officers, an examination of more than usual strictness. Fortunately, we had provided ourselves with a health certificate before leaving Barranquilla and were permitted to land after but little delay. Those, however, who could not exhibit such a document were at once ordered off to quarantine. Everyone, however, had to be vaccinated, unless one could produce evidence that he had been vaccinated only a short time before. As very few could present such evidence, the great majority had to submit—many of them much against their will—to being inoculated with the virus that is supposed to render one immune against smallpox.

While these operations were going on, we had an opportunity of getting a good view of the coast in front of us. It had a special interest for us, for it was the favored land along which Columbus sailed in his last voyage in 1502. Here, before us, there is reason to believe, was the land of Cariari, and, just a stone's throw from our steamer was the charming island of Quiribri, which, on account of its beauty and the lovely trees with which it was adorned—palms and bananas and platanos—the Admiral called El Huerto—the orchard. To-day it is known as the island of Uvita, and is used for quarantine. As we gazed on this exquisite spot, provided with cozy cottages nestling among clumps of stately palms, and decked with beauteous flowers of every hue, we almost regretted that we could not

spend a few days there. Had we been sent there with the others we should certainly not have complained.

So fascinating was this place that Columbus anchored here between the island and the mainland to give his crew an opportunity to refresh themselves after their arduous voyage. And so fragrant were the groves on the mainland that their perfumes were wafted out to the ships. This, we have noted, was also the experience of the early explorers of Florida.

While here, Columbus held frequent converse with the Indians, whom he found intelligent and well disposed. They brought him gifts of cotton, cloth and gold and evidently were inclined to enter into friendly relations with their strange visitors. In his letter to Ferdinand and Isabella, referring to this land, he writes: “There I saw a tomb in the mountain side as large as a house, and sculptured.[3] This is remarkable as being the only passage in all the Admiral’s writings which could warrant us in concluding that he ever set foot on the mainland of the New World.

Until the middle of the last century Port Limon was but a small *rancheria*—it did not deserve the name of village—of poor fishermen. Now it is the chief port of the republic and a flourishing town of 6,000 inhabitants. Its present importance and prosperity are due to the completion of the railroad from this point to the capital, San José, and to the fact that it is the principal centre of the rapidly-increasing banana industry controlled by the United Fruit Company.

The place is quite modern in appearance, and were it not for its exuberant tropical vegetation, might easily pass for one of our enterprising Gulf Coast towns. It boasts of all modern improvements, has good sanitation, broad streets, comfortable homes and a delightful park that, for wealth

and variety of tree and shrub and flower, looks like a well-kept botanic garden. While the white race is well represented, the majority of the population is made up of West Indian negroes.

During our travels among the Antilles and on the Spanish Main, we frequently had occasion to note the importance of the banana and the platano as articles of food, but it was not until our arrival in Limon that we had an opportunity of observing the extent to which the cultivation and shipment of these fruits have been carried. Here are two long iron piers at which one will occasionally find as many as six or eight large steamers being freighted at the same time with the golden fruit of Costa Rica, preparatory to distribution among the leading ports along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts.

The culture of the banana in Costa Rica on an extensive scale is of recent date. In 1880 but three hundred and sixty bunches were sent to the United States. Now the amount shipped from Limon alone averages more than a million bunches a month. During the year 1908 the number of bunches that left Port Limon aggregated more than thirteen million, and the amount shipped is rapidly increasing. In addition to the daily shipments made to the United States weekly cargoes are forwarded to France and England.

But great as are the proportions which the banana trade has already assumed, it is safe to say that it is as yet but in its infancy. What in most parts of our country and Europe has hitherto been practically unknown, or been regarded as a luxury beyond the reach of the poor, is now rapidly finding its way among all classes and at such prices that even those of the most limited means can have it on their tables.

That which first impresses the visitor from the North is the large number of species of the *Musa* and the extraordinary

number of uses made of them. Already fully forty species have been described and nearly a hundred varieties. Most of these bear fruit which is as agreeable as it is nutritious, and which is often of a flavor of the utmost delicacy.

Reference has already been made in a previous chapter to the extensive and varied use made of bananas and platanos by the peoples of tropical climes, but even they have still much to learn regarding the food value of their great staple. Recent investigations have revealed the fact that the fruit of the *Musa* is henceforth to be regarded not only as one of the most wholesome and nutritious of foods, but also as one of the most important means of subsistence for the world's rapidly increasing population. Even now it is felt that the supply of flesh meat and cereals is rapidly becoming less than the demand, and too expensive for the poor, and thoughtful men have already set to work to devise ways and means to meet the emergency. And one of the means suggested is a more extensive cultivation of platanos and bananas, as well as a more general use of their manifold products.

Humboldt long ago pointed out the great economic value of the banana and the platano as sources of food supply.[4] But he did not have the data we now possess for arriving at just conclusions. As the result of numerous experiments it is now known that bananas afford per acre one and a third times as much food as maize produces, two and a third times as much as oats, three times as much as buckwheat, potatoes and wheat; and four times as much as rye. Then the labor involved in the cultivation of the banana is far less than that demanded for our northern crops. No skill is required, and unlike many of our northern fruit-bearing trees, the banana and the platano are entirely exempt from insect pests and diseases.

Chemical analysis discloses the curious fact that bananas

and potatoes are practically identical in composition. As compared with the principal vegetables and fruits consumed in the United States and Europe, the food value of the banana and the platano stands in the ratio of five to four in favor of the latter. Comparing banana flour, a new product of this remarkable fruit, with the flour made from sago, wheat and maize, it is found that the nutritive value of all four is about equal—the banana product being slightly in the lead.

As a consequence of recent researches the commercial products obtained from the banana and platano have been greatly increased, while some of them are vastly different from anything that people who have been living on them for thousands of years have ever dreamed. Among these are meal in the starchy state for making superior kinds of bread and porridge, flakes and meal in a dextrinous condition for the preparation of nourishing soups and puddings, sauces and fritters.[5] In dried slices it is used in the manufacture of beer and alcohol. Bananas are also employed in making marmalades, for the manufacture of glucose and syrups for confectionery, and, dried entire without the peel, they are put up in boxes like figs. Dried and roasted they afford a nutritious beverage that is said to be a valuable substitute for coffee and chocolate. Even the stems and leaves of the banana are put to use, for from them are manufactured paper and cordage.

These facts open up a splendid vista as to the future food possibilities of the tropics. They demonstrate also the wisdom of giving more thought to this neglected part of the world, for it is to tropical America that the teeming millions of coming generations will be obliged to look for much of their sustenance. Our northern climes will be unable to meet the demands that will eventually be made on them.

Before we boarded the train at Limon for San José, the capital of the little republic, a young German, who had visited the lowlands through which the railway passes, said that we would there see the most remarkable exhibition of vegetable growth in the world. “It is,” he declared, “the *Urwelt*”—the primeval forest—“in all its luxuriance and glory.”

As he had never seen any tropical scenery outside of Costa Rica, and very little of that, we, who had just come from the exuberant forest regions of the Magdalena and the Orinoco, were disposed to give little heed to his statement. Compared with Germany, the floral display of Costa Rica was doubtless something really marvelous in the estimation of our untraveled Teutonic friend, but it could not compare, we said to ourselves, with the wonders of plant life on which we had been feasting our eyes during our journey among the Antilles and through the Northern part of South America.

Our conclusion, however, as we very soon discovered, was quite unwarranted. The vegetation of the lowlands and of the foothills of the Costa Rican Cordillera, as we noted on our way to San José, was really something wonderful. It was the *Urwelt* in very truth, and exhibited a wealth of plant and tree, foliage and bloom such as must have characterized the foreworld during its richest period. For miles upon miles along this picturesque railway, we reveled in the glories of the virgin forest at its best—a dense, complicated mass of verdure, a tousled, world-old jungle, surmounted by giants of the forest, loaded down with festoons of countless creepers and bound together by innumerable cable-like lianas, each of the richest hues. At one time we were passing through valleys of enchantment, valleys pervaded by a languorous haze of lilac and indigo, like the smoke of incense, valleys rendered musical by scores of hidden streams and tumultuous torrents bridged

over by an entanglement of green fathoms in depth. At another we were winding around rugged crags and inaccessible peaks, not bald and barren, as in our temperate climes, but covered to their very summits with a tapestry of leaf and flower of the most vivid tropical tints, that at times resembled a cascade of palpitating color, of emerald foliage and glowing bloom. Here it was the crimson bouganvilla, there lovely aroides with spathes of delicate purple or immaculate white, while hard by, fanned into motion by the trickery of the shifting breeze, were the slender tufts of the bamboo or the tenuous fronds of the ever-graceful fern tree. On all sides was a parade of foliage and blossom, a bravery of color to be found only in the tropics and then only in its most favored regions.

The astonishing variety and richness of the flora of Costa Rica is due to the fact that it is the connecting link between the floras of the two great continents of the North and the South. Besides exhibiting species peculiar to itself, it presents an infinitude of others found in North and South America. Those, however, of South America predominate, the reason being that Costa Rica was connected with the southern continent long before it was united with that to the north.

It is a hundred and three miles from Limon to San José by rail. The road, a narrow-gauge one, was constructed by an American, Mr. Minor C. Keith, and compares favorably with our narrow-gauge roads in the Rocky Mountains. Many difficulties were encountered in laying the track, some of which, especially those caused by landslides and the overflowing rivers, seemed at times insuperable. The most serious impediments, however, were due to the steaming, sweltering, putrid, fever-laden swamps between the coast and the foothills of the Cordillera. So great was the mortality among the workmen on account of pernicious fevers that it is stated that this section of the line cost a

human life for every tie that was laid. Like the valley of the lower Magdalena, this part of Costa Rica is habitable only by negroes. The white men who are called there by business make their sojourn as brief as possible.

It is along this route that are found the best and most extensive *platanales*—banana plantations—of the country and, as a consequence, there are many settlements and villages all along the railroad. And what banana plants are seen here! In height they resemble trees rather than plants. We saw some that were thirty-five feet high, bending under golden clusters of fruit weighing at times nearly a hundred pounds. While sailing along the Orinoco and the Meta we thought that the *platanales* we saw on their banks were unrivaled for magnitude of plants and wealth of fruitage, but they were fully equaled if not surpassed by those of Costa Rica.

Most of the labor connected with the cultivation and shipment of bananas is performed by negroes from Jamaica and other West Indian islands. One sees their little frame houses, or shacks, scattered all along the road in the banana region, and their occupants have the same jovial, happy-go-lucky disposition that characterizes the negro the world over. Crowds of them, old and young, are always assembled at the station on the arrival of every train—attracted thither by apparently the same reason that causes their brethren of the North in the cotton belt to flock to the depot when they hear the whistle of the locomotive—childlike curiosity and a desire to get the latest news at the earliest possible moment.

Quite a number of the female portion had sliced *piñas*—pineapples—for sale, but they asked as much for a single slice as a whole piña would cost in our markets, while for an entire pineapple they expected four or five times the price of this fruit in New York, and that in the land of the

piña. They demanded extravagant prices because, I suppose, they took it for granted that those who were able to travel in a Pullman car, as our party did, would not, if the fruit was really wanted, begrudge paying the amount asked, however exorbitant. But high as the price was, the fruit was worth it and far more. It was the most luscious and fragrant fruit we had ever tasted, and incomparably excelled the best that ever reaches our markets. It was so soft and juicy that it could be eaten with a spoon, and contained all the fabled virtues of nectar and ambrosia combined.

Incredible as it may seem, where there were train loads of bananas at every siding, we were unable to get even a sample of edible fruit anywhere between Limon and San José, although we asked for it at every stopping place. All that was destined for shipment was unripe, and, while there were several other kinds of fruits for sale, there was not a single ripe banana.

The negroes we saw along the railroad, as well as those observed in Limon, were a constant study for us, especially when congregated in large numbers in halls or churches. Like the negroes of Martinique they are, in the words of Lafcadio Hearn, "A population fantastic, astonishing—a population of the *Arabian Nights*."[6] They exhibit the whole gamut of skin tints from the milk-white of the albino to the coal-black of the Nubian.

Some of the women are remarkable for beauty of form and delicacy of features. Lissome, statuesque, and of graceful bearing, they are Juliets in ebony, who exhibit the classic proportions of "ox-eyed" Juno or of the Venus of Milo. As simple as children, they, like their sisters in the Antilles, are as talkative as parrots and their laugh is as hearty as it is spontaneous.

But it is the dress of the Costa Rican negress that arrests attention, especially when she is seen in public gatherings of any kind. Then the design and color of her attire is bizarre in the extreme. She selects by preference the most flaunting and garish colors, and, when she appears in her Sunday costume, one would declare that she had tried to combine the hues of tropical birds, and to mimic the gorgeousness of the blue-red-yellow macaw.

The description given by Sir F. Treves of the dress of the negress of Martinique, sums up in a few words the salient features of the Sunday costume of her sister in Costa Rica. "The headdress," he writes, "is very picturesque. It consists of a 'madras,' an ample handkerchief wound about the head turban fashion, and finished by a projecting end, which stands up like the eagle's feather in an Indian's hair. The color of the madras will be usually a canary yellow striped with black. The hues of the dress are bewildering. Here are a skirt of roses and a foulard of sky-blue, a gown of scarlet and yellow with a terra-cotta scarf across the breast, a dress of white striped with orange below a foulard of green, a frock of primrose spotted with red and completed by a scarf of mazarine blue. Add to this the necklace of gold beads, the heavy bracelets, the great earrings, and the 'trembling pins' that fix the madras, and then realize over all, the white light of a tropical moon."[7]

The two places along our route in which we were specially interested were the village of Matina, in the fertile valley watered by the river of that name, and Cartago, which was founded by the Spaniards in 1563, and was, during colonial times, the capital of the country.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century Matina was a port of some importance and the centre of the largest and best *cacaotales*—cacao haciendas—in Costa Rica, but owing to the frequent incursions of pirates and Mosquito

Indians, this fertile territory had to be evacuated. There was also another reason for abandoning it and that was the hot, enervating, pernicious atmosphere, and the torrential rains, which were the causes of malaria and malignant fevers from which the district was never exempt. So bad was the reputation of the Matina valley in this respect that people, as the Costa Rican writer, Don Ricardo F. Guardia, informs us in his *Cuentos Ticos*, "used to confess and make their wills when they went to Matina, to the famous Matina which inspires fear in men and madness in mules,[8] as they used to say in those days when men were braver and mules better."—

Cartago—how often this Carthaginian name recurs in this part of the world!—is a delightful place nearly a mile above sea level, with a population of about seven thousand souls. It was founded in 1562 by Juan Vazquez de Coronado, the real conqueror of Costa Rica. It has a very salubrious climate with a mean annual temperature of 66° F. In 1841 it was almost entirely destroyed by an earthquake caused by a violent eruption of the volcano of Irazu, at the foot of which the town is situated. It is noted as the seat of the Central American Court of Justice, which was inaugurated here as one of the results of the Peace Congress held in Washington in 1907. In consequence of the establishment of this tribunal here, the town has been called the "Hague of the New World." Mr. Andrew Carnegie has contributed $100,000 for the erection of a suitable edifice in which to hold the sessions of the court. The site selected for it is the most beautiful in the city, and the structure, on which work was begun without delay, promises to be the most attractive feature of Cartago.

Costa Rica is justly celebrated for its coffee. In the London market it has long been a favorite brand and always commands a high price. It has a delicious aroma scarcely inferior to that of the best Java or Mocha berries. We

preferred it to any we had found elsewhere in our tropical wanderings. The haciendas devoted to the cultivation of coffee—especially those in the vicinity of Cartago and San José—are kept in splendid condition, and the trees are of exceptional vigor and productiveness.

Next to bananas, coffee constitutes the most important export of the republic. It was introduced from Havana about a century ago, and one may yet see in Cartago the centenarian trees that supplied the seeds for the plantations of Costa Rica and other parts of Central America. The value of the coffee and bananas annually exported from the republic is much greater than that of all the other commodities combined. Indeed, these two staples are to the commerce of Costa Rica what tobacco and sugar are to Cuba. Columbus and his followers searched these countries for gold and spices, but they found but little of either. If they could return now to these favored lands they would discover that their real treasures, more precious far than gold mines and groves of spice trees, lay in the indigenous banana and tobacco plants, and in the two exotic growths, coffee and sugar cane.

The schedule time of the train from Limon to San José, although only one hundred and three miles, is about seven hours. This is due to the numerous stops made and to the heavy grades up the flanks of the Cordillera.

Our arrival at the capital was signalized by a genuine tropical downpour, such as we had not seen elsewhere during our journey. For a while it seemed to justify the Spanish expression—*llover á cántaros*—to rain bucketfuls. But the *aguacero*—the name given these short, heavy rainfalls—was of short duration. It was but one of those daily afternoon showers that characterize the plateau during the winter season—*invierno*, our summer—which extends from the month of May until the end of November.

The dry or summer season—*verano*—lasts from December until May and is distinguished by absence of rain. The verano is the season of the northeast trade winds, which lose their humidity in crossing the Atlantic Cordillera. The monsoon, which comes from the southwest during the winter, does not encounter on the Pacific side mountains of sufficient height to condense the vapor with which it is charged. Thus it still contains, on its arrival at the central plateau, enough moisture to produce the heavy precipitation just noted.[2]

But notwithstanding these daily *aguaceros*, one can always count on sunshiny mornings, except during October, which is the wettest month of the year. It scarcely ever rains before two o'clock P. M., and rarely after five o'clock in the evening.



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We were quite charmed with San José and its hospitable and cultured people. In many respects we thought it the most delightful city we had seen in Latin America—especially for a protracted sojourn. Situated in the smiling valley of the Abra, it is reputed to be the most beautiful city in Central America, while it is the second in extent and

the third in population, having about thirty thousand souls. Its altitude is nearly four thousand and seven hundred feet above the level of the sea, and it has a mean annual temperature of 70° F. Foreign residents declare that the climate during the dry season is ideal.

The city counts a number of beautiful churches and public buildings, but the greatest surprise for us was its superb *Teatro Nacional*. In some of its leading features it is modeled after the Grand Opera House in Paris, and is really a gem of architecture. It cost nearly $1,000,000 in gold, and was paid for by an extra tax on coffee. We have nothing in the United States to compare with it in beauty and artistic finish, especially in the decoration of its sumptuous foyer. In the New World it is surpassed only by the *Teatro Municipal* of Rio de Janeiro and the *Teatro Colon* of Buenos Aires.

There are many attractive parks adorned with tastefully arranged flowers and trees and monuments that would be a credit to any capital. The monument that appealed most strongly to us was located in the *Parque Nacional*, and commemorates the campaign of 1856 against the Filibusters led by that daring adventurer from the United States, William Walker. It is also dedicated to the fraternity of the five Central American republics made one in defense of their independence. Let us hope that this is a symbol of the birth in the near future of a new federation of the Central American republics, similar to the one that was established shortly after they had achieved their independence under the name of the Republic of Central America. Such a republic would have fifty per cent more territory than the whole of Great Britain, and, considering all the natural resources it possesses, it would, under a stable and progressive government, soon take an honorable place among the nations of the world.

We visited a number of coffee plantations, as well as orchards and gardens, in the vicinity of San José, and were surprised at the variety and luxuriance of every species of vegetable growth.

But it is to the city market that one must go—especially on Sundays and *dies de fiesta*—holidays—if one would have an adequate conception of the floral and pomonic riches of this favored land.

Here we could easily imagine that we had before us every blossom that blows. Exposed for sale at a nominal price are the most gorgeous of flowers still fresh with the morning dew; roses of every size and color; orchids of the most fantastic forms and of dazzling beauty, to possess which a New York belle, would, if necessary, pawn a favorite jewel.

And here one beholds in lavish abundance citrous fruits of every species, bananas of untold varieties, and scores of other fruits equally common here but scarcely known except by name in our northern latitudes. At every turn we see booths filled with guavas, mameys and mangoes; zapotes, avocados and chirimoyas; papayas, pomegranates and sapodillas; anonas, bread-fruit, mangosteens, and others too numerous to mention, that are prized by the natives for the preparation of *dulces*—sweets—and preserves.

The avocado, also called avocado pear, on account of its shape, is the fruit of the beautiful tree called by botanists *Persea gratissima*, after Perseus, the son of Jupiter and Danæ. The English in the Caribbean Islands name this delicious fruit alligator pear, or midshipman’s butter. It, indeed, somewhat resembles butter in appearance, and, to a certain extent, replaces butter on the table in the tropics, where real butter is difficult to procure and more difficult

to keep. Of late years it has been introduced into the North as a salad, and promises, as soon as it becomes generally known, to be one of the most popular of tropical fruits.

Speaking for myself, I prefer it to any other, except possibly the *piña*—pineapple. But one must taste the fresh, ripe pineapple of the tropics to know its full lusciousness. It is incomparably more juicy and fragrant than anything our Northern markets offer. Old Benzoni says of it, "It smells well and tastes better," and declares it to be "one of the most relishing fruits in the world." Sir Walter Raleigh was right when he called it "the prince of fruits." King James thought so highly of it that he remarked that "it was a fruit too delicious for a subject to taste of." The poet Thomson doubtless entertained a similar view when he penned the following lines:

"Witness, thou best Anana! thou the pride
Of vegetable life, beyond whate'er
The poets imagined in the golden age:
Quick let me strip thee of thy tufty coat,
Spread thy ambrosial stores and feast with Jove."

But delicious as is the pineapple it is, in the estimation of many, surpassed by the chirimoya. This fruit is likened by Paez to "lumps of flavored cream ready to be frozen, suspended from the branches of some fairy tree amidst the most overpowering perfume of its flowers." Clements R. Markham was so enthusiastic about it that he declared that "He who has not tasted the chirimoya fruit has yet to learn what fruit is." "The pineapple, the mangosteen, and the chirimoya," Dr. Seeman writes, "are considered the finest fruits in the world. I have tasted them in those localities in which they are supposed to attain their highest perfection —the pineapple in Guayaquil, the mangosteen in the Indian Archipelago, and the chirimoya on the slope of the Andes, and if I were called upon to act the part of Paris, I

would, without hesitation, assign the apple to the chirimoya. Its taste, indeed, surpasses that of every other fruit, and Haenke was quite right when he called it the masterpiece of nature."

A fruit that always appealed to us was the papaya, or pawpaw. It grows in clusters on a tree about twenty feet high. In taste and appearance it closely resembles a good-sized muskmelon. It is surprising to see such large fruits growing on so small a tree. It flowers and fruits at the same time.

The fruits, however, that are the mainstay for the greatest number of people in the tropics, are, as has already been stated, the banana and the plantain. The former is known to botanists as *Musa sapientum*, because sages have reposed beneath its shade and eaten its fruit. The latter is called *Musa paradisiaca*, on account of a certain tradition that it was the forbidden fruit in Paradise.[10] Both the banana and the plantain number almost as many varieties as the apple. The bananas are smaller than the plantains. The former range from one to six inches in length, while some varieties of the latter attain a length of fifteen inches. They are eaten raw, boiled and roasted and as preserves. A few trees will supply a whole family with the means of subsistence during the entire year.

The banana and plantain are just the kinds of plants that specially appeal to the natives of the equatorial regions, for they give at all seasons a never-failing abundance of nutritious food, and that, too, without any more labor and care than are entailed by clearing the ground and placing them in the ever-productive soil.[11] Sir Charles Dilke, however, regards these food producers in quite a different light. In his estimation, the banana is the curse of the tropics. Their very abundance, and the little care they require, constitute, according to him, a bar to progress and

to civilization of the highest kind in the tropics, for the reason that all true civilization necessarily presupposes labor and effort. It is for this reason that the highest faculties of man are most conspicuous in the temperate zone, where there is a constant struggle for existence.

Before leaving Barranquilla we met a gentleman who had just completed a tour of all Latin America and he declared that San José was the most beautiful city he had seen in all his travels.

At the time we gave little credence to what seemed a very exaggerated impression, but after we were able to judge for ourselves, we were forced to admit that Costa Rica's fair capital is, indeed, a most delightful place.

In a charming, secluded vale near the city, where stood the country seat of a wealthy merchant of the capital, was a particularly romantic spot. The only places I could recall that could fairly compare with it were certain upland valleys in the larger islands of the equatorial Pacific. Hidden away in the luxuriant tropical forest, alongside a broad mountain torrent, where fruit and flower and foliage vied with one another in delicacy of fragrance and richness of hue, it required but little strain of fancy to imagine that we were gazing upon the wonders of the enchanted isle of Armida and Rinaldo; for here,

"Mild was the air, the skies were clear as glass,
The trees no whirlwind felt nor tempest's smart,
But ere the fruit drop off, the blossom comes;
This springs that falls, that ripeneth and thus blooms."[12]

Whilst gazing in silent rapture at the incomparable beauty of the scene before us, and carried away by the matchless exhibitions of Flora and Pomona, we were suddenly transported on the wings of memory back to the beautiful

plaza of Ciudad Bolivar, where, some months before, we had heard a happy, enthusiastic fiancée declare that she considered the lower Orinoco, aboard a yacht or a steamer, an ideal place to spend one's honeymoon. With no claim to the power of mind-reading, or to the spirit of prophecy, we assert, without fear of erring, that if she had the opportunity of choosing between the Orinoco valley and this beauty spot near San José, as a place to spend her honeymoon—her *luna de miel*, as the Spaniards phrase it—it would not be to the Orinoco that Don Esteban would take his bride, but to this Edenic spot on the charming Costa Rican plateau.

Costa Rica, despite what has often been said to the contrary, has, for the past half century, been practically free from those fratricidal revolutions that have so characterized the other Central American republics. There have, it is true, been occasional *pronunciamientos* and periods of excitement about the time of some of the presidential elections, but none of those devastating insurrections that have so long been the curse of her less-fortunate neighbors.

Costa Rica points with pride, and well she may, to the fact that she has more school teachers than soldiers. Everywhere one finds schools for both sexes, admirably appointed and conducted, and constant efforts are being made to have them compare favorably with similar institutions in other parts of the world.

The original Spanish inhabitants of the central plateau were of sturdy Galician stock, and their descendants still exhibit the thrift, industry and enterprise of their ancestors. One meets many families of pure Spanish blood, but the majority are evidently mestizos—the result of the intermarriage of Spaniards with the aborigines. The number of pure-blooded Indians is comparatively small—

only about three thousand out of a total population of a third of a million. There are few negroes seen outside of the low coast lands, where they constitute the majority of the inhabitants. We were, indeed, greatly impressed to note the sudden transition from the black to the white race as we ascended the Cordillera. In San José the number of negroes is astonishingly small, while the complexions of the whites, compared with that of the majority of the people living in the Andean lands we had recently visited, is unusually clear and ruddy.

"How fair and delicate are the features of the Josefinas!"[13] exclaimed C., as we took our first promenade in the broad and well-kept streets of San José. And with the eye of a connoisseur, he continued, "How tastefully dressed they are!"

He was right. The number of beautiful, Madonna-like types one meets with is surprising. This impression is probably enhanced in some degree by the beautifully embroidered *pañolones*—large Chinese silk shawls—which they know so well how to display to the best advantage. When to the tasteful costume and delicate features one adds the culture and refinement that often distinguish the Josefina, one can easily realize that she but continues the best traditions for beauty and grace of mind and heart that have so long distinguished her sisters in the land of Isabella of Castile.

After a delightful week spent in San José we prepared to return to Limon. We then experienced, probably more than at any other place in our long journey,—what all travelers more or less dread in their peregrinations—the pang of leaving places that have especially appealed to one and of saying farewell to newly-formed friends almost as soon as one has learned to know their goodness of heart and nobility of character. To me, I confess, this has always

been the greatest drawback of traveling and is something I have never been able to outgrow.

Armed with a certificate from our consul stating that we had spent in San José the time required of passengers coming from quarantined ports, by the health regulations of Panama, we took our place in a comfortable parlor car, and were soon on our way towards the Caribbean coast, but not before we had taken "a last, long, lingering look," at beautiful, hospitable, fascinating San José.

As the train slowly moved eastwards towards Cartago, our attention was directed for the hundredth time to the rich *cafetales*—coffee plantations—that covered the fertile acres on both sides of the road. Here and there we noted one of those cumbersome ox-carts with solid wooden wheels drawn by a yoke of oxen in charge of an odd-looking *boyero*. These are rapidly giving way to more modern means of transportation, but the lover of the bizarre and the picturesque will regret their disappearance.

"Observe," said a Josefino, having some pretensions to physiognomy, "the peculiar features of that *boyero* on his way to the market. I will wager anything that that man is a firm believer in *ceguas* and *cadejos* and *lloronas*; that he dreams of *botijas*, even in the daytime, and that he has greater fear of *hermanos* than any of your countrymen have of ghosts." He then proceeded to explain the meaning of these terms.

"A cegua," he continued, "is a monster somewhat like the sirens of old, that assumes the form of a beautiful woman and leads men astray. A cadejos is a fantastic animal, black and hairy, resembling an enormous dog which has resounding hoofs instead of paws. A llorona is a frightful phantom that is sometimes heard moaning in the mountains in such wise as to strike terror into the passer-

by.[14] Botija—the Spanish for a large earthen jar—is the name given in Costa Rica to a buried treasure. The country people believe that, if one having buried money dies in debt, his ghost—hermano—will haunt the place in great distress until the treasure is found and the debt is paid."

"I wish I could have the assistance of a few such hermanos," interposed C. laughingly. "If I had, I should have several thousand dollars more to my credit than I have now. Unfortunately, in my country we have not such aids in bringing our debtors to book."

On our way down the Cordillera, while crossing one of the numerous iron bridges that span the Reventazon and other mountain rivers and torrents, our Josefino friend pointed to a pier of masonry standing alone about forty feet to one side of the bridge. "That pier," he said, "was formerly under the bridge, but in consequence of a peculiar landslide or earthquake, it was transported, together with a part of the bed of the stream, to the spot where it now stands."

And then he told us of the opposition of the boyeros to the construction of the railroad. They, like ill-advised people in other parts of the world, feared that it would ruin their occupation and reduce them and their families to starvation. The government and railway company cleverly overcame this opposition by employing the boyeros to haul the material used in the construction of the road.

Then, too, there were wiseacres in Costa Rica, as there were in our Rocky Mountain region when there was question of undertaking some of the remarkable engineering feats that characterize several of our transcontinental railroads, who declared that the projectors of the road from Limon to San José were essaying the impossible. "General Guardia"—the dictator under whose

rule the road was begun—they declared "is trying to build a railroad to Port Limon, where the birds themselves can scarcely go with wings."

And yet, aside from the landslides which occur in all mountainous countries, and the miasmatic climate, there were but few great difficulties encountered. From an engineering standpoint the construction of the road offered far less difficult problems than many of the railroads in Colorado, Peru and Ecuador. The curves are not so sharp and the grades are less, while the altitude attained is less than half of that reached by several Rocky Mountain roads and less than one-third of the height of the celebrated Andean railway which connects Oroya with Lima.

Our first care on arriving at Limon was to have the health officer of that place countersign the certificate we had received from our consul in San José. We then boarded our steamer and were ready to start for Panama.

The weather was again in our favor, and we had a most delightful sail to Colon, and needless to say, we enjoyed every moment of it. We enjoyed it particularly on account of its interesting historical associations, and the romantic legends that have been woven about every isle and inlet and headland along the coast.

That, however, which appealed most strongly to us was the land of Veragua, near the dividing line between Costa Rica and Panama. It was here that Columbus imagined he had found the Golden Chersonese, the land whence came the gold used in the construction of Solomon's temple. In the letter to his sovereigns, dispatched from Jamaica, he contends "that these mines of the Aurea are identical with those of Veragua."[15]

It was here, too, near the mouth of the river Belen, that the

first settlement on the continent of the New World was located. Although it had soon to be abandoned, it was begun with a view of permanent occupancy, and as such is deserving of special notice. A suitable memorial should indicate this spot, as one should also mark the site of Isabella, the first settlement in the New World.

It was while on the coast of Veragua that Columbus heard of the great ocean now known as the Pacific.[16] He was not, however, permitted to add its discovery to the long list of his marvelous achievements. That honor was reserved for Vasco Nuñez de Balboa.

About nine o'clock the morning following our departure from Limon we dropped anchor in the harbor of Colon. The sea was so tranquil that there was scarcely a ripple on its placid waters. It was certainly in marked contrast with the condition in which Columbus once found it in these parts; for he assures us, in the oft-quoted letter to Ferdinand and Isabella, that "never was sea so high, so terrific, and so covered with foam." It seemed like a "sea of blood, seething like a cauldron on a mighty fire." So continual, indeed, were the shifting winds, and so terrific were the storms, that the coast from Veragua to Colon which we had found washed by so calm a sea was by Columbus and his companions named *La Costa de los Contrastes*.

Immediately on our arrival our vessel was boarded by the health officers of the port. Those who could not produce a satisfactory health certificate—and many could not—were sent to quarantine. Many of our party, however, did not require any, as they did not purpose landing at Colon. Some of them were bound for Jamaica and for points more distant. Among them was C., my brave and resolute companion across the Andes, the loyal and generous young cavalier who, if he had not been of superior mold, would

more than once have lost his heart during the course of our long journey. I would fain have enjoyed his companionship longer while following the conquistadores in lands farther south; but it was not to be. To him, and to other friends, I had regretfully to pronounce the words of parting that had so frequently been addressed to us by the kindly and hospitable people we had met all along our route—*Que Uds. vayan bien, y con la Virgen!*—A happy journey and with the Virgin Mother!

As I left our good ship and the friends it bore to divers destinations and stepped ashore alone, a stranger in a strange land, I felt, I must confess, not unlike Dante when he suddenly found himself deprived of the companionship of Virgil, who had been his friend and guide during his arduous journey down through the fearsome pits of Hell and up the precipitous ledges of the mountain of Purgatory. But this impression, strong though it was, could not long remain dominant. What had in the beginning of my journey been but "a consummation devoutly to be wished," had during our wanderings in tropical lands crystallized into a determination to make the desire a reality. The happy termination of our voyage up the Orinoco and down the Magdalena was conclusive evidence that travel, even through the least frequented parts of South America, was far from being as difficult as it has long been depicted. The moment, then, that I stepped from the gang plank that connected our steamer with Panaman soil, the Rubicon was crossed, and I had resolved, *coûte que coûte*,—alone, if necessary,—to realize the long-cherished dream of my youth,—to visit the famed lands of the Incas and explore the fertile valleys under the equator. If my experience in the llanos and among the Cordilleras had not made me "fit to mount up to the stars," as Dante was when he left the Terrestrial Paradise, it had at least renewed me "even as new trees with new foliage," and I was ready to undertake

a longer and more difficult journey than the one just completed and eager to follow the conquistadores along the Andes and down the Amazon.

1

Hakluyt's *Early Voyages*, Vol. III, p. 594, London, 1810. ↑

2

The origin of the name Costa Rica is uncertain. It appears for the first time in an account of an expedition made by Martin Estete to the river San Juan in 1529, twenty-seven years after the discovery of the country by Columbus. It occurs subsequently in a document signed by the King of Spain, dated May 14, 1541. It is probable that the name was given in consequence of the rich mines that had been discovered near the town of Estrella, in Talamanca—from which it was inferred that all the interior of the country was equally rich in the precious metals—and not on account of the luxuriant vegetation that abounds, as is sometimes supposed. Cf. *Diccionario Geografico de Costa Rica*, p. 47, por Felix F. Noriega, San José, Costa Rica, 1904. ↑

3

"Alli vide una sepultura en el monte, grande como una casa y labrada."—*Relaciones y Cartas de Colon*, p. 375, Madrid, 1892. ↑

4

In his *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain*, Book IV, Chap. IX, he asserts that for a given area of land "The produce of bananas is to that of wheat as 133:1, and to that of potatoes as 44:1." These proportions, however, refer to the weights and not to the nutritive values of the products compared. The ratio of the nutritive value of bananas and wheat is, according to Humboldt, twenty-five to one in favor of bananas. Hence, he writes, "a European, newly arrived in the torrid zone is struck with nothing so much as the extreme smallness of the spots under cultivation round a cabin which contains a numerous family of Indians." ↑

5

Stanley, in *In Darkest Africa*, writes: "If only the virtues of banana flour were publicly known, it is not to be doubted but it would be largely consumed in Europe. For infants, persons of delicate digestion, dyspeptics, and those suffering from temporary derangement of the stomach, the flour properly prepared would be of universal demand. During my two attacks of gastritis a light gruel of this, mixed with milk, was the only matter that could be digested." Vol. II, pp. 261, 262, New York, 1890. ↑

6

Two Years in the French West Indies, p. 38, New York, 1890. ↑

7

Op. cit., pp. 140, 141. ↑

8

“Al famoso Matina
que a los hombres acoquina,
Y a las mulas desatina.”

↑

9

According to observations made with the pluviometer, the amount of precipitation sometimes reaches nearly two and a half inches an hour. ↑

10

“La Banane,” says Père Labat, “que les Espagnols appelent Plantain ... renferme une substance jaunatre de la consistence d’un fromage bien gras, sans aucune graines, mais seulment quelques fibres assez grosses qui semblent representer une espece de crucifix mal formé quand le fruit est coupé par son transvers. Les Espagnols du moins ceux a qui j’ai parlé, pretendent que c’est la le fruit defendu et que le premier homme vit en le mangeant le mystère de sa réparation par la croix. Il n’y a rien d’impossible la dedans; Adam pouvoit avoir meilleure vue que nous, ou la croix de ces bananes etoit mieux formée: quoiqu’il en soit il est certain que ce fruit ne se trouve seulement dans l’Amérique, mais encore dans l’Afrique, dans l’Asie, et sur tout aux environs de l’Eufrate ou on did qu’etoit le Paradis terrestre.” Op. cit., Tom. I, Part II, p. 219. ↑

11

Andres Bello, the Venezuelan poet, beautifully expresses these facts in the following verses:—

“Y para ti el banano,
Desmaya el peso de su dulce carga.
El banano, primero
De cuantos concedio bellos presentes
Providencia a las gentes
Del Ecuador feliz con mano larga;
No ya de humanas artes obligado
El premio rinde opimo;
No es á la podera, no al arado,
Deudor de su racemo.
Escasa industria bastale cual puede
Robar á sus fatigas mano esclara;
Crece veloz, y cuando exhausta acaba,
Adulta prole en torno le sucede.

Silva a la Agricultura en la Zona Torrida."

12

Jerusalem Delivered, Canto XVI.

13

Josefinos—feminine *Josefinas*—is the name given the denizens of San José. In Central America, Costaricans generally are known as *Ticos*, while the people of Nicaragua are called *Nicos* or *Pinolios*, and those of Guatemala and Honduras *Chopines* and *Guanacos* respectively.

14

Compare this with the peculiar belief of the South American Indians, alluded to in Chap. IX, regarding the cry of a lost soul.

15

Veragua has a special interest for Americans, as "the only thread of glory still held in the hands of the family of Columbus" leads back to this narrow strip of territory on the western shores of the Caribbean. The present representative of this name in Spain is Don Cristobal Colon, Duke of Veragua. His full title is Duke of Veragua and Vega, Marquis of Jamaica, Admiral and High Steward of the Indies. The grandson of the discoverer of America, Don Luis Colon, was the third Admiral and Viceroy of the Indies, the last of which titles he relinquished for that of first Duke of Veragua and Vega.

16

"Whatever he may have thought, or said he thought, when he was at Cuba, on the second voyage; whatever he thought, or said he thought, when in a half-crazed condition in the island of Jamaica, he now knew he really had discovered continental land, and that it was separated from Catigara, or the land of the east, by a goodly stretch of another sea."

"And it is pleasant to think that such a view is consistent with the nautical, geographical and astronomical knowledge of the great Discoverer."—Thatcher, *Christopher Columbus*, Vol. II. pp. 593 and 621.

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Corrections

The following corrections have been applied to the text:

Page	Source	Correction
6	plusiers	plusieurs

7	Garcilasso	Garcilaso
7	Endeckungen	Entdeckungen
8	marshaling	marshalling
12	now	new
17	Jourdan	Jourdain
18	Englishman	Englishmen
21	de	da
23	Luìs	Luis
29	[*Not in source*]	,
30	knots	miles
38	CURACAO	CURAÇAO
43	[*Not in source*]	.
67	spheriod	spheroid
75	Gerstächer	Gerstäcker
N.A.	Erberhard	Eberhard
101	reduit	réduit
101, 122	,	[*Deleted*]
101	a	à
101	differents	différents
131, 196	”	[*Deleted*]
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148	—	
154	Historie	Histoire
157	turrent	turret
157	Hartiwig	Hartwig
164, 196	[*Not in source*]	”
186	Barigón	Barrigón
189	[*Not in source*]	“
189	epecially	especially
195	fifth	filth

196	of	if
198	precupen	preocupen
216	á	à
227	decouvrir	découvrir
241	sai	sais
245	gods	goods
248	limped	limpid
253	nightfull	nightfall
303	there	their
310	statemanship	statesmanship
335	Martiu’s	Martius’
362	cononized	canonized
377	‘	“
387	conquerer	conqueror
418	becauses	because
419	temporate	temperate
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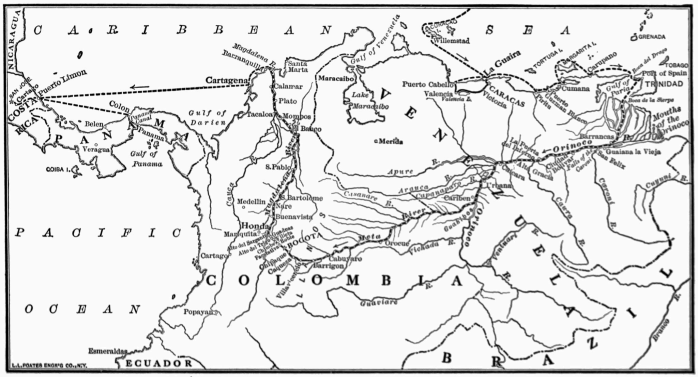
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