

Ballou Maturin Murray

Equatorial America



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*Equatorial America Descriptive of a Visit to St. Thomas, Martinique,
Barbadoes, and the Principal Capitals of South America:*

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Maturin M. Ballou Equatorial America Descriptive of a Visit to St. Thomas, Martinique, Barbadoes, and the Principal Capitals of South America

PREFACE

"I am a part of all that I have seen," says Tennyson, a sentiment which every one of large experience will heartily indorse. With the extraordinary facilities for travel available in modern times, it is a serious mistake in those who possess the means, not to become familiar with the various sections of the globe. Vivid descriptions and excellent photographs give us a certain knowledge of the great monuments of the world, both natural and artificial, but the traveler always finds the reality a new revelation, whether it be the marvels of a Yellowstone Park, a vast oriental temple, Alaskan glaciers, or the Pyramids of Ghiza. The latter, for instance, do not differ from the statistics

which we have so often seen recorded, their great, dominating outlines are the same as pictorially delineated, but when we actually stand before them, they are touched by the wand of enchantment, and spring into visible life. Heretofore they have been shadows, henceforth they are tangible and real. The best descriptions fail to inspire us, experience alone can do that. What words can adequately depict the confused grandeur of the Falls of Schaffhausen; the magnificence of the Himalayan range, – roof-tree of the world; the thrilling beauty of the Yosemite Valley; the architectural loveliness of the Taj Mahal, of India; the starry splendor of equatorial nights; the maritime charms of the Bay of Naples; or the marvel of the Midnight Sun at the North Cape? It is personal observation alone which truly satisfies, educating the eye and enriching the understanding. If we can succeed in imparting, a portion of our enjoyment to others, we enhance our own pleasure, and therefore these notes of travel are given to the public.

M. M. B.

CHAPTER I

Commencement of a Long Journey. – The Gulf Stream. – Hayti. – Sighting St. Thomas. – Ship Rock. – Expert Divers. – Fidgety Old Lady. – An Important Island. – The Old Slaver. – Aborigines. – St. Thomas Cigars. – Population. – Tri-Mountain. – Negro Paradise. – Hurricanes. – Variety of Fish. – Coaling Ship. – The Firefly Dane. – A Weird Scene. – An Antique Anchor.

In starting upon foreign travel, one drops into the familiar routine on shipboard much after the same fashion wherever bound, whether crossing the Atlantic eastward, or steaming to the south through the waters of the Caribbean Sea; whether in a Peninsular and Oriental ship in the Indian Ocean, or on a White Star liner in the Pacific bound for Japan. The steward brings a cup of hot coffee and a slice of dry toast to one's cabin soon after the sun rises, as a sort of eye-opener; and having swallowed that excellent stimulant, one feels better fortified for the struggle to dress on the uneven floor of a rolling and pitching ship. Then comes the brief promenade on deck before breakfast, a liberal inhalation of fresh air insuring a good appetite. There is no hurry at this meal. There is so little to do at sea, and so much time to do it in, that passengers are apt to linger at table as a pastime, and even multiply their meals in number. As a rule, we make up our mind to follow some instructive course of reading while at sea,

but, alas! we never fulfill the good resolution. An entire change of habits and associations for the time being is not favorable to such a purpose. The tonic of the sea braces one up to an unwonted degree, evinced by great activity of body and mind. Favored by the unavoidable companionship of individuals in the circumscribed space of a ship, acquaintances are formed which often ripen into lasting friendship. Inexperienced voyagers are apt to become effusive and over-confiding, abrupt intimacies and unreasonable dislikes are of frequent occurrence, and before the day of separation, the student of human nature has seen many phases exhibited for his analysis.

Our vessel, the *Vigilancia*, is a large, commodious, and well-appointed ship, embracing all the modern appliances for comfort and safety at sea. She is lighted by electricity, having a donkey engine which sets in motion a dynamo machine, converting mechanical energy into electric energy. Perhaps the reader, though familiar with the effect of this mode of lighting, has never paused to analyze the very simple manner in which it is produced. The current is led from the dynamos to the various points where light is desired by means of insulated wires. The lamps consist of a fine thread of carbon inclosed in a glass bulb from which air has been entirely excluded. This offers such resistance to the current passing through it that the energy is expended in raising the carbon to a white heat, thus forming the light. The permanence of the carbon is insured by the absence of oxygen. If the glass bulb is broken and atmospheric air comes in contact with the carbon,

it is at once destroyed by combustion, and all light from this source ceases. These lamps are so arranged that each one can be turned off or on at will without affecting others. The absence of offensive smell or smoke, the steadiness of the light, unaffected by the motion of the ship, and its superior brilliancy, all join to make this mode of lighting a vessel a positive luxury.

Some pleasant hours were passed on board the *Vigilancia*, between New York and the West Indies, in the study of the Gulf Stream, through which we were sailing, – that river in the ocean with its banks and bottom of cold water, while its current is always warm. Who can explain the mystery of its motive power? What keeps its tepid water, in a course of thousands of miles, from mingling with the rest of the sea? Whence does it really come? The accepted theories are familiar enough, but we place little reliance upon them, the statements of scientists are so easily formulated, but often so difficult to prove. As Professor Maury tells us, there is in the world no other flow of water so majestic as this; it has a course more rapid than either the Mississippi or the Amazon, and a volume more than a thousand times greater. The color of this remarkable stream, whose fountain is supposed to be the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, is so deep a blue off our southern shore that the line of demarcation from its surroundings is quite obvious, the Gulf water having apparently a decided reluctance to mingling with the rest of the ocean, a peculiarity which has been long and vainly discussed without a satisfactory solution having been reached.

The same phenomenon has been observed in the Pacific, where the Japanese current comes up from the equator, along the shore of that country, crossing Behring's Sea to the continent of North America, and, turning southward along the coast of California, finally disappears. Throughout all this ocean passage, like the Gulf Stream in the Atlantic, it retains its individuality, and is quite separate from the rest of the ocean. The fact that the water is saltier than that of the Atlantic is by some supposed to account for the indigo blue of the Gulf Stream.

The temperature of this water is carefully taken on board all well regulated ships, and is recorded in the log. On this voyage it was found to vary from 75° to 80° Fahrenheit.

Our ship had touched at Newport News, Va., after leaving New York, to take the U. S. mail on board; thence the course was south-southeast, giving the American continent a wide berth, and heading for the Danish island of St. Thomas, which lies in the latitude of Hayti, but a long way to the eastward of that uninteresting island. We say uninteresting with due consideration, though its history is vivid enough to satisfy the most sensational taste. It has produced its share of native heroes, as well as native traitors, while the frequent upheavals of its mingled races have been no less erratic than destructive. The ignorance and confusion which reign among the masses on the island are deplorable. Minister Douglass utterly failed to make anything out of Hayti. The lower classes of the people living inland come next to the inhabitants of Terra del Fuego in the

scale of humanity, and are much inferior to the Maoris of New Zealand, or the savage tribes of Australia. It is satisfactorily proven that cannibalism still exists among them in its most repulsive form, so revolting, indeed, that we hesitate to detail the experience of a creditable eye-witness relating to this matter, as personally described to us.

Upon looking at the map it would seem, to one unaccustomed to the ocean, that a ship could not lay her course direct, in these island dotted waters, without running down one or more of them; but the distances which are so circumscribed upon the chart are extended for many a league at sea, and a good navigator may sail his ship from New York to Barbadoes, if he so desires, without sighting the land. Not a sailing vessel or steamship was seen, on the brief voyage from the American continent to the West Indies, these latitudes being far less frequented by passenger and freighting ships than the transatlantic route further north.

It is quite natural that the heart should throb with increased animation, the spirits become more elate, and the eyes more than usually appreciative, when the land of one's destination heaves in sight after long days and nights passed at sea. This is especially the case if the change from home scenes is so radical in all particulars as when coming from our bleak Northern States in the early days of spring, before the trees have donned their leaves, to the soft temperature and exuberant verdure of the low latitudes. Commencing the voyage herein described, the author left the Brooklyn shore of New York harbor about the first of

May, during a sharp snow-squall, though, as Governor's Island was passed on the one hand, and the Statue of Liberty on the other, the sun burst forth from its cloudy environment, as if to smile a cheerful farewell. Thus we passed out upon the broad Atlantic, bound southward, soon feeling its half suppressed force in the regular sway and roll of the vessel. She was heavily laden, and measured considerably over four thousand tons, drawing twenty-two feet of water, yet she was like an eggshell upon the heaving breast of the ocean. As these mammoth ships lie in port beside the wharf, it seems as though their size and enormous weight would place them beyond the influence of the wind and waves: but the power of the latter is so great as to be beyond computation, and makes a mere toy of the largest hull that floats. No one can realize the great strength of the waves who has not watched the sea in all of its varying moods.

"Land O!" shouts the lookout on the forecastle.

A wave of the hand signifies that the occupant of the bridge has already made out the mote far away upon the glassy surface of the sea, which now rapidly grows into definite form.

When the mountain which rises near the centre of St. Thomas was fairly in view from the deck of the *Vigilancia*, it seemed as if beckoning us to its hospitable shore. The light breeze which fanned the sea came from off the land flavored with an odor of tropical vegetation, a suggestion of fragrant blossoms, and a promise of luscious fruits. On our starboard bow there soon came into view the well known Ship Rock, which appears, when seen

from a short distance, almost precisely like a full-rigged ship under canvas. If the sky is clouded and the atmosphere hazy, the delusion is remarkable.

This story is told of a French corvette which was cruising in these latitudes at the time when the buccaneers were creating such havoc with legitimate commerce in the West Indies. It seems that the coast was partially hidden by a fog, when the corvette made out the rock through the haze, and, supposing it to be what it so much resembles, a ship under sail, fired a gun to leeward for her to heave to. Of course there was no response to the shot, so the Frenchman brought his ship closer, at the same time clearing for action. Being satisfied that he had to do with a powerful adversary, he resolved to obtain the advantage by promptly crippling the enemy, and so discharged the whole of his starboard broadside into the supposed ship, looming through the mist. The fog quietly dispersed as the corvette went about and prepared to deliver her port guns in a similar manner. As the deceptive rock stood in precisely the same place when the guns came once more to bear upon it, the true character of the object was discovered. It is doubtful whether the Frenchman's surprise or mortification predominated.

An hour of steady progress served to raise the veil of distance, and to reveal the spacious bay of Charlotte Amalie, with its strong background of abrupt hills and dense greenery of tropical foliage. How wonderfully blue was the water round about the island, – an emerald set in a sea of molten sapphire! It seemed

as if the sky had been melted and poured all over the ebbing tide. About the Bahamas, especially off the shore at Nassau, the water is green, – a delicate bright green; here it exhibits only the true azure blue, – Mediterranean blue. It is seen at its best and in marvelous glow during the brief moments of twilight, when a glance of golden sunset tinges its mottled surface with iris hues, like the opaline flashes from a humming-bird's throat.

The steamer gradually lost headway, the vibrating hull ceased to throb with the action of its motive power, as though pausing to take breath after long days and nights of sustained effort, and presently the anchor was let go in the excellent harbor of St. Thomas, latitude $18^{\circ} 20'$ north, longitude $64^{\circ} 48'$ west. Our forecastle gun, fired to announce arrival, awakened the echoes in the hills, so that all seemed to join in clapping their hands to welcome us. Thus amid the Norwegian fiords the report of the steamer's single gun becomes a whole broadside, as it is reverberated from the grim and rocky elevations which line that iron-bound coast.

There was soon gathered about the ship a bevy of naked colored boys, a score or more, jabbering like a lot of monkeys, some in canoes of home construction, it would seem, consisting of a sugar box sawed in two parts, or a few small planks nailed together, forming more of a tub than a boat, and leaking at every joint. These frail floats were propelled with a couple of flat boards used as paddles. The young fellows came out from the shore to dive for sixpences and shillings, cast into the sea

by passengers. The moment a piece of silver was thrown, every canoe was instantly emptied of its occupant, all diving pell-mell for the money. Presently one of the crowd was sure to come to the surface with the silver exhibited above his head between his fingers, after which, monkey-like, it was securely deposited inside of his cheek. Similar scenes often occur in tropical regions. The last which the author can recall, and at which he assisted, was at Aden, where the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea meet. Another experience of the sort is also well remembered as witnessed in the South Pacific off the Samoan islands. On this occasion the most expert of the natives, among the naked divers, was a young Samoan girl, whose agility in the water was such that she easily secured more than half the bright coins which were thrown overboard, though a dozen male competitors were her rivals in the pursuit. Nothing but an otter could have excelled this bronzed, unclad, exquisitely formed girl of Tutuila as a diver and swimmer.

But let us not stray to the far South Pacific, forgetting that we are all this time in the snug harbor of St. Thomas, in the West Indies.

A fidgety old lady passenger, half hidden in an avalanche of wraps, while the thermometer indicated 80° Fahr., one who had gone into partial hysterics several times during the past few days, upon the slightest provocation, declared that this was the worst region for hurricanes in the known world, adding that there were dark, ominous clouds forming to windward which she was sure

portended a cyclone. One might have told her truthfully that May was not a hurricane month in these latitudes, but we were just then too earnestly engaged in preparing for a stroll on shore, too full of charming anticipations, to discuss possible hurricanes, and so, without giving the matter any special thought, admitted that it did look a little threatening in the northwest. This was quite enough to frighten the old lady half out of her senses, and to call the stewardess into prompt requisition, while the deck was soon permeated with the odor of camphor, sal volatile, and valerian. We did not wait to see how she survived the attack, but hastened into a shore boat and soon landed at what is known as King's wharf, when the temperature seemed instantly to rise about twenty degrees. Near the landing was a small plaza, shaded by tall ferns and cabbage palms, with here and there an umbrageous mango. Ladies and servant girls were seen promenading with merry children, whites and blacks mingling indiscriminately, while the Danish military band were producing most shocking strains with their brass instruments. One could hardly conceive of a more futile attempt at harmony.

There is always something exciting in first setting foot upon a foreign soil, in mingling with utter strangers, in listening to the voluble utterances and jargon of unfamiliar tongues, while noting the manners, dress, and faces of a new people. The current language of the mass of St. Thomas is a curious compound of negro grammar, Yankee accent, and English drawl. Though somewhat familiar with the West Indies, the author had

never before landed upon this island. Everything strikes one as curious, each turn affords increased novelty, and every moment is full of interest. Black, yellow, and white men are seen in groups, the former with very little covering on their bodies, the latter in diaphanous costumes. Negresses sporting high colors in their scanty clothing, set off by rainbow kerchiefs bound round their heads, turban fashion; little naked blacks with impossible paunches; here and there a shuffling negro bearing baskets of fish balanced on either end of a long pole resting across his shoulders; peddlers of shells and corals; old women carrying trays upon their heads containing cakes sprinkled with granulated sugar, and displayed upon neat linen towels, seeking for customers among the newly arrived passengers, – all together form a unique picture of local life. The constantly shifting scene moves before the observer like a panorama unrolled for exhibition, seeming quite as theatrical and artificial.

St. Thomas is one of the Danish West Indian Islands, of which there are three belonging to Denmark, namely, St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John. For the possession of the first named Mr. Seward, when Secretary of State, in 1866, offered the King of Denmark five million dollars in gold, which proposition was finally accepted, and it would have been a cheap purchase for us at that price; but after all detail had been duly agreed upon, the United States Congress refused to vote the necessary funds wherewith to pay for the title deed. So when Mr. Seward consummated the purchase of Alaska, for a little over seven

million dollars, there were nearly enough of the small-fry politicians in Congress to defeat the bargain with Russia in the same manner. The income from the lease of two islands alone belonging to Alaska – St. George and St. Paul – has paid four and one half per cent. per annum upon the purchase money ever since the territory came into our possession. There is one gold mine on Douglas Island, Alaska, not to mention its other rich and inexhaustible products, for which a French syndicate has offered fourteen million dollars. We doubt if St. Thomas could be purchased from the Danes to-day for ten million dollars, while the estimated value of Alaska would be at least a hundred million or more, with its vast mineral wealth, its invaluable salmon fisheries, its inexhaustible forests of giant timber, and its abundance of seal, otter, and other rich furs. A penny-wise and pound-foolish Congress made a huge mistake in opposing Mr. Seward's purpose as regarded the purchase of St. Thomas. The strategic position of the island is quite sufficient to justify our government in wishing to possess it, for it is geographically the keystone of the West Indies. The principal object which Mr. Seward had in view was to secure a coaling and refitting station for our national ships in time of war, for which St. Thomas would actually be worth more than the island of Cuba. Opposite to it is the continent of Africa; equidistant are the eastern shores of North and South America; on one side is western Europe, on the other the route to India and the Pacific Ocean; in the rear are Central America, the West Indies, and Mexico, together with

those great inland bodies of salt water, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. It requires no argument to show how important the possession of such an outpost might prove to this country.

Since these notes were written, it is currently reported that our government has once more awakened to the necessity of obtaining possession of this island, and fresh negotiations have been entered into. One thing is very certain, if we do not seize the opportunity to purchase St. Thomas at the present time, England, or some other important power, will promptly do so, to our serious detriment and just mortification.

St. Thomas has an area of nearly fifty square miles, and supports a population of about fourteen thousand. In many respects the capital is unique, and being our first landing-place after leaving home, was of more than ordinary interest to the writer. The highest point on the island, which comes first into view from the deck of a southern bound steamer, is West Mountain, rising sixteen hundred feet above the level of the surrounding waters. Geologists would describe St. Thomas as being the top of a small chain of submerged mountains, which would be quite correct, since the topography of the bottom of the sea is but a counterpart of that upon the more familiar surface of the earth we occupy. When ocean electric cables for connecting islands and continents are laid, engineers find that there are the same sort of plains, mountains, valleys, and gorges beneath as above the waters of the ocean. The skeletons of whales, and natural beds of deep-sea shells, found in valleys and hills many

hundred feet above the present level of tide waters, tell us plainly enough that in the long ages which have passed, the diversified surface of the earth which we now behold has changed places with these submerged regions, which probably once formed the dry land. The history of the far past is full of instances showing the slow but continuous retreat of the water from the land in certain regions and its encroachment in others, the drying up of lakes and rivers, as well as the upheaval of single islands and groups from the bed of the ocean.

A range of dome-shaped hills runs through the entire length of this island of St. Thomas, fifteen miles from west to east, being considerably highest at the west end. As we passed between the two headlands which mark the entrance to the harbor, the town was seen spread over three hills of nearly uniform height, also occupying the gentle valleys between. Two stone structures, on separate hills, form a prominent feature; these are known respectively as Blue Beard and Black Beard tower, but their origin is a myth, though there are plenty of legends extant about them. Both are now utilized as residences, having mostly lost their original crudeness and picturesque appearance. The town, as a whole, forms a pleasing and effective background to the land-locked bay, which is large enough to afford safe anchorage for two hundred ships at the same time, except when a hurricane prevails; then the safest place for shipping is as far away from the land as possible. It is a busy port, considering the small number of inhabitants, steamers arriving and departing constantly, besides

many small coasting vessels which ply between this and the neighboring islands. St. Thomas is certainly the most available commercially of the Virgin group of islands. Columbus named them "Las Vergines," in reference to the familiar Romish legend of the eleven thousand virgins, about as inappropriate a title as the fable it refers to is ridiculous.

Close in shore, at the time of our visit, there lay a schooner-rigged craft of more than ordinary interest, her jaunty set upon the water, her graceful lines, tall, raking masts, and long bowsprit suggesting the model of the famous old Baltimore clippers. There is a fascinating individuality about sailing vessels which does not attach to steamships. Seamen form romantic attachments for the former. The officers and crew of the *Vigilancia* were observed to cast admiring eyes upon this handsome schooner, anchored under our lee. A sort of mysterious quiet hung about her; every rope was hauled taut, made fast, and the slack neatly coiled. Her anchor was atrip, that is, the cable was hove short, showing that she was ready to sail at a moment's notice. The only person visible on board was a bareheaded, white-haired old seaman, who sat on the transom near the wheel, quietly smoking his pipe. On inquiry it was found that the schooner had a notable history and bore the name of the *Vigilant*, having been first launched a hundred and thirty years ago. It appeared that she was a successful slaver in former days, running between the coast of Africa and these islands. She was twice captured by English cruisers, but somehow found her way back again to the old and

nefarious business. Of course, she had been overhauled, repaired, and re-rigged many times, but it is still the same old frame and hull that so often made the middle passage, as it was called. To-day she serves as a mail boat running between Santa Cruz and St. Thomas, and, it is said, can make forty leagues, with a fair wind, as quick as any steamer on the coast. The same evening the Vigilant spread her broad white wings and glided silently out of the harbor, gathering rapid way as she passed its entrance, until feeling the spur of the wind and the open sea, she quickly vanished from sight. It was easy to imagine her bound upon her old piratical business, screened by the shadows of the night.

Though it no longer produces a single article of export on its own soil, St. Thomas was, in the days of negro slavery, one of the most prolific sugar yielding islands of this region. It will be remembered that the emancipation of the blacks took place here in 1848. It was never before impressed upon us, if we were aware of the fact, that the sugar-cane is not indigenous to the West Indies. It seems that the plant came originally from Asia, and was introduced into these islands by Columbus and his followers. As is often the case with other representatives of the vegetable kingdom, it appears to have flourished better here than in the land of its nativity, new climatic combinations, together with the soil, developing in the saccharine plant better qualities and increased productiveness, for a long series of years enriching many enterprising planters.

When Columbus discovered St. Thomas, in 1493, it was

inhabited by two tribes of Indians, the Caribs and the Arrowauks, both of which soon disappeared under the oppression and hardships imposed by the Spaniards. It is also stated that from this island, as well as from Cuba and Hayti, many natives were transported to Spain and there sold into slavery, in the days following close upon its discovery. Thus Spain, from the earliest date, characterized her operations in the New World by a heartlessness and injustice which ever attended upon her conquests, both among the islands and upon the continent of America. The Caribs were of the red Indian race, and appear to have been addicted to cannibalism. Indeed, the very word, by which the surrounding sea is also known, is supposed to be a corruption of the name of this tribe. "These Caribs did not eat their own babies," says an old writer apologetically, "like some sorts of wild beasts, but only roasted and ate their prisoners of war."

The island was originally covered with a dense forest growth, but is now comparatively denuded of trees, leaving the land open to the full force of the sun, and causing it to suffer at times from serious droughts. There is said to be but one natural spring of water on the island. This shows itself at the surface, and is of very limited capacity; the scanty rains which occur here are almost entirely depended upon to supply water for domestic use.

St. Thomas being so convenient a port of call for steamers from Europe and America, and having so excellent a harbor, is improved as a depot for merchandise by several of the

neighboring islands, thus enjoying a considerable commerce, though it is only in *transitu*. It is also the regular coaling station of several steamship lines. Judging from appearances, however, it would seem that the town is not growing in population or business relations, but is rather retrograding. The value of the imports in 1880 was less than half the aggregate amount of 1870. We were told that green groceries nearly all come from the United States, and that even eggs and poultry are imported from the neighboring islands, showing an improvidence on the part of the people difficult to account for, since these sources of food supply can be profitably produced at almost any spot upon the earth where vegetation will grow. Cigars are brought hither from Havana in considerable quantities, and having no duty to pay, can be sold very cheap by the dealers at St. Thomas, and still afford a reasonable profit. Quite a trade is thus carried on with the passengers of the several steamers which call here regularly, and travelers avail themselves of the opportunity to lay in an ample supply. Cuban cigars of the quality which would cost nine or ten dollars a hundred in Boston are sold at St. Thomas for five or six dollars, and lower grades even cheaper in proportion. There is said to be considerable smuggling successfully carried on between this island and the Florida shore, in the article of cigars as well as in tobacco in the unmanufactured state. The high duty on these has always incited to smuggling, thus defeating the very object for which it is imposed. Probably a moderate duty would yield more to the government in the aggregate, by

rendering it so much less of an object to smuggle.

Though the island is Danish in nationality, there are few surroundings calculated to recall the fact, save that the flag of that country floats over the old fort and the one or two official buildings, just as it has done for the last two centuries. The prominent officials are Danes, as well as the officers of the small body of soldiers maintained on the island. English is almost exclusively spoken, though there are French, Spanish, and Italian residents here. English is also the language taught in the public schools. People have come here to make what money they can, but with the fixed purpose of spending it and enjoying it elsewhere. As a rule, all Europeans who come to the West Indies and embark in business do so with exactly this purpose. In Cuba the Spaniards from the continent, among whom are many Jews, have a proverb the significance of which is: "Ten years of starvation, and a fortune," and most of them live up to this axiom. They leave all principles of honor, all sense of moral responsibility, all sacred domestic ties, behind them, forgetting, or at least ignoring, the significant query, namely, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

About one third of the population is Roman Catholic. The Jews have a synagogue, and a membership of six hundred. They have a record on the island dating as far back as the year 1757, and add much to the activity and thrift of St. Thomas. No matter where we find the Jews, in Mexico, Warsaw, California, or the West Indies, they are all alike intent upon money making, and

are nearly always successful. Their irrepressible energy wins for them the goal for which they so earnestly strive. That soldier of fortune, Santa Anna, formerly ruler of Mexico, when banished as a traitor from his native country, made his home on this island, and the house which he built and occupied is still pointed out to visitors as one of the local curiosities. The social life of St. Thomas is naturally very circumscribed, but is good so far as it goes. A few cultured people, who have made it their home for some years, have become sincerely attached to the place, and enjoy the climate. There are a small public library, a hospital, several charitable institutions, and a theatre, which is occupied semi-occasionally. The island is connected with the continent by cable, and has a large floating dock and marine railway, which causes vessels in distress to visit the port for needed repairs. The town is situated on the north side of the bay which indents the middle of the south side of the island. The harbor has a depth of water varying from eighteen to thirty-six feet, and has the advantage of being a free port, a fact, perhaps, of not much account to a place which has neither exports nor imports of its own. St. Thomas is the only town of any importance on the island, and is known locally as Charlotte Amalie, a fact which sometimes leads to a confusion of ideas.

The reader need not encounter the intense heat, which so nearly wilted us, in an effort to obtain a good lookout from some elevated spot; but the result will perhaps interest him, as it fully repaid the writer for all the consequent discomfort.

From the brow of a moderate elevation just behind the town, a delightful and far-reaching view is afforded, embracing St. Thomas in the foreground, the well-sheltered bay, dotted with vessels bearing the flags of various nations, an archipelago of islets scattered over the near waters, and numerous small bays indenting the coast. At a distance of some forty miles across the sea looms the island of Santa Cruz; and farther away, on the horizon's most distant limit, are seen the tall hills and mountains of Porto Rico; while the sky is fringed by a long trailing plume of smoke, indicating the course of some passing steamship. The three hills upon which the town stands are spurs of West Mountain, and the place is quite as well entitled to the name of Tremont – "tri-mountain" – as was the capital of Massachusetts, before its hills were laid low to accommodate business demands. On the seaward side of these elevations the red tiled roofs of the white houses rise in regular terraces from the street which borders the harbor, forming a very picturesque group as seen from the bay.

Though it has not often been visited by epidemics, Mr. Anthony Trollope pronounces the island, in his usual irresponsible way, to be "one of the hottest and one of the most unhealthy spots among all these hot and unhealthy regions," and adds that he would perhaps be justified in saying "that of all such spots it is the hottest and most unhealthy." This is calculated to give an incorrect idea of St. Thomas. True, it is liable to periods of unhealthiness, when a species of low fever prevails,

proving more or less fatal. This is thought to originate from the surface drainage, and the miasma arising from the bay. All the drains of the town flow into the waters of the harbor, which has not sufficient flow of tide to carry seaward the foul matter thus accumulated. The hot sun pouring its heat down upon this tainted water causes a dangerous exhalation. Still, sharks do not seem to be sensitive as to this matter, for they much abound. It is yet to be discovered why these tigers of the sea do not attack the negroes, who fearlessly leap overboard; a white man could not do this with impunity. The Asiatics of the Malacca Straits do not enjoy any such immunity from danger, though they have skins as dark as the divers of St. Thomas. Sharks appear in the West Indies in small schools, or at least there are nearly always two or three together, but in Oriental waters they are only seen singly. Thus a Malay of Singapore, for a compensation, say an English sovereign, will place a long, sharp knife between his teeth and leap naked into the sea to attack a shark. He adroitly dives beneath the creature, and as it turns its body to bring its awkward mouth into use, with his knife the Malay slashes a deep, long opening in its exposed belly, at the same time forcing himself out of the creature's reach. The knife is sure and fatal. After a few moments the huge body of the fish is seen to rise and float lifeless upon the surface of the water.

A large majority of the people are colored, exhibiting some peculiarly interesting types, intermarriage with whites of various nationalities having produced among the descendants of Africans

many changes of color and of features. One feels sure that there is also a trace of Carib or Indian blood mingled with the rest, – a trace of the aborigines whom Columbus found here. The outcome is not entirely a race with flat noses and protruding lips; straight Grecian profiles are not uncommon, accompanied by thin nostrils and Anglo-Saxon lips. Faultless teeth, soft blue eyes, and hair nearly straight are sometimes met with among the creoles. As to the style of walking and of carrying the head and body, the common class of women of St. Thomas have arrived at perfection. Some of them are notable examples of unconscious dignity and grace combined. This has been brought about by carrying burdens upon their heads from childhood, without the supporting aid of the hands. Modesty, or rather conventionality, does not require boys or girls under eight years of age to encumber themselves with clothing. The costume of the market women and the lower classes generally is picturesque, composed of a Madras kerchief carefully twisted into a turban of many colors, yellow predominating, a cotton chemise which leaves the neck and shoulders exposed, reaching just below the knees, the legs and feet being bare. The men wear cotton drawers reaching nearly to the knee, the rest of the body being uncovered, except the head, which is usually sheltered under a broad brimmed straw hat, the sides of which are perforated by many ventilating holes. The whites generally, and also the better class of natives, dress very much after the fashion which prevails in North America.

This is the negroes' paradise, but it is a climate in which the white race gradually wanes. The heat of the tropics is modified by the constant and grateful trade winds, a most merciful dispensation, without which the West Indies would be uninhabitable by man. On the hillsides of St. Thomas these winds insure cool nights at least, and a comparatively temperate state of the atmosphere during the day. Vegetation is abundant, the fruit trees are perennial, bearing leaf, blossom, and fruit in profusion, month after month, year after year. Little, if any, cultivation is required. The few sugar plantations which are still carried on yield from three to four successive years without replanting. It is a notable fact that where vegetation is at its best, where the soil is most rank and prolific, where fruits and flowers grow in wild exuberance, elevated humanity thrives the least. The lower the grade of man, the nearer he approximates to the animals, the less civilized he is in mind and body, the better he appears to be adapted to such localities. The birds and the butterflies are in exact harmony with the loveliness of tropical nature, however prolific she may be; the flowers are glorious and beautiful: it is man alone who seems out of place. A great variety of fruits are indigenous here, such as the orange, lime, alligator pear, moss-apple, and mango, but none of them are cultivated to any extent; the people seem to lack the energy requisite to improve the grand possibilities of their fertile soil and prolific climate.

We were reminded by a resident of the town, before we left the harbor of St. Thomas, that the nervous old lady referred to was

not entirely without reason for her anxiety. Some of our readers will remember, perhaps, that in October, 1867, a most disastrous hurricane swept over these Virgin Islands, leaving widespread desolation in its track. The shipping which happened to be in the bay of St. Thomas was nearly all destroyed, together with hundreds of lives, while on the land scores of houses and many lives were also sacrificed to the terrible cyclone of that date. Even the thoroughly built iron and stone lighthouse was completely obliterated. There is a theory that such visitations come in this region about once in every twelve or fifteen years, and upon looking up the matter we find them to have occurred, with more or less destructive force, in the years 1793, 1819, 1837, 1867, 1871, and so late as August, 1891. Other hurricanes have passed over these islands during the period covered by these dates, but of a mitigated character. August, September, and October are the months in which the hurricanes are most likely to occur, and all vessels navigating the West Indian seas during these months take extra precautions to secure themselves against accidents from this source. When such visitations happen, the event is sure to develop heroic deeds. In the hurricane of 1867, the captain of a Spanish man-of-war, who was a practical sailor, brought up from boyhood upon the ocean, seeing the oncoming cyclone, and knowing by experience what to expect, ordered the masts of his vessel to be cut away at once, and every portion of exposed top hamper to be cast into the sea. When thus stripped he exposed little but the bare hull of his steamer to the fury of the storm.

After the cyclone had passed, it was found that he had not lost a man, and that the steamer's hull, though severely battered, was substantially unharmed. Keeping up all steam during the awful scene, this captain devoted himself and his ship to the saving of human life, promptly taking his vessel wherever he could be of the most service. Hundreds of seamen were saved from death by the coolness and intrepidity of this heroic sailor.

Since these notes were written among the islands, a terrible cyclone has visited them. This was on August 18, last past, and proved more destructive to human life, to marine and other property, than any occurrence of the kind during the last century. At Martinique a sharp shock of earthquake added to the horror of the occasion, the town of Fort de France being very nearly leveled with the ground. Many tall and noble palms, the growth of half a hundred years, were utterly demolished in the twinkling of an eye, and other trees were uprooted by the score.

The waters of this neighborhood teem with strange forms of animal and vegetable life. Here we saw specimens of red and blue snappers, the angel-fish, king-fish, gurnets, cow-fish, whip-ray, peacock-fish, zebra-fish, and so on, all, or nearly all, unfamiliar to us, each species individualized either in shape, color, or both. The whip-ray, with a body like a flounder, has a tail six or seven feet long, tapering from an inch and over to less than a quarter of an inch at the small end. When dried, it still retains a degree of elasticity, and is used by the natives as a whip with which to drive horses and donkeys. In some places, so singularly clear is

the water that the bottom is distinctly visible five or six fathoms below the surface, where fishes of various sorts are seen in ceaseless motion. White shells, corals, star-fish, and sea-urchins mingle their various forms and colors, objects and hues seeming to be intensified by the strong reflected light from the surface, so that one could easily fancy them to be flowers blooming in the fairy gardens of the mermaids. The early morning, just after the sun begins to gild the surface of the sea, is the favorite time for the flying-fishes to display their aerial proclivities. They are always attracted by a strong light, and are thus lured to their destruction by the torches of the fishermen, who often go out for the purpose at night and take them in nets. In the early morning, as seen from the ship's deck, they scoot above the rippling waves in schools of a hundred and more, so compact as to cast fleeting shadows over the blue enameled surface of the waters. At St. Thomas, Martinique, and Barbadoes, as well as among the other islands bordering the Caribbean Sea, they form no inconsiderable source of food for the humble natives, who fry them in batter mixed with onions, making a savory and nutritious dish.

St. Thomas is, as we have said, a coaling station for steamships, and when the business is in progress a most unique picture is presented. The ship is moored alongside of the dock for this purpose, two side ports being thrown open, one for ingress, the other for egress. A hundred women and girls, wearing one scanty garment reaching to the knees, are in line, and commence at once to trot on board in single file, each one bearing a

bushel basket of coal upon her head, weighing, say sixty pounds. Another gang fill empty baskets where the coal is stored, so that there is a continuous line of negresses trotting into the ship at one port and, after dumping their loads into the coal bunkers, out at the other, hastening back to the source of supply for more. Their step is quick, their pose straight as an arrow, while their feet keep time to a wild chant in which all join, the purport of which it is not possible to clearly understand. Now and again their voices rise in softly mingled harmony, floating very sweetly over the still waters of the bay. The scene we describe occurred at night, but the moon had not yet risen. Along the wharf, to the coal deposits, iron frames were erected containing burning bituminous coal, and the blaze, fanned by the open air, formed the light by which the women worked. It was a weird picture. Everything seemed quite in harmony: the hour, the darkness of night relieved by the flaming brackets of coal, the strange, dark figures hastening into the glare of light and quickly vanishing, the harmony of high-pitched voices occasionally broken in upon by the sharp, stern voice of their leader, – all was highly dramatic and effective.

Not unfrequently three or four steamers are coaling at the same time from different wharves. Hundreds of women and girls of St. Thomas make this labor their special occupation, and gain a respectable living by it, doubtless supporting any number of lazy, worthless husbands, fathers, and brothers.

After our ship was supplied with coal, these women, having put three hundred tons on board in a surprisingly short period

of time, formed a group upon the wharf and held what they called a firefly dance, indescribably quaint and grotesque, performed by the flickering light of the flaming coal. Their voices were joined in a wild, quick chant, as they twisted and turned, clapping their hands at intervals to emphasize the chorus. Now and again a couple of the girls would separate from the rest for a moment, then dance toward and from each other, throwing their arms wildly about their heads, and finally, gathering their scanty drapery in one hand and extending the other, perform a movement similar to the French cancan. Once more springing back among their companions, all joined hands, and a roundabout romp closed the firefly dance. Could such a scene be produced in a city theatre *au naturel*, with proper accessories and by these actual performers, it would surely prove an attraction good for one hundred nights. Of course this would be impossible. Conventionality would object to such diaphanous costumes, and bare limbs, though they were of a bronzed hue, would shock Puritanic eyes.

Upon first entering the harbor, the Vigilancia anchored at a short distance from the shore; but when it became necessary to haul alongside the wharf, the attempt was made to get up the anchor, when it was found to require far more than the usual expenditure of power to do so. Finally, however, the anchor was secured, but attached to its flukes there came also, from the bottom of the bay, a second anchor, of antique shape, covered with rust and barnacles. It was such a one as was carried by the

galleons of the fifteenth century, and had doubtless lain for over four hundred years just where the anchor of our ship had got entangled with it. What a remarkable link this corroded piece of iron formed, uniting the present with the far past, and how it stimulated the mind in forming romantic possibilities! It may have been the holding iron of Columbus's own caravel, or have been the anchor of one of Cortez's fleet, which touched here on its way into the Gulf of Mexico, or, indeed, it may have belonged to some Caribbean buccaneer, who was obliged to let slip his cable and hasten away to escape capture.

It was deemed a fortunate circumstance to have secured this ancient relic, and a sure sign of future good luck to the ship, so it was duly stored away in the lower hold of the Vigilancia.

That same night on which the coal bunkers were filled, our good ship was got under way, while the rising moon made the harbor and its surroundings as clearly visible as though it were midday. The light from the burning coal brackets had waned, only a few sparks bursting forth now and again, disturbed by a passing breeze which fanned them into life for a moment. When we passed through the narrow entrance by the lighthouse, and stood out once more upon the open sea, it was mottled, far and near, with argent ripples, that waltzed merrily in the soft, clear moonlight, rivaling the firefly dance on shore. Even to the very horizon the water presented a white, silvery, tremulous sheen of liquid light. One gazed in silent enjoyment until the eyes were weary with the lavish beauty of the scene, and the brain

became giddy with its splendor. Is it idle and commonplace to be enthusiastic? Perhaps so; but we hope never to outlive such inspiration.

CHAPTER II

Curious Seaweed. – Professor Agassiz. – Myth of a Lost Continent. – Island of Martinique. – An Attractive Place. – Statue of the Empress Josephine. – Birthplace of Madame de Maintenon. – City of St. Pierre. – Mont Pelée. – High Flavored Specialty. – Grisettes of Martinique. – A Botanical Garden. – Defective Drainage. – A Fatal Enemy. – A Cannibal Snake. – The Climate.

Between St. Thomas and the island of Martinique, we fell in with some floating seaweed, so peculiar in appearance that an obliging quartermaster picked up a spray for closer examination. It is a strange, sponge-like plant, which propagates itself on the ocean, unharmed by the fiercest agitation of the waves, or the wildest raging of the winds, at the same time giving shelter to zoöphytes and mollusks of a species, like itself, found nowhere else. Sailors call it Gulf weed, but it has nothing to do with the Gulf Stream, though sometimes clusters get astray and are carried far away on the bosom of that grand ocean current. The author has seen small bodies of it, after a fierce storm in the Caribbean Sea, a thousand miles to the eastward of Barbadoes. Its special home is a broad space of ocean surface between the Gulf Stream and the equatorial current, known as the Sargasso Sea. Its limits, however, change somewhat with the seasons. It was first noticed by Columbus in 1492, and in this region it

has remained for centuries, even to the present day. Sometimes this peculiar weed is so abundant as to present the appearance of a submerged meadow, through which the ship ploughs its way as though sailing upon the land. We are told that Professor Agassiz, while at sea, having got possession of a small branch of this marine growth, kept himself busily absorbed with it and its products for twelve hours, forgetting all the intervening meals. Science was more than food and drink to this grand savant. His years from boyhood were devoted to the study of nature in her various forms. "Life is so short," said he, "one can hardly find space to become familiar with a single science, much less to acquire knowledge of many." When he was applied to by a lyceum committee to come to a certain town and lecture, he replied that he was too busy. "But we will pay you double price, Mr. Agassiz, if you will come," said the applicant. "I cannot waste time to make money," was the noble reply.

The myth of a lost continent is doubtless familiar to the reader, – a continent supposed to have existed in these waters thousands of years ago, but which, by some evolution of nature, became submerged, sinking from sight forever. It was the Atlantis which is mentioned by Plato; the land in which the Elysian Fields were placed, and the Garden of Hesperides, from which the early civilization of Greece, Egypt, and Asia Minor were derived, and whose kings and heroes were the Olympian deities of a later time. The poetical idea prevails that this plant, which once grew in those gardens, having lost its original home,

has become a floating waif on the sapphire sea of the tropics. The color of the Sargasso weed is a faint orange shade; the leaves are pointed, delicate, and exquisitely formed, like those of the weeping willow in their youthful freshness, having a tiny, round, light green berry near the base of each leaf. Mother Cary's chickens are said to be fond of these berries, and that bird abounds in these waters.

Probably the main portion of the West Indian islands was once a part of the continent of America, many, many ages ago. There are trees of the locust family growing among the group to-day, similar to those found on our southern coast, which are declared to be four thousand years old. This statement is partially corroborated by known characteristics of the growth of the locust, and there are arborists who fully credit this great longevity. It is interesting to look upon an object which had a vital existence two thousand years and more before Christ was upon earth, and which is still animate.

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Each new island which one visits in the West Indies seems more lovely than its predecessor, always leaving Hayti out of the question; but Martinique, at this moment of writing, appears to rival all those with which the author is familiar. It might be a choice bit out of Cuba, Singapore, or far-away Hawaii. Its liability to destructive hurricanes is its only visible drawback.

Having been discovered on St. Martin's day, Columbus gave it the name it now bears.

St. Pierre is the commercial capital of Martinique, one of the French West Indies, and the largest of the group belonging to that nation. Fort de France is the political capital, situated about thirty miles from St. Pierre. It was nearly ruined by the cyclone of last August, a few weeks after the author's visit. St. Pierre is the best built town in the Lesser Antilles, and has a population of about twenty-five thousand. The streets are well paved, and the principal avenues are beautified by ornamental trees uniformly planted. The grateful shade thus obtained, and the long lines of charming arboreal perspective which are formed, are desirable accessories to any locality, but doubly so in tropical regions. The houses are very attractive, while there is a prevailing aspect of order, cleanliness, and thrift everywhere apparent. It was not our experience to meet one beggar in the streets of St. Pierre. More or less of poverty must exist everywhere, but it does not stalk abroad here, as it does in many rich and pretentious capitals of the great world. The island is situated midway between Dominica and St. Lucia, and is admitted by all visitors to be one of the most picturesque of the West Indian groups. Irregular in shape, it is also high and rocky, thus forming one of the most prominent of the large volcanic family which sprang up so many ages ago in these seas. Its apex, Mont Pelée, an only partially extinct volcano, rises between four and five thousand feet above the level of the ocean, and is the first point visible on approaching

the island from the north. It would be interesting to dilate upon the past history of Martinique, for it has known not a little of the checkered vicissitudes of these Antilles, having been twice captured by the English, and twice restored to France. But this would not be in accordance with the design of these pages.

St. Pierre is situated on the lee side of the island, something less than two thousand miles, by the course we have steered, from New York, and three hundred miles from St. Thomas. It comes down to the very water's edge, with its parti-colored houses and red-tiled roofs, which mingle here and there with tall, overhanging cocoa-palms. This is the most lavishly beautiful tree in the world, and one which never fails to impart special interest to its surroundings.

A marble statue in the Place de la Savane, at Fort de France, on the same side of the island as St. Pierre, recalls the fact that this was the birthplace of the Empress Josephine, born in 1763. Her memorable history is too familiar for us to repeat any portion of it here, but the brain becomes very active at the mere mention of her name, in recalling the romantic and tragic episodes of her life, so closely interwoven with the career of the first Napoleon. One instinctively recalls the small boudoir in the palace of Trianon, where her husband signed the divorce from Josephine. That he loved her with his whole power for loving is plain enough, as is also his well known reason for the separation, namely, the desire for offspring to transmit his name to posterity. There is one legend which is always rehearsed to strangers,

relating to Josephine's youth upon the island. We refer to that of the old negress fortune-teller who prognosticated the grandeur of her future career, together with its melancholy termination, a story so tinged with local color that, if it be not absolutely true, it surely ought to be. The statue, unless we are misinformed, was the gift of that colossal fraud, Napoleon III., though it purports to have been raised to the memory of Josephine by the people of Martinique, who certainly feel great pride in the fact of her having been born here, and who truly venerate her memory. The statue represents the empress dressed in the fashion of the First Empire, with bare arms and shoulders, one hand resting on a medallion bearing a profile of the emperor to whom she was devoted. The whole is partially shaded by a half dozen grand old palms. The group teems with historic suggestiveness, recalling one of the most tragic chapters of modern European history. It seemed to us that the artist had succeeded in imparting to the figure an expression indicating something of the sad story of the original.

This beautiful island, it will be remembered, also gave to France another remarkable historic character, Françoise d'Aubigné, afterwards Madame Scarron, but better known to the world at large as Madame de Maintenon. She, too, was the wife of a king, though the marriage was a left-handed one, but as the power behind the throne, she is well known to have shaped for years the political destinies of France.

St. Pierre has several schools, a very good hotel, a theatre, a

public library, together with some other modern and progressive institutions; yet somehow everything looked quaint and olden, a sixteenth century atmosphere seeming to pervade the town. The windows of the ordinary dwellings have no glass, which is very naturally considered to be a superfluity in this climate; but these windows have iron bars and wooden shutters behind them, relics of the days of slavery, when every white man's house was his castle, and great precautions were taken to guard against the possible uprising of the blacks, who outnumbered their masters twenty to one.

Though so large a portion of the population are of negro descent, yet they are very French-like in character. The native women especially seem to be frivolous and coquettish, not to say rather lax in morals. They appear to be very fond of dress. The young negresses have learned from their white mistresses how to put on their diaphanous clothing in a jaunty and telling fashion, leaving one bronzed arm and shoulder bare, which strikes the eye in strong contrast with the snow white of their cotton chemises. They are Parisian grisettes in ebony, and with their large, roguish eyes, well-rounded figures, straight pose, and dainty ways, the half-breeds are certainly very attractive, and only too ready for a lark with a stranger. They strongly remind one of the pretty quadroons of Louisiana, in their manners, complexion, and general appearance; and like those handsome offspring of mingled blood, so often seen in our Southern States, we suspect that these of Martinique enjoy but a brief space of existence. The

average life of a quadroon is less than thirty years.

Martinique is eight times as large as St. Thomas, containing a population of about one hundred and seventy-five thousand. Within its borders there are at least five extinct volcanoes, one of which has an enormous crater, exceeded by only three or four others in the known world. The island rises from the sea in three groups of rugged peaks, and contains some very fertile valleys. So late as 1851, Mont Pelée burst forth furiously with flames and smoke, which naturally threw the people into a serious panic, many persons taking refuge temporarily on board the shipping in the harbor. The eruption on this occasion did not amount to anything very serious, only covering some hundreds of acres with sulphurous débris, yet serving to show that the volcano was not dead, but sleeping. Once or twice since that date ominous mutterings have been heard from Mont Pelée, which it is confidently predicted will one day deluge St. Pierre with ashes and lava, repeating the story of Pompeii.

Sugar, rum, coffee, and cotton are the staple products here, supplemented by tobacco, manioc flour, bread-fruit, and bananas. Rum is very extensively manufactured, and has a good mercantile reputation for its excellence, commanding as high prices as the more famous article of the same nature produced at Jamaica. The purpose of the author is mainly to record personal impressions, but a certain sprinkling of statistics and detail is inevitable, if we would inform, as well as amuse, the average reader.

The flora of Martinique is the marvel and delight of all who have enjoyed its extraordinary beauty, while the great abundance and variety of its fruits are believed to be unsurpassed even in the prolific tropics. Of that favorite, the mango, the island produces some forty varieties, and probably in no other region has the muscatel grape reached to such perfection in size and flavor. The whole island looks like a maze of greenery, as it is approached from the sea, vividly recalling Tutuila of the Samoan group in the South Pacific. Like most of the West Indian islands, Martinique was once densely covered with trees, and a remnant of these ancient woods creeps down to the neighborhood of St. Pierre to-day.

The principal landing is crowded at all times with hogsheads of sugar and molasses, and other casks containing the highly scented island rum, the two sweets, together with the spirits, causing a nauseous odor under the powerful heat of a vertical sun. We must not forget to mention, however, that St. Pierre has a specific for bad odors in her somewhat peculiar specialty, namely, eau-de-cologne, which is manufactured on this island, and is equal to the European article of the same name, distilled at the famous city on the Rhine. No one visits the port, if it be for but a single day, without bringing away a sample bottle of this delicate perfumery, a small portion of which, added to the morning bath, is delightfully refreshing, especially when one uses salt water at sea, it so effectively removes the saline stickiness which is apt to remain upon the limbs and body after a cold bath.

The town is blessed with an inexhaustible supply of good, fresh, mountain water, which, besides furnishing the necessary quantity for several large drinking fountains, feeds some ornamental ones, and purifies the streets by a flow through the gutters, after the fashion of Salt Lake City, Utah. This is in fact the only system of drainage at St. Pierre. A bronze fountain in the Place Bertin is fed from this source, and is an object of great pleasure in a climate where cold water in abundance is an inestimable boon. This elaborate fountain was the gift of a colored man, named Alfred Agnew, who was at one time mayor of the city. Many of the gardens attached to the dwelling-houses are ornamented with ever-flowing fountains, which impart a refreshing coolness to the tropical atmosphere.

The Rue Victor Hugo is the main thoroughfare, traversing the whole length of the town parallel with the shore, up hill and down, crossing a small bridge, and finally losing itself in the environs. It is nicely kept, well paved, and, though it is rather narrow, it is the Broadway of St. Pierre. Some of the streets are so abrupt in grade as to recall similar avenues in the English portion of Hong Kong, too steep for the passage of vehicles, or even for donkeys, being ascended by means of much worn stone steps. Fine, broad roadways surround the town and form pleasant drives.

The cathedral has a sweet chime of bells, whose soft, liquid notes came to us across the water of the bay with touching cadence at the Angelus hour. It must be a sadly calloused heart

which fails to respond to these twilight sounds in an isle of the Caribbean Sea. Millet's impressive picture was vividly recalled as we sat upon the deck and listened to those bells, whose notes floated softly upon the air as if bidding farewell to the lingering daylight. At the moment, all else being so still, it seemed as though one's heartbeat could be heard, while the senses were bathed in a tranquil gladness incited by the surrounding scenery and the suggestiveness of the hour.

Three fourths of the population are half-breeds, born of whites, blacks, or mulattoes, with a possible strain of Carib blood in their veins, the result of which is sometimes a very handsome type of bronzed hue, but of Circassian features. Some of the young women of the better class are very attractive, with complexions of a gypsy color, like the artists' models who frequent the "Spanish Stairs" leading to the Trinità di Monti, at Rome. These girls possess deep, dark eyes, pearly teeth, with good figures, upright and supple as the palms. In dress they affect all the colors of the rainbow, presenting oftentimes a charming audacity of contrasts, and somehow it seems to be quite the thing for them to do so; it accords perfectly with their complexions, with the climate, with everything tropical. The many-colored Madras kerchief is universally worn by the common class of women, twisted into a jaunty turban, with one well-starched end ingeniously arranged so as to stand upright like a soldier's plume. The love of ornament is displayed by the wearing of hoop earrings of enormous size, together with triple strings of gold

beads, and bracelets of the same material. If any one imagines he has seen larger sized hoop earrings this side of Africa, he is mistaken. They are more like bangles than earrings, hanging down so as to rest upon the neck and shoulders. Those who cannot afford the genuine article satisfy their vanity with gaudy imitations. They form a very curious and interesting study, these black, brown, and yellow people, both men and women. In the market-place at the north end of the town, the women preside over their bananas, oranges, and other fruits, in groups, squatting like Asiatics on their heels. In the Havana fish market, one compares the variety of colors exhibited by the fishes exposed for sale to those of the kaleidoscope, but here the Cuban display is equaled if not surpassed.

St. Pierre has a botanical garden, situated about a mile from the centre of the town, so located as to admit of utilizing a portion of the native forest yet left standing, with here and there an impenetrable growth of the feathery bamboo, king of the grasses, interspersed with the royal palm and lighter green tree-ferns. The bamboo is a marvel, single stems of it often attaining a height in tropical regions of a hundred and seventy feet, and a diameter of a foot. So rapid is its growth that it is sometimes known to attain the height of a hundred feet in sixty days. Art has done something to improve the advantages afforded by nature in this botanical garden, arranging some pretty lakes, fountains, and cascades. Vistas have been cut through the dense undergrowth, and driveways have been made, thus improving

the rather neglected grounds. One pretty lake of considerable size contains three or four small islands, covered with flowering plants, while on the shore are pretty summer houses and inviting arbors. The frangipanni, tall and almost leafless, but with thick, fleshy shoots and a broad-spread, single leaf, was recognized here among other interesting plants. This is the fragrant flower mentioned by the early discoverers. There was also the parti-colored passion-flower, and groups of odd-shaped cacti, whose thick, green leaves were daintily rimmed with an odorless yellow bloom. Here, also, is an interesting example of the ceiba-tree, in whose shade a hundred persons might banquet together. The author has seen specimens of the ceiba superbly developed in Cuba and the Bahamas, with its massive and curiously buttressed trunk, having the large roots half above ground. It is a solitary tree, growing to a large size and enjoying great longevity. Mangoes abound here, the finest known as the *mango d'or*. There is a certain air about the public garden of St. Pierre, indicating that nature is permitted in a large degree to have her own sweet will. Evidences enough remain to show the visitor that these grounds must once have been in a much more presentable condition. There is a musical cascade, which is well worth a long walk to see and enjoy. Just inside of the entrance, one spot was all ablaze with a tiny yellow flower, best known to us as English broom, *Cytisus genista*. Its profuse but delicate bloom was dazzling beneath the bright sun's rays. Could it possibly be indigenous? No one could tell us. Probably some resident

brought it hither from his home across the ocean, and it has kindly adapted itself to the new soil and climate.

We were cautioned to look out for and to avoid a certain poisonous snake, a malignant reptile, with fatal fangs, which is the dread of the inhabitants, some of whom are said to die every year from the venom of the creature. It will be remembered that one of these snakes, known here as the *fer-de-lance*, bit Josephine, the future empress, when she was very young, and that her faithful negro nurse saved the child's life by instantly drawing the poison from the wound with her own lips. It is singular that this island, and that of St. Lucia, directly south of it, should be cursed by the presence of these poisonous creatures, which do not exist in any other of the West Indian islands, and, indeed, so far as we know, are not to be found anywhere else. The *fer-de-lance* has one fatal enemy. This is a large snake, harmless so far as poisonous fangs are concerned, called the *cribo*. This reptile fearlessly attacks the *fer-de-lance*, and kills and eats him in spite of his venom, a perfectly justifiable if not gratifying instance of cannibalism, where a creature eats and relishes the body of one of its own species. The domestic cat is said also to be more than a match for the dreaded snake, and instinctively adopts a style of attack which, while protecting itself, finally closes the contest by the death of the *fer-de-lance*, which it seizes just back of the head at the spine, and does not let go until it has severed the head from the body; and even then instinct teaches the cat to avoid the head, for though it be severed from the body, like the mouth of

a turtle under similar circumstances, it can still inflict a serious wound.

The fer-de-lance is a great destroyer of rats, this rodent forming its principal source of food. Now as rats are almost as much of a pest upon the island, and especially on the sugar plantations, as rabbits are in New Zealand, it will be seen that even the existence of this poisonous snake is not an unmitigated evil.

Crosses and wayside shrines of a very humble character are to be seen in all directions on the roadsides leading from St. Pierre, recalling similar structures which line the inland roads of Japan, where the local religion finds like public expression, only varying in the character of the emblems. At Martinique it is a Christ or a Madonna; in Japan it is a crude idol of some sort, the more hideous, the more appropriate. The same idea is to be seen carried out in the streets of Canton and Shanghai, only Chinese idols are a degree more unlike anything upon or below the earth than they are elsewhere.

It was observed that while there were plenty of masculine loafers and careless idlers of various colors, whose whole occupation seemed to be sucking at some form of burning tobacco in the shape of cigarette, cigar, or pipe, the women, of whatever complexion, seen in public, were all usefully employed. They are industrious by instinct; one almost never sees them in repose. In the transportation of all articles of domestic use, women bear them upon their heads, whether the article weighs

one pound or fifty, balancing their load without making use of the hands except to place the article in position. The women not infrequently have also a baby upon their backs at the same time. Negresses and donkeys perform nine tenths of the transportation of merchandise. Wheeled vehicles are very little used in the West Indian islands. As we have seen, even in coaling ship, it is the women who do the work.

The Hotel des Bains, at St. Pierre, is an excellent hostelry, as such places go in this part of the world. The stranger will find here most of the requisites for domestic comfort, and at reasonable prices. As a health resort the place has its advantages, and a northern invalid, wishing to escape the rigor of a New England winter, would doubtless find much to occupy and recuperate him here. St. Pierre, however, has times of serious epidemic sickness, though this does not often happen in the winter season. Three or four years ago the island was visited by a sweeping epidemic of small-pox, but it raged almost entirely among the lowest classes, principally among the negroes, who seem to have a great prejudice and superstitious fear relating to vaccination, and its employment as a preventive against contracting the disease. In the yellow fever season the city suffers more or less, but the health of St. Pierre will average as good as that of our extreme Southern States; and yet, after all, with the earthquakes, hurricanes, tarantulas, scorpions, and deadly fer-de-lance, as Artemus Ward would say, Martinique presents many characteristics to recommend protracted absence. A brief visit is

like a poem to be remembered, but one soon gets a surfeit of the circumscribed island.

Our next objective point was Barbadoes, to reach which we sailed one hundred and fifty miles to the eastward, this most important of the Lesser Antilles being situated further to windward, that is, nearer the continent of Europe. Our ponderous anchor came up at early morning, just as the sun rose out of the long, level reach of waters. It looked like a mammoth ball of fire, which had been immersed during the hours of the night countless fathoms below the sea. Presently everything was aglow with light and warmth, while the atmosphere seemed full of infinitesimal particles of glittering gold. At first one could watch the face of the rising sun, as it came peering above the sea, a sort of fascination impelling the observer to do so, but after a few moments, no human eye could bear its dazzling splendor.

Said an honest old Marshfield farmer, in 1776, who met the clergyman of the village very early in the opening day: "Ah, good mornin', Parson, another fine day," nodding significantly towards the sun just appearing above the cloudless horizon of Massachusetts Bay. "They do say the airth moves, and the sun stands still; but you and I, Parson, we git up airly and we *see* it rise!"

CHAPTER III

English Island of Barbadoes. – Bridgetown the Capital. – The Manufacture of Rum. – A Geographical Expert. – Very English. – A Pest of Ants. – Exports. – The Ice House. – A Dense Population. – Educational. – Marine Hotel. – Habits of Gambling. – Hurricanes. – Curious Antiquities. – The Barbadoes Leg. – Wakeful Dreams. – Absence of Twilight. – Departure from the Island.

Bridgetown is the capital of Barbadoes, an English island which, unlike St. Thomas, is a highly cultivated sugar plantation from shore to shore. In natural beauty, however, it will not compare with Martinique. It is by no means picturesquely beautiful, like most of the West Indian islands, being quite devoid of their thick tropical verdure. Nature is here absolutely beaten out of the field by excessive cultivation. Thirty thousand acres of sugar-cane are cut annually, yielding, according to late statistics, about seventy thousand hogsheads of sugar. We are sorry to add that there are twenty-three rum distilleries on the island, which do pecuniarily a thriving business. "The poorest molasses makes the best rum," said an experienced manager to us. He might well have added that it is also the poorest use to which it could be put. This spirit, like all produced in the West Indies, is called Jamaica rum, and though a certain amount of it is still shipped to the coast of Africa, the return cargoes no longer consist of

kidnapped negroes. The article known as New England rum, still manufactured in the neighborhood of Boston, has always disputed the African market, so to speak, with the product of these islands. Rum is the bane of Africa, just as opium is of China, the former thrust upon the native races by Americans, the latter upon the Chinese by English merchants, backed by the British government. Events follow each other so swiftly in modern times as to become half forgotten by contemporary people, but there are those among us who remember when China as a nation tried to stop the importation of the deadly drug yielded by the poppy fields of India, whereupon England forced the article upon her at the point of the bayonet.

Bridgetown is situated at the west end of the island on the open roadstead of Carlisle Bay, and has a population of over twenty-five thousand. Barbadoes lies about eighty miles to the windward of St. Vincent, its nearest neighbor, and is separated from Europe by four thousand miles of the Atlantic Ocean. It is comparatively removed from the chain formed by the Windward Isles, its situation being so isolated that it remained almost unnoticed until a century had passed after Columbus's first discovery in these waters. The area of the British possessions in the West Indies is about one seventh of the islands. It is often stated that Barbadoes is nearly as large as the Isle of Wight, but the fact is, it exceeds that island in superficial area, being a little over fifty-five miles in circumference. The reader will perhaps remember that it was here Addison laid the scene of his touching story of "Inkle and

Yarico," published so many years ago in the "Spectator."

Though it is not particularly well laid out, Bridgetown makes a very pleasing picture, as a whole, when seen from the harbor. Here and there a busy windmill is mixed with tall and verdant tropical trees, backed by far-reaching fields of yellow sugar-cane, together with low, sloping hills. The buildings are mostly of stone, or coral rock, and the town follows the graceful curve of the bay. The streets are macadamized and lighted with gas, but are far too narrow for business purposes. The island is about twenty-one miles long and between fourteen and fifteen broad, the shores being nearly inclosed in a cordon of coral reefs, some of which extend for two or three miles seaward, demanding of navigators the greatest care on seeking a landing, though the course into the roads to a suitable anchorage is carefully buoyed.

Barbadoes was originally settled by the Portuguese, who here found the branches of a certain forest tree covered with hair-like hanging moss, from whence its somewhat peculiar name, Barbadoes, or the "bearded place," is supposed to have been derived. Probably this was the Indian fig-tree, still found here, and which lives for many centuries, growing to enormous proportions. In India, Ceylon, and elsewhere in Asia, it is held sacred. The author has seen one of these trees at Kandy, in the island of Ceylon, under which sacred rites have taken place constantly for a thousand years or more, and whose widespread branches could shelter five hundred people from the heat of the sun. It stands close by the famous old Buddhist temple wherein

is preserved the tooth of the prophet, and before which devout Indians prostrate themselves daily, coming from long distances to do so. Indeed, Kandy is the Mecca of Ceylon.

A good share of even the reading public of England would be puzzled to tell an inquirer exactly where Barbadoes is situated, while most of those who have any idea about it have gained such knowledge as they possess from Captain Marryat's clever novel of "Peter Simple," where the account is, to be sure, meagre enough. Still later, those who have read Anthony Trollope's "West Indies and the Spanish Main" have got from the flippant pages of that book some idea of the island, though it is a very disagreeable example of Trollope's pedantic style.

"Barbadoes? Barbadoes?" said a society man to the writer of these pages, in all seriousness, just as he was about to sail from New York, "that's on the coast of Africa, is it not?" "Oh, no," was the reply, "it is one of the islands of the Lesser Antilles."

"Where are the Antilles, pray?" "You must surely know."

"But I do not, nevertheless; haven't the remotest idea. Fact is, geography never was one of my strong points."

With which remark we silently agreed, and yet our friend is reckoned to be a fairly educated, cultured person, as these expressions are commonly used. Probably he represents the average geographical knowledge of one half the people to be met with in miscellaneous society.

This is the first English possession where the sugarcane was planted, and is one of the most ancient colonies of Great Britain.

It bears no resemblance to the other islands in these waters, that is, topographically, nor, indeed, in the character of its population, being entirely English. The place might be a bit taken out of any shire town of the British home island, were it only a little more cleanly and less unsavory; still it is more English than West Indian. The manners and customs are all similar to those of the people of that nationality; the negroes, and their descendants of mixed blood, speak the same tongue as the denizens of St. Giles, London. The island has often been called "Little England." There is no reliable history of Barbadoes before the period when Great Britain took possession of it, some two hundred and sixty years ago. Government House is a rather plain but pretentious dwelling, where the governor has his official and domestic residence. In its rear there is a garden, often spoken of by visitors, which is beautified by some of the choicest trees and shrubs of this latitude. It is really surprising how much a refined taste and skillful gardening can accomplish in so circumscribed a space.

Barbadoes is somewhat remarkable as producing a variety of minerals; among which are coal, manganese, iron, kaolin, and yellow ochre. There are also one or two localities on the island where a flow of petroleum is found, of which some use is made. It is called Barbadoes tar, and were the supply sufficient to warrant the use of refining machinery, it would undoubtedly produce a good burning fluid. There is a "burning well," situated in what is known as the Scotland District, where the water emerging from

the earth forms a pool, which is kept in a state of ebullition from the inflammable air or gas which passes through it. This gas, when lighted by a match, burns freely until extinguished by artificial means, not rising in large enough quantities to make a great flame, but still sufficient to create the effect of burning water, and forming quite a curiosity.

There are no mountains on the island, but the land is undulating, and broken into hills and dales; one elevation, known as Mount Hillaby, reaches a thousand feet and more above the level of tide waters.

One of the most serious pests ever known at Barbadoes was the introduction of ants, by slave-ships from Africa. No expedient of human ingenuity served to rid the place of their destructive presence, and it was at one time seriously proposed to abandon the island on this account. After a certain period nature came to the rescue. She does all things royally, and the hurricane of 1780 completely annihilated the vermin. Verily, it was appropriate to call Barbadoes in those days the Antilles! It appears that there is no affliction quite unmixed with good, and that we must put a certain degree of faith in the law of compensation, however great the seeming evil under which we suffer. To our limited power of comprehension, a destructive hurricane does seem an extreme resort by which to crush out an insect pest. The query might even arise, with some minds, whether the cure was not worse than the disorder.

The exports from the island consist almost wholly of molasses,

sugar, and rum, products of the cane, which grows all over the place, in every nook and corner, from hilltop to water's edge. The annual export, as already intimated, is considerably over sixty thousand hogsheads. Sugar cannot, however, be called king of any one section, since half of the amount manufactured in the whole world is the product of the beet root, the growth of which is liberally subsidized by more than one European government, in order to foster local industry. Like St. Thomas, this island has been almost denuded of its forest growth, and is occasionally liable, as we have seen, to destructive hurricanes.

Bridgetown is a place of considerable progress, having several benevolent and educational institutions; it also possesses railway, telephone, and telegraphic service. Its export trade aggregates over seven million dollars per annum, to accommodate which amount of commerce causes a busy scene nearly all the time in the harbor. The steam railway referred to connects the capital with the Parish of St. Andrews, twenty-one miles away on the other side of the island, its terminus being at the thrifty little town of Bathsheba, a popular resort, which is noted for its fine beach and excellent sea bathing.

The cathedral is consecrated to the established religion of the Church of England, and is a picturesque, time-worn building, surrounded, after the style of rural England, by a quaint old graveyard, the monuments and slabs of which are gray and moss-grown, some of them bearing dates of the earlier portion of the sixteenth century. This spot forms a very lovely, peaceful

picture, where the graves are shaded by tree-ferns and stately palms. Somehow one cannot but miss the tall, slim cypress, which to the European and American eye seems so especially appropriate to such a spot. There were clusters of low-growing mignonette, which gave out a faint perfume exactly suited to the solemn shades which prevailed, and here and there bits of ground enameled with blue-eyed violets. The walls of the inside of the church are covered with memorial tablets, and there is an organ of great power and sweetness of tone.

The "Ice House," so called, at Bridgetown is a popular resort, which everybody visits who comes to Barbadoes. Here one can find files of all the latest American and European papers, an excellent café, with drinks and refreshments of every conceivable character, and can purchase almost any desired article from a toothpick to a set of parlor furniture. It is a public library, an exchange, a "Bon Marché," and an artificial ice manufactory, all combined. Strangers naturally make it a place of rendezvous. It seemed to command rather more of the average citizen's attention than did legitimate business, and one is forced to admit that although the drinks which were so generously dispensed were cool and appetizing, they were also very potent. It was observed that some individuals, who came into the hospitable doors rather sober and dejected in expression of features, were apt to go out just a little jolly.

The Ice House is an institution of these islands, to be found at St. Thomas, Demerara, and Trinidad, as well as at Barbadoes.

Havana has a similar retreat, but calls it a café, situated on the Paseo, near the Tacon Theatre.

The population of the island amounts to about one hundred and seventy-two thousand, – the census of 1881 showed it to be a trifle less than this, – giving the remarkable density of one thousand and more persons to the square mile, thus forming an immense human beehive. It is the only one of the West Indian islands from which a certain amount of emigration is necessary annually. The large negro population makes labor almost incredibly cheap, field-hands on the plantations being paid only one shilling per day; and yet, so ardent is their love of home – and the island is home to them – that only a few can be induced to leave it in search of better wages. When it is remembered that the State of Massachusetts, which is considered to be one of the most thickly populated sections of the United States, contains but two hundred and twenty persons to the square mile, the fact that this West Indian island supports over one thousand inhabitants in the same average space will be more fully appreciated. Notwithstanding this crowded state of the population, we were intelligently informed that while petty offenses are common, there is a marked absence of serious crimes.

One sees few if any signs of poverty here. It is a land of sugar-cane, yams, and sweet potatoes, very prolific, and very easily tilled. Some of the most prosperous men on the island are colored planters, who own their large establishments, though

born slaves, perhaps on the very ground they now own. They have by strict economy and industry saved money enough to make a fair beginning, and in the course of years have gradually acquired wealth. One plantation, owned by a colored man, born of slave parents, was pointed out to us, with the information that it was worth twenty thousand pounds sterling, and that its last year's crop yielded over three hundred hogsheads of sugar, besides a considerable quantity of molasses.

England maintains at heavy expense a military depot here, from which to draw under certain circumstances. There is no local necessity for supporting such a force. Georgetown is a busy place. Being the most seaward of the West Indies, it has become the chief port of call for ships navigating these seas. The Caribbees are divided by geographers into the Windward and Leeward islands, in accordance with the direction in which they lie with regard to the prevailing winds. They are in very deep water, the neighboring sea having a mean depth of fifteen hundred fathoms. Being so far eastward, Barbadoes enjoys an exceptionally equable climate, and it is claimed for it that it has a lower thermometer than any other West Indian island. Its latitude is $13^{\circ} 4'$ north, longitude $59^{\circ} 37'$ west, within eight hundred miles of the equator. The prevailing wind blows from the northeast, over the broad, unobstructed Atlantic, rendering the evenings almost always delightfully cool, tempered by this grateful tonic breath of the ocean.

Trafalgar Square, Bridgetown, contains a handsome fountain,

and a bronze statue of Nelson which, as a work of art, is simply atrocious. From this broad, open square the tramway cars start, and it also forms a general business centre.

The home government supports, besides its other troops, a regiment of negroes uniformed as Zouaves and officered by white men. The police of Bridgetown are also colored men. Slavery was abolished here in 1833. Everything is so thoroughly English, that only the temperature, together with the vegetation, tells the story of latitude and longitude. The soil has been so closely cultivated as to have become partially exhausted, and this is the only West Indian island, if we are correctly informed, where artificial enrichment is considered necessary to stimulate the native soil, or where it has ever been freely used. "I question," said an intelligent planter to us, "whether we should not be better off to-day, if we had not so overstimulated, in fact, burned out, our land with guano and phosphates." These are to the ground like intoxicants to human beings, – if over-indulged in they are fatal, and even the partial use is of questionable advantage. The Chinese and Japanese apply only domestic refuse in their fields as a manure, and no people obtain such grand results as they do in agriculture. They know nothing of patent preparations employed for such purposes, and yet will render a spot of ground profitable which a European would look upon as absolutely not worth cultivating.

In any direction from Bridgetown going inland, miles upon miles of plantations are seen bearing the bright green sugar-cane,

turning to yellow as it ripens, and giving splendid promise for the harvest. Here and there are grouped a low cluster of cabins, which form the quarters of the negroes attached to the plantation, while close at hand the tall chimney of the sugar mill looms over the surrounding foliage. A little one side, shaded by some palms, is the planter's neat and attractive residence, painted snow white, in contrast to the deep greenery surrounding it, and having a few flower beds in its front.

The Marine Hotel, which is admirably situated on a rocky point at Hastings, three hundred feet above the beach, is about a league from the city, and forms a favorite resort for the townspeople. The house is capable of accommodating three hundred guests at a time. Its spacious piazzas fronting the ocean are constantly fanned by the northeast trades from October to March. Some New York families regard the place as a choice winter resort, the thermometer rarely indicating over 80° Fahr., or falling below 70°. This suburb of Hastings is the location of the army barracks, where a broad plain affords admirable space for drill and military manœuvres. There is a monument at Hastings, raised to the memory of the victims of the hurricane of 1831, which seems to be rather unpleasantly suggestive of future possibilities. Near at hand is a well-arranged mile racecourse, a spot very dear to the army officers, where during the racing season any amount of money is lost and won. There seems to be something in this tropical climate which incites to all sorts of gambling, and the habit among the people is so common as to be

looked upon with great leniency. Just so, at some of the summer resorts of the south of France, Italy, and Germany, ladies or gentlemen will frankly say, "I am going to the Casino for a little gambling, but will be back again by and by."

The roads in the vicinity of Bridgetown are admirably kept, all being macadamized, but the dust which rises from the pulverized coral rock is nearly blinding, and together with the reflection caused by the sun on the snow white roads proves very trying to the eyesight. The dust and glare are serious drawbacks to the enjoyment of these environs.

As we have said, hurricanes have proved very fatal at Barbadoes. In 1780, four thousand persons were swept out of existence in a few hours by the irresistible fury of a tornado. So late as 1831, the loss of life by a similar visitation was over two thousand, while the loss of property aggregated some two million pounds sterling. The experience has not, however, been so severe here as at several of the other islands. At the time of the hurricane just referred to, Barbadoes was covered with a coat of sulphurous ashes nearly an inch thick, which was afterwards found to have come from the island of St. Vincent, where what is called Brimstone Mountain burst forth in flames and laid that island also in ashes. It is interesting to note that there should have been such intimate relationship shown between a great atmospheric disturbance like a hurricane and an underground agitation as evinced by the eruption of a volcano.

It should be mentioned that these hurricanes have never been

known to pass a certain limit north or south, their ravages having always been confined between the eleventh and twenty-first degrees of north latitude.

It appears that some curious Carib implements were found not long since just below the surface of the earth on the south shore of the bay, which are to be forwarded to the British Museum, London. These were of hard stone, and were thought by the finders to have been used by the aborigines to fell trees. Some were thick shells, doubtless employed by the Indians in the rude cultivation of maize, grown here four or five hundred years ago. It was said that these stone implements resembled those which have been found from time to time in Norway and Sweden. If this is correct, it is an important fact for antiquarians to base a theory upon. Some scientists believe that there was, in prehistoric times, an intimate relationship between Scandinavia and the continent of America.

Though there are several public schools in Bridgetown, both primary and advanced, we were somehow impressed with the idea that education for the common people was not fostered in a manner worthy of a British colony of so long standing; but this is the impression of a casual observer only. There is a college situated ten or twelve miles from the city, founded by Sir Christopher Codrington, which has achieved a high reputation as an educational institution in its chosen field of operation. It is a large structure of white stone, well-arranged, and is, as we were told, consistent with the spirit of the times. It has the

dignity of ripened experience, having been opened in 1744. The professors are from Europe. A delicious fresh water spring rises to the surface of the land just below the cliff, at Codrington College, a blessing which people who live in the tropics know how to appreciate. There is also at Bridgetown what is known as Harrison's College, which, however, is simply a high school devoted exclusively to girls.

The island is not exempt from occasional prevalence of tropical fevers, but may be considered a healthy resort upon the whole. Leprosy is not unknown among the lower classes, and elephantiasis is frequently to be met with. This disease is known in the West Indies as the "Barbadoes Leg." Sometimes a native may be seen on the streets with one of his legs swollen to the size of his body. There is no known cure for this disease except the surgeon's knife, and the removal of the victim from the region where it first developed itself. The author has seen terrible cases of elephantiasis among the natives of the Samoan group of islands, where this strange and unaccountable disease is thought to have reached its most extreme and repulsive development. Foreigners are seldom if ever afflicted with it, either in the West Indies or the South Pacific.

We are to sail to-night. A few passengers and a quantity of freight have been landed, while some heavy merchandise has been received on board, designed for continental ports to the southward. The afternoon shadows lengthen upon the shore, and the sunset hour, so brief in this latitude, approaches. The traveler

who has learned to love the lingering twilight of the north misses these most charming hours when in equatorial regions, but as the goddess of night wraps her sombre mantle about her, it is so superbly decked with diamond stars that the departed daylight is hardly regretted. It is like the prompter's ringing up of the curtain upon a complete theatrical scene; the glory of the tropical sky bursts at once upon the vision in all its completeness, its burning constellations, its solitaire brilliants, its depth of azure, and its mysterious Milky Way.

While sitting under the awning upon deck, watching the gentle swaying palms and tall fern-trees, listening to the low drone of busy life in the town, and breathing the sweet exhalations of tropical fruits and flowers, a trance-like sensation suffuses the brain. Is this the *dolce far niente* of the Italians, the sweet do-nothing of the tropics? To us, however defined, it was a waking dream of sensuous delight, of entire content. How far away sounds the noise of the steam-winch, the sharp chafing of the iron pulleys, the prompt orders of the officer of the deck, the swinging of the ponderous yards, the rattling of the anchor chain as it comes in through the hawse hole, while the ship gradually loses her hold upon the land. With half closed eyes we scarcely heard these many significant sounds, but floated peacefully on in an Eden of fancy, quietly leaving Carlisle Bay far behind.

Our course was to the southward, while everything, high and low, was bathed in a flood of shimmering moonlight, the magic alchemy of the sky, whose influence etherealizes all upon which

it rests.

CHAPTER IV

Curious Ocean Experiences. – The Delicate Nautilus. – Flying-Fish. – The Southern Cross. – Speaking a Ship at Sea. – Scientific Navigation. – South America as a Whole. – Fauna and Flora. – Natural Resources of a Wonderful Land. – Rivers, Plains, and Mountain Ranges. – Aboriginal Tribes. – Population. – Political Divisions. – Civil Wars. – Weakness of South American States.

The sudden appearance of a school of flying-fish gliding swiftly through the air for six or eight rods just above the rippling waves, and then sinking from sight; the sportive escort of half a hundred slate-colored porpoises, leaping high out of the water on either bow of the ship only to plunge back again, describing graceful curves; the constant presence of that sullen tiger of the ocean, the voracious, man-eating shark, betrayed by its dorsal fin showing above the surface of the sea; the sporting of mammoth whales, sending columns of water high in air from their blowholes, and lashing the waves playfully with their broad-spread tails, are events at sea too commonplace to comment upon in detail, though they tend to while away the inevitable monotony of a long voyage.

Speaking of flying-fish, there is more in the flying capacity of this little creature than is generally admitted, else why has it wings on the forward part of its body, each measuring seven

inches in length? If designed only for fins, they are altogether out of proportion to the rest of its body. They are manifestly intended for just the use to which the creature puts them. One was brought to us by a seaman; how it got on board we know not, but it measured eleven inches from the nose to the tip of the tail fin, and was in shape and size very much like a small mackerel. After leaving Barbadoes, we got into what sailors call the flying-fish latitudes, where they appear constantly in their low, rapid flight, sometimes singly, but oftener in small schools of a score or more, creating flashes of silvery-blue lustre. The most careful observation could detect no vibration of the long, extended fins; the tiny fish sailed, as it were, upon the wind, the flight of the giant albatross in miniature.

One afternoon, when the sea was scarcely dimpled by the soft trade wind, we came suddenly upon myriads of that little fairy of the ocean, the gossamer nautilus, with its Greek galleon shape, and as frail, apparently, as a spider's web. What a gondola it would make for Queen Mab! How delicate and transparent it is, while radiating prismatic colors! A touch might dismember it, yet what a daring navigator, floating confidently upon the sea where the depth is a thousand fathoms, liable at any moment to be changed into raging billows by an angry storm! How minute the vitality of this graceful atom, a creature whose existence is perhaps for only a single day; yet how grand and limitless the system of life and creation of which it is so humble a representative! Sailors call these frail marine creatures

Portuguese men-of-war. Possessing some singular facility for doing so, if they are disturbed, they quickly furl their sails and sink below the surface of the buoyant waves into deep water, the home of the octopus, the squid, and the voracious shark. Did they, one is led to query, navigate these seas after this fashion before the Northmen came across the ocean, and before Columbus landed at San Salvador? At night the glory of the southern hemisphere, as revealed in new constellations and brighter stars brought into view, was observed with keenest interest, – "Everlasting Night, with her star diadems, with her silence, and her verities." The phosphorescence of the sea, with its scintillations of brilliant light, its ripples of liquid fire, the crest of each wave a flaming cascade, was a charming phenomenon one never tired of watching. If it be the combination of millions and billions of animalculæ which thus illumines the waters, then these infinitesimal creatures are the fireflies of the ocean, as the cucuios, that fairy torch-bearer, is of the land. Gliding on the magic mirror of the South Atlantic, in which the combined glory of the sky was reflected with singular clearness, it seemed as though we were sailing over a starry world below.

While observing the moon in its beautiful series of changes, lighting our way by its chaste effulgence night after night, it was difficult to realize that it shines entirely by the light which it borrows from the sun; but it was easy to believe the simpler fact, that of all the countless hosts of the celestial bodies, she is our nearest neighbor. "An eighteen-foot telescope reveals to

the human eye over forty million stars," said Captain Baker, as we stood together gazing at the luminous heavens. "And if we entertain the generally accepted idea," he continued, "we must believe that each one of that enormous aggregate of stars is the centre of a solar system similar to our own." The known facts relating to the stars, like stellar distances, are almost incomprehensible.

One cannot but realize that there is always a certain amount of sentiment wasted on the constellation known as the Southern Cross by passengers bound to the lands and seas over which it hangs. Orion or the Pleiades, either of them, is infinitely superior in point of brilliancy, symmetry, and individuality. A lively imagination is necessary to endow this irregular cluster of stars with any real resemblance to the Christian emblem for which it is named. It serves the navigator in the southern hemisphere, in part, the same purpose which the north star does in our portion of the globe, and there our own respect for it as a constellation ends. Much poetic talent has been expended for ages to idealize the Southern Cross, which is, alas! no cross at all. We have seen a person unfamiliar with the locality of this constellation strive long and patiently, but in vain, to find it. It should be remembered that two prominent stars in Centaurus point directly to it. The one furthest from the so called cross is held to be the fixed star nearest to the earth, but its distance from us is twenty thousand times farther than that of the sun.

We have never yet met a person, looking upon this cluster

of the heavens for the first time, who did not frankly express his disappointment. Anticipation and fruition are oftenest at antipodes.

The graceful marine birds which follow the ship, day after day, darting hither and thither with arrowy swiftness, lured by the occasional refuse thrown from on board, would be seriously missed were they to leave us. Watching their aerial movements and untiring power of wing, while listening to their sharp complaining cries, is a source of constant amusement. Even rough weather and a raging sea, if not accompanied by too serious a storm, is sometimes welcome, serving to awaken the ship from its dull propriety, and to put officers, crew, and passengers upon their mettle. To speak a strange vessel at sea is always interesting. If it is a steamer, a long, black wake of smoke hanging among the clouds at the horizon betrays her proximity long before the hull is sighted. All eyes are on the watch until she comes clearly within the line of vision, gradually increasing in size and distinctness of outline, until presently the spars and rigging are minutely delineated. Then speculation is rife as to whence she comes and where she is going. By and by the two ships approach so near that signal flags can be read, and the captains talk with each other, exchanging names, whither bound, and so on. Then each commander dips his flag in compliment to the other, and the ships rapidly separate. All of this is commonplace enough, but serves to while away an hour, and insures a report of our progress and safety at the date of

meeting, when the stranger reaches his port of destination.

We have spoken of the pleasure experienced at sea in watching intelligently the various phases of the moon. The subject is a prolific one; a whole chapter might be written upon it.

It is perhaps hardly realized by the average landsman, and indeed by few who constantly cross the ocean, with their thoughts and interests absorbed by the many attractive novelties of the ocean, how important a part this great luminary plays in the navigation of a ship. It is to the intelligent and observant mariner the never-failing watch of the sky, the stars performing the part of hands to designate the proper figure upon the dial. If there is occasion to doubt the correctness of his chronometer, the captain of the ship can verify its figures or correct them by this planet. Every minute that the chronometer is wrong, assuming that it be so, may put him fifteen miles out of his reckoning, which, under some circumstances, might prove to be a fatal error, even leading to the loss of his ship and all on board. To find his precise location upon the ocean, the navigator requires both Greenwich time and local meridian time, the latter obtained by the sun on shipboard, exactly at midday. To get Greenwich time by lunar observation, the captain, for example, finds that the moon is three degrees from the star Regulus. By referring to his nautical almanac he sees recorded there the Greenwich time at which the moon was three degrees from that particular star. He then compares his chronometer with these figures, and either confirms or corrects its indication. It is interesting to the

traveler to observe and understand these important resources, which science has brought to bear in perfecting his safety on the ocean, promoting the interests of commerce, and in aid of correct navigation. The experienced captain of a ship now lays his course as surely by compass, after satisfying himself by these various means of his exact position, as though the point of his destination was straight before him all the while, and visible from the pilot house.

How indescribable is the grandeur of these serene nights on the ocean, fanned by the somnolent trade winds; a little lonely, perhaps, but so blessed with the hallowed benediction of the moonlight, so gorgeously decorated by the glittering images of the studded heavens, so sweet and pure and fragrant is the breath of the sleeping wind! If one listens intently, there seems to come to the senses a whispering of the waves, as though the sea in confidence would tell its secrets to a willing ear.

The ship heads almost due south after leaving Barbadoes, when her destination is, as in our case, Pará, twelve hundred miles away. On this course we encounter the equatorial current, which runs northward at a rate of two miles in an hour, and at some points reaches a much higher rate of speed.

As eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, so eternal scrubbing is the price of cleanliness on shipboard. The deck hands are at it from five o'clock in the morning until sunset. Our good ship looks as if she had just come out of dock. Last night's gale, which in its angry turmoil tossed us about so recklessly, covered her

with a saline, sticky deposit; but with the rising of the sun all this disappears as if by magic. The many brass mountings shine with dazzling lustre, and the white paint contrasts with the well-tarred cordage which forms the standing rigging.

While the ship pursues her course through the far-reaching ocean, let us sketch in outline the general characteristics of South America, whither we are bound.

It is a country containing twice the area, though not quite one half the amount of population, of the United States, a land which, though now presenting nearly all phases of civilization, was four centuries ago mostly inhabited by nomadic tribes of savages, who knew nothing of the horse, the ox, or the sheep, which to-day form so great and important a source of its wealth, and where wheat, its prevailing staple, was also unknown. It is a land overflowing with native riches, which possesses an unlimited capacity of production, and whose large and increasing population requires just such domestic supplies as we of the north can profitably furnish. The important treaty of reciprocity, so lately arranged between the giant province of Brazil – or rather we should say the Republic of Brazil – and our own country, is already developing new and increasing channels of trade for our shippers and producers of the great staples, as well as throwing open to us a new nation of consumers for our special articles of manufacture. Facts speak louder than words. On the voyage in which the author sailed in the *Vigilancia*, she took over twenty thousand barrels of flour to Brazil from the United States, and

would have taken more had her capacity admitted. Every foot of space on board was engaged for the return voyage, twelve thousand bags of coffee being shipped from Rio Janeiro alone, besides nearly as large a consignment of coffee from Santos, in the same republic. The great mutual benefit which must accrue from this friendly compact with an enterprising foreign country can hardly be overestimated. These considerations lead to a community of interests, which will grow by every reasonable means of familiarizing the people of the two countries with each other. Hence the possible and practical value of such a work as the one in hand.

By briefly consulting one of the many cheap and excellent maps of the western hemisphere, the patient reader will be enabled to follow the route taken by the author with increased interest and a clearer understanding.

It is surprising, in conversing with otherwise intelligent and well-informed people, to find how few there are, comparatively speaking, who have any fixed and clear idea relative to so large a portion of the habitable globe as South America. The average individual seems to know less of the gigantic river Amazon than he does of the mysterious Nile, and is less familiar with that grand, far-reaching water-way, the Plate, than he is with the sacred Ganges; yet one can ride from Buenos Ayres in the Argentine Republic, across the wild pampas, to the base of the Andes in a Pullman palace car. There is no part of the globe concerning which so little is written, and no other portion which

is not more sought by travelers; in short, it is less known to the average North American than New Zealand or Australia.

The vast peninsula which we call South America is connected with our own part of the continent by the Isthmus of Panama and the territory designated as Central America. Its configuration is triangular, and exhibits in many respects a strong similarity to the continents of Africa and Australia, if the latter gigantic island may be called a continent. It extends north and south nearly five thousand miles, or from latitude $12^{\circ} 30'$ north to Cape Horn in latitude $55^{\circ} 59'$ south. Its greatest width from east to west is a little over three thousand miles, and its area, according to the best authorities, is nearly seven million square miles. Three fourths of this country lie in the torrid zone, though as a whole it has every variety of climate, from equatorial heat to the biting frosts of alpine peaks. Its widespread surface consists principally of three immense plains, watered respectively by the Amazon, Plate, and Orinoco rivers. This spacious country has a coast line of over sixteen thousand miles on the two great oceans, with comparatively few indentures, headlands, or bays, though at the extreme south it consists of a maze of countless small islands, capes, and promontories, of which Cape Horn forms the outermost point.

The Cordillera of the Andes extends through the whole length of this giant peninsula, from the Strait of Magellan to the Isthmus of Panama, a distance of forty-five hundred miles, forming one of the most remarkable physical features of the globe, and

presenting the highest mountains on its surface, except those of the snowy Himalayas which separate India from Thibet. The principal range of the Andes runs nearly parallel with the Pacific coast, at an average distance of about one hundred miles from it, and contains several active volcanoes. If we were to believe a late school geography, published in London, Cotopaxi, one famous peak of this Andean range, throws up flames three thousand feet above the brink of its crater, which is eighteen thousand feet above tide water; but to be on the safe side, let us reduce these extraordinary figures at least one half, as regards the eruptive power of Cotopaxi. This mountain chain, near the border between Chili and Peru, divides into two branches, the principal one still called the Cordillera of the Andes, and the other, nearer to the ocean, the Cordillera de la Costa. Between these ranges, about three thousand feet above the sea, is a vast table-land with an area larger than that of France.

It will be observed that we are dealing with a country which, like our own, is one of magnificent distances. It is difficult for the nations of the old world, where the population is hived together in such circumscribed space, to realize the geographical extent of the American continent. When informed that it required six days and nights, at express speed upon well-equipped railroads, to cross the United States from ocean to ocean, a certain editor in London doubted the statement. Outside of Her Majesty's dominions, the average Englishman has only superficial ideas of geography. The frequent blunders of some British newspapers in

these matters are simply ridiculous.

It should be understood that South America is a land of plains as well as of lofty mountains, having the *llanos* of the Orinoco region, the *selvas* of the Amazon, and the *pampas* of the Argentine Republic. The llanos are composed of a region about as large as the New England States, so level that the motion of the rivers can hardly be discerned. The selvas are for the most part vast unbroken forests, in which giant trees, thick undergrowth, and entwining creepers combine to form a nearly impenetrable region. The pampas lie between the Andes and the Atlantic Ocean, stretching southward from northern Brazil to southern Patagonia, affording grass sufficient to feed innumerable herds of wild cattle, but at the extreme south the country sinks into half overflowed marshes and lagoons, resembling the glades and savannahs of Florida.

The largest river in the world, namely, the Amazon, rises in the Peruvian Andes, within sixty miles of the Pacific Ocean, and flows thousands of miles in a general east-northeast direction, finally emptying into the Atlantic Ocean. This unequaled river course is navigable for over two thousand miles from its mouth, which is situated on the equatorial line, where its outflow is partially impeded by the island of Marajo, a nearly round formation, one hundred and fifty miles or thereabouts in diameter. This remarkable island divides the river's outlet into two passages, the largest of which is a hundred and fifty miles in width, forming an estuary of extraordinary dimensions. The

Amazon has twelve tributaries, each one of which is a thousand miles in length, not to count its hundreds of smaller ones, while the main stream affords water communication from the Atlantic Ocean to near the foothills of the Andes.

We are simply stating a series of condensed geographical facts, from which the intelligent reader can form his own deductions as regards the undeveloped possibilities of this great southland.

Our own mammoth river, the Mississippi, is a comparatively shallow stream, with a shifting channel and dangerous sandbanks, which impede navigation throughout the most of its course; while the Amazon shows an average depth of over one hundred feet for the first thousand miles of its flow from the Atlantic, forming inland seas in many places, so spacious that the opposite banks are not within sight of each other. It is computed by good authority that this river, with its numerous affluents, forms a system of navigable water twenty-four thousand miles in length! There are comparatively few towns or settlements of any importance on the banks of the Amazon, which flows mostly through a dense, unpeopled evergreen forest, not absolutely without human beings, but for very long distances nearly so. Wild animals, anacondas and other reptiles, together with many varieties of birds and numerous tribes of monkeys, make up the animal life. Now and again a settlement of European colonists is found, or a rude Indian village is seen near the banks, but they are few and far between. There are occasional regions of low, marshy

ground, which are malarious at certain seasons, but the average country is salubrious, and capable of supporting a population of millions.

This is only one of the large rivers of South America; there are many others of grand proportions. The Plate comes next to it in magnitude, having a length of two thousand miles, and being navigable for one half the distance from its mouth at all seasons. It is over sixty miles wide at Montevideo, and is therefore the widest known river. Like the great stream already described, it traverses a country remarkable for the fertility of its soil, but very thinly settled. The Plate carries to the ocean four fifths as much, in volume of water, as does the mighty Amazon, the watershed drained by it exceeding a million and a half square miles. One can only conceive of the true magnitude of such figures when applied to the land by comparing the number of square miles contained in any one European nation, or any dozen of our own States.

Juan Diaz de Solis discovered the estuary of the Plate in 1508, and believed it at that time to be a gulf, but on a second voyage from Europe, in 1516, he ascended the river a considerable distance, and called it Mar Dulce, on account of the character of the waters. Unfortunately, this intelligent discoverer was killed by Indian arrows on attempting to land at a certain point. For a considerable period the river was called after him, and we think should have continued to be so, but its name was changed to the Plate on account of the conspicuous silver ornaments worn in

great profusion by the natives, which they freely exchanged for European gewgaws.

Though nearly four hundred years have passed since its discovery, a large portion of the country still remains comparatively unexplored, much of it being a wilderness sparsely inhabited by Indians, many of whom are without a vestige of civilization. We know as little of portions of the continent as we do of Central Africa, yet there is no section of the globe which suggests a greater degree of physical interest, or which would respond more readily and profitably to intelligent effort at development. When the Spaniards first came to South America, it was only in Peru, the land of the Incas, that they found natives who had made any substantial progress in civilization. The earliest history extant relating to this region of the globe is that of the Incas, a warlike race of sun-worshippers, who possessed enormous treasures of gold and silver, and who erected magnificent temples enriched with the precious metals. It was the almost fabulous wealth of the Incas that led to their destruction, tempting the cupidity of the avaricious Spaniards, and causing them to institute a system of cruelty, oppression, robbery, and bloodshed which finally obliterated an entire people from the face of the globe. The empire of the Incas extended from Quito, in Ecuador (on the equator), to the river Monté in Chili, and eastward to the Andes. The romantic career of Pizarro and Cortez is familiar to us all. There are few palliating circumstances connected with the advent of the

Spaniards, either here, in the West Indies, or in Mexico. The actual motive which prompted their invasion of this foreign soil was to search for mineral treasures, though policy led them to cover their bloodthirsty deeds with a pretense of religious zeal. Their first acts were reckless, cruel, and sanguinary, followed by a systematic oppression of the native races which was an outrage upon humanity. The world at large profited little by the extortion and golden harvest reaped by Spain, to realize which she adopted a policy of extermination, both in Peru and in Mexico; but let it be remembered that her own national ruin was brought about with poetical justice by the very excess of her ill-gotten, blood-stained treasures. The Spanish historians tell us, as an evidence of the persistent bravery of their ancestors, that it took them eight hundred years of constant warfare to wrest Spain from her Moorish conquerors. It is for us to remind them how brief has been the continuance of their glory, how rapid their decline from splendid continental and colonial possessions to their present condition, that of the weakest and most insignificant power in Europe.

There are localities which have been visited by adventurous explorers, especially in Chili and Peru, where ruins have been found, and various monuments of antiquity examined, of vast interest to archæologists, but of which scarcely more than their mere existence is recorded. Some of these ruins are believed to antedate by centuries the period of the Incas, and are supposed to be the remains of tribes which, judging from their

pottery and other domestic utensils, were possibly of Asiatic origin. Comparatively few travelers have visited Lake Titicaca, in the Peruvian Andes, with its sacred islands and mysterious ruins, from whence the Incas dated their mythical origin. The substantial remains of some grand temples are still to be seen on the islands near the borders of the lake, the decaying masonry decked here and there with a wild growth of hardy cactus. This remarkable body of water, Lake Titicaca, in the mountain range of Peru, lies more than twelve thousand feet above the level of the Pacific; yet it never freezes, and its average depth is given as six hundred feet, representing an immense body of water. It covers an area of four thousand square miles, which is about four fifths as large as our own Lake Ontario, the average depth being about the same. Titicaca is the largest lake in the world occupying so elevated a site.

The population of South America is mostly to be found on the coast, and is thought to be about thirty-five millions, though, all things considered, we are disposed to believe this an overestimate. There are tribes far inland who are not brought in contact with civilization at all, and whose numbers are not known. The magnitude and density of the forests are remarkable; they cover, it is intelligently stated, nearly two thirds of the country. The vegetation, in its various forms, is rich beyond comparison. Professor Agassiz, who explored the valley of the Amazon under the most favorable auspices, tells us that he found within an area of half a mile square over one hundred species

of trees, among which were nearly all of the choicest cabinet and dye woods known to the tropics, besides others suitable for shipbuilding. Some of these trees are remarkable for their gigantic size, others for their beauty of form, and still others are valuable for their gums and resins. Of the latter, the india-rubber tree is the most prolific and important known to commerce. From Brazil comes four fifths of the world's supply of the raw material of rubber.

The great fertility of the soil generally would seem to militate against the true progress of the people of South America, absolutely discouraging, rather than stimulating national industry. One cannot but contrast the state of affairs in this respect with that of North America, where the soil is so much less productive, and where the climate is so universally rigorous. The deduction is inevitable that, to find man at his best, we must observe him where his skill, energy, and perseverance are all required to achieve a livelihood, and not where exuberant nature is over-indulgent, over-productive. The coast, the valleys, and indeed the main portion of South America are tropical, but a considerable section of the country is so elevated that its climate is that of perpetual spring, resembling the great Mexican plateau, both physically and as regards temperature. The population is largely of Spanish descent, and that language is almost universally spoken, though Portuguese is the current tongue in Brazil. These languages are so similar, in fact, that the people of the two nations can easily understand each

other. It is said to be true that, in the wild regions of the country, there are tribes of Indians found to-day living close to each other, separated by no physical barriers, who differ materially in language, physiognomy, manners, and customs, having absolutely nothing in common but their brown or copper colored skins. Furthermore, these tribes live most frequently in deadly feuds with each other. That cannibalism is still practiced among these interior tribes is positively believed, especially among some of the tribes of the extreme south, that is, among the Patagonians and the wild, nomadic race of Terra del Fuego. These two tribes, on opposite sides of the Strait of Magellan, are quite different from each other in nearly every respect, especially in size, nor will they attempt to hold friendly intercourse of any sort with each other.

There are certain domestic animals which are believed to be improved by crossing them with others of a different type, but this does not seem to apply, very often, advantageously to different races of human beings. It is plain enough in South America that the amalgamation of foreigners and natives rapidly effaces the original better qualities of each, the result being a mongrel, nondescript type, hard to analyze and hard to improve. That keen observer, Professor Agassiz, especially noticed this during his year of scientific research in Brazil. This has also been the author's experience, as illustrated in many lands, where strictly different races, the one highly civilized, the other barbarian, have unitedly produced children. It is a sort

of amalgamation which nature does not favor, recording her objections in an unmistakable manner. It is the flow of European emigration towards these southern republics which will infuse new life and progress among them. The aboriginal race is slowly receding, and fading out, as was the case in Australia, in New Zealand, and in the instance of our western Indians. A new people will eventually possess the land, composed of the several European nationalities, who are already the virtual masters of South America so far as regards numbers, intelligence, and possession.

Since these notes were written, the Argentine government has sold to Baron Hirsch three thousand square leagues of land in the province of Chaco, for the formation of a Jewish colony. Agents are already at work, aided by competent engineers and practical individuals, in preparing for the early reception of the new occupants of the country. The first contingent, of about one thousand Jews, have already arrived and are becoming domesticated. Argentina wants men perhaps more than money; indeed, one will make the other. A part of Baron Hirsch's scheme is to lend these people money, to be repaid in small installments extending over a considerable period. For this extensive territory the Baron paid one million three hundred thousand dollars in gold, thus making himself the owner of the largest connected area of land in the world possessed by a single individual. It exceeds that of the kingdom of Montenegro.

As to the zoölogy of this part of the continent, it is different

from that of Europe, Africa, Asia, and North America. The number of dangerous beasts of prey is quite limited. There is nothing here to answer to the African lion, the Asiatic tiger, the elephant of Ceylon, or the grisly bear of Alaska. The jaguar is perhaps the most formidable animal, and resembles the leopard. There are also the cougar, tiger-cat, black bear, hyena, wolf, and ocelot. The llama, alpaca, and vicuña are peculiar to this country. The monkey tribe exceeds all others in variety and number. There are said to be nearly two hundred species of them in South America, each distinctly marked, and varying from each other, in size, from twelve pounds to less than two. The smallest of the little marmosets weigh less than a pound and a half each, and are the most intelligent animal of their size known to man. There are also the deer, tapir, armadillo, anteater, and a few other minor animals. The pampas swarm with wild cattle and horses, descended from animals originally brought from Europe. In the low, marshy grounds the boa-constrictor and other reptiles abound. Eagles, vultures, and parrots are found in a wild state all over the country, while the rivers and the waters near the coast are well filled with fish, crocodiles, and turtles. Scientists have found over two thousand species of fish in the Amazon River alone.

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