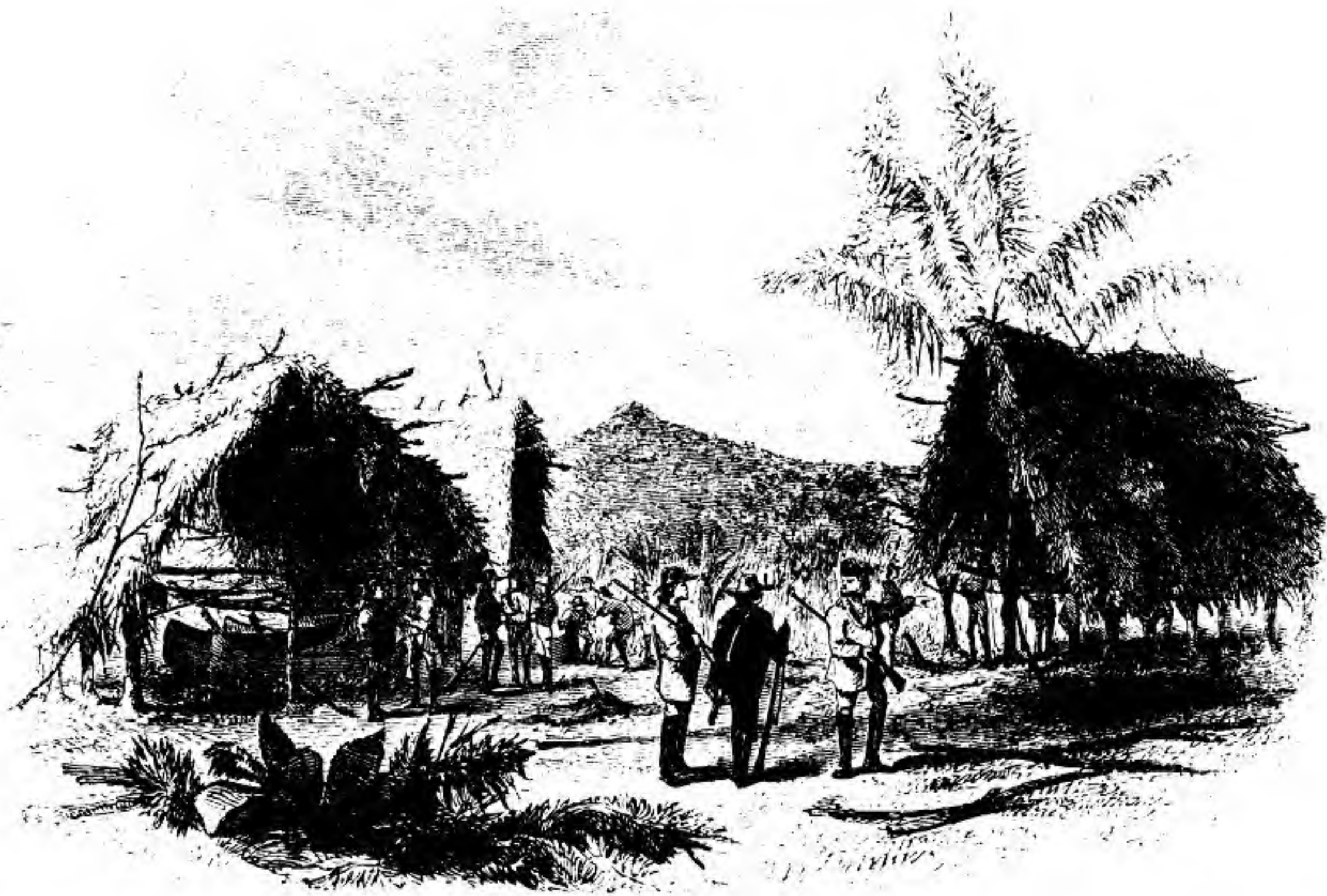


# HARPER'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

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CAMP SCENE.

## DARIEN EXPLORING EXPEDITION, UNDER COMMAND OF LIEUT. ISAAC C. STRAIN. BY J. T. HEADLEY.

[Having from the first become deeply interested in the Darien Exploring Expedition, and afterward doubly so in the fate of Lieutenant STRAIN, I was very anxious to know its history. Subsequent acquaintance with Lieutenant Strain, ripening into a warm friendship, enabled me to gratify this desire. With that grew the wish to make the facts public. At my request, therefore, Lieutenant Strain gave to me his private report to the Secretary of the Navy, whose permission to use it was cheerfully granted, also the journals kept by both parties, together with the book of sketches made by the draughtsman. Interesting interviews with Lieutenant Maury and civil engineer Mr. Avery, have enabled me to add many details not incorporated either in the report or the journals. For any personal matters relating to Lieutenant Strain I solely am responsible, as well as for any special praise bestowed on him. I know it would be his wish that I should speak of him *personally* as little as possible; but I have thought it best to look only at the truth and interest of the narrative, and make every other thing subservient to these.]

[It is not necessary here to speak of the importance to the whole civilized world of a ship canal across the Isthmus of Darien, nor of the different surveys that have been made.

The route of the following Expedition, beginning in Caledonia Bay and ending in Darien Harbor, had not been passed over since 1788, and was a *terra incognita*. In 1849, an Irish adventurer published a book, which went through several editions, in which he declared that he had "crossed and recrossed it several times and by several tracks," and that only "*three or four miles of deep cutting*" would be necessary for a ship canal the entire distance. Aroused by this report—which proved to be a mere fiction—Sir Charles Fox and other heavy English capitalists took up the subject, and sent out Mr. Gisborne, a civil engineer, to survey the route. He pretended to do so, and also published a book, mapping down the route, and declaring that it was only "*thirty miles between tidal effects*," and the "*summit level one hundred and fifty feet*." An English company was immediately formed with a capital of nearly \$75,000,000.

Without following the progress of this scheme in England and on the Continent, it is necessary, in this connection, to state only that Mr. Gisborne's favorable report resulted in enlisting England, France, the United States, and New

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Granada, in exploring together the proposed route for a ship canal across the Isthmus. It will be seen in the succeeding pages that this report was also a fiction; that Mr. Gisborne never crossed the Isthmus at all—never saw across it—never advanced more than a dozen miles inland at the farthest—and, in fact, was *afraid* to make the attempt, and that, instead of the summit-level being 150 feet, it is at least *one thousand feet*. As an inevitable result, therefore, the various expeditions, relying as they did entirely on this report, with its accompanying maps, would be led into error, and in the end completely baffled. The English one, starting from the Pacific side December 23d, 1853, proceeded up the Savana, and cutting its way more than 26 miles from the place of debarkation on that river, finally became disheartened, and, with the loss of four men slain by the Indians, returned discomfited to the ships. Strain, from the Atlantic side, started nearly a month later. Three days after his departure, another expedition, composed of French and English together, under the guidance of both Dr. Cullen and Mr. Gisborne, set out from the same point, and endeavored to follow in his track. But, notwithstanding they had the men who *said* they had crossed and surveyed the Isthmus—the former having walked it “several times and notched the trees”—they were unable even to get out of Caledonia Valley, and after having penetrated not more than six miles in all returned. Gisborne and Cullen could not follow their own maps, not to mention the notched trees. The Granadian expedition started still later. This was a very large party, under the command of Codazzi, the principal engineer of New Granada. How far it penetrated is not known, but straggling over the space of a mile it was completely broken up, and returned, after having lost several men. It is with feelings of national pride I state that the American expedition, under Strain, alone accomplished the passage, though under an accumulation of suffering rarely recorded in the annals of man.

On the morning of the 17th of January, 1854, the *Cyane*, Captain Hollins, with Lieutenant Strain and his party on board, entered Caledonia Bay, where they were immediately visited by a number of Darien Indians, some of whom spoke broken English and Spanish, which they had acquired in their intercourse with the traders on the coast. They came on board fearlessly, were very intelligent and observant, and, though much below the ordinary stature, were strongly built and athletic.

On the 18th a council was held which lasted about eighteen hours, and finally terminated favorably. For a long time the chiefs resisted Hollins's demand for permission for Strain's party to traverse the Isthmus, and opposed the project of a canal most pertinaciously, insisting that if God had wished one made, he would have given greater facilities (an opinion in which Strain fully coincided before he got across), and that they ought not to be disturbed in the quiet posses-

sion of the land which the Almighty had given them. Strain replied that God had created them naked, but they had chosen to clothe themselves, which was as much an infraction of his laws as it possibly could be to construct a canal. To this special pleading they could not reply, and finally, believing that Captain Hollins would send a party through their country with or without their permission, gave their consent, remarking that it appeared to be the will of God that they should cross; and after stipulating only that they should not disturb their women, and respect their property, cemented the treaty by a hearty supper, during which they indulged freely but not immoderately in strong liquors.

Relying on Mr. Gisborne's book, the party took only ten days' provision. Each member of it, with the exception of Mr. Kettlewell, the draughtsman, had either a carbine or a musket, with forty rounds of ball cartridges; while eight of the officers and engineers had, in addition, a five-barreled Colt's revolver, with fifty rounds of ammunition to each pistol. The arms and provisions, in addition to the blankets and minor articles, brought the average weight borne by each individual to about fifty pounds, which was quite as much as they could carry through a pathless wilderness, and in a tropical climate.

The naval officers who were detailed for the expedition were—Passed midshipmen, Charles Latimer and William T. Truxton, and 1st assistant-engineer, J. M. Maury, whom Strain appointed assistant-astronomer and secretary, having obtained sufficient knowledge within the last ten years of his high capacity in each department. Mr. Latimer, however, being taken ill, never started. Mr. Truxton was appointed acting master and executive officer.

Midshipman H. M. Garland, of the *Cyane*, accompanied the party as a volunteer. The assistant-engineers were Messrs. A. T. Boggs, S. H. Kettlewell, J. Sterret Hollins, and George U. Mayo. Dr. J. C. Bird, of Wilmington, Delaware, was the surgeon. In addition to these were three others, volunteers.

Messrs. Castilla and Polanco, commissioners appointed by the New Granadian government, also determined to accompany the party, which numbered, all told, twenty-seven men. Having safely landed his little band, Strain drew them up, read his instructions to them, and then took up the line of march for a small fishing village at the mouth of the Caledonia river, where good water could be obtained.

As the huts were abandoned by the Indians, they took possession of them for the night, and, having stationed four armed men as sentinels, stretched themselves on the floor. But the heavy booming of the surf, as it fell in regular and tremendous shocks at their feet, made it like sleeping amidst the incessant crash of artillery. The billows, as they broke on the beach, swept on through the houses, over the sand spit, and into the river beyond.





THE COUNCIL.

On the morning of the 20th, the party was early afoot—and while waiting for some provisions and other articles for which they had sent to the *Cyane*, Strain endeavored to obtain a view of the valley above by opening a path to the summit of a hill on the right bank of the river, near its mouth, and some knowledge of their route by sending a party to cut up the left bank of the river. Here, as he from the top of this hill swept the mountain-range with his glass, the first feeling of doubt and misgiving arose within him, for in an unbroken chain that range stretched onward till it abutted on the sea, showing nowhere the depression indicated on the maps.

This little band of explorers, as they boldly struck inland and began to traverse the intricate forests of the tropics, presented an interesting spectacle. Officers and men were all dressed alike in blue flannel shirts, with a white star in the collar, blue trowsers and belt. The only distinction between them was, the latter wore blue caps without a front-piece, while the for-

mer had Panama hats, and pistols in their belts. These caps were stuffed with tow, which afterward served an admirable purpose in kindling fires. A spy-glass strapped to Strain's shoulders distinguished the leader. The order of march was single-file—the leading men carrying a macheta (cutlass) or ax to clear the way. The others followed, each carrying a blanket, haversack, carbine, cartridge-box, and forty rounds of ammunition. It being necessary that the men should be well armed, not much additional weight could be imposed upon them. Strain, an old woodman and explorer, thoughtfully put a linen shirt under his woolen one, anticipating the want of linen with which to dress wounds. That shirt afterward did good service to his wounded, lacerated men.

Taking the bed of the Caledonia river—dragging a single canoe after them until the shallowness of the stream compelled them to abandon it—they pushed vigorously up the Pacific slope, and near sunset reached a large island in the river. Following a path, they found deserted



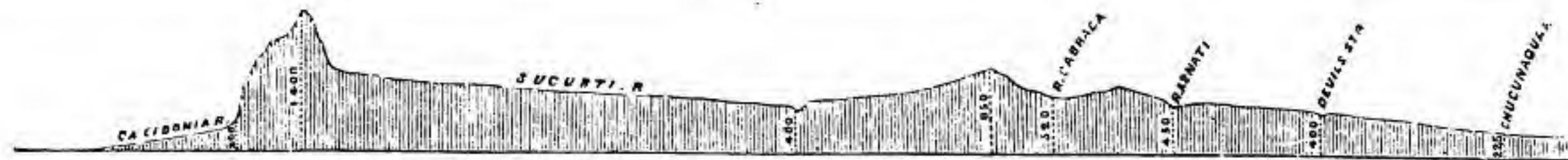
huts similar to those they had left at the mouth of the river, and there determined to encamp. The huts had evidently been deserted in haste, for stools, gourds, and cooking utensils, were strewn over the floors. These, as well as the extinguished brands of a recent fire, were all collected together and placed under charge of a sentry. In the morning they were restored as nearly as possible to their original positions, as Strain was determined to give the Indians no pretext for a display of hostility; although he felt sufficiently strong in numbers and preparation to cope with any tribe they would probably meet on the Isthmus. The rancho was surrounded by a plantation of cocoa, which, with the exception of tortoise-shell, is the only exchangeable product of the Darien Indians. A strict watch was kept during the night, there being two seamen and two officers or engineers, armed to the teeth, at all times on guard, while the remainder of the party had their arms beside them and their cartridge-boxes buckled on. These, silent and motionless, kept anxious watch in the midst of those deserted huts, whose very abandonment seemed portentous of evil. At length the wished-for light appeared, when the shrill and protracted boatswain's call, "*Heave round*"—the cheering strains used to quicken the sailors as they tread round the capstan to heave the anchor to the cat-head—startled every sleeper to his feet. "*Saddle up,*" then rang through the encampment; and soon every man had his blanket and haversack swung to their places, and, with carbine in hand, stood ready to march. At half-past six they set out; and now wading in the bed of the river, and again following paths along its banks, through plantations of cocoa, plantains, and Indian corn, they pushed on until they came to a point where a small tributary entered from the southward and westward. Here they had a good view of the Valley of the Caledonia; and Strain, taking advantage of it, carefully examined the range of the Cordillera with an excellent spy-glass, and finding only a semicircular chain, from fifteen hundred to two thousand feet in height, abutting upon the sea-coast ranges to the westward and southwestward, determined to follow the easterly, or principal branch of the river, believing that it offered the stronger probability of a gorge through to the other slope.

Soon after passing the tributary already alluded to, they followed a well-beaten path on the left bank of the river, which soon brought them to an Indian village, containing some forty or fifty houses, grouped among trees and surrounded by large plantations of cocoa and plantains, and a small quantity of sugar-cane.

An occasional glance through the interstices of the bamboo walls at the interior of these houses—which were spacious and well-constructed—showed that, though devoid of inhabitants, much of their personal property still remained. The grunting of pigs and the crowing of cocks left behind by their owners, gave the only evidence of life in this deserted village, except the steady tramp of the heavily armed and

overloaded party. These familiar sounds added inconceivably to the desolation of the scene, and impressed deeply the whole band. Strain, with his cocked carbine in his hand, strode on in advance, his eye rapidly, almost fiercely, searching every suspicious-looking spot; while the men, each one with his weapon resting in the hollow of his arm, pressed swiftly after. Not till the last hut was passed did they breathe free again. As they emerged from this village, they found a path which wound down a steep bank to the river, near the opposite bank of which lay a canoe containing women's clothing, abandoned evidently in the haste of their flight. As Strain was about to descend by this path, three Indians suddenly appeared. After an interchange of friendly signs, one of them offered to point out to him, as he supposed, the path leading to the Pacific. He accordingly countermarched; but, after accompanying his guide a few hundred yards, came to the conclusion that the latter only wished to lead them from the village; for in the direction he took, toward the west and southwest, Strain, as already mentioned, could see no opening whatever in the Cordillera. He accordingly halted the party, and explained to the Indian, as well as possible, that he would proceed no further in that direction, and was determined to follow up the main branch of the river. The latter made no opposition, but shrugged his shoulders; and turning down a ravine to the river, led up its bed until they had passed the village, then courteously took leave. Subsequent events convinced Strain of the good faith of this Indian, who doubtless would have led him into a path across the Cordillera, which he afterward discovered by mere accident. At ten o'clock the order to halt passed down the line; and the party, still suspicious, breakfasted in the bed of the river. A fire was kindled, some coffee and tea made, which, with pieces of pork stuck on sticks and toasted in the fire, made a comfortable meal. The repast being ended, the party started forward, keeping the bed of the stream till mid-day, when Strain ordered a halt, thoroughly convinced from its course—which inclined strongly toward the Atlantic—its rapid fall—which imparted to it almost the characteristics of a mountain torrent—and the aspect of the mountain ranges which crossed his course, towering some two or three thousand feet above the level of the sea, that this route could afford no facilities for a ship canal, and could not be that alluded to by either Mr. Gisborne or Dr. Cullen. While the main body remained halted here, Messrs. Truxton, Holcomb, and Winthrop were sent up the river to reconnoitre, and upon returning reported unanimously that the route in that direction was impracticable. Having received this report, they rapidly retraced their steps, finding, as they had done in the ascent, several canoes containing women's clothing drawn up on the beach. Their owners were invisible, having doubtless hidden themselves in the forest; but the fact of their having fled up this branch of the river to avoid the party,





SECTION OF THE ELEVATION OF THE ISTHMUS.



was additional evidence to Strain that he had taken the wrong direction. Marching rapidly past the village, which seemed to be occupied, he followed the smaller branch toward the southward and westward—the India-rubber, cotton-wood, and other tropical trees, gracefully festooned with parasitic plants, darkening the way, which was enlivened only by the laugh of the men as their companions, now and then, tumbled over a rock into the water. About sunset they encamped on the right bank of the stream. The officers and men were divided into two messes, each having its separate fire

and cook. This second day's tramp had been a hard, exciting one, and the men were glad to halt. After tea, the two groups sat around their respective fires, smoking, telling stories, and singing, till the watch was set. An officer and two sentries formed, this night and for a long time afterward, the regular guard from eight in the evening until daylight. The two fires were kept brightly burning all night, shedding their steady light over the motionless party as they slept in pairs, with one blanket beneath and the other above them, under the open sky. They were a splendid set of men, and, as they



lay there in order of battle, seemed well fitted for the hardships before them.

Roused up by the boatswain's whistle, the party breakfasted, and again set out, wading about a mile up the river, until they arrived at a "cañon," in which the water was so deep as to place fording out of the question, while the scarped rocks on either side made the ascent to the bank above very difficult. From the outset, as the way became more and more obstructed, Wilson, who had a splendid voice, cheered on the party by making the woods ring with "Jordan is a hard road to travel." While stumbling up the rocky bed of the Caledonia, he had changed his song into "Caledonia is a hard stream to travel," in which there was far more truth than poetry. It was a relief to all, therefore, when Strain ordered a halt, and informed them that it was his intention to leave this river soon, as it was leading toward a very high range of mountains and too far to the southward. Holcomb and Winthrop were for continuing on, and the former having found an accessible point on the bank

of the "cañon" to ascend, and displaying some impatience to attempt it, and as some of the party appeared anxious to follow, Strain gave permission, but at the same time recommended them to follow him a short distance below, where a more gentle ascent might be found, and one less likely to tire the heavily-laden party. They did so, and soon came to an easy slope, up which they pushed. They had not proceeded far when they unexpectedly stumbled on a well-beaten track leading over the hills to the southward and westward. This was an unlooked-for stroke of good fortune, and Strain was convinced that he had found by accident the traveled Indian route to the Pacific. He now recalled the scattered party—first by shouting, as they were near, then by the boatswain's whistle, and finally by firing his carbine. The stragglers soon closed in, but upon counting the party to see who might be missing, he found that Holcomb, Winthrop, Hollins and Bird, and Roscoe, a seaman of the *Cyane*, were absent. He then fired three carbines in quick succession, the previously estab-



THE CANON.



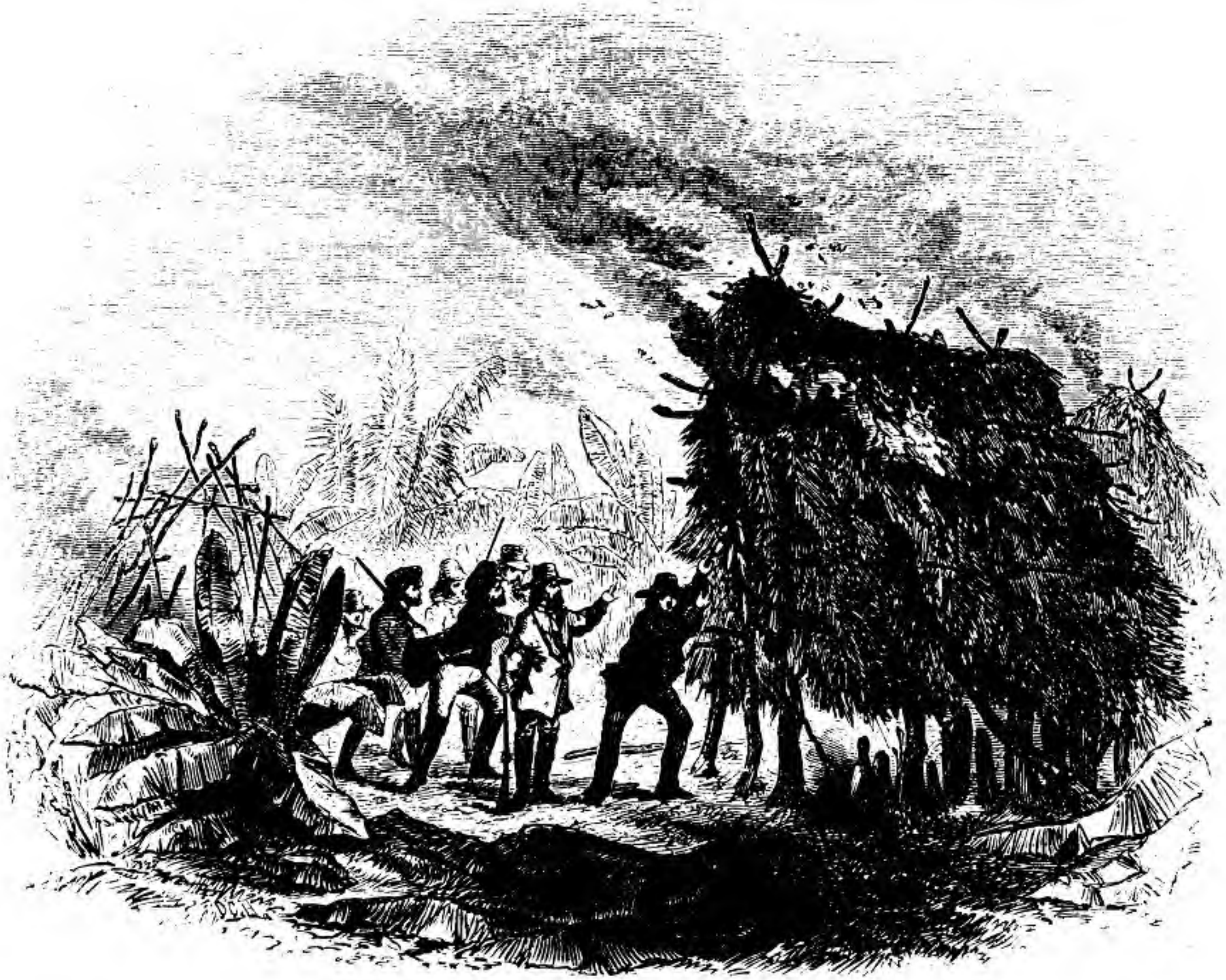
lished signal to close instantly—the signal also of extreme danger. This signal was answered, but still the missing party did not come up. After waiting some time, several successive shots were fired, when Strain, to his astonishment, heard their carbines far up the river, and apparently near the base of the hill. Unwilling still to believe it to be their wish to separate, he waited some time on the slope of the mountain, firing frequently. But finding that their responses gradually became more and more faint and distant, he determined to proceed, hoping that they were only seeking a lower point in a gorge—which he felt sure existed on his left—to cross over and rejoin him. The path he now followed was clear and well defined, and led by a spur over the Cordillera, or principal chain, which rose in three successive peaks as they advanced. The ascent was very steep, being in many places as much as fifty and sixty degrees, up which the men were frequently compelled to pull themselves by trees. As they were without water, and heavily laden, this proved very fatiguing. Arriving at the summit of the first peak, Strain ordered a halt, hoping that the missing party might come up. In the mean time Edward Lombard, a seaman of the *Cyane*, climbed a tree to reconnoitre the country, but reported nothing but mountains and hills in every direction. Following the Indian trail, at a quarter past one, P.M., the party arrived at a small stream running to the westward. The men, suffering from thirst, stooped down to this, and took long and hearty draughts of water. They then laid aside their arms, blankets, and haversacks, and sat down to wait for the absentees, who were expected every moment. The sun at length stooping behind the tropical forest, and no signs of their arrival, Strain ordered a fire to be made, and went into camp. After eating a scanty supper, he seated himself at a point where the Indian trail entered the gorge, and watched long and anxiously for the arrival of the missing men. The shadows of night gathered over him there, yet he still waited until a late hour, when he stretched himself on his blanket in painful suspense as to their whereabouts.

Early in the morning he sent scouts across the mountain, to see if they had not crossed higher up on the Caledonia, and reached the river valley which he was confident must exist on the other side. At half past nine they all returned, unsuccessful, but reported having found a large stream, which they believed united with that on which they then were, which afterward proved to be the fact.

Deeply solicitous as Strain was about the absent men who had been intrusted to his care, and for whom he was in a great measure responsible, he felt the obligation also not to make any delays that should endanger those still under his command nor the success of the expedition, and at ten o'clock gave the welcome order to move forward. Keeping in view this river to its junction with the Sucubti, they followed the latter in its rough and tortuous course, struggling over huge

boulders and masses of stones rolled together by the torrent, and which rendered the way almost impassable. Dangerous rapids also intersected their path, skirted by precipitous banks, along and up which, heavily laden, they scrambled with great difficulty, until at last, fatigued and hungry, they encamped at five o'clock at the mouth of a small stream, having made in all not more than eight or nine miles. All day long, whenever they struck a sandy reach, they found fresh Indian tracks always in advance, but as there appeared to be only two men, and they accompanied by a dog, Strain felt no anxiety, as he knew their strategy never admits of a dog on a war-path. On the morning of the 24th, at nine, A.M., they left their bivouac and proceeded down the bed of the river, occasionally pursuing the banks when it was deep or impassable from falls or boulders. The trail of the two Indians and dog was still very distinct, and it was evident that they had slept in the immediate vicinity of the last night's camp. About eleven o'clock, while wading down the bed of the river, a smoke was seen rising through the trees, and immediately the quick order, "*Close up,*" passed down the line. Soon after, Strain commanded a halt, and advancing alone, mounted the left bank, and found an Indian hut, apparently just abandoned, and on fire; the roof had already fallen in, while the joists and timbers were slowly burning and crackling in the still air. Two other houses on the opposite bank were also in flames. Strain immediately crossed over, and found that, as in the first, all the stools, pots, and other utensils were left a prey to the flames, but their *arms* and clothing had been taken away. While examining these two houses, Mr. Castilla, the New Granadian commissioner, came up the bank, and seeing a bunch of plantains hanging on a rafter, reached up to take them; but Strain stopped him, declaring that he had promised to respect private property religiously, and was determined to give the Indians no excuse whatever for assailing his party. This destruction of their property looked ominous, and could be construed in no way, except as an evidence of hostility; and Strain now began to anticipate a gathering among them, and an attack at some favorable point in advance. He therefore ordered the men to re-examine their arms carefully, and march in close order. Still leading his little band, he kept on the difficult path, expecting every instant, for hours, a shower of arrows upon his party. He, of course, would be the first victim; and he confessed afterward that he remembered the account given by a comrade in Texas, of the sensation the latter once experienced with two arrows in his body, and the remembrance made him squirm. But compact and silent they kept down the river, generally wading in its bed, and where the water was too deep, selecting the bank which appeared less densely wooded, and always, when practicable, following the trail of the two Indians and their dog. Strain carried twenty or thirty pounds more than any other member of the party; and Castilla, the





HUTS ON FIRE.

Granadian commissioner, wishing to relieve him, offered to take the spy-glass, but on being informed that the Indians knew that this was carried by the commander, who would be selected for the first fire, he turned pale, and did not press his offer. Several of the men requested to take part of his load, but he refused, saying, that by carrying more than they, and doing more work, he could better tell how fast to march and when to halt, so as not to overtask them.

At some points the water had attained a great depth, especially where it had caught a rotary motion around some of the smaller boulders, and the traveling not only grew more difficult, but very dangerous. They had lost the Indian trail, and not being able to pass through the forest without the tedious operation of cutting a road with an ax, so thick was the undergrowth, they were forced to climb along the rocky banks of the river, to cross wide clefts in the rocks, and surmount enormous boulders, where a false step or a slip would have led to a broken limb, if not to a broken neck. They made only some ten miles the whole day, and at six in the evening, finding a defensible position, pitched their camp. The men were quite fagged out, and prepared their supper without their usual boisterous merriment. Besides, the consciousness of danger at hand made each one thoughtful. To enliven their spirits they concluded to drink up a bottle of brandy which one of the party carried for medicinal purposes, for the very sensible reason that they feared it would get *broken*. The evening gun of the *Cyane*, rising with a booming

sound over the Isthmus, also cheered them, for while that was in hearing, they did not feel themselves so entirely cut off from the outer world.

It was not so pleasant, however, when darkness enshrouded the wilderness; but the camp fires blazed brightly, and they were all brave hearts. Still many an anxious glance searched the shadowy forest that hemmed them in, and a score of musket-balls or arrows in their midst would hardly have taken them by surprise. Sentries were posted at some distance up and down the bank, to give timely warning. As silence settled on the camp imitations of the cries of wild beasts were heard in the surrounding forest, made evidently by the Indians who were hovering near, in the hope of alarming them. The next morning the boatswain's "*Heave round*" rung far and wide through the solitude, and the tired sleepers arose to another day's toil. On examining the ground near the camp they discovered the tracks of seven men, who had closely reconnoitred them in the night. Strain had already begun to doubt whether he was on a branch of the *Savana*, owing to the course which the river pursued, but as the number of cascades corresponded exactly with those laid down for that river, he was still partially satisfied, and hoped that the maps might, after all, prove to be tolerably correct.

Leaving camp about half past eight, they followed the river by the bed or banks, just as one or the other furnished best footing. Both were difficult; the former being encumbered with granite boulders, and the water often so deep as

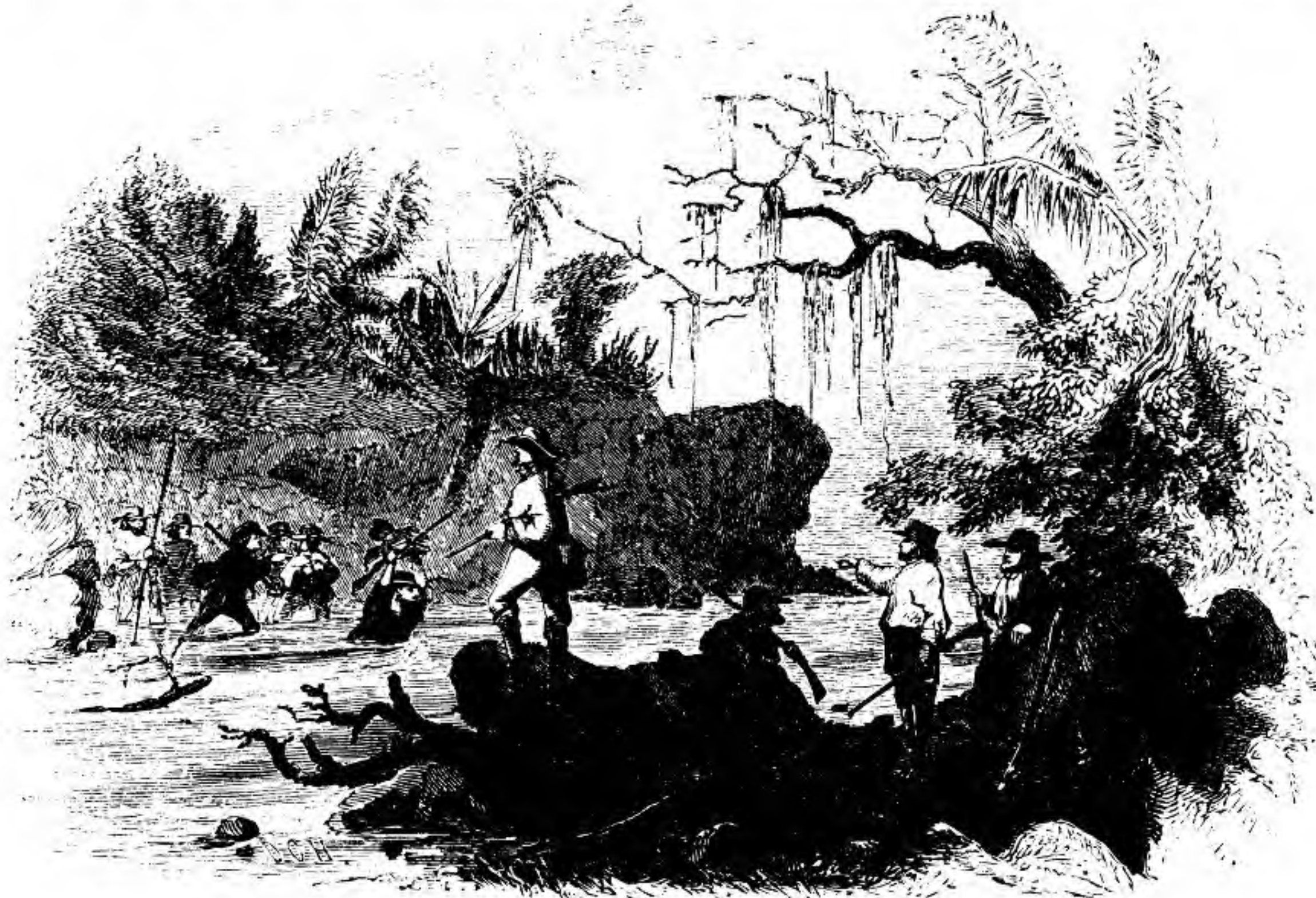


to reach nearly to the cartridge-boxes, while the latter was almost closed against them by the denseness of the undergrowth. Their constant companions, the two men and the dog, between whom and them there seemed some strange, mysterious link, still preceded them.

Passing several isolated peaks, some five or six hundred feet in height, they at noon, or in three hours and a half, had made about three miles. At length they came to some plantain fields, while the distant barking of a dog announced the proximity of Indian habitations. A halt was now called, and Strain consulted with his officers upon the best course to pursue. A long straight reach of considerable depth apparently closed the bed of the river against them in front, while on the banks the undergrowth grew so thick that it was impossible to proceed, except by the slow process of cutting a road. At length, however, they discovered a path on the left, leading over a steep hill, and which they supposed would intercept the course of the river below. Strain directed Mr. Truxton with a few men to examine it, while he, leaving the main body of the party, many of whom showed symptoms of fatigue, in an open space, where surprise would be almost impossible, continued down the river, to determine whether the reach was passable.

He found it to be, under the circumstances, and considering the evidences of a hostile spirit on the part of the Indians, a dangerous route, as the water was very deep for about a quarter of a mile, the banks on each side perpendicular and about eighteen feet in height; while the ledge at the foot of the right bank, where only they could pursue their way, was not in any part more than two feet wide, and in some places could be passed only with the greatest

difficulty, and not without danger of slipping into deep water, where they would sink by the weight of their baggage and accoutrements before assistance could be rendered. An attack in such a place would prove fatal; for the Indians could fire from the bushes while they were on the ledge, where they could neither return the fire nor close with them, nor escape, except by swimming—a resort almost as fatal as to stand and be shot down. At all events, the entire ammunition of the party would be rendered useless. It was a great relief, therefore, when Mr. Truxton came down on the opposite bank and pronounced the path practicable, and trending down the valley of the river after crossing the hill on the left. Cheered by the intelligence, the party entered the river, and slowly, and with great difficulty, stemmed the deep and rapid current. Striking the foot of a steep hill on the opposite bank, they clambered up half a mile to the top, where they found a plantain field, in which the path ended. Wholly at a loss what course to take, they retraced their steps to the river, and while rattling down the hill were arrested by the barking of a dog, which was as abruptly smothered, apparently by a muzzle, and by the distant sound of axes struck rapidly upon some hollow substances. These evidences of the vicinity and watchfulness of the Indians made Strain still more unwilling to risk the ledge along the bank of the river; but as there appeared to be no alternative, he gave the reluctant order to advance, he leading the file. They steadily entered the passage, one by one, and crawling cautiously along the precipice, fortunately passed without an attack. With his gallant little band, Strain had felt himself a match for a horde of Indians; but here he was powerless, and a mountain seemed lift-



FORDING THE RIVER.



ed from his heart when he saw the last man through.

At the end of the reach they came upon a house standing a little back from the river, and surrounded by what appeared to be a species of fortification. Not wishing to expose the whole party to the risk of an ambuscade, or to alarm the natives unnecessarily, Strain ordered a halt, and advanced alone to examine it. Like all the other huts they had seen, it had evidently been recently abandoned—the proprietors having left behind much of their furniture, and some provisions scattered upon the floor. Its position was peculiar, and different from any thing they had before seen, having been erected on an artificial mound, scarped and made nearly inaccessible on all sides except through a strong gateway. This mode of construction may have been adopted to guard against inundations; but reference also appeared to have been had to defense against enemies, and the position was certainly one which a few determined men might have held against a large number. Continuing their journey, they soon arrived at a village on the left bank, containing several houses, almost concealed amidst plantain and other fruit trees. They passed this without entering, supposing it to be, like the others, deserted by its inhabitants; the only sign of life being the barking of a dog, which had probably been left when the Indians concealed themselves in the forest. Immediately in front of the village, and on a sloping shingle-beach, they found the remains of seven canoes which had just been destroyed. Their condition satisfactorily explained the sounds of the ax they had heard while in the plantain field on the hill. The destruction of these canoes was complete; for, not satisfied with splitting them up, the Indians had cut them transversely in several places, taking out large chips, rendering it impossible to repair them. This had an ugly look, and was an unmistakable sign of hostile feeling.

The river here was deep and rapid; but Strain leading the way, the whole party crossed in safety, and entered a path which appeared to follow the right bank. Advancing along this, Strain suddenly saw a party of five armed Indians rapidly approaching. Considering all the recent evidences which he had seen of their distrust, not to say hostility, his first impulse was to cock his carbine; but a moment's reflection convinced him it was better not to lose the benefit of their friendship, if it could be obtained, especially as he felt certain that he was not upon the river Savana, as he hoped and at first believed.

He accordingly halted the party, and handing his carbine to one of the men, advanced to meet them, calling out at the same time in Spanish that they were friends. The Indians then came up and shook hands, when he recognized two of their number as having been on board the *Cyane* soon after her arrival in Caledonia Bay. One spoke a little English, and another, who appeared to be the leader, spoke

Spanish intelligibly; while the remainder, belonging to the Sucubti tribe, used only their own dialect. The leader informed Strain that he was on the *Chuquinaqua* instead of the *Savana*, but offered to guide him to the latter stream. In answer to a question respecting the distance, he replied that they could reach it in three days. Strain then inquired if he had been sent by the commander of the *Cyane*, or by Robinson, a chief referred to in a letter from Captain Hollins, which reached him during the second day's march. He replied, "Neither;" and did not appear to know who was meant by Robinson—probably not recognizing his English name.

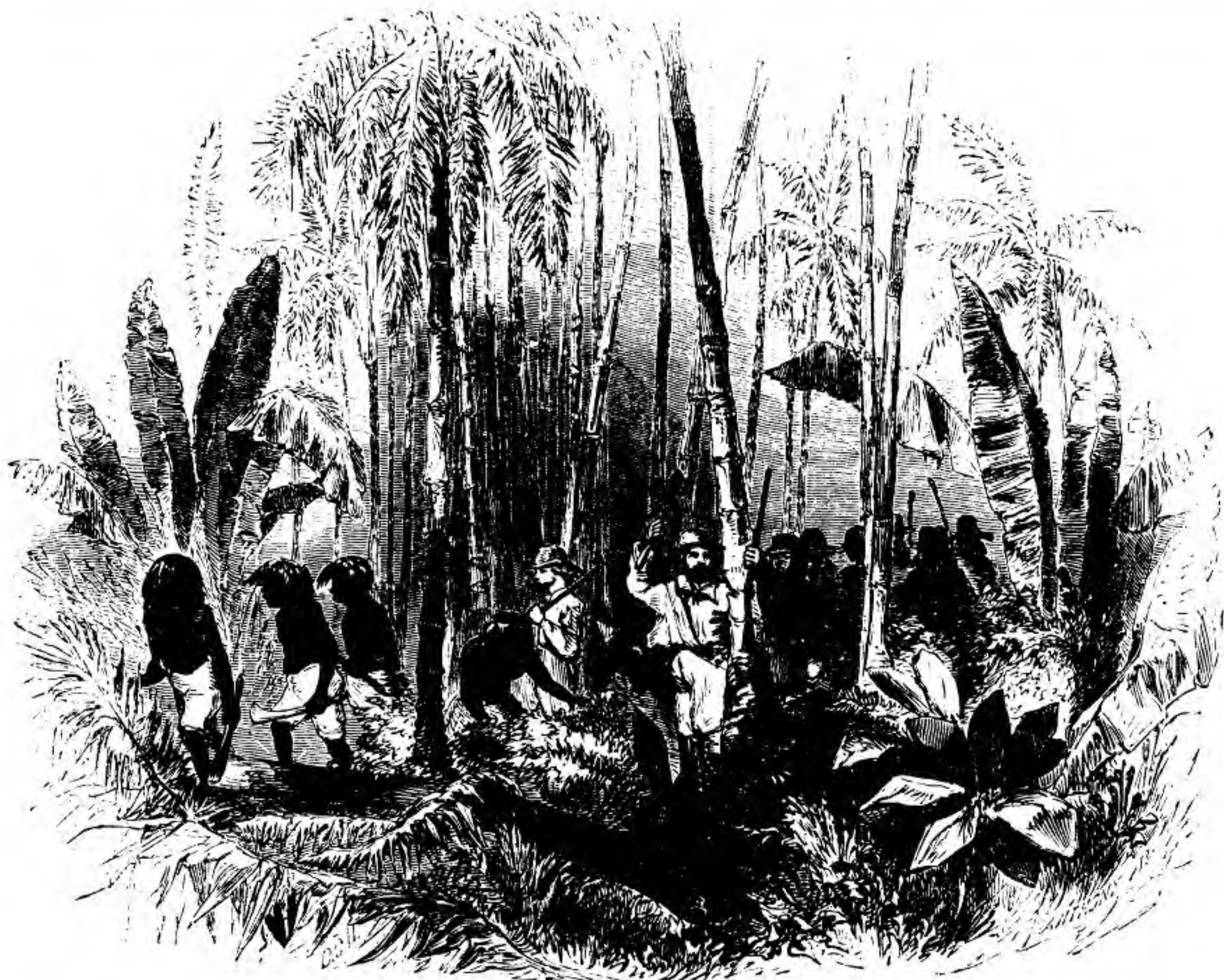
Strain felt that he incurred no little risk in trusting himself to these Indians; but being firmly convinced that they were neither on the Savana nor any of its branches, and knowing that the course which the Indians pointed out would at least bring him nearer to it, he determined to accompany them, believing that he could subsist wherever they could, and that, as a last resort, he could return if they deceived or abandoned him. He was especially induced to this determination by the fact that he had offered this same Indian a large sum of money, when he was on board the *Cyane*, if he would guide him across, and thought it not improbable that he had determined to accept it when once free from the surveillance of his tribe. The order "Forward!" was accordingly given, and they proceeded rapidly, by a well-beaten path, through a cocoa grove and through the forest in a westerly direction. Once in the woods, and finding the path growing less distinct, Strain secretly gave orders to the officers to observe the route carefully, in order that they might return by it, if it was found necessary; and also directed Mr. Truxton, who commanded the rear-guard, to have the trees marked with a macheta as they proceeded.

In silence, and in close order, the little party rapidly followed the Indians, who, leading them over three minor ridges, and one hill nearly six hundred feet high, and through a grove of plantains and of cocoa, arrived a little before dark at a deep and gloomy ravine, through which brawled a rivulet, running apparently in the direction of the river they had left, and as the guide informed them it did.

At this place the Indians left, promising to return in the morning. To this course Strain assented with as good a grace as possible, although very much against his will; for, although he believed them sincere, he felt much more confidence in them while they were within the range of his carbine.

Some of the party asked the Indians to bring some plantains when they returned; which, after consulting with the oldest man among them, the guide promised to do. They then filed away into the woods, and the party pitched their camp. The undergrowth was cleared away, the fires lighted, and the supper of pork and biscuit quickly dispatched. Strain set the watch earlier than usual, as he did not feel perfectly





COCOA GROVE.

secure in his position, and could not shake off all suspicion of his new friends. He also ordered the fires to be made at some distance from the place which had been selected for sleeping, so as to mislead the Indians if they should attempt to surprise them, and directed the party to lie down in their ranks where the steep bank of the rivulet afforded a certain barrier against an attack in the rear. The two sentries he placed completely in the shade on each wing of the camp, and directed the officers of the guard to keep away from the fire, where the light might guide the aim of any one who should be lurking in the bushes.

Having taken all those precautions which a thorough woodsman alone understands—Strain, keenly alive to the welfare of his party, kept the watch of one of the gentlemen who was somewhat indisposed. After it was over he lay down, but at one o'clock was aroused by a slight noise on the side of the ravine whence he supposed an attack, if any, would be made. Without starting up he turned himself slowly and cautiously over, and saw some one silently climb up the bank close to where he was lying, and look round over the sleeping party. He appeared to be short in stature, as the Indians invariably are on the Isthmus, and by the dim light he could see that his hat closely resembled those which they wear, so, silently drawing his revolver, he thrust it suddenly against his side, saying, in a low tone, "Who's there?" He was answered by Mr. Truxton, just in time to prevent his firing. It was this officer's watch, and

having heard a noise in the ravine, he had gone down to investigate it, and was returning by the bank when he thus unexpectedly encountered Strain, and came near losing his life. A moment's delay in answering would have insured his death.

This little circumstance, which was unknown both to the sleepers and sentries, was the only alarm they had during the night. On the morning of January 26th, about half past eight, the guide returned, and announced himself ready to continue the journey. Strain was somewhat surprised to find that, excepting the interpreter and guide, the rest, numbering four, were new Indians.

No plantains were brought as promised; but they continued to give every evidence of friendship, and advised the party to supply themselves with water from the rivulet, as they would have a long and severe march before they reached any more. They therefore filled their bottles and flasks, and, after taking a hearty drink, commenced following a path leading in a westerly direction over a very steep hill about 800 feet in height. Resting but once, and only for a few minutes, to recover their breath, they reached the summit, from which could be seen many ranges and peaks, still higher, to the northward, forming apparently a chain of isolated mountains. Hurrying down the opposite slope, which led them at times along the margin of deep valleys with almost perpendicular sides, they reached, about half past ten, another ravine containing water, where they halted to



refresh themselves, not having drank since leaving the camp in the morning. In this rapid march Strain had a fair opportunity of testing the comparative endurance of his men and the Indians; and although the latter, being nearly naked, and with no burdens except their arms, took the steep ascents much better than the former, he found his own men fully equal to them, heavily laden as they were, in descending or on level ground.

Having slaked their thirst at this stream, which Strain concluded to be that called the *Asnati* on the old Spanish maps, they pushed on, and soon after, passing another branch of the same stream, and some plantations of plantains and cocoa, commenced ascending another steep hill, still pursuing a course little to the northward of west. Near this point, and in the valley, a village known as *Asnati* is supposed to be situated; but the Indians were always careful to carry them as far as possible from their habitations. The hill which they now ascended was neither so steep or high as the last one, not being more than 450 feet above the level of the valley from which they started. While ascending it, one of the men, Edward Lombard, a seaman of the *Cyane*, and who carried the boatswain's whistle, was stung on the hand by a scorpion, and for some time suffered severely. Truxton had a little brandy left in a flask, and Strain having heard that stimulants were good for poison, told Lombard to drink it. But the latter being a temperance man declined. Strain then ordered him to swallow it, threatening, if he refused, to pour it down his throat. The poor fellow finally swallowed it, and some moistened tobacco being applied to the wound he soon began to rally, and was at length able to proceed slowly, and by night had recovered entirely, and was as active and energetic as before. He said the effects of the sting were like an electric shock, as instantaneous and as paralyzing. While Lombard was suffering and unable to walk, the whole party halted, and Strain asked the Indians if they knew of any remedy for the sting. They replied they did not; but that there were men in their village who could cure it.

Strain, taking Lombard's musket, gave the order "Forward!" and passing the summit of the hill they commenced the descent, when they were suddenly met by some five or six Indians. A halt was made, and a man, who appeared to be a chief, approached Strain, and made an elaborate speech, accompanied with all the gesticulation and vehemence of an Indian orator. He concluded by directing the guide to interpret it. During the continuance of this speech, of which Strain could distinguish but one word, "*Chuli*"—"No"—he carefully watched the countenance of the guide, and thought he could detect an expression of annoyance not unmingled with contempt. The latter would not interpret the speech, though requested to do so both by the orator and Strain. At length, being urgently pressed, he abruptly replied, "*Vamos*"—"Let us go"—and led off. While de-

scending the hill, most of the strange Indians, taking with them some of the party with which they had started in the morning, and replacing them with others, left. From that time the conduct of the Indians changed.

At the foot of the hill they arrived at a ravine leading nearly west, which they followed until sunset, sometimes climbing over boulders, and at others sliding down the face of smooth rocks, where the rivulet formed cascades, and always traveling rapidly and most laboriously. From time to time Strain was obliged to order a halt, to allow those who were most fatigued a little rest. The Indians who had joined that day appeared to enjoy the distress of the men amazingly, and attempted to hurry them on before they were sufficiently rested. Mr. Polanco, one of the New Granada commissioners, laid down, utterly prostrated by fatigue; and Mr. Kettlewell, engineer and draughtsman of the expedition, who was ill the night before, wished the party to leave him to rejoin them afterward at the next camp. Having made only twelve miles, they arrived about sunset at a stream a little smaller than the one they had left two days before, and encamped on an island in front of a plantain grove. The difficulties of the way may be gathered from the fact, that, to make even this short distance, the men were kept all day to the top of their speed and endurance. The whole march was a constant climbing, sliding, floundering over one of the most broken countries imaginable. The ravine which they had traveled was, by common consent, denominated "the Devil's Own." Before the Indians left that evening, the guide, who had appeared somewhat depressed since the interview with the strange Indians, informed Strain that, in the morning, he should start on his return to Caledonia Bay; and that he would visit the ship, and tell the Captain how well they had progressed; meanwhile, he would leave behind some of his friends, to guide them to the Savana, at which they would arrive in a day and a half.

Strain attempted to dissuade him, offering him any pay he might ask to guide him through; but to no purpose. He then told him that he would send a letter by him to Captain Hollins, which he declined taking, and started with the others, leaving Strain with no very pleasant anticipations for the future, there being seven days' hard march between him and the ship, while it was very doubtful whether he could find the path back; for in many places it was so obscure that the Indians themselves could with difficulty follow it. A fatigued party, who looked back with horror to the last few days' march, and with less than one day's provisions, and very doubtful guides, was not a very pleasant object to contemplate. Believing that there was a large Indian population immediately in the neighborhood, Strain ordered an unusually strict watch to be kept. Still he had pitched the camp in so strong a position that he did not believe they would dare to attack him.

The next morning, while preparing breakfast,



two strange Indians, with quite a small boy, strolled into camp; and soon after, the old guide, and several others, among whom were the new guides, of forbidding appearance, and who were besides armed with bows and steel-pointed war-arrows—which they never use in hunting—also came in. Some forty more, of different ages and sexes, were seen skulking in a plantain patch on the opposite side of the river, and narrowly watching every movement. Those who were in camp were exceedingly anxious to look into the haversacks of the men and ascertain the amount of provisions they had. These, it is true, were scanty enough, as many of the men had used theirs imprudently, and the New Granadian commissioners, having either consumed or thrown away their rations, had none at any time after crossing the mountains, but lived entirely on those of other members of the party. The officers still having some provisions, which, with greater prudence, they had reserved, Strain directed that they should be divided with the men. All cheerfully consented, with the exception of one, who could not understand why those who had stinted themselves to provide food for the future should now be made to suffer for the reckless improvidence of the others. Strain, who cared little for meat, had eight pounds preserved, all of which he gave up to the men. This left them with nothing on hand but a little bread dust and two or three pounds of coffee. Still, if the Indians fulfilled their promise and took them to the Savana in a day and a half, and they could there obtain boats, they would make a fair journey and escape without great suffering.

Before setting out, Strain took the old guide aside and endeavored to obtain a clew to their intentions and his own prospects. But the frankness and apparent sincerity of his demeanor were gone. He now stated that he would not return to Caledonia Bay until next month, which was only a subterfuge to avoid being pressed to carry a letter. Strain then renewed his offer of large pay, if he would continue to act as guide; and finally asked him his motives in coming thus far. To this he replied, that he had taken an interest in him when they met on board the *Cyane*, and did not wish him to follow the Chuqunaqua, which was a very long route to the Pacific. He still declared that they would reach the Savana in a day and a half, and the harbor of Darien in two days and a half; but Strain could not induce him to give the name of the river on the banks of which they then were. He then broached the subject of provisions, and asked him if they could not procure some plantains, offering to pay exorbitantly for them. Being told he could not, he requested that he would ask his friends to give them some, reminding him, at the same time, that in compliance with their promise, they had never taken a single article belonging to the natives. To this he assented, but refused either to give or sell. Strain then told him that if they should become short of provisions, and the Indians would neither sell

nor give the fruits which were rotting on the trees, in justice to his own party, he should be obliged to violate his promise and help himself. To this threat the guide made no answer. Finally, Strain offered him money for his past services, which he positively refused to accept; and soon after, as the party was about to set out with their new guides, the former turned to take leave of him, and found he had disappeared. This was a bad omen, as the natives on this Isthmus have a strong taste, whether natural or acquired, for shaking hands when their intentions are friendly.

Setting out under these unpleasant auspices, they followed their guides, who led them rapidly by a trail over a hill and through the forest again, to and down the bed of the river. When about a mile below the camp, Strain was anxious to speak with them, but they would not stop, and were careful to keep some one hundred yards in advance—imagining that at that distance they were out of the reach of their fire-arms. They appeared determined to allow no time for rest, which the lagging of some of the party soon showed the need of; for the climbing over rocks, and floundering through reaches of deep water, at the rapid rate they went, tasked to the utmost the heavily-laden party. At length they struck off from the river, taking a path which led into the wood in a westerly direction. From the moment they left the river nothing more was seen of them. Strain's suspicions were immediately aroused, yet he continued to follow the path for about a mile, when it terminated at a plantation and recently abandoned rancho. Here he halted his men, and waited some time to see if the Indians would return. Finding they did not, he halloed for them. Receiving no answer, he gave the order to countermarch. Disappointed and baffled, the party slowly and with difficulty succeeded in finding their way back to the bed of the river.

The treachery of the Indians now being evident to the whole party, and hence their whereabouts encompassed with doubt, Strain called the first and last council which he held in the expedition. This was composed of all the officers, the two New Granadian commissioners, and the principal engineers of the party. The maps were brought out and spread before them, and Strain explained to them their position, as he understood it. According to the statement of the first guide, in whom they still had some little confidence, they had left the Chuqunaqua, and were within one and a half day's march of the Savana; and as there was but one river of any importance laid down on the maps, the Iglesias, which entered the Savana near its mouth, he naturally concluded he was on that river. Besides, this view made the statements of the Indians and the different maps in his possession corroborate each other. On the one drawn by Mr. Gisborne, ranges of hills were put down between the Chuqunaqua and Iglesias, which corresponded to those which they had just traversed. The great object was, if possible, to reach





FIRST AND LAST COUNCIL.

the Savana; but the question arose, whether the risk might not be too great to justify the attempt. The distance was not supposed to be very great, but there was no trail to direct their course, so that they would probably have to cut a path the whole of the way. The journey, therefore, instead of occupying a day and a half, might take weeks.

Besides, there was no certainty of finding water on the route, as it was near the end of the dry season, and they would thus perhaps become embarrassed in the wilderness, and perish from hunger and thirst. To effect this seemed to be the object the Indians had in view in leading them away from the river; while, even should they reach the Savana, they would meet no canoes, as the savages who had abandoned them would take care to conceal or destroy them all. The only resource then left would be to make their way for more than forty miles through one of the most impenetrable mangrove swamps in the world, where half a mile would be a hard day's journey. In addition to all this, Strain was also aware that, owing to the slight fall in the bed of the Savana, the tide ascended the whole length of these swamps, so that they might perish for want of fresh water while following its marshy banks. In a mangrove swamp, too, they could not expect to find game, or get it if they did. Neither could they

dream of finding timber with which to construct a raft. As if to nail all these arguments for not attempting to reach the Savana, two or three of the men and the junior New Granadian commissioner were already foot-sore and worn out with fatigue, and should they break down entirely, or should any body fall sick, it would be impossible to carry them through the dense forest which they would have to traverse. On the other hand, whether the river they were on was or was not the Iglesias, one fact remained certain, that however tortuous might be its course, it would eventually lead to Darien Harbor, the common receptacle for all the streams in that region. As long as they continued on its banks they could not, at any rate, suffer from thirst, at least until reaching tide-water, which did not run so far inland on any of the Darien rivers as on the sluggish Savana. Until meeting tide-water they would encounter no mangroves to impede their march, and if they should, could return a short distance to the forest growth of timber and construct rafts to convey them through.

On the contrary, if this river, notwithstanding the assertions of the Indians, should prove to be the Chuquanaqua, they would meet with settlements before arriving at the mangrove swamps, which presented the most formidable obstacle to reaching the Pacific shore.



The best chance for game was on the river, where some fish might also be obtained, while there was every reason to believe that, as on the stream they had left, they would find plantains and bananas. These last Strain had already determined no longer to respect, considering that the treachery of the Indians and their refusal either to sell or give had entirely relieved him from his former promise. Finally, by keeping on the river, should any of the party fall ill, they could, as a last resource, always construct a raft for their conveyance, even if they failed in finding canoes farther down, which they hoped to do.

This imposing council was held upon a shingle beach, upon which Strain sat soaking his hard, dry boots in the water while making his final speech. The different members were scattered around, some drinking water and others smoking, listening with the gravity of Indian chiefs to this lucid exposition of these not very flattering prospects. After he had finished, he invited every one to express his opinions freely. Unlike most councils, no one was found in this to suggest objections, and Strain took a vote on the two alternatives, when it was unanimously determined that they should continue down the river on which they then were.

*No proposition was made to return to the ship, nor was it hinted at by any one.*

To those easily discouraged—if there were any—the obstacles already surmounted must have appeared too formidable for them to wish to grapple with them a second time; while, as far as one could judge, the idea of a return occurred to very few members of the party. If it had been otherwise Strain would have pushed on, for, to quote his own language, he said, “I neither considered it expedient or consistent with our national or personal reputation, that so formidable a party, and one of which so much was expected, should be turned back by trifling obstacles.”

Of the seven persons who voted at this council, two perished during the journey, and one afterward, from the effects of starvation and fatigue.

At this point the reader would naturally wish for some clew to unravel the tangled state of things, and know definitely where the party really were, and obtain some explanation of the conduct of the Indians. The river which they had followed for several days after crossing the Cordillera, Strain eventually ascertained to be the Sucubti, a very important stream, utterly ignored in those maps of the moon which Dr. Cullen and Mr. Gisborne—the latter backed by the highest English authority—had published. The Indian guide whom they met on the Sucubti stated that this river was the Chuqunaqua, and that to follow it was a very long route to the Pacific. This, though not literally true, was so in effect, for while it was *not* the Chuqunaqua, it was a tributary of that river, which certainly did prove to be a most tedious and toilsome route. The river on which they now were was

the Chuqunaqua, one of the most tortuous known to geographers—in fact, by looking at the map, one will see that it would be almost impossible to double up a stream so as to get more length in the same space. To all Strain's inquiries respecting the name of this river, he could get no other reply than “Rio Grande”—the great river. He therefore remained in utter ignorance respecting it, although, if he gave any credit whatever to the statements of his first Indian guide, that the Sucubti was the Chuqunaqua, he would naturally conclude that they were upon the *next* river to the westward of it, which was laid down by Mr. Gisborne as the Iglesias. On the whole, Mr. Strain was afterward convinced that the Caledonia Indians and their Sucubti friends intended to lead them by the most direct route to the Savana, and that they were prevented from doing so by the Indians of the *Chuqunaqua* or *Chuqunas*, whom they met on their seventh day's march, and who from the first created suspicion. This opinion, which was originally founded upon the conduct of the respective parties, was farther corroborated by the report of a journey made by a Spanish officer in 1788, from the fort of Agla, near Caledonia Bay, to Puerto Principe, on the Savana. He set out under the guidance of the chief of the Sucubti village, who conducted him safely across, cautiously avoiding the Chuquna Indians, who were hostile to the Spaniards. He was prevented from returning, owing to the hostility of this tribe.

It would appear that in 1788, as in 1854, the Chuqunas were on friendly terms with the Indians of the Caledonia and Sucubti valleys, probably on account of their commercial relations, but that the latter have not sufficient influence to obtain a passage for a white man through the territory of these intractable savages. To these Indians is attributed the massacre of the four men in the British expedition.

It afterward turned out that when they struck the Chuqunaqua river, they were within five miles of the road cut by this British expedition before it turned back. At first sight, by looking at the map, it may appear a most unfortunate circumstance that this road could not have been struck, as they might easily have cut their way to it. Still it is very doubtful if they could have followed the Savana without canoes—owing, as before remarked, to the impenetrable mangrove swamps that stretched so far up with its tides into the interior—and they would have been compelled at last to return to the Chuqunaqua.

It is true that from the termination of Prevost's road to the mouth of the Lara, where the English civil engineers in the service of the Atlantic and Pacific Junction Company had established a station for the purpose of surveying the river, was but six miles; yet, as they were unaware of that circumstance, it could not have influenced their determination. A man with a thousand leagues of wilderness before him may be within one mile of deliverance, yet, with the facts in his possession, to go in that direction



would be downright infatuation. The maps on which Strain had implicitly relied proved utterly trustless. The Indians were no better than Gisborne's maps; and thrown wholly upon his own resources, he had, from the meagre facts in his possession, to determine what course to pursue. To have gone in search of a road of whose existence he was ignorant, or to have followed the banks of the Savana toward impassable swamps to find a station he had never heard of, would have been the act of a madman. Under the circumstances he took the wisest course beyond a doubt.

After having determined to continue down the river, Strain felt it important to impress on the men the necessity of great frugality in the use of provisions. He endeavored to prove to the sailors and other members of the party, that the idea that men needed such a liberal supply of food was entirely a popular fallacy; and in order to give his views a more practical bearing, declared that a man could live very comfortably three days without food, and *eight* with very little suffering. The men rolled their tobacco quids in their mouths, and tried to *look* their assent to this entirely new doctrine promulgated there on the Isthmus, in the midst of famine, but it was evident Strain could not count much on his converts. The resolution to go on being made, the order to march was given; and now, without a guide, they wound down the crooked banks of the stream.

Soon after leaving the place where the council was held, they passed a river which entered from the eastward, and which corresponded with one put down on Mr. Gisborne's map as an upper branch of the Iglesias.

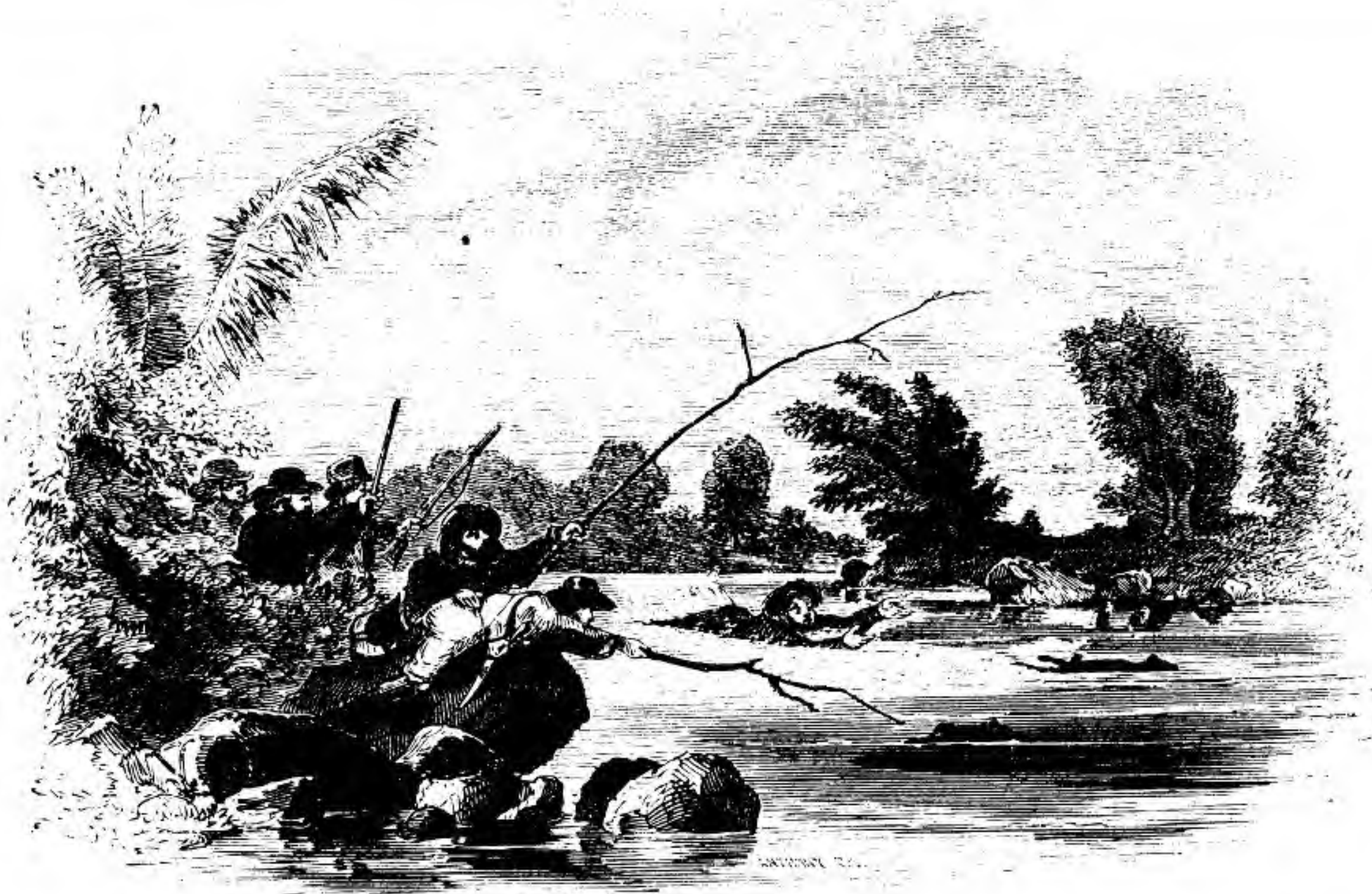
Subsequent investigations led to the belief that this river was the Asnati (see chart), which Colonel Codazzi in his recent maps has shown to be a branch of the Sucubti, upon information compiled from old Spanish manuscripts, and from conversations held with the Indians. During the afternoon a few plantains were found by the men, and urged upon Strain, who refused, wishing the men to keep them. He and Truxton killed eight birds during the day (though one was an owl and another a woodpecker), which were divided among the party, and none felt the want of the ration, which had given out. This was the first time Strain had fired his carbine at game, and the men, seeing what a dead shot he was, requested him to shoot for the party. While their pieces were echoing through those rarely-trod solitudes, a little incident occurred which caused a thrill of feeling to pass through the band. On looking up they saw a large flock of birds high in the air, and sweeping with great velocity to the west. Down in the forest all was still, but far up heavenward the trade-wind was fiercely blowing, and on the wings of the gale those birds were drifting to the Pacific, now the goal of their own efforts, and the only hope of their salvation. An unknown and toilsome way was before them, while those buoyant forms, borne apparently without effort on, would soon

feel the spray of the Pacific. Many an envious glance and envious wish was sent after those birds in their flight. Still the party kept up good spirits, and whiled away the time with jokes and stories. At this camp, and that of the night before, they were first annoyed by sand-flies, and this was the first camp where they met mosquitoes. Fire-flies, too, filled the wood, enlivening the otherwise monotonous gloom. The next morning, January 28th, at half past eight, they continued their journey, and although they had no provisions on hand the party was in fine spirits. The river widened and deepened in parts so much that they were obliged to cut their way across some bends through the undergrowth of the forest. Mr. Truxton shot three birds and caught some fish—among them one cat-fish, six inches long. In the afternoon they had come upon a plantain and banana field, and after eating as many ripe ones as they could obtain, filled their haversacks. Finding that Messrs. Castilla and Polanco, the Granadian commissioners, were very much fatigued, they encamped at about half past three, having made only about five miles. In this camp mosquitoes and sand-flies were met in swarms; and for the first time they heard, what is familiar to every woodsman, the falling of forest trees alone, resembling in the distance the reports of guns.

On the morning of the 29th they left camp at nine o'clock, many of the party with legs and hands much swollen from the bites of mosquitoes and sand-flies, and one of the engineers completely speckled with their bites and badly swollen. About two miles from camp they found some dilapidated huts, which had evidently been deserted for a long time, and fields of plantains and bananas. As the Chuquna Indians apparently do not frequent this portion of the country, these plantations probably owe their origin to the Spaniards, who had a garrison in this vicinity about the middle of the last century.

In the afternoon Corporal O'Kelly and Strain together shot a large iguana on the opposite bank of the river, which sunk. Holmes (landsman) jumped in to bring it ashore, but finding the water deeper than he anticipated, he threw off one of his boots, which sank to the bottom. The recovery of this was of more importance than the iguana, and after feeling around for it in vain, one of the men stripped and dived again and again for it, but unsuccessfully, its dark color rendering it invisible. To this apparently trivial circumstance this poor fellow's death after was partly attributable. This was Sunday. Fatigued with the weight of plantains and bananas, which filled every haversack, and with climbing through gulches and struggling through thickets, they went into camp about four o'clock, having accomplished, with hard work, a distance of only seven miles and a half. Opposite to the camp was a plantain field, with its whole vicinity swarming with mosquitoes of such enormous size, that the officers jocosely christened it "*The camp of the mosquitoes elephantines.*" This afternoon Strain took off his boots for the first time since





FISHING FOR THE BOOT.

starting. It required the efforts of two men to remove them. His feet were very much lacerated, as were also those of the party. The linen shirt which he had put on under his woolen one was now of great service, and Strain tore it up by piecemeal to bind up the wounds, which otherwise would have been dreadfully aggravated.

On the morning of the 30th, after plucking a supply of plantains and bananas from the plantation opposite, they set out on their journey down the river, which now had become so deep that fording was difficult, and they were obliged to hew their way along the banks, and in some cases saved much distance by cutting directly across the bends. About mid-day, being on the left bank, and finding an opportunity to ford, they crossed, as Strain deemed it decidedly best that they should be upon the west side, and between it and the Savana, where, if by accident they should get away from it, they might strike the latter river. During the day a snake about eighteen inches long was killed, which Mr. Castilla said was the coral snake, and very venomous. Strain doubted this, as he had seen such before in Brazil, and found them harmless.

At about three o'clock they encamped on a mud bank, the Granadian commissioners declaring they could go no farther. The day's journey, it is true, had been fatiguing, yet the principal labor, which was cutting the road through the dense undergrowth, was performed by the officers and their men. Mr. Truxton shot a crane just at evening, which was given to the men, some of whom, owing to carelessness and improvidence, were out of provisions. At this camp they thought they discovered tidal influence, and were greatly elated. Camping so early left a long afternoon, and those less fa-

tigued resorted to various amusements to pass the time. One man, named Wilson, had a superb voice, and he made the woods echo with negro songs—"Ole Virginny" and "Jim Crow;" and often during the day his comic songs would bring peals of laughter from the party, and discordant choruses would burst forth on every side. Another had made a fife out of a reed, which he played on with considerable skill, and made the camp merry with its music. The next morning they breakfasted leisurely, and at half past eight commenced again their journey. Having been so successful the day before in cutting off bends by pursuing a fixed compass course through the woods, they set off S.W. by W., and after crossing a bayou with some difficulty, met a deep and turbid river, about seventy feet in width, running from west to east, which they crossed on a large tree. This river was known on the old Spanish maps as *La Paz*, and enters the Chuquanaqua nearly opposite the embouchure of the Sucubti, which was thus passed without being seen. A few hundred yards farther on they again fell in with the Chuquanaqua, which had suddenly become deep, rapid, and much more turbid than where they had left it two miles above. Encouraged by the result of this experiment, they again took a departure from the river, and pursued a S.W. by W. course through a swampy country, where, although it was the height of the dry season, they were obliged to make many *détours* to avoid the standing water and muddy bottom. The country being generally open, they marched rapidly, those behind shouting "Go ahead," as the engineer reported sou'west by west; sou'west. As they tramped along, Strain saw a buzzard sitting on a tree. Turning to Lombard, he asked him if buzzards



were good to eat. Lombard being decidedly low in the larder, and withal having a strong appetite for flesh, replied—"Yes, captain, any thing that won't kill will fatten." Strain thereupon fired and dropped the buzzard, and advanced to pick him up. But as he drew near, the dreadful effluvia which this bird sends forth made him turn aside. Lombard approached somewhat closer, but at last was compelled to wheel off also. Each man in his turn, tempted by so fine a bird, pushed for the prize, but each and all gave him a wide berth. In the end they became less fastidious. Avoiding the thick undergrowth instead of cutting through it, and returning to their course when it was passed, they by twelve o'clock had made about four miles and a half. Not meeting the river, the course was changed to S.W., at 3.15 to S.S.W., and from 3.45 to 4.15 to S. by E., when they fell in with a pebbly ravine, containing cool and palatable standing water. As the distance to the river was uncertain, the probability of obtaining water in advance too vague to be risked, and many of the men foot-sore and fatigued, Strain determined to encamp there, although the sun was several hours high. Most of the men had no plantains and bananas, while the officers' messes contained only three or four, so that it now became necessary to examine into the resources which the forest afforded. Some palmetto or cabbage-palm, resembling, but not identical with, that which grows in Florida, was found, and as Strain, on a previous journey into the interior of Brazil, had lived some ten days on a similar vegetable, he had no hesitation in recommending it to the party, and set the example by eating it himself. This is not a fruit, it is simply the soft substance growing upon the top of a tree, and can be cooked like a cabbage. The palmetto of Darien is more bitter and less palatable and nutritious than that of Brazil, but the bitterness was partially removed by frequently changing the water in boiling.

Very little was said in this camp, and there was no mirth or pleasantry; on the contrary, a gloom for the first time seemed to rest on the party. They lay scattered around among the trees, talking in low tones or musing. It was evident they missed the companionship of the river, the only thread that connected them with the Pacific, and the last object at night and the first in the morning on which their eyes rested. Even Strain felt its influence so much, that when the draughtsman, Mr. Kettlewell, came at a late hour of the night to him, stretched on the ground in the smoke from the watch-fire to escape the bites of mosquitoes, and asked what he would have the camp named, he replied the "*Noche triste*"—the "sad night;" and although many other camps afterward were far sadder than this, and more deserving the title, he nevertheless allowed this name to remain, for it proved the beginning of sorrows. In the morning Strain and Maury took a long walk in the woods to examine them, and held a protracted and serious conversation over their con-

dition and prospects, and discussed the project of making a boat.

Starting about half past eight, they struck off on a southeast course, anxious to reach the river. Hitherto Strain had led the party, every day cutting a path with his cutlass. This was most laborious, and Mr. Truxton now insisted upon taking the macheta, and going ahead in his place. The undergrowth was exceedingly dense, and composed, for the most part, of *pinnello*—little pine—a plant resembling that which produces the pine-apple, but with longer leaves, serrated with long spines, which produced most painful wounds, especially as the last few days' march had stripped the trowsers from many of the party. After cutting for some time, he suddenly fell backward, and almost swooned away from the effects of heat, pain, exertion, and fatigue. Strain now saw that he was in danger of overtaking the officers, and detailed two men to cut the path, they being relieved every hour. The rest would sit down till ordered to march. It would take hours to cut a few rods.

This was the severest traveling yet, beating, as Strain declared, the jungles of Brazil and the East Indies, which he once considered without a rival. When they encamped, at half past four, near a ravine containing standing water, they had not advanced more than two miles, or at an average only eighty rods an hour. During the march they fell in with palm-trees, bearing a nut which they found edible, agreeable to the taste, and nutritious, though so hard as to be masticated with difficulty. They cut down two trees, and Strain divided the nuts equally. Some palmetto was also found, and toward evening Strain was so fortunate as to kill a mountain hen, which was divided between the two officers' messes, as the men had the last bird which was shot. A deer was also started—the first seen—but they could not get a shot at it.

So thick was the undergrowth that it required some time to clear away a place sufficiently large for a camp. Into this crater, as it were, hewn out of the foliage, the tired wanderers, after a frugal supper, lay down, filled with gloomy anticipations, and, strange as it may seem, mourning most of all for the lost river, which had so suddenly changed its direction and gone off no one knew whither.

Edward Lombard, an old seaman and former shipmate of Strain, whose boatswain's whistle had each morning piped the "heave round," and who had shown great energy and activity throughout, now became quite ill and desponding. A little soup, however, and meat of the mountain hen, which Strain gave him from his own mess, appeared to revive him. During his whole life he had been accustomed, on board ship, to a large supply of animal food, and with it he could have endured as much fatigue as any one in the party; but without it, he was perfectly prostrated. Ever afterward, until his death, the state of his health was an indication



of the quantity of animal food in camp. There were no songs to-night—the last strain of music dying away in the “*Sorrowful camp.*” The distressed commander of this handful of brave men now began to feel the pressure of their fate upon him, and on this night he was kept awake by the groans of those who were suffering from sore feet and boils. But fatigue finally overcame all; and at midnight no one was awake, except the sentries and officer of the guard.

Next morning, February 2d, the party appeared in pretty good condition; and Lombard, after eating a banana which Strain had reserved, and which was the last one remaining in the party, declared himself stronger, and ready to start.

Having thus far failed to reach the river on a southeast course, Strain changed it to east; for he found that the great majority of the men thought only of reaching the river banks. “Oh for the river!” exclaimed one; “it is better than Darien harbor.” Fearful lest the supplies of water they had hitherto found so abundant might fail, Strain now directed the few vessels which they had remaining to be filled, and given in charge of the officers, he himself carrying an India-rubber canteen containing about half a gallon, which he served out from time to time to the party. As they groped their way through the wilderness, they came upon trees of enormous size, one of which would have measured forty-five feet in girth.

During the afternoon Strain became somewhat anxious in regard to the supply of water, as many hours had elapsed without meeting with water-holes, and their vessels were empty. He therefore deviated from his course still more to the northward to follow down a slope, and finally meeting a dry ravine, where he thought, as a last resort, he could obtain water by digging, followed it until they met water-holes. Here, although but four o’clock, they encamped, and had quite a feast on the turkeys and small birds, reserving a monkey Strain had shot for breakfast. On this and on all subsequent occasions, all game or fruits obtained was divided equally among the party. Poor Lombard was at last unable to chew tobacco, and brought all he had left—about ten ounces—and gave it to Strain, saying, “Here, captain, take what there is left; I can’t chew any more.” A little coffee remained, and in order to eke it out as far as possible, the berries, after one steeping, were packed up for a second—then for a third, and, finally, for a fourth, when they were eaten for food.

On the next morning, February 3d, they started about half past eight, the whole party, especially Lombard, much revived by the animal food. Feeling confident that the ravine upon which they were would eventually lead to the river, and also afford a certain supply of water, Strain determined to follow it in whatever direction it might lead. As they advanced the forest became open, though the vines, swinging from tree to tree and coiled around every bush,

made the march slow and difficult. During the day they discovered and tested a new fruit of the palm, an egg-shaped nut covered with an acid pulp. This pulp was tried, and found to be refreshing; while the kernel resembled that of the carosas, which they had already eaten. This nut gradually became the principal article of diet; and they found that even the acid covering would support life, although it utterly destroyed the teeth, and by degrees the digestive power of the stomach. Strain, foreseeing to what desperate straits they might yet be reduced, endeavored to cheer up the men by this new discovery, assuring them that they were very nourishing food. Not to mention the pulp and rind, the oleaginous nature of the nut itself was highly nutritious; in fact, he said, many tribes of men lived almost entirely on oil. Men and officers listened respectfully to his philosophical disquisition; but it was evident, that, as they looked at their attenuated limbs, and felt the gnawings of hunger, it was pursuing knowledge under difficulties. Suddenly, “A turkey, turkey!” shouted one of the men, and, looking up, a fine large bird was seen sitting on a limb, and stretching out his neck in wonder toward the party. Strain asked if any one could shoot better than he; if so, let him fire. All shouted “Shoot, shoot!” He fired, and brought down the turkey. Soon after he shot another, which, with a third killed by Truxton, quite animated the hungry band. At length, at two o’clock, Strain, still in advance, with his cutlass clearing a way for his tired followers, caught, through the dense foliage, the gleam of the water. He immediately passed the word “river” back through the line, and “*The river! the river!*” was repeated in still louder accents, till “*The river! the river!*” went up in one glad shout, and then three cheers were called for by the excited men, and “*Hurra! hurra!*” rang and echoed through the forest. The German army, when it caught sight of its beloved river, never shouted “*The Rhine! the Rhine!*” with more ecstasy than did this little party over a stream of whose name even, they were wholly ignorant. They found it deep and turbid, sweeping on at a velocity of nearly three miles an hour. Truxton immediately rigged his hook and line, baiting with the intestines of turkey, and commenced fishing, and soon six fine cat-fish were floundering on the bank. Five of these were given to the men, in addition to their share of the wild turkeys, and seemed, after their late privations, a feast, and filled the whole party with high spirits. Besides, they were once more on the river, and as the tropical moon sailed up over the trees, and turned the dark and turbid water into flowing silver, they felt almost on the borders of civilization. From this time on, a marked and striking difference was seen in the power of endurance between the officers and gentlemen of the party and the common seamen (from the Granadian commissioners, of course, nothing was expected); thus proving, what every man has observed who has been in long and trying ex-





"THE RIVER! THE RIVER!"

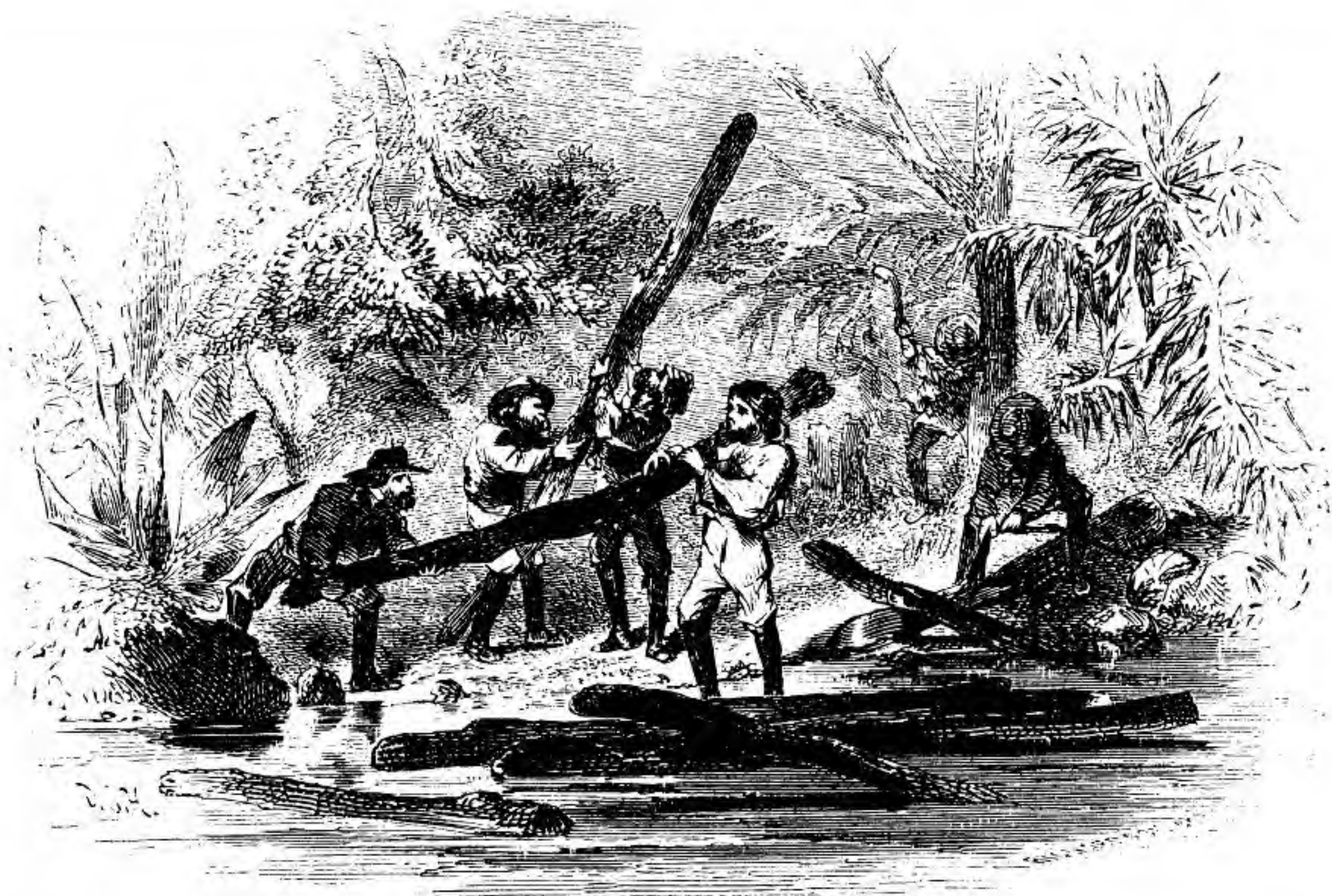
peditions, that intellect and culture will overbalance physical strength. The power of a strong will—the effort demanded by the calm voice of reason and the pride of true manhood—take the place of exhausted muscles and sinews, and assert, even under the pangs of famine and the slow sinking of overtaken nature, the supremacy of mind over matter, of the soul over animal life—no matter how vigorous the latter may otherwise be.

After leaving the ship they all fared alike, and when many of the men were already broken down, physically and morally, the officers and engineers were as active, energetic, and cheerful as at first.

Next morning, at half past seven, they started merrily down the banks of the river. The woods were, at first, open, and the traveling easy; but after making about a mile, they found their progress impeded by a dense jungle, while the river took another easterly bend, thus leading them entirely off their course. Strain halted the party, and after informing them that it was his conviction they were on the Chuquanaqua, one of the most tortuous rivers in the world in proportion to its length, or upon a branch of it which appeared upon none of the maps, and that their journey might be very much protracted, declared that, in his opinion, they ought to avail themselves of the strong current of the river for

assistance, or, at least, to convey the sick and foot-sore of the party. A canoe was, unfortunately, nearly out of the question, as about half the cutting part of the only ax had been accidentally broken off in a hard tree. This would prevent them from felling a tree of sufficient size for a boat; while a raft had thus far been out of the question, as they could find no wood sufficiently buoyant to support more than its own weight. The only resource left them, he said, was to cut down a few moderately-sized trees, split and hew them into planks, and construct a boat which might convey the whole party. "It is true," said he, "we have not a single nail, screw, or any oakum or pitch; but I once constructed a boat on a river in Brazil, secured only by wooden wedges and clamps, and I have little doubt we can do it now within twenty-four hours, if you will join me and work with a will." "Hurra! hurra!" was echoed far and wide; and "a boat! a boat!" repeated with acclamations. The order to encamp and kindle a fire was then given. Truxton, Maury, and Garland, and one man, were sent out to hunt game and obtain food; while the remainder, with every hatchet and cutting instrument they could lay hand on, were soon scattered through the woods, which began to ring with the unwonted sounds of incipient civilization. They vigorously cut down trees for planks, and trim-





BUILDING THE RAFT.

med up clamps, and wedges for splitting the timber, and by evening they had the clamps all done, and two planks, twenty-four feet long, split out and partially hewn. The hunting-party returned before night, bringing only one small monkey, or marmoset, a little palmetto, and some of the acid nuts of the palm. This was a small allowance for twenty-two tired men; and Strain, hearing the cry of hawks near, started off with his carbine, and soon returned with three, which made a meagre addition to the supper. As the men had been hard at work during the day, and were now out of the Indian country, Strain dispensed with the sentries for the night, placing the watch in charge of the officer of the guard; and after this had but one sentry at a time instead of two. The tobacco, their chief comfort, had, at the last camp, given out entirely, and they were driven to all kinds of expedients to supply the deficiency. Some, who were inveterate smokers, gathered decayed dry wood, with which they filled their pipes. The deprivation of tobacco was more severely felt than even that of provisions; and the longings expressed for it greater than for food.

February 5th was Sunday; but, being in no position to make it a day of rest, they were early at work at their boat. In the course of their search after a tree appropriate for planks, they came across some very buoyant wood; and, although it was scarce, Strain immediately determined to build a raft instead of a boat, as the labor was so much less, and so many more men could be employed upon it at the same time. The half-hewn planks were accordingly deserted, and the whole party sent out to seek and cut down these new-found trees. One after

another they came dragging them into camp; and, stripping away the bark, peeled off the inner surface for lashings. These strips a part commenced plaiting into ropes, and soon a large quantity of materials was collected on the bank. The officers discovering that animal food went much farther by boiling it into soup, Truxton was selected as cook, to superintend the operations for them, and give to each his portion. Each man carried a cup, and this cup full was the quantity allowed him.

A great misfortune befell them this day, in the loss of their only fish-hook. It was private property, but Strain had appropriated it for the use of the party, and forbidden every one except Mr. Truxton—who was the best fisherman—to use it. He would not even trust himself, so fearful was he of accident. Mr. Castilla had asked for it, and, as he thought that international courtesy would not allow him to refuse, gave it to him. The latter imprudently turned it over to one of the men, who broke it. Had that hook remained to them, no lives need have been lost by starvation, as the river always abounded in fish, their number increasing as they advanced. On such apparently insignificant circumstances do the lives of men depend.

As the man who lost the hook was one of the best in the party, Strain rebuked him only by setting forth what would probably be the consequences both to him and all the party.

By sunset they had collected nearly all the buoyant wood within reach of the camp, and wearied and worn out flung themselves along the bank, and though pierced by thousands of mosquitoes at length fell asleep.

The next morning the boatswain's call from



Lombard, "Heave round!" roused all hands at early daylight, and they again went to work upon the raft. By noon it was finished, but upon testing it, they found, alas! that it would support only seven or eight persons. As they had used all the *balsa* wood there was in the region, nothing more could be done, and so Strain determined to put those who were ill and foot-sore upon it, and proceed by land with the remainder of the party until they could find more timber of the same description.

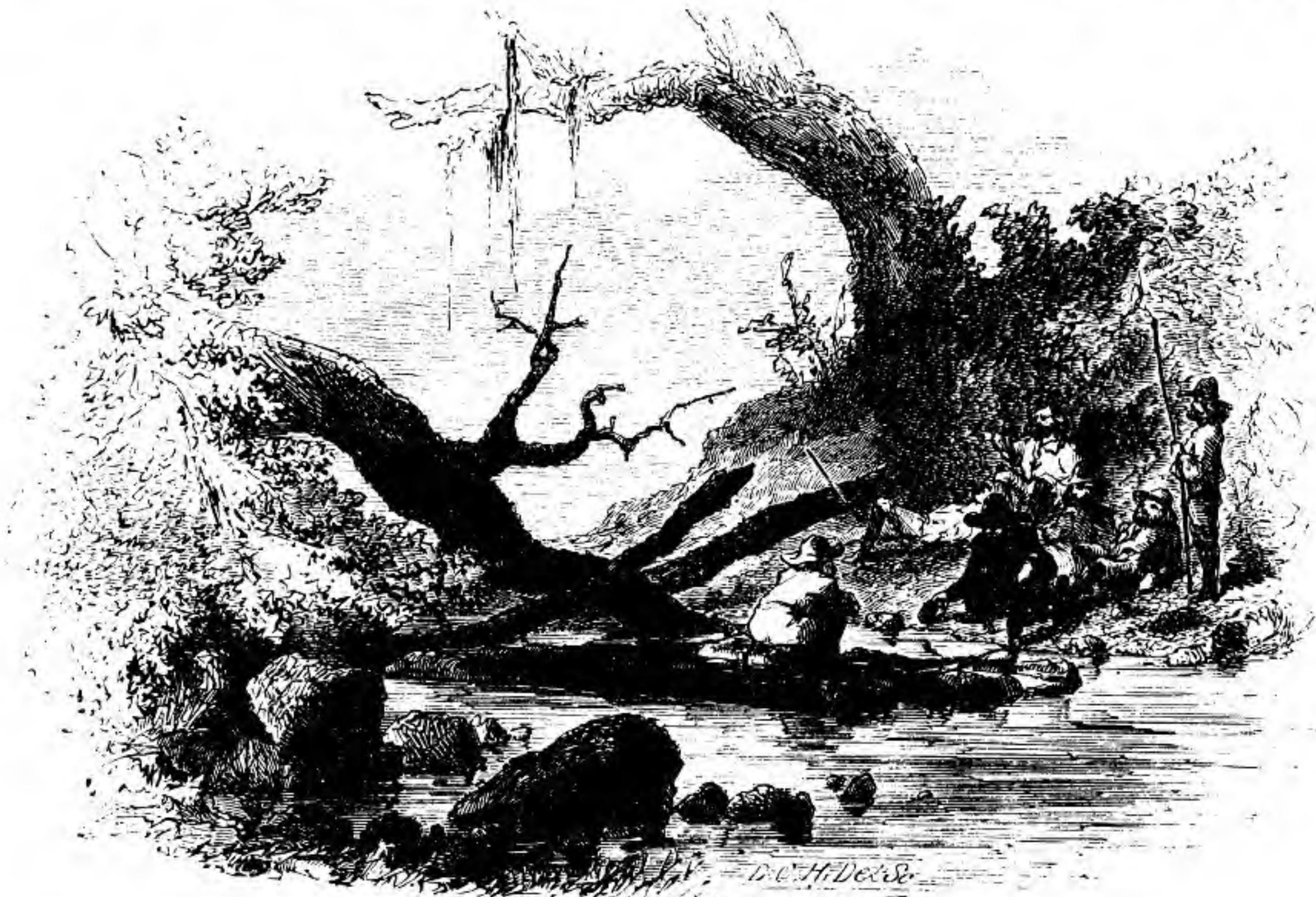
At a quarter past four the raft, in charge of Mr. Truxton, was headed from the shore, and swung slowly out into the current. On board were the two New Granadian commissioners, Mr. Boggs, Wilson, one of the seamen of the *Cyane*, and the draughtsman, Mr. Kettlewell, whom Strain furnished with a compass, to take the bearings of the river, and thus save them on land this trouble; for, still true to the great purpose of the expedition, Strain, amidst all his sufferings, had carefully worked up the route. The remainder of the party, after seeing the raft fairly moving down stream, turned to depart, but discovered that Lombard, who had already given symptoms of mental aberration, was nowhere to be found. Upon inquiry, Strain ascertained that he had been absent from camp several hours, and had left without permission. Scouts were immediately sent out, but they one after another dropped in, reporting no traces of him. Leaving a note directing him to follow down the bank of the river, Strain ordered the march, intending to return for him as soon as he met the raft. But just as they were moving off, to their great joy Lombard emerged from the wood—having been, as he said, down the river to reconnoitre. The main body then took up the line of march, occasionally exchanging signals with the party

on the raft; but at length being forced away from the bank by the undergrowth, they heard nothing more of them, and returned to the river late in the afternoon.

Feeling convinced that they were above, Strain called a halt, and sat down to await their arrival. Very soon the report of a gun above was heard, and then a second. This was the signal to communicate, and Strain set off with two men to ascend the river, leaving the main body to rest upon its banks.

After traveling a mile through the forest they came to a bend in the river, where the raft lay moored, those on it believing that Strain and his party were still above. Undeceiving them in this particular, and directing them to move on, he returned; but had scarcely seated himself again when he was startled by another gun, then a second, and a third. This signal was a recall for all parties, and understood to be one also of distress. He immediately took some fresh men, and carrying the ax, hatchet, and macheta, hurried in the direction of the sound.

Forcing his way through the undergrowth and along the bank of the river, he at length came upon Mr. Truxton and the majority of his party seated upon the bank. The latter, as Strain approached, simply made a sign with his thumb over his shoulder, quietly remarking, "There's the raft;" and, true enough, there it lay, jammed against two trees that had fallen across the river from opposite sides, thus forming a complete boom. The bank opposite was high and perpendicular, so that it would be impossible to lift the timbers out and carry them around. Neither could they cut away the huge trees that blocked the stream—it would take, as one of the men said, "a steam snag machine two days to remove it." Strain therefore determined at once



RAFT STOPPED.



to abandon the raft, notwithstanding the labor and time it had cost. Mr. Castilla, the principal New Granadian commissioner, however, still sat on the raft and refused to land, declaring that he was utterly unable to proceed on foot. Strain, knowing better, used every argument to persuade him to come ashore, promising, if necessary, to carry him, but all in vain. At length, becoming provoked at his obstinacy, he told him plainly that he would not, out of mere courtesy to him as a commissioner, sacrifice his own party, and would leave him where he was if he did not come on at once. Seeing that Strain was determined, he crawled ashore, and walked to the place where the main body was halted.

The following extract from the journal of one of the officers vividly portrays the condition of the party: "Proceeded down stream about a quarter of a mile, when finding a place to camp, built a fire and spread our blankets in the mild moonlight. We all feel downhearted to-night, being without any thing to eat, and not having eaten enough each man for the six or eight days to make one good meal; our clothes all in pieces, and nearly all almost shoeless and bootless. Have no idea where we are, nor, of course, when we shall reach the Pacific. The sick almost discouraged, and ready to be left in the woods to take their chances. I would freely give twenty dollars for a pound of meat, but money is of no use here." Thus they lay down, while countless sand-flies and mosquitoes, combined with the pangs of hunger and torture of undressed wounds, made the poor sufferers groan aloud. Their moans were answered only by the screams of the wild cat or cry of the tiger seeking their evening repast of blood. At last fatigue overcame their sufferings, and, save the night sentinel, all at length fell fast asleep. And over them the white moonlight lay, and past them, in quiet beauty, the unconscious river swept onward to the ocean.

Here, on the 7th, Strain again took off his boots, and finding one of his feet extremely lacerated, put on a moccasin in the place of the boot.

Early in the morning Mr. Castilla asked Strain's permission to return, with Mr. Polanco, his colleague, and one man, in order to attempt the reconstruction of the raft on a small scale, capable of carrying three persons, with which, as it would be more manageable, he expected to reach the Granadian settlements on the river below. This request was acceded to very unwillingly, and only with the condition that no one unless a volunteer should be sent. Finally, Benjamin Harrison, one of the best men, offered to go, and they departed, having first received from Strain good arms in the place of their own, which they had allowed to become unserviceable. The party, which numbered twenty-seven when it left Caledonia Bay, was now reduced to nineteen on the land, and with this number Strain continued to follow the river. The thickness of the undergrowth soon drove them inland,

and they did not reach it again until evening, when it was time to encamp.

The next morning, February 8th, they were about to leave camp 19th, when a shot was heard near by, to which the party answered with a shout. Immediately after the two Granadians and Harrison emerged from the bushes. Their story was soon told: owing to the exertions of Harrison a small raft had been built, but was soon wrecked among the snags and rapids, and a musket, carbine, and hatchet lost. They all seemed delighted to rejoin the main body, especially Mr. Polanco, who threw his arms around Mr. Truxton and Strain, and declared he never would leave them again, saying to the latter as he embraced him, "I know you don't like me, but I like you, and will stay by you." He evidently had gone with Mr. Castilla against his own inclinations. Harrison was utterly worn out, and, moreover, somewhat feverish, but declaring he was able to proceed, the whole set out to follow the river. The Granadians caught this afternoon an iguana, and stealing off into the wood by themselves, built a fire and ate it. The men, who had hitherto generously divided their last morsel with them, on discovering this, became disgusted, and ever after secretly despised them.

During this day's march they found an article of food which afterward became common in the camp, and was called by Mr. Castilla the "monkey pepper pod." It resembled the cocoonut (in its exterior) after the husk has been removed. The interior bore some resemblance to the yellow water-melon, though the seeds were not so regularly disposed, nor in the same direction. It grew in clusters like the jack-fruit, or cocoa of tropical climates, and on the most beautiful forest tree of the Isthmus, which sometimes towered to the height of two hundred feet, not a limb or knot breaking the smooth surface of the column-like trunk for a hundred and thirty feet; the fruit, when not quite ripe, as they at first found it, was hard and of a greenish tinge, becoming black by exposure. When ripe it was softer, and assumed a yellow color, yielding a most fragrant odor. In either state it had a pungent and peppery taste. In small quantities it was a very agreeable stimulant to them, who had so long been without condiments to their scanty food. They ate it raw, cooked it with soup, made soup of it, which proved very refreshing and stimulating when setting off on the day's journey without any breakfast. For some time previous to using it they had met with it in the forest, but dared not eat it. At length, however, they found one partially devoured by some animal or bird, and concluding that what one stomach was able to digest another could, they used it without fear. This was the more acceptable, as Strain had stopped their allowance of gunpowder which had been used for pepper and salt in seasoning their miserable food; but the Pacific receding like the mirage of the desert, and the ammunition getting scarce, he feared they might



need it more in procuring than for seasoning it.

As they had lost their fish-hook, the officers tasked their ingenuity to make others out of the wire in the tin-pots, though without success, owing to their inability to get a barb on them.

The next morning, February 9th, after having been nearly devoured by mosquitoes, the half-starved party set off, and being forced away from the river by undergrowth and deep ravines, only reached it again about five P.M., having made an estimated distance of nine miles. The forest during this day's march abounded in swamps and heavy undergrowth, which, combined with Harrison's weakness, rendered their progress painfully slow and laborious. Many very large trees were seen in the woods, which generally abounded in fine timber, though very little of it, except caoutchouc and mahogany, was recognized by the party.

The camp to-night (camp 21) was pitched in an open grove, under a magnificent canopy of trees, and on a bank thirty feet high, from which a long reach of the river could be seen as it swept in a deep strong current on. As the declining sun sent long streams of light through the leafy arcades, and flecked the high bank with shadows, and poured its tropical glories full on the flashing stream, the scene arrested every eye by its picturesque beauty, and with one accord the spot was christened "CAMP BEAUTIFUL."

This little band of explorers, as they sat at sunset in their "Camp Beautiful," making soup out of their lean, tough hawks, the dark background of forest casting into still stronger relief their tattered garments and emaciated figures, looked any thing but men on whose fate, for the time being, rested the fate of a ship canal, destined to change the aspect and history of the world.

The next day they continued their march, but were much delayed by Harrison, who, though feverish and unfit to travel, would not permit the party to halt for him, but weak and wretched, kept staggering on. Strain could not see the brave fellow bearing up so nobly, yet painfully, without often stopping to let him rest, and at length at four o'clock encamped on a point abounding in palm-trees, and gave it the name of "Nut Camp." They passed during the day the dry bed of a river of considerable magnitude, coming in on the left side. Its bed and banks were strewn with the trunks of trees, which showed that, though then perfectly dry, it must be a tremendous torrent in the rainy season. Breakfastless and weary the party, now thoroughly crippled with the feeble and sick, renewed in the morning their almost hopeless journey along the banks of the apparently endless river. Harrison was still sick, while the Granadians, as usual, complained much of fatigue, and required great urging to keep up. The Americans, both officers and men, except Harrison, as yet showed no signs of breaking down, although almost all had very sore feet,

and their low diet had begun to tell fearfully upon their appearance. Truxton declared he would not wait for the Granadians, who kept constantly crying out "*Halt, halt!*" He finally came forward and told Strain it was of no use marching in this way—they would never get through. The latter had thought so for some time. He, however, halted, and requested an officer to give the Granadians a cat-fish to revive them, which he did. Constantly on the look-out for something on which they might make a supper, he managed during the day to kill six hawks. No order was observed in the march to-day—the line was long and straggling—and, as it crawled slowly and wearily along the winding shore, presented a most piteous spectacle to the commander. Events were drawing to a crisis—each day told fearfully on the party—a few more like the last would compel them to stop, and leave a portion behind to die by slow starvation. Every morning Strain would scrutinize each man anxiously, to ascertain by the increased emaciation how fast they were sinking. At three P.M. they encamped for the 23d time upon a shelving mud-bank, having made some seven and a half miles by the course of the river. After reaching camp, Strain managed, even with the defective fish-hook, to catch two cat-fish, which were divided among the sick; the hawks being divided equally among the well. When about to start early the next morning, Lombard was suddenly attacked with severe pains, accompanied by dangerous symptoms, which delayed them until nine o'clock. This attack was owing to the diet of palm nuts, which, containing only acid and fibre, the first was absorbed in the stomach, leaving the latter in undigested and matted masses, effectually preventing the action necessary to throw them off. Lombard was the first who suffered severely from this cause, but in the course of the journey no one escaped from the fearful effects of such a diet, which, at the same time that it paralyzed the internal organs, utterly destroyed the enamel of the teeth.

During the day they discovered another species of nuts, the outside covering of which was not unlike the mango fruit. As the tree was large, they did not stop to cut it down, but obtained what they could by shooting into the clusters with their carbines. The complaints of Castilla were constantly heard along the line, while Lombard and Harrison were so ill they could scarcely drag one leg before the other. It was impossible to march, and Strain was obliged to encamp at noon, making only about two miles in all. The serious aspect which affairs were assuming was no longer to be trifled with. There was no concealing the fact that most of the party were failing fast, while the feet of many were sore, and the clothes of all in tatters. Strain had given the last remnant of his trowsers to Kettlewell, and had traveled several days in nothing but his drawers.

Lombard was ill and dispirited, and declared that he would "leave his bones in the woods."



The unfortunate Granadians were much alarmed at the protracted journey, but still would make no exertions to advance; on the contrary, they constantly retarded the party by begging Strain to halt at times when his own officers and men could have made three times the distance. Lombard and Harrison were really ill and suffering, yet they still pushed on, and the last early halt was made at the urgent request of Castilla, who, though doubtless fatigued, was in perfect health.

Now nearly certain that they were upon the Chuquanaqua, which, though almost unknown to geographers, was noted for its tortuous course, Strain was aware that marches of two miles a day would never clear them of the forest until all had suffered terribly from starvation or perished from disease, which their diet would certainly engender. He had no direction in which to look for assistance from without. Captain Hollins, as he was well aware, must be already very anxious, but he was utterly powerless to relieve him, as any party which he might have sent would have consumed their provisions before they could reach him, and instead of being serviceable, would only embarrass him the more, by increasing the number to be provided for in the forest.

From below he had no reason to expect any assistance, as he did not suppose any one in that direction was aware of the Expedition, and besides, if they had, he had already had sufficient experience among the New Granadians to feel assured that—their fear of Indians being placed out of the question—their indolence and selfishness would prevent them from making any effort for which they were not well paid beforehand. Having nothing, therefore, to expect from abroad, finding the party daily becoming weaker, he determined at this camp to send forward and have canoes and provisions brought up to meet them.

Soon after encamping, therefore, he called the men together, and explained to them their situation and the necessity for obtaining canoes and provisions. He then told them that he had resolved to build a small raft, capable of transporting three persons, who were to go forward in search of them. Notwithstanding their previous ill-fortune, he believed that, with a small raft, obstacles might be avoided and surmounted which would stop one large enough to transport the whole party. The proposition seemed to meet the views of the whole party, and the poor fellows went to work energetically to fell a tree which he pointed out to them, and which he had himself commenced cutting down; the wood was tested to see if it would float, and the result being satisfactory, they felled it with no little difficulty, cut it into pieces of appropriate length, and peeled it.

At sunset they had, as they supposed, timber enough for the raft, and were about to convey it to the river bank when it was discovered—by throwing a limb into the water—that, though the wood would float, it was just about the spe-

cific gravity of water, and would bear no additional weight.

Thus were all their hopes dashed to the ground, and their labor thrown away. They had, however, found some *pussley*, as it was called, which they gathered, but hesitated to eat it; when one of the party said that hogs would eat it in the United States, and if it was good for hogs it was good for men. This was conclusive; and large quantities were boiled, of which they all ate ravenously. Violent vomiting ensued—Strain suffering among the rest. They became so thoroughly disgusted with it, that afterward, though nearly half starved, they could never eat it again.

The camp-fire was kindled, and the dispirited, distressed band flung themselves on the earth around it, and sought that refreshment in sleep which could not be obtained by food. That was a long and gloomy night to Strain. He could not sleep, but lay amidst his suffering men, pondering on their sad condition, and revolving various schemes for their deliverance. He had resolved, if the raft had succeeded, to have sent others forward and remained himself behind. This hope was past; and, turn which way he would, it was clear that the last hope of the party rested on some of the strongest cutting their way through and returning with boats. If they were near the Pacific, so much shorter would be the delay of relief—if far, so much more urgent was it that the attempt to reach it should be made before all were too weak to undertake the journey. The time had come for immediate and energetic action, if they would not all perish there in the forest. He had found by experiment that he could endure more, and on less food, than any other member of the party. Besides, the advance might be more dangerous than the retreat. Before them was all uncertainty. Perils greater even than those they had already encountered, might await those who ventured forward. He therefore felt that it was his duty to go; and, if necessary, sacrifice himself for the rest. Still, to leave his command to a doubtful fate, tried him sorely. They had supreme confidence in him, which they might not transfer to another leader; and should an evil fate befall them, which after events should prove he could have avoided, it would be a blow greater than he could bear. Thus revolving his condition, he outwatched the stars; but when the morning dawned his resolution was taken.

Rousing up the men, he called them together and announced his determination to leave the party, and taking three persons, force his way down the river to the nearest settlement, from whence he would send back canoes and provisions. Not willing to order men on this doubtful undertaking, he packed up his blanket, shouldered his haversack and carbine, and called for volunteers. Several at once stepped forward, out of whom he selected Mr. Avery, originally a volunteer in the Expedition, and Golden and Wilson, two of the crew of the *Cyane*. These



men were chosen for no mental qualification, but solely because the state of their physique appeared to promise the greatest endurance of the fatigue which he anticipated.

He then told the men officially that they were placed under the command of Mr. Truxton during his absence; whom he directed to follow under the bank of the river by easy marches—halting whenever it might be necessary—and taking all possible precautions to supply the party with game and other food. In a short conversation with the officers, he expressed his firm conviction that if the nuts, palmettos, and other articles of food which they had met thus far held out, the party might be sustained in camp for six months; but he advised them to change their camp as often as provisions became scarce in the vicinity.

With these parting directions, he, on the 13th of February, took leave of his command, and set out on his journey. As he turned away, he exclaimed "Good-by! good-by!"—"Good-by! God bless you!" came from all, and the forest soon shut him from sight.

This little band of four were well calculated for the terrible trial before them. Strain, the leader, though half naked and a small man, was knit together with iron sinews, and with as brave and resolute a heart as ever beat in a human bosom. Fertile in resources, and with that natural spirit of command which begets confidence and insures obedience, no man could be better fitted for the trying position in which he unexpectedly found himself. Avery was a man of powerful frame, and had already had some experience in tropical travel, having passed some months on the Atrato, and journeyed elsewhere in New Granada. James Golden, seaman, was a young man who had served with Strain in a cruise on the coast of Africa, and had enlisted in the naval service with especial reference to accompanying him in this expedition. Wilson, a landsman, was also a man of splendid frame, which seemed to have suffered scarcely at all from the privations which he had undergone. Their arms were one Sharp's rifle, belonging to Mr. Avery, two carbines, and two Colt's pistols. They also took plenty of ammunition. Young Golden, not being so strong as the others, had no arms except a pistol—Mr. Avery, Wilson, and Strain carrying the others. Two machetes and a small pocket-compass, and their blankets and empty haversacks, completed their equipment.

The best compass and the double-barreled fowling-piece were left with the main body, one to direct their course and take the bearings of the river, and the other to provide the party with game.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

#### ANCIENT AND MODERN ARTILLERY.

**I**n few things have men displayed so much ingenuity as in devising and perfecting implements for destroying each other. The necessities of the chase, indeed, demanded projectile weapons; and Nimrod, "the mighty

hunter before the Lord," must have had some means of attacking game at a distance greater than he could hurl a stone or cast a spear. When the hunter of beasts became a hunter of men, the same weapons would come into play, and new ones would be brought into requisition. In point of fact, war, rather than the chase, has led to the invention of projectiles.

The sling being the most simple and obvious, was undoubtedly the earliest instrument for casting missiles. It was but increasing the momentum of the stone by augmenting the circumference of the circle around which it was whirled. Slingers constituted the great body of the light-armed troops of antiquity. The weapon was easily constructed, and the missiles adapted to it abounded every where. Every tent which contained a bit of leather was an armory. Every brook course, with its smooth water-worn stones, was a magazine abundantly stored. There was little room for improvement in the construction of the sling. The earliest were, in all essential respects, as perfect as the latest. Those found in the Egyptian tombs do not differ from those used three thousand years later. The only advance made was in the employment of leaden bullets in place of the smooth stones with which the Hebrew youth slew the Philistine giant. It is not a little singular that these bullets were made of an almond-shape, very like the conical balls which modern science has shown to be preferable to the round ones so long employed. Among the Greeks these bullets not unfrequently bore some motto or inscription. Every bullet literally had its billet. A very common one was, "*Take this!*"—an invitation wholly superfluous to the person who chanced to be hit.



SLINGER.

The range of the sling was great enough to make it a very formidable weapon, though skill in its use could be acquired only by early training and long practice. The inhabitants of the Balearic Islands had a reputation as marksmen akin to that enjoyed by our "Kentucky riflemen." This proficiency was the result of early training, the mothers of the young slingers being accustomed to suspend the food of their sons from the branch of a tree, compelling them



two hours longer, sometimes in the first, sometimes in the second tier, and then for a while still deeper in the bowels of the earth. At last, weary almost with our sensations, and silent as the graves around us, we turned upon our steps and ascended to the day.

"There are the mountains again!" cried Cole. "From their stern heights they have looked down upon Roman, and Goth, and medieval knight, and still they stand there the same calm emblems of duration!"

And still they stand there in the glorious sunlight, or pointing upward to the stars, as when we stood and gazed upon them together. But thou, friend and companion of happiest hours, from whose sweet converse I drew hopes and thoughts that make life a double blessing, how can I think of them without remembering thee! Years have past since last we met, years checkered with life's strange vicissitudes, and thou hast long been sleeping in an untimely grave. And when, a few weeks ago, I sat in the chair where thou didst love to sit, and gazed upon the last touches of thy pencil, and then went forth to the hillside to look upon thy grave, the memory of the hours we had passed together in the homes of the dead came back to me like a dream of yesterday. The awful veil that shuts out the living from the knowledge of all beyond the boundaries of life has been rent, and the mystery of the grave is no longer a mystery for thee. Thou hast stood side by side with those whose bones we touched in veneration and awe, and made thy home with their glorified spirits around the throne of the Almighty. For in heart thou wast of them even here, and the path by which thou walkedst on earth was like that of thine own Pilgrim, the steep and difficult path of the Cross. Peace to thy remains! Peace to the sweet spot where they lie! Other mountains—thine own dear Catskills—look fondly upon thy slumbers from their calm and majestic heights. The stream thou lovedst flows near; and hard by, with its pine groves and shady bowers, stands the home of thy affections. And thy gentle spirit pervades them all, shedding over the landscape the hallowed influences of purifying thought, and making that modest tomb on the hillside a shrine for every sincere admirer of the beautiful and the true.

**DARIEN EXPLORING EXPEDITION,\***  
UNDER COMMAND OF LIEUT. ISAAC C. STRAIN.  
BY J. T. HEADLEY.

THE following is a narrative of the proceedings of the main body of the Expedition, from a Journal kept by Mr. Kettlewell, under the supervision of Passed-Midshipman Truxton, actually in command of the party:

On the morning of the 13th, after Lieutenant Strain, with his party of three, had left, the main body, under charge of Mr. Truxton, also took up its march, and slowly followed down the stream.

The feeble seemed more lively, as the marching was good along the banks of the river and through the forest, and early in the day they thought they would make a longer journey than had been accomplished for some time. But this crooked river so doubled upon itself that they frequently retraced their steps. For instance, if the stream was running west, it would take a turn in the almost level forest and come back for miles to the east. Returning on this, the party would often get a glimpse of the river a little way off in the wood, and supposing it was farther down, cross over, and at length discover they had struck it up-stream.

Depressed in spirits, the weak and sick were soon unable to advance; and after making some two miles, they were forced to go into camp on a high bank where water was obtained with difficulty. It being still early in the afternoon, Truxton and Maury went ahead to clear a path for the next day's march through the undergrowth, where every step had to be cut with the macheta. The only food which they had was a very inferior species of nuts. During the night Vermilyea (one of the best men) suffered very much from acute pain.

On the following morning, the party left camp 25 at a quarter-past nine. The trail cut on the preceding evening was through a dense jungle, which was thickly festooned with vines, crossing and recrossing in every direction, and filled with thorns and prickles. After cutting and forcing their way in this manner for nearly a mile, they found that the edge of the stream beneath them furnished better walking; and catching hold of the vines, they slid down one by one to the beach. Here Mr. Castilla threw away his carbine, declaring he could not carry it any further. The journal says, "The necessity for the advance of Captain Strain becomes the more evident as we proceed, and is displayed in the frequent breaking down of the men, the slowness and constant halts during the march, and the increasing suffering, attributable to our diet of acid nuts, the fibres of which, remaining undigested, produce painful effects."

On the river bank, about two miles from the last camp, they found some palmetto and some nuts, which were divided among the party. Mr. Truxton shot an iguana, which was given to the sick and feeble, and an hour granted them to recruit. A handsome scarlet-blossomed tree relieved the eye from the sameness of the ordinary forest growth.

At four o'clock they went into their 26th camp, and made a scanty supper on "pulsely" and nuts.

The next morning they left camp at half past eight, and on climbing the river bank started a fawn, which, however, disappeared in the wood as an unsuccessful shot was fired, carrying the very hearts of the hungry travelers with him. After advancing about a mile and a quarter, Lombard became very faint, and compelled them to halt. While awaiting his recovery, they cut down some acid nuts, which by roast-

\* Continued from the March Number.



ing they made out to eat. A little later, Mr. Truxton shot a crane in a wet ravine. During the day heavy reports were frequently heard of falling trees, which sounded like distant guns; and every time the deep echo rolled away, the men would look at each other and exclaim—"The Captain must be through, and is firing guns on board the British ship for us." The river became wider and deeper as they advanced, and the current slower.

Soon after, Harrison, one of their best men, broke completely down, and they were compelled to encamp, after having made less than five miles from their last resting-place. These were short marches; but this fact, at the time, caused but little uneasiness, as they supposed Strain was making long ones.

A slight shower fell toward morning, and a little before ten o'clock, Mr. Castilla breaking down, they halted; and while waiting for him to recover, cut down some palmetto and nut trees. Mr. Castilla getting no better, declared he could march no farther, and so they went into their 28th camp, not having made more than a mile and a quarter. He always broke down when they came to any food. In this case, however, it was fortunate, otherwise they would have passed a note written by Captain Strain, which was found near the bank. The party at the time were a little back from the river, and Truxton, speaking to Maury, said, "Jack, push in and find the river." In doing so, the latter came upon this note stuck in a split stick. He immediately called out, "*Here's a note from Strain!*" They all rushed together, when Truxton read it aloud. The following was the note:

"DEAR TRUXTON—We encamped here the night we left you (Monday night). Look out for a supply of palm-nuts, as they appear to grow scarce as we descend. We are off at once, and hope to make a very long march to-day. This river appears to me more and more like the 'Iglesias,' and I have strong hopes of popping out suddenly in Darien Harbor. You may rely on immediate assistance, as I will not lose one moment.

"Your friend, I. C. S."

After the reading, Truxton called for three cheers, and "*Hurra! hurra! hurra!*" rang in excited accents through the wilderness. "Now, my lads," said Truxton, "You see how far the Captain has got ahead; he'll be back in a few days." This cheered up the spirits of all the party, and especially the sick, who now felt that the probabilities of assistance from below were very strong. Owing to the debility of Mr. Castilla and the inflamed condition of Holmes's foot, they did not attempt to march the next day, and subsisted solely on palmetto, "pulsely," and palm-nuts.

The third day poor Holmes could not lift his swollen foot from the ground, and the order to march was not given.

The men lay scattered around on the ground,

with the exception of a few who went out hunting. Harwood shot a turkey, Harrison and Mr. Maury each a hen buzzard, while Mr. Maury brought in some palmetto. The men then gathered round the fire, and began to pluck the buzzards and turkey. The entrails were given as an extra allowance to the shooters.

The next day was Sunday, and owing to the debility of Mr. Castilla and continued illness of Holmes, no attempt was made to advance, and early in the morning Harrison went out to hunt.

The men lay under the trees listening; and as each report echoed through the woods would exclaim, with the eagerness and delight of starving men, "*There's something!*" The spot where they were now encamped was a little tongue of land, running out into the river, overshadowed by trees, and presented, with its location and surroundings, a most picturesque aspect. Truxton lay on his back, pondering the condition and prospects of his party, when Harrison returned with his haversack loaded down. Looking up, he said to the latter, "What have you killed?" "The devil," replied Harrison; and pulling out an animal weighing some eighteen pounds, he threw it down, exclaiming, "Tell me what *that is, if you please.*" "A wild hog," replied Truxton. This windfall filled the men with high spirits, and they fell to cutting up the animal. Truxton took the liver for himself, and soon all hands were gathered round their fires, toasting each his piece of wild hog on a stick. By the time the meat was done the bristles had all disappeared. This was a good substantial meal, and proved very opportune; as the men, covered with boils and suffering from hunger, had become very desponding. They named the place "*Hospital Camp,*" from the number of sick in it. No one thought of marching, for Holmes could not move unless he was carried, and the party was too weak to do that. They had only, therefore, to wait till death should relieve him from his sufferings. The next day the hunters got only two buzzards and some palmetto, which were divided among the fourteen and soon consumed. About sunset a heavy report came booming through the forest, electrifying the men into life. "*There's a gun! there's a gun from the Virago!*" was shouted by one and another. "The Captain's safe, and will be here in a day or two." The British steamer *Virago* was known to be in Darien Harbor, waiting to give assistance to any of the parties that might need it on the Isthmus, and they supposed that Strain was on board and fired a cannon to let them know of his safe arrival. The cheering announcement was like life to the dead; but like many other suddenly excited hopes, this one also was doomed to bitter disappointment. What was taken for the report of a cannon proved to be the heavy crash of a falling tree—falling without wind or ax, eaten down by the slowly corroding tooth of decay. The next day two hen buzzards and a little palmetto, "pulsely," and nuts were all they had to subsist



on. Even the buzzards gave out the day following. They were revived, however, by the sound of what appeared to be the report of three heavy guns. The night, however, wore away in silence, but at daybreak another report was heard, kindling hope only to deepen despair. Parties went out hunting during the day, but were unsuccessful in obtaining game, so they were obliged to subsist upon nuts and palmetto this day also.

Says the journal: "*Thursday, February 23.* Holmes still unable to walk. Harrison had a chance at a piccary, but unfortunately his cap missed. About 5.30 all in both camps simultaneously exclaimed, 'A heavy gun from S.W.' At sunset, Harrison shot a small animal called a 'coingo' by the natives, although it bears no resemblance whatever to a rabbit. 'It was very small, with flat ears, nose and teeth squirrel-like, color gray, long-backed, short-tailed, and with four claws on its fore-feet and three on its hind-feet; its weight was about ten pounds.' Harrison slept out in a ravine during the night to watch for game, but obtained nothing.

"*Friday, February 24.* Holmes's foot still very sore, and Mr. Polanco suffering from a swollen leg. No food but nuts and palmetto."

During these days of darkness and famine, rendered still worse by the want of occupation, thus giving them time to reflect on their forlorn condition, the two young officers, Truxton and Maury, as soon as the camp got quiet, would crawl away into the bushes, and discuss, in a low tone, their prospects, and the probable fate of Strain. The journal continues:

"*Saturday, February 25.* Mr. Maury and Harrison out hunting early in the morning, but returned unsuccessful. Holmes somewhat better, and hopes to be able to march to-morrow.

"*Sunday, February 26.* Holmes pronouncing himself better, the party moved on about half a mile, which was as far as he could walk. Although the distance attained was small, an object was gained in removing the party from a camp which had been so long occupied. During the march we cut some nut and palmetto trees. Our new camp, which was in the wood near the river, was named *Hospital Camp*, No. 2, owing to continued sickness and debility in the party, and we were now below the rapid, the noise of which would have intercepted the sound of guns, which we still hoped to hear from Darien Harbor." The effort of Holmes to walk was so painful and difficult, that when Truxton had made the half mile the former had moved but a few rods, while the debilitated party was strung along the whole distance. Holmes soon gave out, and the report of his condition passed along the line. Truxton lay down, declaring he would not go back, and so Holmes hobbled and was lifted along, and the new camp cleared away. The day was a sad one—no meat, and but a few nuts.

The next day Holmes was very ill. At nine in the evening they again fancied they heard a sharp *gun*-report, not the booming sound

of a heavy cannon, and they were cheered with the hope that the Captain fired on his way up the river. They talked it over a long time by the flickering fires, but at last lay down in gloomy disappointment.

When Mr. Kettlewell went to the men's camp on this morning to see Holmes, he was informed that the Granadian commissioners had been attempting to induce some of the party to leave the officers and return with them to the *Cyane*. The men generally appeared to be discouraged; some doubtful of Captain Strain's return, others whether this river entered at all into Darien Harbor. Mr. Truxton remonstrated strongly with Mr. Castilla for tampering with the men. The latter denied the accusation, but promised Mr. Truxton any amount of money if he would only return.

Mr. Maury shot a hawk, which was given to Holmes, who, without more animal food, it was apparent could not long survive, as he was totally prostrated, and continued so all the day. Taciturn, and apparently resigned, he said but little, but lay stretched, a mere skeleton, on the ground, from which it was evident he would never arise. Says the journal:

"*Thursday, March 2.* Mr. Maury, and a party who went out to hunt this morning, returned with some palmetto and a turkey, which, though when divided it gave each one but a small portion, somewhat revived them. Some small, round black berries, resembling chincapins, were found and eaten. They were few in number, and proved to be a purgative, for which some of the party afterward used them, to counteract the effects of the acid nuts.

"A singular species of worms, called by the natives '*Gusano del Monte*'—Worm of the Woods, was found under the surface of the skin, and covered over like a blind boil. As to the manner in which it was deposited no information could ever be obtained; but it appeared to grow rapidly, in some subsequent cases attaining the length of one inch, and was extremely painful, especially when in motion.

"The party subsequently suffered very much from these worms, and, in some cases, were obliged to have them cut out by the surgeon after the journey had terminated."

"*Friday, March 3.* Early this morning Lombard, Parks, and Johnson left the camp without permission; and it being discovered that they had taken their blankets and cooking-utensils, it was supposed that they intended to desert, and attempt, by following up the river, to regain the *Cyane*. Previous to this Lombard and Parks would, every day, go a short distance into the woods and pray—the burden of their prayer being the return of Strain. After prayer they remained to talk matters over, and finally matured a plan to hide away till Holmes died and the party left, and then return and dig up the corpse, and filling their haversacks with the flesh, start for the Atlantic coast. But after an absence of some two or three hours, and losing their way, and getting fright-





LOMBARD AND PARKS AT PRAYER.

ened, they commenced firing signals. Truxton, however, forbade his men to return the fire, and for a long time left them to wander about. Sometimes they would come close to the camp, and he could hear them talk, but the thick brushwood concealed the party. At last he ordered the signals to be returned, and they came into camp alarmed beyond measure, and most penitent. Parks confessed that Lombard, who at various times during their distressed condition had shown symptoms of alienation of mind, and himself had formed the diabolical plan mentioned above.

“Nothing can give a more vivid conception of the forlorn condition of the party than this horrible proposition; and both of those who entertained it afterward expiated most fearfully their intended outrage against military discipline and against human nature.” But it must be remembered that men grow mad with famine. During the day they found a dead iguana half eaten up by flies and worms; on this they fell like wolves, and devoured it raw. Three eggs were found inside, over which some of the men quarreled.

Holmes was very low to-day, and scarcely able to articulate. Mr. Maury went out to hunt, and returned with some of the best nuts which had been for a long time seen in camp. The journal adds: “We can not surmise what has become of Captain Strain, now absent nineteen days. Nuts, palmetto, and game become daily more scarce.”

On Saturday, Holmes sent for Mr. Truxton at an early hour, and, though his speech was

already indistinct, he expressed hopes that he might recover. He confessed that his name was fictitious, and that he formerly belonged to the marine corps. He was the one who had made a fife out of bamboo, and in the early part of the expedition used to make the company merry with its music.

About eleven o'clock a loud call from the men's camp of “Mr. Truxton! Mr. Truxton!” carried all over to see Holmes breathing his

last. It is inserted in the journal: “After death he presented, even to our debilitated party, a most emaciated appearance; while his left foot, which had been pierced by a thorn many weeks before, was in a condition which threatened decomposition, if it had not already taken place.” Allusion has been made, in a previous part of this narrative, to his having lost his boot while attempting to obtain an iguana, which had been shot on the opposite side of the river. Through the moccasin with which his boot had been replaced he was pierced by a thorn, and being in a high degree of a scrofulous habit, the puncture never healed, and the disease which it produced, added to bad diet, no doubt produced his death.

It was thought best to bury him immediately; but they had great difficulty in digging the grave, as they had no implements but an ax, hatchet, and their knives. Mr. Maury, assisted by Corporal O'Kelly, succeeded at length in scooping out with a knife a grave about twelve inches deep, and, at sunset, all who were in camp attended the body to its last resting-place.



Truxton, deeply moved, offered up an extemporaneous prayer, and then the attenuated corpse, with the musket which he had carried so long placed beside it, was deposited in the shallow opening, and the dirt flung back with the hand. The whole party were seriously and deeply impressed with the solemn scene, and turned from the grave to talk of Captain Strain, and to wonder at his long absence. The journal adds:

"*Sunday, March 5.* We have now been waiting twenty-one days for Lieutenant Strain's return, and the party seems generally impressed with the idea that something has happened to prevent it, as he expected to be back in four or five days. The conclusion forces itself upon us, that if he, with three strong men, could not reach the settlements in twenty-one days, that our dispirited, debilitated, and suffering party of sixteen could never get through. A council of the officers was therefore held, and it was determined to return to the ship."

This was a painful determination to take, for Truxton's express orders were to keep down the stream till met by Strain with boats and relief. But that order was based on the certainty of the latter reaching the Pacific. His return with boats would occupy but a few days, and it did not seem possible, if he were alive, that so long a time could have elapsed without relief being sent, even if he himself were not able to accompany it. For twenty-one days those seventeen men had lain there in the wilderness, gradually wasting away with famine

and now death had come to claim the first victim. Day after day, and night after night they had waited, and watched, and listened, now cheered by the apparent report of a distant gun, which they believed their commander had fired in Darien Harbor, to tell them he was through, and to bid them be of good courage, for help was at hand, and again quickened into sudden joy as they thought they heard the nearer sound of his carbine, till hope had given way to settled gloom. The silent forest still shut them in, the sullen echo of its falling trees only making them more desolate, by reminding them of the cannon of their own ship, whose roar for so long a time had made the sunset welcome. To the oft repeated question, "Where is Captain Strain?" had now succeeded the melancholy response—"He is dead!" To push on was madness, for all said if Strain with three strong men could not get through in twenty-one days, they, encumbered with the sick and feeble, could never get through. It had taken them, when much stronger, three days to reach his first encampment after he left them. Whether he had perished with famine, or been devoured by wild beasts, or slain by Indians, could only be conjectured. It was simply evident that no safety lay in that direction. To stay where they were, around the grave of their partially covered comrade, was also certain death, for game could no longer be found, while the nuts and palmetto were every day becoming more scarce. Besides, the long rainy season was fast approaching, when marching in any direction would be im-



BURIAL OF HOLMES.



possible. The return seemed equally hopeless, for if when starting fresh with ten days' provisions on hand they had encountered such suffering and want in reaching the spot they then occupied, how could it be possible to retrace their steps in their present enfeebled condition? The only gleam of hope remaining to them was that they might reach the plantain and banana fields they had left far up the river, and there recruit. Still, Strain had left no conditions with his orders, so certain did he feel of getting through; and if he should yet return and find his command gone, and trace them up by their dead bodies scattered along through the forest, Truxton felt that heavy blame might attach to him. On the other hand, should Strain never return, he might be blamed for not assuming more responsibility. It was a most trying position in which the young commander found himself, and long and painfully he revolved it. "Oh, for light to direct me!" was his constant prayer. Of himself he scarcely thought. If his death could purchase the safety of those intrusted to his care, the sacrifice would be cheerfully made. Could he only see clearly what was duty, his chief anxiety would be over. But turn which way he might, not a ray of light visited him. Thrown back upon himself, he was compelled to rely on his own judgment and that of his brother officers. Lieutenant Maury, who looked at all these grim dangers with a cool and steady gaze, and met them with an iron will and unshaken courage, also felt that sound reason counseled the attempt to return. Besides, the other officers and the men, and Granadian commissioners, pleaded earnestly for it. He therefore determined, now Holmes was dead, to commence his backward march immediately. Before leaving, however, he wrote the following letter, in case Strain returned, and placed it in a detonating cap-pouch, which he hung on a cross erected over Holme's grave:

"March 5, 1854, No. 2 Hospital Camp.

"DEAR STRAIN—This is Holmes's grave. He died yesterday, March 4, partly from disease and partly from starvation. The rapidly failing strength of my party, combined with the earnest solicitation of the officers and men, and your long-continued absence, have induced me to turn back to the ship. If you can come up with provisions soon, for God's sake try to overtake us, for we are nearly starving. I have, however, no doubt of reaching the plantain patches if the party be able to hold out on slow marches, and reaching them, I intend to recruit. Since you left I have been detained in camp eighteen days by the sickness of Holmes and the Spaniards.

"I trust I am right in going back, and that when you know all more fully, you will approve of my conduct in the course, the more particularly as even the palm-nuts and palmetto are no longer sufficiently abundant as we advance for our sustenance, and as I am now convinced that something most serious has happened to yourself and party to prevent your return to us.

After long and serious deliberation with the officers, I have come to the conclusion that the only means of securing the safety of the party, of saving the lives of several, if not all, is at once to return in the way and to the place of provisions.

"With the kindest remembrances and best wishes of the party for your safe return to the *Cyane*, and a happy meeting aboard, I am, yours truly,  
W. T. TRUXTON.

"To Captain I. C. Strain, U.S.N.,  
"In Charge of the Isthmus Darien Party, etc."



HOLMES'S GRAVE.

Harrison, Harwood, and Vermilyea, who had been out all day hunting, returned in the afternoon, and reported that Parks had left them at daybreak with a supply of palmetto for the party. He had, however, not arrived in camp, and from his continued absence they concluded that he had lost his way or deserted. Many signals were made from camp for him, and a council held to consider whether to remain longer or proceed the next day. The latter course was determined upon in consideration of the dearth of provisions and general and increasing weakness of the party.

The next morning, March 6, Lombard's whistle piped the exciting strain, "*Up anchor for home!*" the one always used when the order to return is given by the commander of a ship. To its stirring notes the seamen tread round the capstan with a will; and on no other occasion does the heavy anchor lift from its muddy bed with such a swift and steady pull as then. So now, gathering up their empty haversacks and rolling up their blankets, and flinging aside useless pistols and muskets, they soon stood



ready to march. This was the last time poor Lombard's whistle roused up the famished wanderers, or woke the echoes of the forest with its music. They felt sad on leaving Parks wandering about alone in the forest; but the prospect of return quickened every heart, and in *two hours* they made a distance which it had taken them three days to accomplish in their downward march. Here, at "Indian Camp," as they had previously named it, they halted, and breakfasted on some nuts. They remained here for three hours and a half, firing signals for Parks. A council was then called, to determine what course to pursue, when it was unanimously decided that the welfare of the whole required them to leave him to his fate; and about mid-day they recommenced their march. Mr. Maury, a little after, shot a marmoset, which being divided into four parts, was given to the weakest, and soon after some large red nuts were discovered; "*Providence,*" says the journal at this point, "*smiling graciously on our return.*"

Mr. Polanco was all day very feeble, and delayed the party very much, which, though weak, was enlivened by the idea of progress, after lying so long idle in camp. Formerly the order "Halt," passed down the line, was heard with pleasure; but it now seemed to take so many hours from the time that should intervene between them and a bountiful supply of food. Having accomplished some seven or eight miles, they encamped on the river, a short distance above the twenty-seventh camp of their downward progress. This was No. 1 Return Camp, and marked the longest march that was made while ascending the river.

The next morning, at a little after six, breakfastless, and with no food in prospect, they started cheerfully off, cutting their way as they went. Mr. Maury, the chief hunter of the party, shot a hawk during the forenoon, and cut down some nut trees, which afforded a slight breakfast. At two o'clock Mr. Polanco was suddenly seized with fainting and cold extremities, while his eyes became glassy and fixed. His illness from this time continued to delay the return very much. His prostration increasing hourly, he was assisted along by the sailors during the afternoon, and with much difficulty the party reached the second return camp, which was about one mile below the twenty-sixth on the downward march.

It is entered in the journal: "*Wednesday, March 8.* Left camp at 6.30 A.M., proceeding slowly, in consequence of Mr. Polanco's continued illness. During the morning march some acid nuts were obtained; and, after many delays, the camp was reached at which the advance party had separated from the main body.

"At 1.30, with gloomy anticipations, we left the parting camp. Miller was permitted to throw away his carbine, owing to his inability to carry it. Mr. Polanco again failed after leaving this camp, and delayed the party a long time. A tree was finally met with which pro-

duced a species of the palm-nut, the covering of which resembled mangoes. As it was too large to cut down, as many as possible were obtained by firing into the clusters. Revived somewhat by this food, the party reached No. 3 Return Camp at 4.50 P.M."

It was sad to see the eagerness with which the men watched each discharge of the carbine into the tree-tops.

After suffering much annoyance from mosquitoes during the night, the party commenced their painful march at eight in the morning, but owing to the illness of the Granadians, little progress was made. "Halt, halt!" rang continually along the line, and the men lay down to wait for the commissioners. Two turkeys were seen, but neither could be obtained. Mr. Castilla being unable to proceed, a woodpecker which had been shot was given to him, which he ate raw, before the feathers were half plucked away. James (landsman) was permitted to abandon his carbine, in order to assist the two Granadians, who hourly grew worse. Overcome with fatigue, they would throw themselves on the ground and weep, bitterly mourning, in their native language, for the friends at home they were destined never to see. Their frequent fainting fits obliged the party to encamp, after repeated stoppings, at half past three.

Nearly all were very weak, and the distance marched could not be very accurately estimated, owing to the frequent halts, but was probably about three miles and a half.

The next morning the Granadians appeared very feeble, while Lombard and Harrison also suffered exceedingly; but at eight o'clock they left camp, and staggered on. Little progress, however, was made, owing to the increasing illness of Messrs. Castilla and Polanco. The traveling, too, in the early part of the day was very trying, being for the most part through a thick jungle, that flogged and tore the men as they floundered on. During the day a few acid nuts were found. Mr. Truxton used every means—persuasion, promises, fear—to induce the Granadians to move on, but Mr. Castilla still grew worse, and would not get up. A lofty tree, filled with a multitude of cranes, was discovered, and several shots were fired into it. Mr. Maury killed one and wounded another, which escaped. Encamping at four o'clock, the party feasted upon the crane (the largest bird yet killed) and some "pulsely" which was gathered near the camp. During the night there was a heavy dew, and the party were much annoyed by mosquitoes.

The next morning the men seemed somewhat improved by the animal food of the night previous, although Lombard, being rather aged, appeared to derive but little benefit from it. Harwood was permitted to throw away his injured carbine, to enable him to carry his blanket and hammock. Since the debility of the party, especially that of the Granadians, had become so great, all hands were called early every morning to prepare some "pulsely" water, acid-nut tea,



or other warm beverage, with which to sustain the stomach while marching. The delays were solely attributable to the weakness or want of energy of the Granadians, though every assistance was given them that the men could bestow. Corporal O'Kelly and M'Ginness were allowed to throw away their carbines, to assist them. Leaning heavily on the shoulders of these two men, who were scarcely able to take care of themselves, these commissioners limped slowly along. As one skeleton, with its arm thus thrown around another for support, begged for delay and still more aid, a most striking illustration was furnished of the difference in endurance and courage between the two races. But even this assistance soon ceased to be of avail; and shortly after leaving camp, Mr. Castilla fell down, apparently insensible, and remained in that state for two hours. Cold water was thrown over him, and every means used to revive him; and at length he opened his eyes. Mr. Maury, in the mean time, having shot a dove, the half of it was given to him, and eaten raw, which enabled him, after much difficulty, to reach the river, where they halted.

Just before dark, while the men lay stretched around their fires and all was quiet in camp, Truxton strolled out into the woods to see if he could obtain any nuts. He had not proceeded far when he observed something breathing in the grass. At first it looked like a negro baby lying there; then he thought it must be a wild cat. He had nothing but his knife with him, and drawing that, he crept stealthily toward the mysterious object. But before he got near enough to strike it, the animal arose, and stretching its wings flew with a heavy swinging motion across the river. It was the crane that Maury had previously wounded. Cursing his stupidity in not making a rush for the bird at once, and thus secure food for his starving men, he saw it slowly fly away, and gazed after it as a wrecked mariner strains his eye after the vanishing sails of a ship. Heretofore the officers had given all the meat to the men to enable them to march, but being compelled to do all the cutting through the jungles themselves, and soon after prepare all the camp fires, they began to feel the necessity of something more nourishing than nuts, or they too would speedily give out. So after this, when a buzzard, or lizard, or any form of animal life was obtained, they first sucked the blood themselves, and then distributed the food to the men. At this time Truxton and Maury would often go forward together to clear a path, or one to cut and the other to shoot. Lieutenant Garland then took charge of the rear-guard, and it required all the arguments of persuasion, and all the power of his authority, to keep the stragglers moving. The distant prospect of food ahead could not overcome the desire of present rest. The prospect now looked gloomy enough. Castilla was getting deranged, and had become fearfully changed. His eyes were glassy, and glared like those of a wild beast from their sunken sockets. He said but little, and when

he spoke his sepulchral cry was, "*Meat! meat! give me some meat!*" A small bird being divided between him and the junior commissioner, he devoured his portion voraciously, and then, as senior in rank, fiercely demanded of the latter his half. Among officers and men there was now but one object—*food*. One thought filled every breast, one desire animated every heart. There seemed but one object in the universe worth seeking after—*food*. The eye was open to only one class of objects, the ear to one class of sounds, some article of food and some cry of animal or bird. Wan and haggard, they looked like spectres wandering through the woods, yet no rapacity marked their conduct—at least that of the Americans. None hid their food. One sentiment of honor actuated every heart, and each divided cheerfully with the other, furnishing a striking illustration of the power of example in officers over their subordinates. Had the former claimed a larger share, or allowed suffering and famine to render them selfish, those men would have become wild beasts. Lieutenant Maury especially exhibited the noblest traits that adorn human nature; I say especially, because he was the chief hunter, and could at any time, unknown to the rest, have appropriated to himself at least some of the nuts he obtained. But that most demoralizing of all things, famine, had no power over him. Forgetting his own destitution, he hunted only for others, and his joy at success, sprung from the consciousness that he could relieve the suffering men who looked to him for food. Undismayed, composed, and resolute, he, with the other officers, moved quietly on in the path of duty, and all by their example effected more than any mere authority could ever have accomplished. When men see officers toiling for their welfare, refusing even to share equally with them, forcing on them the larger and better portion, and then each, with his meagre allowance, turn away to get more food, they will die rather than be untrue or disobedient. Such example ennobles them by keeping alive within their bosoms the sentiment of honor, and enables the soul, even amidst the extremities of human suffering, to assert its superiority to mere animal desires and physical pain.

Says the journal here: "Providentially, as we had no other means of subsistence, Mr. Truxton found the body of the crane which Mr. Maury had wounded yesterday. It had fallen on the opposite bank of the river, and ate all the better for being a little gamy." The colored man, Johnson, swam the river for it, and it was soon devoured, entrails and all. Owing to the mosquitoes and sand-flies none could sleep, and the camp resounded with the moans of the men.

The next morning was Sunday, and at seven o'clock the order to march was given, but in a quarter of an hour Mr. Castilla fainted again, and it soon became evident that his suffering journey had ended. Every effort to revive him proved abortive, and a little after noon, without making a sign, he died. A ring taken from his



finger, a lock of hair, together with all the property found on his person, were given to the junior commissioner, Mr. Polanco. He had for a long time complained of his knee, which he kept bandaged with his handkerchief. This was unbound to examine the cause of his suffering, but though dwindled away to a skeleton, neither limb showed any symptoms of disease. Maury and Corporal O'Kelly, with their sheath knives, dug a shelf in the bank and stretched the Granadian commissioner upon it. The attenuated forms of the men, but half covered with rags, then gathered round the grave, and gazed with haggard features on their dead comrade, while Truxton offered up a short prayer to Him who alone seemed able to save them. Polanco would not go near, but stood a little way off, weeping bitterly, and declaring he could not leave his friend. The dirt was flung back over the form scarcely yet cold, and with sad, melancholy forebodings the party turned away, and the order to march passed down the line. Death had begun to claim its victims, and it was evident, from the appearance of the men, that it would now traverse their file with a more rapid footstep than it had hitherto done. The sudden energy inspired by the thought that they were returning to the ship had given way before present famine and weakness, and as one after another yielded to his fate, the moral and physical force which hope imparts, also left them. This was the case especially with Mr. Polanco, the junior commissioner. Grief at the loss of his friend and companion, added to the increased desolation of his position, was evidently fast sapping his remaining strength.

Whether because absorbed in the calamity that had overtaken them, or from some casualty, does not appear, but they had not proceeded more than three quarters of a mile when they lost the river and became completely entangled in the jungle.

At this juncture, a return of Mr. Polanco's illness obliged them to encamp for the night, nearly destitute of provisions and utterly without water. This was the only night during the whole Expedition that the party encamped without water; and, independent of the physical suffering, the circumstance spread a gloom over the minds of all. They had kept marching until very late, in hopes of reaching again the river; and when the word was passed from the rear to van that Mr. Polanco had fainted, and the order to halt was given by Mr. Truxton, he, Mr. Maury, and some of the men were a quarter of a mile in advance. As they halted, the weak and debilitated party laid down where they found themselves in the matted forest, and for the first and only time it displayed the characteristics of a rout. This was the blackest night yet experienced, not only from the death-scene they had just witnessed, and the absence of water and provisions, and loss of the river, but from the fact that the men were too far apart to converse with each other. The officers, however, moved backward and forward to cheer

them, and by great effort succeeded in kindling two fires, about a quarter of a mile apart, which somewhat relieved the gloom of the night, and served as beacons to the stragglers along the path. This was Sunday; and next morning, after a night of torture, owing to the myriads of mosquitoes which infested the forest, the party, without breakfast or water, started from camp at half past six. Mr. Polanco was scarcely able to move at all; and, after having proceeded about half a mile, fainted, and only returned to consciousness to give himself up to complete despair. He requested that a paper might be drawn up, giving to Corporal O'Kelly and James M'Ginness, who had assisted him during the march, all the money which he had left on board the *Cyane*. He also stated that Mr. Castilla had expressed a similar wish prior to his death. This paper being drawn up, was signed by Mr. Polanco, and witnessed by Midshipman Garland and Mr. Kettlewell, after which it was placed in the hands of Mr. Truxton.\*

The party halted a long time to satisfy every one as to the possibility of Mr. Polanco's recovery. If they had been by the river, or known of its whereabouts, they might have delayed longer; but they were without water or provisions, for both of which the men were suffering exceedingly, and knew not how long a time might elapse before they could be obtained. One thing was certain, these must be reached soon or not one but many would be left in the forest to die. Under these painful circumstances, a council of war was called, and it was submitted, "Whether the life of one man who could not survive many hours should be regarded before the lives of the fourteen now remaining?" The opinions of all being taken, it was unanimously resolved to leave him to his fate and proceed. Poor Polanco then rose and tried to march; but after staggering a few steps he sunk heavily to the earth. Each one in succession of those nearest him then went up and bade him good-by. As Truxton turned away, Polanco shrieked after him, begging most piteously not to be abandoned there in the forest. Three times Truxton, at his beseeching cries, which thrilled every heart with agony, went back to bid him farewell; and at last, with streaming eyes, gave the order, "Forward." Poor Polanco lay doubled up on the ground, moaning piteously; but soon the last sounds of the retiring footsteps of his comrades faded away in the forest, and he was left alone to die. How long he lay there was never known; but it was afterward discovered that he succeeded in crawling back to the grave of his friend, and stretching himself upon it, died; for his skeleton was found lying across it by Strain. Even a grave was a better companion than solitude.

The party, after floundering for a long time

\* This order upon Commander Hollins, of the *Cyane*, was never presented, their property on board having been previously turned over to their relatives at Carthagena, when the fate of the party was uncertain. The amount of money was small.



through the thick brushwood, at length struck the river again, but below Castilla's grave. Refreshed by the water of the stream, they began once more slowly to climb its banks. Suddenly Truxton caught sight of Castilla's grave, and became deeply affected. Maury, who was in advance with him, noticed it, and said, "Truxton, you are strangely moved—what is the matter?" The latter replied, that he feared the effect of that grave on his men. He therefore halted and addressed them, bidding them be of good cheer, and saying that their prospects now were brighter, for all their past delays had been occasioned by the Granadian commissioners, and they could now proceed more rapidly. It was evident, however, from the furtive glances which the men cast at that rude grave, and the melancholy expression of their countenances, that each one was thinking of the probable doom that awaited himself. Many could hardly stagger along, and the pain which the effort to march caused them was written in legible lines on their features. Five carbines were flung away to-day, with the permission of Mr. Truxton. Nothing can show the perfection of our naval discipline more than the conduct of these men under their accumulated sufferings. Scarcely able to drag along their own weight, each attenuated form continued to toil under the burden of its carbine until his commander permitted him to abandon it. Obedient under all—obedient and submissive even to death.

Several men now suffered severely from the "Guzanos de Monte"—wood worms, heretofore alluded to, which were extracted with much pain from different parts of the body. During this day's march a soft vegetable, full of seeds, was found, which, when boiled, tasted like a potato. Toward evening, five who had eaten the *seeds* were seized with violent pains and vomiting, which lasted several hours, and in some cases all night. Harrison here made his will, under the expectation of being left in the morning.

The journal of next day says: "*Tuesday, March 14.* Left camp at 7.30 A.M. After marching about half an hour, Edward Lombard (seaman), who had delayed the party very much yesterday, threw himself on the ground, declared his utter inability to proceed, and begged to be left to his fate. He had made the same request every day for several days previous.

"After much persuasion, Mr. Truxton led him along, allowing him to throw away his blanket and other effects. Among other reasons for refusing his request was the fear that he would go back and dig up and eat the Granadian commissioner.

"Miller, a landsman belonging to the *Cyane*, who suffered intensely from a bad ulcer, wept bitterly during this day's march. He uttered no complaint, but the scalding tears trickled incessantly down his face. He showed a brave and noble spirit, but his terrible sufferings would have some outlet. He declared it to be his belief that he would not march on the morrow."

Mr. Boggs was also very much debilitated, owing to frequent vomiting. The progress of the party was painful and slow on this day, by the illness of so many of its members, and the advance very tedious; but fortunately some three or four dozen of yellow, richly-flavored nuts were procured on the way, by which all were much revived. Three nuts to a man had at last become a refreshing meal. These nuts were the more prized, as all hands had been affected by the late constant use of acid palm-nuts. Mr. Truxton's carbine burst upon being fired on the march, leaving but one carbine and a double-barreled fowling-piece among the fourteen men now remaining. A little after four, they arrived at Return Camp No. 9, an old Indian hunting-lodge, which was not seen on their march down the river. Midshipman Garland had suffered exceedingly all day from the effects of the "Guzanos de Monte," or wood worms.

It is one of the striking peculiarities of the journal before me that all these revolting, painful visitations, so dreaded by man, are chronicled like the common events of every-day life. To me, nothing can show more vividly how fearfully familiar they had become with human suffering.

Lombard became very desponding in camp this evening, and it was exceedingly mournful to look upon the old man, evidently so near his end. Mr. Maury was also very sick, owing to the seeds above alluded to, of which he had partaken freely. Says the journal:

"*Wednesday, March 15.* The party were called this morning at an early hour, but Edward Lombard immediately and despondingly declared his utter inability to proceed, and desired the party should be assembled in order that he might make a statement of his position to them, and abide the result of their determination.

"All having assembled, he set forth clearly and distinctly his utter and entire inability to march any further.

"He also gave his opinion upon the importance of speedily reaching some place where provisions might be obtained; and remarked that as Mr. Polanco had been left to perish to insure the safety of the greater number, he had no right to expect any more consideration. Having finished his remarks, Mr. Truxton addressed himself to the men and officers, stating clearly the case which Lombard had set forth, and then asked that each one, in the presence of Lombard, should give his vote.

"He was earnestly persuaded to try and move a little further, in hopes of reaching some nuts or something of the kind that might revive his drooping strength; but he was utterly prostrated."

Nothing can more clearly illustrate the difference between the Spanish and Anglo-Saxon races than the conduct of the Granadian commissioner and that of Lombard, an American. The one clinging to life with a selfishness and tenacity painful to behold—not a thought for



the welfare of the others; not a moment's manly consideration of the trying duties and exigencies of the case. Lombard, on the other hand, begging day after day to be left, and finally demanding that a council should be called to listen to the sound reasons he could give why his request should be granted.

As he peremptorily refused to make another effort, it was unanimously resolved to leave him. Each one, as he gave his vote aloud, advanced, weeping, and divided with him the few nuts he might have on his person. Lombard received them thankfully, and asked them to kindle a fire beside him, which was done; and that a pot and knife and hatchet might be left. These requests were all silently fulfilled. As he sat, leaning against a tree, with these few articles beside him, so calmly, so methodically preparing for his abandonment, every heart was moved with the deepest pity, and his was the only dry eye there. Each one then bade him an affectionate farewell, with streaming eyes, and took his place in the file in marching order. He then requested that Mr. Kettlewell might write down his last wishes and pray with him. Kettlewell took down his few requests, and then kneeling, offered up a short prayer. Lombard, to whom the parting, now that it was to be taken forever, grew more agonizing, requested him to ask Truxton to come back once more, and bid him good-by. The latter slowly traversed the silent, motionless file, to the head, till he came to Truxton. Emaciated and wan, his clothes patched with bark, and hanging in tatters about him, this noble young commander stood leaning on his carbine, the tears one by one trickling down his haggard face. All his sympathies were aroused, and every pulse quickened into momentary action under the excitement of sorrow, but he refused to go back. He dared not trust himself again. Besides, the scene was too painful to continue—the sooner it terminated the better. The order to march was therefore passed down the file, and the party—dwindled to thirteen—mournfully moved away, and left Lombard alone in the wilds of Darien. That was the last ever seen of him. How long he lived—whether he ever struggled again for life, or whether he flung himself into the river, on the very verge of which he insisted on being placed, was never known. His boatswain's silver whistle, worth some four or five dollars, was government property, and when some one advanced to take it from him, he begged earnestly that it might remain, saying he had carried it the whole route, and could not bear to part with it now. It was the last companion that remained to him, and it was left in his possession. It had sounded its last call, and rests by the bones of its owner in those rarely-trod solitudes.

He had come on from Norfolk, for the express purpose of accompanying Strain in this expedition. The latter told him he was too old to attempt it, and offered to get him some petty office on board ship, but he would not take a re-

fusal, and now sleeps where the sound of civilization will probably never be heard.

That day's march was a silent and sad one; but the feelings of the depressed and debilitated party were much relieved in the after part of the day by coming on the "CAMP BEAUTIFUL" of their downward march. Shout after shout went up as they entered it, and the bright green bank and scarlet blossoms that enlivened the forest presented such a contrast to the gloomy wilderness they had so long traversed, that they seemed to be entering once more the borders of civilization. Besides, this was the first downward camp they had met for several days, and it seemed like the face of an old friend.

Miller, Boggs, and Garland were the last to straggle in; and being prostrated, and scarcely able to move, it was resolved to rest here for an hour and recruit. A fire was kindled on the old spot, and many reminiscences recalled of the time they last encamped there. Strain and his party naturally became again the topic of conversation, and many regrets uttered over his probable doom. A few unripe acid nuts had been gathered on the way, which were divided; while a terrapin, caught by Corporal O'Kelly, was made into soup, and given to the three sick men. Revived by this, the latter announced themselves ready to march, and slowly struggling to their feet, fell into order. From this time on it was with great difficulty the officers could induce the men to rouse in the morning. Threats, and kicks even, were resorted to, to induce them to stir; and but for the tea which the officers made for them, it would have been almost impossible to have succeeded with any efforts.

Continuing the march about sunset, some palmetto was obtained, which being the first which had been met since the 6th instant, was thankfully welcomed. Soon after, the party encamped near the river, though access to it was difficult. "Mr. Garland still suffering severely, and applying cold water. Mr. Boggs very sick; and Miller's thigh much excoriated"—is the remark noted on the journal of the condition of things in this camp. The party supped on palmetto and roasted nuts. The time had now nearly arrived when rain might be anticipated; and the journal kept by the main body remarks in this place—"We have remarked for some days the cloudy state of the atmosphere, and rain has fallen at intervals, but not in such quantities as to excite uneasiness in regard to the approach of the rainy season: if that catches us on the Isthmus our knell is knolled. The weather now reminds us of Indian summer at home."

"*Thursday, March 16.* At daylight, all who were able went to work to cut down some palmettoes which were found in the vicinity of the camp. The trees were small, and the scanty supply which they yielded was carried until breakfast time." During the march Mr. Truxton lost his revolver from the holster, while cutting a path for the party through the jungle. The journal states, during the first portion



of this day's journey, "Mr. Garland still suffering, and extremely distressed marching; Miller a little better; and Boggs very weak, and unable, as he has been for some days, to carry any thing." Between 11 A.M. and 3 P.M. the party halted for rest and breakfast. Resuming its march, five Indian hunting-lodges were passed, in one of which was found the head of a catfish, nearly fresh. "Saw," says the journal "a large dark snake, about six feet long, *but could not catch him!*" Indians appeared to have visited this vicinity since the downward march; and on this day some baskets were seen made of twigs recently cut.

Mr. Maury shot a bird of the toucan tribe—bill about three and a half inches long, one and three quarters thick, dark green, yellow tipped, and slightly curved; color of plumage golden yellow, shaded by blue, blue and gray, speckled white, grayish, and grayish tinted from head along the back. The principal part of this bird was eaten by Messrs. Boggs and Maury, who were quite unwell—the latter from the effect of the *seed* before alluded to; and it should be mentioned, for the credit of the men composing the expedition, that they insisted upon Mr. Maury taking a large share of the bird himself.

As remarked before, the officers hunted game for the party, rarely reserving any thing for themselves. It was for this reason, and fully appreciating the generous devotion of these officers, that when Mr. Maury became ill, the men insisted on his eating a sufficiency of the bird which he had killed, to restore the tone of his stomach. When such a feeling exists between officers and men, and when it is displayed under such trying circumstances, it affords the strongest evidence of the perfect discipline which generally prevails among organized bands of our countrymen, who are the most subordinate and amenable to law of any people whom it becomes the duty of a naval officer to control.

During the progress of the party the remainder of this day some palmetto was obtained, and a fruit resembling the May apple in form and color, but with a pulp something less pungent than the monkey pepper-pod.

At five o'clock they went into camp on a high bank near the river. The journal states that in this camp "the mosquitoes were not so *ravenous* as usual." The next day they started at half past six. The weather was cloudy, and apparently threatening rain. Mr. Garland suffered very much from inflammation, attributable to the worms which could not be extracted, in addition to his debility from starvation and fatigue. Miller, owing to his ulcer, which had assumed a malignant aspect, also suffered exceedingly, and walked with great difficulty. Mr. Boggs was weak, but better than the day before, and marched until nine o'clock, when they boiled some palmetto for breakfast. Mr. Maury shot a thrush, which was cooked for Mr. Boggs. Resting till one o'clock, they again started forward, although Miller was suffering acutely from increasing in-

flammation. The day, on the whole, did not prove so overcast as they expected, which encouraged them. They followed the river bank closely during all the return march, thinking it safer than to attempt to cut off the bends. Besides, it was utterly impossible, with men who so frequently fainted on the route, to go far from the water, for this was their only restorative. At half past two a good camping ground was found, where it was deemed best to halt for the night, especially as some palmetto trees were found in the vicinity. The whole party were revived in spirits by the food which the palmetto afforded, and with the idea that they were approaching the banana plantations. The two palmetto trees which were cut down gave a supper to the whole band, while enough was left for breakfast in the morning. The mosquitoes made this night a sleepless one, even to the fatigued and nearly starved men.

"*March 18.* Left No. 11 Return Camp at 6 A.M.; the marching was found very difficult, owing to the density of the jungle. Harwood's continued illness compelled a halt at 9.15, when a scanty breakfast was made upon nuts. Mr. Boggs better; Mr. Garland barely able to walk. The sky much overcast, and evident signs of an approaching change of weather, which will probably ensue about the 21st of March. Left breakfast camp at 12 M. Stopped at 1.30 P.M. to cut down some palmetto, and moved on at 3.15. Halted again at 4 to cut down some more palmetto, the first supply having proved insufficient. Toward sunset the atmosphere more clear and pleasant. Harwood still very weak. Miller suffering less, but his ulcer shows symptoms of spreading. The men who were employed in cutting down palmetto suffering very much from their exertions.

"There is no small difficulty, in the present exhausted state of the party, in procuring voluntary laborers; nor can the responsibility and energies of Mr. Truxton and Mr. Maury, so incessantly are they called into play, ever be sufficiently felt by the party, or remunerated by the service to which they belong. Mr. Truxton had three wood worms extracted to-day—one from his throat, and two from his shoulders."

Mr. Kettlewell also had a very large one taken from his leg.

The next day was Sunday, and it was thought best to breakfast before traveling, as the men were completely worn out from cutting down the palmetto the day before. Besides, several other trees were seen near at hand, from which Truxton determined to obtain provisions for the future, as they were not certain of meeting any more during the day.

Harwood appeared now to be the weakest of the party, though all were evidently gradually but surely sinking. Miller kept constantly calling out to halt, and appeared wild and delirious. It was stated by some of the men that he had been previously subject to epileptic attacks, which the officers thought very probable. At this point the journal remarks, in a spirit of



thankfulness: "This is the most cheerful day we have had for some time; weather clearer, and fine, pleasant breezes. Not so much worried by sand-flies and mosquitoes. God's providence, it would seem, ought to operate feelingly on the heart of each. Clouds drifting from northwest."

The five—all that were left able to cut down trees—procured five palmettoes; but the yield was very small. "It is now evident," says the journal, "that so exhausted are the members of the party that provisions can not be obtained except with much delay. At 5 P.M. heard a sound strikingly like a report of a carbine; but we may have been deceived, as we frequently have been before, by the sound of falling timber. Supped on palmetto and a few roasted nuts. Mosquitoes as usual very troublesome at night, and relieved at daylight by myriads of sand-flies."

This was Sunday, and the next day they started at a little past six; the weather clearer than usual, and more breeze stirring. Mr. Boggs was still very weak; Harwood also nearly gone, and both suffering very much for want of animal food; but Miller continued to bear up wonderfully against disease and debility. At ten they halted to breakfast, and rested until half past one, when the march was resumed. A very deep dry ravine and two smaller ones crossed their path this afternoon, down and up the banks of which they were compelled to struggle. "Still," says the journal, "much general complaint and debility; and it is no easy matter to muster strength and energy enough to provide the amount of subsistence absolutely necessary to enable the men to march." The weather—which was now narrowly watched—grew more unsettled and threatening. At 5 P.M. the party reached an Indian fishing-station, where abundance of wood was found; but the water was difficult of access, owing to the steepness of the river banks.

The morning of the 21st of March broke beautiful beyond conception after the dull, heavy, and depressing weather of the day before. The breeze, strong and refreshing, proved most grateful to the weary party; the more so, from the fact that the forest was generally close and stifling, owing to the density of the undergrowth. During the night all were aroused by a sound like the report of a heavy gun from the northward and eastward, and anxious looks and inquiries were exchanged; for they supposed it to be the nine o'clock gun of the *Cyane*. "This may be," says the journal; "but we now distrust our ears, having been so often deceived by the falling timber."

There is something inexpressibly mournful in these detached sentences, entered by a weak and half-starved man in his journal. The absence of all attempt at description; the resigned, almost humble, way of recording their sufferings and their steadily-increasing prostration, are more touching than the most elaborate narrative. It is like quietly counting our

own failing pulses as they beat slower and slower to the end. No mention is made of the cries and moans that made the whole atmosphere melancholy; no description of the long sleepless night under the stars, even the refreshment of sleep denied to the famished sufferers. Every day was a picture of woe and sadness indescribable. The piteous aspect of the wan face as it leaned against a tree for temporary support; the beseeching call to halt for a moment as the stronger disappeared in the forest; the hopeless prayer for food, and sometimes for death itself, made each day's journey more sad than a funeral procession. Unmanned by debility and protracted suffering and destitution, these strong men would, one after another, fling themselves on the ground and burst into a paroxysm of tears. But these sudden exhibitions of feeling did not seem to be the result of failing hope or despair, but the mere relief demanded by overtaken nature. Wound up to the last pitch of endurance it dissolved in tears. Truxton and Maury seemed to view them in this light; for when the paroxysm came on the men they would halt, and, leaning on their carbines, let it pass, and then order the march to be resumed. It was not death they feared; it was the desolate fate of being left alone in the woods that made those more suffering and feeble attempt to march. Again and again a poor wretch would sit down, declaring he could go no further; but as the forms of his comrades vanished in the forest, he would struggle up and stagger on after them. The weaker they grew, of course the less able they were to get food, and thus hunger and weakness acted on each other. Some of them wished they might get an Indian to eat him; and though the horrible thought may have occurred to some of devouring each other, it had as yet found no outward expression; nor could it, for still true to their high obligations, those officers retained their lofty character, and through it their supreme authority. Maury and Truxton especially, though but the wrecks of men, still cheered up the sufferers by words of hope; still hewed away at the undergrowth to clear a passage; still gathered nuts, wherever they could be found, to revive their sinking natures; and still kindled fires for them by night to enliven the gloom. Nothing more vividly displays the terrible straits to which they were reduced than the following incident. Truxton, one day, in casting his eye on the ground, saw a *toad*. Instantly snatching it up he bit off the head and spit it away, *and then devoured the body*. Maury looked at him a moment, and then picked up the rejected head, saying, "Well, Truxton, you are getting quite particular; something of an epicure, eh? to throw away the head;" and quietly devoured that himself. After his return, one, in questioning him about it, remarked, "Why, Maury, I thought that the head of a toad was poisonous?" "Oh," he replied, "that is a popular fallacy; but it is d—sh *bitter!*" It doubtless strikes every one as strange that



gentlemen, brought up in luxury, with refined tastes and fastidious as any of us, could be reduced to a state that would make such repulsive, loathsome food acceptable. But there is something stranger than all this to me; it is the extraordinary self-denial, and high sense of duty and honor, which, under circumstances so distressing, made them rob themselves to feed the men, and work on when all else had given out. To eat such disgusting food was strange, but to *refuse* to eat *palatable* food when in their possession, and bestow it on others, was far more strange and surprising.

Starvation reveals many curious psychological facts. As a rule, I think, it develops in an unnatural degree the strongest qualities that a man possesses; but circumstances modify this rule much. Among undisciplined masses ferocity and demoralization are certain results; but when its approaches are gradual, and directed and governed by noble example and the strong hand of authority, its effects are quite different. One phenomenon in this expedition, especially as it was not confined to one, but was exhibited by all the officers, not excepting even Strain at the last, deserves especial notice. From the time that food became scarce to the close, and just in proportion as famine increased, they did not gloat over visions of homely fare, but reveled in gorgeous dinners. So strangely and strongly did this whim get possession of their minds, that the hour of halting, when they could indulge undisturbed in these rich reveries, became an object of the deepest interest. While, hewing their way through the jungles, and wearied and overcome, they were ready to sink, they would cheer each other up by saying—"Never mind, when we go into camp we'll have a splendid supper," meaning, of course, the imaginary one they designed to enjoy. Truxton and Maury would pass hours in spreading tables loaded with every luxury they had ever seen or heard of. Over this imaginary feast they would gloat with the pleasure of a gourmand, apparently never perceiving the incongruity of the thing. They would talk this over while within hearing of the moans of the men, and on one occasion discussed the propriety of giving up, in future, all stimulating drinks, as they had been informed it weakened the appetite. As hereafter they designed if they ever got out to devote themselves entirely and exclusively for the rest of their lives to eating, they soberly concluded that it would be wrong to do any thing to lessen its pleasures or amount.

The journal continues: "Left No. 13 Return Camp at 6.30 A.M., after suffering less than usual from mosquitoes. Vermilyea very poorly; lay down frequently, wandering in mind. After giving way to despair, threw away his blanket, and could not assist to carry a macheta.

"Stopped at 9.15 to breakfast on palmetto, and started again at 1.30 P.M. Soon after starting Mr. Boggs was seized with a violent sickness at the stomach, and his frequent vomiting de-

layed the march very much, and little more than a mile has been made. Near camp crossed a very deep ravine. Neither on the march or in camp is there any disposition on the part of the men to assist in any thing requiring exertion, and but for the untiring efforts of the principal officers, neither provisions, fuel, or fire, could be had. Their strength is overtaxed, and *stand it much longer they can not.*

"They now light every fire, procure water, and collect fuel to cook either palmetto or nuts. Owing to the very debilitated condition of officers and men, no watches have been kept during the return march. About 10.30 P.M. a light sprinkling of rain, which lasted, with intervals, about three quarters of an hour. The remainder of the night clear, and passed with less annoyance from mosquitoes than usual."

"Wednesday, March 22. Clear beautiful morning. Left 14 Return Camp at 6.30 A.M. After marching a few yards Mr. Boggs became excessively ill, and was unable to move. Soon after Mr. Maury shot a bird, which was cooked for him." Only 600 yards had been made from camp, and even this distance he had with great difficulty and suffering accomplished. Having rested until mid-day he again attempted to move on, but immediately broke down. The principal officers then held a council on the course to be pursued in the event of the continued feebleness and helplessness of Mr. Boggs. It was apparent to all that he never would rally. The tone of his stomach and his physical strength were both entirely gone. As other members of the party were necessarily reduced while rendering him assistance in marching, it was deemed prudent to advise with Mr. Boggs on the resolution of the party to leave him, which had been unanimously carried. This course was the more imperative, as the taste for palmetto was fast declining with most of the men, some of whom with difficulty swallowed the tea made from it, while palm-nuts were getting scarcer every day. "It is now," says the journal, "becoming a point involving life and death to reach the banana plantation, and, indeed, some Indian village from whence to communicate the wants, suffering, and broken down condition of the party to the *Cyane*, if, as we fondly hope, she is still at Caledonia Bay. Mr. Kettlewell was deputed to speak seriously to Mr. Boggs without delay, and prepare him for being left behind should he not be able to proceed without further delaying the party. Mr. Boggs seemed somewhat prepared for this warning, and though he imparted to Mr. Kettlewell his last wishes in such case, yet with a remarkably strong tenacity for life, he did not despair entirely of future deliverance from consequences of abandonment." How touching this simple announcement. The day of grace, however, was lengthened, for just as they were about to leave him, Mr. Truxton, who had borne up against disease for some weeks, and avoided causing any delay of consequence, was suddenly attacked, and the party compelled to halt.



The journalist adds: "Mr. Boggs is respited until to-morrow, when, if he can not advance more steadily, he is to share the fate of former sufferers. He is the first officer we have been called upon to abandon. After frequent delays we reached camp about one mile ahead, where Messrs. Boggs and Truxton were attended to. Here we cut down some sour nut-trees, with great fatigue to the few who were able to assist. The fires enlivened the gloom of the forest until a late hour.

"*Thursday, March 23.* Left 15 Return Camp at 6.30 A.M. Mr. Truxton better, but dreading the effects of the march. Mr. Boggs hopeful of his ability to proceed. Mr. Garland suffering acutely, and Harwood fearful of not being able to accomplish the day's march.

"Philip Vermilyea requested Mr. Kettlewell to note down his last requests, and then laid himself down in despair; and at another time requested that a tin pot, some nuts, and a blanket and a hatchet might be given him. All of these requests were complied with, though the different articles were so necessary to the party, and with the most melancholy presentiments leave was taken of the dying man, when the march was continued.

"Nearly half a mile from camp, two bunches of ripe nuts were found, which the party with few exceptions greedily devoured, reserving for the future those which were not absolutely necessary to appease their immediate hunger."

While plucking these nuts Vermilyea came staggering up. The gloom and desolation of the forest as he found himself alone and abandoned, were more than he could bear, and rousing himself by a desperate effort, he had pushed on in the track of the party. As he joined them they gave him a part of the nuts they had gathered, which revived him much, and he declared he was able to go on. Further on some acid nut-trees were found, but as it would take a long time in their feeble state to cut them down, and as the entire party, with the exception of Maury and Kettlewell, were exceedingly prostrated, it was determined to encamp at this point, solacing themselves for the little distance they had made by the strange delusive promise that on the morrow they would proceed by longer marches to the plantations, but seven camps distant. Cherishing this delusive dream they stretched themselves on the ground, while Maury and Kettlewell built the fire in which to roast the few acid nuts which had been obtained. These two officers, with two or three more not so much prostrated, then went down the bank to cool the fever of their sores, and refresh themselves with a bath. To a mere looker on, the camp this night would have presented a most heart-rending spectacle. It was plain that not more than two or three could ever reach the banana plantations, while four or five must be left in the morning to starve and to die. Three knew that their fate was sealed, and looked forward to their abandonment the next day with the calm, stern eye of

despair. Their young commander, Truxton, would in all human probability never lead them again. Weighed down with the terrible responsibility of so many lives resting on his exertions—taking on himself the toil which properly belonged to the men, and at the same time denying himself food for their sustenance, he had borne nobly up till the sudden attack produced by eating some unknown berries. His gallant spirit and courage would naturally keep him up to the last moment, and when he broke down the prostration would be sudden and complete. That catastrophe had now arrived, and no one was so much aware of it as himself. As he lay with his head resting against the root of a tree—his clothes in rags, his face wan, his dark eye sunken and sad, while the blood streamed from his hands, which the thorns had pierced as he cut a path through them with his knife—he presented a spectacle that would draw tears from stones. He felt that the sands of life were almost run, and that those whom he had struggled so hard to feed must leave him to starve and to die. Boggs, a young man of fortune, and who had joined the expedition as an amateur, lay near him. It was plain that he had made his last march. He was engaged to be married to a young lady in Illinois, and visions of her, together with the thronging memories of the past and gloomy forebodings of the future, swept over his spirit as he pondered the morrow. Tall and well formed, he lay a wasted skeleton along the ground. His doom was sealed. A few steps off, in the men's camp, the spectacle was still more harrowing. Some were sitting on the ground with their heads doubled to their knees, so as to press the stomach together, and lessen the gnawings of hunger; while others lay upon their backs, gazing sadly on the sky. The smoke of their fire curled peacefully up amidst the trees, whose tops glittered in the golden light of the tropical sun, as he sunk away toward the Pacific, which had been so long the goal of their efforts, and the only hope of their salvation. Harwood, a young man, twenty-two years of age, was also sitting up, and doubled together—a mere bundle of rags. His eye, which was black and piercing, had sunk far away into his head, and, with his long-neglected hair hanging down over his shoulders, gave an unearthly aspect to his whole appearance. He knew that his marching was over. Beside him, in the same posture, and almost naked, sat another young man, named Miller, who was also to be left in the morning. But little was said between them, but that little related to the dreadful fate before them. A short distance from these sat Harrison, leaning against a tree. He was about thirty-two years of age, a tall, powerful man, but now wasted to a skeleton, and but half covered with rags. His features, originally, were strongly marked, and now the shriveled skin, drawn tightly over the large lines of his face, gave to his countenance the expression of intense anguish. He had been one of the best men of the party, but starvation



had done its work, and he too had taken his last step toward the banana plantations. A little farther off lay Vermilyea, also a tall man, with light hair, and, when in health, possessed of handsome features. He had been a true and faithful man to the last, and borne up with a spirit and resolution that astonished every one. He lay with his skeleton arms flung out upon the ground, from which he could not rise even to a sitting posture. The last vestige of strength had been exhausted in the effort to rejoin the party, after he had been left an hour before to die. Thus they sat and lay around—a skeleton group—watching the declining day, and thinking of the dread to-morrow. To them, and to the stronger, the thought of separation was bitter in the extreme. A common suffering had bound them together, but stern necessity must now divide them.

All was silent and sad as the setting sun sent long shadows through the forest, save an occasional moan, or a half-stifled sob, or a low prayer for food or for death. There was no keenness to their anguish, for the energies of nature were so wholly exhausted that the heart and soul had become benumbed, and almost stupefied. A settled gloom, a still despair, an appalling resignation, characterized each man, as he sat and brooded over his fate. But in this darkest hour of their trials, and just as night was descending on the forest, a report like that of a musket was heard down the river. Maury, who was standing on the shore, shouted, "Truxton, I hear a gun; shall I fire?" "Yes," replied Truxton, but never stirred. "But I am loaded with slugs" (the ammunition was getting low). "Never mind—fire away," said Truxton; and the sharp report rung through the forest. In a few moments Maury exclaimed again, "*I see boats and Indians!*" "Do you see *Strain?*?" eagerly inquired Truxton, still refusing to rise. "*I see white men!*" shouted Maury, the exclamation piercing like lightning every wasted frame. "*Do you see STRAIN?*" was still the agonized question of the young commander, as he lay stretched on the ground. There was a moment's pause, when the bewildering cry—"I see *Strain!* I see *Strain!*" brought Truxton, like an electric touch, to his feet, and he staggered toward the shore. Oh, who can describe the delirious excitement of that moment, as poor human nature attempted to struggle up the steeps of despair to hope and life once more!

TO BE CONCLUDED IN OUR NEXT NUMBER.

#### THE DOG, DESCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED.

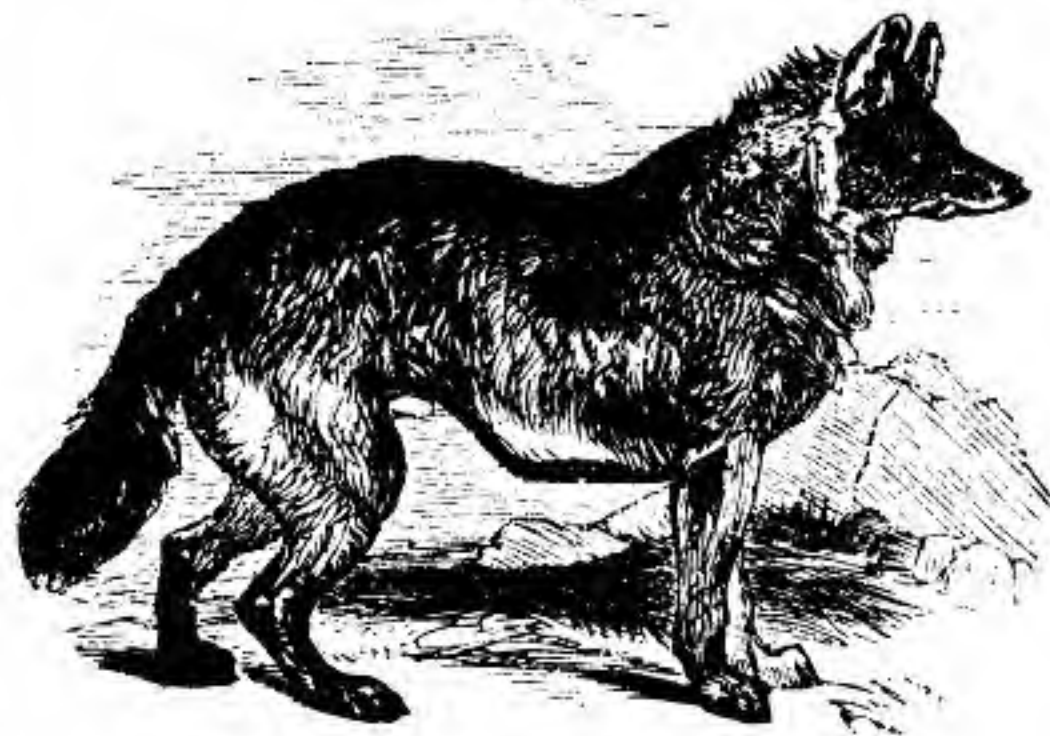
IT would seem to be the beneficent order of Providence, that man should be surrounded with inferior animals under his control, which, by their capacities, make up for the defects of his physical power. He has the horse, and can command his strength; and, more than all, he has the dog—the most intelligent of animals—to become his servant and friend. In order that the dog should belong wholly to man, he has been form-



DIGNITY AND IMPUDENCE.

ed eminently for friendship and devotion, even at the sacrifice of much of the instinctive passions all animals have for their own kind; for the dog cares more for the society of his human friends than he does for that of his own species.

Abel, the second son of Adam, is mentioned as a keeper of sheep; the dog, therefore, was probably the second animal tamed by man, for, as the companion of the shepherd, he has been known in all time. The race undoubtedly originated in the family of the wolf and the jackal; and even now, when circumstances have occurred to cause the dog to live in a wild state, he assumes more or less the wolfish form and expression. In fact, dogs belonging to our Indian tribes and those which so infest the suburbs of Oriental cities, appear to be but little removed in physical form from the supposed original type. It has been suggested, with apparent truth, that the dog being coeval with man in the East, must have aided in a very great degree in the superior early civilization of Asia. Having the dog, the indigenous races had time to spare from the



THE JACKAL.



haunts, and tells of love, daring, success, and defeat, in the wonderful modulations of his orchestral voice. A lion troop is an opera in which the instruments are attuned by nature; the theme destruction, defiance, victory, death. Hence there come the low, deep notes of sorrow, like the wails of mothers over the slain; then the deep-toned, solemn roars follow in quick succession, like the rapid discharge of heavy artillery—growing louder and louder, they seem to engulf the surrounding world, and threaten to shake the elements into chaos; then follows the finale of sobs, of groans, so appalling, because so indicative of human woe.

The lion is supposed by naturalists to have the average life of thirty-five years, yet this seems very inconsistent with the well-known fact, that one was kept in the Tower of London over threescore years and ten, and no one knew the age of the animal when it was first made a prisoner. By a kind arrangement of Providence, lions and other destructive animals are never numerous. A certain area is necessary for their support, and they destroy each other if the prescribed limits are interfered with. Gerard, the French lion hunter of Algeria, calculates that there are thirty lions now living in the colony, and that the Arabs pay an annual tribute of twenty-five cents to the government, and an average of two hundred and fifty cents to the lions, in the destruction of their horses, mules, sheep, and camels; so it would seem that the reign of the king of beasts, like that of all other kings, is rather an expensive luxury.

In the life of the great missionary, Judson, occurs a story of a starving lion, which has all the elements of a fearful tragedy. Confined in prison by the Burman authorities, Judson was electrified by the news of a British victory over his oppressors. This increased the severity of his treatment. Just before the war between Burmah and the English, the king had received a present of a majestic lion, which had become a pet in the palace, particularly with his majesty. After the defeats of Bandoola, some of the courtiers discovered the fearful resemblance between the king's favorite and the insignia on the British flag, and the regal beast was looked upon as a demoniac ally of England, and he was finally cast into prison. The cage was newly ironed and barricaded, as if some unusual resistance might have been expected. And now commenced to the unhappy prisoners with whom Judson was confined a new and fearful scene of misery. The unhappy men had seen their own friends starved, and beaten, and smothered, and strangled to death, and then dragged by the feet from the door, and thrust like dogs into some shallow pit, or left to be devoured by jackals—and they thought they had gained a familiarity with every species of wretchedness. But there was something almost supernatural in their new horror of a starving lion. Day after day the noble beast writhed in the pangs of hunger, parched with thirst, and bruised and bleeding in his fearful struggles, while his roarings seemed to shake

the prison to its foundations, and sent a thrill of indescribable terror to the hearts of its occupants.

The jailer said that it was the British lion ineffectually struggling against the prowess of the conquering Burmans. Sometimes, after dark, a compassionate woman would steal to the cage, and thrust a mouthful of food between the bars, but it was necessarily a trifle to the powerful beast, and only seemed to increase his ravings. At other times, one of the keepers would throw water over him, which would be greeted by almost human shrieks of pleasure, though it only seemed to lengthen for a little his term of suffering. At last the scene was over: the skeleton of the unhappy beast was dragged from its cage, and buried in the earth.

In endeavoring to perfectly comprehend the habits and natural history of the lion, Cumming's adventures in Africa are calculated to give the most vivid idea. He presents many new pictures, all of which elevate the king of beasts in the reader's estimation, and involuntarily suggest a comparison between man and the lion, as a destructive animal. The noble quadruped pursues his way through the interminable wilds, kills from necessity, and, having satisfied his hunger, leaves the remains of his repast for the weaker animals that follow in his path. Wantonness or cruelty he never displays; on the contrary, he has mercy upon the weak, and disdains to strike a blow, except for the benefit of his own existence and those dependent upon him. Cumming, on the contrary, stalks through the wilderness more blood-thirsty than a thousand lions—he seems to literally revel in blood; without any other reason than to gratify his destructiveness, he disfigures the vast plains with the mountain carcasses of elephants and giraffes; antelopes, gnooks, zebras, and buffaloes fall before his pestiferous saltpetre, as if he were a breathing pestilence. At nightfall, the wolf and the jackal swarm on his track, and screech and yell as if the fiends were unloosed; at daybreak, the eagle and the vulture darken the air over his head, and gorge their unholy appetites in the victims of his prodigality of God's life. Surely the lion, by comparison, is the being of humanity, and his bloody deeds pale before the records of his Christianized rival, as a destroyer on the face of the earth.

DARIEN EXPLORING EXPEDITION,\*  
UNDER COMMAND OF LIEUT. ISAAC C. STRAIN.  
BY J. T. HEADLEY.

I WILL now transfer the course of the narrative to the proceedings of the advanced party, which left the main body on the 13th of February.

Breakfastless, but full of hope, the four adventurers set out, and after making a *détour* in the forest to avoid undergrowth, again struck the river, where the walking was good. Truxton's camp was in sight, and Strain hailed it to bid the party keep the bank. Following this

\* Concluded from the April Number.



bank until it became scarped and impassable, they took to the forest, and although still attempting to keep the river in sight, were at length forced from it by the denseness of the undergrowth. After an hour's journey they saw the river again close upon their right, and supposing that it was a sudden bend, regained the bank, which was clear and sloping, and followed it for nearly a quarter of a mile, when they found by their old trail that it was the same ground they had already passed over, the river having made a turn upon itself. This was very discouraging at the outset; and hearing the voices of the main body ahead, already following on, and unwilling to discourage them in their march, Strain struck into the forest, and making a wide *détour*, regained the river, and by rapid traveling left them far behind.

About noon they halted for an hour to allow Mr. Avery to rest, but, with that exception, marched steadily during the day, and made about fifteen miles on the course of the river. At dark they encamped, and kindling a fire to intimidate wild beasts and keep off alligators, laid down to sleep. With so small a party, and traveling rapidly, they did not think it worth while to appoint a watch.

The next morning (14th), at earliest dawn, they were afoot. Having obtained no food the day before, there was no delay in cooking and eating. Writing by the dim dawn the note, formerly alluded to, to Truxton, Strain gave the order to march, and the four pushed on. They were, however, soon forced from the river by the undergrowth, and after a march of about two hours, found themselves in a dense thicket, where it was necessary to cut every foot of the way for some two hundred yards. During the time they occupied in making this distance they rarely if ever touched the earth, so matted and close were the standing and fallen branches and bushes. It was painful work, and not without danger; but they cut and floundered through. Emerging into the more open forest, they found themselves in an almost impassable swamp. Struggling through this as they best could, they saw a large body of water, and Strain, in attempting to approach it, became so effectually *bogged*, that it was with great difficulty he extricated himself. The order to countermarch was then given, and after incredible labor they reached the river about noon, and at a point only about 200 yards below the camp from which they had set out some seven hours before. This was disheartening, but they pushed on for two hours longer, when they halted for an hour's rest.

Strain now felt quite discouraged; for, at this rate, the party would perish before it could get through. He determined, therefore, again to try a raft, and finding on the beach some driftwood sufficiently dry to float, he halted at four o'clock and commenced collecting timbers, cutting cross-pieces, and getting vines for lashings. This was slow work, as they had nothing with which to cut the hard logs—

that were in some cases imbedded in the earth—except the *machete* (a sort of cutlass of good steel and highly tempered). Still, by working hard, they had by dark collected enough logs to float two or three men. They then began to look around for some food, not having tasted a *mouthful since the night previous to leaving the main body*, two days before. Having obtained a few acid nuts, they made a fire, spread their blankets, and were soon fast asleep on a hard clay bank, with a brilliant full-moon shining down upon them.

At daylight they were hard at work upon the raft, and by ten o'clock had logs enough lashed together to support two persons. Wilson and Strain then got upon it, and pushing off, slowly floated down the river; while Mr. Avery and Golden followed along the bank.

At noon another large log was secured and lashed to the raft with strips of canvas torn from Strain's haversack, and the whole party embarked. But the weight was too heavy, and the crazy structure sunk until the water was knee-deep above it. They, however, kept on, but in a short time struck a rapid current which swept them upon a sunken snag. In a moment the logs parted and one broke entirely loose. All was consternation, when Strain cried, "*Silence!*" and sitting down on one log, threw either leg over those each side and kept them together. For a few minutes there was great danger of losing all their arms, and even their lives; and nothing but the presence of mind and coolness of every man saved the raft from entire destruction and in deep water, while, owing to their debility and the weight of their accoutrements, swimming was out of the question.

Landing below, where the current was not so strong, they repaired the raft, and floated sluggishly on till nearly sunset, when they struck upon a shoal. Unable to force the raft over this, they were compelled to take it to pieces and float it down, log by log, to a shelving clay beach, where they could reconstruct it. While getting the raft over they discovered a species of clams—said to be nearly identical with the "Little Neck clams" of New York—one hundred and twenty of which made quite a supper, after their hard day's work. While sitting on the bank they saw a shark, some five feet long, attempting to swim over the shoal; but all attempts to get his body for food proved abortive.

The next day, by nine o'clock, the raft was repaired, and the four again embarked; Strain with neither pantaloons nor drawers—nothing on, in fact, but a shirt—bare-legged, sat exposed to the full rays of a tropical sun, and with the rest not much better protected, drifted lazily down the sluggish, tortuous current. At noon, however, they struck another snag. While working hard to extricate themselves, a heavy rain shower came up, which drenched them thoroughly. Soon after another snag was struck, which caused a delay of two hours. Near sunset they came upon a shoal, and swinging off met a swift current, and were



dragged by its force under some overhanging branches, which swept Mr. Avery and Golden off into deep water, while Strain, with Wilson, whose leg was nearly broken, hung on, and were carried upon a snag in deep water. In endeavoring to cut loose, they lost a macheta. But Golden, finding his leg not broken, plunged to the bottom, and fortunately recovered it. At length, getting loose, they paddled ashore, and as it was already nearly dark, they encamped for the night. Mr. Avery had all the matches upon his person when he swam ashore, consequently they were wet, and no fire could be obtained. This was the more disagreeable, as their clothes and blankets were all soaked with water. Although the weather was mild, they seldom suffered more; for the cold wet blankets chilled them through and through. Weary and exhausted, they could get no sleep. Wilson and Golden lay growling at each other all night.

In the morning they woke thoroughly chilled and sore from the effects of sleeping on the hard clay bank and in wet clothes. They had determined to abandon the raft, as the snags and shoals were too frequent; and spreading their blankets in the sun, remained in camp till they were dried. They employed the time, however, in cutting down a large tree with hard nuts, the kernels of which being extracted supplied them with four days' provisions, that is, the means of sustaining life, for their hardness and tastelessness hardly entitled them to the name of food. While thus occupied, they discovered a saw-fish, about two feet long, working his way up the shallow water, apparently to enjoy the warmth of the sun. Strain shot him with a revolver, and then jumping upon him succeeded in capturing him. Divided between the four, he was but a scanty breakfast, but the meat was sweet and palatable. They started at half past twelve from "Saw-fish Camp," but after making two or three miles were obliged to encamp, as both Mr. Avery and Strain suffered extremely from sore legs. Exposed as they had been to the sun on the raft for two days, Strain's, which were utterly unprotected, were burnt to a blister in many places, while the undergrowth and vines scratched and irritated them to such a degree, that it produced a fever, which was followed by a chill. This looked discouraging enough, especially as they saw no more indications of approaching the Pacific than two weeks before. The bright hopes with which the men had set out began to fade, and they lay stretched about the bank, saying but little, but looking moody and desponding. Strain spent the long afternoon pacing slowly up and down the pebbly beach, pondering over the condition of his men, and vainly endeavoring to come to some conclusion respecting the future. However, with steel and powder, they succeeded in obtaining a fire, which, sending its bright light through the forest, imparted a little more cheerfulness to the scene.

At half past seven next morning they set out, and moved slowly down the left bank. Hearing a heavy report, they thought it was a gun

from the main body, and were much surprised at the rapid progress it had made. About ten, after marching some three miles, they halted on a shingle beach, where Mr. Avery was taken extremely ill with severe vomiting and retching. While halting another gun was heard, supposed to be from the main party, which Strain answered, hoping that they might come up, as he intended to leave Mr. Avery with them and push on. At sunset, Mr. Avery showing no signs of recovery, they went into camp No. 6. Fish were abundant in the stream, but they had no hook to catch them with, and so made their supper on hard nuts.

The next day (Sunday) Avery was better; but convinced that he would embarrass the march, Strain was anxious to leave him with the main party, and fired signals to bring them up, but received no answer.\*

The next day they started early, but Avery's knee pained him severely. At times, exhausted with pain, he would cry out, "Oh, Captain, hold on! hold on!" Strain would then stop and wait for him to limp up, but never went back. The necessities of the case were too stern to admit of a backward movement. Thus painfully marching—around swamps, through thickets, still on, toward an ocean that seemed infinitely removed—the half-naked, half-starved group cut their toilsome, disheartening way. At half past four they encamped on a shingle beach, having made about eight miles.

The following morning they started early, but were compelled to halt frequently for Avery, who would be left far behind, his extreme suffering causing faintness and sickness at stomach. He, however, bore up nobly; and, as Strain in his report says, "He comported himself in the most manly manner; and few men, I believe, even when marching for their own lives and the lives of others, could have done better than he, with boils on all parts of his person, and five on one knee." Strain killed a fine wild turkey during the day, which gave them a good supper, though, when divided among four hungry men, the portion that each received appeared small. They also found an abundance of acid palm-nuts.

Next day the marching was more open and easy, and they were fortunate enough to find clams. About 5.15 P.M. they encamped on a wet sand-beach. In cutting down some guineagrass to protect them from dampness, Strain narrowly escaped being bitten by a large snake of the adder species; his macheta cleaving the reptile just as he was about to strike. Every night a stick was set on the shore to see if there were any signs of tide. The eagerness with which this was inspected every morning showed the longing of the men for this indication of the proximity of the ocean. In the morning they thought they discovered a slight fall in the water, but found afterward that they were mistaken.

\* Truxton's party at this time were lying in the camp where they had halted on the first night after Strain had left them, and the supposed guns were falling trees.



The day following (February 22) the marching a part of the time was tolerably easy, but Wilson and Golden began to show signs of debility. Strain, nearly naked, went ahead and cleared a way with his cutlass. On finding the bushes too thick, he would plunge into them head foremost to break them down, trampling them underfoot for those behind. During the day he killed another adder coiled to strike, but did not tell his men of it, lest they should become alarmed. Golden carrying no fire-arms, was often ordered forward to cut a path, but to-day he gave out completely, and when given the cutlass and directed to go to work, he laid the instrument down on the ground, then stretched himself beside it, and wept like a child. Destitution and toil were telling on him. He was a fine, splendid-looking young man, only twenty-two years of age, and brave as a lion; but this was a form of evil he had never dreamed of.

The next morning they proceeded on their journey through the woods and along the banks until one P.M., making about five miles, when they halted, as Strain had a most painful boil on his right instep, which prevented him from marching or wearing any boot. He was, moreover, suffering severely from a fall into a deep ravine the day before. Near the camp, where the river runs S.S.W., a small stream (the Uporganti) comes in from the N.E. This encouraged the belief that they might still be upon the Iglesias, as a small stream is shown on the map, coming into that river four miles from its mouth, and another about eleven miles above. About four o'clock, as they lay stretched around on the bank of the river, they were startled by a heavy booming sound, like that of a gun, which they thought at once came from Darien Harbor, the "El Dorado" of the expedition. The delusion for a moment made every heart bound.

In the morning (February 24) Strain made a moccasin from a leather legging which formerly belonged to Truxton, who had proposed to boil it down and eat it. The former, however, prevented him, saying they might yet need it for moccasins. So it turned out, and but for this very insignificant circumstance, it is very doubtful whether Strain could ever have got through at all, and consequently the whole party would have perished. On such simple suggestions, growing out of the knowledge of a backwoods life, the fate of scores of men often depends. Slinging his spare boot to his blanket for future service, Strain gave the order to march at half past six, fondly hoping to reach Darien Harbor before night, but having traveled with great pain some eight miles, and seeing no signs of tide-water, at five o'clock encamped on a sand-bank. Having passed during the day two or three rapids with some ten or twelve feet fall, they consoled themselves with the reflection that this accounted for the absence of tides. During the day Strain killed a bird about the size of a partridge, which they ate raw. I find the following recorded in the journal:

"*Saturday, February 25.* Slept well last night, the camp being free from mosquitoes. Set out at eight A.M., and found bad walking all day, both in the forest and on the beaches which we met. In the former we had to cut our way, while the beaches were so steep that we had sometimes to cut steps to crawl along, and even then we were in constant danger of falling into the river, which I did on one occasion.

"Encamped about six P.M. on a mud bank, having made about six miles. During the day's march we found about thirty-two clams, which, divided, gave us something to support life, as the acid nut-skins are less ripe than some miles above, while their kernels are so hard as to be almost inedible in the existing state of our teeth, which have been deprived of their enamel by the use of the acid.

"Saw several turkeys, but could obtain none, owing to the state of our fire-arms, which had become almost useless. My carbine, which was the best in the party, being loaded with difficulty, and requiring two men to fire it, one to take aim and pull the trigger, and the other to pull the cock back, and let it go at the word, invariably destroying the aim; under these circumstances I am not ashamed to say that I fired several times at turkeys without success."

"About sunset we saw a wild hog, weighing some 300 pounds, which came rushing toward us as if intending to attack, but paused about twenty yards distant. Considering the ferocity of this animal, and the state of our fire-arms, I should have hesitated in attacking him had we not been so pressed for food; but it was a matter of life and death in either case. I took deliberate aim at his body behind the shoulders, and with the assistance of Wilson fired my carbine, wounding him severely. I feared firing at his head, lest I should miss him altogether. After receiving the ball he paused a moment, as if uncertain whether to attack, after which he rushed off rapidly some fifty yards, when he was seized with a coughing fit, and slackened his pace to a walk. Handing my carbine to Wilson to reload, I followed him into the jungle, but soon lost him in the darkness of the forest. I am inclined to believe that this animal was not the peccary or wild hog of tropical climates, but one of the domesticated species, which, either in his own generation or that of his progenitors had become wild, because I do not think the peccary ever grows so large. His color was black, with white spots. I passed an almost sleepless night in regretting that we had not obtained him, for at this time food was our only thought, except to push through and obtain assistance for those behind."

The next morning (Sunday) they started early, but the long absence of food had so debilitated them that the marching was slow and difficult. They could make but short distances without being compelled to halt for a long rest. This tattered, skeleton group of four, stretched silent and sad in the forest beside that mysterious, unknown river, presented a most piteous



spectacle. It is very doubtful whether the men ever would have started again but for the orders of their commander. As they staggered up to a jungle, Strain, after exhausting himself in clearing a path, would order the men to take their turn; but so feeble and dispirited were they, that often nothing but threats of the severest flogging could rouse them to make another effort for their lives. At length their attention was arrested by the cry of a wild animal. It proved to be the howling of a monkey, and the men, elated at the prospect of food, cried out, "There's a monkey, Captain, shoot him!" "Cut away," replied Strain, thinking that the noise would excite its curiosity to come nearer. He was right, for the creature kept leaping from tree to tree, until at length it sat crouched on a limb directly above Strain, who was lying upon his back on the ground.

His carbine being damaged, he took the Sharpe's rifle belonging to Avery, and shooting nearly perpendicularly, sent a ball through the monkey's neck. The rifle, however, being loaded with stronger powder than usual, recoiled, cutting Strain's eyebrow and seriously endangering the eye itself. The monkey, after receiving the wound, made off. Strain, though bleeding freely, fired again. His distrust of the rifle, however, distracted his aim, when he drew a pistol and shot the creature through the heart. She fell over dead, but her tail would not uncoil, and she hung suspended from the limb. Strain then turned to take care of his eye, saying to the men, "If you want that monkey you must cut down the tree." Though tired and feeble, they attacked it with a will, and notwithstanding the trunk was three feet in circumference, and they had only a cutlass to work with, soon had it down. This monkey was a prize. She was soon cut up, and portions of her crammed into a tin kettle, which was placed over a blazing fire. Each one took turns at the pot, and they kept it up till midnight, when the animal was nearly all devoured. Weighing some twenty pounds, she gave about *five pounds to a man*. The starved men, however, were not satisfied, and demanded that the skin should be cooked. But this Strain, with that foresight which again and again saved his little band, refused to give up, saying he should yet need it for lashings in making a raft.

This feast was on Sunday night, and the next morning at ten o'clock they pushed on; but the thick undergrowth was almost impassable, and after cutting for seven hours, making only three quarters of a mile per hour, they encamped on a damp clay bank.

During the day they crossed several deep ravines, down the steep banks of which they were compelled to slide, and then cut steps in the opposite sides, up which to climb to the top.

The course of march was generally southerly. The journal at this place remarks, that then, and for some time previous, "our bodies were literally covered with wood ticks, and we were obliged to pick them off morning and evening."

During the march Strain shot three small hawks, upon which they made their scanty supper. They suffered severely from mosquitoes during the night, but at eight in the morning were again afoot; and proceeding about two miles over some hills, discovered a considerable river (the Iglesia), entering from the northeast. After making in all about six miles, they encamped at six in the evening.\* Their only food this day consisted entirely of acid nuts, which were gradually wearing away the teeth.

Having suffered less than usual from mosquitoes, Strain roused his little party at daybreak, and by six o'clock they were again cutting their slow and almost interminable path to the Pacific. After making some six miles they encamped on a bank of rock and indurated clay. During the day they had nothing whatever to eat, and when they halted the whole party were thoroughly worn out. They were too tired even to kindle a fire, but lay down in the darkness and slept on the cheerless bank of the stream. Strain now began to think of another raft, as all were so thoroughly debilitated, and so covered with boils, sores, and scratches that they could not much longer cut their way through the jungle.

Mr. Avery was almost disabled, while the men were becoming daily more and more discouraged. Golden—who was a fine, hale young man when he left the *Cyane*—was fearfully attenuated, and his spirit so utterly broken, that when ordered to do the least work he would lie down and weep bitterly. For several days Strain could make him march only by threatening to tie him up and flog him: then his dread of physical pain overcame for the time-being his debility. Had he not resorted to this expedient, he would have been obliged to leave him to perish, or remain and perish with him. Strain had once or twice thrown out a hint of his intention to build another raft; but found the two men violently opposed to it, as the danger they had incurred on the last completely intimidated them. But finding the river bends deeper, free from rapids, and comparatively free from snags, he determined to carry out his design at all hazards, especially as he felt convinced that the condition of his foot would not permit him to march more than two or three days longer. The constant irritation, produced by contact with bushes and vines, was rapidly extending the inflammation from the ankle, down the instep and up the leg. At first the men were disheartened; but when told that they need not get on the raft, but might keep along shore in sight, while he and Mr. Avery managed it, they were better contented.

That night being unmolested by mosquitoes

\* Says Strain in his journal: "I may remark that our time was *estimated*, as my pocket-chronometer had stopped soon after leaving the main body; probably owing to the dampness of the climate, which affects every time-piece not secured by a hunting case. Then, it almost appeared to me that time had refused to register the tedious hours which we passed in the wilderness. On some occasions almost all men become to a certain extent superstitious."



they had a quiet rest, and, though without food, began early in the morning to collect sticks for the raft; but the general debility, and want of proper tools and lashings, made their progress very slow, and it was sunset before they had enough brought together and lashed to float two persons. In the evening Mr. Avery and Strain obtained some hard nuts and a small quantity of palmetto, which was all the food they had eaten for two days.

Says Strain in his journal: "This was the second time during the expedition that I really felt voracious; and before obtaining the nuts and palmetto, I found myself casting my eyes around me to see if there was nothing that had been overlooked that could allay my hunger. Without a fire, which at this time we never lighted unless we had meat to cook, as we wished to economize our ammunition, we laid down and slept near our raft."

The next day Strain and Avery got on the raft, and the two floated slowly down the stream, while Golden and Wilson forced their way along the shore. Thus, two on the raft and two on shore, they proceeded day after day—an occasional halloo, to ascertain each other's whereabouts, alone relieving the monotony of the hours. In making the bends sharp paddling was necessary, which, in their debilitated condition, was very exhausting. The second day they found a dead iguana, with the head eaten off. This they cooked and divided among them. The two men roasted the skin and chewed that. This miserable raft consisted of six half-decayed, broken trunks of trees lashed together with monkey skins and vines. Strain, half-naked, and with his legs dangling in the water, sat on the forward end to steer, while his companion occupied the hinder part to assist. Now a tree in the distance chock-full of white cranes, and again a panther gazing on them with a bewildered stare, or young tigers, were the only objects that relieved the noiseless and apparently endless solitude. To pass away the time, Strain one day made Avery tell his history; at another time he would narrate from Don Quixotte some amusing story. At length starvation produced the same singular effect on them that it did on Truxton and Maury, and they would spend hours in describing all the good dinners they had ever eaten. For the last two or three days, when most reduced, Strain said that he occupied almost the whole time in arranging a magnificent dinner. Every luxury or curious dish that he had ever seen or heard of composed it, and he wore away the hours in going round his imaginary table, arranging and changing the several dishes. He could not force his mind from the contemplation of this, so wholly had one idea—food—taken possession of it. The animal nature, deprived of its support, was evidently closing with resistless force over the soul, and in a few days more would completely force it from its crumbling, falling tenement. On the 4th of March, however, as they sat on shore eating a portion of a dead,

tainted lizard, Strain heard a sudden roaring behind, and on looking up stream saw a rapid which they had just passed in smooth water. He knew at once that they must have floated over it at high tide, which now ebbing revealed the rift. It was clear they had at last reached tide-water. This was Strain's birthday, and he was looking out for some good luck. He, however, did not mention his discovery to the men, lest there might be some mistake. But they soon discovered it themselves, and cried out in transport, "*Oh, Captain, here is tide! here is tide!*" That night Strain could not sleep until the time for flood-tide again arrived, and at eleven o'clock he took a fire-brand and went down to the shore to see how it was going. The doubt was over—they had reached the swellings of the Pacific, and hope was rekindled in every bosom.

The time after this passed wearily. When it was flood-tide they lashed to the shore, and as the ebb commenced cut loose and slowly drifted down stream. At every turn they strained eagerly forward, hoping to get some look-out, or see some signs of civilization; but the same unbroken wilderness shut them in. Having ascertained how high the tide rose, Avery would take the Hudson River as a gauge, and prove conclusively that there was no great occasion for hope, as they were yet probably at least a hundred and fifty miles from the sea.

Anxious to get forward, they could not spend time to hunt; and a half dozen kernels of the palm nut, hard as ivory, would often constitute a meal. At length, on the 9th, Strain saw that food must be obtained, or the men would sink and die without making farther progress. He therefore put Golden in his place with Avery on the raft, and taking Wilson with him struck into the woods to forage. Only *four cartridges* were left to them; and as Strain turned away with the rifle, Avery exclaimed, "*For God's sake, Strain, don't shoot at any thing less than a turkey—remember there are only four cartridges left!*" After beating about for some time and finding nothing, he came upon a partridge sitting on a limb. The temptation was too strong to be resisted, and he drew up and killed it. His conscience smote him the moment he had done so, as on that single cartridge might yet hang the lives of all the party. At length, however, he came upon a grove of palm nuts. By tightening his cartridge-belt around him, and filling his flannel shirt above it with nuts, he soon had all he could carry, and turned back to the river. But the two got entangled in a swamp, and were wholly exhausted before they could extricate themselves. Wilson then began to beg for the partridge; but Strain told him it was for the party, and must be divided equally. The man at length fell down, and said he could and would go no farther without that partridge. Strain then threw it to him, saying "Take it," and sat down on a log to see him devour it. The starving wretch tore it asunder; but still, feeling that his commander needed it as much as he did, said, "*Captain, do*



*you want the blood?* "No," replied the latter. "*Do you want the entrails?*" "No." He then flung him a piece of the bird, and gorged the rest. At length they reached the river, and kept down the bank. About three o'clock, Strain was startled by Wilson's exclaiming, "*My God, Sir, there is the raft!*" and sure enough, there it was, deserted and floating quietly in the middle of the river, awaiting the action of the tide (it was then slack water) to determine its course.

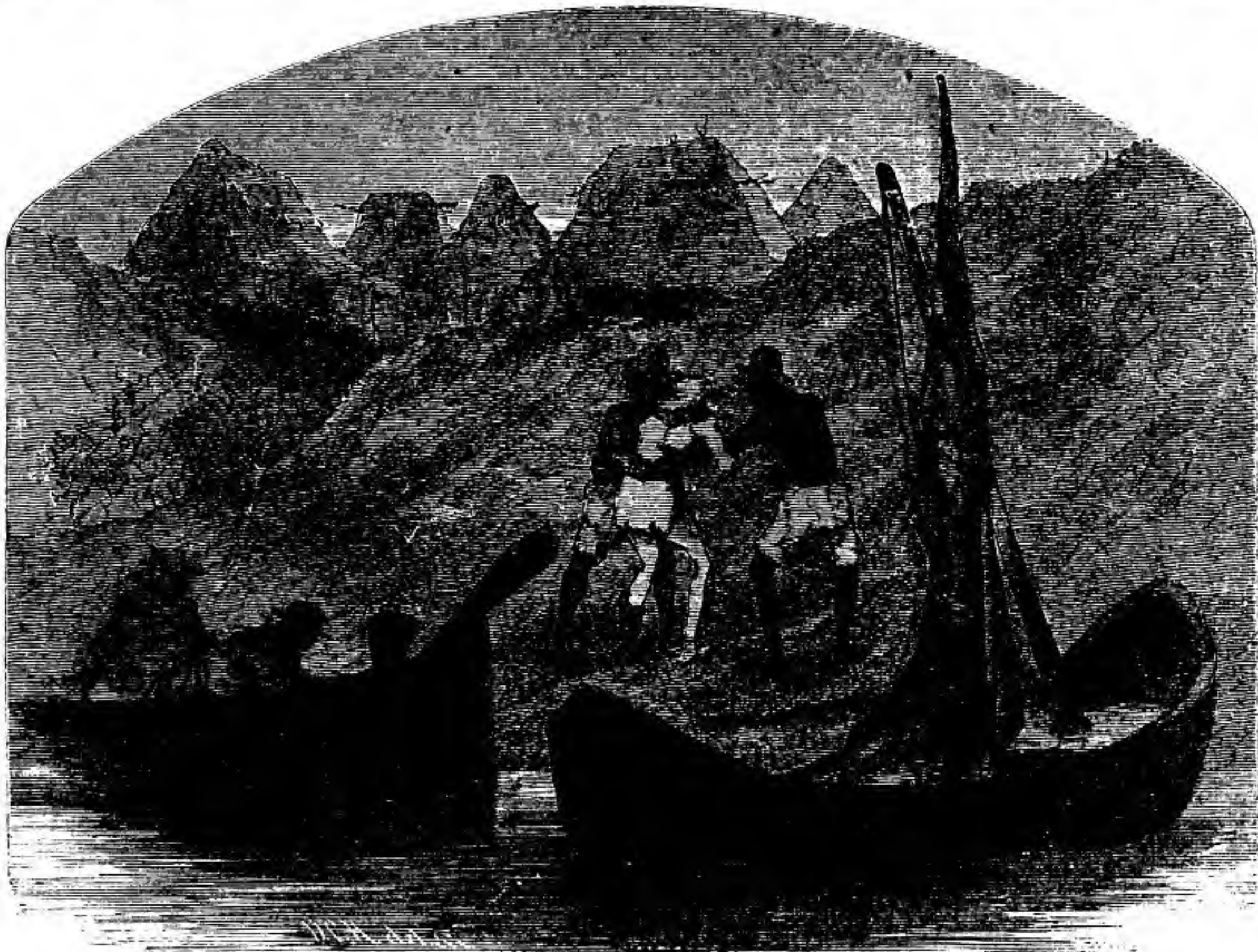
The sight of that abandoned structure at first struck like an ice-bolt to the heart of both, but a single glance showed Strain that the blankets, spare arms, etc., had been taken away, and another, that about eight feet of rope, which had been used to lash the logs, was left untouched, while one of the paddles still remained. He concluded at once that the party had either obtained assistance and left the raft—in which case they would not require, and would probably neglect, the lashings—or that they had been murdered by Indians, who had left the raft adrift for the purpose of entrapping the remainder. In answer to Wilson's anxious inquiries, he frankly told him his conjectures. "Well, Sir," replied Wilson, "if there be Indians about, you have three cartridges left, and are certain of three men, and I think with my *machete* I can give an account of two more." This was the ring of the true metal, and pleased Strain much. While awaiting the progress of the raft, which drifted slowly toward their side of the river, they passed their leisure time in eating nuts. Finally, seeing it foul of some drift-wood about one hundred yards below, they after some difficulty got upon it, and proceeded with the

current down the river. Strain, however, first made a thorough examination, to see if there was any blood or other evidence of a struggle upon it, or a note from Mr. Avery which might unravel the mystery.

After drifting half an hour they saw a clearing on the left bank; and soon after, in passing the mouth of a small stream on the same side, discovered two canoes approaching rapidly from below.

Not feeling assured that the three paddlers were not Indians, who might prove hostile, as they were colored and spoke loudly in a dialect which, at a distance, he could not understand, Strain determined to keep them at arms' length until assured of their peaceable intentions. He accordingly hailed when they came within rifle-shot, and asked who they were and where they were going. They replied, in Spanish, that they were friends, had just taken off his companions, and brought a letter to himself. True to his naval principles, never to let an enemy approach too near without declaring his intentions, Strain sat across the log and hailed as though he trod the deck of a man-of-war. These two skeletons on a mass of drift-wood thus demanding explanations, were very much like a shipwrecked mariner lashed to a spar bidding a vessel stand off till she showed her colors. When convinced, however, of the peaceable intentions of the natives, they gladly abandoned the raft and entered the canoe. Finding that the boatmen had tobacco and a pipe, Strain immediately borrowed them, and, for the first time since the 4th of February, enjoyed the luxury of a smoke.

It was just dark when they reached the village of Yavisa. The excitement was over—the



ARRIVAL AT YAVISA.



immediate necessity of effort past, and Strain's over-tasked nature gave way. He could no longer walk, and was helped by two men to the house of the Sub-Alcalde, where he met Mr. Avery and Golden. When the commander of the United States Darien Exploring Expedition entered the Alcalde's house, his uniform consisted of a blue flannel shirt, one boot, and a Panama hat, neither of which articles was in a very good condition.

Perhaps, in justice to Mr. Strain, I ought to say that he does not accept of my method of accounting for his inability to walk; declaring, by way of proof, that, having often heard of the effect of sudden unexpected deliverance from death after a long and painful suspense, he had the curiosity, when the canoes were approaching the raft to take him off, *to feel of his pulse, and found it was not quickened by a beat!* He therefore naturally enough concluded that it was his cramped position in the canoe that caused his weakness. I am not disposed to differ with a man who pursues knowledge under such difficulties; but he evidently labors under the hallucination that he had *some blood to quicken*. The fact is, he *was drained dry*—soul had taken the place of blood, and kept the body alive. The terrible demands on this were now partially released; and with the yielding of the will nature quietly sunk away.

Having obtained from the Alcalde a petticoat, Strain sat down to supper, and ate as a man will who had for forty days never but in one instance ceased to feel the pangs of hunger. But while Strain gave the reins to his own appetite, he cautiously restrained the men. Wilson yielded to his wishes; but poor Golden, after making most pathetic but vain appeals for more supper, then another glass of brandy, and finally for a cigar, sobbed himself to sleep in the corner where a bed had been prepared for him. He was exceedingly debilitated, and had become perfectly childish and almost idiotic from suffering, and Strain feared that bad effects might ensue if he was permitted to eat as much as he wished. But the latter probably could not perceive the propriety of this, especially when he saw his commander, after refusing him more food, turn from an enormous supply to refresh himself with five or six cups of chocolate.

Before Strain's arrival Mr. Avery had learned that Her Britannic Majesty's steam-sloop *Virago* was at Darien Harbor, but would sail in two or three days for Panama, and suggested the great importance of the former proceeding at once and obtaining from her the necessary supply of provisions and money, offering at the same time to return with the provisions and canoes for the main party.

As he supposed that the men and officers with Truxton had followed his instructions and continued their downward march, Strain believed they could not be far distant; and hence, though most anxious himself to relieve his party, assented to this proposal. Sending, therefore, for the Jefe Politico and Alcalde, he presented

his passports, and requested that four canoes should be engaged as soon as possible, and that provisions, medicines, and all the minor luxuries of spirits, fruits, molasses, and tobacco, should be provided. Every thing was promised, though at such exorbitant prices as soon exhausted his limited means. Having done all he could that night, he was assisted by a Mr. Norriga to the house of his uncle, the priest who had offered beds to Mr. Avery and himself. Says the journal:

"*Friday, March 10.* At early daylight I was awakened by the crowing of numerous cocks which shared my apartment; and this pleasing evidence of civilization soon recalled me to a consciousness of my position and what yet remained to be done before my whole party could enjoy the same luxury. I arose at once, and went to visit the two men whom I had left at the Sub-Alcalde's, but soon found that I had yet a penalty to pay for outraging nature through my diet past and present."

He was seized with the most violent pains, and lay upon his hammock all day rolling in agony. Notwithstanding his severe sufferings, he still planned for his comrades, and aided by Mr. Avery, the Jefe Politico, and Mr. Norriga, managed to provision the party which was to return for the remainder. In the evening, somewhat relieved, though still exceedingly weak, Strain, assisted by the Padre, went down to the river, and took leave of Mr. Avery and Norriga, who, availing themselves of the coolness of the night and bright moonlight, soon after started up the river.

A canoe was to have been ready for himself at the same time, but could not be obtained, and he was forced to wait till morning. The following is from Mr. Strain's journal:

"*March 11.* At early daylight I was awake and prepared for a start; but hearing no intelligence of the canoes, I walked over to the Sub-Alcalde's to see how the men had passed the night. I then met a Mr. Lucre, who had recently returned from Panama, and who had arrived during the night from Santa Maria de Real, a village some distance below. He was the first really white man I had met, and by his conduct certainly supported the dignity of his caste, and presented a strong contrast to the grasping, avaricious negroes, and half breeds of Yavisa, who, availing themselves of our necessities, had imposed upon us at every turn.

"Finding it impossible to obtain a canoe in this village, he proposed to take me to Santa Maria in his own, which was very small, while the Jefe Politico, Mas Carinas, accompanied us in another small canoe, in which he carried my two men. Mas Carinas and Norriga were the only two men whom I could exclude from my heartfelt anathema, as I shook the dust from my feet and embarked at Yavisa, as the parish priest and his whole flock were the most arrant cheats I had ever met with in any part of the world.

"It is true that we have no right to expect



the highest standard of morality in a frontier village in a wild country, but these people certainly carried the privilege of geographical position to an unjustifiable extent, and were, moreover, utterly devoid of the quality of personal courage, which is found elsewhere in similar situations.

"During my protracted journey in the wilderness, I had frequently, in the spirit which actuated Alexander Selkirk,\* wished myself once more in a position to be cheated, and if I had selected from a minute map of the world, I do not believe that I could have had any wish so thoroughly gratified as at Yavisa.

"Our little canoes were laden to within a couple of inches of the water's edge, and as the tide turned soon after we left, we made slow progress, but after some four hours' hard paddling we arrived at the mouth of the river Tuyra of geographers, whence we ascended it about half a mile to Santa Maria, the residence of Mr. Lucre, where we were most hospitably entertained. As he had some medicines and ointment, our sores and boils were first treated; after which a pretty little woman, the daughter of the Jefe Politico, Mas Carinas, to whom Mr. Lucre was allied, in accordance with the custom of the country, prepared for us an excellent dinner, of which we partook thankfully. After dinner, finding that I could not be prevailed upon to pass the night, Mr. Lucre lent me his own canoe, and assisted by Mas Carinas and the Alcalde, I engaged three bogas on reasonable terms to convey me to Chapigana.

"At 5.30 we embarked, and I found that attention to my comforts had extended beyond the door of my hospitable entertainer, as a platform of boards was extended along the bottom of the canoe, upon which we could repose, as it appeared to us, luxuriously. Santa Maria de Real, as has been already mentioned, is about half a mile from the junction of the rivers Tuyra and Chuqunaqua, and contains, I should suppose, about six hundred inhabitants. The style of building is similar to that of the Indian villages on the Caledonia, which we passed on the second day of our journey, although the houses are inferior in size and stability. Two small rivers enter at this village, and the houses are irregularly scattered along their banks, and that of the Tuyra. Large canoes trade between this place and Panama, where they exchange live stock, timber, and plank, for cottons, Delft-ware, cooking utensils, and cutlery. The village has no priest, and the incumbent of Yavisa performs service there as well as in Chapigana and two other villages, Molincea and Pinogana, which are situated on the Tuyra above Santa Maria. With a strong ebb-tide we paddled rapidly down the Tuyra to its junction with the Chuqunaqua, and thence down the united streams, which at this place becomes very wide, though it retains the tortuous character which distinguishes its whole

length above Yavisa. At the junction there is a fine view of the Pine Mountain, which rises abruptly from the flat wooded plain which intervenes, to the height of some 2000 feet. After our long confinement in the forest, where our view was constantly limited by the forest growth, it was an intense pleasure once more to see high land and enjoy a distant view, and I thought I should never tire of gazing on this high and isolated mountain. Beyond it, I was informed, there formerly existed an Inca city, or as the natives term it, a City of the King, while on this side was, during colonial times, a Spanish town of considerable importance, which sprang up rapidly near the mines of Espirito Santo, and as rapidly decayed when the mine was closed by order of the King of Spain, after it was found to have attracted the cupidity of the English Buccaneers.



PINE MOUNTAIN.

"In the beautiful moonlight, and with an occasional glimpse of the Pine Mountain, we drifted and paddled until about 10 p.m., when meeting the flood-tide we tied up to a tree, and each of my bogas addressed themselves to sleep; with me the attempt was nearly a failure, as I suffered such intense pain from my boils and the wood worms (*Guzanos de Monte*), that until nearly morning I found sleep to be impossible. My two men, too, suffered from the same causes, and about midnight we abandoned the idea, and made a late supper on some boiled salt beef which I had prepared at Yavisa.

"At the same place, in anticipation of this journey, and with direct reference to our raven-

\* "Better dwell in the midst of alarms,  
Than reign in this horrible place."



ous appetites, which it appeared no amount of food could satisfy, I had some salt pork boiled also, and although I paid very liberally for the cooking, the beef only was returned to me, the pork having been confiscated as a perquisite of the cook.

"I had also purchased a turkey at the cost of three dollars and three quarters, and afterward paid one dollar for cooking the same, but was informed on the morning afterward that it had been eaten by the cat. The skeleton was shown to me, which proved conclusively that the meat of the turkey was gone; but as the depredation had been committed in the house of the Padre, who had considerable influence over the natives, whom I might have occasion to employ, expediency alone prevented me from inquiring whether the cats on that portion of the Isthmus used knives and forks.

"At a late hour weariness overcame the sense of pain, and I fell asleep, and awakened early in the morning to find the canoe under way, and near Chapigana, where we arrived about 6 P.M. I soon discovered the house of Mr. Hossack, a Scotchman, who had for a long time resided in that place, and from whom I received a kindly reception. From the river to his house I made my way with great difficulty, as the beach was covered with sharp stones, which cut my bare feet very severely. Golden had to be carried by two men, as he was too much debilitated to walk.

"By Mr. Hossack I was informed that the *Virago* had sailed for Panama two days before, and that she would return on the next Thursday. He also informed me that the engineers of the Atlantic and Pacific Junction Company, had a dépôt of provisions on the river Savana, at its junction with the Lara, where I could obtain all that was necessary for my party. I requested him to use his influence to obtain a canoe and bogas to convey me at once to this station, but found that none would venture, owing to the strong trade-wind which was blowing across the harbor.

"The day was passed in patching up our dilapidated physique, and in obtaining news; and it was then I learned, for the first time, that our long absence was generally observed, and had caused much uneasiness.

"Unable to write myself, I requested Mr. Hossack to communicate the intelligence of our arrival to his friends in Panama, to prevent unnecessary uneasiness among those who had friends in the party.

"*Monday, March 13.* A little before daylight we started in a large canoe, belonging to Mr. Hossack, and with three bogas, for the Savana; with a fair tide we passed across the broad estuary, which is by some considered the river Tuyra, and by others called Darien Harbor, and passing the mouth of the Iglesias and Arcti, on the left bank, entered the Savana, which we ascended until about half past 2 P.M., when we arrived at a penal establishment of New Grenada, which had been recently established,

in order to assist Mr. Gisborne and party in the prosecution of their survey."

A few hundred yards above the Presidio stood the English dépôt occupied by the naval engineer, Mr. Bennett. He was an Irishman, tall, well-formed, and with a manly, noble presence. Strain, reduced by long starvation from one hundred and forty-five pounds in weight to *seventy-five*, covered with sores, and clad in such habiliments as the negro Alcalde at Yavisa could furnish him, presented the appearance of a common beggar rather than that of the Commander of the United States Exploring Expedition. As he approached he accosted a negro servant of Mr. Bennett, and inquired where his master was. The negro pointed to where he sat by a table, engaged in making drawings, surveys, etc. As Strain drew near, Mr. Bennett accosted him rather sternly, saying, in somewhat repulsive tones, "Well, Sir, what do you want?" The latter replied, "I am Lieutenant Strain, Commander of the United States Darien Exploring Expedition." "*My God!*" exclaimed the warm-hearted, noble man, as he caught him in his arms, and pressed him to his bosom, while the tears rolled down his cheeks: "Ah," said he, "we had given you up long ago as lost." He immediately ordered dinner; and, while Strain was eating, told him that he must remain there and recruit, and he himself would go back after his comrades. This was the more generous, as he was very lame from the effect of a large wood worm which had been extracted from his leg. Strain, of course, declined the offer. He then supplied him with provisions, brought out nearly all the clothing he had, saying, "Take these to the poor men;" forced on Strain his poncho, turned his medicine chest, and pockets too, inside out. Not content with this, he ordered a bed placed in Strain's canoe for him, stowed away books, cigars, indeed every thing his noble heart could suggest for his own comfort and that of his men. At five o'clock in the evening Strain, who, while the fate of his comrades remained uncertain, seemed impervious to fatigue, started back for Yavisa, where he arrived on the 15th. Going ashore, he ascertained that two of the men dispatched with Mr. Avery had returned. He immediately sent for them, and inquired the cause of their desertion. They replied they were out of provisions. This he knew to be a falsehood. Disgusted with their cowardice and knavery, he told them that he would not pay them one cent for their services unless compelled in course of law, and would then do it under a solemn protest, and refer the matter to their superior authorities. This threat he fulfilled religiously.

The next day the two bogas, who had returned from Avery's party above, sent him a note from the latter, dated March 13th, stating that he had already passed the place where they had constructed the raft on the 2d of March, but had seen nothing of the main party.

He complained bitterly of the indolence and



cowardice of the bogas, whom he found great difficulty in keeping with him by threats and promises, but remarked that he hoped that day to find the party, and that he and Norriga would not return even if all the men left them. At the same time he urged Strain to follow him up without delay. Upon the reception of this intelligence, he was somewhat undecided for a time as to how he ought to act, but finally determined to wait the return of Mr. Avery, or of his party, in the event they should return without him. As his letter stated that they were still advancing, and already near the point where they might reasonably expect to meet the main body in their downward progress, he had little doubt but Avery would be successful, which would make another party entirely unnecessary. Even if he did fit out another party of natives, they would be no more likely to advance than that now with Mr. Avery; and should he accompany them up, and they insist upon returning before reaching the main body, a loss of time would be involved which might prove fatal to them. It was on this day that the *Virago* was expected at Darien Harbor from Panama, and, as a last resource, he could apply to her commander, and obtain men who would not be arrested by common obstacles. Still, while awaiting momentarily the arrival of Mr. Avery with intelligence, and perhaps with the missing party, he felt averse to leaving Yavisa, and determined to delay at least until next morning, before taking any definitive action. Upon one point he was determined—that if Mr. Avery was forced to return unsuccessful, the safety of his men should not be intrusted to the cowardly natives, but that he would obtain a party of English to accompany him, or, failing in that, would demand an escort of troops from the Granadian Presidio on the Savana, who by their muskets and bayonets might force the bogas to do their duty.

The day passed most anxiously, but as none of Avery's men returned, he augured favorably. The journal says here:

"*Friday, March 17.* Before daylight I was awakened by the Padre, who announced Avery's return. In answer to my first question, 'Have you brought the party?' he replied, 'One of them. I have brought Parks.'" He had passed the point where, on the 14th of February, the advance party had constructed the first raft, and discovered a cross on the bank, from whence was suspended a letter from Mr. Truxton, to which allusion has already been made in the record of the main party, where a copy is given.

Having read the letter, and discovered that the party were retrograding, he went into camp for the night, intending to follow them up the next day. This was the 14th of March, one month after the advance party had passed this point, and eight days before it was left by the main body under Mr. Truxton. On the morning of the 15th Mr. Avery, accompanied by Mr. Norriga and two bogas, in a small canoe, attempted to ascend the river in pursuit

of the party, but meeting a log, about two miles above Holmes's grave, which extended across the river, as they erroneously supposed, they returned to the other men, who refused to go further. Every effort appeared to have been made to induce the natives to proceed, but fear of the Indians had obtained such a firm hold of their minds, that no inducement could be offered sufficiently tempting. Double pay for every day's additional service was offered them, double pay for the whole journey, with a handsome present to each boga upon their return to Yavisa, if they would only proceed up the river one day longer.

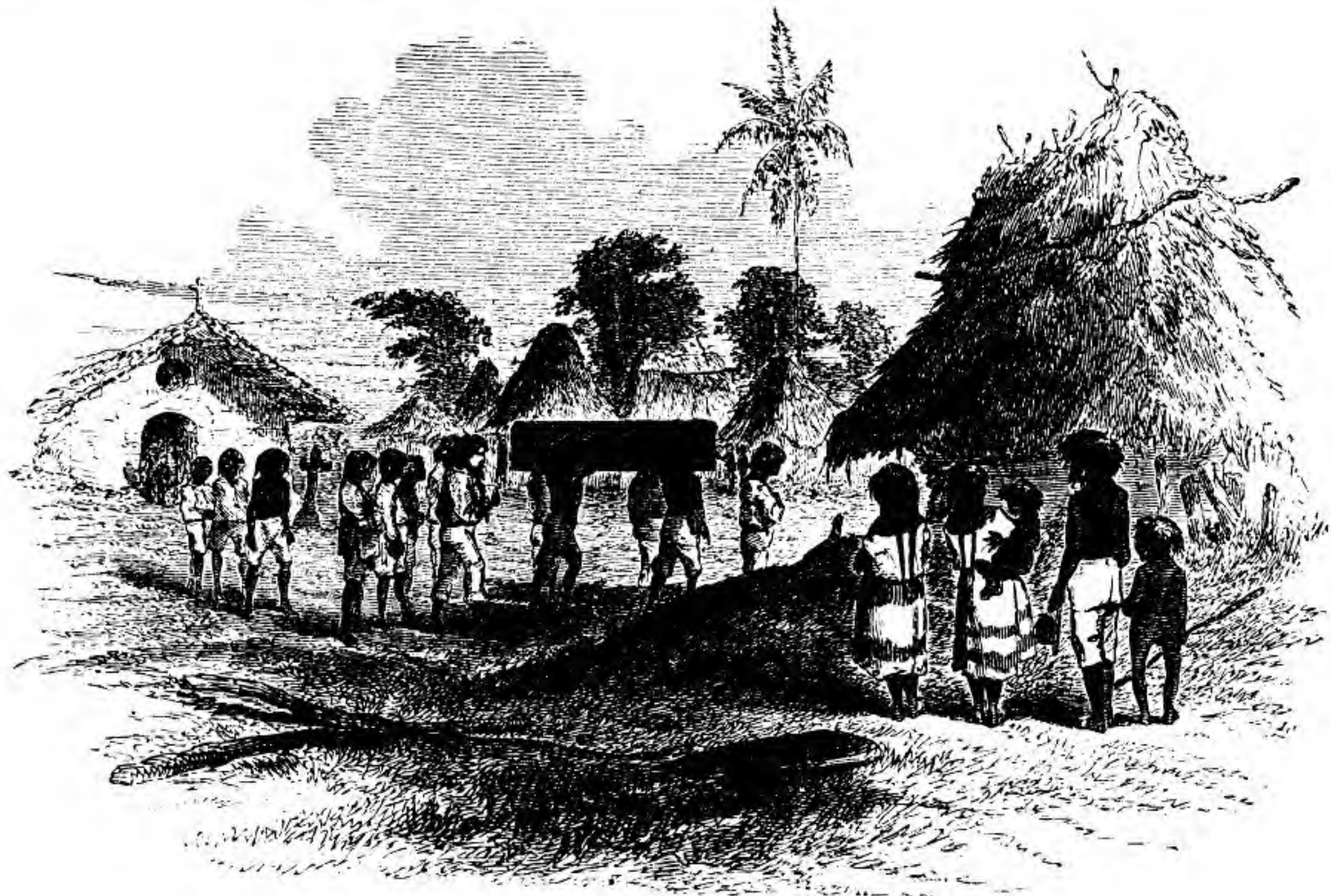
Their avarice, though great, appears not to have equaled their cowardice; and with gloomy anticipations, Mr. Avery hastened down the river to report his failure, and to obtain more men and further instructions. They started on their return from No. 2 Hospital Camp, and passing rapidly over the raft journey of the 15th of February, heard at meridian a call on the right bank of the river. Landing, they discovered Parks, who, it will be remembered, strayed from the main body on the 5th of March. He was unable to move, and slightly delirious, but gave what afterward proved to be a tolerably correct account of the condition of the party up to the 5th of March, when he lost himself in the forest. Of his own wanderings he gave no very distinct account, nor could he state how many days he had been absent from the party. From the 5th of March until the evening of the 14th he appeared to have been lost in the forest, and absent from the river; upon his return to which, the evening before he was found, he stated that he had drunk six quarts of water, and laid himself down to die. For want of food he said that he did not at first suffer, as he had palmetto when he separated from the other two men, and cut down the palm-nut trees with his knife. His knife he finally broke, after which he obtained no more food, but could not remember how long that was after he was lost. His whole body was covered with wood-ticks, which were removed by Mr. Avery, after which he was oiled, to soften the skin, and relieve the sores.

Food was given him in small quantities, of which he at first wished to eat voraciously, but his hunger being soon appeased, he never asked again for it, although constant in his demands for water. He did not know Strain, but called every body Captain Strain. When brought into the presence of the latter, he got up by the side of the house, and, leaning against the wall, exclaimed, "Oh, Captain, Captain, give me some water!"

"What do you want?" replied Strain. "Oh, it is too late!" he replied, and sunk down and never spoke again, though, at the time, no one thought him dying.

Thoroughly alarmed at hearing that the main body had attempted a return—which Strain feared would terminate in a perfect route, and most disastrously to the lives of all—he only





FUNERAL OF PARKS.

awaited until daylight to demand from the Alcalde a second force, to be placed under his own command, and with positive instructions, under the severest penalties known to the rude law of that region, not to leave him until they had overtaken the party. By dint of threats and exertions, he obtained the necessary orders from the Alcalde upon the local authorities of Yavisa, Pinogani, and Santa, to supply the requisite number with all dispatch, and immediately proceeded to the hire of five canoes. Says the journal:

“While arranging this important business, I was shocked by receiving intelligence of the death of Parks. I had left him but a few minutes before, apparently asleep, and though delirious he appeared strong, and was no more emaciated than the members of my own party. Ordering that a coffin should be made, and a grave dug, I charged Mr. Avery and the Padre with the care of his funeral, and prepared to set out immediately down the river to meet the *Virago* and ask their assistance, as I feared to intrust the safety of the party above to the cowardly natives, who might again return before reaching it.

“The *Virago*, I knew, ought to have returned on the day before, and I had determined, if by any chance she should have been delayed, to ascend the Savana to the New Granadian Presidio, and demand from the officer in charge a sufficient guard of soldiers to insure the obedience of the bogas whom I had requested to be drafted for the expedition. I hoped that military discipline might have repaired to some extent inherent cowardice, and that the bayonets of the troops would appear more formidable than the remote danger from the Indians. Un-

willing to delay one moment longer than necessary, I left instructions with Mr. Avery to embark the provisions and medicines which I had brought up, and set out as soon as the natives should arrive from the various adjoining villages. Meanwhile the Jefe Politico, Mas Carinas, arrived, and a demand was made upon me by the bogas who had accompanied Mr. Avery, not only for the pay which had been promised them, but for the extra pay which he offered them on condition that they should accompany him until the party was relieved.” The additional pay he refused to give them, and reproached them bitterly for their cowardice and roguery in stealing nearly all the provisions which he had with great difficulty obtained and destined for his own men, whom they had so scandalously abandoned to their fate.

The altercation waxed warm, and Strain's life was threatened; but he presented a six-barreled pistol, and kept them back, while a threat from the Jefe Politico that he would consign them to prison finally restored order.

Uneasy, vexed, and indignant, he finally threw himself into his canoe, and taking advantage of the remainder of the ebb-tide, swept rapidly down the river in search of assistance of such a character that he could risk the lives of his party upon it.

Extra pay and constant urging induced the bogas to pull even after the tide had turned, and when they could no longer make any headway against the current, and were forced to anchor, they had already made some sixteen or eighteen miles.

Immediately after anchoring, Strain was informed by a fisherman that an armed English boat was coming up the river; and soon after,



to his great joy, she made her appearance, moving rapidly with the tide. He immediately got under way to intercept her, and, upon hailing, found that she contained a party from the *Virago*, under Lieutenant W. C. Forsyth, which had been sent to his assistance by Captain Edward Marshall, who, in a very polite note, congratulated him upon his arrival, and requested him to bring his whole party on board his ship. Mr. W. C. Bennett also accompanied the detachment, and it was to his promptness and energy that this timely assistance was rendered; for, as soon as he heard the *Virago's* guns at the mouth of the Savana, he jumped into a canoe, and, paddling himself, hurried down and stated Strain's urgent necessities, which induced Commander Marshall to expedite his expedition so that it left the *Virago* at midnight on the night previous. It is true that the intention to send a party up the Chuquanaqua already existed; but the promptness of Mr. Bennett, and his earnest representations, advanced its departure several hours, and thus saved Strain the voyage to Darien Harbor. The latter immediately transferred his baggage from the canoe to the paddle-box boat, and arrived at Yavisa a short time after dark. He there learned that answers to the call for men had been received from neighboring villages, but that none had yet arrived, though they were expected in the morning.

The next morning they were stirring early, and every effort was made to obtain canoes for the ascent, as they had determined not to wait the arrival of the natives, but to have them dispatched after by the Jefe Politico and the Alcalde. The constitutional tardiness of the natives, increased by a partially-concealed dissatisfaction at the arrival of the English officers and seamen, delayed them for some hours, and it was not till afternoon that, partly by entreaties, and partly by force, they obtained three canoes and put off.

The tide and some fourteen English oarsmen propelled them rapidly up the stream, and they only halted when it became so dark that they could proceed no farther. While at anchor near the bank, an incident occurred which had nearly proved fatal to the expedition and all engaged, and for a moment seemed to indicate that destiny was against them, and that the unfortunate party had been marked for destruction. At eleven o'clock at night, when all were asleep in the boat except the two sentries and Strain, the latter heard amidst the profound stillness a cracking and rending of timber in the woods, which he knew at once to proceed from a falling tree. He first thought it was some distance from the bank, but on looking up to see whether it was likely to strike and bring down any other timber nearer the shore, he saw against the starlit sky, directly over his head, the dark and swaying form of a tree gradually declining toward the spot where the unsuspecting boats lay moored. His first thought was, "My poor men will now be lost!" He, however, never opened his mouth, but watched the descending mass

without moving, as it came directly toward him. Suddenly, as if turned aside by some unseen hand, it inclined to the right, and fell with a fearful crash into the river, a few feet behind, tearing off a piece of the stern of one of the canoes which was moored alongside. Shouts and exclamations followed, and for a moment the greatest consternation prevailed among the seamen, who thought the Indians were upon them; but the voices of the officers, and assurances that the danger had passed, soon restored order. Mr. Avery, who slept in a canoe alongside, had a narrow escape; but fortunately a good wetting was all the inconvenience which any of them experienced.

Next day was Sunday, and all were early at work and advancing up the river. About mid-day they were joined by two canoes containing eleven natives, who had been dispatched after them by the Jefe Politico in Yavisa. At two o'clock they arrived as far as the paddle-box boat could go, and after a hasty dinner, embarked the officers and a portion of the men in the canoes. It was at this point that Strain had discovered tide-water on the 4th of March, during the downward journey.

From this place down to the harbor of Darien, a distance of fifty miles, there is no obstacle to the navigation, and even at the lowest stage of water about two fathoms can be carried. Above this *salto* the same draft might be carried during the rainy season; but the immense quantities of floating timber at that time, combined with the narrowness of the stream and the frequent rapids, will probably prevent the river being navigated even under the most favorable circumstances. The gunner of the *Virago* and eight men were left in the paddle-box boat, Avery and Wilson remaining with them, neither of them being in a condition to render much service, and requiring rest and diet. Still Mr. Avery, with an endurance and spirit which honored him, offered to go on, if it was thought he could afford the slightest assistance. Mr. Bennett had brought his own canoe, so that, with the two owned by the natives, they had now six in all. The largest of these was given to William Ross, and was intended as a hospital. He was accompanied by the paymaster, W. H. Hills. Mr. Forsyth took charge of the canoe next in size to that of the surgeon, Mr. Bennett of his own, while Strain selected the canoe of the lightest draft for himself. The remaining two were managed by the natives, who halted to dine, while the main party proceeded over the rapids, which—the tide being out—were passed with great difficulty. At night, when they encamped, the natives rejoined and encamped near them. The 12-pound howitzer in the paddle-box boat was heard distinctly at 8 P.M. This was Sunday, and the next morning, March 20th, after a hearty breakfast, they started in the same order as on the previous day; but before mid-day, Strain found that the exertion of paddling a canoe was too great for him, and that his feet had become



fearfully swollen. He accordingly ordered the Padron of the natives to put one man in each canoe, both to paddle and steer it, while two English seamen were retained for the sole purpose of paddling. The officers having managed their own canoes thus far, it had a good moral effect, and convinced the natives that the whites were not so dependent on them as they supposed. The dexterity which the English seamen displayed in the management of the boats surprised every one, but was accounted for by the fact that the *Virago* had been for some time under repair in Puget Sound, on the north-west coast of America, where the sailors had frequent opportunities of amusing themselves with the canoes of the Indians, which are much less stable even than those of the Isthmus.

At dark they encamped on a shingle beach, and, after a hearty supper, set the watch, which consisted of one officer and two sentries. The remainder were soon asleep around the watch-fires.

As rapids were becoming frequent, one of the native canoes was detailed to assist the English to stem the strong current, which they did by dragging them over by hand. The other was permitted to go ahead for the purpose of hunting, in which the men were very expert. Passing several well-recognized camps of his downward progress, and intervals which it had cost him days of hard labor to accomplish, they encamped after sunset, the 21st, on the rocky beach upon which Strain had slept the 16th of February, after having abandoned his raft in the morning.

The raft and paddles were still there, and one of the latter, which Strain made with a macheta, was secured as a memento by one of the English officers, and afterward proved useful when another was broken. The abundance of food, two fires, the bustle of many men, and the sound of many voices, was a pleasing contrast to the chilly, foodless, fireless nights which he had passed in the desert. Still there was a "*plus ultra*" which prevented enjoyment, and his silent exclamation was, "Oh that I could bring the remainder of the party to the same degree of comfort, and I should be content!"

At ten o'clock next morning they arrived at No. 2 Hospital Camp of the main body, where, upon the cross over Holmes's grave, Mr. Avery found the letter from Mr. Truxton, informing Strain of his intentions to go back. Landing, Strain examined it critically, but could find no indications of disorganization or route. An old hat and pieces of cloth lay about, but there were two regular camps, with their respective fires, and evidences of an attempt at comfort. The camp of the men was nearest the water, while a path had been cut to the officers' camp, which was about forty feet distant. In the latter he discovered a tree that had served as a target for pistol-shooting, which convinced him that they were neither utterly dispirited or so short of ammunition as he and his party had been. Although the rude attempt to raise the

evidence of Christian burial over one of the men who, in high health and spirits, had left the Atlantic coast, could not but produce the saddest reflections, yet he was already prepared for it, and left the camp with brighter anticipations, from the evidences of continued discipline and organization which he had observed. The native canoe-men at this point remonstrated against proceeding further up the river, but as he indignantly refused even to listen to their representations, they postponed the discussion for a future occasion.

Ascending rapidly, they arrived at the fallen tree which had barred Mr. Avery's upward progress; but, upon examination, it was found that, in falling, the roots had opened a narrow channel between it and the bank, through which the small canoes passed easily. The larger ones experienced more difficulty, but with a half hour's cutting of the bank all got safely through, and the ascent was rapidly continued. As the day declined obstacles became more numerous, and much skill and dexterity were displayed by the natives in passing under and over fallen trees which extended across the river, near the level of the water.

As they continued to ascend they saw small crosses along the banks, erected, according to previous arrangement, by the main party as they descended, to point out to Strain their progress when he should return with assistance. But the signs soon ceased, and although they passed numerous return camps, there was no symbol from which it could be inferred that they had the remotest hope of relief from below. Worn-out belts and cartouche boxes, found in camps on the river, showed that the party were dispensing with all unnecessary weight, while pieces of leather cut from the latter gave evidence that their boots and shoes were nearly worn out. Quills and feathers of the loathsome buzzard scattered along, revealed the character of food to which stern necessity had at last driven them. In the afternoon they arrived at the camp from whence Strain had taken leave of the party, and found that it had been revisited by them, the evidence of which was the remains of a fire and some cartouche boxes which had been discarded. About sunset they encamped on a sloping bank, and passed a night of torture, owing to the myriads of mosquitoes which infested the camp.

This was a sad night for Strain. From the examination of to-day's camp it was evident his command had given him up for lost, and commenced the desperate undertaking of finding their way back to the Atlantic shore. The prospect now grew painfully alarming. Strain could not sleep, but agitated, anxious, and feverish, sat up all night fanning himself. The noble-hearted Bennett kept him company nearly the whole night, and cheered him with promise of assistance to the last. He told him that a fearful and trying day was before him on the morrow—alluding to the revelations which the camps of the men would make. He requested



him also to get a pair of boots of one of the men, and try by degrees to wear them; for, said he, no one can tell how distant the party may be, and when we ascend as high as the boats can go, the natives, you know, will refuse to advance, and, in all probability, the English seamen also, as they have a mortal dread of the Indians. And as Strain turned inquiringly toward him, he added, "*And, you know, when all shall turn back, you and I must shoulder our haversacks and take to the woods alone, till we find your men.*" This noble self-devotion of a stranger and foreigner—this grand, high purpose to cast his lot in with the distressed commander, and save his party, or perish with them—reveals one of those lofty, elevated characters which shed lustre on the race.\*

At early daylight, when the sand-flies relieved the night-guard of mosquitoes, they rose to prepare for a day of labor and excitement, as Strain had every reason to believe he should overtake the main body of his party before night. As they were now nearly in the heart of the Isthmus, and might possibly meet Indians, a regular order of sailing was adopted, and the canoes followed each other in close order.

Strain led the van, accompanied by a canoe containing three natives, who, sailing close along the edge of the shore, examined each camp and searched the river bank step by step. At about nine o'clock, Strain was startled by the cry from the Padron:

"*Here is a dead body!*"

For a moment he was intimidated, and shrank back as if smitten with a death-chill, and was on the point of asking some one to land and examine it in his place. He did not know which of his friends or comrades he might find stark upon the beach, and for a moment wished to escape the horrible spectacle. Reflection, however, soon convinced him that it was a necessity which must be met, perhaps even till he had counted up, one by one, all of his command, and, nerving himself for the worst, he shoved his canoe ashore. Birds of rapine and beasts of prey had left little more than the skeleton, but a glance at the linen shirt under the blue uniform of the party showed at once that it was an officer. Upon a closer inspection of the bones and skull, he discerned that it was the remains of Mr. Polanco, the junior Granadian commissioner. The outline of a grave was below, which induced the officers and men who accompanied him to believe that the body had been buried and afterward disinterred by wild beasts; but Strain read the history of the recent tragical events more accurately.

The grave was too short for Mr. Polanco; besides, there was not sufficient evidence that the ground had been torn up, while the clothing, flattened over the bones, showed plainly that they had never been covered with earth. He felt,

therefore, rather than knew, that Mr. Castilla, his companion, lay beneath, and that he, faithful in death as he had been faithful and docile in life, had laid down and died upon his grave. Where he lay there they interred him, sacredly gathering together even the finger bones; and, placing a cross over the joint remains of these unfortunate, educated, and talented young men, before whom but a few weeks previous a bright future appeared to be opening, they continued their journey saddened and subdued by the melancholy spectacle.

The English officers could not witness it, but turned away sick and sad. It was not till after they had left the spot, that Strain mentioned his convictions concerning the grave, lest some one might propose a delay for the purpose of examining it. The dead were beyond reach of human assistance and human sympathy, but to those who remained of his party delay might be death.

At about 10 A.M., a tree was met extending entirely across the river, which had to be cut in two before a passage could be effected. Cheerfully and heartily the English seamen went to work; but the natives, for a long time, hung back, and, after a consultation, declared that they would go no farther.

Grieved and distressed beyond measure by the fearful sight he had just witnessed, and feeling that the skill and dexterity of the natives were becoming every hour more essential to his success, Strain was thoroughly enraged by this despicable conduct. He entreated, upbraided, and threatened by turns, and gave them to understand that, even should they escape alive from his own party of armed and determined men, whose success depended in a great degree upon their assistance, the grape and canister of the howitzer in the boat below would prevent their reaching Yavisa. He wound up his harangue by swearing, with the most solemn oath known to those barbarians—viz., *by the soul of God*—that, even if they should escape these dangers, he would devote the remainder of his life to their punishment. Sorrow and anger combined gave an impressiveness to the solemn oath—especially as he presented a six-barreled revolver to their breasts, declaring that at least *six* of them should never return. After a short and frightened consultation, they agreed to continue on the remainder of that day. Although Strain hoped confidently that the party would be overtaken before night, he did not accept of these conditions, as he was determined that they should never abandon to a fearful death men whose lives were of so much more value than their own, especially as they had embarked in the enterprise, and by their promises induced him to consume time which was beyond price.

For some hours, early in the afternoon, they lost sight of the return camps, and the English party, officers as well as men, became apprehensive that the party had abandoned the river. But on this subject Strain felt no anxiety, as he knew that they would not dare to leave the

\* The reader will be glad to hear that this noble stranger received, in a separate letter from the Secretary of the Navy, the thanks of our Government for his devotion and his services.





STRAIN'S LAST ARGUMENT.

stream, which was their only guide and the only certain source from which they could obtain water. Nearly the whole of this day they fired their muskets and shouted at short intervals, in order to attract their attention should they be pursuing their march in the forest, where it was generally more free from undergrowth than close to the river bank. Late in the afternoon a log across the river compelled them to leave the canoes, which were forced over by the united strength of the party. Here a stench induced Strain to believe that one of his unfortunate companions had been left in the forest; but, after a brief search in the bushes, not finding anything, he pushed on—feeling that, even if his suspicions were true, the poor creature was beyond human relief, and it was those who suffered and yet lived that demanded his utmost efforts. Soon after passing this barrier ashes were discovered, which the Padron, in his scout canoe, pronounced to be less than four days old. When Strain announced this intelligence to the party, three cheers were given by the English seamen, that made the forest ring, and they sprang to their paddles with such energy that the water foamed away from the prows of their canoes as they bounded onward.

Signs of disorganization, however, now became more alarming, and the evidence of extreme debility and starvation more apparent. Buzzard's quills, haversacks, fragments of clothing strewed along, together with the want of order in the camps, and their close proximity, attested that the little band had well-nigh reached

the end of their march. With every fresh symptom of extreme destitution Strain became more painfully agitated, for the dreadful fear that they had been compelled to resort to cannibalism haunted him, and made him tremble to proceed. But nerving himself to the worst, and keeping his forebodings to himself, he pushed on, and soon after announced a camp less than three days old. This was responded to by a loud cheer and a discharge of fire-arms. Even the natives began to feel the excitement, and bent to their paddles with lustier strokes. They had not proceeded far before another camp was found, the ashes of which were declared to be warm; and then the excitement reached the highest pitch. Shout after shout went up, shot after shot rang through the forest, and a common enthusiasm and ardor inspired every breast.

At about sunset the natives, who were ahead in the scout canoe, announced a smoke in sight, and immediately after making a turn in the river Strain discovered five men standing on the shelving beach just out of the wood. He immediately discharged his musket to warn them of his approach, lest the effect of too sudden joy might be fatal; and then cheer after cheer echoed and re-echoed through the forest, as each canoe in succession swept round the point and caught sight of the motionless forms in the distance.

When Strain saw but five men his heart sank with dread, and he exclaimed, "*My God, is that all!*" but the next moment a faint cheer from the forest in the rear announced that others



still remained alive. His canoe swept with a bound to the shore; but before its prow grated upon it he was on the land. His first inquiry of Maury was, "How many men have you lost?" "Five," replied Maury. "I know," responded Strain, "of four, who is the other?" "Lombard," said Maury." By this time Truxton had staggered up, and, flinging his arms around Strain, exclaimed, "Oh, Strain, did I do right to turn back?" Joy at his sudden release from the terrible death that awaited him, relief from suffering and suspense, were forgotten in the single question of duty. "Did I do right?" was the only thought, the only question. How that involuntary exclamation honors him—exalts him above all eulogy! *Duty* had governed him from first to last; *duty* occupied him even in the extreme suffering of starvation. So long as we can have such officers to command our ships, our navy will retain her old renown, and whether flying or struck, our flag will still be covered with glory.

One of the men, named M'Ginness, threw his arms around Strain, and bursting into tears, exclaimed, "Oh, Captain! poor Boggs is breaking his heart to see you." As Bennett, the noble Irishman, jumped ashore, and saw the hideous spectacle of scarred and almost naked skeletons, he seized each one by the hand, while the tears poured like rain down his cheeks. The Scotch surgeon gazed around him a moment, apparently bewildered, then leaping back into the boat seized a bottle of port wine under each arm, and hastening from the one to the other, said,

"Take a little of this, my poor fellow; take a little of this!"

But this spectacle was nothing to that which awaited them at the camp. Several of the poor men there had heard the shouts of deliverance, but the joyful intelligence could not impart strength to their wasted frames. There they lay—lacerated, ulcerated frames of men half-covered with rags. Each turned his eye as his commander approached, but none could get up. Strain first came upon Vermilyea, stretched on his back and emaciated to such a dreadful degree that he did not know him. The latter, however, said, in a feeble voice, "How do you do, Captain? We are glad to see you back again. We were afraid you were lost." Strain, with a breaking heart, gazed on him a moment, when the poor man asked, "Won't you shake hands with me, Captain?" "Yes," replied the former. "I beg pardon, Captain, but I can't get up." Strain then knelt down beside him and tried to cheer him, saying he had brought along provisions, a doctor, and every thing needed, and he hoped to see him on his feet again soon. "I am afraid, Captain," he faintly replied, "I shall never march any more." Alas! it proved too true. As Strain rose to his feet he saw a figure sitting a little way off on the ground doubled up against his knees, his pantaloons off up to his thighs, while a part of a shirt, and a palm-leaf hat with but half a rim completed his costume. He was ghastly and frightful to look upon. As he caught Strain's eye he touched the fragment of his hat-brim, and endeavored to smile. The contor-



THE RESCUE.



tions which the effort gave to his almost black and emaciated face rendered him still more horrible. "Who are you?" said Strain. "Henwood," he replied, and again attempted to touch his hat in true naval discipline. "We were getting very uneasy about you, Sir," he added; "very glad to see you back." Strain, horrified and struck almost dumb at the spectacle, replied mechanically, "Well, Henwood, how are you getting along?" "Oh, very well, Sir; but we were very uneasy about you. We are very glad to see you back, because, if you had not come up to-night, there's me, Harris, Miller, and poor Boggs, who could not have gone on to-morrow, Sir." The appellation "poor" was applied to Boggs, because he was an officer. The posture of this young man, his emaciated, half-naked appearance, the resigned manner in which he spoke of his fate, together with the ghastly attempt at a smile, combined to render him one of the most strange and frightful spectacles the human form ever presents. Beside him sat another in the same condition, who to Strain's inquiries answered in the same manner. Truxton had by this time reached camp again, and exhausted lay down. Strain advanced a little farther to where Boggs—his old schoolmate and fellow-officer—was lying on a ragged counterpane which he had carried instead of a blanket. The poor man had at last yielded to despair, and the presence of his friend failed to rouse him. Strain knelt over him and exclaimed, "Good God! my dear fellow don't think of dying. I have brought plenty of provisions, medicine, doctor, etc. We will soon be on the Pacific. Cheer up, and we will take many a good glass of wine together yet in Springfield!" Finding that he could not rally him, he spoke of the lady to whom he was engaged, of her anxiety and welfare, in order to rekindle hope and effort. "I don't think I shall die yet," replied the sufferer, in a low and feeble voice, but it is fortunate you came up as you did, for they had decided to leave me to-morrow." The perfect composure and resignation which reigned in that ghastly group, gave tenfold impressiveness to the scene. But no description can convey any adequate impression of its true character. The British officers were shocked beyond measure, and the surgeon declared that though he had seen much of suffering, in hospitals and elsewhere, he never before dreamed that men could live and march in such a state of emaciation and destitution.

It is a little singular that every half-starved creature asked first for sugar, though this may be owing to the effect upon their system of the acid nuts, on which they had so long chiefly sustained life. Five pounds of sugar and five bottles of molasses were first served out. The doctor then went round with some soft biscuit.

In arranging the camps that night, Strain ordered the natives to occupy the other side of the river, lest overcome by the importunities of the men, they might give them tobacco and food. After the first slight allowance of food all begged

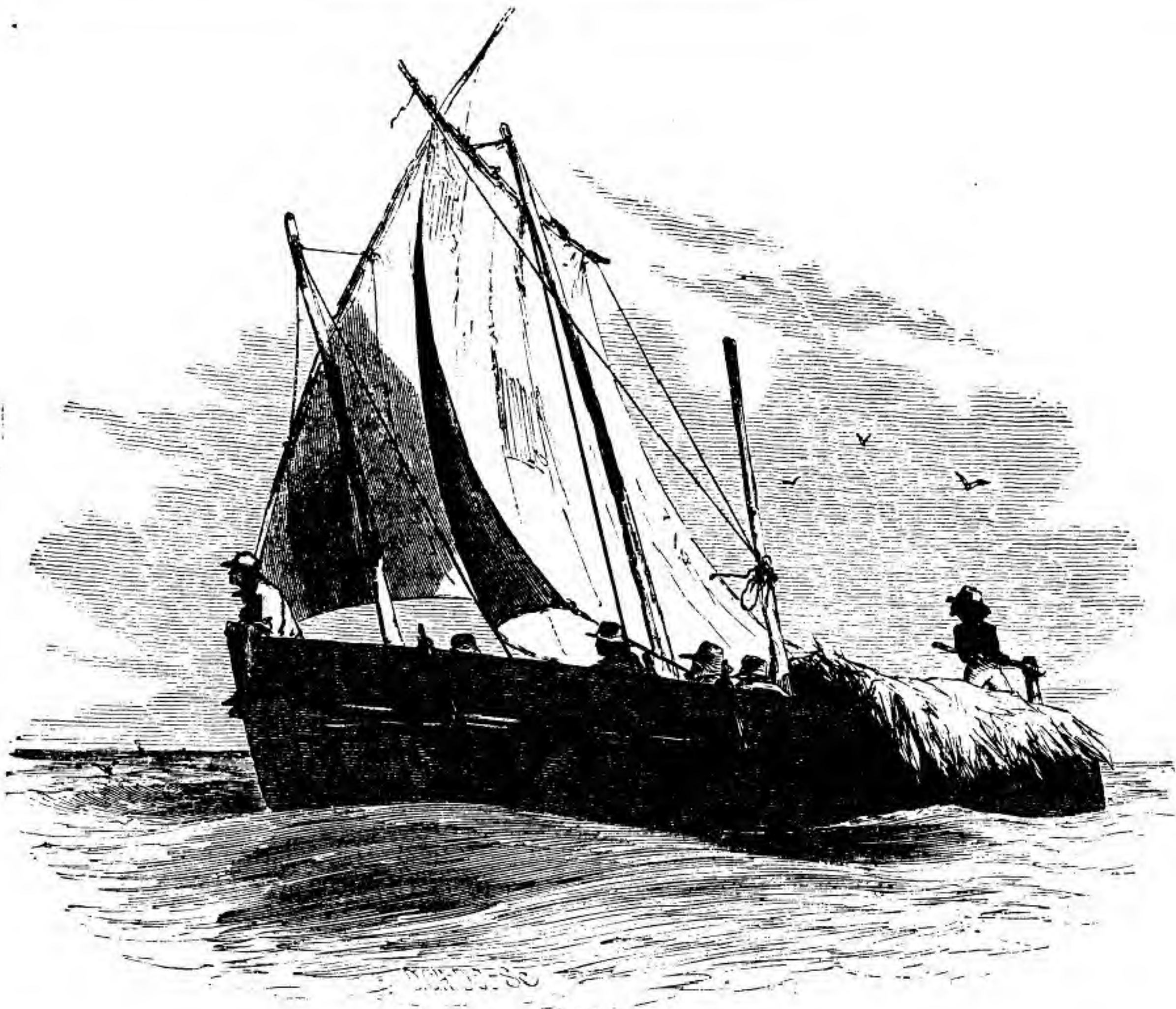
for tobacco, but this the doctor forbade. Strict watch was maintained over them all night, and the wants of each attended to. Vermilyea was kept alive only by stimulants.

The next morning the men awoke elated, and preparations were immediately made for breakfast. Food, of course, was given out in very small portions, as the least excess might prove fatal. Truxton, however, took Strain aside, and in a wheedling way said, confidentially: "Your restricting the men in their food, and even Maury, is exceedingly judicious, but, you know, with us officers it is very different—give me a little meat." But Strain refused, and in a little while Maury took him aside and said, in the same confidential manner: "It is all very well, Captain, to restrain men, and Truck too (meaning Truxton), he is shaky, you know, but I am nearly as well as ever." Strain could not repress a smile, still he refused to be coaxed. However, it is but just to Maury to say, that he was in full as good a condition to gorge himself as Strain was when he ate nearly half his weight at Yavisa. And in speaking of Lieutenant Maury here, it is right and proper to say, that from first to last of this fearful journey, he exhibited all the loftest qualities of an officer and true hero; all the noble feelings of a genuine man, and richly deserves the eulogium pronounced upon him by Strain in his report to the Secretary of the Navy.

The party were three days in regaining the paddle-box. As the men passed their old camps they would talk of the past, and contrast it with the present. Cheerfulness reigned throughout the little fleet of boats, and "Erin go Bragh," "The White Squall," and other naval songs, woke the echoes of the forest as they swept down the winding stream. On the way Strain sounded Maury as to the fact whether they had eaten buzzards. The latter could not deny it; but his disgust at the unclean bird returning with a supply of food, he felt some apology necessary, and replied: "Yes, we did eat them, but perhaps you are not aware there is a great difference between the cock and hen. The one you killed, and we tried to eat and could not, was a cock, and they are very strong. Besides, after all, when men are in a starving condition, a buzzard is better than a turkey, for living on animal food, it is necessarily more nutritious." A hearty laugh exploded the excuse, and no after-defense was made of buzzards.

As they approached the paddle-box, Strain wished to hoist the American ensign, and asked if the one they started with had been preserved. They answered yes. M'Ginness had been intrusted with it, and had carried it to the last. The only emblem of their nationality that remained to them, he had wrapped it round his breast, and though weapons, haversacks, and blankets had been thrown away, he would never part with it. Wounded feet that needed bandaging, and ulcerated limbs, and tattered garments, could not induce a man to devote that cherished symbol to his own use. Without





BOUND FOR PANAMA.

reflection Strain ordered M'Ginness to place it in his boat. The poor fellow hung back a moment, and cast such an appealing look to Strain, that the latter asked him what was the matter. His eyes instantly filled with tears, and he replied: "Captain, I have never parted with this ensign a single instant since you trusted it to my care on the Atlantic coast, and *don't take it from me now.*" Touched by the noble devotion of the man, he replied: "By no means, my brave fellow, shall it be taken from you; display it yourself." His face beamed a smile of thankfulness, and unbinding it with his skeleton hand from the rags that but hardly covered him, he gave it, tattered and torn, to the wind, and three cheers went up from the little fleet. There is a whole poem in this little incident. That flag had been displayed when they marched from the beach at Caledonia Bay, it was now unrolled to announce their deliverance. Once more only was it used, and then to shroud the coffin of one of their number.

Vermilyea never rallied, and died soon after their arrival at Yavisa. On the 29th the party reached the *Virago*. The men were quartered on shore at their own request, and because Strain thought that they would recover much sooner on land than in the confined air of a ship. As soon as he had got them well established he took an open boat, some forty feet long, and three and a half feet wide, and start-

ed for Panama, ninety miles distant, in order to put himself in communication with Captain Hollins, and obtain funds to meet his expenses. Taking mules he proceeded across the Isthmus to Aspinwall, where the *Cyane* lay. The most touching scene followed his arrival on board, for he had long ago been given up as dead. Without stopping to obtain the rest and quiet he so much needed, he returned to Panama, engaged a sloop, and set sail for *Palma*, where he had left his party. He found all doing well except Boggs, who was evidently sinking. Strain's presence roused him for awhile, and he listened attentively to a letter which the former had brought him. He, however, could not rally.

The next day they arrived at Panama, and Mr. Boggs, after giving some directions respecting his affairs, quietly sunk away. Strain then hastened his departure for Aspinwall, and on the 25th of April reported himself and party on board the *Cyane*, which ten minutes afterward flung her canvas to the wind, and was sweeping out toward the Atlantic.

The journal of the intermediate space I have thus briefly passed over is full of interest, and is necessary to the completion of the expedition, but the length of the article has compelled me to omit it in this place. I will only insert the closing portion of Lieutenant Strain's report to the Secretary of the Navy, in order to do justice



to the brave men who composed this ill-fated expedition, in which one-third of those who composed it died from starvation, or from the food they were compelled to resort to in their distress. Says the report:

"This, Sir, terminates the narrative of the United States Expedition to the Isthmus of Darien, an expedition without brilliancy, because without success, and whose reputation depends, in a high degree, upon the fact that it has only disproved a magnificent preconceived theory, whose rise and progress will merit an especial reference in the brief resumé which I propose to append to the narrative.

"In concluding my narrative I would most respectfully call your attention to the subordination and general good conduct of those employed upon the expedition. Greater difficulties, more intense physical suffering, and more discouraging circumstances, have seldom been encountered, and have never, I am assured, been met with greater equanimity, good-nature, and quiet endurance. Although suffering for long periods from scarcity of food, and even perishing for want of it, there was, I am happy to state, developed none of those humiliating instances of selfishness which have so frequently distinguished periods of great distress. I am also happy in being able to report to you that the officers and seamen under my command adopted, and with apparent willingness, a principle of action which was suggested to them at an early period in the journey of the expedition, and that those who survived have nothing to regret or blush for.

"In having the services of passed midshipman W. T. Truxton, 1st assistant-engineer, Mr. Maury, and midshipman H. M. Garland, I was especially fortunate, and to these officers I would respectfully direct the attention of the Department.

"Mr. Truxton, while I was present, was an able and cheerful assistant, and while I was absent he sustained nobly the responsibility which his fearful position imposed upon him. Mr. Maury, owing to his physical endurance, which surpassed that of any member of the party, was enabled to render to the weak and debilitated assistance which entitles him to their and my gratitude, and I feel assured that, even in a profession where chivalry and generosity are characteristic, that few would have deserved so much the high compliment which was paid to him by Mr. Truxton, when making to me his verbal report of the events which occurred in the main body of the party during my absence.

"'Maury,' he said, 'is the only man in the whole circle of my acquaintance, who could have endured so much privation, and passed through so many trials, without displaying a single instance of selfishness.' For my own part, acquainted as I am with all the circumstances, I am at a loss which to prefer, the magnanimity of Mr. Truxton, or the deportment of Mr. Maury, who richly deserved this handsome compliment from his immediate com-

manding officer, whose own conduct was so deserving of eulogium.

[Probably there never was an instance in which an officer, while bestowing upon another the highest yet most richly-deserved eulogy that could be pronounced, unconsciously and unintentionally paid so high a tribute to his own character. The reader will be pleased to know that at the request of the Secretary of the Navy, the gallant Lieutenant Forsyth, mentioned at the close of the report, has been promoted to the command of a ship—a reward well merited.]

"Mr. Garland suffered exceedingly in his own person, but was at all times ready and willing to afford every assistance compatible with his own state of health, as I can testify, and as is fully set forth in the report of Mr. Truxton, which will be found in the appendix.

"You, Sir, are already aware of the assistance rendered to my party by the officers and crew of Her Britannic Majesty's steam-sloop *Virago*, which, pending the action of the Government, I recognized in a letter to Commander Edward Marshal, R. N., which has already been published.

"You, Sir, have already informed me that the thanks of the Navy Department have been communicated to those officers and seamen, and any additional national action which might be taken to call the attention of H. B. Majesty's Government to the generous and chivalrous conduct of Lieutenant W. C. Forsyth, Assistant-surgeon William Ross, Paymaster W. H. Hills (R. Navy), and Mr. W. C. Bennett, Civil Engineer, will be most gratefully received by my party and myself. The foregoing narrative will explain the extent of service which those gentlemen, and certain seamen of the *Virago*, rendered us at no small personal risk.

"I would also respectfully call the attention of the Department to the fact that my entire party were transported on the Panama Railroad free of charge, I having crossed the Isthmus at that point three times, and that upon all occasions we received from Colonel Totten, the Superintendent, Messrs. Monroe, Green, Baldwin, and the various other employés of that Company the kindest possible attention."

#### EMILY DUNCAN.

LET me give you a story for a spring Number. Use it in May, the month of spring, for it is a story that has no joy in it save the hope of the resurrection. It occurs to me on this still evening, and I have pushed aside all my other papers, and have taken a fresh sheet whereon to write it. Just now, while I sat with pen in hand, slowly working out the problem of a curious trust-deed—a conveyance of property by a husband and wife to a friend, to hold in trust for the benefit of the said "Emily," and just as I had written her name for the tenth or twentieth time, and was writing it again—I paused in the middle, and looked up.

Do you know why I paused? It was because I heard the word—the name—audibly pro-