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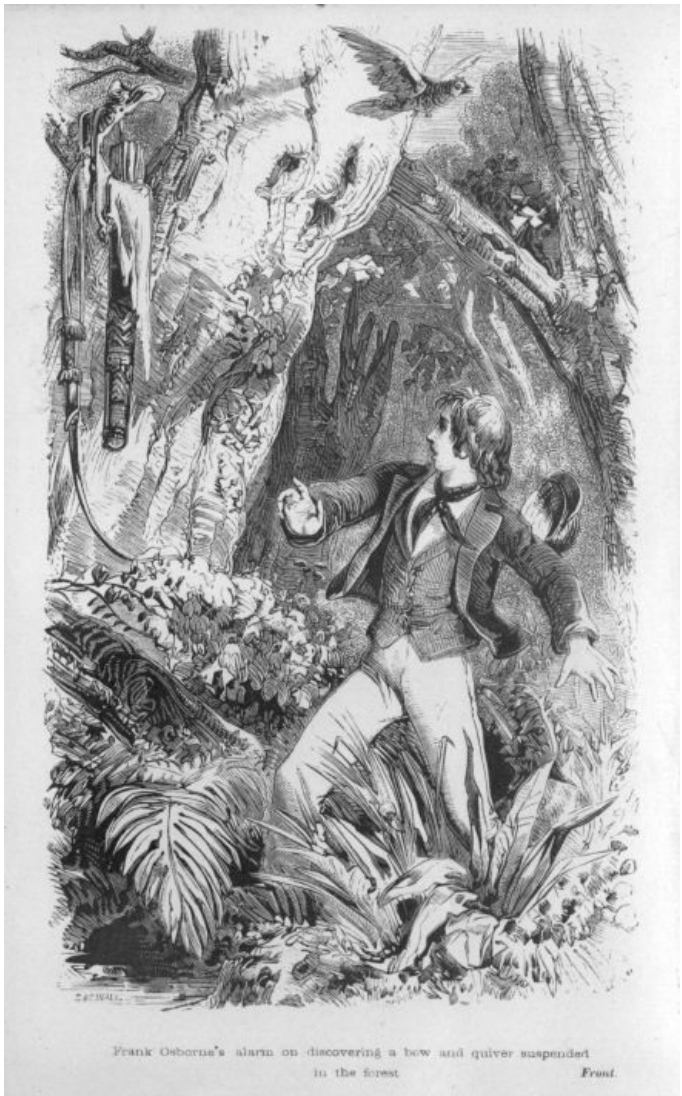
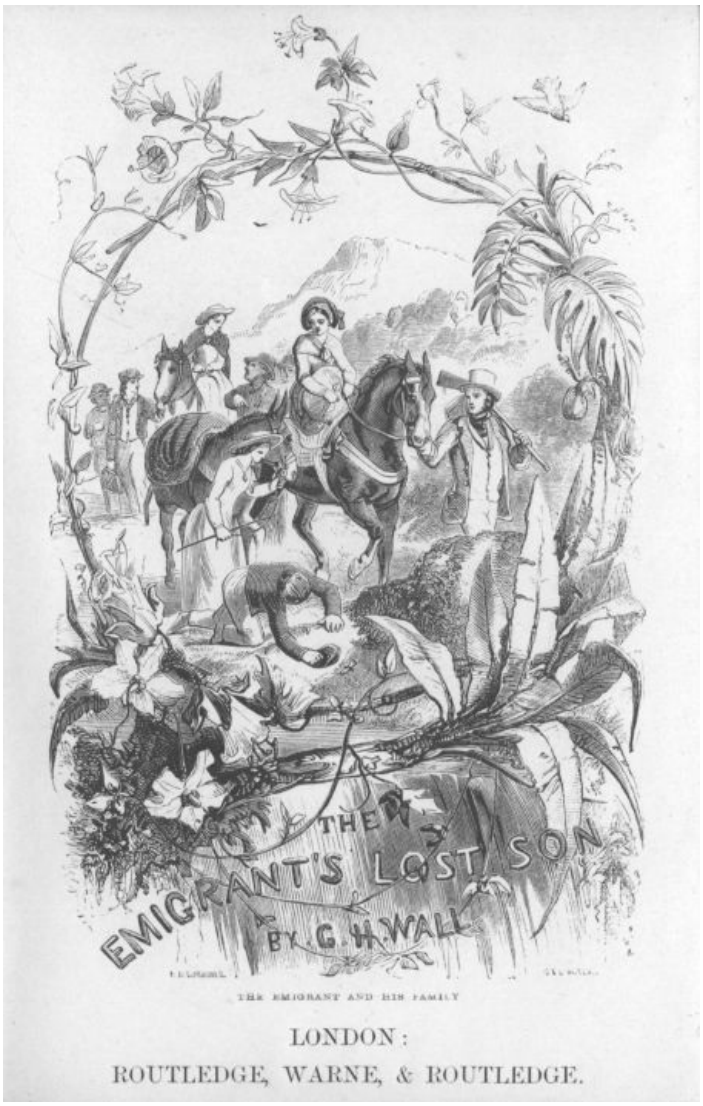


Frank Osborne's alarm on discovering a bow and quiver suspended in the forest



THE

EMIGRANT'S LOST SON:

OR,

LIFE ALONE IN THE FOREST.

EDITED BY
GEORGE HENRY WALL.

NEW EDITION.

Illustrated by Corbould

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CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

That no person in this state of existence may be tempted to assert his own independence, the affairs of life are so ordered that much of the happiness enjoyed by mankind depends upon their communion with each other. Human affections, if they were permitted to act freely, as they spontaneously arise in the breast of mankind, are designed to bind all the human race in one bond of brotherhood.

Our own parents and near relatives first call these affections into active exercise. Their care and attention to our welfare, the interest they take in preserving us in a state of safety and health, and in teaching us also the duties we owe both to our Creator and fellow-creatures, tend to give the first impetus to the germs of our affections; and it is by the exercise of these very affections that we derive a continual source of happiness, which becomes hereafter the chief means by which the refinement of the senses may be effected. Thus it is, that when death, or other causes, deprive us of our immediate parental guidance, the affections as naturally seek for new objects, on which to exert their influence, as the operations of any other well recognised principles proceed in the works of nature.

The author and hero of the following narrative, was called upon to experience the sudden deprivation of not only his parents, but of all his dearest friends; and that at an age when the heart first expands to the relations of our existence, and is most sensitive to the emotions of grief; when, unexpectedly and unprepared, it is cut off from all sympathy or communication with human kind. At the age of thirteen he was lost in an almost boundless Guiana forest, where he remained for several years, dependent solely upon his own resources, mental and physical—that is, on the one hand, to bear the mind up against the shock it received in being thrown suddenly into solitude; and, on the other, to provide for his daily wants. That man never was intended to live in what is denominated "a state of nature," is manifest by his long infancy and the tardy development of his mental powers. No animal is so long after its birth before it can support the body on its legs as man; in none is the period of complete adult stature so long protracted. When born into the world he is entirely defenceless, his great distinctions from other animals are reason and speech: these, however, are germs which are not developed of themselves, but are brought to maturity by extraneous assistance, cultivation, and education; hence we must infer that man was intended for social union, and that his imaginary state of nature, which some writers have spoken of, never has existed.

Man, however, in his nature, is limited in no respect; being fitted for every kind of life, every climate, and every variety of food. The Deity has given him the whole earth for his abode, and the produce thereof for his nourishment. With the advantages, however, of an early moral and religious education, together with an excellent constitution, our juvenile exile from man was enabled, under the direction of a watchful Providence, to preserve his life, protect his mind against despondency, and procure a subsistence in the midst of dangers.

The difficulties he encountered, the manner in which he overcame them, and the scenes which were brought under his view in the extended field of observation into which he was thrown, it is the object of the following narrative to lay before the reader. To those whose knowledge extends not beyond the world of man to the boundless fields of nature, it may appear that such a life must have been one of monotonous listlessness, from which few materials could be gathered to impart knowledge or interest to the general reader.

Our hero, however, found employment for the mind in every moment of his waking hours, and was furnished with objects for study in the forest, that might engage the longest period of life allotted to man to catalogue or enumerate.

Happily for the exile, his mind was formed to seek for knowledge in the only sources open to man for the full development of the intellectual powers; namely, observation and reflection.

Denied the aid of books, in the far woods that "steeped in their moonbeams lie," he called upon his Maker, and the echo of the floor of the forest recognised his presence. Acquiring confidence from this assurance, and relying on Providence for protection, he converted the scenes around him into a school of study, and realized in the woods a life of activity instead of one of solitude. He soon discovered, when left to draw deductions from his own experience in the scenes of Nature, that there is nothing but what is beautiful, nothing unworthy of admiration. "The disregard," he says, "which by many is paid to her productions, reflects no honour on those who evince it, and little credit on a system of education that does not at once lead its pupils to the grand fountain of all knowledge. While the majority," he adds, "of my youthful contemporaries were engaged in committing to memory a vocabulary of words, I was busily engaged in studying the things themselves." While others were spending their time in acquiring a knowledge of the customs and forms of artificial society, our exile had the great book of nature widely spread open before him, Throughout that period of life which is usually devoted, by the majority of individuals, to study the purposes of social life, he was conversing only with the trees; or with the birds, and insects, and other tribes, of the animal kingdom, all the works of God, and to which his attachment was ardent and sincere. Now that he is again in the society of his fellow-men, the

recollections of his sylvan probation are as vividly depicted on his mind as at the moment when he first received the impressions. Trees which supplied him with food, or shelter from the heat of the sun or the rains of the climate, are still dear to his recollection, and he often reverts to them with feelings of gratitude and respect, from which he would not, if he could, estrange the affections of his heart.

There is no music so sweet to his ear as the breezes that animated the lofty cloud-aspiring monarchs of the forest, with which he claims a peculiar acquaintance, or the murmuring of the brook, where he was wont to slake his thirst; no concert to his sense of sound so grateful as the wild notes of the birds that chanted, morning and evening, their Maker's praise, as he offered up his own prayers of gratitude for the prolongation of his existence, or the hummings of the myriads of insects, that every hour, in his woodland rovings, arrested his attention.

It was while listening to these voices of the Creator that his heart was first touched with feelings of admiration and wonder at the multifarious and exquisitely organized beings that everywhere, whether in tranquil meditation or in active search of his food, met his sight. He saw nature everywhere teeming with life, and proclaiming in language intelligible to every one the presence of an All-directing Power. It was in the forest, too, in the midst of the wonders of the creation, that the lost youth first aspired to lift up his thoughts to heaven, and mentally exclaim —"These are thy works, oh God!" It was also in the lonely wilderness he first cherished the hope, in the language of the Indian, that the Great Spirit had provided for him a higher state of happiness; and then it was he offered up a prayer, that this hope might, in his Maker's own time, be realized. It was also in the wilderness, communing with his own thoughts, that he first received an assurance that he possessed a soul to be saved, and became imbued with a firm conviction that the wise Creator, in his infinite beneficence, designed the happiness of his creatures, and that nothing can deprive the human race of his blessings but a connexion with sin.

With an undivided mind, intent only on examining and admiring the works of creation, the youth, in his lonely wayfaring, everywhere found the presence of his Maker. At the earliest moment of incipient vegetation, he was busy watching the indications of bursting nature preparing to re-robe the trees; and in a prospective vista he beheld the joyous movements of the various tribes of birds and insects providing for the wants of themselves and their progeny. Not less busily was his mind engaged when these labours actually commenced, in noting the construction of their habitations, and in admiring the wonderful ingenuity each displayed in providing for its own peculiar wants and safety.

Thus engaged in almost continual observation, he was enabled to trace the manner in which numbers of the feathered and insect tribes worked out the purposes of their existence. As the multifarious branches of the trees of the forest expanded themselves into fulness of leaf, he saw nations after nations of living things on the move to claim his attention, all pouring forth to seize on their share of the abundance of nature. As each revolving season hastened the decay of or imparted new vigour to the monarchs of the forest, the exile from man had an opportunity, abstracted as he was from the busy affairs of human life, to distinguish the various characteristics of the tribes of insects that took possession of the trees, differing from those which, apparently innoxiously, fed on their fulness of vegetable youthfulness, and the insects that came to prey only on the trunk or branches of those that age or disease had brought to decay. He saw the leaves of the forest come into life, witnessed their gradual expansion into verdant beauty; he was there, likewise, at their decline and fall—recurring symbols of the succession of the races of mankind,—and when, the biting north winds denuded of their leaves many of these mighty monarchs of the forest, he collected them to form his woodland bed. No season passed without adding to his store of information in reference to the works of nature, which knowledge, as we have already said, it is the design of this work to impart to others. It is the natural history of the forest, or so much of it as has been seen by one individual during a period of six years' sojourn in its solitude.

From what has been stated, the reader will not expect to find any classified arrangement of subjects in this work; things are spoken of as they were seen, either in the stillness of the shade at one time, or in the raging of the storm at another. Forest trees, in general, are described; those which may afford food to man are more frequently mentioned. Of quadrupeds, birds of the air, and insects, those that most excited his attention are more especially noticed. Those whose ferocity or whose shyness rendered it hazardous or difficult to approach them, are less spoken of. The details of the author's history, in reference to his probation in the wilds of nature, he has endeavoured to relate in a most familiar manner, and in the simplest language; and when describing scenes and events, faithfully to impart the impressions made on his own mind as they occurred.

Reasoning from the convictions arising from his experience,—that is, the effects wrought upon his own mind—he thinks that the study of natural objects, used as a means for the improvement of the religious and moral character of mankind, has been much overlooked by the philanthropist, and neglected by those who are sincere in their desire to improve their own species.

When the author was restored to society, nothing more excited his surprise than the total absence of a system of education which should at once direct the mind of youth to the fountain of all knowledge; and, in consequence, to persons he met with who took any lively interest in the study of natural objects, he remarked, "Your system of education appears more designed to

exercise the mere verbal memory, than to excite observation or reflection;" adding, "that an acquaintance with the works of the Deity, as they are seen remote from the haunts of men, not only expands and elevates the thought, but spiritualises the soul." The contemplation of nature's works, while it subdues the pride of man, harmonizes the feelings of social life, and in a peculiar manner prepares the mind for the reception of revealed truths. It is only necessary to add that, the education of the "Emigrant's Son," previously to his exclusion from the world of man, had not in any way been of a peculiarly religious tendency; nor had he evinced any predilection for discussing religious topics. Yet, when he was brought to contemplate the works of the Deity on an extended scale, he everywhere found the indications of the presence of a superior and all-wise Creator in those scenes. It is therefore natural that he should feel a desire that others should seek and find Him at the same pure fountain of knowledge. "The voice of my beloved; behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills." (Solomon, ii. 9.)

True it is, that the student who once enters the portals of natural history, seldom thinks of returning. Strolling from object to object, his appetite is never satiated. St. Pierre aptly remarked, that "nature invites to the cultivation of herself." Should the perusal of the following page direct the mind of the youthful reader to the study of nature, the object of publishing this narrative will have been attained.

G. H. W.

HARRINGTON COTTAGE,
BROMPTON

THE EMIGRANT'S LOST SON.

CHAPTER I.

CAUSE OF LEAVING ENGLAND AND ARRIVAL AT THE FOREST.

"On the bosom, lone and still,
Of nature east, I early sought to stroll
Through wood and wild, o'er forest, rook, and hill,
Companionless; without a wish or goal,
Save to discover every shape and voice
Of living thing that there did fearlessly rejoice."

As it is my object to lay before my readers only that portion of my life which was passed in the wilds of nature, it will be unnecessary for me to detain them with a lengthened account of the genealogy of my family.

My father occupied a small farm in the west of England, situate near a peaceful village, the curate of which superintended the education of myself and some fourteen or fifteen of the neighbouring youths. I was between ten and eleven years of age, when a stranger arrived at our house, informing the family that, in consequence of the death of my father's elder brother, he, together with two surviving brothers, had jointly become the proprietors of a tract of land situate in the south-western part of Guiana.

It subsequently appeared that my deceased uncle had speculated in the purchase of the land in question, intending to have invited his three brothers to join him in the cultivation of it. Death frustrated these intentions, the land became the joint property of the survivors, and after using every effort to dispose of it in this country, being unsuccessful in meeting with a purchaser, the three brothers came to the resolution of going out, together with their families, and sharing their newly-acquired property.

First leaving home

When the order was finally given to prepare for the voyage, it operated on my mind almost as a penal sentence; expatriation presented itself to my imagination as the climax of all evils. It now suddenly occurred to me that I had a thousand local attachments, all of which were to be broken asunder; my imagination passing in review a painful parting with my schoolfellows and other intimates; when all the early and recent scenes of my short career poured in on the memory, and seemed to bind me to the immediate locality of my existence and its environs. I then discovered that I had a real attachment for my

teacher, the good pastor of a small flock; indeed, every person known to me, I thought had, in some way, been peculiarly kind, and a torrent of gratitude overflowed the heart; while the idea of quitting the scenes of my childhood, and all I then knew of the world, presented itself as the annihilation of every object from which I had hitherto derived pleasure.

The young heart is generally thought to bound with joyousness at the prospect of a change of scene, but it was otherwise with me: the world, in the map of my microcosm, excepting the circumscribed view I had taken of it, was an entire desert, where there was no one to love or be loved. In this state of mind the agitation of my feelings nearly choked me, till I sought the favourite arm of a tree in the orchard, where, unobserved, I found relief in a flood of tears. Still oppressed, as the evening advanced I crept to bed without speaking to any one,—not even to my sister, whose buoyant joyfulness at the time excited my surprise. I spent the night in a state of half-dreamy stupor, being neither asleep nor awake; whilst the imagination was engaged in endeavouring to contrast the retrospection of the past with the prospects of the future. Every act of kindness which had been bestowed upon me, stood out in strong relief in my memory, as a vista of other days, and into which I had not previously been permitted to look; whilst the little village-world was presented to my view as a bright speck in creation—an oasis in a desert, all around which was a mass of confusion and darkness.

The placid countenance of the curate, monarch of his locality, with all the scholastic paraphernalia, were brought vividly under review; the form on which I was wont to sit, with every cut I had made on the well-marked desk with my knife—an instrument with which boys early prove themselves tool-loving animals—were all objects of endearment to me. My fancy then roamed into the little churchyard, where I took a view of each mouldering heap, with the tombstones at the head and foot, every epitaph on which I had committed to memory. I then stood under the brave old Hercules, as we designated an oak tree where four of us had met most days to proceed together to school. Here I distinctly noted—such is the power of memory when the feelings are excited—each abrupt rising of its rugged roots, and marked the boundary of its shadows at different hours of the day, as described by its broad, out-spreading limbs on the greensward.

I wandered to the copse, entered by a well-defined gap at the angular point; noted each spot where I had taken eggs or young ones from birds that had been incautious enough to attract my attention; paused to take a last look at the hazel from which I had gathered the largest cob-nut; lingering at every step, and sighing as I passed each object of remembrance. The following morning, sleepless and weary, I arose with the sun, and collected all my little stock of property—bows and arrows, fishing-tackle, bats, balls, and other juvenile valuables; these I labelled as presents to my intimates. My heart then knew how highly it was susceptible of friendship; it had yet to learn how readily, after the lapse of a few years, such attachments are forgotten. The desire in after life to meet with an old schoolfellow is seldom prompted by a higher motive than a curiosity to learn his success in the world.

It is probable that my parents had associations and connexions from which they were about to separate, and deeper feelings of regret to struggle with, than myself, when parting from attached friends. It is fresh in my memory that our calls were very numerous, and that many reasons were adduced to dissuade my father from emigration. The Sunday previously to our departure, the curate, from the pulpit, mentioned the intention of the families to emigrate, and offered up a prayer for the realization of their prospects of success. I shall ever remember the day I left the kind preceptor of my youth and the companions of my boyish days. My father had sent a chaise to fetch me and my valuable stock of personal property a day before our final departure. I think I see now the mild old curate shaking my hand and giving me his blessing and friendly advice, while around the gate of the old house were assembled my school companions, to take a last sight of me before I took my leave of home and of them.

Voyage to Demerara

Our journey to the coast, and voyage to Demerara, a *ci-devant* Dutch settlement, was unattended by any circumstance of peculiar interest. I therefore take up the narrative from the period of our landing. My father was purely a business man, never permitting pleasure or curiosity to divert him from his pursuits. Immediately, therefore, on our arrival at Demerara, preparations were made for us to proceed on towards our destination, regarding the situation and name of which I had not up to that time taken any interest, I had, however, heard that we had to travel some hundreds of miles over a country where there were no roads, as in England. I also remember a long discussion between my father and my two uncles, whether we should travel with a waggon or purchase horses and mules to carry our luggage and relieve the females when fatigued. As our course was through an extensive wooded country, where carriages could not conveniently pass, the latter mode of travelling was ultimately adopted. Our party consisted of nine persons, namely, my father, mother, sister, and self; one uncle, with a grown-up son (his father being a widower); the other uncle, his wife, and son (a youth three years older than myself).

My father provided himself with a horse and mule; the latter to carry our personal necessaries, and the former to alternately relieve my mother, and my sister, who was a healthy girl of sixteen years of age, when either was fatigued with walking. One other horse was purchased for the use of my aunt and the party in general. We were provided with two painted

cloths, to be used as a covering when we should halt for rest, and no better accommodation could be obtained. I remember my father making a pen-and-ink sketch of the route, marking down, with the assistance of a traveller, the stages we were daily to accomplish.

Crossing the savanna

Thus prepared and equipped, as all of us were in excellent health and spirits, we commenced our journey over the plantations of the settlers, proceeding onwards till we reached the extended savannas—open plains. Here the scene was altogether so new and striking, that it was with difficulty I could be prevented from running after every living thing that came under my view. At one moment I was lost in wonder at the multitudes of creeping creatures which, at every step, crossed my path, while the birds of the air in numbers, variety, and plumage, fixed me with astonishment. My excitement was so great that I actually screamed with delight; at another moment I ran from object to object with such eagerness, that, my mother became alarmed for my intellect, affirming that no one in their senses could sustain so much unnatural excitement.

On the third day of our journey I began to be seriously fatigued, and my father placed me across the back of our mule. This, however, was a measure against which the animal at once entered his protest, by refusing to move forward the moment I threw my legs across him; his conduct seemed to imply that at starting a contract had been made with him to carry the baggage, and he would not consent to its infringement; and it would appear that the mere attempt to overburden him soured his temper for the whole journey; for a more obstinate or perverse mule was never crossed by man or boy. At length we entered into a compromise, by removing a portion of his baggage to one of our horses; and he then allowed me to ride in peace, as he proceeded sulkily along. He was, however, faithful to his second bargain, never evincing any more discontent. This third day of our journey was the longest we had yet had, and we were all of us anxiously looking for some habitation towards its close, where we might rest for the night. The sun soon promised to hide his golden beams behind the hills which formed the horizon, and we all showed signs of fatigue. We were much delighted when my father informed us that we were approaching the house of a settler, where he hoped to obtain shelter for the night. We proceeded up a steep declivity to the house in question, forming rather a picturesque party. My sister was first, mounted on a heavy dappled grey horse, with my father and mother by her side. I followed on my mule; while the remainder of the party were some fifty yards in the rear. As we halted before the house, my father informed us that, in all probability, this would be the last time we should find accommodation, even in the outhouse of a settler; and that in future we should have to resort to our painted cloths for shelter during the night.

We all retired to rest, therefore, with a determination to lay in a good stock of sleep. Notwithstanding this determination, and the fatigue I had endured in the excessive heat of the day, the novelty of my new existence resisted every effort to close my eyes for rest; and I arose in the morning but very little refreshed.

The blessing of rain

During the first five days of our journey the intense heat of the sun, to which we were unseasoned, annoyed us all exceedingly; while the scorching earth so much blistered my feet that, on the sixth morning, I lingered behind, and divested myself of both stockings and shoes, hanging them upon the mule's baggage. In the school of experience nature is head master. The relief was almost instantaneous; and, during that day, I surprised my fellow-travellers with my pedestrian performances, which induced them all to follow my example. Early the same afternoon, the rain began to fall in torrents, or rather in sheets, previously to which, during our journey over the plains, the extreme dryness of the weather had occasioned one of those vegetable conflagrations so common in hot countries. Hitherto the scene had been arid, the land being hard to the feet, and painfully dry to the eye. The following morning, we had an opportunity of observing with what surprising rapidity nature, in these climates, clothes the earth. Our course was now on a wide-expanded green carpet, every where soft and cooling to the feet, and deliciously refreshing to the sight. Birds of every hue, gems of the air, glittered in our pathway; a vast number of the cormorant species were busy in gobbling up frogs, toads, and snakes; the eagle and the vulture, too, were soaring over our heads, looking out for the prey these regions afford them in such abundance. Every step we took frightened up flocks of the smaller feathered tribe, and brought to view myriads of other living things, such as slugs, snails, and insects of every variety.

On the tenth day of our journey, we approached a country covered, as far as the eye could reach, with dense foliage, variegated with every known or imaginable hue, the groundwork of which was one wide-spreading mass of every shade of green. There were browns of all tints, yellow, orange, purple, and brilliant scarlets, so intermingled as to present one uninterrupted view of nature in glorious beauty, spreading over an undulating mass of waving forest-green, while, in appearance, reaching from the high heavens to the earth, into which the lower sweeps seemed to dip, conveying the idea of eternal spring, summer, and autumn, harmoniously blended into one. As we skirted the forest, the charming variety of the blossoms, and their shades of colour, presented a still more enlivened appearance—the tops of the trees being covered with bloom, some standing erect towards the light of the sun, others bending down, with a profusion

of fruit and seed.

Yet, even here, in this enchanting scene, was man admonished, and reminded of mortality: as we passed the margin of the wood, here and there was seen some former giant of the forest, whose head had been bared by time or the thunder blast, painfully, in the midst of nature's prodigal luxuriance, intimating that all things have their period of birth, maturity, and decay.

Meeting with natives

Penetrated with surprise and admiration at the scene, it was some time before we discovered that we were approaching a party of natives, who, it was evident, had been watching our movements. When they first attracted our notice, the sound of what we took for a village bell fell upon the ear; whereupon my father flattered himself that we were approaching a civilized settlement; while both my uncles were of opinion that a signal of alarm was given at our approach, and, in consequence, prepared for defence. The bell, however, sounded only at intervals of four or five minutes; and as there was no increase of numbers in consequence, we at once went forth to meet the natives. They consisted of a party of six, besides an old negro, who seemed to be the patriarch of his race. To our surprise and delight, he spoke English remarkably well, as did also a young man who appeared to be his son. Probably, they were runaway slaves. They proved, however, to be friendly disposed; and when we spoke of the bell, and the negro had explained the nature of our enquiry, they all broke out into a most immoderate fit of laughter. The negro, almost convulsed, said, "White bird, ding dong—ding, dong! a great way off; for white man here, white bird, ding, dong—ding, dong!" The bird that sends forth this peculiar sound is named the campanero, and is snow white; it may be heard at three miles' distance; and during my sojourn subsequently in the wilds of nature, it was the only sound that daily recalled to my recollection the tones of my native village church bell.

As we were all attention to the negro, who was very lively and garrulous, a flock of birds passed over our heads, emitting sounds that might be mistaken for those of a trumpet; when the old man pointed up, and laughingly said—"Red-coats, red-coats!" meaning to ask, ironically, if we took the birds for soldiers? These birds are properly called Waracaba, and are frequently rendered domestic, when they exhibit the attachment of a dog to their master, following him in the same spirit of fidelity; their spirit, also, appears to exceed that of the game cock—although unarmed with spurs for defence, they will fly at a dog; and, in a domestic state, seldom fail to browbeat and lord it over the dunghill cocks living in the same yard.

While my father was consulting with the negro regarding our bivouac for the night, the latter suddenly seized his foot, exclaiming, "*Chegoe* in toe," then forcing him to the ground, and taking from his pocket a knife, proceeded to extract one of those formidable insects, which had become embedded in the skin of the foot. This insect, had it been allowed to remain, would have, no doubt, produced inflammation, from its bite, and, in all probability, caused my father lameness for some weeks. The negroes treated us with the greatest possible kindness and respect; and the old man, who appeared the orator of his party, insisted upon our sharing their hospitality, by partaking of their evening meal, which we readily accepted, producing, at the same time, our own provisions; and such an interchange of delicacies took place, that I am sure it would puzzle me now to recollect or enumerate them. I know it was the cause of some considerable share of merriment among us all. Their food, if I remember rightly, appeared to me to consist more of vegetables and fruit than ours, and was of a simpler nature. I fancy if some of our worthy civic authorities had been present as partakers of this repast, they would have been more surprised at the viands than delighted.

But man is of a ductile nature—a creature of habit, and may almost habituate himself to anything. In civilized cities, where thousands are taxing their energies in the pursuit of wealth and position in society, an artificial state of existence is the consequence; and the primitive fare of our forefathers is superseded by something of a more stimulating nature. I have seen, in my experience in forest life, how little man can subsist upon, and how healthy and strong he may continue in a simple state of existence. Civilization brings with it a host of imaginary and fictitious wants.

The repast with the negroes

We accepted the offer of our newly-made friends to share with them their small huts for the night, and they being plentifully provided with various skins of animals, a more agreeable resting-place could hardly be desired. The old negro, without being obtrusively inquisitive, was anxious to know our object in crossing the country; and my father informed him of our route, and produced the rough chart he had made upon our first starting upon the expedition. A long consultation was the result, and a doubtful shake of the head was given by the old man as to the possibility of our accomplishing the task; at the same time he gave an incredulous look at my mother and sister, who, he seemed to consider, would hardly be able to endure the journey and the hardships attending it. To say the truth, my mother looked but very weak, and I remember being struck myself with her appearance. My sister was of such a buoyant temperament, that her joyous spirit would carry her through almost any temporary difficulties; but still we were all considerably jaded. And I remember I thought the rude habitation of our entertainers a most delightful place of refuge, compared to being obliged to bivouac in the woods; and, indeed, I

dreaded leaving the following morning. I believe we were all of us impressed with the same idea. When we at first met with them, I was overcome with surprise, and was afraid that some calamity was about to befal us. By degrees, however, the feeling wore off, and by that strong and undefined species of discernment which most possess in discovering those kindly disposed towards us, I became on most familiar terms with our friends. The young man, whose name was Rangal, I discovered, was the only son of the elder negro. He was very solicitous in his attentions to me, and his peculiar manners considerably amused me during our evening's sojourn.

More negroes

Upon our retiring to rest, the two negroes, father and son, took up their station in the apartment we had at first entered; this they did to keep watch that no one should harm us; not that there was any absolute necessity for their so doing, but it was an attention meant to impress us with confidence as to our safety. Early the following morning, after a refreshing and undisturbed sleep, I accompanied Rangal to take a survey of the surrounding country, calling at a neighbouring habitation where the remaining portion of the negroes had located. They conversed with my guide a great deal, two or three speaking at the same time; but it was in a dialect entirely new to me, and beyond my comprehension. They evidently, by their gestures, referred to us; but in what way, I was at a loss to understand. There were also a female and three children, the latter varying from seven to eleven years old. They looked at me in perfect amazement, and the three children retired, whispering, to a corner at the darkest part of the room; but I could see by the whites of their eyes in the gloom, that their gaze was rivetted upon me, in which a feeling of curiosity was mingled with dread. For myself, I was only struck with their comical appearance, and fairly laughed outright, in which I was joined by the negroes, one of whom, I supposed their father, brought them forward and introduced them in due form.

Upon returning to our habitation of the previous night, we found our party taking their morning's repast; and I learned that the old negro had insisted upon accompanying us, with his son Rangal, on our journey during the day. He had also arranged where we should halt for the following night which was at the habitation of a friend of his, situate many miles on our road.

The forest

All being got in readiness, we again commenced our pilgrimage. There had been a heavy fall of rain in the night, and it was comparatively cool and refreshing to what it had been, but still the heat was intense to us. We, however, proceeded on our journey with tolerable spirits. My father and uncle shot several birds in the early part of the day, which afforded us an excellent repast. We shortly arrived at a thick and apparently impenetrable forest. Through this we had to travel before reaching our destination for the night. Once having fairly entered its precincts, there appeared to my mind an impossibility of ever again emancipating ourselves from it. The sun, which had been so scorching to our aching sight, was now no longer visible, save here and there, where a few rays would find a passage through the otherwise impenetrably dense foliage, to remind us of the world beyond our sight. The luxuriance of the foliage, the variety of tropical plants which in the fecundity of nature spring up in a few hours—so rapid is their growth in these climates,—the busy hum of myriads of insects, the reptiles, and occasionally the howling of the fiercer animals of prey, can hardly be appreciated by description. Ever and anon we paused, as a rustling of the foliage would give notice of the passage of some fierce animal, who was, as he stole along, unconscious of the presence of man in his domains. We proceeded most watchfully on our way, my father and uncle with guns across their shoulders, ready for immediate service, if required; so, what with our number, and the caution used, we felt ourselves tolerably secure; the more so, as it is a remarkable fact that no species of animal, however fierce, is ever very willing to attack man in open combat, without provocation.

Waterton, the celebrated naturalist, who has travelled through the woods in search of animals for scientific purposes, says, speaking on this subject, "Time and experience has convinced me that there is not much danger in roving amongst snakes and wild beasts, provided you have self-command. You must never approach them abruptly; if so, you are sure to pay for your rashness, because the idea of self-defence is predominant in every animal; and thus the snake, to defend himself from what he considers an attack upon him, makes the intruder feel the deadly effect of his poisonous fangs. The jaguar flies at you, and knocks you senseless with a stroke of his paw; whereas, if you had not come upon him too suddenly, it is ten to one but that he had retired, in lieu of disputing the path with you." Secure, however, as we might feel ourselves, it was a matter of surprise to us how the two negroes would fare upon their return, without our party. They would, however, in spite of every persuasion to the contrary, persist in accompanying us, and we were fain to let them have their own way. Presently an incident occurred which made us see the necessity of caution. As I was walking by the side of my uncle Henry, I discerned, glaring from a neighbouring clump of foliage, two fierce-looking eyes. I impulsively caught my uncle by the arm, and pointed in breathless terror to the spot. He paused, and raising his gun, would have fired, had not my father precipitately intervened, and motioned him to be passive. "Do not venture to fire," he whispered, "till there is a greater necessity." At the same time he raised his gun, and both kept guard till the other members of our party passed the point where danger was to be feared. The animal did not move, but appeared ready to spring forth; which had it done, the pieces must then have been discharged. When we had got some

little distance from the object of our dread, my father and uncle gradually retreated, with their faces and guns directed towards the animal, until they had got sufficiently out of danger; and we had the satisfaction of observing the animal bound off in another direction. It appeared to be a tolerably large-sized puma, as well as we could discern. This little incident made us doubly cautious, and all were loud in praising the presence of mind evinced by my father; for had my uncle fired so incautiously, it is very improbable that he would have wounded the animal mortally, but it might have incited him to a desperate attack upon us.

The negro's daughter

After one or two false alarms, we arrived again in the open country. The darkness of the forest had led us to believe that the day was on the decline; but on emerging into the plain we were greeted again with the rays of the sun. We had still, however, some distance to journey before we arrived at our proposed destination, and my mother, who appeared wearied, was again seated on the back of one of the mules. But even this mode of conveyance was fatiguing to one unaccustomed to such long journeys, in a country so different to our own. The negroes were the most fresh of the party; indeed, heat, and long hours of fatigue or anxiety, seemed to have no effect upon them, for they retained under these trials their good temper and loquacity. The elder of the two seemed, as indeed he always had been, to be of a reflective temperament; and as he was walking by the side of my father, somewhat ahead of the rest, he turned round, and gazing at my sister, said, "Make me think of de ole day—de ole day." "How so?" said my father. "Had a little girl once myself. Long ago, now! long ago!" And he again lapsed into silence, ruminating, in rather an abstracted melancholy mood, for some minutes. "You lost her, then, did you?" said my father. The old man shook his head sorrowfully, and placing his hand upon my father's shoulder, confidentially, exclaimed, "De white man!" He then promised to tell us the history of the affair before leaving. Arriving shortly at the point he had originally proposed when we commenced our journey in the morning, we discerned two or three habitations, even more rude than those we had left, and our guides expressed much surprise and chagrin at finding them uninhabited. We, however, determined upon taking possession of them for the night, and at once proceeded to make the necessary preparations for our stay.

The story of the negro

Agreeably to his promise, the old negro took an opportunity of relating his history. Our first surmise proved to be correct; he was indeed a runaway slave. Some years previously he and his family were sold to a new owner, who proved to be a cruel and unfeeling taskmaster, the very opposite in character to the former owner, who was a kind-hearted, mild disposed man. His wife was so affected by the change and hard usage, that she sunk into a desponding state, and eventually died, leaving him with a son and daughter. The cruel treatment evinced by their overseer towards the latter, a little girl then of ten years old, was a constant source of trouble and misery to the father, and eventually led to an open revolt. One day, when the brutality of this man was beyond all endurance, the father of the girl, in a fit of rage and disgust, struck his superior to the earth. Conscious of what he had done, and the fearful penalty attached to it, he fled frantically from the spot, whither he knew not. His feelings had been wound up to such a state of excitement, that he was scarcely conscious of what he was about; but he had soon left the scene of his suffering many miles distant. His son, it appeared, who was at a remote part of the plantation, hearing of the affair, fled after his father, and they eventually, after enduring numberless hardships, both succeeded in escaping; and notwithstanding the large rewards offered for their capture, they were never betrayed. His daughter he had learned nothing of for many years. He had endeavoured to rescue her soon after his escape from the hands of her tormentor, but did not succeed. Afterwards he learnt that she had left the plantation, and had been passed into the hands of a new master at another remote part of the country. She was dangerously ill at that time, and was not expected to recover. The poor old negro grew very mournful as he concluded his narrative. He had not heard of his daughter for so long a period that he seemed to think it improbable he should ever behold her again. His story, I remember, called forth a long discussion upon the horrors of slavery, the truth of which is now happily made sufficiently manifest, and so universally acknowledged, that it hardly needs repetition here.

On the following morning we parted with our two negro guides of the previous day, but it was with the greatest unwillingness that they could be persuaded to return to their home; eventually, however, we took leave of them after presenting them two or three remembrances for their kindness. We now journeyed on much the same as before, without any incident occurring worthy of notice, when, on the following day, we met with two English gentlemen, both naturalists, on their way to the forest, to collect specimens for the advancement of scientific knowledge. Their party comprised six, namely, themselves, two English attendants, and two negroes, whom they had purchased, with a promise of emancipation if they conducted themselves to their masters' satisfaction. These gentlemen were much delighted to meet with us, and agreed to journey our road, for the sake of company. I was much pleased with their society. I was soon made sensible of the advantages of a system in studying the works of nature. My senses had before been quite captivated and gratified with the general aspect of the scenes through which we had passed; but now I was taught to examine objects more closely and in detail; to compare, arrange, and, above all, to study the uses and purposes of vegetable and animal constituents, with their mechanical construction, tracing, in some measure, the designs of the Creator in all his works. I was now

awakened to an intellectual gratification exceeding that of the mere senses. I learned how to collect and store up knowledge in the memory, which elevated my notions of the human species and considerably augmented my self-respect. The more I found opportunities to bring the intellect into play, the more apparent became the advantages which the civilized and cultivated man possessed over the mere savage or uninformed; and, in consequence, my delight in receiving instruction was unbounded.

Unlike myself, however, the gentlemen whom we accompanied did not appear to me to enjoy or appreciate my natural enthusiasm for varied scenery. They carried on their researches with surprising ardour; and when in pursuit of an abstract or particular object, their attention was wholly absorbed; nor were they in any way sparing of the lives of animals, birds, or insects, when selecting their specimens from the abundance before them. Their recklessness, too, in destroying what they considered obnoxious animals, somewhat surprised me, so much so as to induce me to enquire what caused them to have antipathies, like unto children and some females, especially against spiders, beetles, &c. The only answer I received was, "We destroy only such things as are of no use to us, and those which come in our way when in search of our object." They soon, however, explained to me that the reason of their shooting such a number of birds was that they were in want of all the varieties, and could not always distinguish, until they had them in hand, whether they had such a one amongst their collection.

To watch the young of animals, whether those species born with sight or closed eyes, and note their progress towards perfection, and the celerity with which some of them, birds especially, will remove themselves, even while unfledged, from danger to security, is to see God watching over all his creatures. To be near when the cry of danger is started in the wood, and hear the whole flock, though composed of different kinds of birds, each in their own peculiar note, cry "Hush!" to their young ones before they leave the nest,—to ascertain the cause, and then to have the satisfaction of removing that cause of danger,—is to be an agent of the Deity in the work of benevolence.

"All are agents," said one of the gentlemen, "in carrying out the benevolent purposes of the Deity. Direct your mind towards the various provisions which nature has devised for the dispersion, of the seeds of plants, and introducing them, into proper situations for germination. Every class of beings," he continued, "is useful as a means to promote the spread of seeds: man, beasts, birds, reptiles, and probably even fish, by consuming, cause the propagation of the *algæ* in the depths of the ocean; and the multiplied contrivances of hooks, awns, wings, &c., with the elastic and hygrometric power with which seeds are furnished, manifest what infinite provision has been made for the dispersion of seeds, and successive productions of nature."

It was thus that they would tutor me, and relieve the tedium of the day, by instilling into my youthful mind the first rudiments of a knowledge respecting the works of the Deity, and the uses to which they were applied; and I became aware of the wonders an all-bounteous Providence has in store for an enquiring mind.

The rattlesnake

But I now approach a period which proved an epoch in my existence. It was towards the evening of a very long and fatiguing day's journey, perhaps the most wearisome we had yet had, that we halted to refresh ourselves, and consult where we should bivouac for the night. We were all jaded, and scarcely knew how to proceed any further. My sister was reclining on a bank, and had, unobserved by us, fallen fast asleep, fairly overcome with the fatigues of the day. Her head was resting on a small package of tightly compressed woollen cloths. We had not noticed her for some minutes, when one of the gentlemen who accompanied us was the first to observe her dangerous situation. It was fortunate he did so. Taking my father by the arm, and leading him quietly away from the party, he directed his attention to my sister. My father stood almost petrified with fear and horror, on observing a large rattlesnake moving from side to side on my sister's chest. Upon the impulse of the moment, he was incautiously about to rush to her rescue; but was detained by his companion.

"I do not think it means any mischief," he whispered. "Make no noise, and I fancy it will merely cross your child's body, and go away."

In this, however, he was mistaken, for on reaching my sister's left shoulder the serpent deliberately coiled itself up; and although it made no immediate attack, it did not appear at all likely to leave the side of the sleeper.

"Leave it to me," said my father's companion, "to rescue the poor girl from her terrible position. I know best the habits of these creatures, and how to treat them. Make no noise, on your life, or your child may be lost; but follow me."

My father obeyed; and our friend then determined that two of us should advance in front, to divert the attention of the snake, while he should noiselessly steal behind my sister, and, with a long stick, remove the reptile from her body. The snake, on observing the approach of the two intruders in front of him, instantly raised its head, and darted out its forked tongue, at the same time shaking its rattles,—all indications of anger.

Anxiety

Every one of our party was in a state of fearful suspense and agitation for the fate of my poor sister; who lay like a beautiful statue, sleeping the calm sleep of innocence, unconscious of her danger. Our friend advanced stealthily behind, with a stick of seven feet long he had procured for the purpose. In an instant, almost before we had time to observe it, he succeeded in cautiously inserting one end of the stick under one of the reptile's coils, and flung the creature some yards from my sister's body. A wild scream of joy was the first indication my sister received of her danger and providential escape. In the meantime, her preserver pursued the snake, and killed it. It was three feet seven inches long, and eleven years old; the age, our friend said, was always to be ascertained by the number of rattles. He also informed us that there is no danger attending the destruction of the rattlesnake, provided a person has a long pliant stick, and does not approach nearer than the reptile's length; for they cannot spring beyond it, and seldom act but upon the defensive. We discovered, on searching about, a nest of these snakes near to where my sister had been lying; and, after this incident, were a little more cautious in taking our way along. We could not shake off the alarm that it had occasioned; and it was with anxious thoughts and heavy hearts that we again proceeded to seek repose from the day's troubles and fatigue.

CHAPTER II.

I AM LOST IN THE FOREST—MY SITUATION AND FEELINGS DESCRIBED.

"Existence may be borne, and the deep root
Of life and sufferance make its firm abode
In bare and desolate bosoms: mute
The camel labours with the heaviest load,
And the wolf dies in silence. Not bestow'd
In vain should such examples be; if they—
Things of ignoble or of savage mood—
Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay
May temper it to bear; it is but for a day."

In arranging our watch for the night every precaution was taken to guard against intrusion; then most of the party composed themselves for sleep; indeed, the previous day had been one of peculiar fatigue and disappointment—opiates much less injurious than those issued from a druggist's shop. I alone, and for the first time, became restless after the approach of night—usually having fallen asleep as soon as I had eaten my supper,—and became insensible to the busy hum of night, which in tropical countries is very noisy. I lay down with the adventure of the snake on my mind, my reflections on which kept me awake till the nocturnal insects of the wood were all in full chorus, and the reptiles began to move. Up to this hour I had no idea—so soundly had I hitherto slept—that the night was as rife with sounds and animated nature as the day; differing not in their variety but only in their peculiar kinds.

Fireflies

As I have in another place, under the head of a natural day in the forest, spoken of this hour, it will be unnecessary for me to describe it in this place; suffice it to say, that my ear being once engaged in attending to the succession of sounds which addressed it, sleep, for the night, became hopeless. About midnight I suddenly sprang to nay feet with the surprise of being surrounded, as I thought, with flakes of fire, or rather with similar lights to those emitted by a jet of gas in the centre of glass drops. Finding myself uninjured in the midst of myriads of these dancing lights, I moved forward, as they moved, to examine the phenomenon. They were fireflies, whose light would have enabled me to see the hour by a watch. They suddenly, however, left me in darkness, and that as rapidly as if they had really been gas-lights extinguished by the turning of the stop-cock.

Pausing for some minutes, and censuring my own conduct for having moved from the spot of our bivouac, my attention was again attracted by sounds of something in pain, close to my feet; it was evidently a bird, and I stooped with a view of taking it up, when the note proceeded from my right, and then from the left, "Crek-crek-crek!" Whether I was ambitious to capture the bird, or whether I was moved by feelings of compassion I know not, I acted on the impulse, and continued to turn from side to side till I had advanced some distance in the underwood in a zig-zag direction. At length, being vexed at my disappointment, I lost my temper, and rushed forward again with renewed determination to take the wounded bird, which was always at my feet but never in my hand.

He who does not command his temper can scarcely fail to do wrong; and never was indiscretion perhaps more severely punished than in my case.

Bewildered in the wood

I had committed an unpardonable act of imprudence in suffering my curiosity regarding the light emitted by the firefly to lead me one yard from the bivouac; but afterwards to lose my presence of mind in such a situation and at such an hour, in the mere attempt to possess a wounded bird, was an act of puerility inexcusable in a boy many years my junior. Need I inform the reader that I was the dupe of a watchful parent, or perhaps there were two of them, who, with a view of protecting their young ones, beguiled me from the spot where they were being reared. The bird was a species of quail, which, like the plover in England, will pretend to be lame, to draw stragglers from its hiding-place. When the cry of the quail ceased, without doubt I had been led a sufficient distance to place her progeny out of danger; I was now enshrouded in all but utter darkness, and then bean to shout out to my uncle John, who was on watch, as loudly and as frequently as the power of my lungs enabled me; but there was no response. The aphorism says, "Do not halloo till you are out of the wood;" and truly I might have spared my lungs, for calling was of no avail. Errors and blunders generally run in sequences; had I remained on the spot when I found myself first lost, the probability is that I should, when the morning dawned, have been near enough to my friends to have been discovered. But no! having been guilty of one act of folly, I must repair it by committing a second. My impatience impelled me to make an effort to retrace my steps; while a moment's reflection might have shown me, that as there was but one road back, so there were many which might lead me farther into trouble.

The remainder of this night was spent in exhausting my strength in vain and useless efforts to retrace my steps; and ere the sun rose, I was so fatigued and hoarse as to abandon every hope of making myself heard. Exhausted nature alone brought conviction of the fruitlessness of such efforts. I sat down on a blasted tree, and there relieved my harassed and affrighted spirits by a flood of tears, the shedding of which did indeed bring alleviation; for previously I felt as if my heart was bursting. A heavy load of grief, however, still pressed with a leaden weight on my mind; but as the heart lightened, the reflective powers began to operate, and the full sense of my desolation was presented to my view. I was horror-stricken and paralysed; but as these paroxysms passed away, I gradually brought my mind to contemplate calmly my isolated situation.

First sensation of solitude

I first reflected on the inestimable value of parental affection, the blessings conferred on us by friends, the pleasures of social life, and the advantages mankind derive by forming communities. At that moment there was no sacrifice I would not have made to have been restored to my family, and become again entitled to all these advantages. Out of this comparative state of calmness, I was roused by murmuring sounds which my excited imagination converted into human voices. Oh, how my heart bounded, and with what intensity did the ear strain itself to catch assurance that there was truth in its first impression. But the organ had prejudged, and was not readily open to conviction. I therefore proceeded, with what haste my weary limbs would permit, to exercise the sense of sight. Alas! it was but the murmuring of waters, a gentle confluence of which was precipitated over an elevated rock of stone.

It was impossible to conceive a more enchanting scene than that which now met my anxious eye. Through several ravines the water, pouring over moss-grown stones, fell in miniature cascades, with a musical murmur, over rocks shaded by low trees, and grey with variegated mosses and the elegant maiden's hair. Large trunks of trees, thrown down by the hand of time, lay covered with fungi waved with various hues. The scene was altogether such as might for a time engage the attention and abstract the mind of one plunged into the abyss of grief. I was deeply impressed with its beauty, and it powerfully excited sensations of delight; but as I continued to contemplate it, a sense of loneliness crept over me; there was no one near to hear me exclaim, "How exquisitely enchanting! how sublime! yet how soft and harmonizing is it to the feelings."

Turning from this scene I found my grief considerably modified in its intensity; and I began now to look on my case only as that of a lost child in society, whom the parents would be certain of finding on diligent search.

"God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," and in a thousand mysterious ways prepares the minds of his creatures to meet the burdens they are called upon to bear. Of this truth I was early convinced. Had the night of my first day's loneliness closed on me in the full consciousness of my desolation and self-dependence for preservation, it is impossible to say what dreadful effects might have been wrought on the mind of one so young, and so tenderly brought up. But it was ordered otherwise. The want of sleep the previous night, together with agonised moments of distress, and fears which returned with redoubled force as the day progressed and no relief came, all contributed so much to the exhaustion of my frame, that long ere the curtains of night were drawn over the forest, I involuntarily fell into a profound sleep, unconscious at what hour, or where I had lain myself. I was thus spared those feelings of dread which, if night had overtaken my waking moments, might have overshadowed my reason while I was watching the

final departure of daylight.

When I awoke the next morning, it was broad day; and nothing, while memory retains her seat, can obliterate or weaken the impressions I received on opening my eyes. There was presented to my view the most magnificent scene perhaps ever beheld in this world of nature's productions. For a time I imagined myself dreaming of fairy-land. Before me, as I reclined on a mossy bed of green herbage, as soft as eider-down, there was an opening in the wood, shaped like an amphitheatre, with the sun's rays throwing a flood of light into it. Trees rich with foliage and blossoms waved like a galaxy of parti-coloured flags or banners at a jubilee of nature; brilliant colours, varied in endless hues, all beautifully harmonising, so that each was seen without any being predominant. Here arose upright flowers on stupendous branches, towering aloft as if aspiring to reach the sun; there others hung pendulously, as if seeking to hide themselves amidst the rich foliage that cradled their birth, and were anxious in their modest delicacy, to avoid the god of day. Birds of ever-varied plumage, sizes, and habits, were congregated in immense numbers, forming an orchestra of thousands of vocalists, as if met to celebrate the hour of creation.

A small glassy lake in the centre of the glade, peopled with water-fowl, served the songsters for a grace-cup, each quitting the sprays to dip its beak into it, and again resume its perch to pour forth a torrent of musical notes. I know not how long I might have lain rapt with delight, had not some husks fallen on my face, and roused me. I have reason to think that I was pelted by monkeys, whose jealousy at the appearance of a stranger in their territories had aroused their indignation.

The nut-hatch in the gum tree

Entranced as I had been by the scene, the grosser appetite admonished me that food was necessary for the sustenance of the body; I had not tasted it for upwards of twenty-four hours, and the demands of the stomach now became imperative. Without allowing myself time to reflect, the horror of starvation presented itself to my imagination, and I was again relapsing into despondency, when I saw several small birds running up and down the trunk of a large tree, in a spiral course; their movement was so rapid, that I could not distinguish whether their heads or tails were uppermost. Curious to obtain a nearer view of them, I advanced, and observed that they frequently tapped the bark with their beaks, and then inserted them into the interstices; this led me to examine the tree more closely, when I discovered large masses of gum protruding from the bark. This description of bird is named the nuthatch. They were in search of insects and their eggs, not of the gum. I however filled my pocket with it, and putting piece after piece into my mouth, as it dissolved, it allayed for the present the cravings of hunger.

Frequently when distant dreaded danger is more nearly approached, our fears vanish, and it often happens that a supposed coming evil turns out to be a benefit. At all times, however, the mind is soon familiarised to those dangers that partake of the inevitable. The very worst had now passed away from me—the first night's sleep alone in the forest. I was safe, unhurt, refreshed, and even cheerful: perhaps because I was still full of the hope of being sought for and found by my father and friends.

It was the will of Divine Providence that I should for several weeks cherish this hope; nor did I abandon the flattering solace till I had become fully initiated into the ways of providing for myself. Indeed, I may affirm that hope never left me—hope, if not of meeting directly with my friends, of emancipating myself from the intricacies of the forest. Hope, Memory, and Imagination, three lovely sisters, were my companions, and even in the wilds of a forest,

"Hope enchanted, smiled, and waved her golden hair."

Memory, a visionary slumber, with half-closed eyes, was frequently dispelled by the hard necessity there was to be up and stirring for immediate self-preservation. Imagination came with lamp-like eyes, a bright and bold beauty, seating me at one bound or flight in the midst of my family, enjoying all the comforts of civilized life, throwing me into the arms of my mother, indulging in her warm embrace. Remorse would then supervene—remorse for the pain and anguish I had occasioned my fond and worthy parents, and for the misery my waywardness had brought upon myself.

Efforts to escape

My first meal, as I have stated, when left to cater for myself, consisted of gum, of which I had a store in my pocket. As soon, therefore, as I had satisfied myself with the surrounding objects of admiration, I thought of making another effort to regain the spot where I had left my parents: it was a vain hope, but I pursued it throughout the day, during which I must have travelled many miles. In the course of my peregrinations, I found abundance of fruit and nuts, which lay strewed in my way. Late in the day, I met with a mass of the bush-rope, and, ignorant of its abundance, I at once jumped to the conclusion that I had arrived at the identical spot which our party had before passed. This barrier, as it is designated, to my view was considerably extended; and then

my heart, after being elevated with hope, again sunk within me. Still, however, disinclined to relinquish hope, my only solace, I soon persuaded myself that I might not, on the former occasion, have accurately surveyed it; and I resolved, as night was fast approaching, to remain on the spot till the following morning, and from thence to make a fresh start, to find, if possible, the track in which the party were travelling.

In social life, provident thoughts rarely trouble a youth of thirteen years of age; his parents, or others, think for him, and generally every night provide a bed for his resting-place. Such had been previously my case; the reader will, therefore, not be surprised that, up to this moment, I had not bestowed a thought on how I was to pass the ensuing night in security. I was, however, now fairly inducted into the school of hard necessity; and as the day was fast waning, I had no time to lose. Acting on impulse, I commenced climbing the bush-rope, intending there to make my bed, but the dread of falling came over me, and checked my resolution. I then thought of a hollow tree, many of which I had seen in the course of my perambulations. Following this suggestion of the mind, I immediately began a search for one, and fortunately met with it on the spot. Night was, however, setting in so rapidly, that I had no time to be nice in my choice.

The jaguar

The tree that seemed most to invite me to enter into its interior was partly uprooted, leaning its head towards the earth, so that I could rest in a sloping position; but thinking the opening of the decayed part too wide for perfect security, I stripped off the bark on the reverse side, of which to form a shutter, or loose door, which I might pull towards the opening when fairly ensconced within the hollow. Having thus prepared my bed, I instinctively cast a look round, as an undefinable sense of danger crept over me; the first movement brought my eyes in contact with those of a large jaguar, the tiger of that country. He was standing upright, about eight yards distant, apparently surveying me from head to foot. I was paralyzed with fear, and remained fixed to the spot; the animal gave me a second and third look, then took two or three bounds, and was out of sight in an instant. It is to this moment my fixed opinion, one confirmed by subsequent experience, that I owe my life to the passive manner in which I stood, and which was occasioned by fright; the slightest movement on my part would have occasioned alarm in the jaguar, and proved fatal.

With regard to the jaguar's prowess, he is little less formidable than the Bengal tiger: cows and young bulls he destroys with ease and avidity; but the horse is his favourite prey. All these large animals he kills by leaping on their backs, placing one paw upon their head, another on the muzzle, and thus contriving, in a moment, to break the neck of his victim. The jaguar, although as ferocious as the tiger, rarely attacks man unprovoked, or unless very hungry; but in general he finds no scarcity of food in the regions in which I was located.

I now debated with myself whether I should enter the tree, foolishly imagining that the animal designed to take me asleep. At length the gloominess of the night enshrouded me in darkness, and left me no alternative but to spring into my cabin, and pull the pieces of bark before the aperture. I will not attempt to describe the fearful trepidation in which I was placed: the darkness of the night rendered the hollow of the tree like a tomb, and I viewed it as a coffin; every movement of a twig was, to my imagination, the jaguar removing my barricade with an intention of clawing me out for prey. The scene was rendered more horrible by the contrast with that of the morning, to which the mind would revert, in spite of surrounding horrors—one was the reality of the fabled Elysium, the other that of the Tartarean fields. Just as I had thought I had now experienced the acme of terrors, my fright was augmented by something fluttering round my head, the noise from which seemed as if an animal was struggling to disentangle itself from a snare. Shakspere, describing the effects of fright, speaks of its causing

> "Each particular hair to stand on end,
> Like quills upon the fretful porcupine."

I will not affirm that the hairs of my head rose to that height, but I may safely aver that no mortal had ever more cause for exhibiting all the known symptoms of extreme fright. In a second or two after I heard the fluttering, I received repeated blows on the head and face, indubitable proofs that I had a quarrelsome fellow lodger. Present and immediate dangers chase all others. I kicked away my temporary shutter; but before I could make my exit I felt, by the motion of the air, that a living thing had passed me in rapid flight.

The terrors of night in the forest

When the sharer of my tenement had flown, I began to consider that it must have been some night-bird; and as the jaguar was still uppermost in my thoughts, I lost no time in repossessing myself of my lodging. Worn out as I now again was with the fatigues of the day and the terrors of the night, after a time I was dropping to sleep, when I was once more roused by the growl of the jaguar, as if he had just seized his prey, and half the beasts of the forest, from the noise there was, had collected to contend and fight for the carnage. A short interval elapsed, and then the growling changed gradually into death-groanings. I was now in the midst of a scene of horror and darkness

that may well be said to elude the power of verbal description. Only a few hours previously my mind had been harmonized by the soft and elegant forms of nature's richest beauties, under a clear blue sky. How changed was now the scene! how deformed and disfigured was the aspect! It was a transition from Paradise to Erebus; environed by all the real and conceivable monsters in nature. I had before been alarmed—I now abandoned myself to the one sensation of unmitigated despair, the extremity of which was so intense, that it is a miracle reason held her place, or that I survived to write this narrative.

Indeed, nothing but the turn my thoughts took at this crisis could have preserved me. I had already undergone all the horrors of an agonizing and protracted death, and was well nigh insensible to grief or pain, when, providentially, in the last extremity, I was inwardly admonished to appeal to my God. And now, with suppliant accents and upraised hands, I prayed to Heaven for a blessing, for short I still thought was the space between life and death. Praying with fervency of soul, I gradually became inspired with confidence; my mind became more tranquil and fitter for calm consideration. It occurred to me, notwithstanding the horrible din of noises around, that I was still unhurt; that if the jaguar had really selected me for his prey, he would have seized me when within his reach, and not have restrained his appetite for the mere gratification of tearing me from the hollow of a tree. Then, in reference to the sharer of my apartment, I began to look on myself as the real aggressor. Had I not ejected some native of the forest, whose natural home it was, both by right and possession; had I not most unwarrantably intruded on his privacy, and frightened an inoffensive member of the sylvan community.

Thus, through the medium of prayer, was I at once enabled and taught how to face danger; and whilst looking it steadfastly in the countenance, to ascertain correctly its magnitude, and banish chimerical fears. That I was surrounded with danger, I was still conscious; but now I offered up thanks to God for preserving me in the midst of them; for having directed me to a place of security, and provided me with a strong tower, where I might almost defy enemies. Thus recovering my self-possession, I began really to enjoy the interior of the tree as a very comfortable resting-place and a complete snuggery. Very soon after this state of mind was brought about, I fell asleep, and awoke refreshed and tranquil. Morning was announced to my glad eyes by lines of light passing from the lofty trees, scintillating through the holes of my worm-eaten shutter—lines of light which were delicately drawn by the golden fingers of Phoebus, the most famed of artists. A very considerable portion of the sufferings of mankind have their source in ignorance: nearly all that I encountered, even from this memorable night to the hour of my emancipation from the forest, was the result of my want of experience. Had I known that the noises which had disturbed my rest were but the imitations of the red monkey, I might have slept in quietude. These animals assemble, and at times amuse themselves throughout the night by making the most horrible noises, more especially mimicking the growlings and roarings of the more ferocious animals. I say amuse themselves; but at the same time I may remark that all sounds given out by quadrupeds, birds, or reptiles, are designed to effect some of nature's especial purposes. Some, for their own protection; others, to caution weaker animals against approaching danger.

Monkey tricks

The gift and propensity the red monkey has of imitating the beasts of prey, may deter some enemy from attacking him in the dark; for it is observed they cease their mocking habits when daylight appears. They may also warn the timid animals when others of a formidable nature and ferocious appetite are in their vicinity.

The jaguar, as we have said, was in the immediate neighbourhood that night. Among the general community of the monkey tribes, morning and evening are periods they generally select to settle their public affairs, for the noises they make at these times are absolutely stunning, and to strangers very alarming. The forest is their citadel, where, mounted on lofty trees waving in the breeze, they confabulate, and, as naturalists have often described, arm themselves with sticks and stones, and in conscious independence defy all intruders.

The red monkey, however, is the most pugnacious of the whole species; and it was some months before I was permitted to walk the woods in peace, for these animals frequently assailed me with a stick or a stone. Policy led me to take all their insults patiently; and in the end, I imagine, they passed an act of naturalization, for I was ultimately permitted to range the forest without molestation.

I once witnessed a peculiar instance of their tenaciousness in regard to their territory. An European boat was passing down a river on the side of a wood, when, on a signal being given by one of these animals, others crowded to the spot in such numbers as literally to cover the trees, bending with their weight the branches to the water's edge.

At first they appeared as if amused with the sight of the movement of the rowers; then deeming them intruders, they commenced a general pelting, discharging showers of stones and broken sticks. The people in the boats fired; when the monkeys pelted more furiously than before, and though numbers fell wounded, or dead, still they continued the contest till the boats passed beyond their domain.

I now entered on the third day of my sylvan probation, and upon the whole, felt more self-possession than I had any right to expect, under all the circumstances of my forlorn case. This

day, like all others, waned with a quick and silent foot, while I again rambled round the immediate locality of my resting-place, fearing I might, if I strayed far away, be constrained to face the perils of a night in the open air.

The blood-sucker

This night I took possession of my lodging in good time, and, as I thought, carefully fenced myself with an impregnable barrier; and, as I thought so, it was the same as if it had been a high stone-wall, for it removed my perturbation, and occasioned me to sleep soundly. When I awoke the following morning, I was surprised to find my stocking matted with coagulated blood; I hastened to a rill of water, where I had the day before previously allayed my thirst, to draw it off and cleanse the foot. To my utter astonishment and dismay, I discovered that my shoe was in every part stained with blood, and that the toes and the sole of the right foot were stiff with coagulum.

Divesting myself of the covering of my foot, I observed a small wound on the instep, not unlike the mark made by a leech. Imagining that I had been bitten by some formidable insect, such as I had seen in the course of our journey, when I had washed myself and recovered my fright, I hastened back to scrape out the interior of my chamber with a stick. In performing this work I disturbed myriads of small insects with which I had rested, but nothing that could account for the bite on my foot. Pleased, however, at having discovered the necessity there was for cleanliness in my apartment. I was resolved to give it a thorough scouring; and for this purpose thrust the stick up a hollow arm of the tree above my head, when out flew an extraordinary large bat. It was some satisfaction to become acquainted with those who are likely to become the sharers of your lodging, and I had no doubt the bat was the animal that flew against my face when endeavouring to set out the previous evening on his usual nocturnal rambles.

Still I remained in a state of ignorance as to the cause of the wound in my foot. It requires much study and considerable experience, even to ascertain the causes of only a few effects in the phenomena of nature's workshop. Unwilling to leave the uninformed reader in doubt, not only in this particular instance, but in numerous others that will be met with in the course of this narrative, I shall anticipate, as it were, my own subsequent experience, and explain, when I can, the causes of certain effects that occurred to me while living alone in the forest. It was a species of bat, named by naturalists the vampire, that I had ejected, and he it was who had bled me so freely in the foot.

It is remarkable that this bloodsucker, when once he has fastened on an animal, is allowed to satiate his appetite unmolested, as its victims all remain quiet and unresisting during the time he makes his meal. It is said that vampires flap their wings and produce a cooling sensation that lulls their prey to sleep while they suck their fill.

In the instance of myself, I had not awoke the whole night, and was perfectly unconscious of the attack, until morning; but, as I have already said, I was in nature's great school, and soon learnt that, as in the moral world, so it is in the woods, there is more to dread from insidious attacks, than from open and declared enemies.

When I had satisfied my appetite, on leaving my resting-place, with nuts and fruit, I sat down by the rill of water, to consider more determinately than I had hitherto done, what were my prospects, and what course of conduct I should pursue for my own protection.

The battle of the snakes

While thus engaged in thought, my attention was attracted to a snake, only a few yards' distance from where I sat; it was near a patch of brushwood, and was apparently trembling with fear. Almost as soon as I had noticed its state of alarm, another snake, with astonishing celerity, sprung upon it, and seized it by the neck, then encircled itself about six folds round the body of its victim, like the worm of a screw. The assailant then, leaning its head over the other, looked its gasping foe in the face, to ascertain the effect of the coils round the body; and seeing that its prey was still alive, it multiplied the coils three or four times, and evidently tightened the screw, watching all the time to see the effect of the extra coils. The attacking party was an animal designated the black snake, and the victim was a rattlesnake, about three and a half feet long, its enemy being about the same length. The former, however, had perfect command over the latter; but I was surprised at the length of time the executioner took to satisfy himself that his work of death was performed. The black snake remained three-quarters of an hour coiled round the other, and then very slowly and cautiously slackened one coil at a time, narrowly watching if any signs of life yet remained, ready to resume the screw again, if necessary, to complete the destruction of the victim.

Driving the live snake away, I obtained possession of the dead one: it was four years old, which I scarce need mention was known by the number of rattles in its tail, which make a rattling noise when these reptiles are in motion.

The rattlesnake is not among the most active of the species of snakes: it never springs a greater distance than its own length, which rarely exceeds four feet. It is owing to this that the black snake has the advantage, being able to spring from a greater distance on its prey, and,

from its rapid motion and method of seizure to deprive it at once of the power of injecting its venom.

I have since seen the rattlesnake destroyed by bucks in the open plain, and that without risk of suffering from the fatal effects of its bite.

The buck and the rattlesnake

A buck, when he discovers a rattlesnake, immediately prepares to attack it as a dreaded enemy, while he will pass other snakes unnoticed. The buck, depending on his sharp bifurcated hoofs, with which to sever the body of his adversary, is very skilful in his manoeuvre. He approaches the snake to within about ten feet, and then makes a bound, cutting the snake down with his hoofs with such unerring celerity and fatality as rarely leaves any chance of escape.

The two incidents of the vampire and the snakes threw my mind into a state of reflection on the system of nature which makes the existence of one animal depend on another for its subsistence. Then my thoughts reverted to the number of living things I had myself to dread, separated as I was from society where men unite for mutual protection. I had seen in the case of the chegoe, that a very small insect could inflict a severe injury on the human frame, and I had narrowly escaped being carried off by the jaguar. Snakes, serpents, and enormous lizards, crossed my path at almost every step, and the monkeys pelted me.

Uneasy and restless, I rose on my feet, to wander I knew not whither; I proceeded forward as if running from danger, yet dreading it at every step as I advanced. Presently my progress was impeded by a broad piece of expanded network, such as, from appearance, might have been manufactured by the hand of man,—it was spread from tree to tree. In the network was a small bird struggling to free itself from the toil which had ensnared it. Thinking I had now crossed the path of fowlers, my heart leaped with joy, and I flattered myself that deliverance was at hand; yet, fearing to spoil their sport, I drew back, and took up a position behind a tree. My mind was soon disabused of the error into which I had fallen. Several spiders of enormous size approaching the captive, I sprang forward to release the bird, and then perceived that the netting was the work of insects. The captive proved to be a humming bird, one of those beautiful little creatures that are fabled to feed on the nectar of plants. They however feed on insects, those which are attached to the nectarium of plants: these they seize for food with their long bills.

The spiders that weave these extraordinary webs from one tree to another, are not, like those of Europe, of solitary habits, but live in communities; they mutually share in the labour of forming the web, and divide the prey they catch. It is worthy of notice that all animals who unite their labour, possess infinitely more ingenuity in their proceedings than those who work individually. The weak, however, are generally provided with some compensating, self-protecting secret, that enables them to rear their young in as much security as the strong. Many insects that execute their buildings in trees, and there collect provisions for their infant colony in fear of the depredations of birds, cover the extremity of their store with substances of nauseous taste. Having saved the elegant little bird from the voracious spiders, I could not resist giving it freedom.

The web which had impeded my progress brought to my recollection the bush-rope, which I had previously proposed to examine by daylight, in the hope of falling into the original track my family had taken through the forest. After having spent the whole of the subsequent part of the day in surveying the barrier and its approaches, I was reluctantly constrained again to take up my position in the hollow of the tree, under the firm conviction that I had no clue by which I could, for the present, at least, emancipate myself from the mazes of the forest. I retired to rest much depressed, and half disposed to abandon myself to despair. I, however, got some sleep at intervals, notwithstanding the renewal of the frightful noises heard the first night; and, upon the whole, on the approach of morning, found myself somewhat resigned to my fate.

Preparations for defence

Possessing an excellent pocket-knife, I now thought of cutting a good staff, and, if occasion should render it necessary, of defending myself with it against any assailant. How it happened that I had not thought of this before surprised me; and I acquired new confidence from the consideration that I possessed some means of defence. While trimming my staff, the history of Crusoe occurred to my recollection; and I then resolved to adopt his mode of registering time by making notches on the stick; and this employment brought home to my recollection that I had now been lost four days, and, while so engaged, that the present day was a Sabbath.

The last notch I cut longitudinally, that I might mark the Sundays, and thus chronicle the return of the one day to be kept holy. Having always been accustomed religiously to observe the Sabbath, the current of my thoughts now took another turn. My first act was to offer up prayers, and to petition God to infuse into my breast courage to face the trials I must necessarily undergo in the wilderness, and ask for his guiding finger in all my wanderings.

Alter performing this duty, I sat down on a fallen tree to court reflection, and presently heard a humming noise close to my ear. Turning round, to see from whence it proceeded, I thought I

recognised the identical bird that I had, a short time before, liberated from the spider's web. It appeared, at first, to be stationary in the air, and I marvelled how it was supported; it then occurred to me that it was a spiritual messenger, sent in the form of the little creature I had been kind to, as an assurance of divine protection. Full ten minutes I contemplated the bird in this light, when it flew away, leaving me in a much happier state of mind than I had hitherto felt myself.

Utility of birds

The fixed position of the bird I afterwards found to be its habit when hovering over certain flowers in search of insects. There are a great variety of the humming-bird tribe; the one I had caught was very beautiful, and moved its wings with such astonishing rapidity in flight as to elude the eye; and when poising itself over a flower, waiting to attack insects as they enter between the petals, the wings moved with such celerity as to become almost invisible, like a mist. The habits of these birds may be denominated fly-like:—

"When morning dawns, and the blest sun again
Lifts his red glories from the eastern main,
Then round our woodbines, wet with glittering dews,
The flower-fed humming-bird his round pursues,—
Sips with inserted tube the honied blooms,
And chirps his gratitude as round he roams."

Birds, throughout my sojourn in the forest, were my chief and most cheerful companions. They seem to be sent by Heaven as the peculiar associates of man; they exhilarate him in his labour, and brighten his hours of leisure by their melody. They also, in an especial manner, serve man, by preventing the increase of those insects that would consume the products of his industry. Whatever the uninformed farmer or gardener may say on this head, I beg to assure them that the depredations birds commit are more than compensated by their insectivorous habits.

There is not a vegetable production, cultivated or of spontaneous growth, from the forest tree to the most tender garden-flower, that is not liable to attacks from myriads of insects, though small in form and weapons, yet insidious in their mode of attack, and fatal to the plant. Birds are the natural enemies of insects, and were sent as a check upon their increase. Man persecutes the bird for plundering his fruits, seeds, and grain crops, but he does not enquire whether he would have any of these productions if the bird did not free the ground and buds from insects. The late Professor Bradley ascertained that a pair of sparrows, during the time they had young ones, destroyed on an average 3360 caterpillars every week, besides butterflies.

Man, when he clears and cultivates the land, destroys the winter food of birds, cutting down the trees that nature intended should supply them with berries during a season when their insectivorous habits are suspended. It would be an advantage to those who are engaged in cultivating the earth, if they studied the harmony of nature a little more than they now generally do. The farmer will say that a hard and long frost is good for the land, because it kills the insects; so likewise do the birds die off in severe seasons of cold, thus reducing the number of his auxiliary agriculturists to the proportion in which they will be required, on the return of spring, to keep the land clear from insects, and secure a crop to the cultivator. Birds in general return tenfold to man, in the services they render him, for all they take from his store; while they,

——"With melody untaught,
Turn all the air to music, within hearing,
Themselves unseen."

The humming-bird's visit, together with the peculiar associations of my mind at the time, produced in me a calmness that partook of heaven. The scene—a picture, too,—which was before me, was one of those beautiful instances of nature's chaste compositions that combined all around in harmony. Lovely were the sylvan flowers, fresh with blossoms, rising amidst the soft and matted growth beneath; and how exquisite the structure of the moss and lichen within my reach; how calm, how clear and serene was the air—how deepened were the shadows—how perfect was the quiet—how eloquent the silence!

Solitary reflections

My meditations were painfully broken in upon by the mind reverting to the jaguar that I thought at times was lurking about to devour me; then to the snakes, and the captive humming-bird. "Has God," I involuntarily exclaimed, "made all his creatures that they may devour each other? Yes, yes! he has." I continued, as I rose with disturbed feelings; "I see the scheme of destruction at every step, and behold it at every turn; both day and night, every hour, yea, every moment, millions are struggling in the death-grasp of their foes."

These reflections almost melted my heart, when, casting up my

eyes to heaven, as if to ask for some light to shine on my mind and explain the subject, I saw a falcon, in the act of flying, seize a bird of the pigeon kind, and fly off with it into the woods. Tears came to my relief. Goldsmith says, "The mere uninformed spectator passes on in gloomy silence; while the naturalist, in every plant, in every insect, and in every pebble, finds something to entertain his curiosity and excite his speculation. In the animal kingdom alone there exists nearly one hundred thousand of known different subjects, and half that number of different plants. The discovery of almost every vegetable brings with it the knowledge of a new insect. In the mineral kingdom the compositions and forms are almost endless." And Dr. Priestley says, of scientific pursuits "The investigation of nature cannot fail to be valuable. It engages all our intellectual faculties to the greatest extent, and in its pursuit the general stock of useful knowledge is increased. The field for inquiry is rational, extensive, and profitable, beyond conception."

"But what right have I, a poor, short-sighted mortal," I then exclaimed, "to seek for the motives that actuate an all-wise Deity? It is not only vain but wicked in man to scrutinize the ways of Providence."

CHAPTER III.

I BUILD MYSELF A HUT—THE SCENERY THROUGHOUT A DAY IN THE FOREST DESCRIBED.

"O may I with myself agree,
And never covet what I see;
Content me with a humble shade—
My passions tamed, my wishes laid;
For while our wishes wildly roll,
We banish quiet from the soul."

Projects of building

As the first Sabbath-day in the woods closed upon me, I felt more resigned to my fate, and more composed, than I had been at any previous period since the separation from my parents. I now looked on myself as a denizen of the forest; and as I slowly repaired to the hollow tree, the thought possessed me that I could construct some kind of dwelling-place. During the night I formed and rejected fifty plans for carrying this scheme out. At length, just as morning dawned, a simple method suggested itself to me of effecting my purpose; and, with my usual ardour, I commenced the work forthwith. Before the evening set in I had collected, and trimmed with my pocket-knife, a considerable number of stakes, about four feet long, at which work I continued for four days, when it occurred to me that I had not yet given the eligibility of site a thought, and had been much too hasty in my proceedings. Ashamed of my own impetuosity and want of consideration, I crept to rest, very weary and ill at ease with myself; and as I took a retrospective view of the results of my impulsive mode of acting on the thought, together with the ills I had brought on my own head, I did not spare self-reproach. Considering my numerous wants, it was clearly, where I had collected the stakes, a very inconvenient spot to choose for a permanent place of residence. Weighing in my judgment the kind of locality suited to the purpose, I decided on an open space or glade in the forest, where I might have a clear view all around, and be out of the way of uprooted or falling timber. But for this last consideration I should at once have selected the spot where I awoke after my first night's sleep in the forest. The recollection of that beautiful scene reminded me of another thing I had not hitherto thought of, namely, that my house must be built near to a supply of water, and also of fruit. The next day, therefore, was spent in searching for a site on which I might commence my building speculation. There was no lack of space, or of glades; but in the resolution I had now made to become thoughtful, and act with caution, I fear I became too nice and fastidious.

The forest stream

One open plot of ground I traversed many times with the eye of a government surveyor: it was the very thing itself; but there was no water to be seen. Presently, I caught the sound of trickling water; and my new friend, caution, forsook me. I was so heedless in running to satisfy myself that there actually was a stream fit to drink, that I was precipitated headlong into the gill, or chasm, which formed the channel for its course. It was so covered with wood that the eye could not see it. Fortunately I met with this rent in the earth near to the commencement of the fissure, where it was comparatively narrow and shallow. At any other part, its steepness and depth might have endangered life. It was the birthplace of a native stream. I subsequently learned to track it by the

soothing harmony of this invisible torrent, the notes from which sounded like innumerable broken falls, and were softened by ascending through branches which hung over it. These sounds were extremely harmonious.

At the spot where I had fallen the water might with some difficulty be obtained, and near to this, at length I determined to build my villa—a sylvan mansion. This site, on one side, was flanked by a morass, or bog, which even then, in the driest season, was only passable with care on tufts of grass, which here and there sprung from the moisture of the soil. Proceeding to lay out my ground-plan, which was a circle, and to prepare for the morrow, I stayed at work till it was too late to find my way back to my lodging; leaving me no alternative but either to stretch myself on the ground, exposed to numberless dangers, or remain awake, and protect myself as I might. In this extremity I thought of the chasm, and groping my way to it, found its extreme end, where it was a mere slit, into which I rolled, and laid till the return of day.

The hut commenced

The morning opened with its usual bustle of animals, birds, and insects summoning me to my labour, and, having commenced, I was surprised to hear a cry of, "Who are you? Who—who are you?" I had scarcely recovered from the astonishment which these words occasioned, when they were followed by, "Work away!—work away!—work away!" and a mournful cry of "Willy come!—go, Willy! Willy—Willy—come! Go Willy!" Looking up, and being now in an open space, I could plainly see the birds fly over my head that uttered these notes. Not aware that these calls are common to certain birds, and my Christian name being William, the reader may imagine the effect and surprise with which they were heard. I instantly discontinued my labour, conceiving that the birds had been influenced by supernatural agency, and that they portended omens which had a peculiar reference to myself. This impression filled me with fears and fantasies of all kinds; it seemed as if some spell was on me, and I sat down in melancholy moodiness for the rest of the day. Irresolute, the following morning I rather dragged myself than walked to the same spot; but as I went, another bird over my head distinctly cried out, "Whip-poor-Will! Whip-poor-Will! Whip-poor-Will!" Yes! I exclaimed (as my spirits threw off the burden which had oppressed them) I am indeed ashamed of my folly in attending to the omens of birds. They are winging their way to the business of the day, and why should I neglect mine? I then returned, and took a bundle of the prepared stakes on my back to my new settlement. Need I apologise to the reader for mentioning the trifling incidents which depressed me at times, and the manner in which the paroxysms were dispelled. My motive in naming them is to illustrate the alternations my feelings underwent during my early days of probation in the wilderness. I know not whether I had taken a cold, but for some days past I had now suffered from a pain in my limbs, which I at the time attributed to the cramped position in which I rested at night. I therefore became extremely anxious to possess a place in which I might stretch myself at length. It, however, took seven days to construct the internal shell of the hut; for, being determined to sleep in security, I ultimately doubled the frame of the building. Having driven stakes into the earth, about a foot apart, forming a circle of about eight feet in diameter, I interlaced these with the limber branches of trees, fastening them to the stakes with tough fibres, stripped from the bark of lianes. These shrubs, of which there are a great variety, all comprised under that term, sometimes grow to the size of a man's leg round trees, making the trunks look like a mast of a ship furnished with rigging. They support the trees against the hurricanes, in the same manner as spurs are placed in the ground to prop posts; cords are made of their bark stronger than those manufactured of hemp. In woods where timber is felled, it is sometimes the practice to cut several hundred trees near their roots, where they remain till the lianes, which hold them, are also cut. When this is done, one whole part of the wood seems to fall at once, making an astounding crash. By the means of the lianes and stakes, I formed a circular strong hurdle-kind of fence; on this I fastened a number of other sticks, like wands, tapering at the top, which, when bound together, met over the centre part of the floor of the hut, and formed a conical roof. These I also interlaced in the same manner as the upright stakes; covering the whole with leaves of the parrasalla tree, which the wet does not injure; binding these also down with my most excellent substitute for cordage—fibres of the bark of the lianes. In the roof I left a hole for ingress and egress; so that, with two steps up, and then a jump, I was in the centre of my habitation, where, with dried grass, I made a most comfortable bed. This, after all, was a frail affair. My next object was to erect another frame over it, at about two feet distance from the interior shell, filling up the space between the upright stakes with stones and dry earth. The aperture was secured at night, leaving only a space for air, with a piece of bark hung on with the before-named fibres. With the same material (bark) I also formed a kind of stage before the opening into the hut, where I could sit, and survey the surrounding scenery. Some time subsequently I wove myself a grass hammock, which I found more cleanly than the dried grass, and less liable to be infested with insects. Finding myself lonely in this structure, I took the resolution of increasing my family; and, with this view, I devoted a portion of the interior for birds, that I might not be wholly companionless. These I took young, and reared them up in an aviary which I constructed immediately under my hammock, letting them out to hop about me when the aperture of the hut was closed. Many of my associates repaid me for my care with strong proofs of docility and affection. I also caught two land tortoises, to occupy the floor of the dwelling, and make me conscious of other living things besides myself breathing the same air.

In the foolishness of my heart I thought that when I possessed a hut, in which I might repose in security, I should be happy. But alas! in

The dwellers in the hut

the city or in the forest, worldly acquisitions are not always attended with contentment. Man everywhere sighs for something more than he possesses.

I had now a hut, one, too, that was impregnable against the attacks of the jaguar, or any of the animals of the forest; and, as I thought, in every way compactly built to be impervious to noxious insects; but happiness or contentment did not abide in it.

I now wanted a gun, that I ought, man-like, slay, and play the tyrant over the living things around me. I grew tired of my vegetable diet, and daily lamented the want of a fire to cook the eggs, which now began to form a considerable portion of my food. These wants gradually, as the mind dwelt upon them, became sources of anxiety, and disturbed my rest. The animal propensities of my nature began to stir within me. I longed to kill at my pleasure, and live on prey, as did the other animals of the forest. At length I determined on making the best substitute I could for a gun—namely, a bow and arrow; and, like Robin Hood, practise till I could hit the shaft of an arrow placed upright in the ground.

It was many weeks subsequently to this resolution before I succeeded in even procuring the materials I deemed suited for my purpose. My knife having become blunted with frequent use, it took a length of time to fashion the bow, and no less than four snapped in two as soon as I attempted to use them; proving that, choice as I had been in the selection of my wood, my judgment was defective in this particular. When I had succeeded in forming one of these primitive warlike weapons, I fastened large butterflies against the hut, and commenced the practice of archery.

I have informed the reader that the entrance of the new dwelling was through the roof, where, as I have said, I erected a seat, or standing-place; a sort of balcony, or rather, more like a dormer window. On this, every morning, during the dry season, at daybreak, I took my stand to discharge my arrows at any unwary bird that might come within my reach.

Early morning in the forest

This early rising at length grew into a habit, and to watch the opening of the day gave me unspeakable pleasure; and up to the last day of my pilgrimage it was the most interesting hour to me. It was an hour when the littleness of life did not present itself; the mind being refreshed with rest, was prepared to be filled with enlarged ideas.

The labourers of the night—for nature has her two sets of working animals—were then all on their way to seek retirement and rest during the day, from the fatigues of the night; while those that had rested during that period were all preparing to hail the morn with innumerable cries.

As twilight glimmers in the east, the tiger-cats are stealing into their holes. The owl and the goat-sucker cease their mournful lament, and as streaks of light appear the "Ha! ha! ha! ha!" of the latter, each note lower than the last, sounding like the voice of a murdered victim, entirely ceases. The crickets, also, at this hour begin to slacken the violence of their chirping, though sometimes in cloudy weather they will continue their notes for four-and-twenty hours together.

The partridge is the first of the birds to give signal of the rising of the sun, even before he appears on the horizon; while the mist of the morning, that precedes the day, is dispelling, numerous tribes of insects are creeping to their hiding-places, as others are issuing forth to enjoy the day. Lizards of sparkling lustre, from two inches to two feet and a-half long, cross the paths of the forest; and the chameleon has begun to chase the insects round the trunks of trees. Gaudy serpents steal from out of holes or decayed trees.

> "Each rapid movement gives a different dye;
> Like scales of burnished gold they dazzling show,
> Now sink to shade, now like a furnace glow."

The houton, a bird so called from the sound he gives out, distinctly articulates "houton, houton," in a plaintive note, as he erects his crown, and cuts and trims his tail, with his beak, in the most, artistical manner, then flies off with a short jerk.

At the same period the maam whistles; and when the sun is seen above the horizon, the hanaquoi, pataca, maroucli, and all the parrots and paroquets are prepared to announce his arrival. Every hour from this moment, excepting noon, calls into action new races of animals; and he who spends a day in the scene that environed my existence, when seated at my door, would not know which most to admire,—the forms, hues, or voices of the animals presented to his observation; as at intervals, wonder, admiration, and awe of the power that created them, are forced on the mind.

With the morning's dawn, the monkeys send forth their howl, the grasshoppers and locusts chirp, the frogs and toads give out their notes. The hanging pendant wasps' nests, most curious in form, send

Forest animals

forth their inhabitants; myriads of ants issue from their clay-built tenements, in some places colonized so densely as to cover the foliage all around. These, like the species of ants called the termites, that cast up the earth in mounds, commence their day's journey on roads constructed by themselves, some of which are covered, and others open.

Myriads of the most beautiful beetles buzz in the air, and sparkle like jewels on the fresh and green leaves, or on odorous flowers. Other tribes, such as serpents and agile lizards, creep from the hollow of trees, or from holes beneath the herbage; many of them exceeding in splendour the hue of the flowers. The major part of these are on their way to creep up the stems of trees or bushes, there to bask in the sun, and lie in wait for birds and insects.

The most brilliantly coloured butterflies, rivalling in hues the rainbow, begin to flutter from flower to flower, or collect in parties on the most sunny banks of cooling streams. There was the blue-white idia, the large eurilochus with its ocellated wings, the hesperite, the Laertes, the blue shining Nestor, and the Adonis; these, like birds, in most places hovered between the bushes. The feronia, with rustling wings, flew rapidly from tree to tree; while the owl, the largest of the moth species, sat immovable, with out-spread wings, waiting the approach of evening.

As the day progresses, the life of the scene increases. Troops of gregarious monkeys issue from the depths of the forest, their inquisitive countenances turned towards the verge of their wooded domain, making their way for the plantations; all leaping, whistling, and chattering as they progress from tree to tree.

Parrots, some blue, red, or green, others, parti-coloured, assemble in large groups on the tops of the forest-trees; and then, flying off to the plantations, fill the air with their screams. The toucan, perched on an extreme branch, rattles his large, hollow bill; and in loud, plaintive notes, calls for rain. The fly-catcher sits aloof, intent on watching insects as they dart from branch to branch, seizing them as they heedlessly buzz by him in their giddy and unsteady career. Other birds, of singular form, variety, and superb plumage, flutter by, in large or small parties, or in pairs, and some singly, peopling everywhere the fragrant bushes. On the ground are gallinaceans, jacuses, hocuses, and pigeons, that have left the perch to wander under the trees, in the moisture, for food.

In the tones of the nightingale the manikins are heard in all places, amusing themselves by their sudden change of position, and in misleading the sportsman; while the woodpecker makes the distant forest resound as he strikes the trees. Super-noisy, above all, is the uraponga, who, perched on the highest tree he can find, gives out sounds resembling the strokes of a sledge-hammer on the anvil, deluding the wanderer, as it once did me, into a belief that a blacksmith's shop is near at hand.

The mocking-bird

Every living thing, by its action and voice, is seen greeting the splendour of the day; while the delicate humming-bird, rivalling, in beauty and lustre, diamonds, emeralds, and sapphires, hovers with invisible wings over the brightest flowers. The bird colibri repairs to the tree called *bois immortel*, when the wild guava ripens its fruit; and there, also, will be found the Pompadour, both the purple-breasted and the purple-throated. At the same hour (day-break), the crowing of the hanaquoi sounds like a village-clock, for all to set to work in the great shop of nature. Then the cassique, or mocking-bird, gives out his own short but sweet song, preparatory to visiting the plantations, being fond of the haunts of man, where he remains till evening, making all kinds of noises, from the crowing of a cock, and the barking of dogs, to the grunting and squeaking of pigs. These birds weave their nests near together, in a pendulous manner. Their bodies are black, having the rump and half-tail yellow; other species have the rump a bright scarlet. In form they are a model of symmetry.

As the feathered tribes, one after the other, adjust their plumage, and tune their throats, squirrels, in rapid spiral speed, as quick as thought, are seen descending trees, then darting upon others in opposite directions, flinging themselves from tree to tree, with amazing exactness; pursuing their mates or their rivals among the mazy branches of the trees, with a velocity that eludes the sight.

Everywhere is nature's secretary, with his pen dipped in intellect, busy in writing down the invisible agency of Infinite Wisdom and Almighty Power.

> "How dazzling is thy beauty! how divine!
> How dim the lustre of the world to thine!"

The sublimity of the scene, when first beheld, produced unlimited astonishment; viewed again and again, all was softened down into harmonious shades of beauty, imparting a pleasure that cannot be understood by mere dwellers amidst the works of man.

Noon in the forest

In the forest, every hour of the night and day is the Creator present to the eye. Surrounded by the works of man, we sometimes lose sight of our Maker, and do not always properly appreciate his attributes. I have said that the morning gives life and activity to myriads of his creatures, who declare his power; but not less expressive is the hour of tranquillity—the hour of noon. At that hour, all is suddenly hushed into solemn silence. Stillness, as if by general consent, concert, or word of command, influences all the sylvan communities—a stillness illumined and made more manifest by the dazzling and burning beams of a meridian sun.

Creation at that hour appears wearied, fatigued, and overcome with the splendour of the day; it is as the face of God himself, before whose glory all things are struck with awe, and pause to acknowledge His majesty. Nothing moves—it is the hour of nature's siesta—yet the stillness speaks.

"Thy shades, thy silence, now be mine,
Thy charms my only theme;
My haunt the hollow cliff whose pine
Waves o'er the gloomy stream."

The quietness is that of a pause in the running stream of time; the air is motionless, the leaves hang pendant, as waiting in the presence of a deity for permission to resume the business of growth. The silence that reigns at the hour of noon is peculiarly of a religious character; there is nothing to which it can be compared but itself. From the nobles of the forest to the minutest insect, all appear to be at their devotions—the propensity to kill, for the time being, is forgotten or suspended,—

"The passions to divine repose alone
Persuaded yield; and love and joy are waking."

It is as if the naiads and fairies had deserted the sunbeams and fallen asleep. Oh! there is a harmony in nature wonderfully attuned to the intelligence of man, if he would but listen to it. The hour of noon, in the woods, is an hour of intellectual transcendentalism; it lifts the thoughts beyond the world, and peoples the grove with spirits of another world. Yet is there nothing in motion but the beams of the sun penetrating the foliage to the base of the trees—

"The chequered earth seems restless as a flood
Brushed by the winds, so sportive is the light
Shot through the boughs; it dances as they dance,
Shadow and sunshine intermingling quick,
And dark'ning and enlight'ning (as the beams
Play wanton) every part."

Everything speaks of the Deity, and the fall of a leaf passes as a phantom of the dead.

——"not a tree,
A plant, a leaf, a blossom, but contains
A folio volume."

The fitful meanings of the wind, in the more boisterous moments of Æolus, through the branches, speak not louder of God than the whisper of his breath that plays with the foliage. The low and broken murmurs of the water in the gill are as audibly eloquent as the lashing of the waves of the ocean in a storm, or the wild roar of the cataract. The voice of nature, come in what form it may, brings unutterable thoughts of the majesty of the creation. Whether it is in the deep, delicious tones of the happiness of the wood-dove, the melting, graceful notes of the nightingale, the thrilling melody of other sylvan songsters, or the twitterings of the swallow, all compel us to exclaim, "Oh! there is harmony in nature."

"Sounds inharmonious in themselves, and harsh,
Yet heard in scenes where peace for ever reigns,
... Please highly for their sake.
... Kites that swim sublime
In still-repeated circles, screaming loud,
... Have charms for me."

But the hour of stillness, like all other hours, passes away. The insects again give out their sounds; wasps and bees buzz in every direction; the talk of birds is clamorously resumed; the king-vulture

Evening

and the kite soar high in the hair, like fugle-birds, as signals for the resumption of the business of the day. The chattering manikins again rustle among the fig-leaves; the armadillo, and other burrowing animals, are seen cautiously peeping from their holes; the horned screamer opens wide his throat, and one by one, the whole of the sylvan feathered community join in concert.

The porcupine moves in the trees; the long grass is observed to give way as creeping things pursue their prey, or escape from foes; all indications that the earth and air again are full of animated life.

An hour or two elapses, and a gentle breeze rises to cool the air and give motion to the trees, as troop after troop of birds and monkeys wend their way back into the interior of the forest, indicating the gradual decline of the day. General preparations are being made for rest; only the slender deer, the peccari, the timid agouti, and the tapir, will still graze. The opossum, and some sly animals of the feline race skulk through the obscurity of the wood, stealthily prowling for prey. Finally, the last troop of howling monkeys are heard, as if performing the duty of drovers to those that have preceded them; the sloth cries as if in much distress with pain; the croaking of frogs, and monotonous chirps of large grasshoppers, bring on the close of day.

The tops of the forest now appear to be on fire, in the midst of which, the toucan, on a blasted mora tree, is uttering his evening cry, as darker shades are gradually cast into the forest, and the sun's disc sinks into the horizon.

The sky, which a moment since was bright as burnished gold, has already changed to a dusky grey, with here and there streaks of purple hue. A solitary bird, truant to its mate, or perhaps a mourner for its loss during the day's excursion, is seen like a wayfarer, with tired flight, wearily labouring to reach the wood ere nightfall.

Twilight is still lingering in the west, bringing on the night with a soft and sweet touch of delicacy, but still approaching, till surrounding objects become more and more obscure and confused, though undiminished in their beauty and effect. The cries of the macue, the capaiera, the goat-sucker, and the bass tones of the bullfrog, are now heard. Myriads of luminous beetles fly in the air, resembling the ignes fatui, and announce the departure of the day; when the night-moths and numerous other insects start on the wing, the bats flit between the branches of trees, the owls and vampires, like phantoms, silently pursue their course in search of prey, reserving their hollow cries for the ominous hour of midnight.

The stars, one after another, are lighted up as the moon rises on the horizon, with a modest countenance, to intimate to man that there is still a ruling power over the world. She tinges with silver streaks of light the tops and edges of the forest, till

> "Lo! midnight, from her starry reign,
> Looks awful down on earth and main,
> The tuneful birds lie hush'd in sleep,
> With all that crop the verdant food,
> With all that skim the crystal flood,
> Or haunt the caverns of the rocky steep."

At this hour the spectral owl quits the hollow tree, and with his shriek makes the boldest birds shrink away in fear, though in the sunshine hour they would hunt him.

> "So when the night falls, and dogs do howl,
> Sing Ho! for the reign of the horned owl!
> We know not alway
> Who are kings by day;
> But the king of the night is the bold brown owl!"
>
> "Mourn not for the owl, nor his gloomy plight!
> The owl hath his share of good;
> If a prisoner he be in the broad daylight,
> He is lord in the dark greenwood.
> Nor lonely the bird, nor his ghastly mate,
> They are each unto each a pride;
> Thrice fonder, perhaps, since a strange dark fate,
> Hath rent them from all beside."

The bow and arrows

I made but little progress in archery, which was a great source of mortification to me, although I spent every leisure hour I could spare after obtaining food, in practice. I was on the verge of despair of ever being able to make anything like a shot, when an incident occurred that enabled me to kill, in a few weeks, almost any bird on the wing, if within the range of my bow. Returning home from a long and fatiguing

ramble (for I had extended my surveys of the forest as I acquired confidence of finding my way home at night), I one day was astonished to see a bow and a quiver of arrows suspended from the branch of a tree.

This was a sight which occasioned feelings that are indescribable. I was both rejoiced and alarmed. At first I thought my deliverance was certain; the next moment I crouched behind a bush to hide myself, as from a most deadly foe. When I reflected on the loneliness of my existence, I longed to join society; yet, whenever society appeared to be available, I instinctively shrunk back, as if about to lose my independence or be carried into slavery. Operated on by mingled impulses, the dread of man seemed for a long time to prevail. Might they not be savages, and take my life? Or might they not lead me into captivity, and make a slave of me? They would at least have the Christian's practice to urge as a plea, in extenuation of such a measure.

Confident that human beings were in the neighbourhood, I at length resolved to secrete myself in a bush and wait their return. I fixed my eyes on the bow and quiver, expecting their owner would return for them; but the tones of the toucan were heard, by which I was as well informed of the approach of evening, as the partridge's call announces the coming day. Still unwilling to quit the spot, I remained throughout the night; but no owner came to claim the weapons. All this time I feared to touch them as if they were a trap laid to ensnare me. About noon the next day, I thought of possessing myself of them, and then made a circuit to reassure myself that no one was at hand. With fear and trembling I then, like a thief, took the bow and quiver from the tree, and hastened back to my hut to examine them. The whole secret of my inability to shoot birds was now at once explained. I had not feathered my arrows, nor was my bow long enough.

Still anxious to know their owner, the following morning I repaired again to the spot, and hung my own rudely formed weapons on the same tree from which I had taken the others. My motives were, first, to ascertain whether any person would yet come to remove them, and also to inform those who might come for that purpose, that another human being was in the neighbourhood.

The bow and arrows hung there a month, when I gave up all hopes of seeing any person in the woods; still the event caused me much uneasiness, and ever afterwards occasioned me to tread the paths around with extreme caution.

Flint and steel

Being now furnished with well-made arms, I soon brought down my birds, and might have fared sumptuously, could I have procured a fire. All my waking hours were, therefore, spent in bewailing this want, when one morning, as I was digging with my stick to come at a land tortoise that had crept into a hole, I raked out a piece of flint, and the tinder-box occurring to my mind, I struck it on the back of my knife, and instantly produced sparks, which actually made me leap for joy. My delight, however, was but of short duration. How were the sparks to be collected? I had no tinder—no matches. I then thought of my shirt, which I had long cast off; but then I had no matches, and must have fire before I could make tinder.

My joy was soon turned into despondency. I threw down the flint, and in the bitterness of my disappointment, apostrophised it, as the cock in the fable did, when scratching on a dunghill he found a jewel instead of a grain of corn. "Are all my days to be spent," I ejaculated, "in hopes that delight me only to make me more miserable?" Suddenly it occurred to my memory, that when at school, our small pieces of artillery were fired with lighted decayed wood, what the boys called touch-wood. Repossessing myself of the flint, I flew to my old sleeping-place, and in my impatience, struck a light on my former bed—the soft wood in the interior—it ignited, and smouldered. I was in an ecstacy of delight, and clapped my hands with exultation. Still I had no flame. I then collected some dried leaves, and holding them loosely over the spot that was alight, I blew with my mouth; a severely burnt hand soon informed me that I had succeeded.

My first fire was indeed a bonfire: heaping more leaves and dried sticks on to it, the tree was entirely consumed, and a number of others so damaged as very soon to become touch-wood.

The thunder-storm

A terrible thunder-storm succeeded this exploit. So wholly absorbed had I been with the fire, that when it expended itself, I found myself in total darkness, the moon having been suddenly obscured. All the inhabitants of the wood were restless and uneasy in their beds. I could hear the stag startle, and again lay himself down. Flashes of lightning showed the birds, lifting their heads at intervals, then returning them hastily again under their wings. The storm had for some time been gathering on the tops of the forest, and had now spread its black mantle over the moon, while I, like a school-boy on the fifth of November, had been exulting over a blaze.

On the storm advanced, in the majesty of darkness, moving on the wings of the blast, which my imagination pictured as uprooting the trees around me. The thunder rolled over the crown of the forest in the rear of the lightning. Rifted clouds continued to pass over my head. An owl left

its dirge unfinished, and fitted its ruffled feathers into a cleft of a blasted tree over my head. The wild animals that prowl by night, with famished stomachs, sought shelter in their dens.

I alone stood bared to the fury of the storm, incapable of reaching my hut in the darkness of that awful night. The thunder rolled as with ten thousand voices, and the lightning at intervals set the whole forest in a blaze of light. One of the flashes brought down a mora tree near to where I stood, crushing the limbs of other trees as it fell. The crash was terrific. Examining it the next morning by daylight, there was a wild fig-tree growing out of its top, and on the fig grew a wild species of vine. The fig-tree was as large as a common apple-tree, yet owed its growth to an undigested seed, dropped by birds that resort to the mora to feed on its ripe fruit. Such seeds the sap of the mora raises into full bearing, when they, in their turn, are called on to support and give out their sap to different species of seeds, also dropped by birds. In this case the usurpation of the fig on the mora, and the vine on the fig, brought all to an early end. A dead sloth was lying near to the prostrate timber, probably brought down, by the force of its fall, from the branch of another tree.

It was a night of devastation in the wilds of nature. The storms of destruction blew piercingly on every quarter. The destroying blast clapped his wings over many a tree, and laid prostrate numerous creatures that had life as the sun went down the previous evening. To the things that can be shaken, belong all that is earthly. However durable they may appear, however they may glitter, or stable they may appear, age, or the storm, will bring them to oblivion. Mutability is written on all the works of nature. It is an inscription that meets every eye, whether turned on the foundations of a city, a nation, or the works of the creation. Awe-struck with the dilapidations the morning made visible, I hastened to my hut, anxious to see if all was safe there, and prepare to cook myself a dinner.

The sloth

Man is essentially a cooking animal, and though omnivorous in his appetite, is nine parts out of ten carnivorous. I had abundance of vegetable food around me, of which I ate freely, and was in good health; yet my desire to taste animal food was so strong that I would at the time have made almost any sacrifice to obtain it. I had reached more than half the distance towards my residence, thinking all the way only on the means that I possessed of making a fire, before it occurred to me that I had no flesh to cook. I then turned back, and with my knife cut off the hind-quarter of the sloth, being resolved to try the quality of the flesh.

Having collected a small heap of the dried rotten wood, to use as tinder, I succeeded in making a fire outside my hut, where I broiled some pieces of the sloth's flesh, and from it made a tolerable meal, though it was not so good as beef or mutton.

Whenever I subsequently met with the sloth, he always excited my pity, and I forbore from doing such a helpless creature any injury. The natives say that by his piteous moans he will make the heart of a tiger relent, and turn away from him. The sloth is a solitary animal; he has no companion to cheer him, but lies on the branches of trees almost stationary, having no means of defence or escape, if you intend him any harm; his looks, his gestures, and his cries declare it; therefore do not kill him. He subsists wholly on the leaves of trees, and does not quit one branch till there is nothing left for him to eat, and he then moves evidently with much pain to himself. He preys on no living animal, and is deficient and deformed, when compared with other animals, though in some other respects he is compensated in the composition of his frame. His feet are without soles, nor can he move his toes separately; he therefore cannot walk, but hooks himself along by means of the claws which are at the extremity of the fore-feet. He has no cutting teeth; he has four stomachs, and yet wants the long intestinal canals of ruminating animals. His hair lies flat on his body, like long grass withered by the frost. He has six more ribs than the elephant, namely, forty-six, the latter having only forty; his legs strike the eye as being too short, and as if joined to the body with the loss of a joint. On the whole, as a quadruped, the sloth is of the lowest degree. He never quits a tree until all the leaves are eaten.

The day after I had made a meal from the sloth, I shot my arrow through the head of a horned screamer, which brought him within my grasp; this was a great feat for me to accomplish, the screamer being a majestic bird, as large as a turkey-cock, having on the head a long slender horn, each wing being armed with a sharp, strong spur, of an inch long. I had seated myself behind a tree, where I had been, for several hours, watching the movements of the ants that build their nests on those trees, when the bird came within a few yards of me. This incident practically exemplified to me that, like other animals that seek for prey, I must use patience, and be wary in my movements. It taught me to reflect and to know that it was not rambling over much space that would ensure success, and that every spot in the world was available, either for the study of the things of creation or for procuring food.

It is a great error some fall into when they imagine that travelling over much ground will give knowledge; those who observe and reflect may gain more information when examining a puddle of water, than the careless will in traversing the globe.

Of the insect tribe, the ants early attracted my attention, and I spent much time in watching their movements; indeed, from the first hour I turned my thoughts to the study of insects, I never afterwards

The ants

spent a dull one. The tree ants' nests are about five times as large as those made by rooks, from which they have covered ways to the ground; these ways I frequently broke down, but as often as I did so, they were quickly under repair, a body of labouring ants being immediately summoned for that purpose. Ants have the means of communicating with each other in a very rapid manner. I am of opinion that the antennæ are the medium through which they receive and convey orders to each other.

I have seen a troop of ants a mile long, each one carrying in its mouth a round leaf about the size of a sixpence, which appeared to have been trimmed round to the shape. Wasps do the same; and after twisting them up in the shape of a horn, deposit their eggs in them. When on their march, or engaged at work, nothing deters them from progressing; they seem to have no fear either of injury or death. I have broken their line at different points, and killed thousands of them; the others go over the same ground, as if perfectly unconscious of danger, while a body of them are instantly detached to remove the dead, and clear the way. It matters not how often the experiment is repeated, or what number are slain, others come on as if their forces were unlimited. It would seem that they live under an absolute monarchy, and dare not disobey orders. When accompanying them on a march, I have seen a messenger arrive from the opposite direction to that they were going, and the whole line, as I have said, of sometimes a mile long, simultaneously brought to a halt. One of the ants belonging to the body went forward, and applied its antennæ to those of the messenger, after which, the latter returned the way he came, and the main body immediately altered its course of march.

At one time, I fell in with an unusually large body of these persevering labourers, and being resolved, if possible, to stop them, I formed a ditch in their way, and filled it with water; while the ditch was being made, they continued their course up and down the ridges of the loose earth, as if nothing had happened, although hundreds were every instant buried. When, however, the water was turned into the channel, there was a momentary halt; but as the ant must never be idle, it was but for an instant, to receive orders to take the margin of the earth, and travel round the head of the channel. How the nature of the disaster they had met with was made known, so as to stop the whole body simultaneously, may be difficult to ascertain; but at the moment of making these experiments I have distinctly seen the antennæ of one ant strike the tail of the one immediately before it, and the same movement repeated by all the others in rapid succession as far as my observation extended.

Wasps

All insects that live in communities are, I should imagine, in possession of language. One day I saw a wasp fly into my hut, and recollecting that I had a small collection of honey wrapped in some plantain leaves, I went to close the shutter as it again flew out; but observing the wasp immediately fly towards another of his species, and then to a second and a third, and those instantly fly off in opposite directions, I said to myself, the discovery of my depot of honey is being advertised throughout the community of wasps. Thinking I would disappoint the depredators, before I left home I was very careful in fastening the entrance, and stuffing every crevice up with long grass. About a hundred yards from my hut I met a swarm of wasps, which induced me to return and ascertain whether my conjectures were confirmed; and there I found an immense number seeking an entrance, evidently with a view of plundering me of my honey. It was not long ere they found admission through some of the apertures in the roof. Knowing that my honey must go,—for a swarm of wasps is not to be molested with impunity,—I turned away to pursue my walk with the reflection that they only took what they could get, and suited their appetites, the business of my own every-day life.

Both in society and in the forest it is wise at all times to avoid being an aggressor. The stings of mankind, and of insects, are most frequently the result of our own imprudence. In the forest I have daily been surrounded with myriads of wasps and large stinging bees, and never received an injury but when I was committing depredations on their store.

But of all plunderers in nature, the ant exceeds the whole. I had become acquainted with five species of bees in my immediate neighbourhood, not one of which could secure their combs from the voracious appetites of the ant. They came in such numbers, as sometimes, in my view, to threaten the undermining of the forest; and were to be seen of all sizes and colour. One sort is so large, that the natives make a considerable article of food of them when fried.

The termites, or white ants, are very destructive; neither fruit, flowers of plants, or food of any kind, escapes them. When they appear in the dwellings of man, they will undermine a house in a few hours, if the wood of which it is built suits their taste.

Voracity of the ants

The whole of the ant tribes are, however, essentially carnivorous, and are useful in repressing a too rapid increase amongst reptiles much larger than themselves; and I have often thought, when watching their movements, and observing that there is nothing, from the smallest winged insect to the carcase of a bullock, that comes to the ground, but they instantly assemble in millions to devour it, that they were intended by nature to prevent the corruption of the air from

the decay and putrefaction of animal matter. If an enormous spider accidentally falls to the ground, they give it no time to recover itself; thousands are instantly on it; and although the spider, in its struggles to escape, will kill and crush numbers, still others continue to crawl up his legs and thighs, and there hang on in quietness, till their victim is exhausted by fatigue, when a few seconds serve to remove all traces of its heretofore existence. As I grew older, and acquired more experience in hunting for my food, I frequently killed large animals, of whose flesh I could only eat as much as served me for a meal, before the remainder would be spoiled by the heat of the weather: this the ants generally cleared away.

At length I learned to go out by moonlight, to kill deer and the peccari,—a time that they like to browse, and may be approached with more ease. I generally dragged the remains of a carcase I did not want in the way of the ants, and watched them at their feast. A few hours served to leave the bones of the largest animal perfectly clean, and as a skeleton for study, fit for an exhibition.

When the termites, or white ant, is seen in the neighbourhood of man, the antipathies of the species are rendered available. As soon as they are observed, sugar is strewed in such a direction as to lead the brown or black ants to the spot, who, it is known, will immediately attack and put the white party to the rout, much to the amusement of the negroes, who cheer on the blacks to kill the whites. I have often awoke with my body covered with ants, when I generally ran to the nearest water, and plunging into it, freed myself from them; though I never could discover for what purpose they spread themselves over my frame, unless it were in expectation of my becoming a corpse. When, however, I did rouse myself, they seldom exhibited much alacrity in acknowledging their error by making a speedy retreat.

CHAPTER IV.

AN ADVENTURE WITH A BEAR—AN EXTRAORDINARY ECHO—I AM ATTACKED WITH A FEVER, AND SUBSEQUENTLY DRIVEN FROM MY HUT.

"Give me, indulgent gods—with mind serene,
And guiltless heart—to range the sylvan scene;
No splendid poverty, no smiling care,
No well-bred hate, or servile grandeur there."

I had now become a sportsman—a Nimrod—my chief delight being found in the use of my bow and arrows. Thus armed, I ranged the forest, or laid in covert, to destroy any game which might come in my way. My propensity for killing, however, soon led me into a scrape, the escape from which nearly cost me my life; yet the lesson was thrown away on me, for it in no way abated my desire to shoot and eat the flesh of birds.

Early one morning I had taken my station behind a large tree, from which I discharged an arrow at a mocking-bird. No sooner had the arrow quitted the string, than I descried a bear, feeding on ants' nests, and that in a direct line between myself and the bird shot at. The arrow passed close by his ear; it might have struck him: be this as it may, the bear instantly began to descend the tree, showing evident signs of his intention to revenge the insult.

Not being disposed to confront such an enemy in an angry mood, I instantly took to my heels; but had not proceeded far, before the shaggy monster was near overtaking me. In this extremity I ascended a tree, confident of being as good a climber as Bruin was. I had, however, scarcely reached the lowest extending branch, before the enraged beast was close on me. Fortunately, I had in my flight retained possession of my stick; and as the bear had no means of supporting himself but by clinging to the trunk of the tree with his claws, I applied my staff with so much vigour to his feet, that he was constrained to drop to the ground, whereupon his rage was great. He then took a turn or two round the base of the tree to cool himself, gave a growl, and seated himself under it, fixing his eyes on me. In this position the disappointed monster remained, on his hind-quarters, seven hours, watching my movements; till at length, growing weary of his presence, and having read somewhere of the effect of the human voice, I cried out loudly, mentioning several names, as if calling for assistance. When speaking of the storm, I said that the thunder rolled with ten thousand voices. The cause, however, of its multiplied tones, was reserved for this adventure to make known. As I called out, I was utterly astonished to hear my own words repeated several times in succession;—the bear started on his feet; and after looking round, as if in fear of an attack, took himself off at his utmost speed.

Assured that I had heard human voices, I became more agitated

An alarming echo

than when in company with the bear. It may appear anomalous; it is nevertheless true, that the prospect, or thought, of meeting with human beings in these wilds, always elicited agitation, or, more properly, terror.

The joy that hope brought of my emancipation was always mixed with an alloy of indefinable dread of some coming evil. I remained in the tree about an hour after the bear had departed, continuing to amuse myself with the exercise of the voice, and listening to the repetitions of its sounds. At length, when assured that the bear did not contemplate a renewal of the attack, I descended from the tree, and again raised my voice, and was again surprised to find that I had no response. This struck me as very mysterious; and instead of seeking for natural causes of the phenomena, I abandoned myself to superstitious fears, and persuaded myself that I was on enchanted ground, while my mind indulged in endless chimeras. Every effect is preceded by a cause, was a sentence I had often heard my father repeat; and as it recurred to my memory, I again ascended the tree, and repeated the experiments, alternately, for some time, on the ground and in the tree. The result was always the same, the voice being reverberated when in the tree, and not so when on the ground. Again and again. I turned the matter over in the mind, and could come to no other conclusion than that there were persons somewhere in the neighbourhood, who could hear me from the tree, but were too far off to hear my voice when surrounded with the underwood on the ground. I now thought it my duty to find out the persons from whom I supposed the sounds came, and was actually preparing to start in search of them, when it suddenly flashed on my mind that I had heard a similar phenomenon under a bridge near my own native village, which the boys called an echo; yet as that gave only one response, or echo, I was still perplexed to make out a cause for hearing so many. This phenomenon, however, soon became a considerable source of amusement to me, and by shifting my positions I found several series of echoes: in some places the reverberations were six and sevenfold, and in others they were so numerous as to run into indistinctness. For a considerable time subsequently it was my wont, on a Sunday, to ascend a tree after my devotions, and sing a line or two, or a verse of a psalm which I knew, when the effect was something like a number of voices in a place of worship, though the ear could not compass the innumerable combination of reverberations. When the echo was peculiarly distinct and near, and then taken up and repeated at a distance, it conveyed to my imagination the idea of aerial spirits answering each other. It was thus that the astonishing multiplied reverberations of the thunder in this region were accounted for—namely, the transmission of its sound from point to point.

The honey-bear

I saw no more of the ant-bear; but the honey-bear, which was more common, and a fellow-depredator of the bees' nests with myself, often crossed my path; and it required the exercise of much ingenuity and caution to successfully compete with him.

In all countries where the collection of honey is made a profit, various devices have been resorted to for deterring or entrapping the rugged depredators. To enumerate them all would be a digression from my narrative. The following are, however, among other successful modes of dealing with bears who have a taste for honey.

The trees in which the bees are found the inhabitants lop close to the trunk, up to the home of the bees, so that the bear has nothing but the main trunk to assist him in climbing. These trees they sometimes stick with spikes, and blades of knives, with the points upwards. These, however, offer but small impediments to the bear in ascending the tree, but as he cannot descend with his head foremost, he is compelled to slide down, when the points are not so easily avoided, generally lacerating him in such a manner as to deter him from making any future attempt to rob hives situated in trees.

The experienced bear will, however, sometimes, as he ascends the tree, break off the points, and secure himself a safe retreat. Entrapping them is, therefore, a more successful practice.

In lopping the tree the peasants are careful to leave a branch that extends out from the trunk above the hole where the bees have constructed their hive. From such a branch they suspend, with four ropes, a flat board, forming one scale of a pair, such as are commonly used in open markets; when this is hung up it hangs pendant at a distance from the trunk of the tree. When, however, it is prepared as a trap, it is brought close to the body of the tree by means of a bark rope, upon which it is fastened over the entrance of the hive.

The bear having climbed the tree, with difficulty maintains himself with his claws while he commits the depredation, and is, therefore, glad to find a seat so conveniently placed for him to sit on; but seeing the entrance of the hole nearly covered with the bark-rope, he immediately commences tearing it away, and, in so doing, liberates himself from the tree, and becomes suspended in the air. In this situation he sits contemplating the alternatives of remaining to be killed when discovered, or venturing a leap to the ground; both, however, lead to the same end, as stakes are placed to receive him on their points, should he hazard a leap.

In cold countries, it is by no means uncommon for bears to attack human beings; but in forests, within the tropics, where redundant nature pours out her horn of plenty, and food is found in abundance throughout the year, man, if he is not himself quarrelsomely disposed, may

pass without molestation. Both the ant and the honey-hear occasionally visited my hut, having frequently detected them sniffing round my barricade; but when I made my appearance, either on the roof, or in returning from a ramble, they always walked away without manifesting decided hostile intentions.

The rains of Guiana

I had now passed ten months in the forest, and had learned to dispense with shoes, stockings, linen, and, indeed, with every kind of covering for the body, excepting a wrapper for the loins, which I contrived to make out of the remaining rags collected from the worn-out habiliments I possessed when lost to my family. I had also combated with a wet season, and this season was now again approaching, that is, January and February, when the rains fall heavily; indeed, rain is no proper term for a fall of water in a Guiana forest. Rain conveys the idea of water falling in drops; there, the water comes bodily upon the earth in wide sheets. And before they come, no notice is given; they send no *avant courier* of a few scattered drops to warn you of what is to follow; they are their own messengers. In the intervals between every such fall, the fervid sun resumes its influence, operating with such intensity as to effectually envelope all things in hot steam. A continuation of rain and excessive heat produces exuberant vegetation; and these in turn, by the exhalations of its ripeness and corruption, furnish back to the atmosphere an accumulating fund of distempering miasma, or cause of malignant fever.

When the destructive effects of these influences are considered, in a locality amongst the rankest productions of nature, and where in a thousand places the water is pent up and sluggish, —prolific producers of reptiles and noisome vapours—nothing but a miracle, through the interposition of Providence, could have preserved me in health so long. But my day of sickness was not to be altogether remitted, it was only postponed, and then inflicted in kindness, to teach me prudence, and the necessity there was for adopting proper precautions against evil results.

My hut, notwithstanding the complacency with which I had selected the site, was, after all, situated in the very worst place I could have found in the entire forest. The former rainy season had inundated the morass that lay in the rear of my dwelling, and had, indeed, threatened me with submersion; yet I continued to remain there, as if nothing of danger had occurred, and the air, impregnated with the fermentations of collected vegetation for ages, was as healthful as that on hilly lands. It is the province of experience to calculate or anticipate results; how then could one so young as I was know that too frequently the beauty which redundant nature presents to the eye, is but an indication of its treachery to the constitution.

I had not then reflected on the condition on which mortals receive life, namely, that of being associated with an inseparable companion called care; a companion which never quits their side till they resign up their souls.

In my isolated situation, it was natural I should seek to indulge the sentiment of friendship with such companions as the locality afforded. The interior of my hut was therefore a kind of aviary; and it was my practice every morning to devote a couple of hours to teaching, and in the amusement of feeding my companions; after which, I indulged, by turns, the most docile with a walk into the interior of the wooded parts of the forest. A land-tortoise had become so tame, that when, in my rambles, I sat down to rest, I allowed him to seek his own food in the immediate neighbourhood, and that without any fear of his wandering far, even if unwatched.

The rainy season had commenced about three weeks, when one morning I arose with an intense headache, excessive thirst, and a burning skin. I hastened to the stream, drank copiously of cold water, bathed for upwards of an hour, and then returned with my usual supply of water, conveyed in a clay vessel, which I had baked in the sun. This, as were similar vessels, was chiefly for the use of my family of birds, &c.

I remember perfectly well, the following morning, that, as was my custom, I caressed the whole family; and, to avoid jealous bickerings, to which some were prone, I bestowed on each an equal portion of attention; and that subsequently I took up a tortoise and a mocking-bird for my companions during a walk. I also remember, that as I reached the aperture under the roof, the rays of the sun affected my sight in a peculiar manner, and that a giddy sensation came over me; but from that moment I lost all remembrance of what followed, being unconscious of passing circumstances; until I found myself reduced in flesh, and so weak and feeble, as to be incapable of rising from the floor of the hut where I was lying. Under the opening, from whence I must have fallen, lay a dead tortoise, the shell being crushed. The sticks of which my aviary was composed were all torn asunder, and the broken fragments strewed about the place. Several of my favourite birds, with their necks wrung, were on the ground; the others were absent. The vessel in which I had brought the water was broken into pieces, and many parts of the hut exhibited proofs of an attempt having been made to pull up the stakes of which it was formed. These were all evidences that I had fallen down when attempting to leave the hut, probably from giddiness or vertigo; that a violent fever had supervened, and in that condition I had lost my reason, and the consequent command of my actions—whence the devastation around me, and the debilitated state in which I found the body when reason returned. Soon after consciousness had made me sensible of my condition, I fell asleep, in which I was carried into all kinds of illusory imaginations. Among other fantasies, I dreamed that I was on the sea—walking—yet bounded on either side with rows of myrtles in full blossom, intermixed with jessamines; and that thousands of Cupids and Fauns

preceded me, strewing flowers in my way. These figures, carrying baskets, were followed by Zephyrs, which supplied the flowers. I was in a state of enchantment with the scene, yet every moment suffered from the dread of sinking into the depths of the sea, until I thought the water would no longer support me, when I awoke in the fright of being drowned.

The power of prayer

The fever had entirely left me, and I was in a measure refreshed by the sleep I had had. I was now reflecting on the phenomena of dreams, and the length of time the impressions they leave remain on the mind—for I still heard the action of the water—when, after several efforts to disengage myself from the illusion, as I thought, I was roused from imaginings to a sense of the reality of what I heard. Plash, plash, went the water against the exterior of my hut; and these sounds were continuous and audible, so much so as to be unmistakable. Still I was incapable of reaching the exterior to see what was the cause. My state of alarm and agitation may therefore be better conceived than described. Too feeble to use my limbs, I had no resource but in prayer. Most sincerely did I offer the Supreme Being thanks for having preserved me through my illness. I then prayed, that after such a miraculous dispensation of Divine goodness, I might not be left to perish in my helplessness. I believe that no one ever prayed from the heart without acquiring some additional knowledge or strength of purpose. May not this be because prayer is both an inquiry of the intellect and of the affections; the one seeking for the truth, and the other for what is good? Besides, pure devotion is thought, which improves, at least, and helps the judgment.

After some time spent in this manner, I felt the perturbation of my mind much abated, and in a frame to contemplate steadily surrounding circumstances, and consider how they might be best dealt with. A short time since, and I had looked on death as inevitable, either by drowning or starvation; now, I reflected, that if the water had been very high, it must have, ere this, penetrated my frail creation; and, if very powerful, it would have swept the whole away without giving me any notice whatever. It also occurred to me that I ought to have some dozen or two of cocoa-nuts and a store of honey within my reach, as I lay on the floor.

As I had not previously, on any occasion, made a store, I could not but see the hand of Providence directing me to prepare for my present extremity. These supplies were placed in a hole which I had made in the ground for their reception, being covered with a piece of bark, and a stone to keep it in its place. Fortunately, I had only to drag myself a few yards, and take the nourishment I so much needed; although it was not calves'-foot jelly and port wine, yet, in my then weak state, it proved a very gratifying refreshment.

It is not possible for me to make any rational estimate of the length of time I was under the influence of the fever, or of the period employed in sleeping during my recovery. It is probable that it had but a short, though a violent career; but the present exigencies were too pressing to admit of much time being expended over the past. Plash, plash, continued the water against the hut, and the floor began to exhibit signs of its entrance into the interior. My situation was now one of real peril. I made an effort to raise myself up to the opening through which I mast pass to escape, but as I had first to mount a stool formed of pieces of bark, and then to raise my body several feet with my arms, before my head could reach the aperture, I found my strength insufficient for the task. My distress was considerably augmented by the impossibility of my taking any more rest in a reclining position, as the water was rapidly covering the floor, and the probability there was of the structure giving way on a sudden, and submerging me in an instant of time. I seated myself on the before-mentioned stool, with my feet and legs stretched over a bird-coop that had not been entirely broken up.

Singular to relate, in this position I fell into a profound sleep, with my back against the lining of the hut; the extreme of distress, contemplated for a length of time, I believe has a tendency to produce this effect.

Perils of water

I had fallen asleep as the moon went down, about an hour after midnight; it was daylight when I awoke; the first object that caught my attention being the staff, on which were the notches that formed my calendar; this was floating on the water, now a foot or more in depth. It is said drowning men catch at straws; the idea immediately came across my mind that, with the support of the stick, I should be enabled to effect my escape. I succeeded; and after wading about fifty yards up to my knees in water, reached a dry spot of land, on which my first act was to kneel, and offer up prayers of gratitude for my deliverance. As a period of unconsciousness had occasioned a breach in my calendar, and the true Sabbath was lost to me, I made the day of my deliverance a Sunday, from which hereafter to reckon the days of the week.

Attenuated in frame, with weak limbs, but possessing a healthy stomach, I dragged myself to a half-natural cave, at a short distance, which I had previously cleared out as a place where I might find shelter from the heavy rains, and where I could lie in wait to kill a head of game without the fatigue of hunting for it. In this retreat I lived for two days, solely on cocoa-nuts and honey; the third, I caught an armadillo, which I dressed for dinner, and then resumed the practice of taking a dessert in the afternoon, having abundance of fruit at my command.

It is one of the miseries inseparable from the condition of man, that good and evil are presented under different forms; misery often appearing to us under the mask of happiness, and prosperity under the image of misfortune, teaching us to leave all in the hands of Him who knows best what is good for his creatures.

I had no reason to complain, having within my reach blossoms, green and ripe fruit, all on the same trees, and those in abundance throughout the year, new soil for their growth being constantly formed by the exuviæ of the forest, which here keeps her sabbath in silence. But even here, in the midst of plenty, man must not be idle. "The crab," say the negroes, "that does not leave his hole, never gets fat." As my strength returned, my wants increased; and as animal food appeared to be needed for the renovation of the frame, I was constantly engaged in the pursuit of it; while, what leisure time I possessed became irksome, from the want of a domestic establishment such as I had formed in the hut.

The first night in the cave

Although my specimen of sylvan architecture was at no time more than half submerged in water, and that without being broken up, I abandoned it as being unsafe as a residence. Finding myself not only more secure from the heavy rains, but much more cool in the cave, I now began to fortify its entrance, to guard against night intrusions. In effecting this object, the only one I kept in view while at work, I fell into the error of neglecting to provide for the admission of sufficient air to sustain life. The first night I passed in the cave, after completing my barricade of bark, which served the purpose of planks of deal, I could get no rest, turning and rolling about with an uneasiness I could in no way account for, till the morning came, when the admission of air made me sensible of breathing with more freedom, and at once explained the cause of my previous uneasiness. The next day was spent in cutting holes through the bark fence, to remedy so serious an evil as the want of air.

Accustomed as I had been to the intimate society of birds and other animals, their loss was too severely felt for me to remain long without them; I therefore commenced the construction of a new aviary on the outside of the cave, with a space beneath, to confine any of the small kind of animals which might fall into my hands. One surviving tortoise from the hut I had already brought into the cave. It was not long before the entrance to my retreat somewhat resembled the display made by a metropolitan dealer in animals, on the pavement before the steps which lead to his lodgings in the cellar. Contentment is in no station the lot of mankind. Although my new residence had many advantages, nothing could compensate me for the loss of the security in which I had every morning obtained a survey of the movements of the inhabitants of the forest from the roof of the hut. I did not, however, indulge in idle regrets, continuing to work on in constructing snares and traps, to people my new dwelling-place; and when it happened that I wounded a bird or animal, I derived a peculiar pleasure in attending to it till its recovery was effected. When I had again collected a tolerable number of friends, and formed some new attachments, a catastrophe happened which occasioned me more regrets than any circumstance which had previously befallen me in the woods.

Slaughter of the pet birds

Early in the day I had left my family all safe and well; they were of course confined, but plenty of air and light was admitted through the bars into their dwellings. I had the satisfaction of thinking they were happy, even in their captivity; they were, however, all carried off at one fell swoop, and I returned only to witness the desolation of the scene. There is a small animal of the weasel species, having the bump of destructiveness so strongly developed, that it seeks the destruction of all other animals that cannot defend themselves from its attacks; it is called the crabbodaga. One of these—or there may have been an accomplice in the murderous business—crept between the bars of the cage, and killed every bird and animal I possessed, excepting a mocking-bird I happened to have out with me.

None but those who have reared birds from the callow state and have given them a place in their affections, can appreciate my distress at this disaster. The birds had been my companions—had dined, some of them, at the same table every day, and over the dessert had amused me with their conversation, or delighted me with their music. Reflecting on this domestic tragedy, I resolved to convert the entire of the abandoned hut into one large aviary, that is, as soon as the dry season had entirely freed the place from water.

I had very little difficulty in trimming sticks, and binding them together for fences, to confine the birds; but it was not so easy to repair the loss of attached friends, who had reposed their confidence in me, or to teach strangers an agreeable method of conversation upon a given signal. I could now no longer give dinner-parties at home; I therefore intruded on the entertainments given by others, for I did not enjoy my meals alone. I did not often take a meal with gregarious birds—those who moved in flocks,—yet many of these were excellent companions in private; in a body they were generally too noisy and fickle in flight to be depended on, except in the morning or evening.

The birds usually called social, were my favourites; these are such as live in pairs, but assemble in parties at certain hours of the day to dine on the same tree, sing in concert for an

hour, and then part as they came, each attended by its mate. At many of these entertainments I was permitted to remain, without causing any surprise or confusion; but then I behaved with proper decorum, and above all, did not forget the manners and habits of those I visited.

Observing the monkeys to be very fond of the seeds that grew on a tree called the *vanilla*, the Spanish name for scabbard, which the seeds of the plant resemble, I one day presumed to join one of their parties at meal time, and climbed a tree for that purpose, but was received so very uncourteously, that I gave them up as incorrigible boors. That they have no soul for music I have had frequent proofs while listening to the song of the thrush in the breeding season; a period when these birds select an elevated spot, generally the same every day, and pour forth strains of peculiar melody. These songs the monkeys not only disregard, but continually interrupt with their monotonous howls.

Habits of birds

The habits of birds are very peculiar, and distinctively marked; the thrush sings to its mate, delighted with the prospect of rearing up a new progeny; the nightingale, on the contrary, only ceases to sing when his mate arrives to join him; being migrating birds, the male precedes the female in making its passage from one country to another, and pours forth his notes only while waiting for the arrival of the female.

If this bird is caught and caged before he is joined by his mate, he will continue to sing in confinement, if afterwards, he will be mute. Nothing is more remarkable in birds, or has perhaps been less noticed, than their affection for each other, and for callow birds in general. The cries from any one nest of birds will set all the old ones within hearing into a state of extreme agitation, all flying up and down anxious to inquire what is the matter, and what assistance they can offer. He who walks through the woods, and can imitate the cries of young birds, may at all times be certain of collecting old ones around him, that is, in the breeding season.

The cry of young birds in the nest is in the forest what the cry of fire or murder is in a city; it alarms all the neighbourhood; and the knowledge of an enemy to their young being in the vicinity of their homes, is to them much the same as going to bed next door to an incendiary.

I have seen a blue jay—a very noisy and chattering bird—discover an owl sitting in his hiding-place, and immediately summon a flock of his feathered fraternity to his assistance. These surrounded the winking *solitaire*, and opened a fire of abuse on him that might at a distance be mistaken for a general disturbance in Billingsgate Market. The owl opened and then shut his eyes, as if at first unconscious of the meaning of the attack, and asking, "Can it be me you mean?" He, however, was soon made sensible that he would not be suffered to remain within their jurisdiction; and off he went, followed by a mob of birds, who hunted him out of the bounds of their district. Clamorous as the jay is against the owl for eating young birds, he himself I have detected in tearing the callow young out of the eggs belonging to other birds; yet he never fails to unite with the other feathered inhabitants of the wood at the cry of danger.

The tender assiduities of birds in their attachments is no less remarkable than their courage in defence of their mates and young ones. The male, solicitous to please, uses the tenderest expressions, as evinced by his manner; sits by his mate as closely as he can; caresses her with a thousand endearing movements of the body and head: sings to her his most enchanting warblings; and, as they are seated together, if he espies an insect more agreeable to her taste than another, he takes it up, flies to her with it, spreads his wings over her, and genteelly puts it into her mouth. And if a rival or an enemy appear, his courage in attack soon proves the ardour of his love.

The mocking-bird and snake

During incubation, the female is no less the object of his solicitude; as birds have many enemies, the males feel that it is their duty to watch over and protect their mates and young ones. I had every waking hour opportunities of witnessing their courage, frequently seeing very small birds attack the black snake, darting at its head, and pecking the eyes till they either killed or drove away that enemy to their brood. When these contests became doubtful, the females would leave their nests, and hasten to the scene of action to render their mates assistance.

The mocking-bird seldom fails to kill the snake single-handed, instantly afterwards mounting the bush, to pour forth a torrent of song in token of victory. These birds mount and descend as their song swells or dies away; at times darting up with the celerity of an arrow, as if to recover or recall the last strain of expiring melody. While the mocking-bird thus exerts himself, a bystander, destitute of sight, would suppose that the whole of the feathered tribes had assembled to vie with each other in singing and in deceiving the sportsman, by imitating the birds of which he was in pursuit. Their talent at imitation is so extraordinary, that they can call the mates of almost every other bird around them at pleasure.

The fascinating power ascribed to the black snake is an error. When a snake is discovered in the vicinity of a nest, the male bird mounts a spray, and in great agitation flutters his wings in a threatening manner, till an opportunity offers of flying down to the attack. In these encounters

the snake sometimes succeeds in biting the bird, and in injecting its venom, when the effect of the poison is so sudden, as to paralyse the further efforts of the latter; hence has arisen the supposed power of fascination, and the story of birds flying into the snake's jaws. Instances of this nature I have witnessed, and if I had not followed up my observations further, might have fallen into the popular error of supposed fascination: but my experience informs me, that when the bird is said to be spellbound, it is preparing to destroy an enemy, in which encounter it generally comes off victorious.

Birds, as a class, possess as much intelligence, and more courage than any of God's creatures lower in the scale of animals than man. The instincts, or the propensities and precautions of animals, as in birds developed, are as multifarious and as striking, if not more so, as in other animals, not excepting the elephant and dog.

A thrush that I caught in a trap used to catch wasps, and after plucking the wings off to prevent their escape, pressed the abdomen with his bill, to force out the poison of the sting before he swallowed it. I have frequently seen birds seize mice and reptiles, and after examination reject them. In all such cases I have found that the prey thus cast aside was sickly, or infested with lice. The birds seem to reason thus: "If I take this sickly thing to my nest, I shall not only carry my young ones unwholesome food, but shall carry a nuisance to them, also." Another bird I had in my aviary, would carry food that was too hard for his taste to his water, and there let it remain till it was soaked to his palate.

Departure from the cave

Looking over my notched calendar, and transferring it in weeks and months to another stick I was suddenly struck with the length of time I had been shut out of society, and how wonderfully the Almighty had preserved me. It then occurred to me that I had not exerted myself as I ought to have done, to free myself from the intricate mazes of the forest. Then, reflecting on the regular inundations of the morass, I thought it was probable that the waters might come from a river, or the sea; and as they had just then retired, I determined to start off immediately, and pursue the margin to its source. Hitherto, security at night had induced me to linger about favourite spots; I had now surmounted childish fears; still I was sensible of the great risk I should run of sleeping, night after night, in the open air; and this reflection for a time deterred me from carrying out my plan. At length I thought of the gipsies I had seen in the green lanes in England, and then set to work to manufacture a substitute for the covers they use to throw over the hooped sticks at night, with which they were wont to form low booths. This I effected by platting and weaving long dried grass, and when it was completed, I cut some poles of the lacaria; but still doubting my own resolution to break up my establishment, I one day, with a kind of spasmodic effort, liberated all my newly-collected domestic friends and companions, some of which accepted of freedom rather reluctantly. My attachments being thus dissolved, the following morning I commenced my lonely journey, on the second day of which I made a fire near to some shallow water, and was broiling a jay I had killed for my supper, when the earth on which I sat began to move, and instantly afterwards the embers were scattered about. Starting to my feet with alarm, a crocodile about four feet long showed itself as it plunged a few yards further off into a pool of mud and water. The place on which I had lighted my fire, was a part of the swamp, crusted over, probably, by the heat of that day's sun only. Every hour, indeed, now brought me in contact with enemies, and exposed me to privations I had avoided by making a home in one spot. But then I had an object to attain, and I persevered for twenty days, at the end of which I had the mortification to find that I had, like many others in the world, progressed not a step, having travelled in a circle, which brought me to the very threshold of my recent home. My chagrin was so poignant, that I thought the very trees waved in derision at my folly; and the same day I set out in another direction, which proved to be directly south.

Every step I took informed me that I was a trespasser; the scene that I had quitted appeared to have been ceded to me by the inhabitants of the forest, who were willing for me to occupy it without molesting me, or exhibiting any signs of alarm; but, as I moved from place to place, all seemed in arms against me. My insatiable curiosity, too, was everywhere offensive; nothing escaped my prying propensity, and I even regretted that I had suffered the crocodile to escape that I might have intercepted, had I been cool, and have driven to the land for examination; I often, indeed, pushed my inquiries beyond the line of prudence.

An unpleasant nocturnal visitor

One moonlight night I was favoured with a splendid view of the jaguar under the influence of a hungry stomach, and in that state I saw him seize his prey. I had spread my matting at the lower end of a tree that had been torn up by the roots, between which I could creep and hide myself; at the other end the branches extended into a small glade or open space; when about midnight I was awaked by a tremendous roar. Alarmed for my own safety. I crept between the roots of the tree, pulling the covering after me, and in this situation raised my head so as to look along the shaft of the fallen timber, about ten yards from the end of which I could distinctly discern the jaguar, pacing up and down, in a space of not more than thirty yards. His step was quick and hurried, but so light that he appeared not to touch the ground; his swollen and stiffened tail swept the ground, as it moved from side to side. I instantly became anxious to ascertain whether

his eyes were directed towards any particular object, and more especially in the direction where I was hid. I had the satisfaction of seeing their fierce glance furtively cast in every direction but towards me; indeed, I must have been invisible to him through the broken branches and roots, at the distance he was from the tree, and amid the shade that surrounded me.

The spot he had chosen for his nocturnal promenade was, I have no doubt, a deer track, on which he had before in all probability snatched many meals. His impatience evidently increased as his expectations were delayed; he quickened, if possible, his step at every turn, till at length he suddenly paused, and assumed a most exciting attitude. His tail for a moment stood out perfectly horizontal, in a line with his back; making gentle sweeps, as if of immediate expectation. Suddenly he crouched on his belly, still moving his tail very gently; at length the moment arrived: he gave one roar of horrid delight, and the next, a deer was in his jaws, and growling, he seized and dispatched it by twisting the head downwards with his paw. Finally he gave the deer a shake, as if to assure himself that life was extinct, and then, with a fling of the head threw the dead animal across his back, and was lost in the thicket, depriving me of the satisfaction of witnessing his manner of finishing the repast.

Strong in my resolution to arrive if possible at the extremity of the forest, I continued to proceed, as I thought, in the same direction; but I could not travel every day, being compelled sometimes to watch through the night, and being frequently unable, while moving forward, to obtain a sufficiency of nutritious food. When, therefore, I met with a convenient retreat, I stayed and refreshed myself till I acquired strength to undertake new labours.

Some scenes would irresistibly detain me, and if any one express surprise that they should do so when journeying to seek the society of my fellow-creatures, I reply that I did not at any time abandon the hope of success; yet when the uncertainty of my course, without a compass or guide, is considered, I never had a right to be very sanguine in my expectations, use whatever efforts I might. In a journey of such a doubtful nature, oftentimes worn down with fatigue of body and despair of mind, it was natural to linger on and to rest in an oasis longer than in a desert.

In a hot climate, cool retreats have peculiar charms, such as are unappreciable by those who live in cold countries. The mere topographical traveller may measure a lake, or a river, give the height and angle of a projecting rock, describe the rush of falling waters into an estuary, and trace the course of rivers from their rise to their mouth, but he is unable to give the living tints of nature, together with all their form and colour.

Beauties of the forest

Neither the pen nor the pencil can describe the feelings of those who sympathize with nature in her secret homes of grandeur.

When I first entered the forest, the effect of the sublimity of the scene was astonishment, in which the beauties were lost; but as surprise wore off, these beauties, one by one, stood out to view; and operating on the senses, produced pleasure in its highest state of enjoyment.

In scenes where bignonias, passifloras, and a thousand other flowers presented an unceasing display throughout the year, surrounded with birds and insects of surpassing beauty, who, possessed of sympathy of soul, or an ear for the sweet sounds of nature, would not for a time forget mortality and live in imaginary eternal bliss; for the charm of such scenes is only dispelled by awakening to the wants and necessities of the corporeal man.

My existence was of such a nature,—one of alternate enjoyment in communing with lonely and enchanting scenes, and of fears lest I should fall a sacrifice to the dangers that environed my everyday movements. Sometimes I sallied forth to face dangers, and again paused to breathe, and, for a time, escape them.

At length I reached a new scene, consisting of sand-hills, out of which issued springs of water, uniting at a short distance, where they formed a stream, which appeared to wind over an open country. In comparison with my solitude in the woods, this was a cheering change; and recollecting the geographical axiom in my school-books, that all springs and rivers ultimately find their way into the sea, I rejoiced at the chance I had of being extricated from the labyrinth in which I had been so long bewildered.

Following the stream

It is the fate of mortals to see the birth of pleasure only to witness her destruction. Her commencement is always very nearly connected with her end. The instant that gives her birth is generally the same in which she expires. I had not proceeded far before the waters spread themselves over the land, and were lost to the sight. In one or two places their course terminated as if they were cut off with a knife, one edge being visible and the other in obscurity, exhibiting the phenomenon of rivers which suddenly take a subterraneous course, to rise again at another point, leaving the space between perfectly dry. Being now in an open country, I ascertained that the course I had travelled was directly southward, or towards that part of the horizon which was cut by the sun's culminating, or meridian line; and this course I continued to pursue. A

day and a half again brought me to the stream, for, as yet, it was not entitled to be called a river. It now, however, took a direction leading into the wood, among the foliage of which it was lost to the eye. The emancipation from the forest had given me the greatest possible delight, I therefore could not but hesitate before I again entered it; yet it was my only certain source of subsistence in the open country. I suffered both from hunger and thirst. I had, therefore, no alternative but to follow the stream; and on I went, its course winding so much that I began to fear I was traversing another circle. At length, after giving me much wearisome toil, it was lost in an impenetrable thicket of wood. I was now constrained to make a very considerable and extended *détour*, in the hope of again reaching its banks at some merging point. Three days I journeyed round an impervious mass of wood, so closely matted that I could at no point obtain an entrance. At the end of that time, I suddenly lighted upon the spot where I supposed the waters met in one broad reservoir. Various tributary streams flowed into this spot, and continued their meandering course for many miles. I hailed the sight of it with considerable delight, as I had begun to be fearful that I was about to lose sight of its course altogether.

CHAPTER V.

I WITNESS A GRAND CONVULSION IN NATURE, OF WHICH I HAVE A WONDERFUL ESCAPE—AM RESCUED IN THE LAST EXTREMITY, AND ADMITTED INTO A TRIBE OF INDIANS.

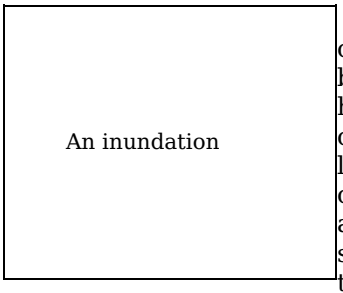
"Look round and see
How Providence bestows on all alike
Sunshine and rain, to bless the fruitful year
Of different nations, all different faiths;
And though by several names and titles worshipp'd,
Heav'n takes the various tribute of their praise.
Since all agree to own, at least to mean,
One best, one greatest, and one Lord of all."

A useful hollow tree

When I arrived at the confluence, as I took it to be, of the streams, it was Saturday night,—that is, according to my new calendar. As I did not think it lawful to travel on the Sunday, I sought for an eligible place of security, where I might rest, and start thoroughly refreshed on the Monday, to solve the problem of the opposing currents. With this view I ascended an isolated blasted tree, where I might seat myself, and find protection from insidious enemies. I was delighted to find that the trunk was hollow, the only entrance being from the top. The tree leaned to the horizon at about an angle of 45 degrees. After carefully examining it, I thought I had satisfied myself that it was not pre-occupied by any obnoxious inhabitant; I then dropped into it, as it were, down a chimney. Crouching, I was out of sight, but when I stood erect I had a view of my own desolate situation.

A species of frogs had just commenced to send forth their peculiar noise, which resembles the sound from a stonemason's yard, when I was annoyed by a number of green frogs, such as dwell in trees; and endeavouring to brush these from my immediate locality, I discovered a number of the *scolopendra*, or centipedes, from five to eight inches in length. Perceiving a hole in the side of the tree, I proceeded to expel these formidable insects with my stick, by which means I disturbed, in the pulpy part of the decayed wood, a nest of *scorpions*. Things in motion soon catch my eye, and in another second I had regained the earth. Indisposed, however, to give up such a comfortable apartment, I cleared out the whole of the interior, and then regained the top of the tree, where I sat for a considerable time in doubt whether I should retire to rest or keep watch through the night. It was a beautiful evening, and the air was strongly impregnated with the aromatic fragrance of the different species of the *rubiaceæ*, the *andiocera*, and *ænothera*. Moonlight is a thoughtful period in all climates. I had almost, while watching my own shadow, forgotten the process of time, when suddenly Cynthia extinguished her lamp. Wearied, both in a mental and physical sense, I again, reckless of consequences, dropped into my cylindrical apartment. How long I slept I cannot tell; I was, however, awaked to scenes as remarkable as they were terrible and rapid in succession. A flood of light was streaming into my skylight, and I became conscious of a rocking sensation. For a moment I concluded that I was again seized with the vertigo in my head. A violent sound of rushing waters soon roused me to a sense of my real danger, and, standing erect, I beheld all the firm earth, on which but a few hours previously I had stood, now covered with water. An immense number of aquatic birds were floating on its surface, while others were springing up to branches of the trees above, to escape from the enormous serpents, and other monsters of the deep, that infest temporary lakes caused by sudden

inundations.

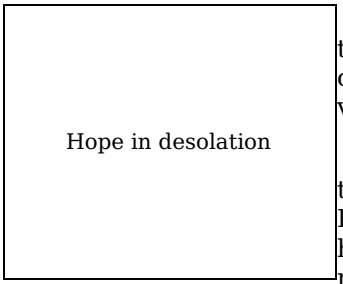


An inundation

As I surveyed the scene the waters were still rising, and the tree on which I sat rose with them in an upright position. Presently it became stationary, and the water began, gradually to cover its trunk. I have said that it was an isolated spot: it was a small area in the midst of the wood, which appeared to have been cleared by the blast of lightning, the nearest tree being fifty yards, or more, distant. Among other things struggling for life was a fawn, which swam beneath me, and was seized by a cayman; while as another monster of the same species, at least thirty feet long, paused to survey me, with my feet then nearly touching the water, I impulsively raised my stick in self-defence, and at this juncture the trunk of the tree suddenly swung round, and by its action nearly threw me off into the jaws of the cayman. The principal part of the roots were torn from the earth, but most providentially the only remaining branch on the tree remained uppermost, which presented me with the opportunity of climbing five or six feet higher. Still, as I could not now turn round with facility, I remained for a full hour, every moment expecting the monster would seize me from behind; for the cayman continued to show himself at intervals, as if certain, in the end, of his prey. At length the roots of the decayed tree parted entirely from the earth, and it was carried forward with the current. Fortunately the branch, which was my only chance of escape, still remained elevated. The cayman did not abandon his intended victim till my bark conveyed me among the standing trees, when I seized the opportunity of climbing up one of considerable height. Up to this period all other dangers had been merged in the immediate dread of the monster of the deep, but I was now at liberty to take a more extended view of the scene, from a fixed position, and I found myself in the midst of congregated wild beasts and powerful reptiles.

In the next tree to the one I occupied was an ant-bear, and a little farther off I could discern several others. Monkeys and apes were swinging and chattering over my head in large numbers; serpents, from five to thirty feet long, were crawling on the branches and round the trunks of trees, to escape from the flood; tiger-cats, beautifully striped, were springing from branch to branch of the green and purple-heart trees, which here grew to the height of seventy feet; lizards were seen in such numbers as in many places literally to cover the branches of the trees. All the birds were sending forth sounds of dissonance, as if stricken with terror; while the shrill voice of the bird called the pi-pi-yo roused me to the consciousness that the hour of noon had arrived.

The lofty *panax*, *Bignonia*, *copaiva*, rising to a hundred feet in height, were peopled with living things, all in apparent consternation at the sudden changes of the scene. It was a grand, though an awful sight for a human being to behold. Animals of various natures, habits, and antipathies, were all crowded together in one common place of refuge, shaken by the wind, and dreading contact with each other, as the violent rushing of the waters bore on their surface numberless proofs of the havoc made, and still threatening to sweep away and swallow up every vestige of animal and vegetable creation.



Hope in desolation

But let the soul be set on the highest mount of distress, and view the most spacious prospect of misery, if the eye be turned towards God comfort may be found beyond the horizon, when human strength is vain.

I lifted up my voice in the wilderness, and lo! God was there, and I took courage, exclaiming, "The Almighty is the architect of all I see, His power stretches over the whole earth and the empty space; He hangs the earth and all the ethereal globes upon nothing; and is He not able to save me?" "I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness," saith the Lord. "The hand which fixes the stars and guides the planets in their courses is stretched out to preserve His children."

With these reflections did I trust in my position, and bid my soul to take courage and rely on divine succour. Fortunately, I had the remains of a cooked bird in my wallet, which always hung at my back; and *murucuja*, fruit of one of the passion-flowers, was within my reach, which I gathered and ate. The fish also forsook their ordinary food, for I could plainly see them feeding on the fruit and berries of shrubs through which they swam.

At length night overtook me, and the moon, I thought, rose with a more speaking yet angry countenance than usual, frowning blood-coloured rays on the surface of the water and through the foliage of the wood, still rendering my fellow-lodgers immediately around me visible, while the vampire and other species of bats flitted wildly round, like spirits of the air; and occasional splashings beneath indicated that the larger tyrants of the flood were making prey of the weaker inhabitants, or the latter were exerting themselves to escape from the jaws of the former.

The terrestrial animals seemed, for the most part, in providing for their own safety, to have suspended all operations of warfare, the scene above the flood in the evening wearing much the same appearance as throughout the day, excepting that the reptiles were not so numerous, the serpents and lizards having found hiding-places in the holes of the trees or under thick foliage. After a few hours the moon went down and left me

"In the populous solitude of bees and birds,

And fairy-form'd and many-colour'd things."

It was now that, like Job, I had to "gird up my loins like a man;" for, as darkness shrouded me, my thoughts naturally reverted to the bear in the next tree; I could not but speculate on his movements, and the probability of his descending and swimming to invade my territory. Impressed with this fear, the master one of the hour, I took up a position to command the trunk of the tree, where, armed with my stick, I might oppose him to an advantage.

A night on the water

It would be futile were I to attempt to describe my sensations during the night. Could words be found expressive enough for the purpose, they should have been penned at the instant they were felt; feelings under such extraordinary circumstances cannot be recalled, or appreciated only at the time they were excited. Words, in description, stand for general ideas in Nature's chart; ten thousand sensations and forms enter of themselves into the sanctuary of the mind. I can only say that I spent the night in prayer for the coming morn. It, however, passed without involving me in any encounter. "Now, men see not the bright light which is in the clouds; but the wind passeth and cleareth them away."

I thought it was an interminable night, and long before morning dawned, as the first glimmer of light tinged the eastern horizon, I strained my eyes to assure myself of its actual approach; yet what hope could it bring me?—none, in prospect; notwithstanding which, latent hope was not wholly extinct. A vague idea possessed me that I might find some floating tree to carry me to the nearest shore. At length, indolently, as I thought, the morning did appear, rendering surrounding objects visible. The bear was still in the tree, coiled up like a cat, in a forked branch, apparently asleep. His bearship had not even the politeness to pass the compliment of the day by noticing me; and noon again arrived, bringing with it utter despair. For some time I had been watching a log of timber, in the hope that it would float within my reach, when I distinctly heard the sound of human voices. My heart leaped up with joy; and the coincidence of the appearance of a rainbow at the same instant, operated like a reprieve to a malefactor in the hands of the executioner.

I was so much elated, that I actually should have neglected to have called out for assistance, had not the same voices again addressed my ear more distinctly, when I used my vocal powers with all my might; but I had no response, and my heart was again, sinking within me, when I observed a canoe approaching. It contained two Indians; one was using the paddle, the other directing his attention to the spot from whence my voice proceeded. A few seconds brought them under the tree, and an invitation, by signs, for me to descend, and accept of my emancipation from their hands.

The charms of solitude

Notwithstanding all the terrors and privations of my wild life, there was a charm in it which is inexplicable; and I paused ere I parted with it. Men whose whole life has been identified with civilization may not understand this feeling; but long association with nature in her own scenes of unlimited grandeur and profuse bounty, cannot be broken off without a struggle. In return for all the blessings nature bestows on her children of the woods, she requires no sacrifice of liberty; free and unconstrained she permits them to roam throughout her domains; to robe or unrobe, as their taste may dictate; to rest when fatigued, and to rise when refreshed. Nature does not mask misery with the face of happiness, nor dress misfortune in the guise of prosperity; free and uncontrolled, her children are invited to help themselves at her munificent board; while in the narrow paths of civilized life, even the boasted reason of man is incapable of conferring happiness on society. But with the green grass and soft moss for a carpet, umbrageous trees for a shade, the murmuring stream for the ear, together with the sound of the breeze amongst the leaves to woo reflection, the syrens of vicious pleasure may be avoided, and the disquietudes of life be forgotten. Like a true citizen of the world, I had become enamoured with liberty, and with the instinct of a denizen of the forest, I shrank from the presence of man. My situation was perilous, death being inevitable if I remained in the tree; for in a short time sleep must overcome me, and in that state, I must fall into the waters beneath. Reluctantly, therefore, I dropped into the canoe, with the feelings of a bird who darts into a cage to escape the talons of the hawk—an incident, by the way, which once brought both the fugitive and the hawk into my trap. No captured African slave could feel the loss of liberty more than I did when the Indians assigned me a seat in the canoe, which proceeded to join a company consisting of eleven persons. They were a fishing party that had left their wonted haunts to avail themselves of the flood, a period when their efforts were generally rewarded with great success. One canoe was nearly filled with the product of the first draught, and they were in the act of drawing another as I appeared amongst them.

They were all well-grown men, nearly naked, like myself, very placid in their demeanour, and showed great anxiety to relieve my distress, offering me food and drink. Indeed, their manners were so urbane and pleasing, that in a very short time I recovered from my depression of spirits, and congratulated myself on my good fortune in falling into their company. They wore large grass-platted hats to defend the head from the heat of the sun, and had each a hammock made of the same materials, which as night approached, they slung from the branches of trees, and calmly laid themselves down to survey the confusion of nature which the sudden inundation had

occasioned.

With the party was a youth about my own age, who at once attached himself to me; he manifested his disappointment and concern that he could not make himself understood by words, and in a very short time intimated his intention of undertaking my education by showing me the implements in use and calling them by name, till I not only recollected them, but acquired accuracy of pronunciation.

The Indian village

Two days subsequently to my rescue from the tree, I was taken to the Indian village, about ten miles from the border of the forest. It consisted of fifteen huts on an elevated spot, distant a half-mile from a fine river, which ebbed and flowed with the tide. It was this circumstance that had occasioned my embarrassment when following the stream and suddenly meeting with a contrary current.

On my arrival at the village I was struck with the absence of curiosity or surprise which a stranger from another race generally excites, even in civilized localities. Neither men, women, or children appeared to bestow on me any peculiar notice, nor did they, as far as I could learn, express any desire to know how I came amongst them, or from whence I came. No overseer or other parish officer was called in to provide me with food and then dispute my right to eat. I was at once led to the hut of the father of my young friend, and received as one of the family, in which there were two wives and two families—one mother with three, and another with four children. Plurality of wives was the custom of this Indian community, and yet they lived in perfect harmony; there were no jealousies or bickerings; the progeny of each shared alike the affection and care of both mothers, who laboured with equal zeal in the culture of cassava or manioc, the roots of which they grated and made into bread.

There were numerous tribes of these Indians, but they all spoke the same language. The tribe I was with were called Galibis; they were remarkable alike for their humanity and intelligence. Indeed, they possessed all the moral qualities of civilized society, without its forms and most of its vices, especially the one of coveting their neighbours' goods.

Habits of the Indians

During the time I was with them, a period of eighteen months, I never heard of a charge of theft. Land was as plentiful as air and water; there could not, therefore, be any motive to steal, if we except idleness,—a vice which prevails more in cities than in the wilds of nature. Numerous families sometimes live in one common large hut; yet there are no quarrels to disturb their harmony; and such is their hospitality that he who is fatigued with hunting may always depend on repose in the nearest dwelling.

Their language is peculiarly harmonious, rich with synonyms, and is represented by those who have studied its grammatical construction, to be complicated and ingenious in syntax. Intelligent as they are, they have at all times rejected the arts and all instruction, from their great love of independence. The countenances of all are stereotyped with benevolence, and their conversation is fraught with maxims that inculcate the practice of charity to all the human race. They are not without a sense of pride, yet discourage it in practice. It requires no broker to make a written catalogue of their household furniture: their weapons are bows and arrows, and a short dart which they force through a reed with the breath, bringing down birds on the wing with surprising dexterity. A flat stone on which the women bake bread, and a rough one on which to grate the root of cassava; a hammock, a hatchet, a comb, and a broken piece of looking-glass in a rude frame, comprise the whole of their furniture. What few vessels they had were ill made,—not any improvement on those I formed from clay for the use of my aviary when in the woods.

They have no code of laws, nor have they a word in the language by which to convey the idea of laws; yet they have the same word as in Hebrew to express God, by which they understand supreme master. They have a magistrate or elder, to whom any matter of disputation is referred, and by him summarily and finally settled. Fire they obtain by rubbing two pieces of wood together; and for cooking, this is made on the ground, over which they suspend their vessels in the rudest manner. Although these people wear no clothes, properly so called, they are very fond of ornaments; as amulets and charms, those obtained from the ivory-billed woodpecker were most in vogue. No people in the world, perhaps, are more remarkable for acute observation. If you name any kind of bird, or other animal, to them, that is to be found in this part of the globe, instantly they imitate its action and tones of voice. The notes of birds they give with surprising accuracy. They are very expert swimmers, and some of the women and children spend the chief of their time in the water. The men fish, and hunt, and when not so employed, which happens three or four days in the week, they remain in their hammocks, and amuse themselves with their implements, in the repairs of which, and in conversation, all their leisure is spent. They possess all the qualities to form good sportsmen, and to take the command of others—having great presence of mind and promptitude of action. I know not which most to admire, their skill in discovering game, or their manner of taking it. They entertain the loftiest sentiments of chivalrous honour, and their courage always rises with increasing difficulty; it "smiles in danger stern and wild," and is superior to circumstances.

On the fourth day after my emancipation from the loneliness of the forest I accompanied a fishing party to the same spot from whence I had been taken. It was a favourite locality for hunting the ant-bear, and when the waters were out, for taking crabs and oysters, which were caught in large numbers among the trees and shrubs that were more or less covered by the flood.

The Great Spirit of the Indians

Under the assiduous tuition of my young friend, whose name was *Pecoe*, I rapidly progressed in a knowledge of his language, and could not refrain from making many reflections on his method of teaching as compared with my European schoolmaster's. Pecoe, I considered, had adopted a natural mode of instruction, while the system of the other was wholly artificial, and tedious in practice. My teacher was as anxious to be taught himself as to teach me, and when we were able to converse, asked ten thousand questions relative to my country and the state of society in it. Whether my long residence in the woods had disqualified me to be an advocate for the cause of civilization I know not, but at all my descriptions of it, Pecoe shook his head, and was evidently under an impression that my countrymen must be a very unhappy race of people. On one occasion, when conversing on our difference of colour, and on the human races generally, he said, "I will tell you how it happened: you know that there are three great spirits, all good, though each is greater than the other. The great spirit of all one day said to the lowest spirit, 'make a man, and let me see him.' The spirit took some clay and made a man; but when the Great Spirit saw him, he shook his head, and said he was too white. He then ordered the spirit next to himself in goodness to make a man, who tried his skill with charcoal—burnt wood; but the Great Spirit again shook his head, and said he was too black. The Great Spirit then determined to try himself, and taking some red earth, made the Indians, which pleased him very much." When I told him that the Great Spirit in his great goodness had so ordered it that every one should think his own colour the best, he replied, that it was not possible for either a black or a white man to be so stupid as to be satisfied with the colour of his skin, stigmatized as he, Pecoe, thought both races were, by barbarities. When I explained to him the various grades of civilized society, his quick apprehension broke out in the most indignant terms, denouncing the system as one dictated by a demon. Rich and poor! "What good," he asked, "could arise from allowing one to take all, and giving nothing to the other?"

Pecoe's ideas of society

I replied, that the wisdom of the Great Spirit (God) was recognised in his anticipation of the wisdom of man, by providing him with original principles of his own, which were given to regulate, not excite desires. Thus the sense of property is germinated in very early childhood, which sense I maintained generated a moral feeling, and a principle of justice and equity. My young friend, after a moment's thoughtful pause, stoutly gave the negative to my premises,—that the sense of property was developed in early life; he argued that the desire exhibited by children to handle things, and which we erroneously call a desire to possess them, is nothing more than a natural desire to exercise the physical senses on objects of the external world, through which only could they educate the powers of the body for healthful and manly purposes of life. Those things which some call children's playthings, he held to be *bonâ fide* tools, without which, whether they were wooden horses, paper boats, a doll's head, or a piece of stick, they could no more rise out of a state of childhood than a man could go to sea without a canoe. He therefore denied the inference, that because children manifest a disposition to snatch or handle everything they can reach, it is an indication of natural acquisitiveness. The mind, he said, was wholly disengaged from these matters at an early age; employment for the organs of the five senses, together with an instinctive desire to promote their development, were the true causes of children quarrelling for possessions. He instanced their having no abiding attachment for any one particular toy, however expensive or attractively constructed, always casting away one thing to handle another, the various forms of which gave exercise to different muscles, and imparted new sensations of pleasure.

The object I have in presenting my readers with a few of Pecoe's opinions is to illustrate the different ideas elicited in the minds of men by diverse circumstances of life and education. I scarcely need inform them that, in committing to paper my friend's notions, I have dressed them up in my own language.

On this occasion Pecoe closed the conversation by remarking that the nature of society, such as I had depicted in England, appeared to charge the Great Spirit with having at some early period thrown upon the earth all His gifts in a heap, for a general scramble, on the condition that the posterity of those who succeeded in first picking them up should for ever live in idleness, and become the masters of the posterity of those whose ancestors had been unsuccessful in snatching from their fellow-men more than their own share. He continued: "It was hard to believe such a state of society could exist, and thought the Evil Spirit must have put it into my head;" meaning that I had drawn upon my own imagination for the sketch. The incomprehensible part of the system to Pecoe was, that some could be luxuriating in plenty and others be starving at the same time in one country.

Warfare was unknown to his race, because the practice of good-will and the friendly offices of mutual assistance were universal among them, and annihilated every motive to aggrandisement,

and consequently the disposition was never brought out. Bear in mind, reader, that I am describing no Utopia. When, therefore, I spoke of our numerous wars, and explained that it was those who had been unfortunate at the first general scramble, as he designated it, who risked their lives in battle, fighting for their wealthy masters, his incredulity rose so high as to doubt my veracity, and for some time subsequently I thought he seemed to shun my society, appearing very pensive and lonely in his habits.

Pecoe as a nurse

About a fortnight after the above conversation I was suddenly taken with violent symptoms of fever, when Pecoe was immediately by my side, assiduously attending to all my wants with the tenderness of a nurse. The physician, or pee-ay-man, was applied to, who offered up prayers to the Bad Spirit for my recovery;—for it is a part of their creed that the Good Spirit is too good to do any one harm, and therefore it is the Malicious Spirit that must be conciliated.

For this purpose a number of incantations were performed, after which the physician continued to parade from hut to hut, howling and performing another series of incantations throughout the night, at intervals calling to see if any improvement had taken place in the health of his patient. As it was the practice of every family to burn a fire through the night, I could from my hammock see this juggler stalking to and fro, looking more like a demon than a minister of comfort in sickness.

Pecoe proved the best physician. He never left me, continuing to administer comfort to me in every possible way and manner. Among other services he relieved me, at my request, from the mummeries of the pee-ay-man, aptly urging that, as the spirits of my country were not the same as theirs, he might by his interference make them angry instead of conciliating them. But the women, who really felt an interest in my fate, were not so easily satisfied, they placed implicit reliance on the skill of the pee-ay-man, and were angry with Pecoe for sending him away. "Never mind," said he, coolly, to some remarks that censured his conduct, "I am as good a doctor as he is; and if I am hot, don't the Great Spirit brush away the flies from the animal without a tail?"

My disease grew worse, and rapidly hastened to its crisis. Pecoe in every stage sought for new sources of comfort: he collected silk-grass, and daily made new pillows for my head, when they were wetted with the cold water he applied to my temples. He constantly moistened my lips with slices of pineapple, only occasionally leaving me, to go in search of the jelly cocoa-nut, which in an unripe state has but a thin skin, but contains more liquor. As the fever subsided, these grateful draughts contributed much towards my recovery, and without doubt hastened the period of final restoration to health, when I said to my friend, "You may now set up as physician to the tribe, and supersede the pee-ay-man." The remark brought a smile from his lips, as he replied, "I have not such a mean spirit as to endure to be laughed at by all the people. Do you, then, really believe that these pretenders to superior knowledge are esteemed, or that any in the place have faith in their arts?"

"If not," said I, "why tolerate them, and why not apply to the Great and Good Spirits themselves for help?"

Pecoe's prudence

"Why!" rejoined Pecoe, "because too many like deception more than honesty, and prefer listening to falsehood rather than to truth. My father and all his friends have secretly laughed at the impostor all their days, yet in public give him countenance, and also frown on the children who would doubt the efficacy of his tricks, or his ability to solve dreams and foretell events. I myself," he continued, "sometimes doubt my right to disregard the proffered services of these men. This arises, perhaps, from the general countenance they have from all the tribes, and the force of custom; for I seldom give myself the trouble to investigate their claim to respect; I endure their arts, because the majority patronise them, though I never open my lips in their defence. It is an ungracious task to make yourself more wise than your neighbours; even if you should be successful, you must inevitably make enemies without gaining new friends, people do not like to be told that they have been in error all their lives, or to believe that their forefathers were foolishly credulous."

CHAPTER VI.

FURTHER ACCOUNT OF THE INDIANS—I ARRIVE AT MY FATHER'S FARM.

"What fancied zone can circumscribe the soul,
Who, conscious of the source from whence she springs,
By Reason's light, or Resolution's wings,

Spite of her frail companion, dauntless goes
O'er Libya's deserts, and through Zembla's snows?
She bids each slumb'ring energy awake,—
Another touch, another temper take;
Suspends th' inferior laws that rule o'er clay.
The stubborn elements confess her sway;
Man's little wants his low desires refine,
And raise the mortal to a height divine."

Notwithstanding the darkness in which my friend Pecoe had been brought up, I was impressed with the notion that his soul was sufficiently alive to receive the great truths of Christianity. I therefore resolved again to introduce the subject, and make an effort to engross his attention. I commenced by impressing on his mind that my countrymen were a race acknowledged to be inferior to none other, and that they worshipped only One Great Spirit, the Maker of the heavens and the earth, together with all things visible and invisible. He surprised me by admitting that these things had engaged much of his attention, and that his mind was now made up on the question; his conviction being that the heavens and the earth had existed from eternity, and would continue the same to eternity.

I explained to him that nothing endured for ever but the power of God; that all things were constantly undergoing a process of change; that the globe we inhabited had a beginning, and, consequently, like inferior bodies, would have an end; that God permitted the dissolution of one body, and the birth of another, at periods appointed, to the end that the whole of his designs might arrive at perfection, and no absolute loss be sustained. Pecoe heard me out with great patience, then shook his head, and enquired how it came that my father should know better than his? When, however, I spoke of the existence of the soul in another and better world, and endeavoured to illustrate that certainty by saying, in the dissolution of bodies nothing perished but their forms, and that the soul when it abdicated its decaying vessel, the body, was translated to another, and a purer state of existence, he evidently looked on me as being insane.

Attempts at conversion

I was disappointed,—was vexed at my inability to awaken him to a sense of what all mankind, more or less, in some form, have acknowledged, namely, a future state of existence. I now urged that all human beings were sensible of relations not subject to the senses, and therefore possessed sensibilities distinct from the body. That they could compare, and therefore had judgment; that they retained, and therefore have memory; that they possessed freedom of choice, and therefore have will. I then said, if to these we add instinct, there are five faculties of the soul; adding, Reason compares those ideas immediately transmitted to the memory; imagination is the same faculty exercised on the same objects differently combined, having no similitude in nature.

"These," replied Pecoe, "are all your own thoughts."

Having from early infancy been accustomed, both morning and evening, to offer up my prayers to God, and having, when in the wilds of nature, found in this practice much solace, I did not fail while with the Indians to continue the custom; yet none of the people had hitherto taken any notice of my devotion. At length Pecoe inquired my motives, asking what I expected to gain by the practice.

I replied, that we had all daily wants, and that in the morning I petitioned the Great Spirit—my God—-to supply them, and that in the evening I returned thanks for the protection and supplies I had received. I further explained, that prayer was the voice of sin to Him who alone can pardon it; that it was the petition of poverty, the prostration of humility, the confidence of trust, the feeling of helplessness, and the compunctions of the soul. All this I put in the most simple form of language, and I have reason to think that he fully understood the feeling I endeavoured to convey.

Notwithstanding, he asked me whether I had not food enough to eat, and what it was the Evil Spirit had made me do that troubled me so much?

Conversation on prayer

In vain did I labour to impress his mind with a sense of the necessity there is for all to worship the Giver of life and all other blessings, and that by intreating the One God to protect us, the value of his gifts was enhanced, and that there was an inexpressible delight in committing ourselves to the care and guidance of one who is infinitely able to protect us in the right path.

"The Spirit," said he, "is good, and will do nothing wrong—he will not listen to what you tell him."

I replied by saying that we could not tell God of anything that he did not already know, and that prayer and thanksgiving were due from us all to one so beneficent. I then explained to him that his condition of darkness in religious matters was once

the condition of all mankind, and that it was only by reflection, and the intercommunication of minds, that the little light our forefathers possessed was obtained, until at length God sent his only Son to reveal the truth to us. I then repeated the Lord's Prayer, and promised to teach it to him in his own language if he would use it.

He replied that he must have time to consider of it. A few days after he requested that I would not talk in that way any more to him, adding, that they were all my own sayings, meaning they were things of my own invention.

"You have consulted your father," said I. He acknowledged that he had, laughing at the same time, as if I had been a subject of their ridicule. Up to that moment I had flattered myself that I should have been spiritually of service to him, and perhaps through him, to more of his race. His father, however, was an enemy to civilized man, and inimical to innovations of every kind.

It appeared from a traditional story, which Pecoe subsequently related me, that at some former period these people had been visited by a party of missionaries, the particulars of which I an induced to give, as a caution to gentlemen who labour in such arduous undertakings as those of converting heathens to Christianity.

"Some white men," said Pecoe, "came here a long time since, and brought strange talk about the Great Spirit and his Son, (that is, about our blessed Saviour), to which our people agreed to listen, upon condition, that every time they attended they should receive a bottle of rum. They did attend," continued Pecoe, "but in a short time the white men wanted them to come and listen for nothing, and so broke their contract." Scrupulously punctual to their own engagements, the Indians, immediately on the withholding of the rum, took a prejudice against the missionaries, which no subsequent conduct on the part of the latter could remove, or perhaps will ever efface from the memory of the former. Thus has a stumblingblock been placed in the way of all future adventurers among them in the cause of Christianity. As soon as I was made acquainted with these particulars, I resolved to undertake the defence of the missionaries' conduct, and at least, lessen the prejudice against them. With this view, I availed myself of the first large assemblage of the natives, and opened the subject by inquiring how long it was since the white men had visited them, which way they came, and lastly, by what road they returned? suggesting, that perhaps the same road might lead me to a European colony, where I might have a chance of hearing from my friends.

Defence of the missionaries

An aged Indian replied to these inquiries, adding, that he had no great opinion of the white men who came there; and on asking how they had conducted themselves, he related the story in nearly the same words as I had heard it from Pecoe. I then explained the good intentions of the persons who subscribed money to spread the truths of the gospel, and the great sacrifices made by those who consented to give up the charms of civilized life for the good of the poor unenlightened heathen. I then went on to say, that with respect to the presents of rum, it was natural, after the missionaries had taken the trouble to study their language, and to travel so far, to adopt any means to secure a hearing, without which, no good could possibly accrue to the objects of their mission. Although, I continued, they might at first hold out some inducement to be heard, yet it was unreasonable to expect that persons so far away from home and their resources could continue to find the means of making repeated presents in order to tempt persons to their own good.

When I had finished, some of the Indians laughed, others shook their heads, indicating disapprobation, and a hint that I had better be silent. Upon the whole, though I pushed the matter somewhat strongly, I failed in making any impression on the auditors.

With regard to natural objects, I question if there be a more acute and observing people in the whole world; yet they are wholly a people of feelings, being evidently deficient in intellect. Their imagination and understanding are both at a low ebb, as I could never extend their ideas beyond their own path of life. At times I gave Pecoe credit for possessing a more lively imagination than others of his tribe; but as I knew more of him, this impression died away. In the highly cultivated walks of society, manhood is the period when the feelings are predominant. Imagination prevails in youth, and the understanding in old age. These people are in the middle stage of progress; and as they possess the purest moral notions of right and wrong, cannot be incapable of receiving the truths of revealed religion. The highest degree of moral elevation can only be attained by carefully cherishing the more benevolent and kindlier feelings of nature; that is, by cultivating the good passions, and throwing into disuse the bad ones. The Indians with whom I lived, effected these objects in a very high degree; for I never saw an instance of any violent exhibition of temper among them, and it was always a matter of astonishment to me to see how exceeding tractable their children were without severity on the part of the parents.

In the moral sense of the word, they were good; and if they had been Christians, would have been deemed examples for more refined nations.

> "A good man, and an angel! these between,
> How thin the barrier? What divides their fate?
> Perhaps a moment, or perhaps a year;

Or, if an age, it is a moment still."

The following anecdote will not only illustrate the kind feelings of the Indian's heart, but also exhibit his delicacy in bestowing a favour. I had for some time been uneasy at not being able to contribute, by my exertions, a fair share towards the provisions of the common stock of those with whom I resided; and this uneasiness was frequently expressed to Pecoe, the principal difficulty being the want of a canoe—for these vessels were not constructed in general to carry more than one person; I was thus precluded from sharing in the daily excursions on the water.

Gift of a canoe

Pecoe, as I have said, knew that I felt this want, and one morning surprised and delighted me, after a walk in the woods, where he pointed out the silk cotton tree as the material out of which they made canoes. "Why," exclaimed he, as he took a turn towards an inlet of the great river, "here is a canoe already made for you; come, help me to launch it, and let us see how it fits you when afloat." I had recently, for several long intervals, missed him, and having, when inquiring the cause of his absence, received equivocal replies, I thought it was occasioned by some duty connected with his family, and had in consequence forborne to notice it again. He had, however, been in the wood, fashioning a canoe for my use, being the most valuable present he could, at that juncture, have made me; and the manner in which he conducted the matter, considerably enhanced its value. I was now as rich in property as any of the natives, whose ambition seldom soars beyond the possession of a canoe and a stock of hunting and fishing implements, which my friend Pecoe did not forget to provide with the canoe.

My health being perfectly restored, I now joined in all the sports followed by the natives, having previously, at Pecoe's earnest solicitation, learned to swim. Time ran on smoothly, the morning invited me to the woods (my natural home) to hunt for game.

"On a sweet shining morning, thus drawn out,
    It seem'd what man was made for, to look round
And trace the full brook, that, with clamorous route,
    O'er fallen trees and roots, black curling, wound
Through glens, with wild brakes scatter'd all about."

The days did not linger in their progress, nor did night arrive too soon, the changes being all attended with enjoyments.

    "Night bringeth sleep
    To the forest deep,
The forest bird to its nest,
    To care, bright hours,
    And dreams of flowers,
And that balm to the weary—rest."

Discontent is man's great enemy. I believe that, constitutionally, I was fitted to enjoy any station to which the Almighty, in his wisdom, might call me; yet even contentment may be carried to an extreme, and degenerate into apathy, or the want of a healthful spirit into indolence.

Soft leisure hath her charms, and the bliss of her votaries is to bask in summer rays through the day under the greenwood tree; but however soothing or pleasant this may be to the reflective mind, the common duties of life should not be neglected. I had parents, relations, and friends, all of whom had more or less been rendered unhappy by my loss in the woods; and I now became impressed with a notion that I had not been sufficiently active in using means for my restoration.

I had indeed escaped the mazes of the forest by the inundation—an event in which the hand of Providence was conspicuous; for had not the flood-gates of the firmament been opened, I might still have remained in my forest prison. I now asked myself why I did not stir and exert all the energies the same Providence had bestowed on me, to reach the nearest European colony and seek advice as to the proper mode of proceeding to discover the home of my parents. All my moments of leisure were now filled up with self-reproaches. The deep solitude of the woods, I thought, had enchanted me, and now the wild charm of a free and roving life was weaning me from duty. These were errors which, I thought, demanded a rigid retribution; yet at intervals I was in no want of excuses to extenuate my conduct. I reflected on the extraordinary flexibility of our nature, which accommodates and adapts itself to all circumstances; and, that the reality of our existence is the present moment, the exigencies of which are inimical to prudent resolutions.

Of man's generic character there is much yet to be written; the change of climate, food, scenery, society, together with a thousand contingent circumstances that follow in their train, all produce effects unappreciable by those whose lives have been bounded by one circle. Of all animals, man best endures the changes of food and climate. It therefore follows that his physical

construction is more changeable; but in proportion as the body undergoes a change, and adapts itself to the circumstances of its situation, so will the feelings, temper, and mind also undergo some change, and more or less affect the character of the individual.

Forgetfulness of home

In reference to my own case, and the experience derived from it, this is the best solution I can give of the passive submission with which I accommodated myself to the manner of life into which my waywardness had cast me. If we pass from man to the influence of climate on other animals, the effect on dogs is very remarkable. In Kamtschatka, instead of the dog being faithful and attached to his master, he is full of deceit and treachery; he does not bark in the hot parts of Africa, nor in the extreme cold countries of the north; in Greenland he loses his fitness for hunting and his character for docility. If this subject were pursued, it might be added that the African slaves, when removed from their own country to the West Indies, undergo a marked change of character. The American settlers too, have changed in character since their first settlement in that country, as also have the Anglo-New Hollanders. The temperate zones appear to be the most favoured regions for the full development of the human powers, whether physical or moral, especially of the principle of sympathy, that vicegerent of the divine benevolence in our world, which is capable of binding up all the wounds that sin and death have introduced into it.

As we are all, however, too much swayed by the considerations of pleasure and pain, it is probable, that had I been cast into regions subject to a rigorous winter, I should have been more anxious to have escaped from the forest. Perpetual summer, however, beguiled me from my resolution, and being unprovided with a defence against ease and indolence, years passed on while I was only dreaming of home and friends.

The hand of Providence, notwithstanding, continued over me, and in a miraculous manner took me from savage life.

The sun's departing red rays were shining on the surface of the river, as Pecoe, myself, and three other youths were hastening in our canoes to reach home before night should set in, when I heard the stroke of oars, that indicated the approach of a boat's crew. I have before said that an inexplicable feeling came over me whenever I thought that I was in approximation with those who might be the means of conveying me again into civilized life. On this occasion I was for the moment paralysed. Pausing to assure myself of the reality of the sounds, I heard Pecoe and his companions calling to me to pull towards the opposite shore, from whence the sounds proceeded, and turning round to ascertain the direction they were pursuing, I caught sight of a long-boat, manned with ten sailors, just turning a point of land which had hitherto screened them from my view. The Indians were still calling to me, but it was too late. With the usual celerity of British sailors, the boat in a few seconds was abreast of my canoe. The officer who commanded the crew pulled my canoe aft, and after scrutinizing my countenance, ejaculated, "The boatswain is right—an European; but not, as he supposed, a runaway convict; it's the wrong latitude for that kind of fish;" continuing, "Come, young man, step into our boat: we are in want of some information with which you may furnish us."

Impressed on board an English ship

I hesitated, then made some reply in English, when one of the sailors exclaimed, "I told Tom that he was a Briton."

"I am glad I have met with a countryman," resumed the officer, who held the canoe fast as he offered his hand to assist me into his own boat; but as I still hesitated, he affected to stumble, and in the action drew me over the bow of the canoe, which constrained me either to jump into the ship's boat or fall into the river. When seated beside the lieutenant, I had in some measure recovered from my surprise; I inquired whether the practice of pressing in the British navy was revived.

"It is not," replied the lieutenant, "but I shall feel myself justified in detaining you until I have the particulars of your history, and learn especially what brought you into this part of the world."

All this time the boat was proceeding down the river, and had carried me out of sight of my Indian friends. When I informed the officer that I had been lost when a boy, he replied—

"Then you are now found; but have you a knowledge of this river?"

"From hence upwards I have," said I. "having accompanied the Indians in their farthest migrations."

"Make your mind easy," rejoined the officer, "I shall introduce you to the captain of our brig."

It appeared that the boat had been sent out by a government brig which was on a survey in the river Amazon, to ascertain the course of one of its tributaries. Late in the evening of the following day we reached the ship, and when my story had been heard by the captain, he at once determined on taking me with him, saying that he should find means of sending me to Berbice,

the point, he judged, from which my father had started, and to which place he thought it probable my father would in the first instance transmit an account of my having been lost; and where also it was likely some arrangement had been made for providing me with the means of finding my way to his residence.

The brig remained two months on the survey, and then sailed for Halifax, crossing the Mexican bay, where I had an opportunity of witnessing the extraordinary phenomena produced by a large body of fish that at one time surrounded the vessel. The sea was like one field of fireworks, all sparkling with serpents and silver spangles; the mind, when contemplating such scenes, is lost in amazement at the prodigious number of living things the regions of the sea contain. But whether the naturalist turns to the woods and the water, or explores the cloud-capt mountains, the sequestered cave, or the rocky cliffs, he will at first be embarrassed at the sight of the variety of objects that claim his attention; and it is only by learning how to distinguish them in a methodical manner that the mind can be brought to contemplate them in detail.

On board the vessel I was supplied with a sailor's dress, but the force of habit was so strong that for a considerable time I could not wear it with any comfort to myself. The captain was faithful to his promise, and from Halifax sent me in a merchant vessel to Demerara, with a letter addressed to the British consul at that station. On my arrival I presented myself before that authority, who the next day produced a colonial newspaper in which I had seven years previously been advertised, and a reward offered for my recovery, and in which also the name of an agent was mentioned who would defray any costs incurred on the occasion.

Return to society

Fortunately that gentleman was still in the colony, who, after satisfying himself of my identity, promised to avail himself of the earliest opportunity to restore me to my family. The location of my father's property was on the remote banks of a branch of the Amazon river, to which few vessels traded, there was therefore no possibility of reaching it otherwise than overland, as the family had previously done. For some time after my arrival in Demerara, I found myself an object of interest, receiving invitations from most of the respectable inhabitants; while my appearance in the streets excited a sensation. Although I was much pleased with the opportunity of attending public worship, where I might collect and concentrate the scattered ideas I retained of my father's faith, yet the ceremonies and forms of society appeared ridiculous to me, and were very irksome.

First sight of home

I received marked attention and kindness from the gentleman who had been advertised as my father's agent, and an opportunity soon occurred for him to place me under safe escort to my home. Two gentlemen were about to journey near to where my father resided, and they kindly undertook my safe conveyance. They were entrusted with a letter from the agent to my father, which was to be delivered into no other hands but his own. I can scarcely describe my delight when all was in readiness for our departure and we set out on our journey. My feelings of impatience grew more uncontrollable every day. The thoughts of home and the prospect of again beholding all I held dear on earth made my passage appear a lifetime;—tedious and protracted as it was I shall pass it over now, as it had no incident that was at all attractive to me—until we arrived at the Amazon River, whose clear surface I hailed with indescribable delight, as I knew then we were not far from my father's estate. Following its course for a day we arrived towards the afternoon at a plantation of cotton, the proprietor of which informed me that we were within two miles of my father's house. He had heard the particulars of my absence, but declined to comply with my request to go and inform the family of my arrival. The reason he assigned was that he had lately been engaged in a dispute with my father, and therefore could not undertake my mission—adding that the alteration in my appearance, living as I had from the age of thirteen to twenty in the wilderness, would be sufficient to prevent them from recognising me at first. I then inquired for my uncles, and was informed that one had sold his land and returned to England, and that the other (the widower) was dead. This unchristian man also informed me that, in his opinion, I had been given up as entirely lost by my family. As the day was advancing, I waited no longer to hold converse with him, but abruptly turned away, disgusted with his apathy and want of feeling. As we proceeded towards my home, I consulted with the two gentlemen who were my guides what course to adopt in breaking the intelligence of my return, to my family, as I felt a dread of presenting myself too precipitately after so long an absence, being naturally fearful that the shock would be more than my mother could sustain. We deemed it prudent, therefore, to send the letter by one of my guides, while I waited the result close by. Our precautions, however, were not carried into effect, as an incident occurred which rendered them unnecessary. I had arrived in sight of my father's habitation, and paused on a slight eminence to contemplate with mingled feelings of surprise, delight, and fear, the spot made sacred by the affections which were centred there, with all the ties which bound me to the world—that spot which, from the meanest to the noblest in every land, is the only haven of refuge from the troubles and travail in this life, and which finds a ready response in every heart by the one magic word—home! I had not felt its cheering influence for now more than six years. An outcast and a wanderer for that period, how often in the loneliness of my forest life had I yearned to be again restored to it, and to find, like the dove of old, a place of refuge and rest—an ark, and a covenant. But now, as the fruition of my hopes appeared to be realized, I paused, spell-bound and overpowered by the many conflicting feelings which the sight

of it had conjured up. The memory of all the incidents of my early life—the days of childhood—the school-boy troubles—the many acts of parental kindness evinced in a thousand ways—were all pictured to my sight in one rapid glance. And then the terrible foreboding presented itself, that I might not find my family circle as I had left them—alive and in health. In the history of the world six years is but a speck of time; but with individuals the case is widely different. I had lost one uncle, and the fear came across me that my loss might not be ended thus. I almost dreaded to make the inquiry, as I felt incapable of bearing such a calamity. It was a beautiful mansion which lay before me. The large and well-built house, surrounded with thick foliage—the carefully cultivated grounds surrounding it—the broad and extensive landscape beyond of richly wooded hill and dale—the wide and meandering river by whose banks I had been guided thither—gave to the scene a lofty grandeur. While standing thus irresolute, a young man of some five or six and twenty was advancing towards us; he had on his arm a female, with whom he appeared to be chatting familiarly. I watched them as they came near us, and from the young man's appearance judged him to be one of the settlers here. As they approached, I heard their voices more distinctly. That of the female fell upon my ear in well remembered tones. There could be no mistaking them, I knew it to be the voice of my sister. But ah! how changed she was. The laughing merry girl had grown into a staid and matronly woman. I could hardly believe it possible; but to assure myself, I inquired of her companion if that was the residence of Mr. Howard. My sister started as I spoke, turned pale, and looked at me intently. I suppose I was changed; indeed, there was but little doubt of that—but changed as I was, she could not be deceived. She trembled, and would have fallen, had I not caught her in my arms in a fond embrace. The first surprise over, she laughed and cried by turns, and overwhelmed me with caresses. Then the numberless inquiries she had to make! One after the other in such rapid succession, without waiting for replies. I know not what the three spectators of the scene must have thought; but no doubt they deemed her frantic, and, indeed, for the time, I believe she was. My first inquiry was about my parents. They were both well. She had left them a few minutes previously. Her companion she introduced to me as her husband. She told me, also, that she had two children, a little boy and girl. We arranged our plan, if it could be called arrangement, where all was mad delight; she insisted that my two guides should go home with her husband for that evening, as his house was close by, and deliver the letter in the morning, while she and myself went home to our parents. When we had arrived at the house, I detained her from entering until I had peeped in at the window to take a glance at its inmates. There was a light in the interior, and I could observe all distinctly. I saw my father seated in a comfortable apartment, quite unconscious of any one observing them. My father was reading aloud one of the local papers. He wore spectacles; I remember to have been struck with this, otherwise, my mother and he were not at all changed. The same as I had left them—the old familiar faces, remembered from earliest childhood—the old familiar faces, it made a child of me again to gaze on them. Presently my sister entered, and from her hurried manner and sudden return, they seemed surprised. She said something, I did not know what, but my father rose, and hastily throwing down the paper, gazed wonderingly on my sister. I waited no longer—another moment—I was on my knees before my mother, buried in her embrace. She wept over me, her truant boy, tears of joy. Who of us has not felt the depth and purity of a mother's love? Who hath not found, be his errors what they might, that there was one gentle spirit to turn to, ever ready to pardon, protect, and solace? I felt the force of this doubly then. And now, when past the meridian of my life, I look back through the long vista of the past, the self-devotedness of a mother's love shines forth as something "which lighted up my way of life," never to be forgotten. My father could scarcely find utterance, from excess of joy at my return. I recounted to him a brief summary of all I had gone through since I had been lost, and half that night was passed in the details of my story. My sister did not return to her own home till the following morning, when I accompanied her. Another surprise awaited me. I saw Rengal and his father working on our estate. They had become devoted and trustworthy servants of the family, being employed as free labourers. It seemed that my father had instituted a vigorous search for me, and had engaged them many months for that purpose, believing their acquaintance with the country would be of infinite service in the undertaking. Their labours, however, proved fruitless, as my reader already knows. Ultimately, pleased with their faithful conduct, and evident anxiety to accomplish my restoration, he engaged them as assistants on his farm, where they had remained ever since. Their surprise and extravagant delight when I made myself known, exceeded all bounds; and although, perhaps, I compromised my dignity, I was obliged, in spite of myself, to burst out into a fit of immoderate laughter. There was a degree of comicality about these people which was perfectly irresistible, the more so, as they could not at all comprehend it themselves. The old negro informed me that he had discovered his daughter, and my sister's husband had purchased her freedom, and engaged her as a domestic in his house.

The brother and sister

Rengal

* * * * *

Many years have rolled on since the incidents described in this narrative occurred. Time has been busy with his ceaseless works and wondrous changes. Our little settlement has now sprung up into a large and thriving city, in whose streets are seen a throng of busy men. Our river bears upon its bosom many argosies freighted with the merchandise of every clime. Our meadows are ploughed into furrows by the hand of the skilful husbandman, and returning autumn sees them

laden with the products of cultivated nature. The giant, steam, is made a slave to man. and is seen at work on the mill—the mine—the forge—and rail; and everywhere marks of the master spirit, industry, are visible in our town. For myself, I am rich in the possession of all the blessings of domestic life, with an amiable and loving partner and dutiful children. I am respected as a thriving merchant, and I hope as a worthy friend. My parents, I am happy to say, still cheer me with their presence and advice; and if this, the narrative of my earlier years, should awaken the youthful mind to a sense of self-reliance and dependence under all trials and vicissitudes, and make manifest the bounteous providence of a wise and beneficent Creator, my labours will not have been spent in vain.

THE END.

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