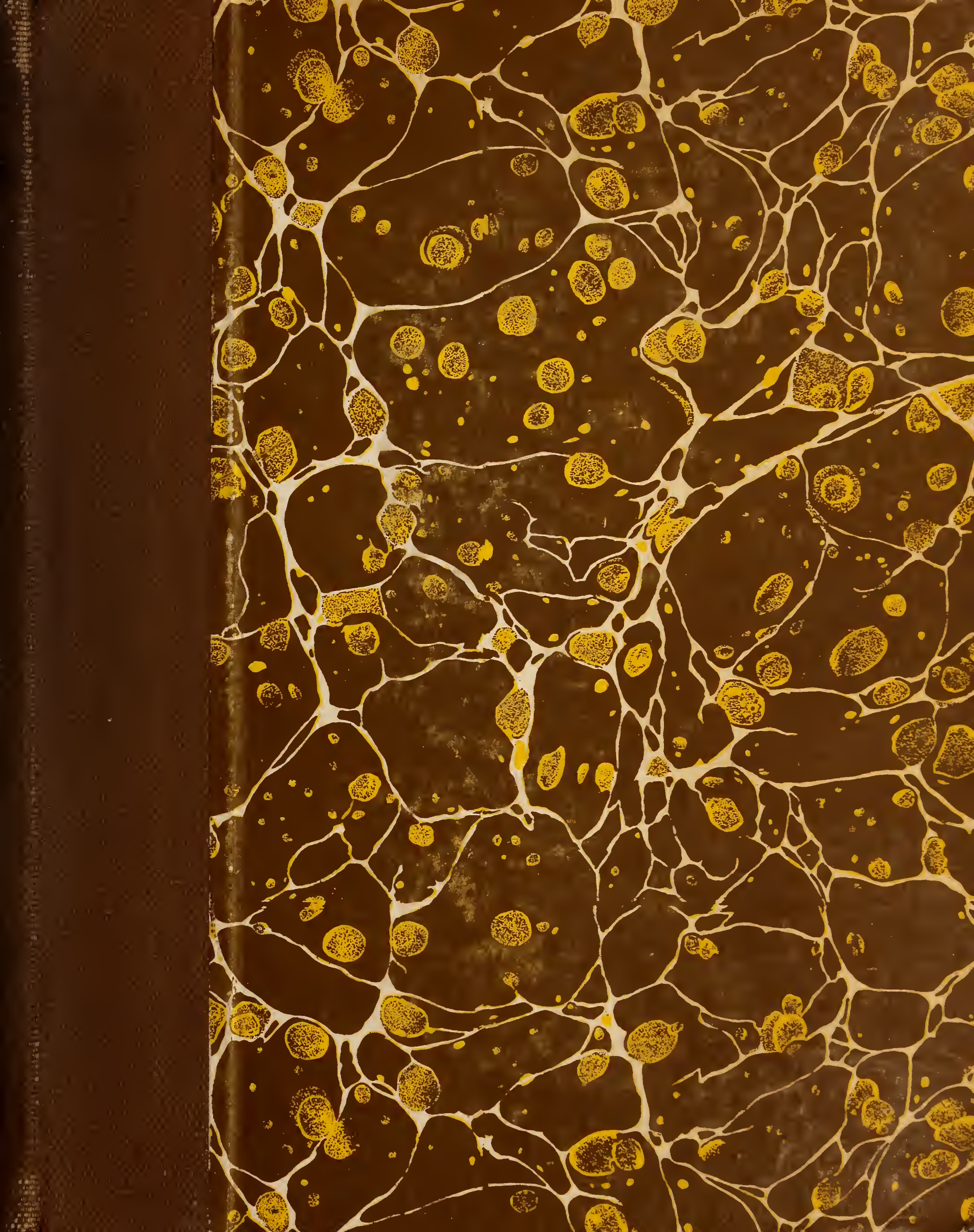

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THE KNOCKABOUT CLUB ON THE SPANISH MAIN.

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ESTES AND LAURIAT, Publishers,
BOSTON, MASS.

AN ARMY OF TURTLES ON THE ORINOCO.

THE

KNOCKABOUT CLUB

ON THE

SPANISH MAIN.

BY

FRED. A. OBER,

AUTHOR OF

"TRAVELS IN MEXICO," "THE KNOCKABOUT CLUB IN THE EVERGLADES," ETC.

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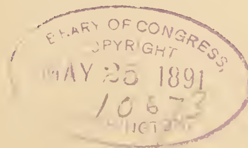
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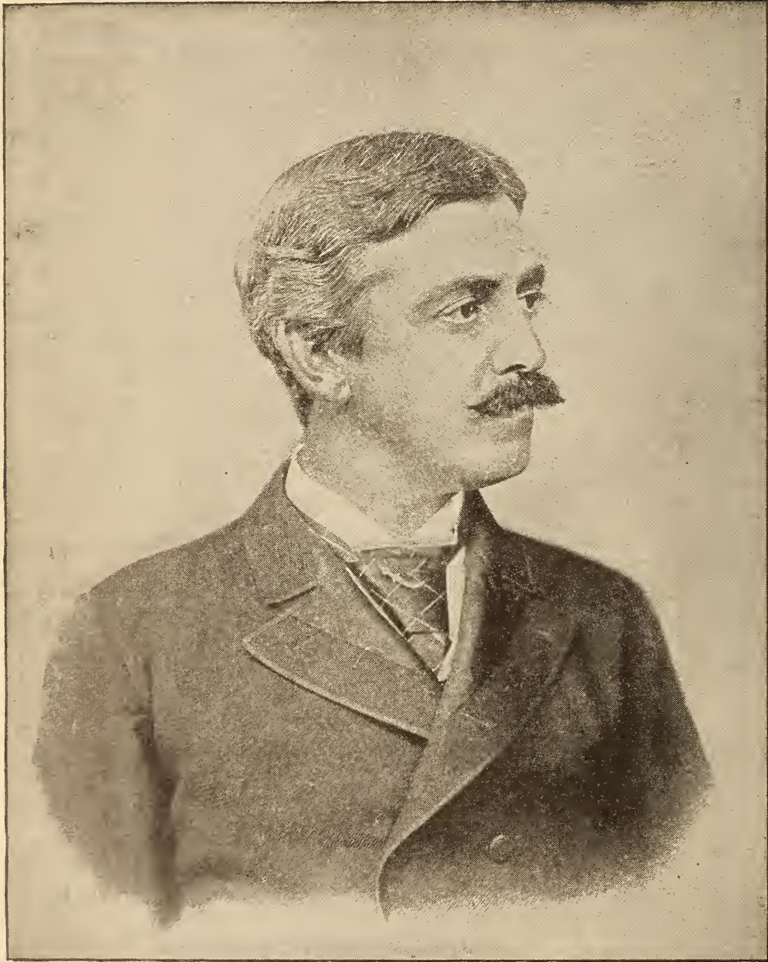

Frederick A. Ober

BIOGRAPHY.

R. FREDERICK ALBION OBER was born in Beverly, Mass. The public schools gave him his early training, and he received no other assistance from schools, save one year in the Agricultural College. At fourteen he learned the shoemaker's trade, at eighteen was working in a drug store, at twenty-one was in business with his father. He is a lineal descendant of Richard Ober, — the first American of that name who came from England to Beverly in 1664. He imbibed early a fondness for field sports and natural history; and while working at his trades, rising early and laboring late at night, he taught himself taxidermy and collected and classified nearly all the birds of New England. Audubon and Wilson were his favorite authors; and at last, yielding to a desire to tread in their footsteps, he abandoned business and went to Florida, in 1872 and 1874. Here he hunted to his heart's content, lived with the Seminoles, camped with a grandson of Osceola, and explored Lake Okeechobee to the Everglades. To accomplish the exploration of Lake Okeechobee, Mr. Ober carried two boats to Florida, sailed down Mosquito Lagoon and Indian River, and hauled his boats across to the Kissimmee River, by which his party reached the lake, being gone over a month, and encountering many strange adventures, which were published in "Forest and Stream" and Appleton's "Journal." In 1876 and 1880 he went to the West Indies for the Smithsonian Institution, exploring the Caribbee Islands from Porto Rico to Trinidad, and discovering twenty-two birds till then unknown to scientists. Two of them

were named by the naturalists in his honor. His adventures there with the Indians and half-wild negroes were published ten years ago, in a book that gave him a wide-spread reputation. In 1881 he turned his attention to Mexico, allured by the fascinating story of the conquest as told by Bernal Diaz, one of the conquerors. On his way thither he touched at Cuba and afterward visited the wonderful ruined cities of mysterious Yucatan. Arrived at the city of Mexico, he ferreted out the remains of early civilization, climbed to the peak off Popocatepetl, three miles above the sea-level, rode a thousand miles on horseback, and then returned home after seven months' absence. In 1883 and 1885 he again visited Mexico, penetrating to little-known portions of the country. In 1887 he was again in the West Indies, in 1888 in Spain and North Africa, and in 1890 in Venezuela and the Spanish Main. The exploration of these various fields has consumed a dozen years and more. The thrilling incidents connected therewith have been given to the world in his books and lectures, with which many thousands are familiar. Although at first travelling for the sake of adventure and rare birds, latterly Mr. Ober has drifted away from the study of natural history, and has shaped his journeys with a view to the exposition of the early history of America. Hence it is that Spain and Spanish America have absorbed his time and talents. In recognition of his endeavors in this field, he has been appointed special commissioner by our Government to the West Indies and Spain in connection with the approaching Columbian Exposition. As many of our readers may have surmised, he himself is the "Knockabout Club," or the "Historian," the "Professor," and the "Doctor" in one individual; and nearly all the adventures narrated are his own, while his descriptions are from his own observation and can be relied upon as authentic. It is his constant aim to instruct as well as amuse, and to convey interesting information without a sacrifice of the truth.

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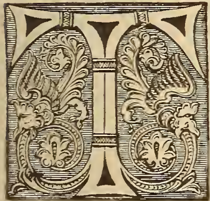
THE KNOCKABOUT CLUB

ON THE SPANISH MAIN.

CHAPTER I.

WANTED: A COUNTRY TO EXPLORE.

A QUIET LITTLE SPOT. — "LET US CAMP." — WE BUY LAND. — WOODS, BEACH, AND BOATS. — A CANOE AND A HAMMOCK. — WRITING UP OUR LAST CRUISE. — THE PROFESSOR CONTENTED. — OUR LATCH-STRING ALWAYS OUT. — THE SUMMER HOME OF THE KNOCKABOUTERS.



HE summer succeeding our journey into Africa, the events of which are set forth in our last book, the Professor and the Historian — namely, the writer — rested in the country of their birth. We had been "knockabouting" so much that we had collected more material than we could readily digest while on the wing, so we looked around for a quiet spot at which to spend the season. We sadly needed some particular abiding-place, where we could deposit the numerous trophies of travel we had accumulated in our various expeditions, and where we could study, and arrange the data for our books and lectures. Owing to the fact that our plan for some years to come was to travel a portion of each year at least, we did not wish to "settle down" and buy a house in which to dwell. And that was the problem we set ourselves to solve, — how to live by ourselves for the summer, and still not be committed to permanent

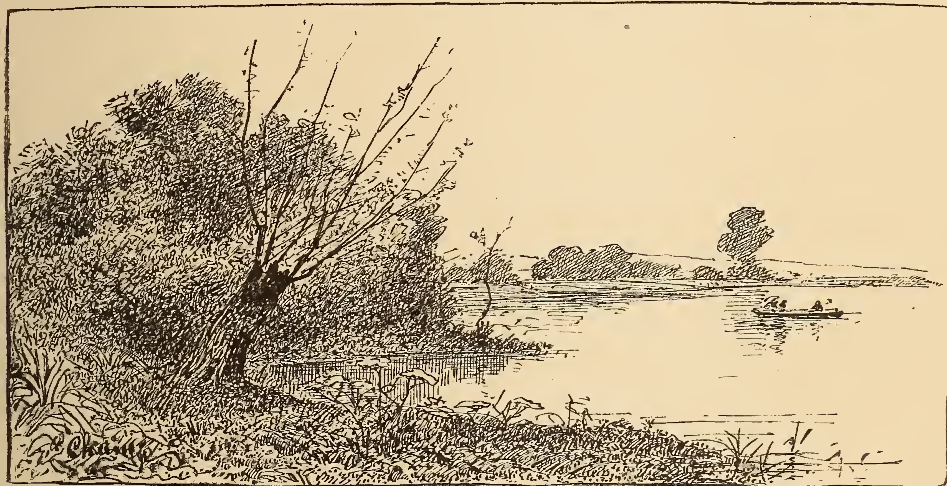
housekeeping. The Professor was greatly exercised, because he wanted to locate at once, and begin the arrangement and cataloguing of his botanical, mineralogical, and historical collections. He gave the subject the profound attention that such a great mind as his, constantly occupied in pondering weighty questions, might be expected to bestow.

I, the Historian, knew that something was about to be evolved, and so held my peace. At last it came. Solemnly removing his spectacles, and carefully polishing the glasses on the red and yellow silk bandana he always carried in his coat-tail pocket, he gazed at me in an absent manner, and opened his mouth. He uttered but three words, but those words at once shaped our course for the next six months.

" Let us camp," said the Professor; then he placed his spectacles astride his nose again, replaced the red and yellow silk bandana in his coat-tail pocket, and resumed the book he had been reading. A moment later he was perfectly oblivious of my presence and had already forgotten the matter under discussion. He had delivered himself of his opinion, and that was the end of it. It was a very good suggestion, without doubt; but it was very easy to say, " Let us camp," though not quite so easy to carry out the suggestion. Knowing the Professor as I did, having travelled thousands of miles in his company, over sea, through forest, in various lands, I very well knew that having indicated what we ought to do, he would leave it for me to do; and so I did it. That very week I departed into the country in search of a place to camp. It was early in June, and the country was dressed in its very best garb. All the summer flowers were nodding their pretty heads; all the birds were singing their finest songs; and Nature was at the very top notch of her best performance. I thought I knew just where to go, and immediately went there. A new railroad, along the southern shore of one of the largest and most beautiful lakes in New England, had just made accessible a tract of country very little

known. It was almost by instinct, as it were, that I found out the prettiest spot on the lake, and there decided we should pitch our camp.

The next thing in order was to find the owner of the land, and, if possible, purchase it. He proved to be a young farmer, who had a large acreage of pasture-land bordering the lake, and who was anxious to convert some of it into cash by a process more direct than the feed-



"THE PRETTIEST SPOT ON THE LAKE."

ing of its scanty herbage to a herd of cows. But as he had conceived the idea that this lake-land was very valuable, though really it had little value except such as the Professor and I could create by our improvements, it was some time before we could come to an agreement. There was nothing tangible to base an estimate of value on, you see. If we assumed it from what the land produced, it would be very low indeed, because the hillside portion, which only could be pastured, was covered chiefly with sweet-fern and blackberry vines, and the beach portion had no grass on it at all. But although the farmer could not perceive it of his own vision, the place had an

æsthetic value; and as this was an unknown quantity and hard to measure, the farmer, on his part, exaggerated it, while I, in my own interest, tried to keep it within bounds.

Ah, but it was a beautiful spot, — this little acre I was anxious to secure! First, it was situated at the extremity of a deep bay, at either end of which was a high hill, and between them a curving beach of white sand, a mile in length. Behind the beach was a deep belt of pines and maples, with smiling farm-lands beyond, and ranges of high hills overtopping all. I think it must have been this very bay, with its waters of clear and sparkling blue, that suggested, many years ago, to the red Indian, the aboriginal name of the lake, — the "Smile of the Great Spirit."

There, dear reader of these "Knockabouts," you now know just where the Professor and I decided to pass our summer; and you will know, I hope, where to seek us out when you desire to become acquainted with us in the flesh.

Well, as I was saying, it was just where the crescent sand-beach met the western hill-slope that this spot was found. The hill came down to the water, green with sweet fern and sweeter clover, with great gray rocks protruding from a tangle of blackberry vines, and plunged its feet into the lake with a protecting fringe of maples, elms, and alder-bushes. Back of this was a bit of wood, with a dozen different kinds of trees in it, but hardly large enough to conceal one from the country road that bounded this property on one side. The beauty of the place was the beach of pure white sand, soft and sparkling, which here curved like a cimeter and made a perfect landing-place for boats and canoes. The pine-trees came down almost to the beach-rim, and sweet-scented bayberry-bushes fringed it; and this was the most charming place in the world for a bath, where you could enjoy a plunge, or a run along the beach for several hundred yards.

On the level lawn, between the bit of wood and the beach, stood an old house, that had been built there some years ago by winter

fishermen. These men were master-workmen in a car-shop, five miles away, and they had constructed the house as though it had been a fine residence, although it was but a little shanty, and had only two rooms and a stable. This house, I concluded, would do for our summer residence, if I could secure it; but it did not belong to the owner

THE PROFESSOR AT WORK.

of the land, and would require a separate negotiation. It was perfectly equipped for housekeeping, having a stove in it, beds in the chamber, chairs, table, crockery, — in fact, everything we should need. Only the necessary provisions, clean linen, etc., would have to be brought here, to make it available for our stay.

At last, after much adjusting of differences, the young farmer and I came to an agreement; a surveyor was brought up to measure the land the very next day; a deed was drawn up; and the Professor and I

had a place we could call our own. I lost no time in concluding an arrangement with the gentlemen who owned the house, whereby we could occupy it during the summer and they might use it in winter-time, then hastened back to Boston, to bring up my friend.

It was a very great labor to move him and his collections to the place, as the camp is half a mile distant from the railroad station and the nearest house; but that once done, everything moved on pleasantly and happily.

The Professor was more than delighted; he expressed his approval of my purchase in fitting terms, condescended to look over the ground once in a general survey, and then he selected the most comfortable corner of the house for his own, and the pleasantest nook on the beach for his workshop out-of-doors.

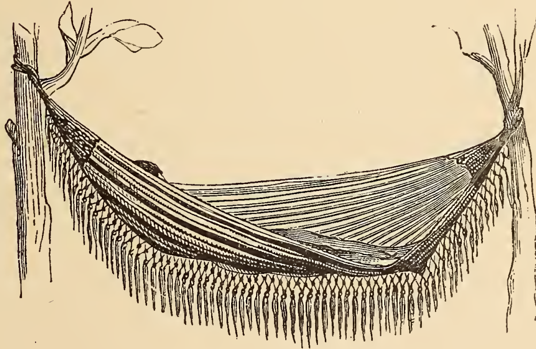
After that he was wrapped up in himself and in his pursuits, paying no attention to outside affairs except at meal-times, when he would rather impatiently inquire the cause of any delay in providing nourishment at the proper time. He seemed to think that sustenance might be obtained from the trees or the rocks, evidently without labor, as he never gave a thought to providing any. All this work fell on me; but as I was only too glad to have my friend with me, and willing to pay the price for his company, I did it without a murmur.

Now, this long introductory is put in merely to tell our friends where we passed the time since we last met, and how it was we came to write this present volume.

We had been off on a cruise for new adventure and information, and having garnered in as much as we could carry, we retired to this secluded nook to work it up into shape, — in other words, to make the book you, dear reader, are about to peruse.

We are perfectly contented with our bit of Paradise, and its only drawback is its loneliness. Being human and (we hope) sympathetic, we feel rather regretful that so much loveliness should be monopolized

by ourselves alone. I never have anything of the kind that all humanity would enjoy, without wishing all my friends to share in it. So, dear knockabouts, take this as an invitation; bring your tents and camping things along, and help us to your company. You may not find us extremely sociable, but you will find a welcome; we have boats and a canoe, hammocks, provisions, half a mile of beach to sport on, and hundreds of square miles of water in front of us, dotted with islands and said to be swarming with fish.

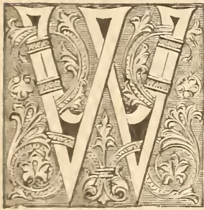


OUR TROPICAL HAMMOCK.

CHAPTER II.

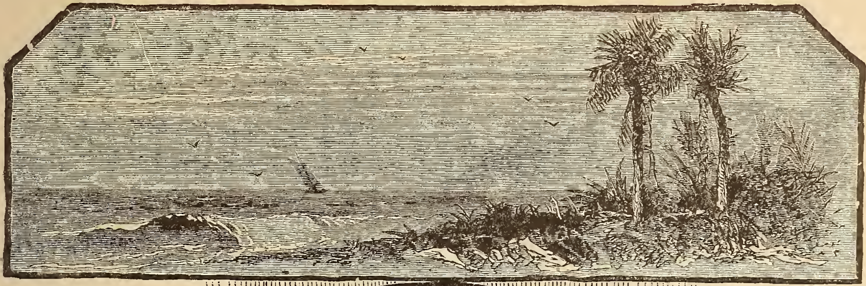
THE VOYAGE TO VENEZUELA.

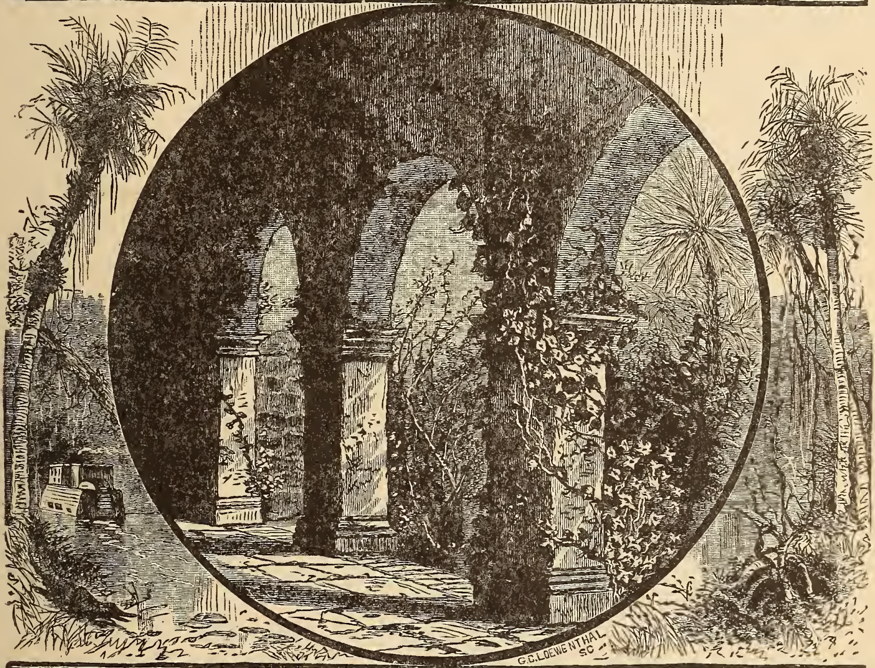
Sudden Rise in the Temperature of the Water in the Gulf Stream. — Floating Gulf-Weed. — The Flying-Fish. — The Tropic Bird. — Sight of Tropic Isles.

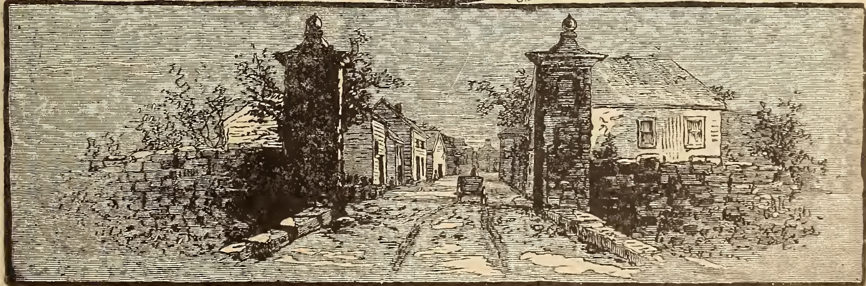


HEN the Professor and I began to cast about for a country in which to wear away the wire edge of winter, we were much "put to it" to find one measurably accessible and yet sufficiently attractive. For consider that this was not our first voyage in search of the sunbeams that Winter stores away somewhere in the South. And it was understood that we did not wish to get too far away, — not so far but that we could get back again, perchance, when the trees put forth their blossoms and the bobolinks arrived. Anybody, perhaps, may journey into the tropics; but only once a year do the apple-trees blossom and the bobolinks pour forth their ravishing melody; so indeed it must be a country of surpassing attractions that would woo us from prospective delights like these.

Professor La Vaca, my intimate friend and travelling-companion, had visited, with me, most of the Spanish-speaking peoples of the New World. We had been wrecked on the reefs of the Bermudas, had sailed the seas of the Bahamas, circumnavigated Cuba, explored Mexico, and gained a glimpse of South America. Ten years ago, at the mouth of the Orinoco, we had been obliged to turn back from

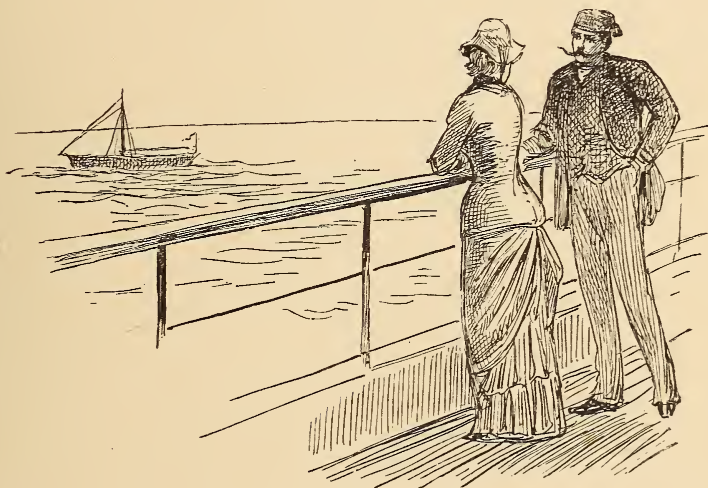






A GLIMPSE OF FLORIDA.

a journey into that mysterious continent. Ever since, whenever the season for travel came around, we had cast anxious glances in that direction. But South America is a far country, and the voyage thither expensive to the individual so unfortunate as to have to labor half the year for the wherewithal to exist during the other half. At least, it seemed so when we received replies to the letters sent the great steamship lines running to Brazil and Panama. It would need a small fortune in order to accomplish Chili, the Argen-



PASSING THE LIGHT-SHIP

tine, or Brazil, since two or three steam-lines have the monopoly of travel and traffic. But the Professor, who is more persistent than I am, discovered a way to reach the continent, to "sample" a republic or two pertaining to our South American sister, and to fill ourselves up with caloric for the winter to come. He it was, I will confess, who brought to my notice the fact that a real American line ran straight down to the land of our desires, without a stop by the way. I had heard of it before, to be sure, but had given it scant attention, thinking it devoted more space and care to freight than passengers.

But in this I was mistaken; for the "Red D" Line, I found, ran half a dozen steamers with special view to the comfort of passengers, and with a round-trip rate that promised the Professor and myself

NASSAU HARBOR.

enough of our winter earnings remaining for the seaside and mountains of New England on our return. In a word, the regular rate to Venezuela and back, including excellent fare and lodging *en route*, hardly exceeds five dollars per day. We had often paid this at the seaside, and all we got for our money was but tolerable fare and a

monotonous, even irksome, existence. In this case, superadded to the comforts of life was the fact that we should be all the time travelling onward, with changing scene and new objects for contemplation.

The steamers of the "Red D" fleet range all the way from sixteen hundred to twenty-eight hundred tons, the smallest being the "Valencia" and the largest the "Venezuela." We would have chosen the largest, of course, had her day of departure coincided with ours, but compromised on the "Philadelphia," a stanch steamer of twenty-one hundred tons, and with a record for comfort and safety. The "Philadelphia" was the steamer particularly mentioned also in our guidebook as that on which the writer of that excellent pamphlet had taken passage.

It did seem rather ungrateful to leave New England just when the first signs of spring were in the air. Spring, in our country, as a certain well-known author has written, is a maiden hard to woo, and proves to be backward in coming forward; but like our own true Yankee girls, she is well worth having when once you get her. There is a bit of acerbity in her temper, perhaps, that our maidens lack, — at least, all those that I know, — and a certain coldness, with which she masks her real intentions; but when with a hop-skip-and-a-jump, she plumps herself into your arms, — why, all the world could not take her from you! That is the way you feel — or ought to feel — when the May mornings come around. Well, as I was saying, the signs of spring were appearing even the week before we left: the wild geese were tracking the skies, the crow-blackbirds flocking in the taller trees, a robin or two hopping about the fields, and one morning a blackbird's note was heard on the still air.

From all these harbingers of better days we tore ourselves away; from what sweeter charms we will not venture to state, lest one might think we expected to sail direct to Paradise.

Now, who can describe a sea voyage and make it interesting? Washington Irving did, you will say; but that was when sea voyages

were events; and, again, he had the field all to himself. I have made voyages enough in sailing-vessels to learn to abhor them; life is too short for one to spend it on the wave. I always wanted to "duck" the author of "Life on the Ocean Wave," and do hope that if he ever made a voyage (which I doubt) he was seasick all the time. The good Lord made dry land enough for all the inhabitants thereof, and He meant for man to stay there, I am sure. But man is a roving animal, and will continue to be to the end of the chapter.

There were not many passengers on the "Philadelphia," which I attribute to the fact that the travelling world is not yet aware of "Red D" attractions. Be that as it may, the Professor and I had no friends to see us off, while the few other passengers had quite a cabin full. They had friends thoughtful enough to send last messages to be read in the outer harbor also; while we had no such mementos of living beings ashore who considered our departure or our return as of any moment whatever. We possessed ourselves in stoical, perhaps cynical, calmness, at these signs of affection (in others, bestowed *upon* others); and even when one of the gentlemen from Connecticut pulled a love-note from his wife out of the pocket of a shirt he donned, the second day out, we were not greatly affected thereby. Man, having been created gregarious, — that is, with an inherent hankering to "flock" with his fellow-man, — and having, moreover, vanity enough to cause him to desire to be loved (whatever sentiment *he* may entertain in return), is naturally envious of others more favorably regarded than himself. Hence (in a purely impersonal way), the Professor and I may have been a trifle envious; but as we care for nobody else more than we care for each other, and are convinced that there are greater treasures to seek than we have yet acquired, — why, we yield to the others their joys, real or imaginary, and go our way.

The statue of Liberty waved us a last farewell as the pilot stepped over the side (his pocket full of letters for the "dear ones"

pertaining to the Four-Men-from-Connecticut), and New York grew dim in the distance. Then we were alone upon the briny deep; our voyage had begun.

The 26th of March, 1890, was as fair a day as ever old March begot. The 27th was still fair, but the sea was heavy and the wind ahead. On the second day out, at noon, we entered the Gulf Stream, striking its northern edge, and left it toward the next morning. At this point it is about one hundred miles across; and its temperature varies considerably. The highest recorded this trip in mid-stream was 76°, though it sometimes runs up to 80°, even as high as 82° and 84°. It is interesting to note the rapid leap in the thermometric scale as the Gulf Stream is reached. The water will register forty-five, fifty, fifty-two, then suddenly jump to sixty-six, seventy, and seventy-five.

Our course was almost due south, a little eastwardly, — as straight a course as sailor ever steered. The third and fourth days appeared the gulf-weed, at first in sprays and spangles, then in drifts and windrows. Finally, and especially during the fourth day's voyaging, the sea was brightened with great sheets of golden brown. So blue was the water, so golden-bronze the drifts, that we would fain be artists, that we might transfer the beautiful colors to canvas.

These drifts of weed were seemingly alive, and little fish leaped out as we sailed by. We know, of course, that many investigators have examined the gulf-weed, and their findings have long since been published to the world. The floating weed *is* all alive with multitudinous forms of life.

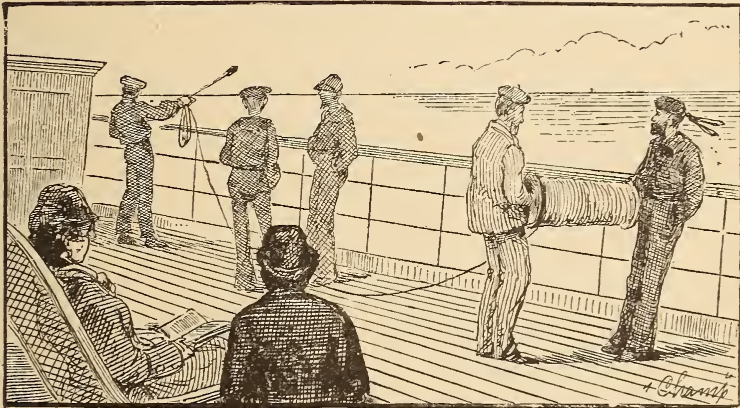
The fourth and the fifth days showed us those angels of air and sea, the flying-fish, at first singly, and rarely seen, then increasing in number hour by hour, until the sixth day, the water was alive with them. I think it has long been settled that they cannot sustain prolonged flight without at least dipping their fins in the briny wave. Many and many a time I have watched the flying-fish; and I really believe that there is no more beautiful sight at sea than a flock of them skim-

ming the waves, with silver wings extended wide. They can change their course at will apparently, but seem to steer by means of the tail and ventral fins, just touching the water with the tip of the tail, and then swerving off at a tangent. Many take an undulatory flight, sailing along for hundreds of yards, but at no great height above the waves. Now and then they will dash through the seas, reappearing beyond a billow, alternately in air and water. A strong, well-sustained flight by a large fish rejoicing in its strength, is a beautiful sight indeed; but more attractive is a little flock of young ones, twenty or thirty in number, darting out of the water in a body, like a sudden discharge of silvery arrows from Neptune's bow. One night, coming out of the cabin after dinner, I found our captain groping about the deck in the dusk. He was "fishing for flyers," he said, and had found several dead upon the deck.

During the day it had been very rough, great seas sweeping upon us, and now and then spilling across the rail; and it was probably during the advent of one of these seas that the fish came aboard. I have often found them on the deck of a sailing-vessel, heavily laden, within a few feet of the water; but unless aided by the seas, these fish must have leaped quite fifteen feet above the level of the water. They fly with great force. The head of one of them was torn completely off, and one striking you in the face would certainly have given you a black eye. Those the captain caught were fried next morning and given to one of our passengers, who had been the victim of an April joke.

The flying-fish is seldom found north of the Gulf Stream's inner edge, and may well be termed a peculiar product of the tropics. Another denizen of the warm zone toward which we were hastening, we saw the fourth day out, sailing the air, the tropic bird (*Phæthon æthereus*), called by the sailors the boatswain, from its loud, whistling cry. It is a most shapely bird, built to cleave the air and breast the hurricane. The one we saw must have been at least three hundred

miles from land. We were then in the region of the Horse Latitudes, called by some the "Doldrums," because of the variable undertides and currents. I shall not merit, perhaps, the name of a tropic traveller, if I do not make mention of the Sargasso Sea, the outer edge of which we skirted or crossed, and the source, it is said, of the vast floats of gulf-weed. But I have crossed these waters so often that it seems to me like an old story. Had I not, at some time previous, done so, I should call your attention to the fact that this is the sea Columbus crossed, on his way to the Bahamas, Cuba, and San



HEAVING THE LOG.

Domingo. A venturesome voyage we feel it to have been, in those frail *caravelas*, scarcely larger than a fishing-boat, as we, in our great steamer, are tossed by the rough waves mercilessly about.

Perhaps I ought to add a word or two anent the steamer, — our floating home for nearly a month to come. The Professor and I were agreeably surprised to find such comfort, cleanliness, and system aboard this boat. We both have crossed the Atlantic in the great English steamers, and we both declare that in no whit, save in size, do they surpass these of the Venezuelan line. The staterooms are quite as large as in many of those, the service prompt, and the crew

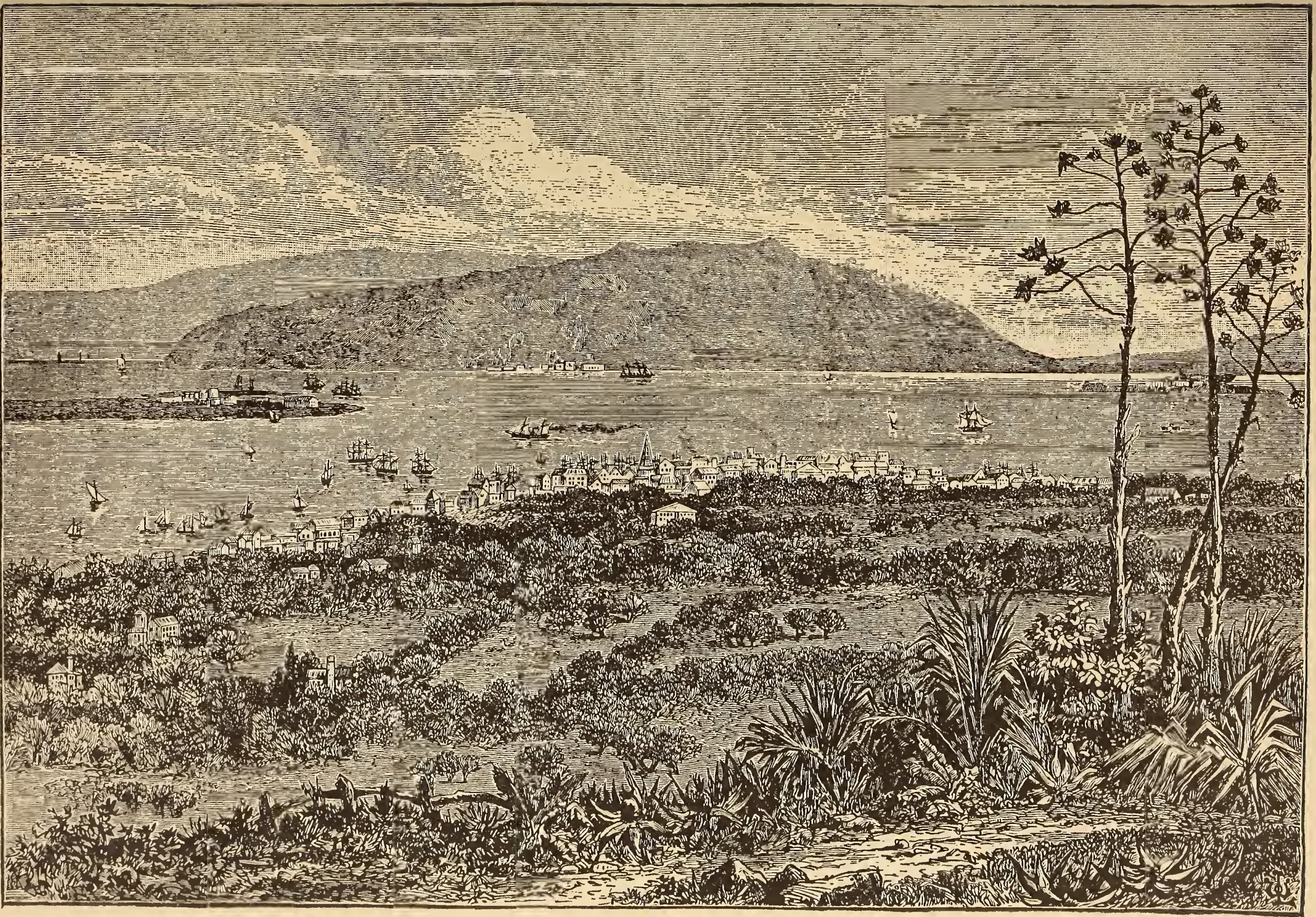
and officers efficient. The *menu* is nearly as complete as the best of the transatlantics, while our steward has a reputation of his own for elegant catering. At the head of our table sat the burly and genial Captain Chambers, who treated us with the cordiality of a father, and beamed upon us at every meal save lunch. To say that he is a native of the State of Maine, born on land and bred on the sea, is enough, at present, in his honor.

The second day out, just at the time and place predicted by our captain, we sighted the crack steamship of the line, the "Venezuela," on her way to New York, flying the American flag, and the great red "D" conspicuous on her smoke-stacks. Her sister ship, the "Caracas," we expected to meet at Curaçoa, and by her send back our first letter to the "States." As I write these lines in my notebook, land is in sight, the heights of Curaçoa, while we sighted the first landfall, Buen Ayer, three hours before, at twelve o'clock, noon.

The first land of the southward trip was Mona Island. This lies directly between San Domingo and Puerto Rico, and appeared to us as a bluff headland, standing up bravely in the morning light. It is said to be about six miles long, with water and coco-trees on its other side, but is uninhabited.

How many misty memories arise, of man's inhumanity to man, as these islands, San Domingo and Puerto Rico, are brought before us! The eastern province of San Domingo belonged to a famous Indian princess, at the time of the coming of the Spaniards, and Puerto Rico to a race of Indians distinguished for their many fine qualities. Thousands of peaceful people dwelt there then; now it is centuries since the last of them perished, driven to swift death by the murderous Spaniards.

Ten years ago, in March, 1880, I sailed around Puerto Rico, and many visions of beauty arise, as I recall its beautiful hills and harbors. It is a thirty-six-hours' sail across the Caribbean Sea from Mona to Curaçoa. We cannot distinguish any difference between the waters



KINGSTON HARBOR, JAMAICA.

of the Caribbean and the Atlantic, except that we met rougher treatment here than there. This was the reverse of what I had expected, remembering my many sails on the waters of this sea, and the long smooth track of the sun as I used to watch it set from my camp in the Caribbean Mountains.

The fourth and fifth days we were in the latitude of those isles of calm in which I camped for twenty months a dozen years ago. Their memory comes back to me like the visions of one's long-past youth; for I was young then, full of adventure and spirit, with a heart for any exploit. Not that the fire has died away, or is in any wise dimmed even; but that my work as an explorer is done. Then I discovered a score of birds, unknown even to science, the skins of which are in our National Museum, and which might have been fluttering in the forests to-day, unknown and undiscovered, but for me. Ah, the world was new then; the forest spirits beckoned to me to come and woo them, and I went. The world is just as bright and enjoyable now as then, but enjoyment takes other forms, and as for adventure — I have had my fill!

CHAPTER III.

ACROSS THE CARIBBEAN SEA.

Adventures of the Past. — Devil-Birds of the Mountains. — The Isles that lie beyond our Ken. — A Monologue on Monkeys. — An Original Poem by an Absent Friend.

N deck the first evening succeeding our entrance into the Caribbean Sea, while yet Mona Island lay dimly outlined astern, I found my old friend, the Professor, gazing eastward with a far-away look on his face.

"Away over there, out of sight," he said, as I joined him, "lie the islands we hunted through twelve years ago.

"What glorious adventures we had then, *amigo mio!* Shall we ever have the like again? Shall we find new birds awaiting us in the forests ahead of us now, or Carib Indians to guide us through the wilds, and entertain us in their huts of palm-leaves?

"I am thinking of the life we led, and the joyful existence of that happy period of our lives. Ah, me! if we could only be always young, and eagerly looking forward to new adventures!"

This was a long speech for the Professor; but I knew that he was strangely stirred by these reminiscences of our earlier explorations. Above us the bright stars were shining, and the celestial luminaries were reflected in the waters of the deep. There is one star I always

seek when far away from home, — one that invariably reminds me of home scenes and the dear ones it shines above. This is the North Star, its position unerringly indicated by the pointers of the Dipper. Down here, on the verge of the Caribbean, it is much nearer the horizon than with us in the North, and it crouches lower and lower, the farther south we go, while almost exactly opposite rises higher and higher the Southern Cross. This constellation rises on our vision in the latitude of the Bahamas, and becomes brighter and larger as the coast of South America is approached, while the North Star sinks finally nearly out of sight. This is the same starry cross Paul and Virginia saw in the other hemisphere, lying slantwise in the Southern sky. The heavens everywhere declare the glory of God, be it North or South, in limpid tropic sky or frosted dome of Northern night, ablaze with the celestial lamps of the thither world!

A strange cry interrupted our meditations, a wild, piercing, mournful shriek, coming to us from the darkness in front of the ship. It was startling and weird; and half the passengers came running to the rail, thinking probably some one was being strangled and cast into the sea.

I myself was surprised into an exclamation; but the Professor reassured me by remarking, "That is the *diablotin;* don't you remember it?"

The *diablotin*, or devil-bird, of the Caribbean Sea had been the mystery of this region until we had found out all about its habits. When we began our researches, we thought it must be a mythical bird. Everybody who professed to have seen it said it was long ago, so long ago that he could hardly tell whether it was like a duck or a sea-bird. As near as we could ascertain, it was like a duck in shape, with a bill like a gull's, in color black and white. Every one agreed that it lived in the tops of the highest mountains, and that it burrowed a hole just beneath the surface of the earth six feet deep, at the end of which it laid its eggs. It could only be found at home while nesting,

during the daytime, being nocturnal in its habits, and prowling about the sea at night. The opinion among the mountaineers of the islands was that the *manacon* (a species of opossum) had killed all the *diablotins;* but we believed that a bird so far-flying as this could not be killed by a local disturber like the *manacon*, and we think we brought it to light, ten years ago, in the Island of Saba.

About two hundred years ago, an old French priest voyaged to these islands, and he makes the first mention of the devil-bird: "We were now in the season for certain birds called *diables*, or *diablotins* (little devils), that are said to live and breed in the islands of Dominica and Guadaloupe. This bird is nearly the size of a fowl, and is sometimes called the pullet; its plumage is black, its wings long and strong, the legs rather short, the feet like those of a duck, but furnished with long and strong claws; its beak is a good inch and a half in length, curved, pointed, extremely hard and strong; the eyes are large and even with the head, and serve admirably during the night, but are useless during the day, so that when surprised out of its retreat, it dashes against everything in its way, and at last falls to the earth.

"These birds live on the fish which they catch in the sea by night. After they have finished fishing, they return to the mountains, where they live in holes like rabbits, and do not come out again till the return of night, to go to the sea.

"They cry out to one another as they skim the surface of the sea, calling and replying."

These cries, uttered by the devil-birds as they hunted along the waves, were what awoke us from our reveries and brought surging over us another flood of reminiscence.

"Do you remember," said the Professor, "our exciting monkey-hunt in the mountains of Granada? The island must lie directly east of us now, and cannot be more than two hundred miles away.

"I recall the glimpses I got from the mountain-forest above Richmond, where we entered the monkeys' stronghold. First, the blue

water hazy in the east, foaming as it approaches a wide bay formed of a long point of land called the Telescope, and a long island on the other side with breakers beyond, caused by the coral reefs. The village of La Baye is formed of huts clustered beneath rows and groups of palms. Above it are bowl-shaped valleys golden-green with sugar-cane, dotted with thatched huts and red-roofed sugar buildings beneath bread-fruit and mango trees. A white-spired church is perched conspicuously on a long knoll, with its chapel-of-ease close by, ringed round with low trees and overtopped by tall cabbage palms. Coco-trees cluster thickly in ranks and confined masses in the upper valleys; palms are outlined against the black mountains, which enclose this valley of valleys within a valley, and of hills enclosing hills. A noise near me causes me to start; and I withdraw my gaze from the wide-spread view below, and see close at my elbow a little 'sugar-bird,' in plumage of black and yellow, tugging away at the dead leaves of a *balisin*, or wild plantain. It carries the dry material to its nest near by, which it defends with great spirit, and attacks any bird, no matter how large, coming near it.

A THATCHED HUT.

Now and then it robs another nest, nearly completed, of its materials, making a lively squabble with its owner.

"IN THE PLEASANT WOODS OF RICHMOND."

"Another bird, the *grive*, or thrush, flies by on silent wing, and occasionally alights overhead. It is easily attracted by a noise, and approaches very near my face whenever I call it to me.

"The stream below me makes sweet music, which mingles with the murmur of the forest in soothing melody. These were some of the scenes and sounds that greeted me as I waited patiently the coming of the monkeys — that did not come after all — in the pleasant woods of Richmond.

"Late in the evening I saw at a distance a monkey leaping from tree to tree, nearly a mile away; and from the agitation of the tree-tops I judged there must have been quite a flock of monkeys in that bit of woods. You remember, Histrix, our monkey hunt later on, when we did get a monkey, and were so ashamed of ourselves that we never told of it?"

"Yes, and I remember also the poem our eccentric friend, the Doctor, wrote about the skull we brought him from the woods."

The passengers had gathered about us by this time, and seemed greatly interested in our description of the life we once enjoyed in the Caribbean Islands. At the mention of the poem they all demanded that we should produce it; and as I had it in my scrapbook, I complied with their desire, and read them then and there the Doctor's —

AN ODE TO A MONKEY,

SUGGESTED BY HIS SKULL.

There is no brain within this hollow shell,
Neither is there a nose wherewith to smell;
But time was when this skull was animate,
Instinct with life, and formed a monkey's pate.
Among the trees its owner frisked and played,
And cut up antics in a way not staid,
Stood on this selfsame head, hung by its paws,
And chased the parrots and the gay macaws,
Did everything, in fact, a monkey could,
Performed all tricks an honest monkey should,
Excepting one: it never ceased to fail
Whene'er it tried suspension by its tail.

For if he had tried it, he 'd have come to grief;
Though perhaps it surpasses all belief,
But that tail of his he could n't entwine
About any branch, or limb, or a vine.

"THE DOCTORS CAME."

'T was the only failing the monkey had;
But this was the ailing that made him sad.
And he often said to himself, said he,
"Oh, for a more flexible vertebræ!
What would I give to see myself toddle
About the woods with a mighty caudal
Appendage, that in a prehensile grasp
The limb of a forest monarch could clasp."

No wonder this monkey was feeling sad;
That he fell from grace, and went to the bad;
That his eyes sank in, and his cheek grew pale,
When those eyes aforesaid lit on his tail.

This is but a "figurative expression,"
A sort of "poetical concession."

And now, to relieve the reader's suspense,
And also the monkey's — still on the fence —
In a single sentence let me relate
Why it was this monkey grew so sedate;
Why it was he could n't hang by the tail,
Cool his heated brain in the perfumed gale.
Here, then, without any pretence to style,
Is the reason why that this "animile"
Grew morose and thin, and so full of bile
That his victuals hurt him at every trial,
Though the doctors came from many a mile
And placed him outside of many a phial
Of ipecac pills and castor "ile."
They seemed not to soothe, but only to rile;
In his favorite haunt he lingered a while,
Then gave up the ghost, with a sickly smile.
When a monkey dies they do not bury
His last remains in a cemetery;
With tenacious tail he clings to a limb,
And when he lets go, there 's an end to him.
A naturalist to his grave did come,

"OUR MONKEY'S SKELETON."

A man who dwelt in a museum,
Where of monkeys and reptiles they had some
Ten thousand or more, all pickled in rum;
And as luck would have it, he stumbled on
The remains of our monkey's skeleton;
And he jumped for joy, and he said, said he,
"Why, this is a famous discovery!
These are bones of the *Cercopithecus*,
To be precise, the true *Callitricus*,
A monkey rare, with non-prehensile tail—"
The very fact our monkey did bewail.

There was but one opinion among the passengers, and that was that the merit of the poem was about equal to the subject that inspired it. But they all agreed that it was the best poem they had ever heard on that subject—never having heard any other before!

"Poor Doctor!" said the Professor. "I wonder where he is now! The last we saw of him, you know, he was sitting under a palm-tree, at Biskra, on the borders of the desert, pulling out the molars of a wild Bedouin Arab.

"I think the Arab intended to kill him after the operation was over; but he would have to be a very smart Arab to get ahead of the Doctor. He said he would rejoin our caravan; but it is a year now since we heard from him, and I'm half afraid the desert sands cover him."

CHAPTER IV.

SOME DOINGS ON SHIPBOARD.

Comfortable Travelling. — Some Things we had to eat. — A Murderer of English. — Our Grand Entertainment. — How to study Spanish. — The Language of the Future. — Land in Sight.

T seems to me that we have at last reached the ideal method of travel; and the Professor agrees with me. It is this: To occupy a commodious room on the deck of a large steamer, all by yourself; to have electric communication with the pantry and the refreshment counter; to be waited on by attentive servants; to have trained officers in charge of your floating hotel; and to move along without a thought or care for your safety and locomotion. Is not this the perfection of travel?

We went down, as I have said, on the "Philadelphia," but before we returned we lived aboard various steamers of the Line, and aboard them all found the same unvarying courtesy from commanders, pursers, stewards; and all united to make us contented and happy.

Altogether, it was one vast pleasure trip, with smooth seas (in the main), and magnificent steamers, strange sights, tropical scenery, and tropical experiences. That our "inner men" were not neglected, let the following *menu*, selected at random, testify: —

STEAMSHIP "VENEZUELA." — APRIL 30, 1890.

DINNER.

Soup:

Consommé. Noodle.

Entrée:

Queen Fritters.
Chicken à l'Espagnole.
Corned Beef and Cabbage.

Roast:

Ribs of Beef.
Baked Ham with Wine Sauce.

Vegetables:

Boiled and Mashed Potatoes.
Asparagus. String Beans. Onions.

Pastry:

Rice Custard Pudding. Lemon Sauce.
Apple and Strawberry Pies.
Wine Jelly. Small Pastry.

Dessert:

Pineapple Sherbet.
Nuts. Raisins. Oranges. Bananas.
Cheese. Coffee and Tea.

The "Venezuela" was the steamship we sailed in on our return voyage. But I must not anticipate, for we have not yet reached the Spanish Main, and have not yet finished with the Southern Sea we were sailing on in the last chapter. First let me mention some of the passengers we have on board.

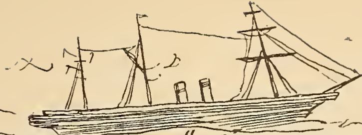
Only six of us are Americans; two are French engineers on their way to build a railroad inland from Lake Maracaibo; and two are Venezuelans. Travel hitherward is light at this season; but the return trips will be crowded with the best of Venezuela's citizens, seeking a northern clime to summer in. I am brushing up my Spanish, and slowly the words and phrases are coming back to me. It is but an indifferent Spanish I speak, I am afraid; but when our French

companions proceed to murder our mother English, I am encouraged. One of them makes praiseworthy attempts to master our language, and neglects no opportunity to exhibit his proficiency of speech.

We were cosmopolitan, and we were altogether a jolly crowd; even the Professor was occasionally excited to hilarity, and often contributed his share of the conversation. A day or two before our southward voyage was to end, there was a great stir among the passengers. We were few in number, but we determined to give an entertainment, even though our only auditors were the officials of the ship. They said it was a grand success. On the pages following is our programme, drawn in pen-and-ink by our own special artist.

Every passenger on board was expected to contribute something to the entertainment, and after it was over we had our customary social chat. This time the conversation turned upon language, and especially the language spoken in the country we were sailing to, — the Spanish. It is spoken, as the readers of this book well know, in the greater portion of the country lying south of the United States, — in Mexico, Central America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, partially in several other islands of the West Indies, and in all South America except the empire of Brazil. It is destined to be of great use in the near future to our American people; and it will well repay our young Americans to learn this language, spoken by nearly fifty millions of people living on this hemisphere where we dwell.

The Professor and I had tried several "systems" of teaching a foreign tongue, and had finally adopted the latest, the "Meisterschaft," as that which gave us the most immediate grasp of the language, that enabled us to converse in the vernacular with the people who spoke it. We found, in an older system, some very good advice on study and the acquiring of a foreign tongue, — so good that I wish to repeat some of it here. "Divide and conquer," the author says; repeat, re-read; read easy words at first, but *read!* The order to be followed in the study of a foreign language is: reading, hearing, speaking,



GRAND CONCERT ON BOARD THE "CITY OF PHILADELPHIA"
• OFF MONA ISLAND •

2d APRIL 1890. COMMENCE 8 O'CLOCK; CARRIAGES 9:15. P.M.

Chorus – "THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER".

SONG – "ROCKED IN THE CRADLE OF THE DEEP."
MR. SNAZELLE.

SONG – "STRANGERS YET –"
MR. FELLOWES.

RECITAL. THE ARMADA
REV. DR. BACON.

DR. WEBSTER WILL PRESIDE

• AT THE PIANO •

MR. HAWKINS.

"JAPANESE SELECTION" – MR. BEKKER.

RECITAL –
"AURELIAS UNFORTUNATE YOUNG MAN."
MR. SNAZELLE.

SONG –
THE FINE OLD ENGLISH GENTLEMAN
MR. BROWNE.

CONDUCTOR
MR. SNAZELLE

SONG –
"TIS KNOWN ALONE TO THEE."
MR. GUNNING.

A YARN –
"HOW • BILL ADAMS • WON THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO –"
– MR. SNAZELLE.

SONG – "MY OLD FRIEND JOHN –"
MR. SNAZELLE –

SOLO & CHORUS

"AULD LANG SYNE".
MR. HAWKINS & CHORUS

• GOD • SAVE • THE • QUEEN •

writing; acquire, then, the art of reading, of hearing, of speaking, and of writing.

"It is by translating that young people learn best of all the art of writing. If you wish to be one day translated, begin yourself by translating. . . . The prevailing notion that we must be taught everything is a great evil. The most extensive education, given by the most skilful masters, often produces but inferior characters; that alone which we give to ourselves elevates us above mediocrity.

"The eminence attained by great men is always the result of self-imposed labors. . . . He who attempts composition without first laying in a large provision of knowledge will at best deal out none but commonplace ideas, and conceal poverty of thought under pomp of phraseology.

"But a second language presents an inexhaustible source of interesting compositions, which, while they serve as models for the manner of treating a subject, afford by translation the best means of practising the art of writing. . . . The best mode of imitation in foreign composition is *double* translation, which consists in translating the foreign text into the national idiom, and then endeavoring to reproduce that text by translating the version back into the original. . . . Those who express themselves best in their own language owe their superiority far more to their own reflections than to the precepts of the grammarians. There was no methodical treatise or grammar at the time Shakspeare, Milton, Dryden, Addison, Pope, and Johnson formed their style of writing; and the same holds good with regard to Cicero, Virgil, Horace, La Fontaine, Dante, Petrarch, and many other celebrated writers, who, so far from having learned anything from grammarians, supplied them with materials from which they inferred their rules."

Says Voltaire: "The assiduous reading of good writings will be more useful for the formation of a pure and correct style than the study of our grammars. We soon acquire the habit of speaking well from the frequent reading of those who have written well."

There! You will find some words of wisdom in the above, which it will repay you to commit to memory; to supplement this I add a good bit of advice from that excellent book, "The Intellectual Life," by P. G. Hamerton: "Much time is saved by following pursuits which help each other. To have one main pursuit and several auxiliaries is the true principle of arrangement. . . . And whatever is to be mastered ought to be mastered so thoroughly that we shall not have to come back to it, when we ought to be carrying the war far into the enemy's country."

One thing at a time, and that well done! I will close these quotations by one of Martial's epigrams, written more than eighteen hundred years ago, aimed at the critics of his verses: —

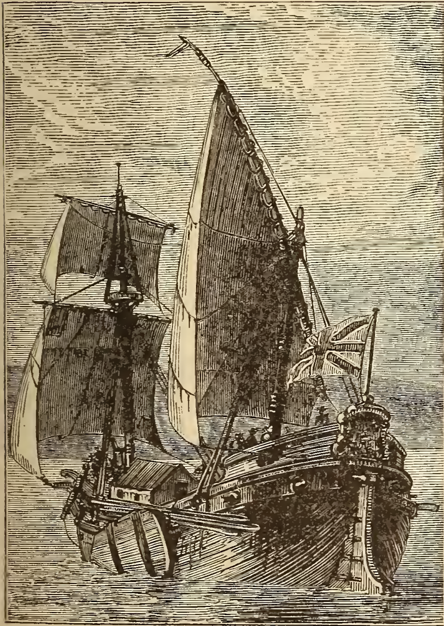
> "The readers and the hearers like my books;
> And yet some writers cannot them digest.
> But what care I? for when I make a feast
> I would my guests should praise it, — not the cooks!"

But through the window of my stateroom, right abeam, I can see the jagged outline of Curaçoa. The man at the wheel has just tolled six bells, and at four o'clock we expect to toss our mail aboard the outward-bound "Caracas." Two days here, and then — on, to the coast of the mysterious continent!

CHAPTER V.

CURAÇOA, — A LITTLE DUTCH PARADISE.

Mountains of Phosphate of Lime which have yielded Fortunes. — Wilhelmstadt and Schattegat Lagoon. — Dutch Architecture. — A Charming Climate. — The Market Girls.



In the olden times, when sea pirates and buccaneers sailed the Caribbean, and made it lively for the coast settlements of Cuba, Florida, and the West Indies, the "Spanish Main" was a name of mysterious and terrible import. It was applied to the stretch of coast lying between the Island of Trinidad and the Darien. The third voyage of the great navigator, Columbus, first brought this region to the attention of civilized man, and in the year succeeding, in 1499, Amerigo Vespucci made a successful trading voyage to this country of savages and precious products.

The Island of Margarita was discovered; and the pearls of sea oysters, purchased from the natives, enriched many a Spaniard and

caused Columbus much trouble. For by the king's patent Columbus was entitled to a tithe of everything discovered; and as he sailed directly past and over the pearl-producing oyster-beds, leaving them to be exploited by petty adventurers, little gain had he for his pains. This, we know, is the fate of pioneers, — to plough land and sea, to sow seeds and soundings, merely that others may follow and gather the fruits thereof.

Amerigo Vespucci, it has long been held, gave his name to the newly discovered continent, but there are some recently who hold that the name "America" pre-existed in the aboriginal tongue. Who can fail to note the resemblance between Americapan, the ancient name of this coast region, and that of America? Be that as it may, the name of the country best known on the northern border of South America, Venezuela, was bestowed by the Spaniards. Sailing into the great lake, Maracaibo, in 1499, they found Indians dwelling in huts built over the water, a long distance from the land. They were the first of the kind they had seen; and these lake dwellings so forcibly reminded them of the mistress of the Adriatic that they called the country Venezuela, or the little Venice. A far stretch of the imagination, perhaps, but the name clung to the country. As yet, the descendants of those aboriginal lake dwellers cling to their primitive dwellings on the shore of the great Maracaibo.

A HALF-BREED.

No longer a name merely, pregnant with vague terror, the Spanish Main is open and accessible. Where once the slow-sailing caravels crawled from headland to headland, and painfully performed their voyages, swift steamers give their passengers the delights of a pleasure trip. A voyage of six days direct brings to our view the mountains that guard the portals to the mysterious continent.

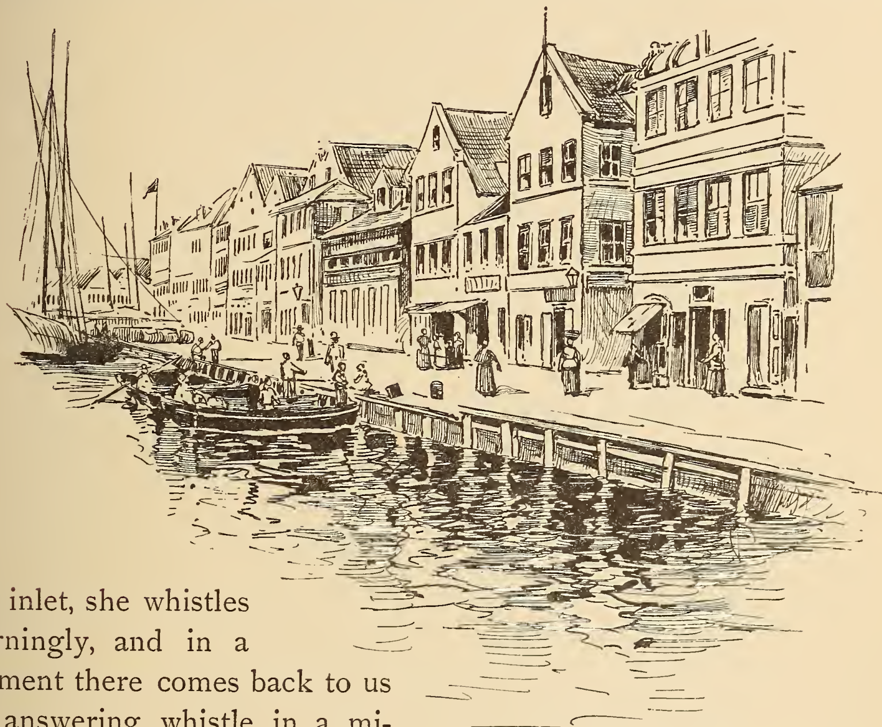
The year 1499 was one of the most eventful in the last decade of that century so pregnant with momentous events. Not the least remarkable of the Spanish voyagers to the New World was Alonzo de Ojeda, who had with him, as adventurer, Americus Vespucius, whose claim to distinction everybody is familiar with. Whether or not he was entitled to the peerless place the cosmographers assigned him, or whether, indeed, his was the name bestowed upon our continents, I will not argue; but his was the most richly rewarded of any voyage of that period. Coasting the country now known as the "Spanish Main," with many strange adventures and frequent detentions from the friendly natives, Ojeda and his crew finally sighted an island bearing the aboriginal name of Curaçoa. The Indians inhabiting here were of great stature, but not so large nor so numerous that they were not soon exterminated, sharing the fate of all the islanders of the Caribbean Sea.

Curaçoa, this island thus discovered in the last year of the fifteenth century, is about forty miles in length, with a varying breadth of from three to seven miles. It lies some forty miles off the coast of Venezuela, the blue mountains of that portion of *terra firma* known as the Paraguana being in plain sight, on every clear day, from the hills above the harbor. From the sea, as the voyager approaches, Curaçoa appears like a volcanic fragment, rent from the mainland of South America, or tossed up from beneath the waves. Its coast is everywhere rugged, with deep fissures, as harbors, leading to extensive inland lagoons. The hills are not high, but abruptly broken off and sharply cleft. It would seem that the island is one vast deposit of phosphate of lime, that there are mountains of it, for more phosphate is mined here than the markets will carry. The highest hill on the coast that the arriving steamer skirts — a hill that might well be dignified by the name of mountain — consists of ninety-seven per cent of phosphate. Fortunes have been realized here, and fortunes yet await the owners of this vast deposit. The works of the mining company form

a little settlement isolated from the others of the island, and the treasure they guard is jealously kept from the view of prying visitors. Traditions are afloat of the strange doings of the company in possession of Curaçoa's only treasure trove, — that no one can penetrate the charmed circle they have drawn about their wealth; that the visitor is hospitably received and royally entertained, the finest fruits and meats and choicest wines being set before him, but that no blandishment can open the inner portal. It is a question whether or not all these precautions be necessary, but the company is said to pay the Dutch Government over two hundred thousand dollars each, and every year the mines are worked. Phosphate was first found here by a poor Cornish miner, who first secured the refusal of this otherwise waste land, the Dutch being ignorant of any value attached to it, and then leaped suddenly into affluence.

As we sail the southern shore of the island, a bright lagoon opens out to view below the phosphate region, called the Spanish Water, and a castle of Spanish times commands it from a beetling cliff. Spanish possession of Curaçoa extended from 1499 to 1634. The Dutch then acquired it, and have held it ever since, except for a few years' occupation by the English. And to-day, though Spanish in nearly everything save its government and its architecture, Curaçoa still pertains to the people who wrested it from the marauding Spaniards. The barren hills that form the backbone of the island are rent apart at about its centre, and give ingress into the safest and most securely land-locked harbor in these seas, perhaps in the world. It is so narrow that the sentries of the two forts guarding it, one each side the entrance, can hail each other from their respective stations. One of these forts is called Fort Riff, and the other Fort Amsterdam. They are old, and their cannon are obsolete, while their garrisons of funny Dutch soldiers are enough to make a mummy smile. The inlet is deep and straight, and heads into a capacious harbor, of perhaps half a mile in length, beyond which is a great

lagoon, called the Schattegat. A pontoon bridge spans the harbor just inside the forts, and this has to be opened, of course, every time a vessel of any kind seeks entrance. As our steamer draws opposite



WATER FRONT, INNER HARBOR, CURAÇOA.

the inlet, she whistles warningly, and in a moment there comes back to us an answering whistle in a minor key. Then, as the pilot takes the wheel, and the bow is pointed toward the lagoon, we see one end of the bridge slowly crawling toward the opposite side of the harbor, its propelling force being a very diminutive steam-launch. The strip of blue water grows wider and wider, and at last, when the bridge of boats lies parallel with the shore, the little steam-launch toots again, and it is safe to enter. The steamer sails superbly in, giving us views of forts and houses so close that we could toss a biscuit into them, standing on the deck. Once inside, the bridge is swung back into position, and the interrupted traffic between the opposite sides resumes its placid flow.

The lagoon, of which the harbor proper forms a part, consists of three sections, like a clover-leaf. There are two lagoons lying parallel to the shore, with a coral strand only separating them from the ocean, and the stem and central leaf pushing straight into the island. It is about the centre and the right-hand clover-leaves that the town is built. The finest houses line the main harbor, and they are eminently respectable as well as picturesque. As I have said, the architecture is Dutch, only modified to suit the exigencies of a tropical climate. Nowhere in the West Indies will you find such substantial, such comfortable houses. They are as solidly built as any structure along the Zuyder Zee, with stone and mortar walls, bricked courtyards, and tiled roofs. They are exceeding quaint, even to the height of picturesqueness, and so suggestive of comfort and homelike attractions that many a Spanish-American sighs and shivers when he recalls the barren, cheerless *casas* of the Latin peoples on the Main. The windows are broad and open, with glass instead of gratings, though balconies and corridors are shielded by green *jalousies*. Aside from their shapes and contours, these houses attract by their rich and various colors. The tiles that cover their roofs are red, their walls are yellow and pink, picked out with colors that please and harmonize. As seen from the sea or from the cactus-covered hills that rise inland, a prettier picture than this little Dutch paradise would be difficult to present. The town or city of Wilhelmstadt is divided into

A WELL-TO-DO NEGRO.

Pietermaay and Schardo, on the right of the harbor as you enter, while the "other side" is literally rendered in the name Otrabanda. In these names we see the curious mingling of Dutch and Spanish that forms the prevailing speech of the island, called Papiamento. Two or three of the streets are quite broad; all are well paved; and indeed the roads throughout the island are very nearly perfect. Most interesting, however, are the narrow lanes that intersect Pietermaay, where the sun only reaches the pavements at midday, where the balconies on either side nearly meet, and where the evil odors that prevail are most startling in their strength and variety. Here you may see the offspring of African, Africo-Dutch, Africo-Hispano, Dutch, etc., sporting themselves in the unadorned garb of Eden. This is a costume in great favor with all the juvenile portion of the population, up to the age of eight or ten, without regard to sex. It is always of the same cut, but there is infinite variety of color.

Says the ancient historian, Hakluyt: "One of the marueylous things that God useth in the composition of man is colour; and doubtlesse cannot bie considered without great admiration, in holding one to be white, and another blacke, being colours utterly contrary; some likewise to be yellow, which is between blacke and white, and other of other colours, as it were of diuers liveries, and as these colours are to be marveled at, even so is it to be considered howe they differ one from another, as it were by degrees, forasmuch as some men are white, often diuers sorts of whitenesse; yellowe, often diuers sortes of yellow, and blacke, after diuers sortes of blacknesse, and howe from white they goe to yellowe by discolouring to browne and redde, and to blacke by ashy colour, and murry, somewhat lighter than blacke, and tauny, like unto the West Indians, whiche are altogether in generall either purple or tauny like unto sodd Quinces, or of the colour of chesnuttes or olines, which color is to them natural, and not by their going naked.

as many haue thought; albeit their nakednesse have somewhat helped thereto."

The old historian reasoned well: "Color is to them natural, and not by their going naked;" and this is proven by the fact that the little Dutch youngsters who toddle about are naked as Adam before the fig-leaf was invented, and retain in later years the flaxen hair and pink and white complexions. "It is to them natural" also to speak the barbarous dialect of the island, called Papiamento, — a patois more barbarous than any I have heard anywhere else in the West Indies. The Papiamento is structurally Spanish, with an intrusion of Dutch, a little English and African, moulded in the mouths of ignorant negroes. For instance: One day I was out hunting with a native of the island and asked, among other things, the name of a pretty plant. He answered: "Eso se llama Barba de Yoong Man" ("They call that Young Man's Beard"). It was, by the way, well named, the flower having a soft silken fringe, reminding one of the pubescent adornment of a young man's chin, of which he is at first so proud and afterward so ashamed. Papiamento is a comparatively recent invention; that is, it came into use a long time after the confusion of Babel. It has nothing to do with Hebrew, Greek, Sanscrit, or with Latin, except through the Spanish. It is, of course, extremely difficult to construct a grammar of patois; to seize the fleeting, subtle forms that emanate from the brain of primitive people, and mould them into permanent shape. From the very

DIVING FOR COINS.

nature of the dialect, spoken as it is by people unable to read or write, it must ever remain plastic, as it were. Yet the Papiamento has been somewhat crystallized, and a grammar has been published, so that the philologist may now study at least one language in its nascent state; that is, if we admit this hybrid to the dignity of a "language." Any one speaking Spanish may easily understand Papiamento; but it is detrimental to his Castilian in a high degree. Years ago I found that those who spoke the French patois in the Caribbees could not speak but with effort the Parisian; more than this, even, that good French scholars soon sacrificed their purity of speech to the demands of the virile patois. Let me instance some differences between the Castilian and the Papiamento, for the numerals. The Spanish *uns* is *un*; *dos* and *tres* are the same; *cuatro* is *cuater; cinco* is *cincu*; *seis*, the same; *siete* is *chete*; *ocho*, *naire*, and *diez* are unchanged, but *once* is *yesun*, *doce* is *yesdos*, *trece* is *yestres*, etc. But

"THE VEGETATION HAS A TROPICAL CAST."

enough has been given to show the Spanish character of the Papiamento, and yet its distinctiveness as a dialect. All speech not understood seems gibberish, and these Curaçonians confuse us with their jargon. Fortunately, most of the business men speak English, and the only persons we are in a measure dependent upon are the negro boatmen who compete with the bridge between the opposite towns. There are, it is said, one hundred and fifty of them. Their charge for ferriage is only five coppers, Dutch, equal to about two cents, American; but they are said to be unable to make change (when it is to their advantage not to), and get many a silver piece they would otherwise lose. The toll on the bridge is two Dutch cents, for "quality" people; but if you go barefoot, the charge is but one cent. This bridge, by the way, was built and is owned by a Yankee from Maine, the American consul, Captain Smith. This enterprising gentleman also owns the only ice-houses that are replenished with crystal Kennebec, brought in American schooners to this land of heat and sunshine. Captain Smith has lived here for I don't know how many years; he came here an invalid, but is now a witness to the all-healing climatic properties of Curaçoa. The residents claim that their island is singularly exempt from disease; and certainly there seemed to be none, except universal poverty. Many years ago the negro slaves were freed, and since then they have had to shift for themselves, so that labor now is very cheap, barely supplying these simple folk with food and raiment. The slave owners received eighty dollars for every emancipated slave about twenty-seven years ago, but the value of these erstwhile bondsmen has depreciated, and doubtless you could buy one for half that money, if you would only stipulate to find him in food and clothing. An English shilling per day is a fair average wage earned by laborers, while skilled labor does not receive much more than double that amount. A master mason or carpenter receives but sixty cents per day;

yet there are no troublesome strikes, for the laborers know—if they know anything—they would be futile. The fact is there are more negroes than the island can care for, more even than it can feed.

All the steamers of the great "Red D" Line, which make the Island of Curaçoa their rendezvous, rely upon the natives to load their ships, and even ship them as common sailors for their voyages. They are honest and faithful, and work for less than the laborers of the Venezuelan mainland. On the arrival of every steamer a crew of Curaçoa laborers is taken aboard for service throughout the round trip to Venezuela, *via* the ports of Puerto Cabello and La Guayra. There may be about twenty thousand negroes and "colored" people on this island. The land is poor, mainly sterile, even bananas and plantains having to be brought from the mainland to be found in the market in quantities. The phosphatic hills are rich in the elements of fertility for other and distant lands, but are not capable themselves of producing a crop of cane or corn. The valleys of comparatively fertile land are too few to be considered, and the poor laborer is even worse off than he of Barbadoes, where the land is rich, though devoted almost exclusively to sugar-cane. The vegetation, such as it is, has a tropical cast, and in the gardens you will find all the members of the citrus family, pineapples, paw-paws, custard apples, soursops, mangoes, guavas, casbera-apples, and many other fruits and vegetables. The island is celebrated for its *nisperos*, or *sapadillos*. The *sapadillo* is rarely seen in the north, never found in our market, and is only brought to us by the officers of the steamers running to the West Indies. It requires careful handling, will not keep well, and has a flavor that requires an acquired taste to appreciate it. It resembles somewhat a russet apple, and has a taste, many declare, like a rotten pear. The tree grows vigorously in the stony soil of Curaçoa, its green bulk resembling the mango, and is a refreshing sight against the dry and blistered hills. There are no streams at all, either above

ground or below, and the people depend upon the heavens for their supply of water, storing it up in great cisterns and doling it out carefully. Sometimes, they say, they have no rain for years, and again they will have months of pluvial discharges, so that the greatest wisdom must be exercised in its distribution. The fields and hills are dry, covered with cactus and prickly pear, but they have a beauty of their own. There is a comfortable, inviting look about them that (unless you stick a prickly-pear spine into your shin) entices you to wander abroad.

A party of us one day set out on a hunting expedition to a distant plantation. We rowed up the lagoon some miles, and landed at a wharf on a mangrove-fringed shore, where the herons perched, the lizards and iguanas basked in the sun, and the fiddler-crabs crawled by thousands over the mud. This great lagoon is called the Schattegat, and is deep enough and large enough to float the entire Dutch navy. It is completely land-locked, and is protected by a most picturesque fortress, perched on a cliff, and used now as a signal station. Behind this towering cliff the pirates of the Spanish Main used to lie in wait for their prey, their masters watching from the rock, their masts completely hidden from sight. Through the narrow passage to the sea they used to slip out warily, spread their sails, and bear down upon the richly freighted galleons bound with treasure to Spain. Many a ship's crew has been murdered within sight of these gray cliffs, and many a million of treasure here divided. Pirates and buccaneers have long since passed into the unknown, and the blue waters of the peaceful lagoon are rarely vexed by any keel whatever, of any size. We had a delightful tramp that day over the old plantation, but the only "game" consisted in ground and turtle doves, wild rabbits, troupials, curlew, herons and humming-birds. The little green-crested hummers flitted from acacia to cactus, and lit up the dark green *nisperos;* the turtle-doves cooed innocently; the golden troupials flashed by on shining wings; and the shade of the *ceibas*, or silk-cottons, was most refresh-

ing. With water only, and plenty of it, this little parched island might be made a perfect garden of delights, for its climate is perfect.

I fear I have not made out this tropical island to be the happy haven of rest I myself have found it; but I describe it as it appears, without exaggeration of its merits or defects. Perhaps its charm lies in the climate, the air is so cool in the morning, though so hot at noon, but delicious and refreshing at evening-time. There is here a perpetual invitation to rest, and the twenty-seven thousand composing its population have not disregarded it. The government, as I have said, is Dutch, paternal and beneficent in so far as it can be; and one should visit the old fortress church, the fort, and the government building, to see specimens of Holland architecture modified to suit climatic conditions. This is a free port, Curaçoa. The shops are many, and the goods are cheap. Most of the business seems to be in the hands of the Jews, although the Dutch hold the wholesale trade. There is an immense *libreria*, or bookstore, here, — that of Bitancourt, whose principal trade is in Venezuela. Communication is maintained between various parts of the island by means of excellent roads, and around the lagoon of Schearlo runs a tramway. I may be accused of adopting an English term instead of an American, in calling this a tramway, and not a horse-car line. But the truth is the car is drawn by a donkey. The car itself is not over large, and perhaps nine people can secure transportation at one and the same time; while the donkey is hardly as big as a billy-goat. It may not always be the same donkey that draws it, but if it is not, there is a strong family resemblance, especially as to size. One day a party of three ladies went on shore from a newly arrived steamer, and seeing the car standing there, boarded it. As it was rear end on, they did not see the donkey, and when it began to move they were filled with wonder. They made the trip around the lagoon and back, alighted, and went aboard the steamer delighted. "How lovely it was! And what a charming ride that was on the electric car!"

"And all de time," said the old Dutchman who told me the story, "der was a man on der vront seat, und dey didn't see der yackass!"

The "sights" of Curaçoa are peculiarly West Indian, and the people, especially the blacks, objects of never-ceasing interest. Everywhere, squatted against the walls along the streets, one sees groups of aged negresses and young girls, their rags scarce hiding their skins, keeping guard over small heaps of fruits and vegetables. Exceeding the market-women in interest, the washerwomen attract the first attention of the stranger. They board the steamer (when the officers will let them) and solicit the linen of passengers; but woe to him who intrusts his garments to their care! Before you decide to do this, walk over to the beach and look at the spectacle of half-naked washerwomen lining the shore, dipping the clothing in the sea and mauling it with a club! After they have worried the life out of a garment, — a shirt, for instance, — smashed all the buttons off and punched it full of holes, they spread it out on a cactus-bush to dry, or fasten it down on a rock with jagged fragments of coral. Witnessing such a sight makes the average man unhappy; and it is small wonder that many of the natives seek to drown their sorrows in the flowing bowl. Their favorite tipple is that delicious drink bearing the name of the island, Curaçoa, which is made in Holland, but receives its flavor from a peculiar orange peel exported hence to the land of dikes. Gin also, being very cheap, about thirty cents a bottle, is much approved. And so, revelling in the luxuries a free port invites to their doors, blest with a delightful climate, secure in their environment of sea, and imbibing the golden nectar of the gods, these exotic Dutchmen abide in perfect peace and contentment.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MYSTERIOUS CONTINENT.

From Curaçoa to Puerto Cabello. — Castle of the Liberator. — Burial-Place of Drake. — Coco-palms and Tropic-Trees. — Photographing the Natives. — How we frightened a Negro Boy.

CALL it mysterious, for South America yet contains vast regions unexplored, rivers whose windings have never been traced, and mountain valleys never yet seen by white men. Let us imagine ourselves, then, entering the harbor of Puerto Cabello on a cool May morning, the purple mountains half hidden in mist, the white-walled city lying quiet as a churchyard, without a breeze to sway the long leaves of the palms, whose green crowns rise above the roofs. But as we round the island castle that guards the harbor mouth, a gun booms out a welcome, and as by magic, the city is astir. People move early here in the tropics.

A short gun-shot away rose a square old fortress, of gray and yellow stone, low and massive, with crenellated parapet and ornate, bell-top sentry-boxes; a survival of buccaneer times, this gray old Spaniard, when Morgan and Drake and pirates from Curaçoa pounced upon the Main. A guard of dirty and dismal soldiers while away their time within its walls, and parade the narrow limits of their island. They are brown and black, and their tattered uniforms proclaim their miserable condition. In the morning early they come out and fire a gun, and spend a great portion of their waking hours in

blowing horns and bugles, showing that they have some energy, even if confined inactive within the narrow compass of a fort.

A few hundred yards away rises a square, four-storied lighthouse, on a narrow island by itself with apparently only just space enough

BOLIVAR.

for foundation-stones between the lagoon and the sea, the waves of which can be seen above the beach; and their roar can be heard throughout the day. This lighthouse mounts a flash-light, red and white alternate, visible ten or fifteen miles at sea. The old fort guards effectively the narrow entrance to the harbor of Puerto Cabello, and

is now known as *el Castillo del Libertador,* — Castle of the Liberator; for we are now in Venezuela, land of the Liberator, the great and only Bolivar. Between us and the lighthouse, on a shoal of the Castle Island, lies the hull of a steamer, its machinery sticking up suggestively above the water, — an old blockade-runner, with a history, during our late war between North and South. Farther up the lagoon a great "mud-digger" is moored, an expensive purchase by one of the numerous "Governments" of Venezuela, and which was intended to dredge the harbor, but which, beyond a merely preliminary exhibition, never scooped a shovelful. A little beyond, a great iron steamer lies inactive, rusting to pieces at her moorings. The Government paid ten thousand dollars to have her taken away from one of the revolutionary generals a few years ago. The "general" himself is now commander-in-chief of Venezuela's forces; but the gallant tar who saved her to the Government still whistles for his reward.

AN INDIAN PORTER.

High hills rise behind Puerto Cabello, clothed in green to their crests, and guard a broad plain between their bases and the sea, and

here the city itself is built. The streets are straight, some broad, some narrow, with several *plazuelas* here and there, planted with palms and tropical shrubs. The plaza-park occupies a point of land just astern our steamer and opposite the castle. Between park and castle is the channel, narrow but deep, giving entrance to the finest harbor on this coast.

A SPANISH GIRL.

The great lagoon beyond is crowded along its shores with mangroves, isles, and islets, among which there should be excellent shooting, unless appearances deceive. I have a gun aboard, but as yet have not taken it from its case, and am reserving it for use in Lake Maracaibo. Of birds generally considered gamey I have seen very few thus far; only pelicans, herons, gulls, and terns, aside from the numerous song and plumage birds met with in the plazas and gardens.

The *parque*, with its contiguity to the sea, and swept by cool breezes all day long, is an extremely attractive spot. Tall palms, called here *jaguaranas*, probably *oleracias*, rise above and guard the gates, and encircle a fantastic fountain in the centre. Many of the great gray stems of these palms are perforated,—holes from half an inch to two inches in diameter,—which remind us of one of the revolutions that took place here. Crowds of people were gathered here

and were fired into by the fort opposite, and many slaughtered. These holes in the palm-trunks are yearly growing larger, and may eventually cause the destruction of these glorious trees.

To mention the other plants and trees of this pleasure garden would be to enumerate a goodly portion of the flora of the tropics.

I sat down one afternoon beneath the shade of a sapote-tree, and watched the birds playing in the shrubbery, while I amused myself trying to call them about me, as I used to do in the Antilles. They were nearly all strange to me; but I think I recognized a little "hummer," that buzzed about a bush with great red flowers, as the green-throated humming-bird of the West Indies. In the palms, crying noisily among the spathes covering the flower-clusters, was a species of fly-catcher very much resembling a new one I discovered in Dominica thirteen years ago, called by the natives there the "sunset-bird," and named by Professor Lawrence the *Myiarchus Oberi* in honor of its discoverer. The one in the palm-tree, the little boys in the garden told me, was known as *Tio Juan*, or Uncle John.

I have often wondered whether I did science a service or no, in bringing to the ornithological lights the twenty and more new birds I discovered in the West Indies. Since the beginning of creation, perhaps, at least since these islands rose from the wave and were blessed with bird-life, these birds had existed unknown save to the native negroes and Indians, and by them only half recognized by cry or flight. Civilized man first made their acquaintance through my introduction, and that was only brought about by searching out and killing the birds; for one can rarely tell to a certainty when he holds a new species in his hand. The animal must be skinned and stuffed, must be measured, and his life-colors, cries, and habits noted; then its skin is sent to the museum, where it is compared with others there collected, and with all known species; and perhaps it must even be sent to Europe to be compared with others.

One humming-bird that I sent to our museum at Washington

made two voyages across the Atlantic before its identity was determined. There exists a class of "closet naturalists," — men who know nothing of field or forest, but who spend their lives in examining dead and dried specimens of animated nature. They have perhaps their use; but they do a great deal of damage and prolong the quarrels that are constantly going on between real naturalists over the classification of bird and beast. What constitutes a species? It is, I think, a question not yet determined, — one class being prone to make a species out of a mere variety, and another insisting upon reducing the number already existing.

But I did not intend to wander into those fascinating fields again, where I passed so many months of my youth. Already, I fear, they have consumed too much of my life. To come back to Puerto Cabello and its plazas. I often queried what was the signification of this strange name: Puerto Cabello, — the "Port of the Hair." But the other day one of our vice-consuls here explained that it was a perpetual boast of its excellence; a vessel might be moored here *by a hair*, and not break away from her moorings.

Off the castle, our mate tells us, lies anchored that redoubtable pirate of England, Sir Francis Drake; at least it is said that he was buried here, so many leagues off the Castle of Puerto Cabello,[1] and so many fathoms deep. This was the great "stamping-ground" of the late Sir Francis; and perhaps the enormous old cannon in Caracas were a pair of the very pieces used against him when he stormed La Guayra.

The last voyage of Drake was made in company with the scarcely less celebrated Sir John Hawkins. It was most unfortunate to all concerned. Hawkins died off the eastern end of Puerto Rico. Not long after, Drake died and was buried at sea off Puerto Bello, in a leaden coffin.

[1] We think the mate mistaken, and that Drake was buried off Puerto Bello, not off Puerto Cabello.

The following lines perpetuate this event: —

> "Where Drake first found, there last he lost his name,
> And for a tomb left nothing but his fame.
> His body's buried under some great wave,
> The sea that was his glory is his grave;
> On whom an epitaph none now can make;
> For who can say, 'Here lies Sir Francis Drake'?"

Here forts, castles, cannon, habitations, all carry us back to the times of Drake and Raleigh; and if it were not for the enterprising

THE LAST VOYAGE OF DRAKE.

North, Venezuela might perhaps still be dreaming of times when Charles the Fifth first inscribed *plus ultra* upon his arms. Only yesterday I saw a doubloon of Charles the Third, bearing date 1791.

Gold is not so scarce here as it is in Spain to-day. I remember how eagerly a certain old antiquarian in Granada seized upon a gold-piece I had, and refused to give it up again when I wanted it back. Once was the time that the golden flood poured into Spain from the Americas, from Mexico, the West Indies, and Peru. But where is it now? Where are the pearls that Cubagua and the Spanish Main sent to Spain? Long years since, the tide turned the other way, and the treasures of the Occident have been brought back from the East, though in a shape different from that in which they went out. Montezuma's and the Incas' treasures excited unbounded wonder. They were the accumulation of centuries, those vessels of gold, wheels, suns, and golden gods. Not so much has been found since, though doubtless there are mines untouched and river-sands unwashed that will yet yield gold.

AN INCA.

The houses here are all in the Oriental style; that is, of southern Spain, — low, square, massive, all built of stone, with flat roofs and enclosed *patios*. There are few here of more than one story, and the active city is hidden from the steamer's deck by the custom-house, that towers above all else. This custom-house is said to be due to the enterprise of an American, our consul here. In truth, almost all works of any magnitude are the product of foreign capital, and are

of foreign inception. As in Mexico, the English and Americans have kindly provided the people with railroads to all important points, so here English and Americans are working the great enterprises that give these people quick communication between important points, secure harbors and connection with foreign ports. Of these I shall write more particularly after I have had opportunity for examination and comparison.

A certain writer on Algiers has declared that no two Orientals will walk down a street side by side, unless the colors of their costumes harmonize, — color and contrasts of colors being felt everywhere. As to costume, the people here seem to have little regard for their appearance, with reference to harmony of colors; but as to their dwellings, they make them most attractive. Instead of whitewashing these massive walls and making them glaring white, as the Bermudians do with their houses, making them look like surface-croppings of coral rock, these South Americans give them a great variety of pleasing colors. Blue, pink, and yellow predominate; and the combined effect, though not premeditated, is fine. Cover these walls with tiles, curving over one another in undulating lines, and of richest browns and terra-cottas, with a background of deep-green hills; over all a sky of clearest blue, — and there is harmony in color that would satisfy the soul of an artist hard to please.

I cannot learn that Puerto Cabello has ever suffered from earthquakes, nor been often devastated by hurricanes; but the houses crouch low upon the ground, as though fearful of some elemental convulsion.

In such a country as this — indeed, in any country whatever — we always find the lower classes the most picturesque, both in habit and habitation. Their surroundings also are in keeping with their immediate environment, for they always occupy the outlying districts where gardens bloom fruitfully and coco-palms wave invitingly their golden leaves. Such are the suburbs of Puerto Cabello. The city

itself may be half a mile across; solidly built, from sea-wall to lagoon, where the water penetrates to the streets, and boats and bridges are as necessary as sidewalks. One little island here is occupied by a shanty and its scant soil covered by a garden, apparently a summer

CHURCH AND STREET IN PUERTO CABELLO.

resort, and this insular possession is called *La Isla Misteriosa*, — the Mysterious Island. But the attractive portion of the city lies hidden among the coco-palms.

The palm groves can be seen from the steamer's deck, filling the valley between the city and the hills, and bordering the sea-beach for miles and miles. How the coco-palm clings to the sea! It never strays far away from the sea-beach, never leaves the sound of the sea-waves behind, — the waves that first brought the coco-nut to these shores. Other palms replace it in the hills and mountains; but if

you are coming to the coast from a point far inland, you may be sure of the end of your journey being near when you first see the coco-palm.

They say in the islands that the coco-palm ministers to their wants in a hundred different ways. Speaking of the palm, I found once something quite interesting relating to it in an old book published in London, 1613, called "A Plain Description of the Barmodas, now called Summer Islands, with the Manner of their Discouerie." It says: "The Head of the Palmito Tree is verie good Meate, either raw or sodden; it yieldeth a Head which weigheth about twentie Pounds, and is farre better Meate than any Cabbidge." The author was probably writing of the cabbage-palm, though that variety is now scarce in Bermuda.

There are thousands of these coco-palms in the place I have mentioned on the outskirts of Puerto Cabello, tossing their graceful heads aloft in wild abandon. They lean lovingly over the lowly huts of cane and hang their stems across the roads and lanes. Great clusters of coco-nuts hang invitingly just out of reach, — green-gold nuts, half shaded by green-gold leaves.

Here are the gardens of the poor, rich in everything prodigal Nature can bestow. The ground is covered with sheets of purple flowers and clumps of shrubs bearing white spikes of flowers with a fragrance like our "spice-bush." The air is sweet, and the senses are delighted, in spite of the filth and squalor of the people who live here. Clumps of sugar-cane grow here and there, reminding me, by their size, of a story I once heard anent a man of Tobago. He told of cane so large in that island that while one man is cutting one down with a cutlass, another is stationed a little way off to warn him in case it seems likely to fall upon and crush him. The narrator of this yarn had a spy-glass so powerful (he said) that he could see through it the washerwomen spreading their clothes to dry on the walls of Fort Charlotte, St. Vincent, seventy-five miles away.

It is a fact of history, by the way, that the English name for tobacco was derived from that of the island Tobago, where it was first found by Englishmen. But to return to our coco-palms.

A NATIVE TRADER.

Some one, perhaps, may object to my spelling of "coco," preferring it "cocoa." But I beg to inform any one disposed to be critical that "cocoa" is wrong. The coco is the *cocos nucifera ;* the *cacao* may be called "cocoa," if you like, coming from the Aztec (Mexican) word, *cacahuatl.* Here they call it ca-cá-o, and apply the term "cocos" to the coco-trees.

Having photographed the city streets and the parks, I hied me out one morning to secure some of the dwellers in the coco grove. I had a companion, and we each had a camera. Mine was an old affair perched on a tripod, and had done good service already. The lens I purchased of old Darlot himself in Paris, and I know just what it can do. My companion had a new-fangled invention with an outlandish name, in the shape of a box filled with "films" for sixty photographs. He was no photographer, but he went according to printed directions, which he consulted before every exposure. These directions were: (1) To unplug the end of the box; (2) Pull a string; (3) Turn a crank; (4) Press a button. Also to be careful in

estimating the distance between the machine and the victim intended for sacrifice. It was to be pointed exactly at the centre of the object to be photographed, and if said object were small, then the operator must crouch a little. Thus armed, — "loaded for bear," as it were, — we went hunting for game. A fine group of cocos claimed my attention at once, and I pitched my camera at a street-corner, and was at once surrounded by a curious crowd. They were curious, but not offensive; and so, finding that these people would take it in good part, we proceeded to secure several groups of them. There was one hut especially fine in its barbaric completeness, — a hut of reeds, wattled and plastered and thatched. Between the reeds the spaces were stuffed with coco-husks. The interior was dark and filthy, without table or chairs, and a little naked infant crouched in one corner. Out of surrounding huts poured the people like flies from the bung-hole of an empty molasses barrel. There were women clad in chemise and skirt, bearing babies astride their hips, — babies stark naked and brown. Youngsters of all ages, up to eight or ten, stalked about without a rag on them, while the older ones wore hardly anything but rags. They were rather coy at first; but a few words of explanation from me set all right, and they allowed us to include as many as we wanted in our grouping. I told them, for instance, that we were Americans (*Americanos*) from the North, and that we did not have any coco-palms and beautiful houses of palm-leaves, nor such lovely babies, *chiquititos*, and pretty *señoritas;* and these simple people believed it all, and said they would be glad to let the *Norte-Americanos* see photographs of all these things, since they did not have any of their own. So they laugh-

INDIAN GIRL.

ingly grouped themselves, only begging that they might have a peep through the machine after I had taken the photograph.

The camera, perched on its tripod, they could understand and were familiar with, but were afraid of the black box with its ominous muzzle, carried by my friend. When that was pointed at them all the youngsters trembled and cried, while the older ones were rather dubious, though I managed to reassure them. Just as we had concluded, I spied a better subject coming than any we had taken. A little negro black as night, with an old straw hat on his head and straw sandals on his feet, came down the path, leading by the hand a smaller mite of humanity the hue of mahogany. Both were naked, except for the hat and sandals of the older one; but they marched along as grave as judges and apparently as happy.

I had used up my plates, but I said to my friend, "There is your chance;" and he at once started on the trail. As the little chaps were small, he had to crouch (according to direction); and when those black babies saw the strange man after them, creeping stealthily and pointing a long black box, as though to shoot, they set up a howl, and fled precipitately. The old straw hat fell off; the sandals flew into the air; and the photographer lost his picture.

CHAPTER VII.

A JOURNEY INTO THE COFFEE REGION.

Venezuelan Politicians. — Fireworks by Daylight.— Loading Coffee at Puerto Cabello. — A Railroad on Stilts.— The City of Valencia.— From Coast to Mountain-Land. — Bread-Fruits and Trumpet-Trees. — What a Wise Indian said.— A Rumor of Cannibals.

ONE night we came over Curaçoa, leaving at sunset and arriving at sunrise; going to rest with memories of roseate hills and sunset clouds, awaking with a vision before us of cloud-capped mountains, green hills coming down to the sea and enclosing a city curious and quaint. Coming up from La Guayra the other night, as the distance is short, one boiler only was used, and the motion was hardly perceptible. We had a crowd of Spanish-Americans, and among them several distinguished Venezuelans, attendant upon the last ex-President, Doctor Paulo. To pronounce the name of this distinguished gentleman you must make it Pow-oó-lo, and then the chances are you won't place stress enough upon the *oo*. We departed amid music and fireworks, and arrived at Puerto Cabello with a welcome of music and fireworks. It was scarce daylight when we arrived opposite the castle, yet the rockets began to ascend and explode, while the band kept up such a din that it almost drowned the voice of our captain as he gave his orders from the bridge. The channel is narrow, and a big Spanish

steamer lay at our berth; and it required great skill and seamanship to put our steamer up to the wharf. Through it all — confusion of noises such as tooting of whistles, exploding of rockets, and braying of horns — the multitude assembled on the wharf applauded vociferously. I scanned the faces carefully, and came to the conclusion that it was a good-natured multitude, an easily-led-by-the-nose multitude, with great respect for a man who could hold office a year in this country and leave a respectable sum in the treasury. For that is what they say Paulo did, a month or two ago, when he retired to make way for his successor; but some also assert that the surplus aforementioned was suddenly reduced, and Paulo's pockets as quickly filled. Be that as it may, Paulo is not an evil-looking man; he looks honest and kindly. He is past middle age, dark and cadaverous, dresses plainly, and has an unassuming manner. His wife is also dark, but quite large, and the diamonds she wore were the envy of all the ladies on board.

"THE ROCKETS BEGAN TO ASCEND."

They had their nieces with them,— two plump and beautiful brunettes, who played our piano with skill, and were the objects of unwearied attention from the young men in attendance. How long they continued their promenades on deck that night, I cannot tell, for I retired early; but I know that I awoke now and then through the night, and heard snatches of music and laughter, and caught glimpses of the moon-lit mountains of Venezuela, as we glided over the sea.

One is struck by the prevailing complexion of the people, so generally dark, even swarthy. I noticed this particularly the day before as I glanced over the crowd on the wharf. Nearly all (as one man

put it) were black-and-tan, the only difference being a little more or less of one or the other. The Indians have mostly disappeared, but they have left their mark, though the Spaniard has more than held his own. During the entire day "El Doctor," as he is termed, held a levee with the people, on deck and in the cabin. Although he no longer held office, yet people seemed to think he "had the pull," and he was constantly besieged. He was going to Curaçoa with us for his health; and some of the young ladies with us were also going there to attend the famous convent school. After the doctor had in a measure satisfied the curiosity of the people, they began to depart; but the rocketeers remained till the last, sending up their sticks. The Spaniards and the Spanish-Americans have a great inclination for sending off fireworks by daylight. They make very good fireworks here, and send them off in good style, but oftener make their displays by day than by night, evidently having a greater relish for the noise than the illumination. All this occurred, or most of it, before six o'clock in the morning; for the people here are "early to bed and early to rise;" as to whether or no they are "healthy, wealthy, and wise," I cannot tell, but do not think many of them are.

The legal hours for labor here are from six to ten o'clock in the morning, then a two hours' siesta, and from twelve o'clock, noon, till four o'clock in the afternoon. Everything is regulated by the customs officials; they charge twenty-five cents an hour for the laborers, and are said to pay them twenty. This may not be a paternal government, but it exercises pretty strong control over the lower classes. The officers of the ship have to make their bargains with the officials, who undertake to supply the number of men wanted and who specify their hours of labor and their employment. This operates to make the laborers very saucy and independent, and takes their control out of the hands of those most concerned in the faithful discharge of their duties. The customs regulations are

eccentric; but there is hardly any impediment placed in the way of the traveller. No passport is demanded, and only a superficial examination is made of one's luggage.

As I said, the lading of the ship began at about six o'clock, and a din of a different sort began. Great and brawny negroes, stripped to the waist, handled the sacks of coffee with great rapidity and dexterity. A line was constantly passing and repassing, — each one with a sack of coffee on his head, which he dexterously dumped across the rope on which the sacks were slung, ten at a time, and hoisted by the steam-winch into the hold. It seemed like a pandemonium of noise and confusion; but everything moved steadily on, and by breakfast-time, or ten o'clock, the great pile of coffee sacks was diminished; and by three o'clock the work was done, the negroes and donkeys departed, the wharf was swept off, and the late scene of bustle, noise, and strife was quiet, and nobody was left there, except a few fireproof darkies slumbering in the sun.

ALL NATIONALITIES.

All this coffee comes from the interior; and until recently it was brought down to the coast on the backs of donkeys and mules. The plantation, a long way off, of course was at a great disadvantage, there being no long-and-short haul clause in their contracts with the *arrieros* and donkey drivers.

A few years ago a railroad was inaugurated, from Puerto Cabello into the interior. It was completed in 1888 as far as Valencia,

a city of some forty thousand inhabitants, the capital of the State of Carabobo. This railroad line is, as far as Valencia, fifty-four kilometers (or about thirty-five miles) long. It carried sixty-two thousand passengers the first year of its completion. As one of the railroads aiming to penetrate this great and mysterious continent of South America, which presents a mountain barrier almost the entire length of the Caribbean coast, this road deserves examination. It was built with English capital, and is owned and run by Englishmen; the rolling-stock is thoroughly English also, and presents to the American many obsolescent features that our country has long since buried, but to which Johnny Bull still clings tenaciously, or else England used these new countries as a sort of dumping-ground for her cast-off and antiquated carriages. Let us hope, for her sake, the latter. But the road-bed is magnificent, and the viaducts just such as we find on that other English road running through similar country, in Mexico, from Vera Cruz to the capital.

Over this road in Venezuela come the products of the interior, — coffee, cacao, deer and goat skins, hides, cotton, copper, and dye-woods, amounting to some five million dollars during the year 1888.

This city of Valencia, of which we heard so much, we desired to see; and so we set forth one morning by the train. Consulting the history of Venezuela, we found the town to be sufficiently ancient to have a suggestion of interest, having been founded so long ago as the middle of the sixteenth century, by Alonzo Diaz Moreno. It occupies a beautiful plain, or elevated valley, mountain-surrounded, with temperate climate and within sight of Lake Tacarigua, famous for its beautiful shores and islands. Beyond this city, the railroad will connect with another line, which is to establish communication between Valencia and Caracas.

A party of us took the train at eight o'clock in the morning,

seeking the station in a dirty suburb of Puerto Cabello. The fare is two dollars and a half — first-class — for the thirty-five miles. Although the railroad station is in a location altogether uninviting, yet within a few minutes after pulling out, the train passes through the beautiful coco grove which I mentioned before, and thenceforward the scenery presents a constant succession of surprises. Leaving the vast coco plantation, embowered in which are the huts of favored dwellers, we come out upon a long curving beach, where the waves tumble heavily upon the sands, and the wind whistles through the palm-branches. Taking our departure from the coast at this point, our course hence is along the banks of a river.

From the very beginning, this river treats us to the choicest bits of Nature's production in the way of tropical and semi-tropical scenery. Curving in and out, first on one bank, then on the other, the road steadily ascends the steep hills and penetrates a succession of valleys, each higher than the other, and each showing a slight difference in the vegetation. Along the coast of course the coco-palms grow, in thinner and thinner groups, then more isolated, until the last one is left behind, growing on the seaward side of a hill. Then the bananas and plantains, *nisperos* and bread-fruit. This last has a character of its own, and is distinctive even in this tropical wealth of vegetation. The leaves are deeply cleft with seven to nine lobes. The fruit is green, spherical, with a very rough surface. Under the skin, or rind, we find the pulp, or "bread" portion, of the fruit, which nourishes so many people here as well as in the islands of Oceanica. A tree resembling this at first glance is the trumpet-tree, though it bears no edible fruit, and its leaves have silver linings which, like poplar-leaves, show bright in every breeze.

Then came silk-cottons (*ceibas*) and sand-box-trees. The former are now in delicate green leaf, and are not hung with the pods of

silk-cotton, which give these trees their specific name. As to the sand-box-trees, their twigs are topped with the round tomato-shaped seed-boxes that have such a curious appearance. If collected and carefully dried, they make fine paper-weights, etc. But there is a knack in the drying of them that I do not understand. I remember that I carried some home in my trunk at one time, intending to show them to my friends. When I came to "overhaul" my trunk, however, I found no sand-boxes at all, — at which I marvelled much, — and only some strange seeds I had never seen before. It was a long time before I discovered that the boxes had burst and scattered their contents throughout the trunk.

TROPICAL PLANTS.

The railroad is steep as far as a station called Las Trincheras; but beyond this the grade is such that a different engine is substituted for the one we started with, which works with a cog or cam in a similar manner to the one up Mount Washington, in New Hampshire. Only it is claimed that this system is superior, being adapted to heavy trains, and having a larger and different kind of engine.

We run parallel to the old mule road from the coast, and note that the trains of donkeys are not yet discontinued. Now and then

the river is spanned by a rude semi-suspension bridge, almost as primitive as the grape-vine bridges I have seen in South Mexico. The hills and mountains rise far above us and hem us in; but at last we burst the barrier and see before us a far-stretching plain.

FRUIT-SELLER OF VALENCIA.

Just here, the train is halted, while I am given time to photograph a fine fall of water, called Aqua Linda. It drops over a cliff, between masses of trees and vines, and forms a lovely pool ere it runs away to the river. The hills and mountains on either side of us are gaunt and bare, of rich red hues. The air is clear and pure, and we are now in a temperate region, perhaps fifteen hundred feet above the sea. Beyond Aqua Linda is a station called *Naquanaqua*, or, as it was explained to me, the Two Waters. After a two hours' ride, the station of Valencia is reached, which, like nearly all Spanish and Spanish-American stations, is a long way from the centre of the city.

To the surprise of most of our party, we were met here by the superintendent and assistant superintendent of the railroad, and the chief of the electric plant, — two Englishmen and an American, — and during the rest of the day were in their charge. Suffice it to say that they cared for us royally, took us all about the city in carriages, to every point of interest, and ended with a dinner of the best Valencia afforded. The day was Good Friday, so that everybody was in holiday attire, and flocking to the church.

HOUSE OF CIVILIZED INDIANS.

We visited, among other places, the waterworks and Calvario, or Calvary, the highest point in the city, where it all lay spread out at our feet; and beyond the many-colored houses sparkled the waters of the lake. On the highest part of Calvario, Guzman Blanco, with becoming modesty, had erected his statue; but the people pulled it down months ago, and not even a fragment remains.

Were it possible, I should like to describe the unbounded hospitality of our friends and show my readers what generous deeds some men are capable of; but I confess I cannot. The city is lighted by electric lights, the public buildings are fine, and in the principal plaza is a beautiful bronze statue of Bolivar.

The Professor and I, as our readers well know, are very much interested in the history of America; and as it was upon this very coast of South America that some of the most notable events took place, we cannot let the opportunity pass without reference to them. We found a queer old book called, "The General History of the Vast Continent and Islands of America, commonly called the West Indies," written by Antonio de Herrera three hundred years ago, and translated into English in 1740.

From this very valuable work we shall now and then make extracts; the following is one: —

"In the other hemisphere [America] there were no dogs, asses, sheep, goats, swine, cats, horses, mules, camels, nor elephants. They had no orange, lemon, pomegranate, fig, quince, olive, melons, wines 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), therefore, they *lived some part of the night!* and this he thought to be the most valuable acquisition from the white people." A wise old Indian that! There are many Indians in Venezuela yet in savage state, and in the neighboring republic of Colombia there are said to be cannibals. Not long ago reports came down to the coast of a massacre and cannibal feast which took place on the Putumayo, — one of many rivers which run from the eastern slope of the Colombian Andes, and about which little is known. Rising in the mountainous districts of the upper altitudes of Pasto, in the State of Cauca, this river runs nearly one thousand miles, receiving in its course the tributary waters of more than thirty streams.

Within the past few years adventurous residents in Pasto have endeavored to turn the riches of the river to account. Some time ago a young merchant of Barcacoas, named Portes, with some friends, established himself on the banks of the Putumayo. They were soon visited by a number of Jevenetos Indians, who came ostensibly to trade. The Indians were well received and were apparently satisfied, but suddenly they attacked and killed the Colombians, and afterward cooked and ate them. The Indians had never visited the Putumayo before, and no one had ever fallen in with them on the Amazon. Other tribes have also made their appearance in different places, and it is believed that some more powerful tribes are driving the weaker ones from the heart of the unknown forest regions, or that they are voluntary emigrants who will murder and plunder whenever opportunity offers. Residents on the frontier also suggest that they may have been driven from their homes, wherever these may be, by the slavers, whose vessels ascended several of the tributaries of the Amazon a few years ago in search of slaves and produce. Indians are captured on all the interior rivers and carried off to out-of-the-way regions.

NATURAL TUNNEL ON THE COAST OF VENEZUELA.

CHAPTER VIII.

LAND OF THE LIBERATOR.

SIGHT OF SOUTH AMERICA'S MOUNTAINS. — A FORMIDABLE LINE. — A MISERABLE PEOPLE. — THE VIOLENT SEA. — RED AND GREEN HILLS. — ONE DOLLAR FOR LANDING, AND A FEE FOR LEAVING. — BOLIVAR'S ARMY. — POETRY BY A CONSUL. — REVENUES AND EXPORTS OF VENEZUELA. — A FLOCK OF FIREFLIES.

OUTH AMERICA, as we first approach it on the Venezuelan coast, presents a discouraging bulwark of defence in its mountains, which guard the interior well. Beyond these mountain-barriers it seems impossible to penetrate; they stand up so high and frowning without an apparent opening in their serried ranks. Half the night through, in going from Puerto Cabello to La Guayra, as we walked the decks we were treated to occasional glimpses of misty mountains. It was a glorious night, moonlit and clear; the stars sparkled brightly, and the Southern Cross hung slantwise above the purple mountains, having mysteriously made its appearance about nine o'clock in the evening. The sea was smooth; and as the distance between the two ports is only half a night's run, we glided along almost imperceptibly, with no motion of the big steamer felt except the regular pulsations of the engine. We reached La Guayra at daylight; and as we sought the deck after a refreshing night's sleep, we saw our friends, the mountains, right before us, their higher steeps frowning directly upon and overtopping us, as we lay

tossing upon the waves. The roadstead is open and exposed, and the waves roll in from outside, tossing the steamers and the smaller craft about like chips. The distance from Curaçoa is a ten hours' run, and from Puerto Cabello five or six, going at easy speed.

Great cloud-masses hang lowering over the mountains, while silver cloudlets sport along their sides. Though the heights are green, the bases are bare and brown, scarred and gashed. There are no signs of habitation above five hundred feet or so, but one of the shoulders of a hill is cut out to receive a cosey little fort, upon the stone walls of which is a signal station, — a delightful post of observation, commanding a wide sweep of ocean and coastwise view.

The bull-ring is just below the fort, and immediately beneath, the best part of the town, which is here compactly built, but straggles along the shore to the right and left. It lies under the steep hills, composed of houses of stone and clay.

A hotter place apparently could not be found anywhere than this La Guayra occupies, with the hills behind and above it, and exposed to the blaze of the sun three-fourths of the day. Above the narrow line of houses along shore, tracks and footpaths zigzag up the hills, leading to humble dwellings, mere mud-boxes, perched on the hillsides. They are but earthy excrescences of the hills, as brown and sun-baked as the slopes around them. Yet mean and small as these huts are, they are swarming with people, — with creatures whom it were high honor to call brothers through Adam. I am sure Adam did not expect such degeneracy as one sees here on the north coast of South America.

To get ashore at La Guayra costs one dollar. It is the first port at which we have touched where there is anything like a desire to make money out of visitors; so that this mild attempt at extortion is taken in good part, and is soon forgotten as new scenes claim attention.

It was on a holiday that we arrived at La Guayra, and the regular

LA GUAYRA,

"lighters" were not making their trips to the shore. These great boats, built of ironwood and lignum vitæ, are said to cost above one thousand dollars each; and though they are but clumsy, misshapen "gundalous," yet they land their freightage in good condition, and their passengers with dry feet. Our boatman was very importunate for his fee, and we could hardly avoid paying him the dollar each that he demanded. But it was well that we "stood him off," because when we reached the custom-house, a ticket was presented to each of us for which we had to pay the dollar.

The customs department regulates the landing and leaving of passengers, and no one is allowed to do either here without its sanction. My ticket was numbered 9,756, and read as follows: —

Corporacion del Puerto de la Guayra,
Pasage
Con 50 kilos de equipaje
B 5.

We did not have the stipulated fifty kilos of baggage, as we had but one trunk between us; and that may have been the reason our luggage passed through without examination. But these customs officials, like their cousins in New York, know well enough when a man intends to smuggle, and never go to any unnecessary trouble in searching. The landing-fee was demanded ostensibly for the building of the breakwater, — a magnificent work which is progressing as fast as the rough northerly winds and seas will permit. It is an English concession, I believe, and when completed will make this open roadstead a tolerably secure place of anchorage. The work proceeds but slowly, owing to the heavy seas, and not long ago a great breach was made in the wall during a hurricane, when thousands of dollars' worth of material was swept away in less than half an hour. It is being built of great blocks of concrete, or cement, this cement being enclosed in

immense sacks, carried out to the end of the pier in lighters, the bottoms of which drop out and deposit the sack in place, after which it is left to harden, and the structure is carried out above.

A picturesque port is this of La Guayra, with its curving shore, its stone and adobe houses, and its immediate background of red and verdant hills. To the eye taking in its beautiful contours and bright colors from the ship in the bay, it presents an attractive picture.

Not only did I have to pay for permission to land, but when I took leave I had to secure a permit to get away. This cost twenty cents for a stamp, and another twenty (a bolivar) for the official who secured it for me. This ticket was worded as follows: —

El Sr. F. A. Ober es pasajero
por el Vapor Americano,
Philadelphia.
La Guayra, May 10, 1890.
pr. H. L. Boulton & Co.

Upon this was affixed a revenue stamp of fifty centimos, and also the official stamps of the chief of the custom-house and of the chief of police.

The customs officials were pretty well dressed, and bore themselves with an air of superiority; but the soldiers on guard reminded me of a description I once read of Venezuelan patriots of seventy years ago: —

"Bolivar's army wore literally what they could get. Some were to be seen in every corps with Spanish uniforms, either with or without broad-brimmed straw hats; but these few were so far from improving the appearance of the line that they made it resemble a rabble, and displayed to greater advantage the miserable clothing of their comrades. Many were nearly stark naked; but the greater part wore small ragged blankets and pieces of carpet, with holes cut in them for

the head to pass through. Straw hats were in general use, but some colonels had partially introduced into their corps a kind of nondescript *schakos*, made of raw cowhide of various colors. The firearms too of this devoted army were all old and in very bad condition. Some muskets were absolutely without locks, and were apparently carried for show, until the fall of a few friends or foes should give their owners an opportunity for exchanging them for more effective weapons. Many had only lances or bayonets on poles; and the Indians were armed with bows and arrows."

Being more or less under the protecting care of the agents of the Line, the American passenger does not suffer many annoyances. Of course we make the agency our headquarters, when ashore, and go to it for information, even on matters having no relevancy to the business of the Line. All are treated with courtesy, however, and made to feel that there is one spot where the American flag floats not in vain. In a double sense, the American feels the security of home at the office of the Line, because here also is the headquarters of the American Consul. I found him in an upper apartment overlooking the picturesque *patio* of the old building, a courteous, educated gentleman, willing to give information about the country, and anxious to be of service to those who approached him in the proper spirit.

It was a rambling old corridor in which his office was held, with bare beams and rafters overhead and great piles of coffee sacks against the wall. Everything was dusty and somewhat musty, and the busy spider had not neglected such glorious opportunities for connecting widely separated rafters with its silken webs. Pigeons cooed on the tiles, and smaller birds darted in and out, while the spiders aforementioned, some of them of enormous size, kept unacclimated visitors in "a state of mind." The Consul has been here some years, and is thoroughly conversant with the things of Venezuela as well as with the people who reside here. Perhaps I cannot better convey this sentiment than by making public some verses he wrote upon —

LA GUAYRA.

I.

O tranquil *paraiso*, nestled near the placid (?) sea,
La Guayra, *mi querida*, I must bid adieu to thee!
My boat is tossing in the surf; the twilight settles down;
Asi pues, *mi despedida*, — *adios*, my dear old town!

O gorgeous, cloud-kissed mountains that majestically arise,
Far up into the azure of the lovely tropic skies,
Frown never, but forever with the smile of pity greet
The home of *mis recuerdos* sweetly sleeping at your feet.

The restless and resistless *olas* that with ceaseless roar
And sheets of white *espuma* dash upon the rocky shore,
Beat lightly and break brightly, with thy changeless melody
On the beautiful *orillas* of this haven by the sea.

And thou too, gentle Mother Earth, in moments of unrest,
Trembling with hollow thunders that re-echo in thy breast,
In pity spare La Guayra a recurrence of her woes,
The death and desolation of the *terremoto* throes.

With fondest recollections and with heart sincere and true,
Guaireños queridisimos, receive my last adieu!
May God, *con mado muna*, ever graciously extend
To you the favor you have shown to your departing friend!

This is very fine, as everybody will surely admit, and the sentiment was undoubtedly received with applause by the *Guaireños queridisimos*, — the most dearly beloved Guayra friends; and had the worthy Consul stopped here, all would have been well, and perhaps he might ere this have been secure of a niche in the saintly pantheon after his death. But when he once had left La Guayra, and was safe aboard the Yankee "Vapor," his lines, though not lacking in truth and expression, are strangely at variance with the foregoing. In very truth, they convey the impression we all received, and may be accepted as authoritative, coming from such a source: —

SUNSET ON THE VENEZUELAN COAST.

LA GUAYRA.

II.

Adios to thee, La Guayra ! city of the dark-eyed *gente*,
Land of *mucha calor* and of *dolce far niente*,
Home of the wailing *búrro* and the all-abounding flea ;
Mañana, *gracias à Dios !* I bid adieu to thee.

Farewell, ye gloomy *casas*, *mejor dicho* prison cells,
Ye narrow, crooked *calles*, reeking with assorted smells,
Ye dirty little coffee-shops and filthy *pulperias*,
Stinking stable, dingy *patios*, and fetid *canerias*,

Where beggars ride on horseback, like Spanish cavaliers,
And vagabonds perambulate like jolly gamboliers,
Where the *lavanderas* wash your *ropa* — when they feel inclined,
And hotel waiters strut about with shirt hung out behind.

Good-by, ye Latin greasers ! *Su atento servidor*,
Que vaya bien, *pues adios !* My boat is on the shore ;
O dirty people, dirty houses, despicable spot,
Departing I salute you, in your dirtiness and rot.

There you have La Guayra, and many another Spanish-American city in a nut-shell. Its streets are narrow and dirty, the houses old and damp, the people — those you most come in contact with — disagreeable and unattractive. Yet even in dirt and squalor there is attractiveness, and we should not let minor faults cause us to overlook the merits of La Guayra — as a picture seen from the sea.

One would hardly expect our Consul to dismount from his Pegasus, when his steed ambles so beautifully amid the palm groves and *calles;* but he does, now and then, and sends to our Government "reports" abounding in statistics made of the sternest stuff. We all know that La Guayra is the chief port of Venezuela, from which comes a vast shipment of coffee every year. It is said that there is an average annual exportation of coffee amounting to twenty-five millions of pounds.

The revenues are derived mainly from imports, the natural products of the country not being subject to export duty. If one might believe reports, half the population live on the customs, either directly or indirectly. One of our sailors stated the condition of things very emphatically when he said that all Spaniards and Spanish-Americans, as peoples, are robbers, preying upon the products of superior intelligence. Like vampires, they suck the life-blood out of commerce; like leeches, they apply themselves to every healthy subject that sets foot within their waters. From the first dawn of Spanish-American history, these Latin peoples who settled Mexico, West Indies, and South America have played the part of robbers, pirates, and buccaneers. Gold has been their god; and to procure it they have never hesitated to exterminate peaceful people, murdering them in the fields and suffocating them in the mines. In a more peaceful way, in recent years, they have applied themselves to squeezing the golden eggs out of the geese that flocked to their shores. They manufacture next to nothing; they export nothing but the fruits of the soil. An ungrateful people possess this bountiful country; and it is one of the mysteries of a Divine Providence that they have been allowed to cumber the earth so long.

According to the "Statistical Annuary" for 1889, the imports for 1886–87 amounted to 73,191,880 bolivars. A bolivar has a value of about twenty cents; and the duties amounted to 23,203,459 bolivars, or about one-third of the total cost. In 1887–88 the total value of imports was 78,963,288 bolivars, with a total duty of 29,728,817 bolivars. Of the imports, Great Britain sent the greatest amount, equal to 23,510,113 bolivars, and the United States of America 19,743,824 bolivars.

The chief exports in 1887–88, consisting of cotton, cacao, coffee, copper, hides, deer and goat skins, *divi-divi*, timber, dyewoods, gold, tonka beans, and sundries, went to the United States,

— more than half the grand total, or 45,615,500 bolivars. Of the vessels employed in the carrying trade between Venezuela and other countries, the United States had the greatest number of steamers, and Great Britain the largest number of sailing-vessels. The most direct service between Venezuela and the United States is by the American Line, six days from La Guayra to New York.

This city is certainly important in a commercial sense, but far from desirable as a place of residence. It has two beautiful suburban towns, called Macato and Maiquetia. The former is some four miles distant, and there one finds surf-bathing, fresh and salt water baths, and good hotels; in fact, there is the germ here of a delightful watering-place. A railroad runs out there, and coaches can be hired to take one to Macato, as well as to the nearer suburb. This latter, Maiquetia, is completely embowered in coco-palms, through which gleam the white church and the red-roofed houses.

Through this village, and through the palm grove, runs the railroad that connects La Guayra with Caracas. Its devious course may be traced from the ship in the harbor by its trail along the hills.

We were now in the country of fireflies, the *noctilucas*, that so astonished the Spaniards when they first saw them. The old historian shares in this astonishment, and this is the way he speaks of them: "In Hispaniola they found a sort of Vermin, like great Beetles, somewhat smaller than Sparrows, having two Stars close by their Eyes, and two more under their Wings, which gave so great a Light that by it they could Spin, Weave, Write, and Paint; and the Spaniards went by Night to hunt the *Utias*, or little Rabbits of that Country; and also afishing, carrying those Animals tyed to their great Toes, or Thumbs, and they call'd them Locuyos. They took them in the Night, with Firebrands, because they made to the Light, and came when call'd by their Name; and the Men, stroaking their Faces and Hands with a sort of Moisture that is in these Stars, seem'd to be afire."

CHAPTER IX.

FROM THE COAST TO CARACAS.

Sunset Colors. — Palms and Paradise. — Some South American Hotels. — Washerwomen at the Brook. — Climbing a Coco-Palm. — A Wonderful Railroad. — Swarms of Locusts. — What Humboldt wrote. — The Climb to Caracas.

A GUAYRA lies on a narrow shelf cut out of the hills that here come directly down to the sea. It is "bound to be" hot; it swarms with a swarthy population; it is only attractive at a distance. The farther away you are, provided you be not too far to lose details sufficient for a picture, the more you are inclined to like La Guayra. My most beautiful photographs were obtained just as we were steaming out of the port, and they were some "snap-shots" at great banks of sunset clouds, massed above a promontory crowned with palms. Crimson and gold in color, the sun only peering through rents in the radiant meshwork, these clouds attracted us all to the rail, and kept us there, even though the gong had sounded for dinner, and we were hungry to a degree. For nearly an hour the sun's influence was observable upon the clouds, that lay piled upon one another in fantastic shapes. At last the crimson faded to pink, the gold to salmon tints, and the cloud-ranks dispersed themselves over the sky, the flow of which was a lovely robin's-egg blue. I took three photographs of this fleeting picture, before the clouds had lost their distinctive shapes. Each was a gem, and needs only

to be carefully copied into a lantern slide, and colored after my description by a "lantern artist," to make a vision of tropical splendor, when projected by the stereopticon, that even Turner might envy. In the last photograph, sweeping my camera more inland, I secured a Venezuelan man-of-war, brought out distinctly against the crimson background. The low black hull, the masts and spars, and every rope of the rigging, are drawn in silhouette against this wonderful sky. The water is dimpled and crinkled, and a path of golden glory leads from the fortress held by the sun to the immediate foreground of the picture. The mountains beyond lay half revealed, the clouds covering their flanks and summits, while the ranks of palms were lighted with a gleam celestial. Beyond these palms, where the distance was lost in mist of gold, one might well believe the pathway would be found to the portals of Paradise.

"EACH PHOTOGRAPH WAS A GEM."

For Paradise will surely be found in the tropics, provided poetical fancies and the visions of holy men be taken as truth; they oftener paint it as abounding in palms and tropical vegetation than as the home of the pine and maple-tree.

To my mind, the pine is in some respects preferable to the palm; but I should not like my particular Eden to be given over to the one or the other. Take it all in all, I prefer the pine-tree, with its sturdy

growth, its shining needles, its fragrant breath. And I have enjoyed the delights of life in a palm grove; I have swung my hammock beneath its rustling leaves, have watched the bird and insect life that plays about its honeyed blossoms, and have drawn the coco-water from the ivory-lined cell of the coco-nut. The sun, from each, distils a nectar; but the breath of the gods pervades the pine grove in summer-time.

Speaking of palms, the little town beyond La Guayra, Maiquetia, is surrounded with them, and they lie dozens deep between it and the shore. I did not have time to investigate this grove on my upward journey to Caracas, but a day to spare on my return to the ship gave me the desired opportunity. I had "spotted" the places worthy to be photographed in going up, and when the day came I hastened thither with my camera.

The train from Caracas having been delayed by land-slips, it was late in the evening when I reached La Guayra. But I had no difficulty in finding my way to the best hotel, which, by universal consent, was pronounced to be the Neptune, — *El Neptuno*. To reach it, you require a guide, unless you have been previously directed; and you enter a dingy courtyard, a *patio*, encumbered with refuse, and rank with Venezuelan odors. This was the court into which I was guided, but there is a neater entrance on another street. Around this *patio* a rambling structure is built. In our country, the wisdom of enlightened architects has pointed out that it is best to first take heed to sanitary conveniences. We should consult, first, health and safety; second, comfort; third, beauty of location and elaboration. But these Spanish-Americans rarely regard health and cleanliness as factors. Like the corporal who captured a dozen prisoners, they form themselves into a hollow square, and proceed to surround it. The *patio* is the first essential; having got that, they surround it with apartments, which on the first floor open only into this court, which again is only open to the sky. There are the store-rooms, the ser-

vants' quarters, and the stables. Yes, the noble steed and the patient jackass occupy the same building with their owner usually, even though he may be a millionnaire. The apartments in the second tier are used as reception-rooms, dining-hall, and dormitories. The kitchen is near by, either on the ground-floor or in the second story. You do not need to be told where it is located, for you have only to follow your nose.

But don't you do it! Don't allow yourself to look into that kitchen as you value your peace of mind and your appetite. Our Southern kitchens, with their ebony cooks, grease, and curry, are as sweet-smelling refectories when compared to these. I have inspected some of them; but then I am seasoned by long residence in Mexico and the West Indies. Nothing can be more wretched than the kitchens, unless it may be their system for sanitation. Sufficient to say that you need ask no disagreeable questions, — your nose will guide you! Fortunately for the traveller here, he may have the ship he came in as a home, except when in La Guayra or at Caracas. With the steamers to fall back to as havens of refuge, the tourist willingly endures a few days of discomfort for the sake of what he may see and hear. It is no great amount of discomfort after all; but I would only remark that if cleanliness is here considered next to godliness, there is little doubt that these people need missionaries.

As things go here, El Neptuno was tolerably clean. The bedroom was merely a bare box of an apartment, with a wooden table and wash-stand, a chair, and a cot-bed with canvas bottom and a strip of calico in lieu of a sheet. A cracked pitcher, a grimy wash-bowl, and a slop-pail half full of fermenting pineapple parings completed the equipment of furniture. I retired in some trepidation, as there was merely a grated opening for a window, and the partitions between my room and the others adjoining were only just high enough to prevent a person from looking over. A well-conditioned burglar might easily have scaled it; and any one so inclined could easily take a shot at me

through the grating. These were my reflections as I retired; but the next morning found me safe and whole, yet perfectly willing to vacate

THE HOTEL PORTAL.

the apartment. The table at the Neptuno was bountifully spread, many courses being served by active waiters. From the balcony

facing the sea, a very fine view is spread out of the curving shore, the city, and the hills beyond.

As I was emerging into the street, a little black boy accosted me in English, wishing to carry my camera for me. Feeling that his recognition of me as an American savored something of familiarity, I answered him in Spanish; yet I allowed him to take the instrument, and took him on the train with me to Maiquetia. He was black as night — a night without a star — and saucy as the British-born negro always is; for he came from Jamaica. We wandered through the streets, and at last came to a palm avenue, where the coco-palms grew in regular ranks, and shaded a path to the sea. At my request, the little black fellow climbed the stem of a coco, and hung there while I photographed the scene.

Nearing the shore, we came to a stream where, in the shade of the cocos and grape-fruit trees, several washerwomen were washing clothes. I wanted to photograph them, but was afraid they would resent it; though when I made known my desire, they were only too eager to have their pictures taken. Indeed, they had abandoned their picturesque attitudes and occupation and came and stood stiffly in front of my camera. There was one graceful maiden who possessed the shapeliest form of them all, — a girl of perhaps sixteen, clad only in a loose muslin that was drawn up and knotted gracefully over one shoulder. One arm and shoulder were bare, and so were her lower limbs, yet she walked and splashed about in the brook apparently unconscious of any observers with curious eyes. She was a very pretty picture, and nothing could be more admirable than her air of *insouciance* as she waded through the stream, picked up a fire-brand on the bank, and leaned over to light a cigarette. These *lavanderas* were clubbing the clothes vigorously after the manner they have here, making havoc with fine linen and garments with buttons. Some were semi-nude, while the children were entirely so, disporting themselves in the water with an abandon only possible to a child unencumbered by the habiliments of

civilization. Above us, in the shade of an odoriferous hedge, a fair woman was bathing, crouching in the shallow stream and pouring water over herself with a calabash.

As we rambled on through the coco grove, we came upon the owner, who assured me that there were so many trees in his *cocotal* that he could not tell their number. One of his laborers was then up a tree cutting off coco-nuts. He climbed the smooth, straight stem, perhaps sixty feet high, to the crown of leaves by the aid of a peculiar sling. In the West Indies I have seen the little negroes walk up a coco-tree by placing a rope around them that encircled both themselves and the tree; but this man had a noose around the tree and one foot in a loop. Pushing up the noose as he advanced, and clinging to the trunk, he rapidly climbed up to the coronal of leaves arching overhead. Then with his cutlass he chopped off great clusters of nuts, which fell to the ground. One of them he sharpened to a point, then cut off this point, leaving a hole in the shell the size of a cent, and through this I drank the refreshing coco-water.

CLIMBING A COCO-TREE.

But I was to describe the ascent of the mountain, by rail, to Caracas. It is a great work, this scaling of the steep mountain-side, and it has been successfully done; but I saw something as I walked along the track that day that would have made an American engineer laugh outright. As we reached a curve where the railroad crossed the cart-road, a freight engine came along, tugging a train of cars heavily laden. Perched upon the cowcatcher was a native, with a sack of sand. The

OLD MISSION NEAR CARACAS.

native dipped his hand into the sack and scattered the sand along one rail, then crawled over to the other side and sprinkled that one. I could not at first understand this operation; but at last it occurred to me that he was *sanding the track by hand.* This illustrates the rather slow process of working and the primitive methods of the English engineer. Imagine a human sand-sprinkler attached to an engine in the United States!

This railway leading from La Guayra to Caracas is twenty-four miles long; yet it connects two places only seven miles apart. But in those seven miles it climbs three thousand feet perpendicularly. The cars, the track, the engines, the management, are English. The coaches are the same as used between Puerto Cabello and Valencia, pertaining to a past generation.

After a great deal of screaming and tooting, our engine pulled us out of the station, past the shore, through the shady palm groves of Maiquetia, and then the climb began. A wide-sweeping curve carried us above the tile-covered houses, and into a ravine, where a river ran through beautiful groves. Higher and higher we climbed, steadily rising on the incline without a stop till the halfway station was reached, at the Zigzag. The speed was about twelve miles an hour; the time between points is two hours and a half; and the first-class fare is $2.50.

It was a grand and even awe-inspiring journey. From the deck of our steamer the track had been pointed out to me, scarring the hills, zigzagging along the sides, until lost to sight in the distance. From the very start to the finish, there was something to attract and keep the attention fixed. First, the beautiful palms of the shore, the wooded ravines, the impending cliffs, and steep slopes, green and brown. Comparing this road with the similar one in Mexico, I should award this the palm, even though there are not the broad plains and the snow-covered mountains of the Mexican route. The chief charm of this Venezuelan road lies in its immediate uplift from the sea, bringing

within the compass of vision the purely tropical vegetation of the coast, the palm-fringed beaches, the exquisitely graceful contours of the coast line, and the broad bosom of the Caribbean with its far-distant horizon. For an hour perhaps, we had views of La Guayra and glimpses of the coast, the breakwater, and the ships at anchor appearing like toys afloat upon a burnished sea of silver. Winding beneath us, as we ascended, we saw the old mule track, — the road between the port and Caracas, along which, even to-day, toil trains of patient donkeys, and the leather-clad muleteers. Houses were scarce, and there were few stations along the line.

About halfway up, our train was invaded by thousands of locusts that swarmed by millions and millions over a certain tract along the railroad. They seem confined to this particular section just now, and to inflict their presence upon every train-load of passengers that passes through; but Venezuela and the valley of Caracas have often suffered severely from their ravages. These locusts are very large, bold, and ravenous; they have even stopped the trains at different times by covering the rails with their oily carcasses.

I should not forget that the great Humboldt came over the road between La Guayra and Caracas just ninety years ago. He first landed at Cumaná, in company with his distinguished friend Bonpland; and after some months they took a coasting vessel for La Guayra, where they landed after many disagreeable misadventures. Humboldt's opinion of the climate of this port is not a favorable one: "A stagnant air engulfed in a hollow of the mountains in contact with a mass of barren rocks acts differently from air equally hot in open country."

But he is profuse in admiration of the beautiful situation of Caracas. The great naturalist first slept at Caracas, "in a house on a little hill above the village of Maiquetia." I wonder if that house still stands on the little hill above that lovely village embowered in its golden-green coco-palms. I am no hero worshipper; but I would

have given an hour or two to that little house in which Humboldt slept. In the city of Mexico, in a certain *calle*, you may find the house in which Humboldt tarried when he was there, with an inscription to that effect over the doorway. Venezuelans yet relate that Humboldt came here; but more than that I think they do not record.

He too admired the wide-extended horizon that seemed to climb higher and higher as we ascended the mountain, until it appeared almost as high as the mountain itself. From La Venta, Humboldt says, "You discover an horizon of more than twenty-two leagues' radius; the white and barren shore reflects a dazzling mass of light; you see at your feet Cape Blanco, the village of Maiquetia with its coco-trees. . . . The road from La Guayra to Caracas is infinitely finer than that from Guayaquil to Quito."

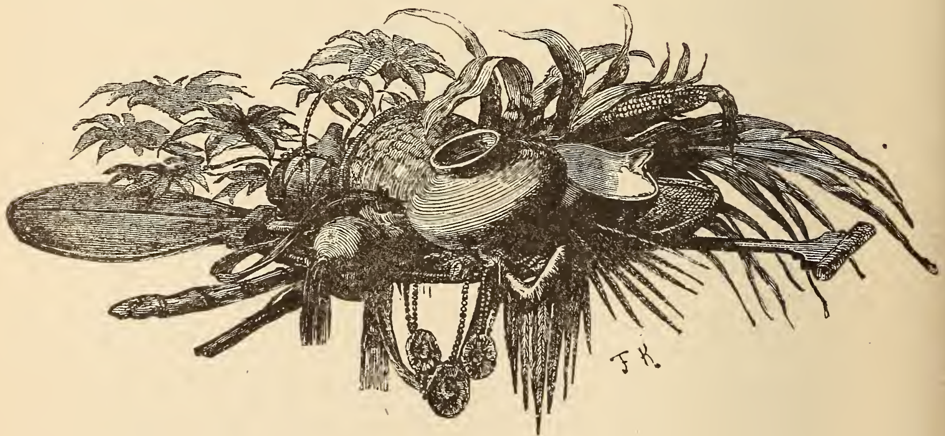
Of the mountain valley the great philosopher and world-famed observer writes, "The height of Caracas is but a third of that of Mexico, Quito, and Santa Fé de Bogota; yet amongst all the capitals of Spanish America which enjoy a cool and delicious climate in the midst of the torrid zone, Caracas stands nearest to the coast."

About halfway between sea-port and capital the up and down trains meet. We could see the down-coming train a long while before it reached us, and we finally drew in at the station together. There was a *cantina* here, a drinking-place, a little shed with open front; and toward this all the male passengers made a violent rush. They fairly fought for the privilege of buying flat, sour beer, brandy, insipid lemonade, and stale sandwiches. By no means backward in securing their drinks and rations were two portly priests, as I can show in a snap-photograph I made of the crowd in its mad rush upon the *cantina*.

Then we crawled on again; the inner man being satisfied, the outer could the more calmly contemplate the beauties around, above, and below. The tropical vegetation is out of sight, and barren-

looking hills stretch away on every side. We scale them, hill after hill, and run along the brinks of ravines and gorges that it thrills one to look into. At one point, as the train sweeps around a curve, we are eighteen hundred feet above the bottom of the gorge, into which we can peer from the car window. Were this the first time the ascent had been made, we should shudder with fear; but we feel that there is no danger, and have confidence in our engineers.

Plunging in and out of numerous tunnels, we at last come out into an upland plain, bounded by distant mountains. Farms are passed; signs of cultivation increase; houses grow numerous; a church stands high above us on a bluff. The whistle sounds shrilly; we are at Caracas.



CHAPTER X.

IN VENEZUELA'S CAPITAL.

POETS, DOCTORS, AND GENERALS. — THE DESAYUNO. — TERRIBLE EARTHQUAKES. — CALVARIO AND CATHEDRAL. — BOLIVAR AND HIS BATTLES. — STATUES WITH MOVABLE HEADS. — A STATUE OF WASHINGTON. — PLOUGHING WITH A STICK. — TELEPHONES AND ELECTRIC LIGHTS. — CANNON OF LONG AGO. — A BULL-FIGHT BY NIGHT.

THERE was quite a mob at the station when the morning train from La Guayra arrived at Caracas, and it was with difficulty that the Professor and myself secured a cab. The fare to a hotel was only thirty cents each, or a bolivar and a half, but the *cochero* waited till the cab was filled before he started. Once arrived at the region of hotels, we found them full, to our great annoyance. There are several hotels of the (so-called) first class, and their prices are not so very high, being from two to three dollars per day. I finally secured part of a room at Los Andes, a native hotel. Whether or not this lofty name was bestowed on account of its high class or its high prices, neither was very lofty, and we had no quarrel with the proprietor on their account. The *chuno* explained that he only took me out of pity, seeing that I had no other place to sleep, and so I carefully avoided expressing the disgust I felt at my situation. As in La Guayra,

it is well to avoid an inspection of the *cuisine* and the *comun.* Nearly all Spanish and Spanish-American hotels are alike in their culinary and un-sanitary arrangements. Every room on the ground-floor was occupied by a "general," except one, and that was held by a "doctor." You are always safe in addressing a man in Ca-

ANCIENT HOUSE IN CARACAS.

racas by the one title or the other, for the army turns out one class and the university the other faster than they can be used. The "doctor" is generally the one who has a hankering after literary fame, and who writes lines for the "poet's corner" of the city papers. They are good to the poets in Spanish America, giving them more than a "corner" of each issue; in fact, they generally have a whole broadside, and control a "corner" in space. They have no "patent insides" here, except such as Nature has

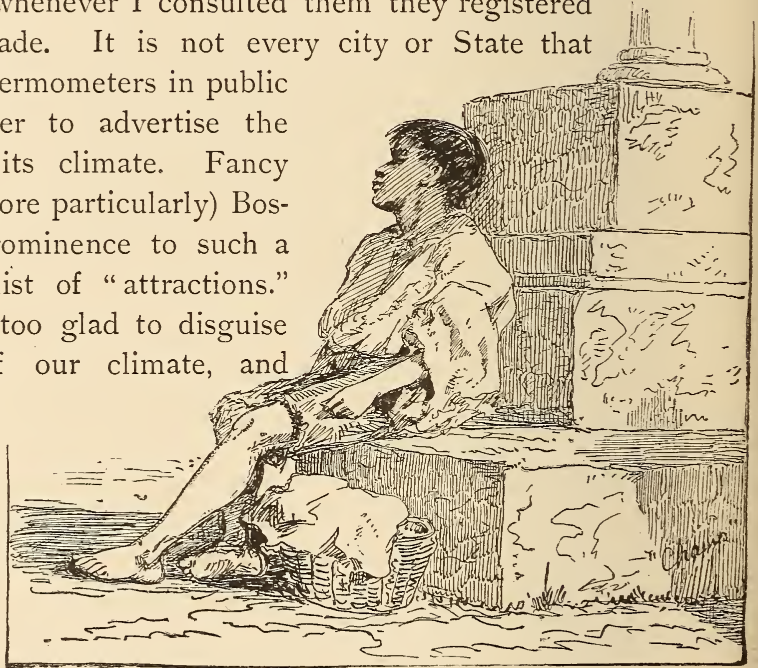
endowed them with, and so the numerous lucubrations of the poets come in quite handy. These effusions are generally addressed to the eyes or the feet or the hands or the soul or the handkerchief, or to some property or attribute of a fair *señorita* called Clara, Maria, *Angelita divina*, or something equally sweet and "fetching." The particular "doctor" who occupied the *quarto* next to mine was a small-skulled, goggle-eyed, under-sized, brown-skinned Mestizo. He did not look as though he could "count one;" but when I, one day, asked an English companion, in the doctor's presence, who that insignificant specimen belonged to, he whispered to me to be careful, as he could speak English, and understand it, with fatal facility.

I have often noticed, in a coco grove, that the biggest coco-nuts did not always contain the most milk.

According to the Spanish style, the *desayuno*, or light, very light repast, opens the day here, — consisting of coffee or chocolate, a roll, and sometimes fruit, served anywhere from daybreak till seven or eight o'clock in the morning. Breakfast, or *almuerzo*, is served about noon, or from eleven to one. It consists of half a dozen courses, and the *comida*, or regular dinner, at about six P. M., generally has a couple more. As a rule, the meals are better than the rooms, the food being rich and varied, even if not cooked to suit the fastidious Americans. Wine is always served, and is usually included in the price charged for board. The servants are attentive, and though their ideas of cleanliness may be at variance with yours, will serve you with alacrity. Owing to the mild climate in this favored region, the tables are often spread in a corridor at one side of the *patio*, and the eye is refreshed with the sight of flowers and birds, while the air is cool and pure.

According to the latest available information, Caracas lies at an elevation above the sea of 2,880 feet, and south-southeast from La Guayra. Its climate is considered temperate and healthy,

though I could not but notice that many people were afflicted with "colds." The mean temperature is about 72° Fahrenheit in the hot season, and 66° in the cool. According to the large thermometers, which the Caracanians have erected in their every public square, whenever I consulted them they registered 65° in the shade. It is not every city or State that would place thermometers in public places, in order to advertise the equability of its climate. Fancy Hartford or (more particularly) Boston, giving prominence to such a feature in a list of "attractions." We are only too glad to disguise the nature of our climate, and to hustle the thermometric record out of sight. If there is anything we are *not* proud of, it is certainly our climate. But in Venezuela things are different.



A YOUTHFUL BEGGAR OF CARACAS.

The valley of Caracas is said to be subject to earthquakes, and everybody remembers that terrible *terremoto* of 1812, when twelve thousand persons perished in the ruins of the city. I find a curious reference to this great earthquake in Waterton's "Wanderings in South America." This great naturalist was then in the wilds of Guiana, and had reached a remote frontier post of the Portuguese. For days and weeks his only companions had been wild Indians; but at last, sick and weary, he had reached a temporary haven of rest.

"As the canoe was proceeding slowly down the river toward the fort, the commander asked with much concern where was I on the night of the 1st of May [1812]? On telling him that I was at an Indian settlement a little below the great fall of Demerara, and that a strange and sudden noise had alarmed all the Indians, he said the same astonishing noise had roused every man in Fort St. Joachim, and that they had remained under arms till morning. He observed that he had been quite at a loss to form any idea what could have caused the noise; but now, learning that the same noise had been heard at the same time far away from the Rio Branco, it struck him there must have been an earthquake somewhere or other." Later, on reaching the confines of civilization, he "learned that an eruption had taken place at St. Vincentis, and thus the noise heard in the night of the 1st of May, which had caused such terror among the Indians, and made the garrison at Fort St. Joachim remain under arms the rest of the night, is accounted for." The eruption of the volcano in the West Indian Island of St. Vincent was almost simultaneous with the earthquake at Caracas. It was caused, of course, by the same seismic convulsion. The entire top of the volcano was blown away, a new crater was formed, and the whole island covered with ashes. Not this alone, but ashes fell in clouds upon Barbadoes, *ninety-five miles to windward!* That is, the cloud of ashes was shot up above the prevailing current of the trade-wind, which is always from the east and northeast, and was carried by that upper current a hundred miles and more away. The *souffrière*, or volcano (sulphur-mountain), of St. Vincent stands to-day quiescent. Until that day in 1812 when it blew its head off without warning, it had been at rest from time immemorial. It may take another period of rest, extending through centuries of time, and then suddenly extinguish itself and the beautiful island, and sink beneath the waves.

A dozen years ago I climbed to the brim of its dead crater, and camped in a cave for a week — my only companion an old negro —

in search of a mysterious bird. It was not a comfortable place, and I got a fever that kept me confined a month; but *I got the bird*, and had the satisfaction of proving it a species new to the world. It was named in honor of my friend, Mr. N. H. Bishop of Lake George, New York, the adventurous canoe-voyager, who performed the journey between the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Gulf of Mexico in a paper canoe.

This much for a roundabout journey, suggested to me by the great tragedy at Caracas nearly eighty years ago. It was declared by the priests at that time that the earthquake was a divine manifestation against the (then) recent declaration of Venezuelan independence; and many believed it. It greatly retarded the progress of the cause. But judging from the atrocities of the Spaniards during the struggle for independence and previously, committed upon the inoffensive Indians, Providence must have taken a distorted view of things; for a really humane being would much rather have been on the other side. The god of the Spaniards, like the deity of every race or nation, very much resembles his creator; he is sanguinary, revengeful, a god of hate and lust, yearning for a chance to spoil the heathen and rend them limb from limb.

The great Cathedral of Caracas stands to-day on one side the main plaza, — a plain structure, two hundred and fifty feet long by seventy-five wide, supported inside by twenty-four pillars. It does not compare favorably with the cathedrals of other Spanish capitals, neither do the churches with others of their kind. Above the city rises the hill of Calvario, the scene of a battle between the patriots and the Spaniards in 1821. The valley is separated from the La Guayra coast by the hill, *Cerro de Avila*, and two miles east is the great double-crested mountain called the *Silla* (Saddle) of Caracas, rising to an altitude of eight thousand feet.

In the list of cities, Caracas ranks first, with respect to wealth, influence, and population. Capital of the Republic, here reside the

President and the high officials. Besides the city proper, there are six suburban boroughs, Antinamo, Mecarao, La Vega, El Valle, El Recreo, and Macuto. The estimated population of the city is about fifty-six thousand, or including the suburb, seventy thousand. The valley in which it is situated rejoices in a temperate climate; the soil is fertile, producing nearly everything desired by man; and several brooks and streams add beauty to the scenes and fertility to the summer gardens.

Founded over three hundred and fifty years ago, in 1567, by a Spanish captain, Caracas remained in Spanish hands two hundred and fifty years. It is the focal point of all South American republicans, since here had birth the republican idea. As the birth-place of Bolivar, the great "liberator," it has more than local fame. There stands in the centre of the great plaza a fine equestrian statue of Bolivar, in bronze. The only other equestrian statue was one of Guzman Blanco, and that was recently destroyed by an incensed and outraged people. Bolivar, the "Washington of Venezuela," was born here July 24, 1783. He was educated in Europe, residing some time in Madrid, where he married, losing his wife by yellow fever on the voyage back to Venezuela. In the year 1809, he passed through the United States, joined the Venezuelan revolutionists in 1810, and Venezuela declared its independence 1811. Bolivar was compelled to flee to Curaçoa in 1812, though he operated along the Magdalena River the same year. He returned, organized an army, and took Caracas from the Spaniards in 1813, but lost it to them the following year, in July. The same year, however, he rescues Bogota for the patriots, but is later defeated and flees to Jamaica, where he narrowly escapes assassination, his secretary being murdered. The year 1816 finds him in Hayti, where he reaches the Main, raises an army, but is defeated; but the next year he inflicts defeat upon the Spaniards and fixes his headquarters at Angostura, on the Orinoco. By July, 1819, he had freed New

Granada from the Spaniards, and crushingly defeated the Spaniards at Carabobo, Venezuela, driving them to retreat to Puerto Cabello, which they held for two years, the last place in Spanish possession. In 1821, Colombia, Venezuela, and New Granada adopted a constitution. In 1822, Bolivar invaded Peru, freeing it from Spanish rule, and in 1825, Upper Peru was set off and named Bolivia in his

STATUE OF BOLIVAR, CARACAS.

honor. This great man, who at one time "had unlimited control over the revenue of three countries, Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, yet died without a penny of public money in his possession." He died in 1830, at San Pedro, near Santa Martha.

Very few of his successors to the executive have followed his example of disinterested patriotism. This is what an English writer says about it: "How a country gifted with one of the best codes

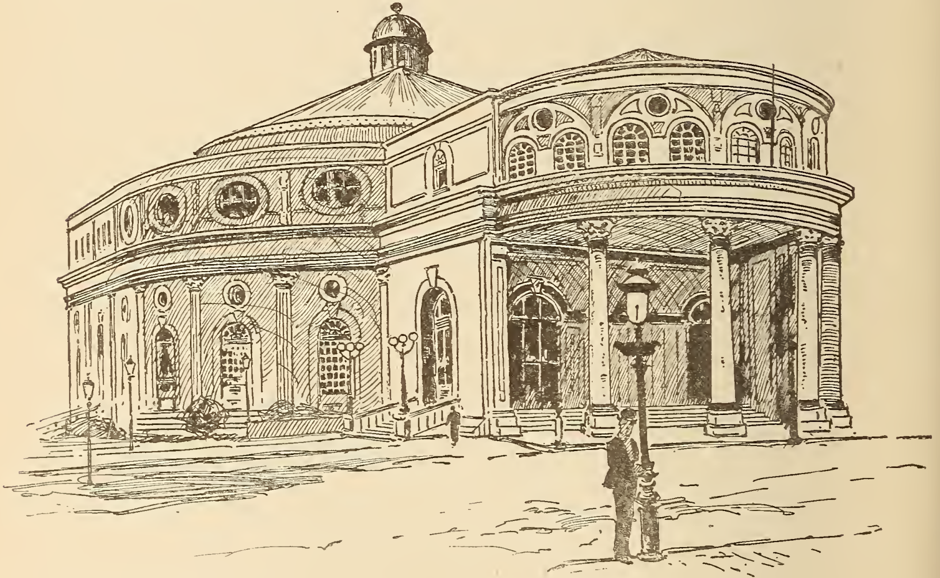
of law in existence could, through the utter depravity, greed, and cruelty of successive chiefs, have fallen into its present state seems incredible. Enough that from its liberation to the present, every successive President seems to have been employed, during his short lease of power, in trying to enrich himself and his adherents, without the least consideration for his unfortunate country. On paper, all laws are perfect, and the Constitution is all that could be desired; but experience has shown that the influence of the executive power is able to subdue and absorb every other power, legislative and judicial."

About the numerous Venezuelan generals, the same writer says, "These worthies, it is said, are the only people allowed to wear swords in public. A major of an English regiment, being out in Venezuela in the interior one morning, being about to pay a visit to the governor, asked his servant for his sword, intending to put it on, with his uniform. His servant gravely asked his rank in the army, and on being told, observed that officers of that rank when not on duty were not allowed to wear swords; but that he, the servant, *being a general*, could wear it, and hand it over to his master if it was wanted for use.

"It is customary to erect a bronze statue to every successful general, when he is in power; but this is usually pulled down by his successor. A cute Yankee, therefore, hit upon the novel idea of having statues with *movable heads*, keeping the heads of prominent men in stock, and screwing on the latest President at a moment's notice."

There stands on one side of the Plaza de Bolivar a plain structure, massive in its construction, but unattractive either outside or in. In the centre of this plaza is the beautiful bronze statue of the liberator Bolivar, mounted upon a gallant steed, — a figure impressive and heroic, — erected in 1874. Very near the plaza are the government buildings, fine Corinthian structures, and opposite them the university.

There are ten chief squares in the city, each with a statue of some important personage. The only foreigner that I can recall as being thus honored is our own Washington, who has a fine statue in a square bearing his name. The buildings of importance are the national Capitol, consisting of two parts, — the legislative and the federal executive; the Yellow House (*Casa Amarillo*), the residence



GRAND OPERA HOUSE, CARACAS.

of the President; the university; the exhibition building and museum; the great theatre; the Cathedral; the Church of San Francisco, the monument to Bolivar; and the Pantheon. West of the city, and above the grand promenade of Calvario, lies a great reservoir, which supplies the city.

It is a lovely spot, Calvario, filled with palms, vines, and roses, with a bordering of aloe and feathery bamboo, through which you look out upon the city of Caracas, three hundred feet below. Seriated moun-

tains surround this valley, in the centre of which lies the capital city of this rich land of Venezuela. The area of red-tiled roofs is broken by comparatively few buildings of great prominence, such as the Cathedral, the grand opera, the shabby bull-ring, the Pantheon, and two or three churches. Very few trees thrust themselves up above the expanse of stone and mortar, but these few are mainly the royal

A DONKEY CAR.

palms, called here the *jaguaranas*. A most attractive avenue of these beautiful palms is to be seen a mile or so distant from the opera. They are at least one hundred feet in height, straight as a ship's mast, with glorious coronals of feathery leaves. One morning, strolling in that direction, I saw two men ploughing with a yoke of oxen hitched to a wooden plough, — merely a crooked stick, — and it struck me as a very curious sight.

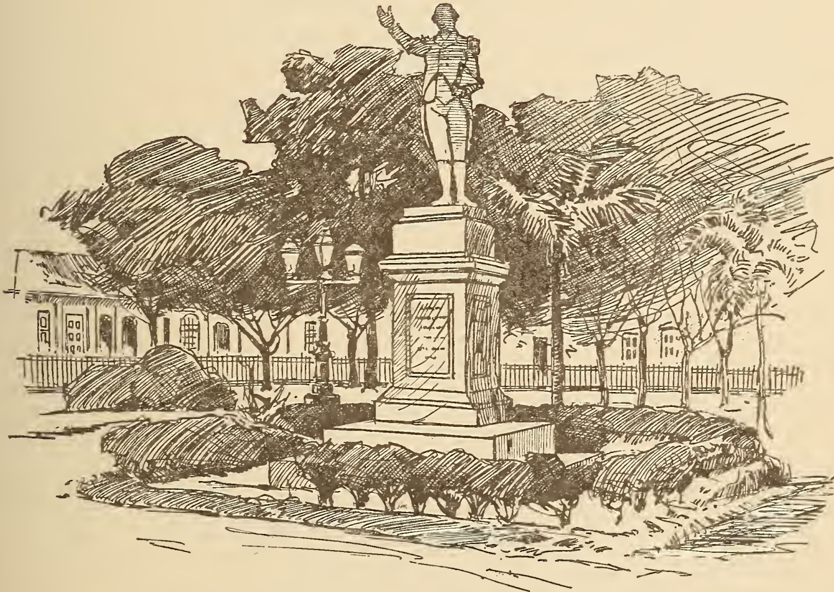
To view the city of Caracas in its entirety, to gain a comprehensive idea of this capital with its fifty-six thousand population, and to see all its architectural attractions at a glance, you should climb the hill above the great iron bridge. The highest natural elevation near any Spanish or Spanish-American city is usually crowned by a cross, and called Calvario. To such sacred use, I believe, was devoted this beautiful hill, — at least, it is called Calvario; but Guzman Blanco, in the plenitude of his power as President, some time ago erected a statue of himself in place of the cross of Christ, and thus offered the people another object for worship. In the opinion of Guzman Blanco (and in the slang of this period) there appeared to be no flies on Guzman Blanco. Yet after his flight from the country, the outraged people rose in their wrath and rent his statue limb from limb, leaving not the minutest fragment to remind us of his glory. As the redoubtable Guzman, by a strict attention to business during his various terms of office, saved some thirty odd millions of dollars and now lives in luxury abroad, he may view with complacency this desecration of Calvario.

It is said that Caracas contains forty bridges. Some of them are excellent structures of iron and of masonry. Near the large iron bridge east of the city is a very beautiful avenue, a double row of royal palms. It is called in Caracas the *Jaguaranas*.

More than forty papers are published in the city. Most of them are political; but literature itself is at a low ebb. The Government also owns and runs a large and well-equipped printing and lithographing establishment, which has sent out among other things an edition of one hundred thousand copies of its "Statistical Annuary," each copy containing a lithographed map in several colors. The city is traversed by two tramway lines, which render excellent service, and is also well supplied with coaches. It is now the centre of four railways, — that from La Guayra, already completed; another to the town of Petare; one to El Valle; and another to Antinuano. Soon, it is expected, at least one line will be completed, connecting Caracas with

Valencia and thus indirectly with Puerto Cabello. This line runs through a fertile and picturesque district, though not densely populated enough to make the venture a great success.

Two telephone companies, with their headquarters here, are profitably patronized. The city is lighted with gas, and an electric-light plant is in operation, though not apparently so successfully as those at Valencia and Maracaibo. Fuel is scarce, and the price excessive,



STATUE OF WASHINGTON, CARACAS.

which will always operate against electric lighting in Venezuela. Of hospitals and the institutions of charity, Caracas has several, a national museum, and a library of thirty thousand volumes.

The Venezuelan Academy is correspondent of the Royal Spanish, and history is represented by the National Academy, created a few years ago.

I must confess to a feeling of satisfaction and a more tender regard for the Venezuelans, as I came one morning upon the statue

of our greatest American. The square in which it stands is called the Plaza de Washington, and the statue is a faithful likeness of Washington, with epaulets on his shoulders, a cocked hat in his left hand, and one arm commandingly extended. In one of the courts of the university is a memento of ancient Spanish times, in the shape of a noble old cannon, some fifteen feet in length, bearing a date on its breech of two hundred and sixty years ago. The old and new so crowd each other here! Of their own volition the Venezuelans do next to nothing to keep pace with the times, but they allow the foreigner to put them in touch with the mighty genius of the present. Thus the telephone here is doing a great and profitable business, tram-cars reach out to the suburbs, and electric lights are already aglow in their streets. They take readily to the electric light, — *la luz electrica*, — and we find it to-day in the inland city of Valencia and sparkling along the lake-front of far-distant Maracaibo. I recall, however, a night that threatened with disaster the electric plant of Caracas, and I do not know yet if it has recovered its prestige. It was on the occasion of the greatest bull-fight of the season, — yes, even of the century, if it had been carried out according to programme. Not content with the Sunday fight, in which eight bulls had been neatly killed and several men put in peril of their lives, all Caracas flocked to see the crowning event, in a grand bull-fight by electric light. It was the first of the kind attempted, and — well, it went off very well, till the lights went out on the fifth bull, and then ensued pandemonium. After venting their rage in wrecking the amphitheatre, the male portion of the rabble made for the electric-light works, and when I left they were searching for rocks and beams with which to batter down the doors.

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT WE FOUND IN THE MUSEUM.

Side-Peeps at Natural History. — Old Caribs and their Cookery. — Curious Parrots. — Wourali Poison. — Big Lizards. — Anacondas Fifty Feet Long. — Alligator's Appetite.

> "A naturalist to this place did come,
> A man who dwelt in a mu-se-um,
> Where of spiders and reptiles there were some
> Ten thousand or more, all pickled in rum."

CARACAS has been pretty well described, by numerous writers, in the ninety years or so since the great earthquake elevated it into notice.

In looking about for some object worthy the distinguished attention of readers of this "Knockabout," we recall nothing that impressed us as did the museum, contained in two or three rooms in the university building. Not that it is much of a museum, for the collections there comprised are most wretched, both in preparation and arrangement. But notwithstanding the neglect and ignorance apparent on every side, there are here many things that remind us of Venezuela's riches to be observed in field and forest. And so if the reader will pardon this departure from descriptive writing, we will proceed to record our impressions and go on a "paper" hunt into Venezuelan wilds.

If we were to write of Venezuelan history, we would like to make mention of the first arrival of Columbus on the coast of Paria. He

first sighted, on that third voyage of his, in 1498, the mountains of Trinidad, — which island, indeed, received its name from its triple-crowned summit: *La Trinidad*, the Trinity.

We have already described, in "The Antilles," this beautiful island, with its unsurpassed attractions, — the finest botanic garden in the world, and the wonderful Pitch Lake. One comes also to the Orinoco River and the gold mines of Bolivar. It was from a very quaint and ancient volume that we took the following account of the discovery of the South American mainland: —

A VAGRANT VIOLINIST.

"We vnderstoode by the signs and poyntings of the Indians that this Region was called *Paria*, and that it was very large. The Admirall [Columbus], therefore, taking into his shippe foure men of that lande, searched the West partes of the same. By the temperature of the ayer, the pleasantness of the ground, and the multitude of people which they saw dayly more and more as they sayled, they conjectured that these things portended some great matter. Here they found great multitudes of people. There came certaine messengers from their *Cacici* (that is, the kings of the country) to desire the Admirall to come to the palaces. Innumerable people met them, having chaynes about their necks and bracelettes on their arms of pearles of India. Being asked where they gathered them, they

poynted to the next shore by the sea-banke. They signified also, by certayne scornefull gestures, that they nothing esteemed pearles. Taking also baskets in their handes they made signes that the same might be filled with them in shorte space.

"But Columbus (because of the corne wherewith his shippe was laden to be caryed into Hispaniola had taken hurt, by reason of the salt water) he determined to defer this marte to a more convenient tyme."

Alas and alack for Columbus! While he was engaged in other adventures, and before that "convenient tyme" came about, along sailed Amerigo Vespucci and some other Spaniards, and made such a haul of pearls (from the very islands Columbus had sighted) that all Spain "marvelled greatly thereat." The courses of that early history would lead us into many pleasant ports and along many a golden strand; but as we have hinted already, it is forbidden ground. If it were not, we should be tempted to extract further from that musty old edition of "Hakluyt's Voyages," and describe divers other things of interest. As it is, we cannot forbear presenting you with this account of the discovery of the Indian cannibals: —

"The third day of the ides of October (1493), departing from Ferria, and from the coastes of Spaine, with a Nauie of seventeene shippes, they sayled XXI daies before they came to any lande, and arrived first at the Ilandes of the *Canibales*, or *Caribes*, of which only the fame was known to our men. Among these, they chaunced first upon one so beset with trees that they could not see so much as an elle space of bare earth or stonie ground; this they called *Dominica*, because they found it on the Sunday."

In the island called Guadalupus they found the dwellings of the Caribs: —

"Our men found in their houses all kindes of earthen vessels, not much unlike unto ours. They founde also in their kytchens *mans flesh*, duckes flesh, and goose flesh, all in one pot, and other on

the spits ready to be layd to the fire. When they perceived the coming of our men, they fledde. This island is the chief habitation of the *Canibales.* They brought from this iland VII *Popiniayes* bigger than Phesantes, having their backes, bustes, and bellies of purple colour."

These "Popiniayes," I think, were the island parrots. At present, the species pertaining to Guadalupe is extinct; but it is a strange fact that each large island of the Caribbees has, or had, a species of parrot peculiar to itself. In Dominica, only thirty miles south of Guadalupe, is a most beautiful parrot, called the "Cicero" (the *Chrysotis augusta*), the largest true parrot known. I brought the first specimen home to our National Museum, and had most exciting times in procuring it. Martinique, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent, each has a peculiar species of this magnificent *Chrysotis.* And the striking fact that these islands, separated by water, — channels only thirty miles wide, — should contain different species of the same genus of bird, without a specimen of the same species, has been alluded to by Wallace in his remarkable "Island Life."

A Frenchman of long ago, in the year 1656, describes a fight between his countrymen and the Caribs near the Caribbee island of Dominica: "While we were occupied in saving the wounded, the old savage Carib captain, all wounded as he was, came towards us, and raising his body half out of the water, like a Triton, holding two arrows on the string of his bow, fired them into the barque, and dived immediately into the water; he returned thus bravely unto the charge, and his strength failing him before his courage, we saw him fall backward and sink to the bottom." That period, the seventeenth century, was a terrible time for Indians and negro slaves, for their lives were held worthless. In 1657, in Martinique, a woman was burned to death for witchcraft. A priest presided at her trial; the report of the trial states that she would not sink in water, but floated like a balloon, until *a needle was stuck in her hair*, when she sank like lead,

but came up thirsty. She was then condemned to death, and was burned by the priest so that she died that night.

In 1658, there was a great massacre of the Caribs at Martinique. To-day not one of them remains alive in that island. In 1660, the Caribs, by treaty, were given possession of the islands of Dominica and St. Vincent, where a few of their descendants may be found living now.

To return to the museum at Caracas. There you will find specimens, though crudely prepared, of the most remarkable animals in Venezuela's fauna. I was pained to see there specimens of the beautiful and celebrated *campanero*, or bell-bird, so horribly mounted as to present a caricature of this bird with the melancholy cry. There are also specimens of Indian handiwork, in their bows, arrows, war-clubs, cooking utensils, and even their canoes. I was particularly interested in a cluster of poisoned arrows, from the wild Indians of the interior.

Many of my readers have heard of Waterton, the eccentric naturalist who achieved fame by his adventures in Guiana, — a region then pertaining to Venezuela, and the dividing line between which and the latter country is still a matter of dispute.

Waterton made three voyages to Guiana, the first in 1812, his principal object being to collect some of the *wourali* poison, with which the Guiana Indians poisoned their arrows. Waterton was possessed with the idea that it was incumbent upon him to secure that poison, whatever the consequences of journeys by strange rivers and through the wildest forests. He was finally successful; but I cannot find that the drug was ever of any use to man. The naturalist's account of his discovery, and the adventures he had by the way, are worth reading, as is also his description of the manner in which the Indians prepare the poison: —

"A day or two before the Maconshi Indian prepares his poison, he goes into the forest in quest of the ingredients. A vine grows in

these wilds which is called *wourali*. It is from this that the poison takes its name, and it is the principal ingredient. When he has procured enough of this, he digs up a root of a very bitter taste, ties them together, and then looks about for two kinds of bulbous plants which contain a green and glutinous juice. He fills a little *quake* which he carries on his back with the stalks of these, and lastly ranges up and down till he finds two species of ants. One of them is very large and black, and so venomous that its sting produces a fever; the other is a little red ant which stings like a nettle. After obtaining these, he has no more need to range the forest.

"A quantity of strongest Indian pepper is used; but this he has already planted around his hut. The pounded fangs of the Labarri snake and those of the Conanaconchi are also used. These he commonly has in store, for when he kills a snake he generally extracts the fangs and keeps them by him. Having thus found the necessary ingredients, he scrapes the *wourali* vine and bitter root into thin shavings and puts them into a kind of colander made of leaves; this he holds over an earthen pot, and pours water on the shavings, the liquor that comes through having the appearance of coffee. Then the shavings are thrown aside, and the juice of the bulbous stalks is squeezed into the pot. Lastly the snakes' fangs, ants, and pepper are bruised and thrown into it.

"It is then placed on a slow fire, and as it boils, more of the *wourali* juice is added; the scum is taken off with a leaf; and it remains on the fire until reduced to a thick syrup of a deep brown color. Arrived at this state, a few arrows are poisoned with it to try its strength. If satisfactory, it is poured out into a calabash, carefully covered over with leaves and a piece of deerskin, and kept in the driest part of the hut.

"The making of the *wourali* poison is considered a gloomy and mysterious operation, and many precautions are taken. The Indian secludes himself; he fasts all the day the poison is prepared; and

MACONSHI INDIANS PREPARING WOURALI POISON.

women and young girls are not allowed to be present, lest the *Labahon*, or evil spirit, should do them harm."

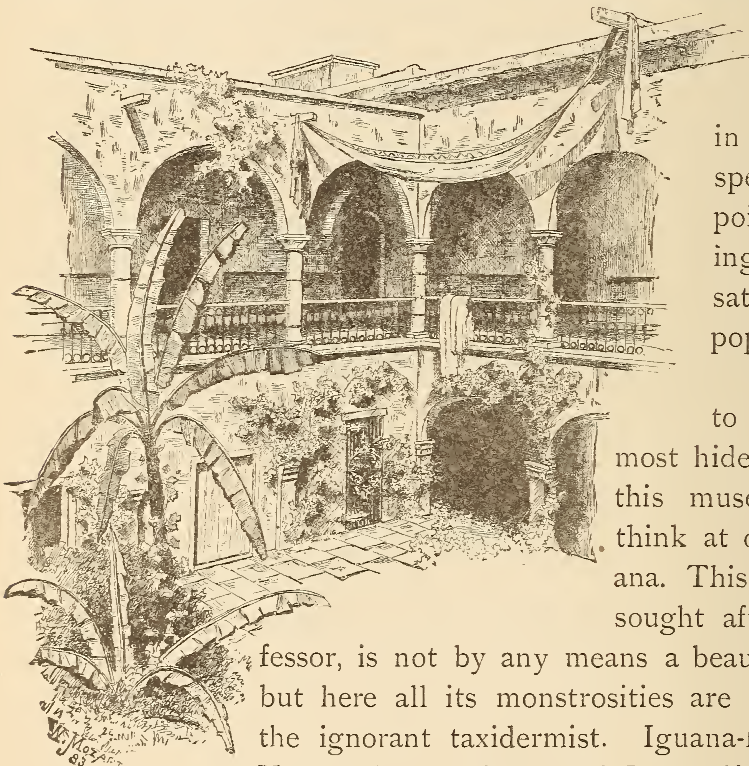
The arrows dipped in the *wourali* mixture carry death into whatever creature they penetrate. A fowl, wounded with one, died in five minutes, an ox in twenty-five. "In passing overland from the Essequibo to the Demerara, we fell in with a herd of wild hogs.

THE PROFESSOR AFTER A BABY LIZARD.

Though encumbered with baggage, and fatigued with a hard day's walk, an Indian got his bow ready and let fly an arrow that entered the cheek of one of the hogs and broke off. This wild hog was found quite dead about one hundred and seventy paces from the place where he had been shot. He afforded us an excellent and wholesome supper."

It is very strange that the *wourali* poison does not injure the flesh

in any way. Like the poison of the rattlesnake, it may be taken into the system in the natural way without harm. I cannot learn that this powerful poison has yet been used in Venezuela by any but the Indians, or that it has proved of service in the pharmacopœia. Besides the poisoned arrows, one may see in the museum specimens of the poison itself, looking like the inspissated juice of the poppy.



A COURT.

If I were asked to mention the most hideous occupant of this museum, I should think at once of the iguana. This big lizard, often sought after by the Professor, is not by any means a beauty when in life, but here all its monstrosities are exaggerated by the ignorant taxidermist. Iguana-flesh is sold in Venezuelan markets, and I myself have tasted it. As the reptile feeds on leaves, its flesh should not be rejected, I am sure. In the old book referred to, mention is made of —

"Serpentes also, of that kinde esteemed among them as most delicate meat & like unto crocodile, saving in bignesse. These serpentes they call *Inaunas.* The Indians prepare them after this manner: First, taking out their bowelles, even from the throte to the thyghes, they washe and rubbe their bodies verie cleane, both

within & without, then rolling them together in a circle, involved after the manner of a sleeping snake, they thrust them into a pot, putting a little water unto them, with a portion of the Iland pepper, they seethe them with a soft fire of sweet wood and such as maketh no great smoake.

"They say also that there is no meat to be compared to the egges of these serpentes, which they use to seethe by themselves; they are good to be eaten as soon as they are sodde, and may also be reserved many dayes after. This much of their entertaynement and dayntie fare; which our men learned late to adventure, by reason of this horrible deformity and loathsomenese."

Coiled about the trunk of a tree was the stuffed skin of an enormous serpent.

In the Orinoco district of Venezuela the serpents attain to great size, says a writer of adventures in that region: —

"At a place called El Enayaval (or the guava-wood), where our party halted, the men discovered in the morning a very large water-snake of the species called by the Indians *camondi*, which they resolved to kill. It was dangerous to approach it, for on being disturbed, it had raised its head out of the marsh to the full height of a man, and appeared ready to dart on the first person that should venture within its reach. The soldiers, however, advancing cautiously, threw a *lazo* round its throat, with which, the end being fastened to a horse's tail, they dragged it by slow degrees from its hiding-place. Its struggles were at first violent; but as the horse kept a constant tight strain upon the *lazo*, the snake was unable to extricate itself or approach the horse. On getting weaker by strangulation, it was dragged along the plain about half a league, until it was so far rendered incapable of resistance that one of the men dismounted and cut off its head with several blows of the *machete*.

"We found it to be fully twenty-five feet long and thick in pro-

portion. The belly appearing preternaturally distended, we opened it out of curiosity, and found it to contain a young calf, which did not appear to have been long swallowed. This sufficiently accounted for the ease with which the reptile was killed, as snakes lose their activity for some time after having obtained a hearty meal. My *Llanĕros* assured me that *camondis* have been killed on the marshy banks of the river Cunavichi, measuring eighteen lengths of a *machete*, or over fifty feet."

While certain forest districts swarm with snakes, the banks of rivers are alive with alligators, or caymens. In Florida the alligator is comparatively harmless; but in Venezuela, according to some writers, the cayman (perhaps a true crocodile) is extremely dangerous.

It has often been asserted, and many times denied, that the cayman, or caiman, the alligator of the South-American rivers, will pursue and devour man. Here is the testimony of the author of "Campaigns and Cruises in Venezuela": —

"When an Indian has occasion to swim across any pass of a river known to be the haunt of a dangerous alligator, he provides himself with a stout stick about eighteen inches in length, sharpened at both ends. Should he be attacked by one while in the water, he presents the stick to the expanded jaws, and as the cayman endeavors ravenously to seize him, the sharp points of the stick pierce the roof of the mouth and under-jaw in such a manner as to render it incapable of extricating itself. The Indian may then with safety kill it, or leave it to drown.

"The *Llanĕros*, or inhabitants of the plains bordering on the rivers where these animals abound, take great delight in catching the cayman by means of a *lazo* of tough bull-hide. This noose they throw dexterously over its head while it is floating near the bank, and drag it on shore by the united strength of ten or twelve men. Its rage and consternation on finding itself captive are ex-

OVERTURN OF A BOAT BY CAYMEN ON THE ORINOCO.

cessive; but after the first violent struggles to effect its escape, it remains perfectly motionless, with the upper jaw raised in readiness for an attack, giving occasional proof of the immense strength of its jaws by the ease with which it splinters between its teeth the thigh-bones and skulls of bullocks thrown to it by its captors.

"One of our lancers lost his life while we were swimming a lagoon. When he was nearly halfway across, we saw a large cayman, which was known to infest this pass, issuing from under the mangrove-trees. We instantly warned our companion of his danger, but it was too late for him to turn back. When the alligator was so close as to be on the point of seizing him, he threw his saddle at it. The ravenous reptile instantly caught the whole bundle in its jaws and disappeared for a few minutes, but soon discovered its mistake and rose in front of the horse, which, then seeing it for the first time, reared and threw its rider. He was an excellent swimmer, and had nearly escaped, but was finally caught by the middle and drowned before our eyes, the alligator afterwards dragging the body out upon a sand-bank and there devouring it."

The reader cannot fail to bring to mind in this connection Waterton's account of his capture of a cayman in Guiana, at about the same time this was written.

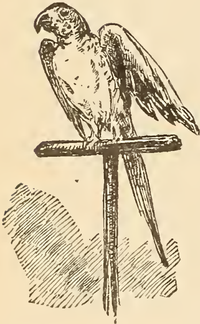
We must confess that Waterton's story of riding an alligator, which was copied into all the school "readers" and story-books of half a century ago, has always seemed to us an exaggeration. After all, what did it matter whether or not he mounted the captive cayman and rode astride him, while his negroes pulled him to the shore?

We did not intend to confine ourselves to making extracts from books when we began; but at least, we have followed Emerson's advice, — to read no book less than twenty years old. Besides, there is more "meat" in them than in anything we can now write from personal observation.

CHAPTER XII.

SOMETHING TO EAT, IN THE TROPICS.

Some Venezuelan Products. — Fruits and Vegetables of the Tropics. — Soap-Berry and Poison-Tree.



HE question oftenest asked us after returning from a tropical trip is, "What do the people eat?" It seems to be a prevailing impression that residents in the torrid zone have great difficulty in obtaining wholesome food. This impression of course is wholly erroneous. Although there is not the great variety of vegetables and small fruits that we have in the North, yet there is sufficient to give a varied *menu*. There is no country like our own New England for fruits and vegetables, especially small fruits and berries. We have, I think, more berries growing wild in our fields, woods, and pastures, more delicious fruits in our gardens, than any other equal extent of contiguous territory on the globe. Any one who will go into the fields late in the spring can be convinced of this.

But tropic dwellers are not without their solace, having several peculiar products of their own, as we all know. I need not mention such noted sub-tropical fruits as the pineapple, orange, lime, lemon, soursop, custard-apple, mango, guava, banana, plantain. I have often been asked the difference between the banana (*Musa sapientum*) and the plantain (*Musa paradisiaca*). Perhaps the best answer that can

be given is that the first may be eaten raw, while the plantain must be cooked. As seen growing in the plantations, the casual observer would hardly distinguish a difference; but while the banana attains to the luscious fruit we all have eaten, the plantain is dry and almost tasteless.

FRUIT-DEALER OF CARACAS.

There is perhaps no more beautiful object in Nature than the banana, or plantain, as seen growing in tropical luxuriance in the West Indian mountains. A wild plant, that we find in climbing through the "high woods," called the *balisin*, or wild plantain, has leaves that faintly resemble the *musa*, but it belongs to an entirely different family.

Of vegetables, the tropic-dwellers have a supply in the yam (*Dioscorea sativa*) and *alata*, the sweet potato, the cassava (*Jatropha*

manihot), and the sweet cassava (*Jatropha janipha*), the tamer and the eddoe. Of them all, the cassava seems to be the most useful. The root is grated and baked into thin cakes. In its natural state the cassava is very poisonous; but this poisonous quality is wholly in the juice, which is expressed by means of a long tube of basket-work, the grated root being packed into it and pressure applied by hitching a stone to the lower end. The heat of baking dissipates the remaining juice, and the bread is quite palatable. The juice itself is used in making that famous West Indian compound called "pepper-pot," or *cassareep*, which is usually so hot with red-pepper that a novice cannot even approach it.

The vegetables of the Northern zone do not take kindly to the tropical climate, and there is no great variety offered.

Venezuela yields to no other country within the tropics in its range of fruits, vegetables, and woods. I have already mentioned the coco-nut, cacao, and bread-fruit. The above are the main retinue for the table, so far as spontaneous natural products go. In supplying their tables with meat, the Venezuelans are not so fortunate. The quantity, quality, and variety are limited. Beef is poor and dry, mutton the same, and the omnivorous goat forms the basis of supply. Now and then the people treat themselves to a change by substituting a kid for the tough and bellicose "Billy-goat."

Of wild animals the country at large affords quite a number. In the forests, the peccary lives, though at a long distance from the settlements. Deer are found in abundance in some sections, rabbits everywhere, and armadillos. The armadillo, though protected by its shell, does not enjoy immunity from danger. It is constantly sought, and forms a staple article in the local market. Its habits are somewhat like those of our native woodchuck. It has a hole all to itself; and when its retreat is invaded, it will extend that hole at one end about as fast as two smart men and a boy can open it at the other. It takes sometimes half a day to resurrect an armadillo,

and when once you have got him in hand you have then to "shuck" him out of his shell, by a process as difficult to the operator as it is painful to the armadillo. Its native name is *cachicámo*, — a name also by which it was known here four hundred years ago, and which must be aboriginal. In the West Indies I found it called by the negroes, *Hag-in-amah*, which I then took to mean a "hog in armor," but which may have been a corruption of its Venezuelan appellation. Only a short time ago, the steward of the steamer I was in served us a *cachicámo* for breakfast. It resembled the finest veal, and had a delicious flavor all its own.

AN INDIAN HUT IN THE INTERIOR.

Raleigh calls the pineapple "the princesse of fruits [the *Pinas*] that grow under the sun;" and he describes well the poison used by the Indians on their arrows. The *ourari* (*Strychnos toxifera*), says Schomburgh, is only known to grow in three or four situations in Guiana. It is a bush-rope, or ligneous climber, which kind of plants are called by the French *liane*, and by the Spaniards *bejuco*. I cannot forbear quoting a few things this great man and born explorer says about the animals of Venezuela. At this moment, in looking over my notes, I find something quaint he says about the armadillo: —

"One of the Indians gave me a beaste called by the Spaniards *Armadilla*, and which they call *Cassacam*, which seemeth to be all barred over with small plates, somewhat like unto a *Renocero*, with a white horne growing in his hinder partes, as big as a greate hunting horne, which they use to winde [blow] instead of a trumpet. Monardus writeth that a little of the powder of that horne, put into the eare, cureth deafness."

And afterward: "We feasted ourselves with that beaste which is called *Armadilla*." That was at a feast where he found the Indians "all drunke as beggers, and the pottes walking from one to another without rest." In one of the lagoons he saw the manatee, or *Maniti*, "as big as a wine pipe, which they call *Maniti*, and is most excellent and holsome meate;" and, "One of our guides kindled a fire with two sticks."

Referring to the peccary, he says, "I fedd on the porck of that country." His "pig" is represented (says Schomburgh) by the peccary, the hare by the *aguti*, — *Dasyprocta aguti*, — the lion by the puma, and the tiger by the jaguar.

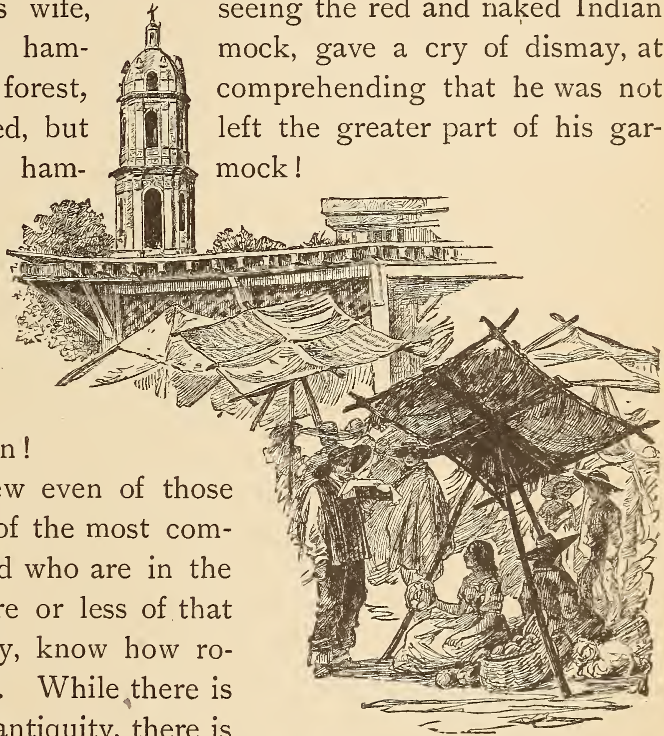
Leaving the animal for the vegetable kingdom again, I feel constrained to mention two or three productions of Venezuela seldom used outside the country. One of these is the *roucon*, or amatto, — a plant cultivated by the Caribs at the period of their discovery, and still to be found growing in the negro and Indian gardens. Raleigh says of it, —

"These be divers berries that dye the most perfect crimson and carnation; and for painting, all France, Italy, or the East Indies yield none such. For the more the skin is washed, the fayrer the cullour appeareth, and with which e'en those brown and tannie women spot themselves and cullour their cheeks."

The Carib warriors, as well as the women, delighted to adorn themselves with *roucon*.

I once found mention of one of these warriors, at the time Guada-

lupe was first settled, who made a friendly visit to a white settler. The noble Carib was clad solely in a rich coat of *roucon.* Arrived at the settler's hut, he espied a nice new canvas hammock, white and clean, and into this comfortable bed he plunged himself without ceremony. The settler's wife, seeing the red and naked Indian appropriate her best hammock, gave a cry of dismay, at which the child of the forest, comprehending that he was not wanted, arose and fled, but left the greater part of his garment clinging to the hammock!



SCENE IN THE MARKET, CARACAS.

The most common things attract our attention far from home. What more beautiful, for instance, than a field of waving Indian corn!

"Comparatively few even of those to whom corn is one of the most common of all objects, and who are in the habit of handling more or less of that noble grain every day, know how romantic a history it has. While there is no question as to its antiquity, there is much doubt about the place of its origin. It has been found in the tombs and ruins of South America, in the caves of Arizona, and in the mounds of Utah. The Smithsonian Institute has an ear of corn found in the tomb of a mummy, near Ariquipi, Peru; and Darwin mentions the head of a stalk found imbedded in a sea-drift eighty-five feet above the level of the sea. Petrified stalks and ears were found, perfect in appearance, in working a stone quarry near La Prairie, in Illinois. In a neat and useful little manual, issued by

J. C. Vaughan, it is said that those who claim Asia for the original home of maize, point to the representation of the plant found in an ancient Chinese book in the Royal Library in Paris, and tell of the grain being found in cellars of ancient houses in Athens. Rifaud speaks of finding the grain and ear of maize within the tomb of a mummy at Thebes in 1819. Some, like Corbett, claim that it is the corn of Scripture, and in support of the claim quote the following: 'And it came to pass that He went through the cornfields on the Sabbath day; and His disciples, as they went, began to pluck the ears of the corn.' Again, from Lev. ii. 14: 'And if thou offer a meat offering of thy firstfruits unto the Lord, thou shalt offer for the meat offering of thy firstfruits green ears of corn dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears.' Lev. xxiii. 14: 'And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the self-same day that ye have brought an offering unto your God.' Gen. xli. 5 (concerning Pharaoh's second dream): 'And he slept and dreamed the second time; and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good.' Job xxiv. 24 says the wicked are 'cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.'

"An unimpeachable history of Indian corn can never be written, as the subject is full of counterfacts, contradictions, and speculations. Learned authorities, both early and late, have differed as to its origin, — some claiming it a native of Asia, others of America."

There is little doubt, the Professor thinks, that Indian corn, so-called, is indigenous to America. It was found growing here by the Spanish adventurers, and taken by them to Europe and the East.

Now, before I leave this subject of fruits and vegetables found in the tropics, let me allude to another tropical production. It is the cacao (Aztec *cacahuatl*), the *Theobroma cacao*, or "food for gods." It is certainly an indigenous plant of Mexico, mentioned by all the early writers upon that country as of great service to the Mexican nobility. Like maize and the native turkey, it found its way into

Europe soon after the conquest of Mexico, and is now raised in all the South American States, in Africa, and in Asia. It is not so beautiful an object in the vegetable world as the banana, but doubtless its fruit is of more wide-spread utility and more highly appreciated by the residents of Northern climes far from its habitat.

The tree attains a height of about twenty feet, being in full bearing in six years, and yielding large crops of beans (chocolate) for two decades or more. The bean from which chocolate is made is contained in a large pod surrounded by a white, sweetish pulp. The native mode of preparation, after the bean is separated from its enclosing pulp and dried, is to grind it, generally upon a flat stone after roasting, so as to convert it into a perfectly smooth paste. It is then mixed with a little vanilla, or flavored with other aromatic spices found in the forests growing wild. At the present time it forms the favorite beverage of Yucatan and the warmer portions of Mexico, where also the cacao-seeds are even now used as currency. The first mention of this peculiar coin is in 1502, when Columbus first descried the coast of Yucatan; a boat came off laden with the products of the country, and among them those.

Cortes, in one of his letters to his sovereign, describing a plantation then being prepared for the king at Malinaltepec, says, " These Indians planted sixty *fanagas* of maize and ten of beans, together with two thousand cacao-trees, which bear a fruit resembling an almond, and is held in such estimation that it is used as money throughout the country and employed in purchase in the markets and elsewhere." I myself have seen the cacao-beans used as currency in Yucatan, and have drunk the delicious chocolate as prepared at the hands of the native cooks.

A French traveller, remarking on this strange medium of exchange, says, " The *medio* (six cents) is not sufficiently small to meet the wants of petty trade, so they cut it in halves and quarters; the first is called *cuartillas*, and the latter *chicas*. After the *chicas*, the grains of

cacao come in to balance exchanges in the proportion of from eighty to one hundred and sixty grains to the *medio*, according to the crop." Cacao, although cultivated in many districts throughout the republic, finds in the State of Tobasco a soil and climate especially adapted to its growth, and is there raised in large quantities. Certain portions of the States of Vera Cruz, Guerrero, Michoacan, Colima, Oaxaca, and Chiapas are favorable to its cultivation; and the cacao of Soconusco, in the last State, is much sought after. From the cacao-seeds the ancient Aztecs prepared chocolate (in their language *chocolatl*). They mixed with it, says Humboldt, a little corn flour, vanilla (*tlilxochitl*) and a species of spice (*mecaxochitl*); they also possessed the art of reducing the chocolate to cakes, which they sold in their markets.

Another peculiar tropical product is the soap-berry, with which the people sometimes wash their clothes. On the bank of the river of Cariaco, says Humboldt, "We saw the Indian women washing their linen with the fruit of the *Sapindus saponaria*, or soap-berry, an operation said to be very injurious to the linen. The bark of the tree produces a strong lather, and the fruit is so elastic that if thrown on a stone it rebounds three or four times to the height of seven or eight feet. Being of a spherical form, it is employed in making rosaries." There are two sorts of trees in the islands and along the coast that serve the people with a substitute for soap. The one furnishes it in its fruit, and the other in its bark.

It is along the coast that the poisonous *manchineel* is found, — a veritable upas-tree, for whosoever sleeps beneath its shade will be dreadfully poisoned. I recall many a beach of snowy sand, overshadowed by the green-leaved *manchineel*, where the shade seemed so invitingly cool that I have been half tempted to recline beneath it. The sand beneath the *manchineels* is strewn with yellow fruit, tempting to the sight, but deadly to the taste. I have mentioned one style of fishing said to have been in vogue here in ancient times; another is prevalent on these coasts. Finding a *manchineel* tree near good fishing ground,

say a small pond or stream, if you break off the branches and throw them into the water, it will not be long before the fish therein will come to the surface, gasping for breath. They can then be captured; but it must be done quickly, as they soon recover sufficiently to disappear. The natives say that the *manchineel* "burns" the fish; others that it deoxygenates the water, at least temporarily.

Our readers have had much to pardon us for in this rambling chapter; but it has seemed to us that all these things are interesting. If not, then that is an error of ours; we beg your pardon, gentle reader, and ask you to turn over a new leaf and peruse the Professor's paper on pearls.

CHAPTER XIII.

PEARLS OF THE SPANISH MAIN.

The Professor "Reflects." — Fate of Spanish Explorers. — Americus Vespucius. — Pearls by the Pound. — The Pearl-Fisher's Perils. — A Strange Spaniard. — Names of the Deity.

" WAS reflecting," said the Professor to me, one day, "upon the tragic ending of the lives of most of the Spanish leaders who contributed toward the discovery of America: Columbus sent home in chains, at the end of his third voyage, and finally dying in poverty; Cortez, conqueror of Mexico, who, although he had a victorious career, died in obscurity; Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, who saw, first of all Europeans, from the mountains of Darien, the Pacific, the great southern sea, but who was afterward beheaded by an unworthy rival; Pizarro, assassinated in his own palace by his associates, — we cannot say but that he deserved his fate; De Soto, explorer of Florida, buried at deep of night in the bosom of the Mississippi, for fear that the outraged Indians would discover and mutilate his body; and many others of lesser fame perished miserably and by violence."

It was even so, and could we but follow out our friend's suggestion, we should find that the Spaniards individually reaped small reward for their arduous labors.

The old historian says that they all combined in speaking ill of the Indies, because they had not found gold laid up for them to plunder, in chests, or growing on trees.

It was in the year 1499, as I have already mentioned, that Alonzo de Ojeda and Americus Vespucius made their famous voyage along the coast of Venezuela; and then "every Indian thought himself happy, when they came to ford rivers, if he could carry a Spaniard over on his shoulders; and he that oftenest carried any over looked upon himself as most fortunate." Regarding the manner in which the name "America" came to be bestowed upon our continent, the royal historiographer says,—

"When King Ferdinand returned to Spain, in 1507, he ordered Juan Diaz de Solis, Vincencio Yañez Pinzon, John de la Cosa, and Americus Vespucius to come to court, and while some of them were sent on voyages of discovery, Vespucius was retained with a good salary, to make sea-charts, with the title of chief pilot. Whence the Indies took the name of America, whereas they should have had it from Columbus, who was the first discoverer."

We left Caracas one morning and took the steamer for Trinidad, purposing to tarry, if possible, at the pearl islands, Margarita and Cubagua. They no longer produce those precious oysters that contain the beautiful pearls; but when the Spaniards first came here, in 1499, they obtained vast quantities of them, and it was many years before the oyster beds were exhausted.

The great Humboldt says: "The situations which since the discovery of the new continent have furnished the greatest abundance of pearls to the Spaniards are the following: the arm of the sea between the islands of Cubagua and Coche and Cumaná (on the Spanish Main), the mouth of the Rio de la Hacha, the Gulf of Panama, near the Islas de las Perlas, and the eastern coast of California."

In 1587, three hundred and sixteen kilograms of pearls were

imported into Spain, among which were five kilos of the greatest beauty, destined for King Philip II.

The pearl fisheries of Cubagua (Venezuela) and Rio Hacha have been very productive, but of short duration. After the beginning

COLUMBUS, THE FIRST DISCOVERER.

of the seventeenth century, the pearls of California began to rival those of Panama. The California pearls are of a very beautiful water, and large, but they are frequently of an irregular figure. The most valuable in the possession of the court of Spain were found in 1615 and 1655.

In recent years, more pearls have been found in the Gulf of California than anywhere else in America.

On the coast of Lower California an important industry has been developed by the pearl fisheries of that remote region. Five merchants and a thousand daring divers are wearing out their lives in supplying the markets of Paris, London, and New York with the rare and costly black pearl, which is found in a state of great perfection in the deep waters off La Paz. The latitude is a little south of Key West, in Florida, and not far north of Havana. Since the recent Mexican fever began, an increasing public interest has been taken in the resources of the ancient empire of the Montezumas, and the gold and silver and other precious products of that land are exciting much curiosity among American capitalists. As the pearl fisheries of Lower California belong to Mexico, they will of course rank among the other natural riches of that country. Chief Engineer Magee of the United States Navy, who has lately returned from the Gulf of California, was found at the Fifth Avenue Hotel recently, in company with one of the principal pearl merchants of Mexico, who had just arrived from Paris, whither he had been on a mission to dispose of his annual harvest of precious stones. This merchant, while hoping to see his country developed and American capital, industry, and machinery encouraged for this purpose, did not think that the present condition of the pearl fisheries of the Gulf of California would warrant the investment of more capital or labor.

The following facts were given during the interview: pearl oysters are found from one to six miles from shore in from eight to twenty-one fathoms of water. The one thousand divers who are engaged in searching for them are generally employed under the contract system, as they make greater efforts to discover the pearls than they do when hired by the day. Boats, diving apparatus, and money for provisions and outfits are supplied by the merchant on condition that all the pearls discovered shall be sold to him at such prices as may be agreed

upon, — in other words, that he may have the refusal of all the pearls found. Sail-boats of five tons' burden and containing six men each are fitted up with sleeping and cooking accommodations, and six months are devoted to pearl-diving up and down the coast, from May until October and November.

The total product of a year's work is estimated at about five hundred thousand dollars, — that is, valuing the pearls at the first cost price. The United States is a very poor place to sell pearls of any kind, and black pearls, which are most valuable, are bought exclusively by wealthy and titled people in Europe. St. Petersburg ranks next to Paris as a good market for them, while in the United States there is a great demand for diamonds of extraordinary value. Of the entire yield of Mexican pearls, ten per cent are white, forty per cent blue, and fifteen per cent black. The blue stones are of little value. The oyster in which the pearl is found has the shape of a large clam, or saddle-rock oyster, but it is smooth and brilliant, with all the colors of the rainbow. The shells which are known as the mother-of-pearl are carried once a year, in ships of two thousand tons, around Cape Horn to Hamburg, where they are sold to German merchants and manufacturers for sawing into buttons, knife-handles, paper-cutters, and a thousand other ornaments for boudoir and studio. Americans are beginning to use this material, and it is thought that there will be a large demand for pearl-shells in a few years. They are worth from four hundred to five hundred dollars per ton. Boston buys more of them than any other city in the United States.

The value of pearls depends entirely upon their size, shape, and color, and perfect condition. There can never be an arbitrary schedule of prices agreed upon, since for what one man may be willing to pay one thousand dollars, another man would not give a tenth part of that sum. The Russian nobles are especially fond of rich black pearls, which would scarcely find sale in the United States, except as a matter of speculation to send abroad. The uncertainties of the fisheries are

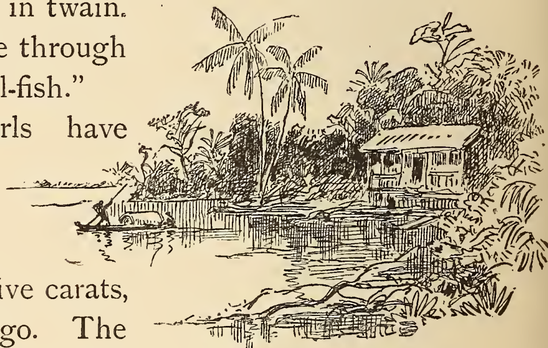
A GIANT OF THE VENEZUELAN FOREST.

great. Sometimes it is weeks and even months before a hundred dollars' worth of stones are discovered. The choicest pearls found during a season are worth from one thousand to five thousand dollars apiece.

The cheapest pearls are sold by weight. Generally pearls are about the size of bullets and found in the soft oyster near the place where it joins the shell. Then again, just at the close of a long and unprofitable season, an experienced diver may find a few pearls worth a fortune. Strange things happen down in the wild solitudes of those distant fisheries. Poor men sometimes find pearls that a king might envy, and if the divers were frugal they could often rise above the obscurity of poor pearl fishermen; but such successes are generally followed by dissipation, which soon leaves the man as penniless as he was before.

The Mexican divers of the Gulf of California are said to be the most expert in the world. They go down into deep water and remain below for a long time. In former times many men were lost in this perilous pursuit after submarine treasures. English diving-suits are said to be the safest and most satisfactory, and superior to the celebrated French armor, but American hose-pipes are unsurpassed. Several years ago a large number of divers lost their lives in one season because of the defective English hose-tubing. Since then there have not been many serious accidents. The loss of life caused by the exposure and hardships of pearl-fishing is considerable, and the men generally retire after a few years of active service to spend the rest of their wretched days in trying to find relief for a rheumatic paralysis which generally closes a pearl-fisher's life. The lower currents of the sea, at a depth of eighteen or twenty fathoms, are very cold, even in the tropics, while the pressure is oppressive. The blood grows cold and thick, so that the joints stiffen, the muscles contract, and only the strongest constitutions can long survive the hardships of pearl-fishing.

The divers see a great many sharks, but as a rule, they do not fear them, although they sometimes cut or break the pipes which supply the men with air from the atmosphere above. The danger most dreaded by the brave fishermen is the celebrated devil-fish. "They are all we fear," said a merchant. "They lie near to the bottom of the sea. At first sight they seem insignificant and harmless, but if a diver or the air-pipes come within their reach, their long, shadowy tentacles or fingers suddenly clutch the object with a powerful, tightening grasp, until the man is crushed to death or the hose-pipes cut in twain. Many a man has lost his life through the wickedness of these devil-fish."



IN A GUM SWAMP.

Some extraordinary pearls have lately been found near La Paz, in Lower California. Probably the largest pearl on record, weighing seventy-five carats, was found but a few years ago. The fisherman sold it on the spot for fourteen thousand dollars, which, however, was an insignificant sum compared with its real value. Since then two gems, one valued at five thousand dollars and the other at three thousand dollars, have been found.

The steamer passed Cubagua in the night, and hence we could not land; but we were assured by those on board that we should not have found anything there at present that our readers would care about. Some of the Indians of the mainland, we were told, still burned incense to their gods, using the native gum, copal. This was used also by the natives of Mexico, and derives its name from the Mexican *copalli*. It was in extensive use on the arrival of the Spaniards, and had been probably for centuries, as incense, before the idols in the temples. There are said to be ten varieties

of the tree producing this gum, which was used, not only in the temples, but in fumigating strangers, and especially ambassadors.

A strange man, evidently a Spaniard, attracted our attention by his eccentric behavior on board. He was poorly dressed, but evidently had a well-stored mind, though what it contained was in a somewhat disordered state. He surprised us one day by conversing with three different men in as many different languages, and when we expressed ourselves to that effect he said, "Oh, that is nothing; I can speak a dozen dialects, and understand portions of a dozen more. Now, for instance, I can give you the name of God, the Creator, in four dozen different dialects." Below, as he gave it to us, we append the list, and we think it is in the main quite reliable.

THE NAME OF GOD IN FORTY-EIGHT LANGUAGES.

Hebrew, — Elohim or Eloah.	French, — Dieu.	Slavic, — Buch.
Chaldaic, — Elah.	Spanish, — Dios.	Polish, — Bog.
Assyrian, — Ellah.	Portuguese, — Deos.	Polaca, — Bung.
Syriac and Turkish, — Alah.	Old German, — Diet.	Lapp, — Jubinal.
Malay, — Alla.	Provençal, — Diou.	Finnish, — Jumala.
Arabic, — Allah.	Low Breton, — Doue.	Runic, — As.
Language of the Magi, — Orsi.	Italian, — Dio.	Pannonian, — Istu.
Old Egyptian, — Tuet.	Irish, — Die.	Zemblian, — Fetizo.
Armenian, — Teuti.	Olala tongue, — Deu.	Hindostanee, — Rain.
Modern Egyptian, — Tenn.	German, — Gott.	Coromandel, — Brama.
Greek, — Theos.	Flemish, — Goed.	Tartar, — Magatal.
Cretan, — Thias.	Dutch, — Godt.	Persian, — Sire.
Æolian and Doric, — Hos.	English and Old Saxon, — God.	Chinese, — Prussa.
Latin, — Deus.	Teutonic, — Goth.	Japanese, — Goezur.
Low Latin, — Diex.	Danish and Swedish, — Gut.	Madagascar, — Zannar.
Celtic and Old Gallic, — Diu.	Norwegian, — Gud.	Peruvian, — Puchocamae.

"Whatever language it may be in which we address Him," said the Professor, "our prayers, I trust, will not be in vain.

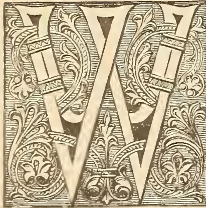
"'I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.'"

CHAPTER XIV.

WITH COLUMBUS AND SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

MOUTH OF THE ORINOCO. — THE SERPENT'S MOUTH. — THE GOLDEN MOUNTAINS. — SIR WALTER RALEIGH. — EL DORADO THE GOLDEN. — LOST ROANOKE. — OYSTERS GROWING ON TREES. — ALLIGATORS AND SERPENTS. — THE GREYHOUND OF THE SEA.

" Where down the purple slope that slants
Across the hills, the sunrays glance
With hot stare through the coco-trees,
And wine-palms tent beside the seas,
There Port-of-Spain, long leagues away,
Glows in the mellow mist of day."



E sailed into the harbor of Trinidad's capital, Port-of-Spain, just as the sun sank behind the purpling mountains. Perhaps some of our readers may remember that we once touched here several years ago. You will remember too that the island Trinidad was discovered by Columbus on his third voyage.

On the last day of July, 1498, two months from the day the Spanish fleet had sailed from Cadiz, the mountains of Trinidad were sighted. We may distrust the statement of Columbus that he had previously concluded to honor the first land discovered on this voyage with the name of the Trinity, in view of the fact that the mountains first seen were three in number, and naturally suggested the name, La Trinidad.

Columbus, as we are aware, was much given to the setting forth of coincidences showing him one under special guidance of the Lord. However, it was a harmless vanity, and this name, like most of those bestowed by the admiral, was fitting and suggestive.

LANDING OF COLUMBUS AT TRINIDAD.

Coasting the island, he entered a narrow pass where the waters met and clashed so furiously that even his high courage was shaken, and he called this the Serpent's Mouth (*La Boca del Sierpe*). He passed out of it in safety and anchored in the smooth water of the great Gulf of Paria, and on the inner coast of Trinidad. Crossing the gulf, he emerged into the Caribbean Sea through another dangerous passage which he called *La Boca del Draco*, the Mouth of the

Dragon. Before venturing upon this terrible passage he coasted the Gulf of Paria, discovering there a fine race of people, tall, straight, shapely, the men with loin-cloths in various colors, the women entirely naked. They were frank and hospitable, and dwelt in a rich and generous country, their dwellings in beautiful gardens, where the birds and flowers vied in abundance and brilliancy of color.

They possessed little gold and that of inferior quality, but they wore strings of pearls that made the Spaniards' fingers itch and burn with strong desire. Finding that the pearls were obtained off the north coast of Paria, Columbus at last ventured to brave the dangers of the Dragon's Mouth, through which the waters of the Orinoco and other South American rivers rushed with frightful velocity. He escaped through the warring breakers and found smoother seas beyond. He found also the seat of the pearl fishery, though he was then ignorant of its value or extent, and discovered the islands, Margarita and Cubagua, so celebrated in later years for their beds of pearls. The Spaniards did not stop to fish, but obtained a large number of pearls by traffic with the Indians, in exchange for bits of porcelain and bells of brass. Sufficient were obtained, in fact, to tempt the cupidity of other Spaniards, and to attract attention to this region of riches, now for the first time brought to the view of the world.

Although the indications were promising and the north coast of the continent stretched invitingly away, with mountains reared against the clouds and islands fringing the coast, yet the navigator was sore pressed by disease, and his stores were failing, so the fleet set sail for the fair Island of Hispaniola.

Of the people here discovered, the ancient historian writes quaintly, "They are white even as our men are, saving such as are much conversant with the sun. They are also very gentle and full of humanitie towards strangers. There was fewe or none that had not eyther a collar, a chayne, or a bracelette of golde and pearles, and

many had all. Other than these ornaments, except for a breech-cloth of cotton, they were naked. . . . The regions being in the large province of Paria, for the space of CCXX myles, are called of the inhabitants *Cumana & Mancapana*."

Reflecting upon the divers species of man, the old historian, Hakluyt, thus delivers himself, "The Aethiopian thinketh the blacke colour to be fairer than white, and the white man thinketh otherwise. Hee that is polled thinketh himself more amaiable than hee that weareth long hayre, and the bearded man supposeth himself more comely than hee that wanteth a beard. As appetite therefore moueth, and not as reason persuadeth, do men run into these vanities."

It was on the voyage preceding this that Columbus had made the acquaintance of the cannibals, the Caribs of the Caribbee Islands, and had heard of Amazons. From the coast of Paria he stood northwardly toward Hispaniola. "By the way, there appeared from the north a great Iland, which the captives that were taken off Hispaniola called Madinino [now known as Montserrat], affirming it to be inhabited only with women."

It was on his return voyage to Spain that Columbus carried captive the King of the Golden Mountains, Caonabo, "who dyed on the voyage, for very pensivenesse and anguish of minde." Then also he encountered one of those dreadful tempests called hurricanes: "These tempests of the ayre, which the Grecians called *Tiphones*, — that is, whirlewindes, — the Indians called *Furacanes*."

I did not intend to digress; but whatever I have cited is in a measure cognate to our subject. Christopher Columbus, on that eventful third voyage to America, drew nearer to the Equator than before; and filled with the belief that he was penetrating a region of fire and drought, he was astonished to find verdurous vegetation, plentiful showers, and habitable islands. Learned theorists had assured him that in the tropical area everything would be found sublimated to the last degree.

Hence, it would be productive of pearls and precious stones, especially emeralds and diamonds, sublimated in telluric crucibles. He was not, then, astonished at the abundance of pearls. Was it not the wise Pliny who taught that pearls were the product of oysters, into whose mouths the dews of heaven fell at night? Even so; and the great navigator found oysters so numerous that he saw them clinging to the roots and branches of trees. And we may find them to-day in these same waters, — oysters growing on trees; but they are not the bivalves that yield the precious pearls.

Nearly one hundred years later than Columbus, another voyager, also world-famous now, came to this Island of Trinidad. This was Sir Walter Raleigh, who, leaving England Feb. 6, 1595, arrived at Trinidad the 22d of March, in the same year. The record of his adventures is styled, " The Discoverie of the large, rich, and beautiful Empire of Guiana, with a relation of the Great and Golden City of Manoa, which the Spaniards called El Dorado, performed in the year 1595, by Sir Walter Ralegh, Knight."

Now, the first English vessels that visited the West Indies after their discovery were two ships of war, under Sebastian Cabot and Sir Thomas Pert, in 1516 or 1517. Two years afterward the first English trading vessel arrived at Puerto Rico. Capt. John Hawkins followed in 1565, and Capt. Francis Drake in 1572; but neither attempted to form a settlement. " This was reserved for Sir Walter Raleigh, to whom belongs the honor of founding England's colonial empire." Raleigh's first expedition to the New World was in 1584, landing on the coast of North Carolina. In 1585 the settlement was formed at Roanoke, but next year the settlers were taken off by Sir Francis Drake in a destitute condition, and carried to England. In 1587 one hundred and twenty colonists were left at Roanoke; the governor returned to England for supplies, but the apprehensions in England regarding the coming of the Spanish Armada prevented relief being sent, and when finally a vessel reached Roanoke, in 1589,

it was too late. Nevermore were seen by white men those lost colonists of Roanoke! But to return to Sir Walter's expedition to South America: He was in search of El Dorado, the gold-covered capital of which was said to be built upon a vast lake, surrounded by mountains

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

glistening with gold. And it was ruled by a prince also covered with gold, "powdered from head to foot, so that he resembled a golden god, worked by the hands of a skillful artist." Raleigh captured a canoe, or *canoa*, laden with great store of bread made from the cassava. They landed upon "a faire sand, where we found thousands of Tortugas' [turtles'] eggs, which are very wholesome meat and very restoring."

Raleigh's observations prove him to have been accurate and pains-taking, and it was a loss to posterity that he did not carry out his great scheme of conquest and colonization. You will perhaps recall his famous excuse for not penetrating farther into the interior of Guiana: "Considering that to enter Guiana by small boats, to depart four or five hundred miles from my ships, and to leave a garrison [Spanish] interested in the same enterprise, who also daily expected supplies out of Spaine, I should have savoured very much of the Asse!"

He discovered, in the Gulf of Paria, oysters growing on trees, as follows: —

"In the way between were divers little brooks of fresh water, and one of salt, that had store of oisters upon the branches of the trees, and were very salt and well tasted. All their oisters grow upon those boughs and spraies, and not on the ground."

Referring to alligators, he says, —

"There were thousands of those uglie serpents; I had a Negro, a very proper young fellow, that, leaping out of the galley to swim in the river, was, in all our sights, taken and devoured with one of those Largatos."

The products of the sea yield the coast-dwellers of Venezuela a better living than the earth products to the dweller in the interior. The numerous fish, oysters, and turtles supply all the tables.

I wonder if any of my readers ever heard of the process of setting a fish to catch a fish? It was in use several hundred years ago, and I take the account from the old book to which I have referred:

"Nowe shall you heare a newe kinde of fishing. Like as wee with Greyhoundes doe hunt Hares in the playne fieldes, so doo they, as it were with a hunting fishe, take other fishes. This fish was of shape or fourme vnknown to vs, but the body thereof not vnlike a great yeele, hanging on the hinder parte of the head a very tough skinne, like vnto a great bagge or purse. This fish is tyed by the side of the boat with a corde, let down so farre into the water that the fish may

lie close by the keel or bottome of the same, for shee may in no case abide the sight of the ayre. Thus when they espie any great fish or Tortoyse, they let the corde at length, and when she feeleth herself loosed, shee invadeth the fish or Tortoyse as swiftly as an arrow, and when she hath once fastened her hold, she casteth the purse of skinne, and by drawing the same together, so graspeth her pray that no man's strength is sufficient to unloose the same, except by little and little drawing the lyne, she bee lifted somewhat above the brimme of the water, where, as soon as she seeth the brightnesse of the ayre, she letteth go her holde."

EXECUTION OF RALEIGH.

The whole coast of Guiana, at that time, between the Amazon and the Orinoco was called *Caribania*, or the wild coast, and is supposed to have received its name from being the chief residence of the Caribs. The Spaniards did everything in their power to annoy and even to exterminate the poor Indians; but Sir Walter treated them humanely. He says in his defence, —

"I protest, before the majesty of the living God, that I neither

know nor believe that any of our companie, one or other, did violence to the Indian women; and yet we saw many hundreds, and had many in our power, and of these very young and excellently favored, which came among us without deceit. Nothing got us more love among them than this usage, for I suffered not any man to take from anie of the natives so much as a *Pina*, or a Potato root, without giving them contentment." Poor Sir Walter! Returning to England not long after, he met his doom at the hands of the executioner, and his schemes of conquest came to nought.

CHAPTER XV.

UP AND DOWN THE ORINOCO.

Boundaries of Venezuela. — Moonrise on the Sea. — Tree-Dwelling Indians. — An Old Cacique. — Catlin, the Indian's Friend. — City of Bolivar. — Wild Birds of the Esteros. — The Carib Fish. — Electric Eels and Wagon-Birds.

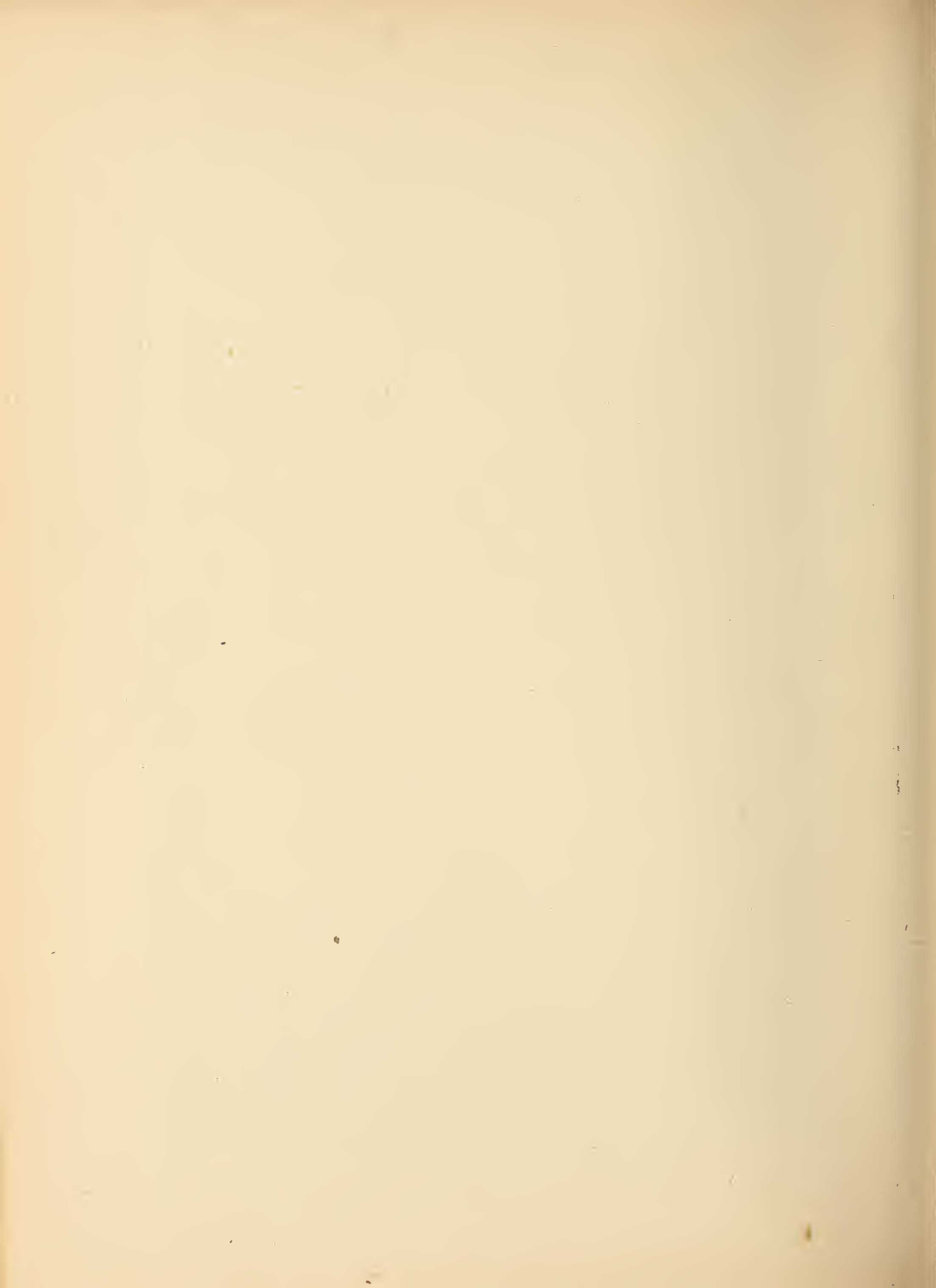
IF I might be permitted to drop into statistics a little, I might tell the reader what no doubt he already knows, that Venezuela is bounded on the north by the Caribbean Sea, on the south by the Empire of Brazil, east by British Guiana, and west by the Republic of Colombia. Its situation, between 1° 40′ south and 12° 26′ north, brings it within the tropics. The Venezuelan divides the entire territory into zones: the farming zone, the cattle-breeding, and the uncultivated, — the last being as extensive as both the others, and the whole giving an area of 1,552,741 square kilometers. The country is mainly drained by one great river, the Orinoco, and its tributaries, — the only isolated section being that draining into the great Lake Maracaibo. It is of the Lower Orinoco that this chapter will treat, — a river whose source no white man has yet discovered.

At the Port-of-Spain, the steamers of the Orinoco meet and connect with those that cruise along the Spanish Main. We lay in the harbor through several days, but at last, one hot and sweltering afternoon, we changed from the coast to the river steamer. And what a glorious night succeeded to that long hot afternoon! Just at sunset, as the belt of crimson cloud lay girdling the horizon, I

caught my first sight of the new moon of May (or of April, as you may choose to call it). It was just the faintest crescentic line of silver, drawn against the blushing sky, — a hint of argent only on the roseate field. It might have been the maiden moon of the universe, so pure it looked, so chaste, and almost *spirituelle.* Below it, at an angle, gleamed goldenly a lustrous planet, beneath which yet again a silver star. A great bank of crimson clouds formed beneath them that spread wider and wider, and reached out its arms till it nearly encircled the horizon, all the time losing its color, becoming paler and paler, till of a sudden I noticed that the cloud-bank was purple, and the sky above was deepening into blue. Then the purple cloud-bank advanced upon the silver star, and swallowed it; it moved yet farther, toward the golden planet, which hung tremblingly on its brink awhile, then disappeared; and at last the virgin moon gave up the effort to illumine the night, and hid her face behind the cloud.

The Orinoco, as you know, is over fifteen hundred miles in length and drains over three hundred square miles of territory. It is navigable over eight hundred miles, although comparatively little is the commerce of this great river. Its broad delta reaches out its numerous fingers opposite and south of the island Trinidad, and up one of the northern branches the steamer takes its course. The scenery is dreary and uninteresting, and there is little to reward the traveller, unless he has the courage and the time to penetrate to the Upper Orinoco, where the great forests are. It is said to have been ascended for the first time by white men by Diego de Ordaz, in the year 1535. Sir Walter Raleigh sailed up some distance, and his descriptions yet hold good, for nothing changes here. His attention was particularly called to the tree-dwelling Indians, whose frail shelters are built aloft to avoid the rising floods. In the winter, he says, "they dwell upon the trees, where they have very artificial townes and villages, for between May and September the river Orenoke riseth thirtie foote upright; and for this cause they are forced to live in this manner." They must have

THE DELTA OF THE ORINOCO.



pretty hard times in securing food enough to eat, and are said to subsist mainly upon the tops of the *palmistes*, or cabbage-palms.

Raleigh heard also of Indians with eyes in their shoulders and mouths in their breasts; and of course stories were brought him of the fierce Amazons, or fighting women of the Upper Orinoco and the river Amazon; but he himself did not see either the monsters or the fierce females. He speaks of meeting a fine old Indian, a *cacique*, or chief, who elicited his admiration by his quaint speech: "He desired leave to depart, saying that he had far to go, that he was old and weak, and was every day *called for by death*."

Sir Walter speaks of an animal I have mentioned, the *cachicámo*, or armadillo. I suppose the Venezuelan or Guianian name of the armadillo may have been carried to the islands of the West Indies, by the Arawaak Indians, who once occupied those islands and were driven out by the Caribs. They call themselves Aru, or Aruwa (says the traveller, Schomburgh), which is the name of the American tiger or jaguar.

"The Arawaak Indian is fairer than either the Carib or Warau, and the females, taken as a tribe, are the handsomest of all the Guianians."

The famous traveller and artist, Mr. Catlin, makes mention of some very attractive Indians he once met far in the interior of South America, the Zurumatis of the Upper Amazon: —

"They had no clothing whatever on them, but wishing to appear in full dress, they had very curiously and beautifully painted their round and pretty limbs with vermilion and other bright colors, and encircled their waists with kilts of long and sweet-scented grass, in beautiful braids, which also ornamented their ankles, wrists, and necks. Tastefully arranged wreaths of evergreen encircled their heads and waists, bright with orchids and other wild blossoms of the richest bloom and odors; while their long and glossy black hair, which is generally kept in braids, was loosened and spread in lovely waves over their naked breasts and shoulders. Gayety, modesty, and pride were imprinted on every one of their faces

and evinced in all their movements, which were natural and exceedingly graceful."

This remarkable man, Catlin, who made an immense collection of paintings of Indians, and who studied them all his life, was their most enthusiastic friend. The American Indians, he says, "made the white man always welcome to the best they had. Honest without laws, with no jails or poorhouses, free from religious animosities, in their natural state they rarely steal, never swear, nor take the name of God in vain. They don't live for money; they keep their own without locks and keys. They never fought a battle with white men except on their own ground. All may mourn when these people are swept from the earth; and the artists of future ages may look in vain for another race so picturesque in their costume, their weapons, colors, manly games, and the chase. The native grace, simplicity, and dignity of these natural people so much resemble the ancient sculptures that we are irresistibly led to believe that the Grecian sculptors had similar models to study from; the toga, tunic, bow, shield, lance, similar to those of ancient times, convince us that a second and strictly classic era is now passing from the world."

Breasting the turbid flood, our steamer forced her way to the chief town on the river Ciudad Bolivar, formerly known as Angostura. It was founded in 1764, and now contains about twelve thousand inhabitants. This place is the outlet of the famous gold mines of Suruari, where a great deal of English capital has been spent. Gold has been found here in great quantities, but it has cost the lives of thousands of miners. These mines, doubtless known to the Indians in ancient times, furnished the gold that gave rise to the stories of the mythical city, El Dorado the Golden. All the great country back of Bolivar sends its products here, — gold, cacao, coffee, hides, goat and deer skins, tonka-beans, oils, and drugs, which are carried away by the steamers to the coast. A very profitable

THE ORINOCO AT CAICARA.

traffic is that in stuffed birds; probably millions of beautiful birds are slaughtered in the forests, brought here and then sent out to supply the demands of the world of fashion.

Barbaric Indians, with shot-guns and blow-guns, hunt down these lovely creatures merely that frivolous women may wear their plumage on their hats. We can hardly blame the Indian, because he gains subsistence by the cruel trade; but the women who wear these skins are supposed to be civilized, yet they deck themselves out in feathers like their more ignorant Indian sisters.

Trinidad Island used to be the headquarters of the bird traffic, but the Government has recently forbidden the slaughter of the innocents, and the aerial visitors are again haunting the woods. Bolivar is hot and unhealthy, and not at all interesting, so we did not tarry any longer than the steamer did. If there had been time, and if we had thought it possible to include the head-waters of the Orinoco and the Amazons in this book, we should have pushed on; but we are already rather beyond the limits assigned us, and must soon return to the Spanish Main.

Higher up the Orinoco begin the perennial meadows of Venezuela, called *Esteros*, to which resort hosts of water-fowl, such as ducks, herons, storks, ibises, and the wild jabiru, — a bird with long javelin-like bill and soldier-like bearing, tall and stately. Animals of all kinds are found here, many of which come to prey upon the birds; and exceedingly abundant in the streams and pools are the alligators, enormous anacondas, and electric eels.

The most horrible pests of the streams are the *caribs*, of about the size, shape, and color of a gold-fish. They swarm in myriads, and are so voracious that they attack nearly everything living that enters the water where they dwell. They may be called sharks in miniature, having a mouth enormously large in proportion to their size, which opens like a steel trap. It is set about with sharp teeth; and when they close them together, a piece of flesh is always torn out

of their victim. The taste of blood seems to enrage them, and the spread of it attracts thousands immediately, so that in a very short time they will strip the flesh entirely from the bones of man or beast.

It is said that even the alligators, with their scaly armor, are not safe from these little monsters, for when in their fights blood is drawn from one of them, the *caribs* speed to the source of it and tear open the wound with their teeth. Their jaws are so strong and their teeth so sharp that they can bite a strong fish-hook in two with the greatest ease. It was a funny scene we one day witnessed out on the plain. A herd of cows had been driven up to one of the *Llanéros*' huts, and two men went out to milk. They did not seem to expect much, for they carried a small vessel for it; nor did the cows look as though they could yield much.

One of the men threw a lasso over the horns of a cow and dragged her up to a tree. Passing the lasso over a limb, the men hoisted the cow bodily until her hind-feet hardly touched the ground. It was a barbarous proceeding, but the ranchmen said that was the only way to make a cow give down her milk. Then they proceeded to milk the poor beast, letting her down occasionally to rest, but hoisting her up again whenever she refused to allow the milk to flow.

We might speak of the electric eels, that inhabit the shallow ponds where cattle and horses come down to drink, and sometimes administer terrible shocks. These of course have been so often described that we could give nothing new about them. There was noticed a curious bird, called the *canctero*, or wagon-bird, because the male and female, one with a hoarse quack and the other with a shrill cry, imitate the rattling and squeaking of cart-wheels.

But we must bring this sketchy and imperfect account of our Orinoco journey to a close, and hasten back to the coast, where we will in the next chapter pursue the ghosts of dead and departed buccaneers.

ON AN ORINOCO RIVER STEAMER.

CHAPTER XVI.

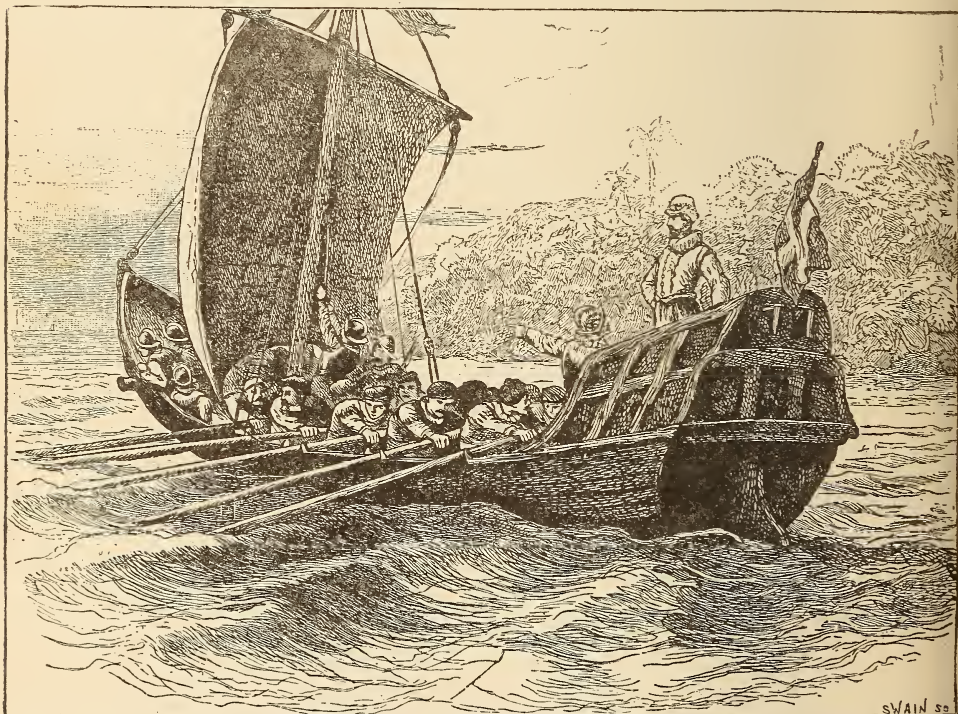
PIRATES AND BUCCANEERS.

The Origin of the Buccaneers and Freebooters. — Gold-Laden Galleons. — The Golden Crab. — Sea-Rovers of Jamaica. — Tortuga, the Pirates' Paradise. — Peter the Great. — No Prey, no Pay. — Share and Share alike. — Fiends let loose. — The Sack of Maracaibo. — Lolonois. — Henry Morgan. — Capture of Panama. — A Diet of Leather. — Horrible Cruelty.

IT is now many, many years since the last pirate sailed along the Spanish Main, but two hundred years ago this coast was the resort of the most bloodthirsty crews that ever cut a sailor's throat. It might hurt the English pride to call the great Sir Francis Drake a pirate; but the Spaniards, who suffered from his depredations, styled him nothing less. His great field of operations was on the coasts of the Caribbean Sea, and especially the Spanish Main. Hawkins and Davis were also engaged in piratical warfare upon the cities and commerce of the King of Spain.

But we will not put these old worthies in the pillory now, for after them came a class of pirates that made this region more infamous than any of their exploits. The buccaneers, who had their origin and their dens in the islands of the Caribbean Sea, will be the subject of this chapter. They had their origin about the year 1630, when the English and French settlers of the island of St. Kitts were dispersed by the Spaniard, Don Frederic of Toledo, on his way to Brazil. In 1665 a French company purchased St. Kitts, St. Cruz,

and St. Barts from the Knights of Malta. But the dispersed islanders had joined together long before, and formed a piratical colony on the Island of Tortuga. Some Dutch refugees here joined them, and they styled themselves the "Brethren of the Sea," and considered the Spaniards as their common enemy. Tortuga was a relatively small island,



DRAKE'S LIEUTENANT ON A PIRATICAL CRUISE.

not far distant from Hayti, or Hispaniola. As the latter island swarmed with wild cattle, and was thinly inhabited by Spanish settlers, part of the "brethren" invaded Hayti and hunted the cattle for their hides and meat. Another portion of the pirate company waylaid merchant vessels in the narrow channels between Hayti, Cuba, and Puerto Rico.

They were very poor at first, and made their excursions in little boats, from which fact they were called "freebooters," from the Dutch word *freiboteros*, or little boats. Their more common name, buccaneers, is derived from *boucaniere*, a corruption of *boucan*, which means to cook meat in the barbarous manner peculiar to the Caribs in their cannibal feasts. They at first had no houses, only frail huts called *ajoupas*, the Indian word for lodge, or camp. In the year 1638 the Spaniards destroyed their settlement, but it was soon rebuilt.

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE.

At that time the Spaniards traded between their own country, Spain, and their colonies by means of great fleets of galleons, or immense three or four decker ships, each carrying about fifty guns. Seville, in Spain, was the port from which the *flota*, or merchant fleet, sailed every year until the river Guadalquivir filled up, and then it sailed from Cadiz. After 1732, they sent out register ships. The annual fleet from Cadiz was composed of sixteen merchantmen of from five hundred to six hundred tons' burden, and convoyed by three men-of-war.

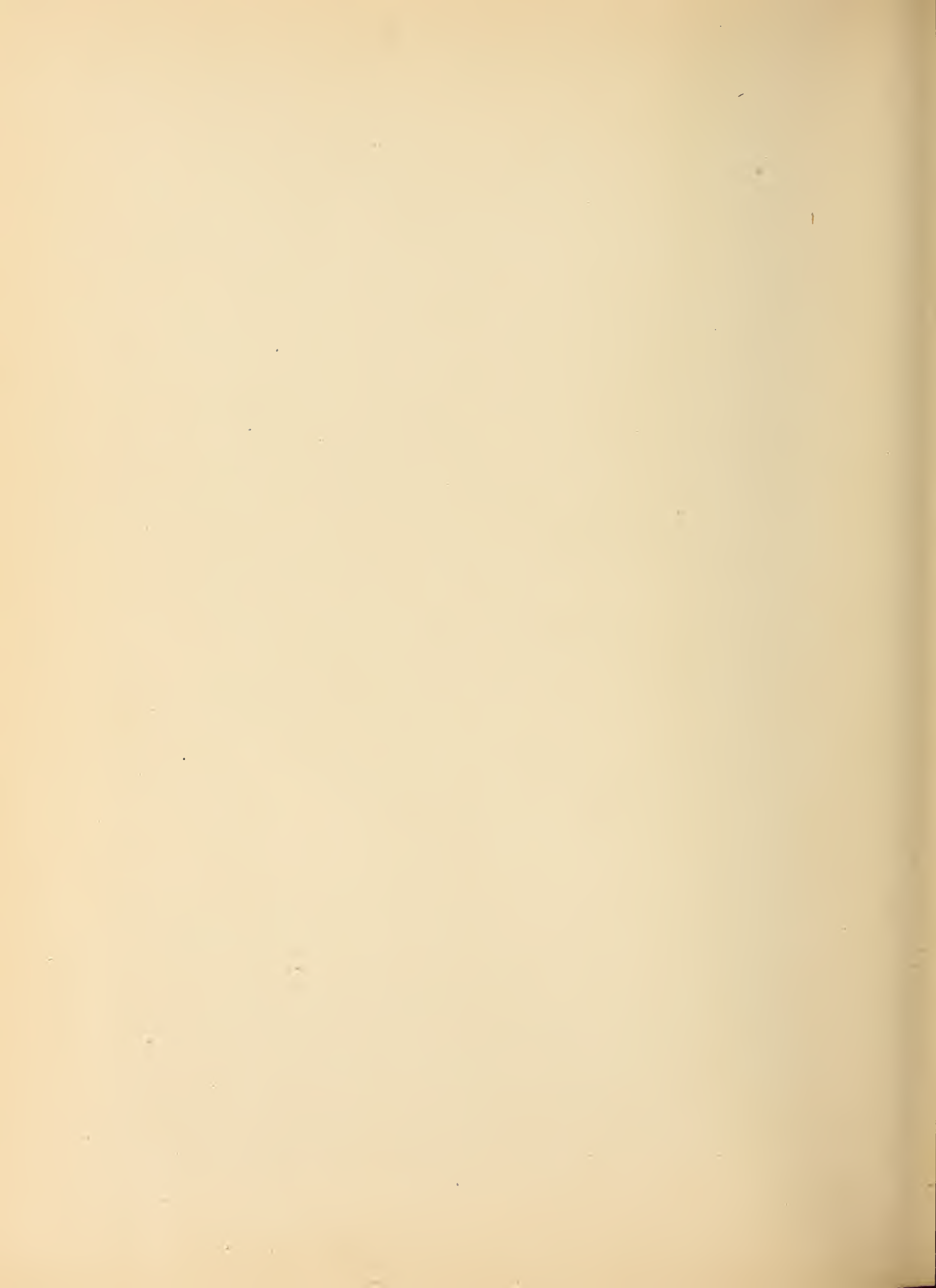
It was about 1540 that the prosperity of San Domingo, or Hayti, began to decline and the gold mines to fail. It was in 1586 that Drake was sent out by Queen Elizabeth to do all the harm he could to Spanish shipping. In the year 1655 Oliver Cromwell's general, Penn, met with repulse at San Domingo. The defeat was aided by an army of crabs, their clattering claws in the darkness being mistaken by the soldiers for the hoof-beats of advancing cavalry. It is

said that the thankful Dominicans carried a gold crab in one of their religious processions after that, in token of their indebtedness.

One of the first piratical expeditions that met with rich reward was to the Gulf of Florida. One of the Spanish galleons laden with silver from South America was sunk in a storm. Two years later the Spaniards of Havana in Cuba, sent divers to the wreck and recovered some millions of dollars. This they took to Havana; but a party of sea-rovers sailed from Jamaica in two ships and three sloops, and captured about three hundred and fifty thousand dollars which had been left under guard of sixty soldiers. The sea-rovers came to anchor, and landing three hundred men on the little island where the treasure was stored, they attacked the guard, seized the silver, and made off with it toward Jamaica. On their way they met with a Spanish ship laden with cochineal, indigo, and silver to the amount of sixty thousand dollars, and all this they appropriated, letting the vessel go. There was peace between England and Spain at that time; and as Jamaica was an English island, the Governor of Cuba demanded restitution. This the Governor of Jamaica could not deny, and so the freebooters put to sea, turning pirates in good earnest and pillaging every vessel they caught.

The Island of Tortuga lies to the north of Hayti, and was so called by the Spaniards because in general shape it resembles a great sea-tortoise, called by them *Tortuga-de-mer*. It is mountainous and wooded, and owing to the difficulty of great ships getting into its harbors, was selected by the buccaneers as their rendezvous. Some of them cultivated the scanty soil and went hunting, but the greater part secured their riches by plundering passing ships. At one time it swarmed with wild dogs, descendants of the fierce bloodhounds brought by the Spaniards years before to hunt the Indians. In 1668 the governor of the island tried to poison them, but could not succeed in exterminating them, and gave up the attempt. The first pirate of Tortuga was called Peter the Great, a native of France. With one

"A SPANISH SHIP LADEN WITH SILVER."



boat and twenty-eight men, he took the great ship of the vice-admiral of the Spanish fleet. They crept up to the sides of the ship in the dark, and while the men were making ready to board her, the pirates' surgeon was boring holes in their own boat so that they could not by any means escape.

With a pistol in one hand and a sword in the other, they climbed up the sides of the ship and ran all together into the great cabin, where they found the captain and companions playing cards. Here they put a pistol to his breast and commanded him to deliver up the ship.

The Spaniards, surprised to see the pirates, as if they had come out of the sea, exclaimed, "Heaven help us! are these devils, or what are they?" Some of them took possession of the arms and gun-room, killed all who opposed them, and soon had the ship at their mercy.

This rich prize, taken so easily, set the planters of Tortuga all afire, and nearly all turned pirates at once, going out in their canoes and capturing such vessels as came in their way.

It was the custom with the pirates of Tortuga, when on the eve of an expedition, to send notice to all concerned to assemble at the place of embarkation and bring as much powder and ball as they could. Then they stole all the pork they could lay hands on, dried the flesh of cattle, and salted down tortoise-meat for the voyage.

Before the vessel left the harbor, it was settled just what proportion of the prospective spoils each member of the crew was to have. Their motto was, "No prey, no pay!" Having secured the prey, it was to be divided as follows:—

The captain's share first, then the carpenter, or shipwright, and the surgeon, afterward the common crew. They mutually agreed also what each one should be entitled to for loss of limb, or wounds. For the loss of a right arm, six hundred pieces of eight, or six slaves; for the left arm, five hundred; for right leg, five hundred; left leg, four hundred; for an eye, one hundred, or one slave, and for a finger the same. These damages were promptly paid out of the first of their

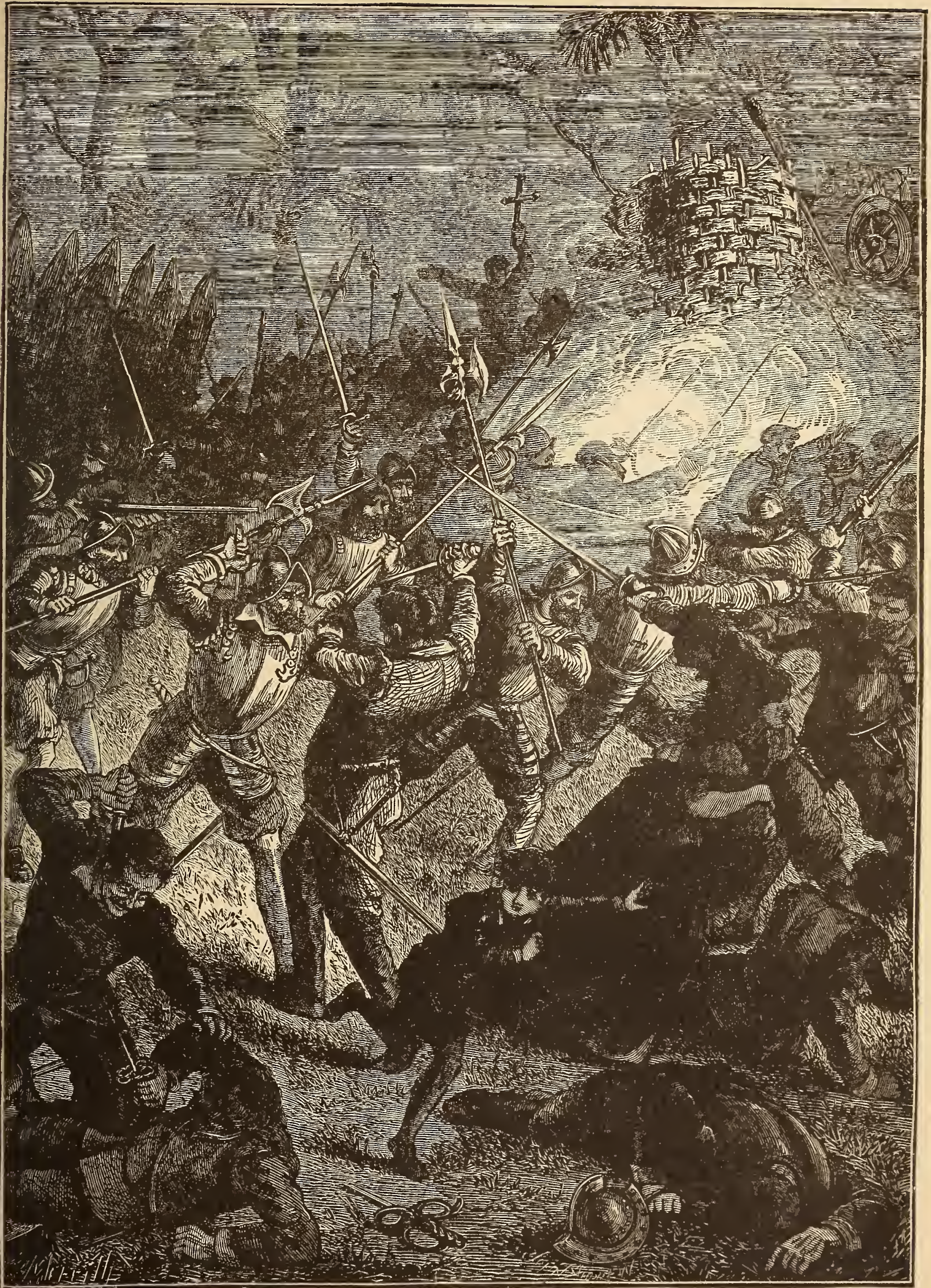
ill-gotten gains. They sometimes secured rich prizes, and made money enough from a single voyage to keep them in comfort the rest of their lives; but they always squandered it as soon as their vessel returned to port. Their time ashore was spent in the most revolting debauchery. Some of them would throw away thousands of dollars in a single night, and in the morning not have enough to buy one of them a shirt. One of the pirates, landing at Jamaica from a successful expedition, bought a barrel of wine and placed it in the middle of the street, compelling every passer-by to drink.

One of the most bloodthirsty of the Tortuga cut-throats was Francis Lolonois, who had narrow escapes from death on the coasts of Cuba and Campeche, and who, being condemned to death by the authorities of a place, escaped, and soon captured the very men who had sentenced him, cutting their heads off, every one.

Casting about for a place to sack and ruin, he concluded upon Maracaibo, the city of Venezuela to which we ourselves will go in one of the chapters following.

Maracaibo was defended by a castle, near the entrance of the great lake on which it is situated, but this was quickly taken by Lolonois and his desperate crew, who then marched upon the city. All the inhabitants fled to the forests, for they had had dealings with pirates before; but the pirates captured several of them and hacked one of them to pieces before the rest, promising to serve them all the same way unless they revealed where they had hidden their treasures. But they got so little that they sailed up the lake to a city called Gibraltar, where the people made such desperate resistance that when the pirates overcame them they murdered nearly all. Most of their prisoners they shut up in a church and left them there to die of starvation.

At last the pirates sailed away, leaving behind them suffering and misery, hundreds of murdered people and ruined homes. It may be considered a righteous retribution that Lolonois and nearly all



"THE PEOPLE MADE A DESPERATE RESISTANCE."

the miserable crew that went with him were massacred on the coast of Nicaragua.

Retributive justice, it seems, did not always overtake these scoundrels in this world, though their horrible acts of cruelty certainly called for the extremest penalties. The pirate who excelled all the rest in deeds of blood, and who robbed and murdered thousands of innocent people, instead of being punished, was in the end rewarded. We refer to Morgan, the buccaneer leader. He was an Englishman by birth, the son of a Welsh farmer. He had no desire to pursue the peaceful calling of his father, but when quite young, shipped on board a vessel bound for Barbadoes. Living there some time, he at last reached Jamaica, where, being unemployed and in poverty, he joined a pirate-ship.

After three or four voyages his profits were so great that he joined a company, and they bought a ship of their own. Their first cruise, along the coast of Campeche, was a success, and they brought several rich prizes into Jamaica.

Another pirate, named Mansvelt, was then fitting out a fleet of piratical craft, and he became so much impressed with Morgan's fitness as commander that he appointed him vice-admiral, with a fleet of fifteen ships and five hundred men. They ravaged a portion of the coast and sacked a city of Cuba, treating the inhabitants with extreme cruelty.

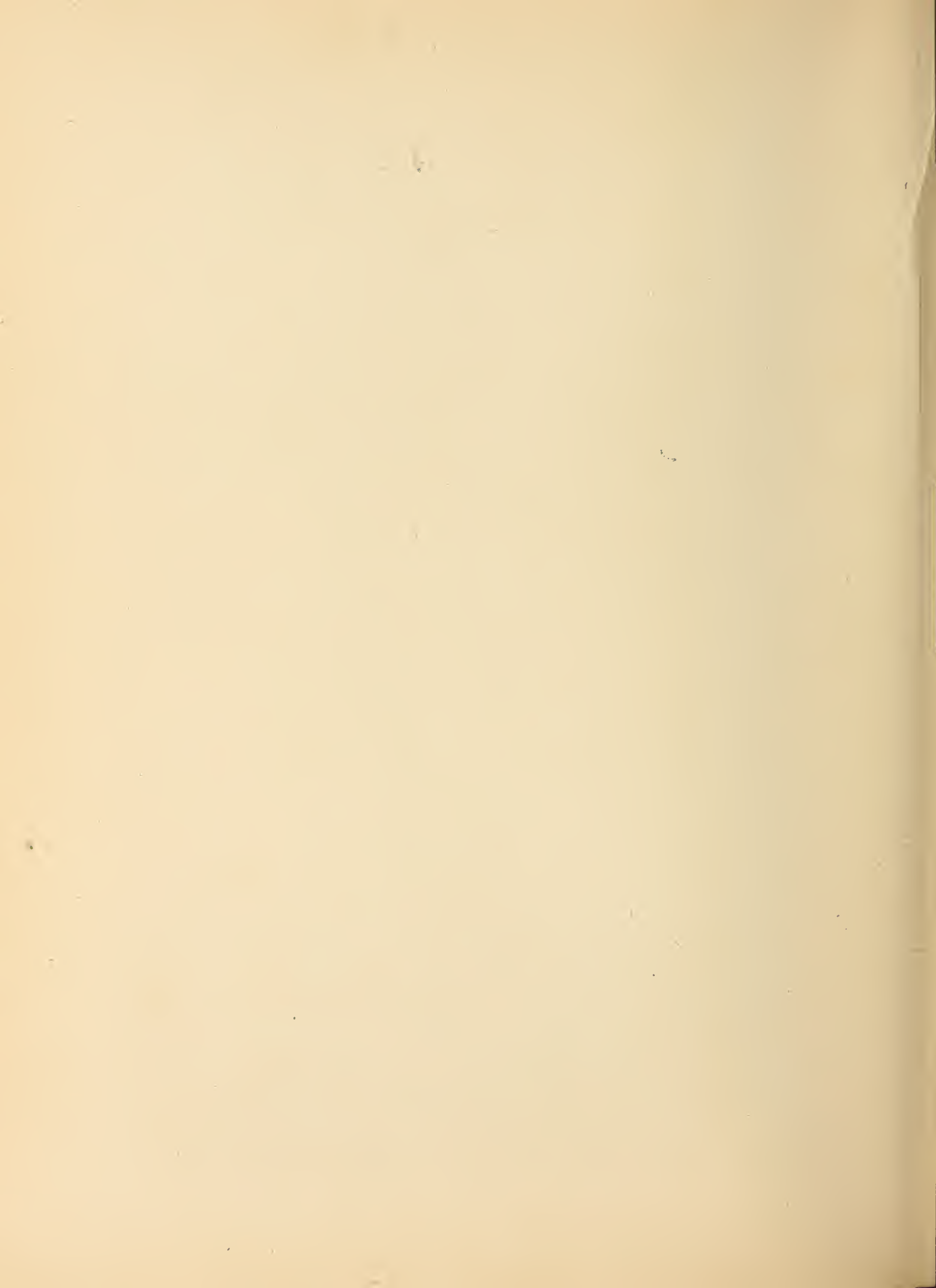
The next object of the pirates' greed was the city of Puerto Bello, near the Gulf of Darien. It was strongly fortified, and the garrison made a desperate defence, but finally the city fell, through fire and sword. The governor shut himself up in a castle, and repulsed every attempt of the pirates to get possession, until finally the wretches compelled the nuns and priests of a convent to lead the way with scaling-ladders which they placed against the walls. Many of these innocent people were killed in this attempt, but that mattered little to the pirates, who, after the castle was taken and the governor killed,

gave themselves up to every variety of horrible debauchery. Not finding all the treasure they had expected, the pirates put many citizens to the torture, so that many died on the rack. At last they sailed away to Jamaica with their rich spoil, and there wasted in a few days what they had taken such great trouble to procure. It was not long after that a vessel containing over three hundred of these pirates was blown up by accident in the harbor of Port Royal; thus were avenged the poor people of Puerto Bello.

Perhaps the greatest of Morgan's deeds was the taking of the famous city of Panama, where the bravery and determination of his ferocious followers received such reward as few fighters obtain in a better cause. Before setting out on the long march over the isthmus, Morgan assaulted and captured the castles defending the coast on the Atlantic side. He took the castle of Chagres after heavy fighting, and it is said that its capture was only consummated by an accident. One of the pirates was shot through by an arrow, that went in at his back and came out at his breast. Pulling it out, he wound some cotton about it and rammed it into his musket and fired it back at the castle. Now it so happened that the cotton about the arrow took fire from the powder and kindled the thatch of some houses, whence the blaze extended to a magazine of powder, and blew up part of the fort.

It was in August, 1670, that Morgan left the castle of Chagres, with twelve hundred men, in five boats and thirty-two canoes, determined upon the capture of Panama. The Spaniards of the country got wind of their coming, and left not a particle of food on their line of march, so that the miserable pirates nearly starved, only saving themselves by devouring some leather sacks they found, and leather boots. They even fought one another for bits of leather to eat. One of them describes the manner of preparing this harsh food. First they sliced the leather in pieces, then beat it between two stones and rubbed it, often dipping it in water to make it supple and tender;

MORGAN'S MEN IN CAMP.



lastly, they scraped off the hair, and broiled it. Being thus cooked, they cut it into small morsels and ate it, helping it down with frequent gulps of water.

Almost the only resistance they encountered by the way was from the wild Indians, armed only with arrows, who would let fly at them from the rocks, crying out, *Ai perros! a la saxana! a la saxana!* ("Ha, dogs! go to the plain, go to the plain!"), meaning by this that when the pirates should reach the plain on which Panama was built they would find the Spaniards prepared for them. The ninth day of this terrible march they were rejoiced at the view of the Pacific, and the city of their desires, beyond the plain. Descending into the plain, the famished wretches killed cattle and donkeys, and feasted on their flesh, and the next day they were sufficiently recovered from their sufferings to attack the Spanish force drawn up to receive them.

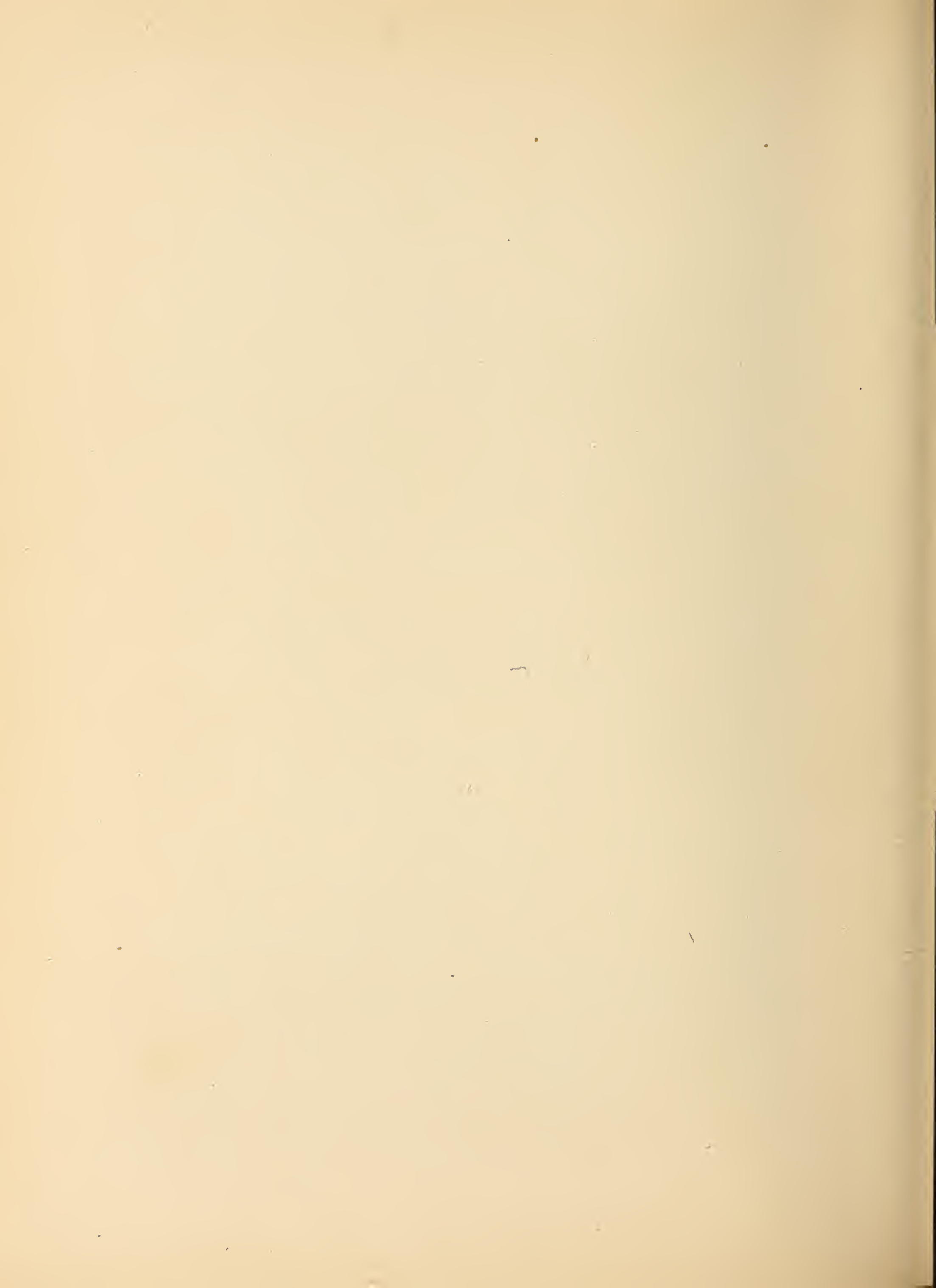
Even the fearless buccaneers were filled with apprehension at sight of the large army drawn up before the city; but they attacked with their usual ferocity and put the Spaniards to rout, notwithstanding the latter so outnumbered them. Even a great troop of wild bulls that the Spaniards tried to drive against the pirates turned upon their former masters and helped to win the day for the sea monsters. But history has given us the result, and told of the destruction of this great city of the South Sea, with its houses lined with cedar-wood and its vast wealth. Not satisfied with its plunder and the torturing of its inhabitants, Morgan set fire to the city.

The plunder was vast, and the pirates plunged into every sort of debauchery and wickedness. But though they obtained great treasure, they were much grieved to learn that during the time they were drunken with wine and lust, a galleon escaped the city, and sailed away, richly laden with all the king's plate and jewels. On board this galleon also were the religious women of the nunnery, with all the rich ornaments of their church, and gold and silver plate of great

value. Morgan was so enraged at the escape of this galleon with its precious freight that he raved like a madman, and repeatedly despatched boats in its pursuit. Finally, after committing every sort of cruelty and indulging every bestial appetite, these human fiends departed for Chagres, where a division of the spoil left most of them with almost nothing, as Morgan fled to Jamaica with the rich bulk of the booty.

It is well known that Morgan was never punished for his misdeeds, but instead was rewarded, being made Governor of Jamaica and knighted. As Sir Henry Morgan, gallant knight and gentleman, he is now known to history! With this the greatest of the buccaneers, we will conclude our chapter, only halting to apologize to the smaller fry of pirates and freebooters that we have not time and space to give them all a fitting biography in these pages.

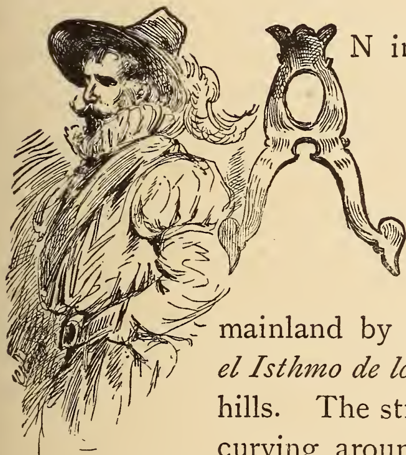
AN EXPEDITION IN SEARCH OF SECRETED TREASURE.



CHAPTER XVII.

CORO AND THE PARAGUANA.

The Mysterious Peninsula. — Mud Huts and Muddy Complexions. — A Wild Sea and a Stormy Night. — Some Allusions to Morgan's Gold. — Treasure-Seekers of To-Day.



AN immense tract of land, called the Peninsula of Paraguana, projects northward from the main coast line of Venezuela, and forms a portion of the eastern boundary of the great Gulf of Maracaibo. It is little known, almost uninhabited, and connected with the mainland by a long and narrow isthmus, known as *el Isthmo de los Medanos*, and rightly called the Sandhills. The stretch of wind-swept sand gleams bright, curving around from the land, and finally becoming lost in the distance. Beyond, out of the clouds, rise the misty mountains, two in number, of the Paraguana.

While we are approaching the Peninsula of the Paraguana, let us again recur to the old sea-rovers, whose exploits we have alluded to. There has always been a belief that the successful pirates left large deposits of buried treasure somewhere along the Spanish Main, and quite recently we found an account of an expedition in search of the gold supposed to have been buried by Morgan himself. Here is the notice, as we found it: —

"Captain Robert Annett, an old mariner of many shipwrecks and thrilling adventures of the sea, is arranging for another expedition to the Island of Santa Catalina, in the Caribbean Sea, which was formerly the headquarters of the notorious Captain Morgan, the buccaneer. In 1877 Captain Annett was pilot and interpreter of an expedition on the schooner 'Maria,' in search of the pirate's hidden gold. The yacht 'Maria' reached the island in November, 1877, and the expedition remained there for three weeks without making any discovery. Permission was obtained to visit the island for the purpose of hunting, but the real nature of the expedition having been discovered, a Spanish man-of-war was sent to investigate. The 'Maria' sailed away from one side of the island while the man-of-war was approaching the other. The 'Maria' proceeded to Balize, and then spent three months searching for the phantom treasures on Turnefeccas in the Bay of Honduras. The machinery gave out, and the expedition headed for New York. Five days after leaving Balize, the schooner sprung a leak, and the crew were rescued one hour before the vessel sunk.

"The island is a mile in circumference, mountainous, and a complete network of caverns. Buccaneer Morgan, after killing all the crew of every vessel he captured, would secrete the booty on the Island of Catalina, according to tradition. Captain Annett says he has two men who have found treasure on the island. One of these is John Curry of Kingston, Ja., who discovered in a cave ten thousand dollars in Spanish doubloons. Curry told Captain Annett that he landed on the island from a Spanish vessel in search of wood and water. While there, he chased an iguana, which ran in a hole near one of the forts. Curry put his hand in the hole after the animal, and says it came in contact with masonry. He pulled out two or three stones and discovered that the masonry concealed the entrance to a large cave. Curry entered the cave and built a fire to give him light, and was astonished at what he beheld.

"There were in the cave nine earthen jars, filled to the top with Spanish doubloons, and cases filled with jewels, while gold and silver ware were strewn around. Curry took away as much as he could conveniently carry without exciting the suspicion of the men on the vessel, who he feared would murder him if his secret was discovered. He went to Jamaica and spent his fortune in a few years. After his treasure was exhausted he returned to the island and was arrested there by the Indians of Old Providence and taken to Aspinwall, where he was imprisoned. Mr. Compton, the British consul at Aspinwall, interfered in Curry's behalf, and he was released. His story induced Compton to invest in an expedition to the island, and he secured the services of a British man-of-war. Curry was with the expedition, but refused

to disclose the treasure cave. He said he was afraid he would not get any of the find. Curry was threatened with lynching, and Mr. Compton committed suicide by blowing his brains out as a result of the expedition.

"Alexander Archibald of Old Providence, while digging a well on Santa Catalina, struck an earthen jar with his spade. Thinking he had made a discovery, he sent his assistants back to Old Providence and pursued his investigations alone. When the jar was removed, Archibald found it to contain fifteen thousand dollars in Spanish doubloons. Captain Annett's new expedition will sail in the spring. Concessions have been obtained from the Government of Honduras for this expedition, and it will not be molested. It pays ten per cent to the Government and fifteen per cent to the Balize Produce Company of Honduras on all treasure found, for the privilege of prosecuting the search."

It is more than doubtful if any treasure is found; but the searchers will some day be richer by an experience, and waste time and money in the search. These allusions to concealed treasure are constantly appearing in the public prints, and here is another, that we copy from the "New York Herald": —

"News reached the Island of Tortola on the fifteenth ult. that while an excavation was being made on Norman's Island a large amount of Spanish coin was found. Two small anchors marked the spot, and were undoubtedly intended for its future identification. It was expected that on digging further more money would be discovered. The latest advices from Venezuela state that eight revolutionists landed on the coast between Puerto Cabello and La Guayra. They said they came from Curaçoa in a Dutch vessel. They were immediately arrested. One of the party took refuge in a high tree, and having fired down upon his captors, he was shot."

It will be noticed that nobody yet has seen this golden store in any quantity; and we may well assume that they never will. But history records a few notable "finds" of sunken silver and gold, the most famous being that of Sir William Phipps, who located and exploited a sunken galleon, in the West Indies, and thereby enriched himself and his king.

All that time we are supposed to be steaming toward the open

sea, at midnight reaching the tempestuous part, where the Caribbean current meets and wars with the waters of Maracaibo. Before daylight the rolling of the ship had ceased; we had almost circumnavigated the Paraguana, and its blue mountains lay to the west of us instead of to the east. We anchored in a great bay, open to the east, with the land about two miles away. The water in this bay is shallow, and in times of storm the waves are high and angry. Abreast us stretched the isthmus, its *medanos* rosy in the sun of morning, a scant growth of green covering their crests, and only one clump of trees, of coco-palms, growing in their hollows. To the south, a brown-and-yellow beach was pointed out as the Vela of Coro. It is a most miserable apology for a town, consisting mostly of mud boxes for houses, with perhaps a dozen respectable buildings. The roofs of tiles and the *medanos* harmonize well with the landscape; and the white church tower, though short, is a pleasing feature.

The largest and most important building here is the *aduana*, or custom-house, as it is in every port in Venezuela. Next to it is the guard-house, where live the ragged soldiers who enforce the authority of the *comandante*. These idle soldiers are clad in cotton shirt and pantaloons, cap and sandals, all very much the worse for wear. Their guns are muzzle-loaders, old-fashioned, of course, but objects of great solicitude apparently, as they carry them about wherever they go.

Things "go slow" here. Official red-tape is awful. Our captain wished to obtain a rock from the beach, with which to anchor the mooring-buoy. First, he had to get permission from the *comandante* to take the rock, and then a ragged negro was detailed to go with us, to see that we took but one rock, and nothing else. This fellow's feet were bare, his trousers dirty, and he was bare-headed, while his old musket (the muzzle plugged with a cob) he handled like an Irishman with a crowbar. We got the rock from near the lighthouse; and this structure, by the way, is nothing more than the stump of a tree with a battered old lantern perched about twenty feet from the ground, and

reached by a rickety ladder. A score of boys accompanied us, the ragamuffins having nothing else to do, and they stuck by us a full hour, dodging us through all the streets, not from any ill-will, but out of mere curiosity. We had with us the captain's big dog, Princesse, who attracted more attention even than we did. At nearly every hut and house the women and children would rush to door and window and stare at us with admiring eyes. Many of the children ran into the neighbors' huts and solicited them to come out and see the biggest dog they had ever seen in their lives. *Que perra!* ("What a dog!") and *Tan grande esta perra!* ("What a great dog!") were the exclamations that greeted us at every corner.

"THEY WOULD STARE AT US WITH ADMIRING EYES."

Innocent people and ignorant are these coast dwellers of Venezuela, and the simplest things excite their admiration. There are about a thousand of them living in and about this Vela de Coro, living with apparent content in their huts of adobe.

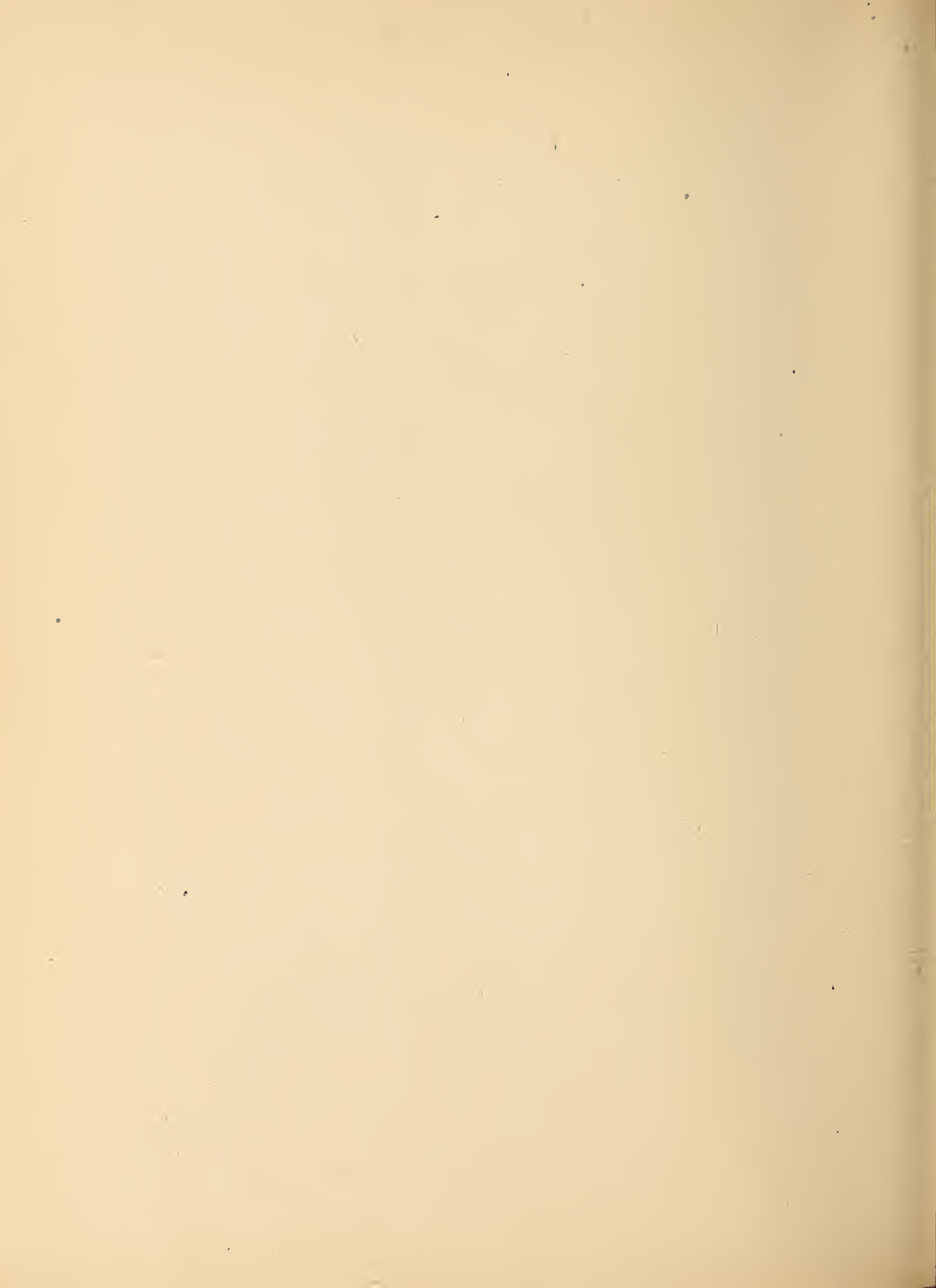
I have long since noticed that there is a certain correspondence between the people of any country and their immediate environment. Here the land is parched and dry, brown and sterile. The houses, being made mostly of unbaked brick, or cakes of mud, are of course the color of the earth. The people, living in these mud huts, also have acquired this color, and their complexion is as nearly that of an unbaked brick of red earth, or clay, as it is possible to be. The children here go about naked up to a certain (or uncertain) age; they sit and roll and sleep and eat on the warm, naked lap of Mother Earth. As the children of

Cape Cod are said to be pretty gritty until they get their wisdom teeth cut, and never lack sand in their craws, so these mud-dwellers must be well plastered, outside and in. As I was about to remark, Nature may be kinder to these children of the Earth, so earthy, than

A COFFEE-PLANTER'S HOUSE.

we take into account; for being so near the color of earth, they are less liable to be seen and shot, in this land of frequent revolutions. But whether this protective color ever does avail them in time of war, I have no data to prove. The negro, at night, it is hard to detect, except for the whites of his eyes; and these people are exceedingly well fitted, by their soft earth-tints, for nocturnal prowlers. I do not think they do go about much though, here in the Vela, — for there is

A CACTUS-COVERED PLAIN.



nothing to be gained by it; nothing to steal except a goat or a jackass, the loss of which the whole town would be cognizant of by the next sunrise.

Behind the Vela is a range of hills, very dry and sterile, covered with cactus and *divi-divi* scrub, worthless for cultivation; but back a mile or two is another, higher range, which is greener, more pleasing to the eye, and where the varying shades of verdure proclaim cultivation, as well as the spaces of golden-brown earth. For there is a rich country behind all this, whence the coffee comes that loads this steamer every week, as well as her companion, the "Maracaibo." The other freight obtained here consists principally of goat-skins, the wearers of which once sported joyously on the cactus-covered hills before us.

The captain and I concluded to visit Coro, the city of which the Vela is merely the port. Three leagues, or about eight miles, they reckon the distance, and it is all of that. Nearly every pound of freight for the steamers comes from Coro, drawn in carts, or on the backs of *burros.* There are but twelve carts in all Coro, and we met those twelve on the plain, each cart containing about one thousand pounds of coffee, and conducted by a driver, a black-and-tan Venezuelan, wearing cotton shirt and drawers, old straw hat and hempen sandals. These teams make two trips daily, and are constantly engaged in carrying hides and coffee to Vela. The *comandante* graciously permitted me to land with my camera. Without his permit I should have been liable to arrest when I returned; for everything coming into the country is taxed. Our agent, Don Jullio, secured us a *coche*, drawn by two horses and guided by a boy with the prevailing complexion. It was a very shaky old *coche*, an old rattletrap on wheels, full of cracks and holes, and it rattled fearfully as our Jehu applied the whip to the horses. The harness was composed of leather lines and bits of rope, in about equal proportions, and it seemed as though our wiry equine skeletons

would jump through the whole affair at every application of the whip. But it was a complicated arrangement, and it was impossible for the horses to free themselves.

The cart-track to Coro straggles over an immense flat, covered with cactus and *divi-divi* bush. Here the goats and kids find congenial retreats, and seem to thrive on the thorny and spiny fruit and leaves of the candelabrum cactus and prickly pear. No other animals are observed to haunt here, except the pachydermatous *burro;* and even the birds seem to have abandoned a spot so accursed with thorns and traps for unwary feet.

No, I must not forget to mention the mocking-birds, now and then seen among the acacia-trees, nor the gay-colored troupials, looking like great and beautiful "golden robins;" nor the queer birds, a species of fly-catchers, almost as large as cuckoos, with dove-colored breasts and black markings, that cried shrilly from the tops of the cacti. Ground-doves, in all their innocence, walked and fluttered over the ground under the scrub; and we saw a small bevy of curious quail.

After all, there must have been a good deal of animated life in that cactus-covered plain; and doubtless it would have repaid investigation. Another bird we saw there was the vulture, sailing the air in circles; but the vulture is omnipresent in these tropical regions, and his presence must be taken for granted. A rarer species, and one more nearly resembling an eagle than the vulture, we saw hopping along by the roadside, and that was the Caracas eagle. It is a true vulture, though much cleaner in its habit, I think, than the other species, and from its more alert and noble appearance seems to be as much a hawk or an eagle as a member of the vulture family.

A SCAVENGER.

Infrequently, forlorn mud-houses claimed our attention, each a

box of mud with a hole for a doorway and another for a window, with black-and-tan children playing about them, and slatternly, low-browed women looking listlessly out of them. The few men we saw were dark and sullen, either sitting about doing nothing, or training fighting-cocks. A few pedestrians, mostly women, were scuffing through the dust, their faces half-hidden in their shawls. The women here thrust their feet into the forward halves of shoes and jam down the heels, wearing them like Moorish slippers, which have no heels at all. Thus they scuff along the streets, and where the streets are paved, you may hear the "click-clack, click-clack," all day long and far into the night. They wear no stockings, these women comprising the common classes, and very little apparel not visible at a casual glance. They sit and roll in the mud and dust during childhood, and push those slipshod feet through dust and mud in womanhood; and it may be imagined what attractive creatures of clay these women are. Yet, there are to be found men who consort with them, apparently love (at least, tolerate) them, and join with them in raising progeny just as black and dirty as themselves.

Coro, the city, lies flat upon a plain, without a redeeming feature of beauty or attractiveness. It is said to be the oldest city in Venezuela, and they point out to you to-day, in one of the squares, the veritable cross planted here at the celebrating of the first Mass, in 1527. Near by it is an old church, date of erection 1530. I questioned the inhabitants as to the reasons that the first Spaniards had for settling here, and they themselves could not imagine any, except that there was an Indian settlement here previously, and the conquerors occupied it. This may be true, for those old Spanish robbers were prone to take from the Indian whatever they found him in possession of; and they would seize and occupy his town if only out of pure devilishness, merely that the aborigine should not have it to himself.

There is no nearer harbor than the Vela, three leagues away, and it has no natural advantages, though it is now the outlet of a vast interior country, rich in coffee, tropical fruits and woods. Everything has to be carted to the Vela for shipment; and it is not unlikely that a concession for a railroad or a tramway might prove profitable to some American. The land between Coro and the Vela is perfectly flat, and is rarely overflowed. Here is a city of twelve thousand, with another thousand at the port, and an unlimited country around to draw upon. I am not so sure but that it might be made a paying investment; for there may not be so much poverty here as appears upon the surface.

Quien sabe? Let some American, capable of such things, come out here and investigate. Venezuelans are always willing you should spend money in their country. As to how much they are willing one should take away, ask such men as Guzman Blanco, who now lives abroad with millions, it is said, that the Venezuelans badly need. However listless the natives may be in the matter of invested capital, they cannot be accused of lack of energy in taxing it, nor of neglecting any opportunity for giving the stranger a chance to leave some behind him. But I did not intend to digress.

The agent of the steamer at Coro received us hospitably, and insisted on our staying to breakfast. His family consisted of himself, his charming mother and sister, and three brothers; and we breakfasted delightfully in the corridor, with a perfumed *patio* (perfumed by flowers) at one side.

One of the brothers went about with me, pointing out the objects of historic interest, which he lamented were so few, and explaining to the curious inhabitants that I was an *historiador* from North America, who had heard of Coro, and wished to present its attractions to a waiting world.

Few, indeed, are the things ancient and interesting in Coro. I photographed the cross, the old church, the Palacio Gobierno (con-

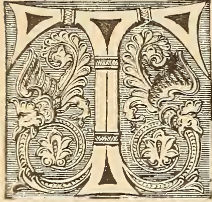
verted to its present use after serving as a nunnery), and a quaint old building called the *Casa de las Ventanas de Hierro*, or House with the Iron Windows.

After this ramble through the hot streets, and a short siesta after breakfast, the time came for us to leave; the *coche* was driven around to the door; and we said adieu to our hospitable hosts. But one thing mars the memory of this pleasant visit. The agent promised to get us off in two days, and then sent word the next day that some of the merchants objected. So we lay a day and a night in the open roadstead of the Vela, while half a gale was blowing, and the sea rolling in, in great windrows that threatened to engulf any approaching boat. As the promised cargo those merchants were to send amounted to a paltry boat-load of skins and coffee, and as there was a prospect that our "papers" would not be sent aboard under another twenty-four hours, we were all far from amiable. The tumultuous seas came in, chasing one another rapidly, seeming to revolve upon the bottom of the sea and break on all sides of us, angry and foaming white. The sun went down in a sky of brilliant yellow; but elsewhere than above his resting-place it was overcast and gloomy.

CHAPTER XVIII.

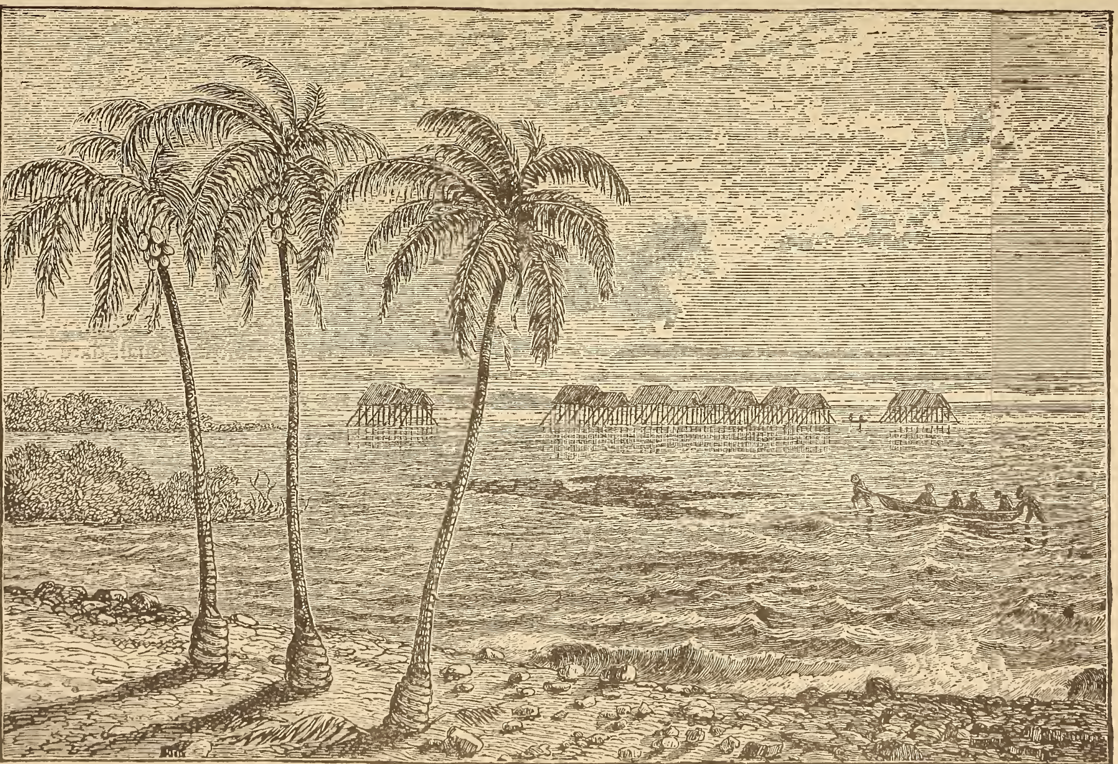
MARACAIBO AND THE LAST LAKE-DWELLERS.

A CRUISE TO LAKE MARACAIBO. — THE SLEEPY BUT CHARMING OLD DUTCH PORT OF CURAÇOA. — MARACAIBO, ITS HARBORS, LAKE, SANDY STREETS, FLEAS, AND BABIES. — LAKE-DWELLING INDIANS. — A PROMISE FOR ANOTHER YEAR.

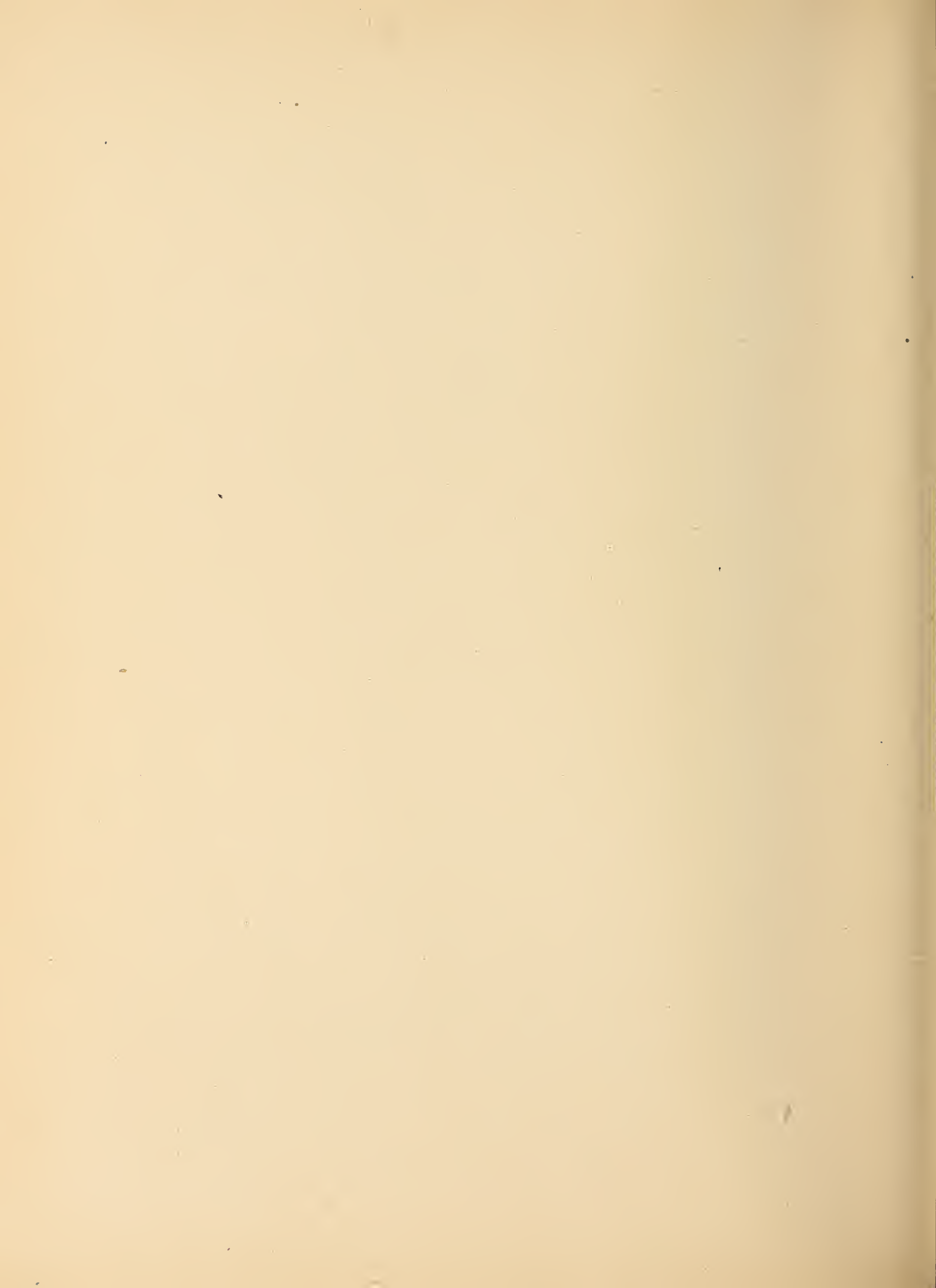


THAT was a perilous passage which the mate of our steamer made to the ship in the Vela of Coro. As I wrote in my notebook, the boat of our mate, who was sent with a message ashore, was a dancing speck upon the waves, tossed hither and thither, but constantly returning to the charge and breasting them masterfully.

Writing yet an hour later, I recorded that the little boat reached the ship, the two sturdy negroes at the oars pulling manfully, the mate with one hand at the tiller, unceasingly bailing out the water the great waves poured over her. They reached our side, a rope was thrown, and missed them; then another, which the bowman caught. To me, looking upon this scene as a "land-lubber," it seemed pregnant with peril. Soon as the rope tautened and the boat's motion was arrested, the seas rushed upon and over her, she was dashed against the landing-stage and half buried in water, just as the mate succeeded in handing up the mail-bag and the captain's box of "papers." Before he himself had a chance to seize the lines, another deluge swept the boat from stern to stern, completely filling it; but as it was lifted upon the next wave, the mate scrambled quickly upon the steps and thence upon the deck.



A GUAJIRO VILLAGE, LAKE MARACAIBO.



The blocks were hanging from the davits, and watching their time, the two boatmen hooked on and shouted loudly, "Haul her up!" A dozen pairs of black and brawny hands were at the ropes, and soon the boat and its contents were safe, beyond the reach of the cruel waves that leaped up angrily as though enraged at being baffled thus. As a "land-lubber," I say, I thought this was perilous; but the sailors laugh at it, as an event common enough, and which may take place on any one of their voyages. Still, regarding this episode from a landsman's point of view, I will stick to my opinion and declare that I would rather be in a place where I could go on shore at will than afloat in a small boat on these terrible seas. Just this very minute, a sea broke on our quarter that shook the steamer like a leaf, and made a report like thunder. Others may like it, but I will confess that I do not, — banging the seas in a stormy night with but a few feet of water under the ship's keel and a lee shore but a little over a mile away.

But we escaped the perils of Coro, and steamed away for the distant port of Maracaibo. It is of my visit to this lake and the city on its bank that I would write about. One hardly knows where to begin or what to present, when there come crowding upon him the incidents of a whole voyage, and the varied pictures of half a dozen different ports. He cannot "keep up with the procession," unless he writes incessantly and despatches a two-column letter home by every mail. To recapitulate a little: —

After a five nights' run from Puerto Cabello, Curaçoa lay before us, "all jagged and uneven," cool and sweet in the early morning, and with an aspect restful and inviting.

As we reached the entrance to its magnificent harbor, the old pilot came off to us and took his place on the bridge. Not that we needed a pilot, for our captain had entered port so many times that the pilot was entirely superfluous; but it relieves the owners of the steamers of a risk, and is a strict regulation of the island Government. Unlike, however, the pilots of most countries, this one is paid a stated

salary by the Government, and does not exact extortionate fees for imaginary services.

There was with us, as a passenger, the captain of a small vessel just wrecked on the Island of Aves, and he was seeking reparation for injuries sustained at the hands of the Venezuelans. As these Venezuelans suffer no opportunity to pass for robbing a mariner, they had laid claim to the vessel and her cargo, because the wreck occurred on Venezuelan soil — or rather, rocks. How the persecuted master escaped I do not know, but I can well imagine that he was not suffered to depart until he had paid the uttermost farthing.

Under the guidance of the pilot we entered, for the second time, the land-locked harbor of Curaçoa, the finest in these seas and the prettiest.

There is not much room to spare between the old stone forts that guard the entrance; and the harbor is crossed by a pontoon bridge that slowly swings to one side as our steamer sails grandly in. Houses old and quaint, and unmistakably Dutch in design, line the lagoon on either side, and spread along the sea-front for a mile or so, north and south. One feels a sense of security here; not only protection from storm and hurricane, but from the rapacity of the robbers of the mainland of South America, which lies behind a misty cloud-mountain forty miles away. I would gladly linger here and rest among the placid people that inhabit charming Curaçoa; but it is my purpose to push farther on and visit distant Maracaibo. It is a province so isolated that it would appear to belong to Colombia, rather than to Venezuela; yet it is within a day's easy sail of Curaçoa. The American line there connects with two subsidiary steamers, named respectively the "Merida" and the "Maracaibo." Each is commanded by an able master, and each is a stanch and comfortable steamer.

At the Curaçoa docks, as we entered, we found these steamers in waiting, and they moved out to give us room, then steamed alongside, in turn, one to receive freight for Coro and the Paraguana, and the

other to deliver its cargo of hides and coffee. Transferring my trunk from the "Philadelphia" to the "Merida," — an easy matter, as the rails

BELLE OF A GUAJIRO VILLAGE.

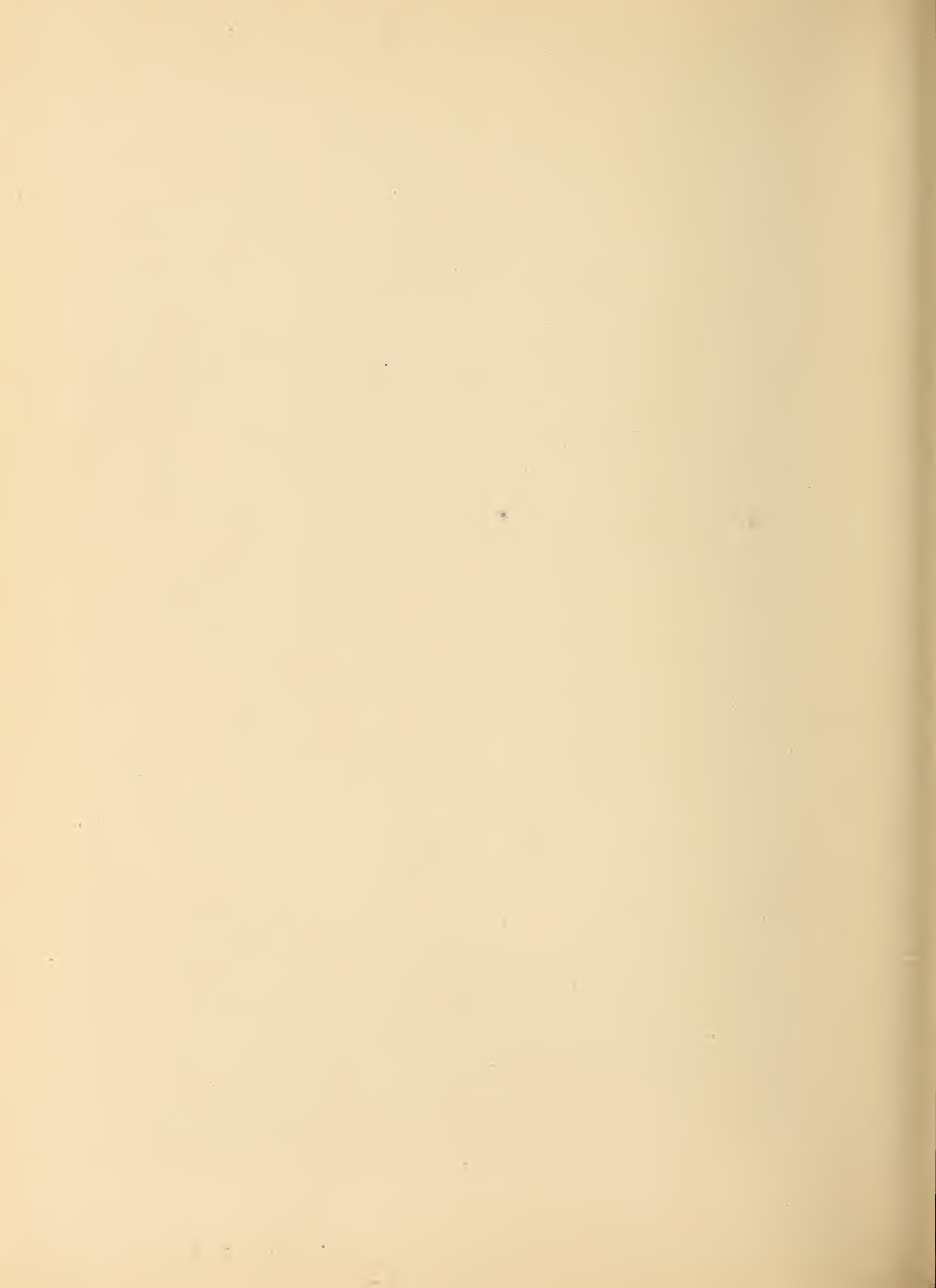
of both were close together, — I soon found myself occupying a deck stateroom, with almost the entire steamer at my command. Travel between Curaçoa and Maracaibo is very light, as the country itself seems

outside the ordinary line of travel; and the steamers were built more for freight than with a view to passenger accommodation. But the latter is better than for any other line plying between the ports of Venezuela and other ports, and maintains the reputation of the American steamers in these waters. The captain was the personification of kindness; the steward was Mr. John Thomas, who is a well-known caterer to sea-faring epicures. Our consul had adjured me to make the acquaintance of Mr. John Thomas, not only because he had the reputation of making a cocktail that would ward off malarious attacks, but also because he was better informed than many others regarding certain matters of importance. As a consequence, having sought the acquaintance of Mr. John Thomas, I fared sumptuously every day, and the Maracaibo malaria passed me by. This gentleman had travelled these seas many years, and with the present captain of the "Merida" had made numerous voyages as steward. He was the colored *chef* of the culinary department, and it was his strident voice that woke me every morning, accelerating the pace of his slow-going assistants, Jill and Josey.

"Here, you sah! step lively, now. Take up de gen'lemun's coffee. Wha' you loafin' about there for?" He claimed to be an old man, but he was more active than the boys, and set them an example of celerity and neatness. His cooking was excellent, his native dishes things to be remembered, and in preparing the armadillo, he excelled. The first bit of armadillo I ever ate was at his table; it was delicious, rich, and tender. The shell, out of which Mr. John Thomas had unceremoniously "shucked" the animal, he saved for me, and I brought it home curled about an earthen water-cooler.

But why should I attempt to enumerate the many virtues of Mr. John Thomas, when perhaps none of my readers will ever make his acquaintance? Why, indeed? Simply that it is every one's duty to mention a good thing when he sees it; and a good cook and steward deserves the praise of every right-minded traveller.

PIRATES REVISITING THE SCENES OF THEIR DEPREDATIONS.



Rumor reached us of fevers along the coast, and obstructions to travel in the interior; but these did not deter us. At noon of the second day we sighted Fort San Carlos, — a low stone structure, with a little dependent village jutting out from the mainland, with which it is connected by a narrow strip of sand. This fort commands the channel leading into Lake Maracaibo. It is a dreary coast, with scrubby trees, and a distant backing of forest. All the water used here comes from little holes in the sand a mile or more distant, and is brought to the fort in small kegs, on the backs of soldiers. There is good hunting along this coast, and the few people living here are so hospitable that they will not let you pass their doors without halting for food and drink.

An hour previous to reaching San Carlos we crossed the bar, piloted by a brown and shrivelled old man, who came aboard from a little sloop hovering a respectable distance away. This bar across the only channel of Lake Maracaibo prevents the entrance of large steamers, and it is constantly shifting.

The commerce of Maracaibo is now mainly with the United States, and carried on through the medium of American steamers; but ten years ago, according to the Consular Reports, it was chiefly foreign. Of the amount shipped that year, $4,188,677, nearly $4,000,000 was shipped in British bottoms.

The great Lake Maracaibo is over one hundred miles in length. Its chief settlement and only port is the city of Maracaibo, which lies beyond the brackish waters of mingled lake and sea, on the shore of the lake itself. We steamed past Fort San Carlos, and in three hours were off the city, in an immense bay, crescent-shaped, bordered with palms.

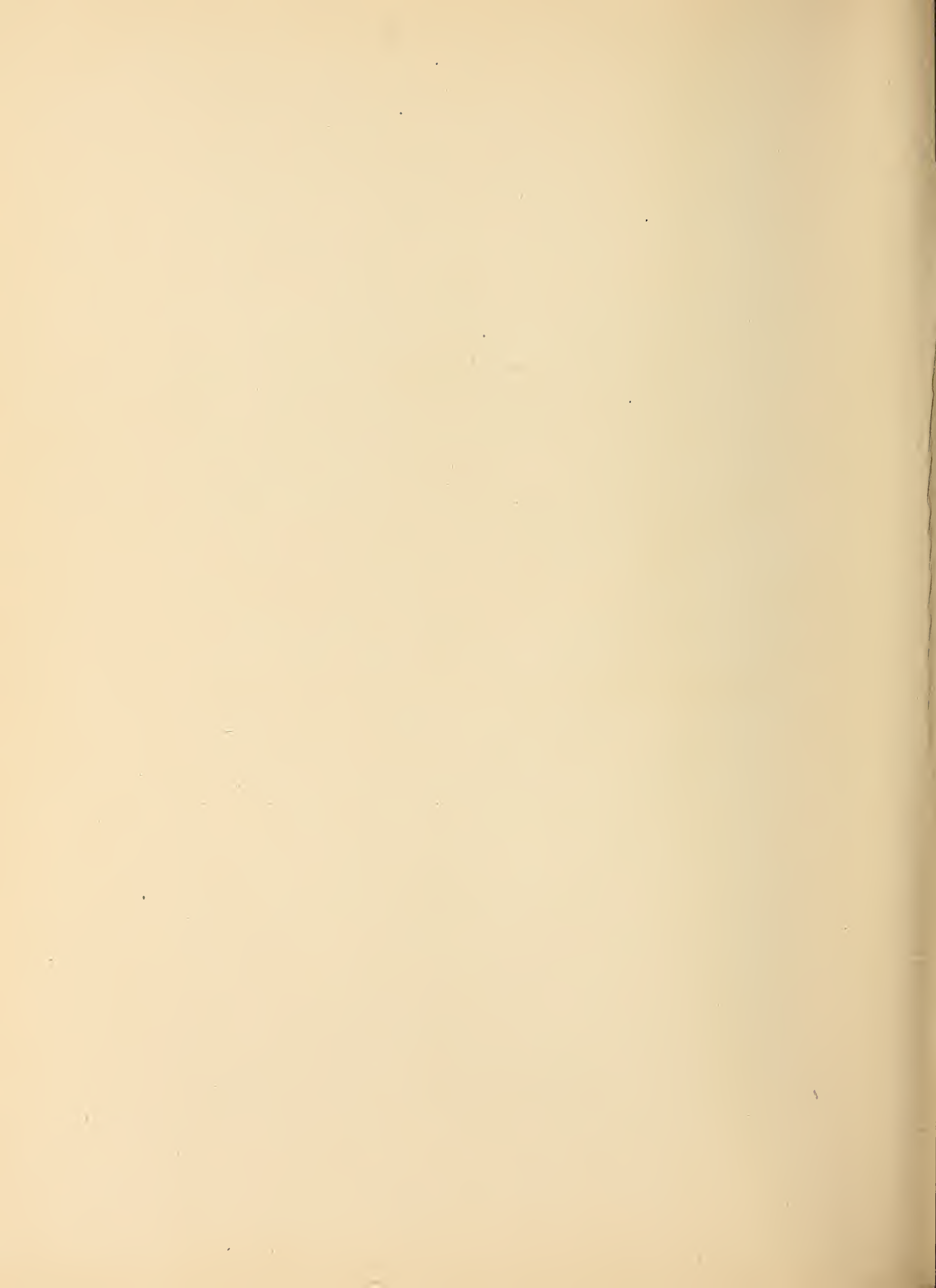
We came to anchor about a mile from shore, and were soon surrounded by the boats of the customs officers, who swarmed like rats over the gangway and upon the deck. I had thought the officials of La Guayra as impudent and exacting as any I had ever

met, but these exceeded them. They would not allow a passenger to land unless he went direct to his house or to a hotel. No one was allowed to go on shore while nominally living on board ship, except the captain and the steward. No article of any kind could be taken ashore unless examined and passed by an official. The captain secured special permission for me to take my camera with me and to return to the ship, though the *jefe* (chief) was slow in granting it, and reluctantly said that he really ought not, but if I brought it with me he would try not to see it. I had no trouble during the time I was there, and photographed all I pleased. The authority of the chief having been recognized, there was no interference from the civil authorities.

The houses of Maracaibo are poorly constructed of rubble and concrete, with small wooden beams to give strength. They are plastered on the outside and painted in gay colors; and from the steamer's deck the city seems filled with substantial and pretentious buildings. There are few structures of importance, even the cathedral being of mean appearance. The streets are beds of sand, with high sidewalks on either side, between which, in the rainy season, torrents of water flow to the bay. When the sand is dry (which is nearly all the time), it is the abiding-place of uncounted millions of fleas and thousands of naked babies, while the surplus is whirled about by the winds in the shape of blinding clouds of dust. The babies are so numerous that it is open to question if they be not a product of the sand, like the fleas. It is positively dangerous to ride through a street after dark, for the naked youngsters lie about in every direction, and they are so nearly a dirt-color that it is difficult to distinguish them in the gloom.

It is said that some of the population of Maracaibo have traces of the blood of the first conquerors; but most of them are an injudicious mixture of Indian and Spanish. They constitute the *Raza Indio Latino*, — the Indio-Latin race, which is the dominant race in

HOUSES OF THE GUAJIROS.



South America. The dress of the men is the same as throughout Venezuela; the ladies wear a head-dress called the *abrigo*, made of lace; sometimes the *seductora*, a gaudily colored *reboza* worn over the shoulder.

Maracaibo seems to have been an especial subject for the pirates' prey, for it was several times sacked. The pirate Morgan, following

HOBBY-HORSE OF A MARACAIBO BABY.

the example of the buccaneer Lolonois, sailed into that inland sea, Lake Maracaibo. The fort that guarded its entrance the pirates found deserted; but the Spaniards left a train of powder behind them with a lighted slow-match near it, which Morgan discovered just in time to save being blown into the air, with all his men, who had swarmed into the fort. As soon as the pirates entered Maracaibo, they "searched every corner to see if they could find any persons hidden, for everybody had fled the place and buried themselves in the forest. Not finding anybody, every party, as they came out of their ships, chose what houses they pleased to live in. Next day they sent a troop of one hundred men to seek the inhabitants

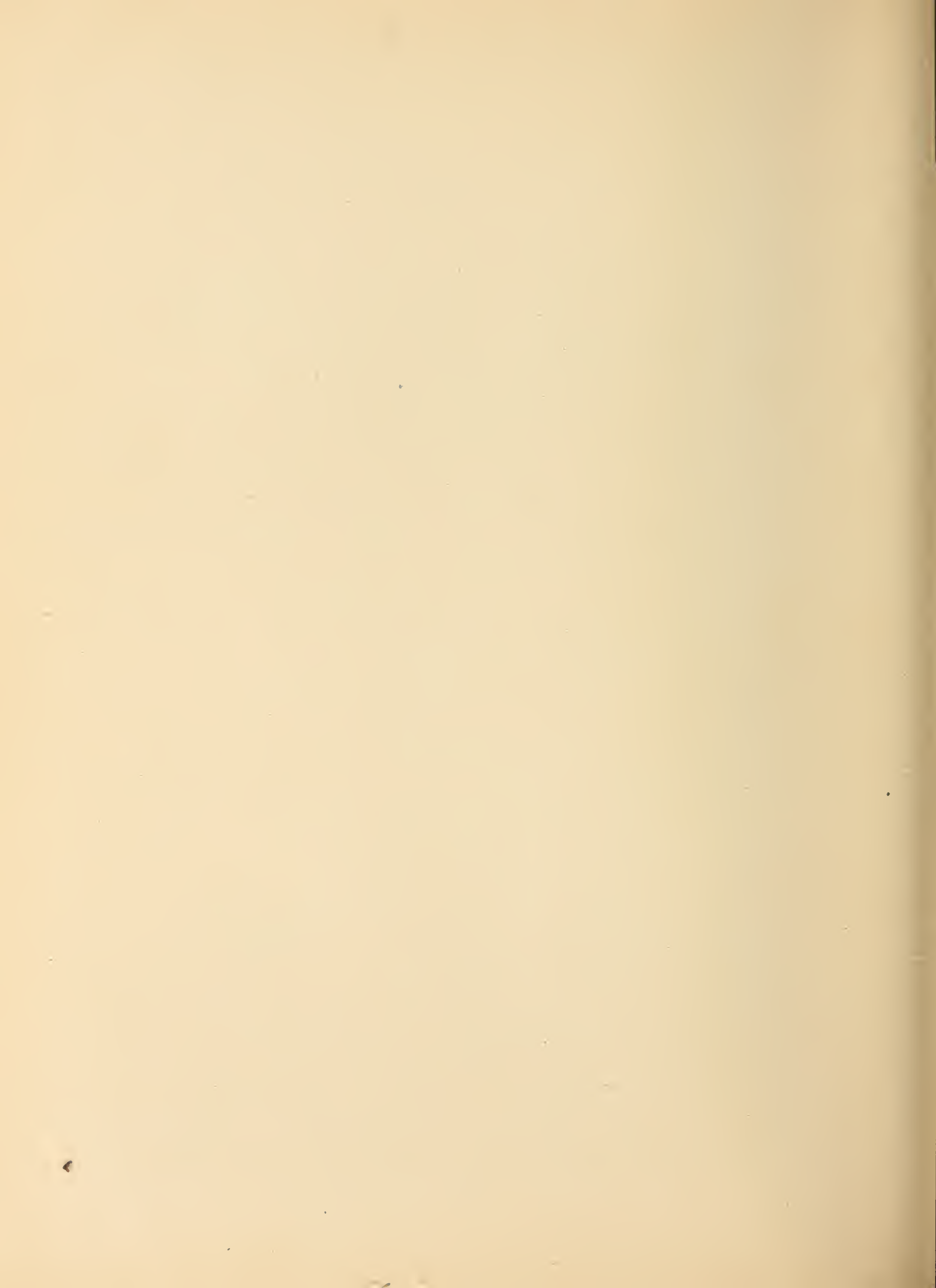
and their goods; these returned next day, bringing with them thirty persons — men, women, and children — and fifty mules laden with good merchandise. All these miserable people were put to the rack, to make them confess where their treasure was. Among other tortures, one was to stretch their limbs with cords, and then to beat them with sticks. Others had burning matches placed betwixt their fingers and were burned alive. Others had cords twisted about their heads till their eyes burst out. Thus all inhuman cruelties were practised on these innocent people. Those who would not confess, or who had nothing to declare, died under the hands of these villains. These tortures and racks continued for three whole weeks, in which time they sent out daily parties to seek for more people to torment and rob, they never returning without new victims and riches."

Then, having got together all the riches he could extort from the miserable people, Morgan sailed up the lake toward Gibraltar, which city likewise he found deserted. Only one poor half-witted man they found here, and him they tortured to death, tying him upon the rack, hanging him up with great weights suspended at his feet, and then burning him alive with palm-leaves.

Upon returning to Maracaibo, the pirates learned that the entrance to the lake was blockaded by three Spanish ships. The admiral had retaken and garrisoned the fort, and felt quite certain (as well he might have done) that he had the pirates at his mercy.

He despatched them a bombastic letter, offering them pardon if they would surrender their prisoners and plunder, but death if they defied him. The buccaneers were in consternation, but they would not think of surrender. They prepared a great fire-ship, made to look like an ordinary vessel, with wooden men at the port-holes and on deck, and this they set adrift as they neared the Spanish fleet. All the prisoners the pirates put into one great boat, and in another they placed all the women, plate, and other rich things, while the fighting men went ahead, with the great fire-ship in front of them.

"THE FIRE-SHIP FELL AFOUL OF THE ADMIRAL'S VESSEL."



Sad to relate, everything turned out to the pirates' desires, for the fire-ship fell afoul of the admiral's vessel and burned it to the water's edge, another Spanish ship ran aground, and the third surrendered. The crews of the sunken ships gathered in the forts, and as they had plenty of ammunition, prevented Morgan from sailing past it to the open sea. At last, by stratagem, the wily pirate slipped by, and finally made his way to Jamaica, his piratical stronghold.

The most interesting of the inhabitants are the donkey boys, especially those who carry water about the streets. They may be seen everywhere, going to the lake shore and returning. Each little donkey has thrown over his back a light iron framework, supporting a large water jar on either side. Between the jars, and astride the donkey, sits the boy, usually a small one, with a fluttering shirt in rags as his only drapery.

By pairs and by dozens these lively water-venders canter down the street and ride into the lake till the water is level with the donkey's back, then they swing the jars off the frame into the water and back again, and prance off, seeking customers.

The lake water is brackish and unfit for drinking, yet I suspect the poorer people use it entirely. At all times of the day they may be seen bathing in it, and carrying it away for use in their huts. For a pair of jars filled with lake water the boys charge three cents, and they must drive a lively business with the people of the back streets; yet they always appear half naked and poverty-stricken, though jolly, and full of mischief.

We should not fail to mention that the beauty of Maracaibo lies in its bordering fringe of palms, which sweep around the bay overhanging the shore; and here the summer seats and retreats of the better classes are built, as well as the humble huts of the poorer. All tropical fruits grow here, though the soil is poor; and northern vegetables do not flourish.

The bay of Maracaibo is magnificent, and with its belt of electric

lights at night gleaming through and over the palms, is beautiful. But the yellow fever lurks always beneath the palms; in the summer season the lake is covered with a green scum that breeds disease, and the heat is wellnigh intolerable.

Commerce with the interior is carried on by means of flat-bottom paddle-wheel steamers that ascend some of the rivers, such as the Catatumbo and Escalente, reaching the little-known province of Colombia and interior Venezuela. Many of the products of Colombia come down to the sea by these river steamers, which connect with other boats, called bongoes, that are propelled by poles.

The markets of Maracaibo are pretty well supplied, as game is plentiful. Many strange things may be observed here hung up for sale to epicures, such as the iguana, the armadillo, etc. Numerous "tiger" skins are brought here, beautiful specimens being offered at about ten dollars each. For game and for adventure, the country reached through this Indian city, Maracaibo, holds out fascinating promises.

Having reached this distant province, it seemed to us our journey had just begun; but here we had to turn back with one of the portals to the mysterious continent invitingly open to us. It is a region not yet thoroughly explored, — that to the north of Maracaibo, — but would require several weeks or months at a different season of the year than that in which we were there.

Ten miles below Maracaibo, the city, is a settlement of strange people, the Lake-Dwellers, who live in thatched huts over the water. Their houses are rude structures erected on piles driven into the sand in about two feet of water, and about a quarter of a mile from the land.

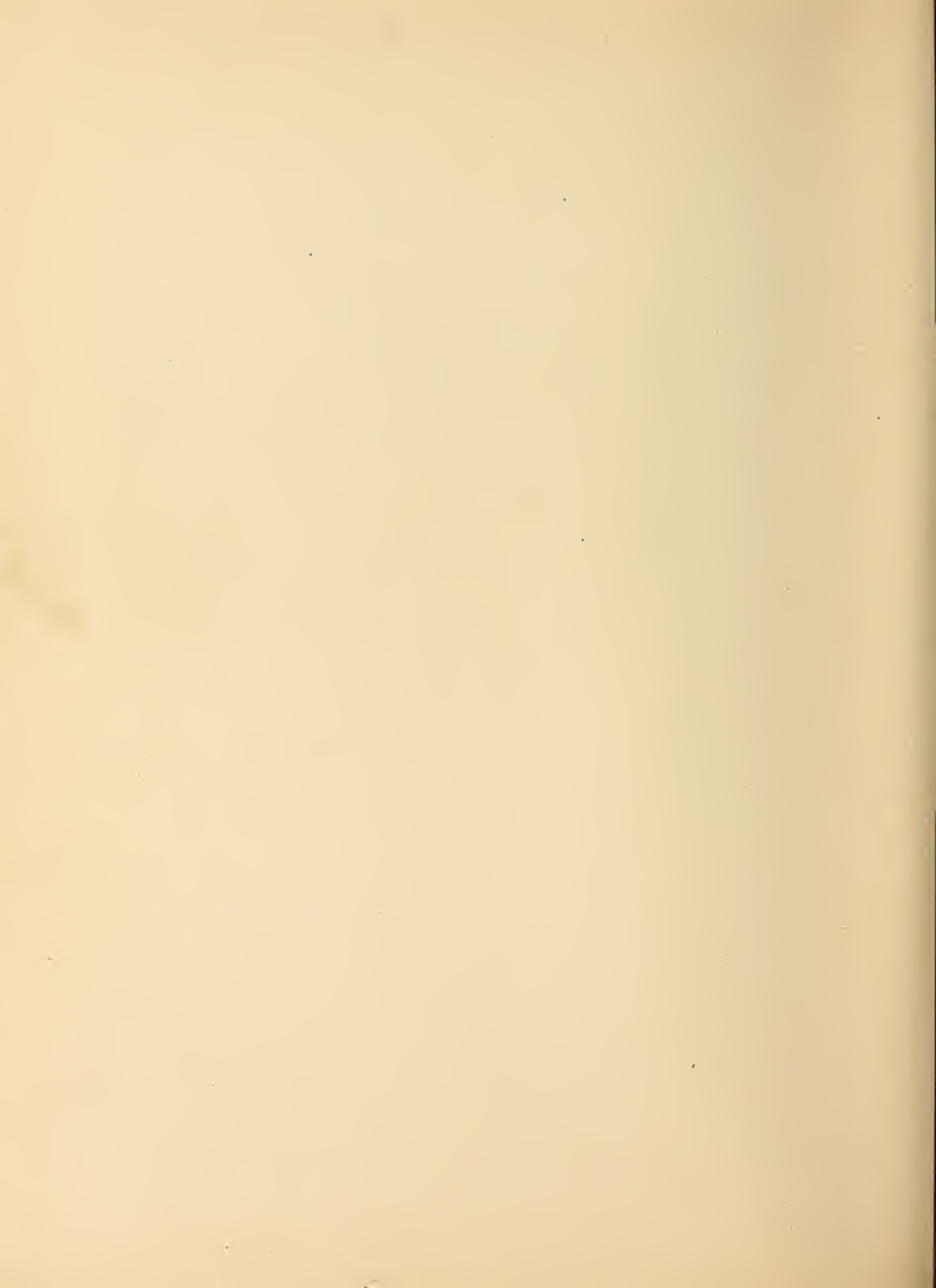
They were discovered here nearly four hundred years ago, by the great Amerigo Vespucci, and here they live to-day just the same as their ancestors did in 1499, when the Spaniards first discovered them.

We spent a day with them, photographed their huts, inspected

their hammocks and apartments, and came away with very pleasant memories of the last of the historic Lake-Dwellers. Here they have lived for many generations in the same primitive huts, happy and contented, yet poor and neglected. They remind us of those other Lake-Dwellers of Switzerland, in their manner of life and dwellings, though those of Europe have long been extinct.

Here, friendly readers of the "Knockabouts," we will take our leave, promising to conduct you next year through a country more interesting than even that of the Spanish Main. And as for adventure, my word for it, you shall have your fill.

THE END.



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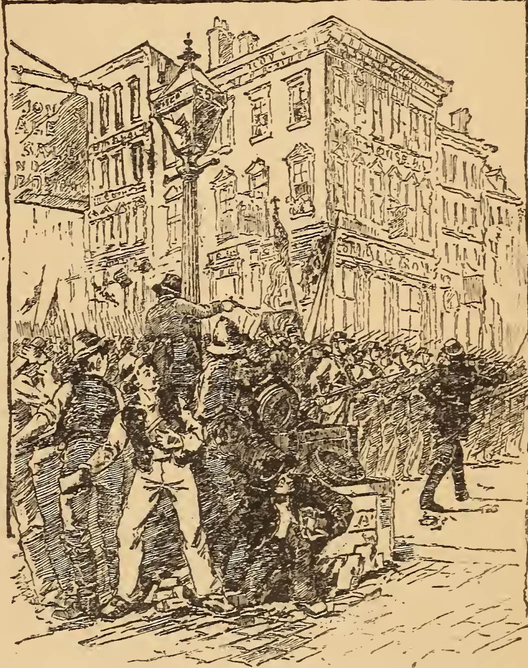

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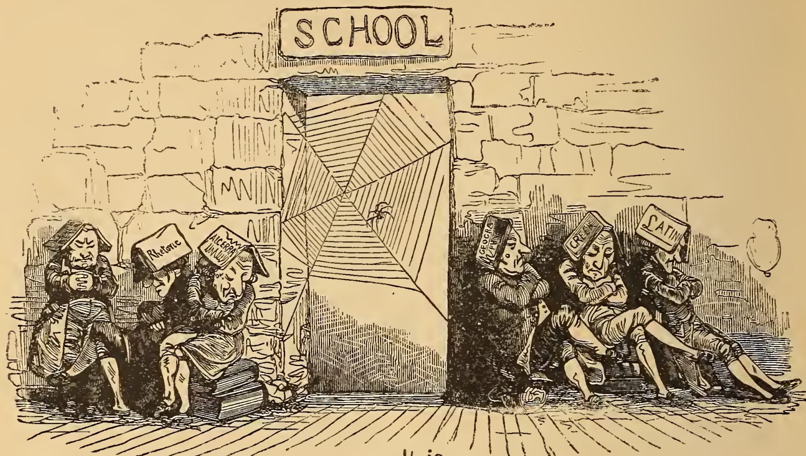

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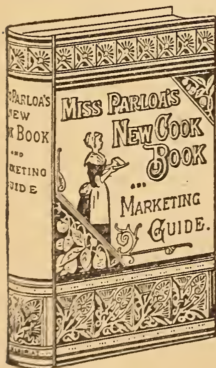

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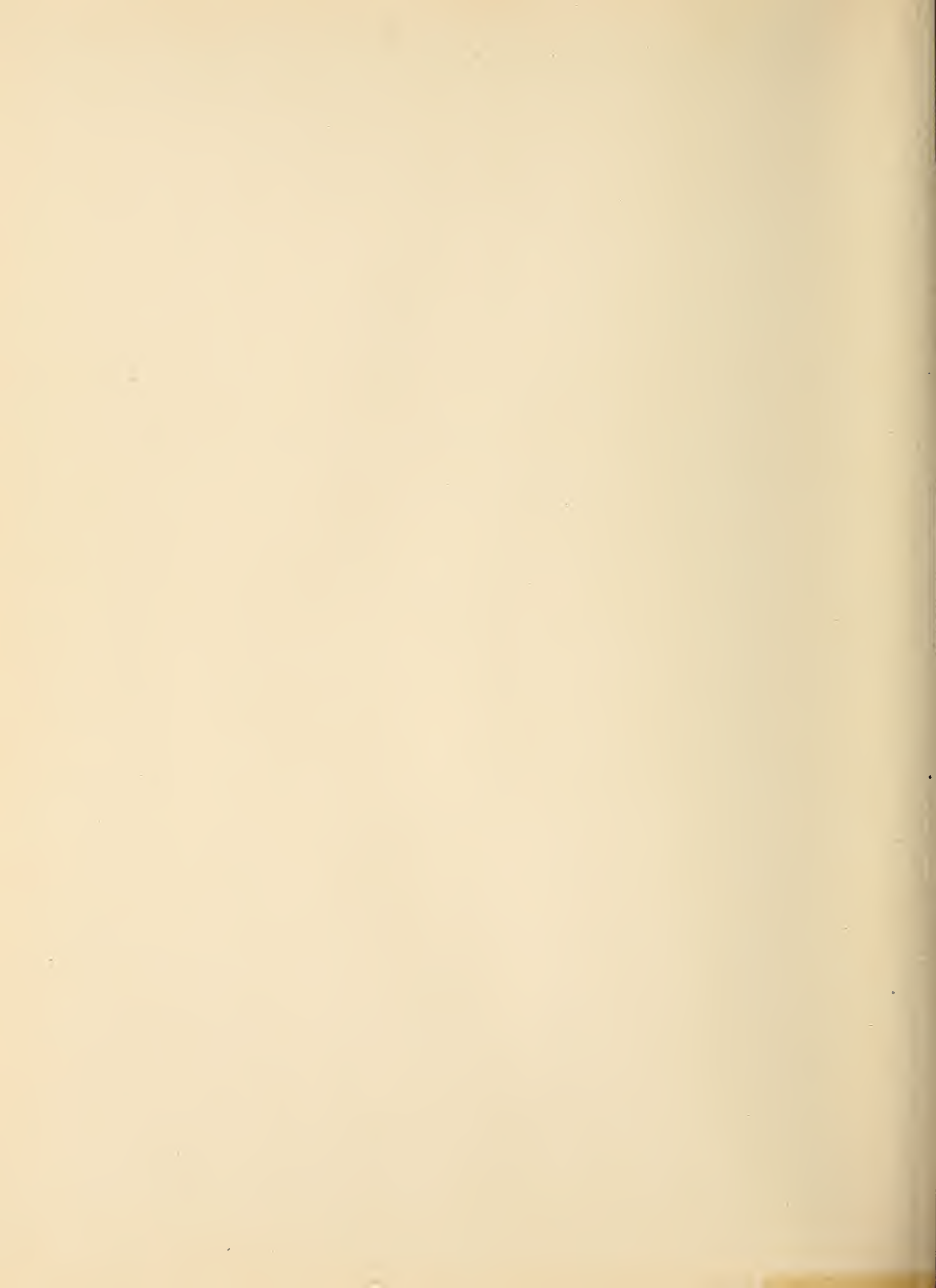

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