

## THE VALLEY OF THE AMAZON.

*A Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro, &c.* By ALFRED R. WALLACE. London, Reeve & Co., 1853.

*Exploration of the Valley of the Amazon.* By WILLIAM LEWIS HERNDON and LARDNER GIBBON. Washington, Robert Armstrong, 1854.

WE class these two books together, not only because they relate to the same subject, but because they are admirable complements of each other—the one furnishing what the other lacks, and the two in connection giving a complete view of the vast and almost unknown regions to which they relate.

Mr. Wallace is a naturalist, who went to South America to collect specimens of birds and insects, and during his sojourn of some years, had his attention chiefly directed to the natural history of the country. Lieutenant Herndon, on the other hand, was sent out under the direction of the Navy Department of the United States, to explore its agricultural resources and commercial capabilities, and the probable influence of the free navigation of the Amazon upon the trade of the world, and of the United States in particular. Mr. Wallace landed at Para, on the Atlantic side of the continent, and confined his researches mainly to the northern tributaries of the great stream, while Lieut. Herndon, setting out from Santiago, on the Pacific, “a pleasant place of residence,” as he naively observes, “with the exception that it is subject to earthquakes and civil wars,” proceeded to Lima, and thence across the Andes, to the river Huallaga, one of the most western branches of the Amazon. It will be seen, therefore, that the journeyings of the two travellers cover the entire valley, except the part drained by the Madeira and other southern forks, which Lieut. Gibbon, who was joined with Mr. Herndon as far as Terma, explored, but whose report is not yet published. When the latter shall have appeared, our knowledge of the Valley will be more comprehensible.

We were not wholly ignorant of the regions of the Amazon before these explorations. The interesting work of Von Tschud had made us familiar with the country about Lima and the Sierras. Smith’s “Peru as it is,” was also full of information on the same points, while Humboldt’s Narrative, Prince Adalbert’s Travels, Southey’s Brazil, and the journals of the English lieutenants, Smyth and Maed, had furnished us with a mass of valuable details in regard to the more

eastern parts of the great basin; but in none of these do we find as ample and authentic accounts of the whole river as in the two works before us.

The Peruvians at an early day, even before the time of the Spanish conquest, made attempts to explore the country east of the Andes. The sixth Inca, we are told by Garcilaso de la Vega, sent his son *Yahuar Huaccac*, with a force of fifteen thousand men, to its conquest, and the young prince added some thirty leagues in that direction to the dominions of his father. Under the tenth Inca, also, the great *Yupauqui*, an expedition forced its way into the Montaña, and embarking on rafts on the river Amarumayo, penetrated through hostile tribes of Indians, into the territory of the Musus, whom they subdued and partly civilized. But these attempts were merely predatory incursions, and led to no important results, although they left behind them, to incite the cupidity of the Spaniard, stories of great empires filled with populous cities, whose streets were paved with gold, and whose monarchs, when they rose in the morning, were smeared with oil and covered with gold dust, which their courtiers, having brought it from a lake of pure golden sand, blew upon them from long reeds.

Excited by these traditions, Pizarro fitted out two expeditions, which entered the country as far as the Beni, but which, overcome by danger, privation and sufferings, returned worse than they went. Gonzalo Pizarro also fitted out an expedition from Quito, of which Prescott gives a brilliant account, showing how they found the rumored gold, but were themselves cruelly murdered. The first person who reached and descended the Amazon was *Lope de Aguirre*, the lieutenant of a company fitted out by the Viceroy of Peru, the Marquis of Cañete, about 1560. Having assassinated his captain, he prosecuted the enterprise on his own responsibility, as far as the Huallaga, which he descended to the Amazon, and thence floated down the Amazon to its mouth. The information given by this adventurer, however, was not of much worth, and the task, “which had baffled the ambition and power of the Incas, and the love of gold, backed by the indomitable spirit and courage of the hardy Spanish soldier,” was accomplished by missionary zeal, and the love of propagating the true faith. As early as 1637, missionary sta-

tions were established in the Montafia, and in less than a century afterwards, nearly every Indian town and village was surmounted by the cross, and a large part of the inhabitants rudely indoctrinated into the belief of the Church.

"The difficulties of penetrating into these countries," says Lieutenant Hernon, "where the path is to be broken for the first time, can only be conceived by one who has travelled over the roads already trodden. The broken and precipitous mountain track—the deep morass—the thick and tangled forest—the danger from Indians, wild beasts, and reptiles—the scarcity of provisions—the exposure to the almost appalling rains—and the navigation of the impetuous and rock-obstructed river, threatening at every moment shipwreck to the frail canoe—form obstacles that might daunt any heart but that of the gold-hunter or the missionary."

The most remarkable voyage down the Amazon, according to the same authority, was made by a woman. Madame Godin des Odonnais, wife of one of the French commissioners who was sent with *Condamine* to measure an arc of the meridian near Quito, started in 1769, from *Rio Bamba*, in Ecuador, to join her husband in Cayenne, by the route of the Amazon. She embarked at *Canelos*, on the *Borbonaza*, with a company of eight persons; two, besides herself, being females. On the third day, the Indians who conducted their canoe deserted; another Indian, whom they found sick in a hovel near the bank, and employed as a pilot, fell from the canoe in endeavoring to pick up the hat of one of the party, and was drowned.

The canoe, under their own management, soon capsized, and they lost all their clothing and provisions. Three men of the party now started for *Andoas*, on the *Pastaza*, which they supposed themselves to be within five or six days of, and never returned. The party left behind, now consisting of the three females and two brothers of Madame Godin, lashed a few logs together, and attempted again to navigate; but their frail vessel soon went to pieces by striking against the fallen trees in the river. They then attempted to journey on foot along the banks of the river, but finding the growth here too thick and tangled for them to make any way, they struck off into the forest, in hopes of finding a less obstructed path.

They were soon lost; despair took possession of them, and they perished miserably of hunger and exhaustion. Madame

Godin, recovering from a swoon, which she supposes to have been of many hours' duration, took the shoes from her dead brother's feet, and started to walk, she knew not whither. Her clothes were soon torn to rags, her body lacerated by her exertions in forcing her way through the tangled and thorny undergrowth, and she was kept constantly in a state of deadly terror by the howl of the tiger and the hiss of the serpent. It is wonderful that she preserved her reason. "Eight terrible days and nights did she wander alone in the howling wilderness, supported by a few berries and birds' eggs. Providentially (one cannot say accidentally) she struck the river at a point where two Indians (a man and a woman) were just launching a canoe. They received her with kindness, furnished her with food, gave her a coarse cotton petticoat, which she preserved for years afterwards as a memorial of their goodness, and carried her in their canoe to *Andoas*, whence she found a passage down the river, and finally joined her husband. Her hair turned gray from suffering, and she could never hear the incidents of her voyage alluded to without a feeling of horror that bordered on insanity."

The river Amazon, as we all know from our school-books, is the second largest river in the world, being second only to the Mississippi, and with its numerous and mighty tributaries, drains a basin which surpasses in its dimensions that of any other river. Situated in the tropics, alternately on both sides of the equator, it is supplied by abundant rains throughout its whole extent, and pours a flood of water into the ocean, to which the magnificent streams of the Mississippi, the Hoang Ho, the Ganges, and the Danube, afford scarcely a comparison. From the fourth degree of north latitude to the twentieth south, all the rivers that flow down the eastern slope of the Andes, are its confluent, which is as if, says Mr. Wallace, every river of Europe, from St. Petersburg to Madrid, united their waters in a single flood. Considering the *Marañon* as its true source, we find its whole length about 2,740 English miles, while its tributaries on the north and south, cover a space of 1,720 miles. The whole area of its basin, is 2,330,000 English square miles, or more than one third of all South America, and equal to two thirds of all Europe. "All western Europe," says Mr. Wallace, "could be placed in it without touching its boundaries, and it would even contain the whole Indian empire."

The same writer remarks upon a curious contrast in the colors of the Amazon and several of its branches: the waters of the former are of a yellowish olive hue, while those of the Rio Branco are almost milk-white, those of the Yuacali a transparent blue, and those of the Nigro, as the name imports, quite black. The difference of color does not depend entirely on free earthy matter, but on some material which they hold in solution; for in lakes and inlets where the waters are undisturbed, and can deposit all their sediment, they still retain the same tints. This material is evidently derived from the soils through which they flow; a rocky and sandy district always giving clear water—a clayey one the yellow or olive colored, while the infusion of decaying leaves and other vegetable matter, makes the black. The Rio Branco looks like a stream of dissolved chalk, and the Madeira and Puros are also white. The Tocantins, the Xingu, and the Tapajoz, which rise in the mountains of Brazil, are blue and clear; while the Nigro, the Coary, the Teffe, the Jutai, and some others, are black as ink, only getting a little paler in shallow places.

The velocity of the Amazon varies with the width of the current and the time of the year, but is nowhere and at no time so great as it has been represented in the older accounts. A large number of people think of it only as pouring down with the fierce flow of a torrent, but the truth is, that its average flow is about three and a half miles an hour, and its fleetest, not more than five or six miles. This opinion of its rapidity arose probably from the fact, that it carried its fresh waters far out to sea, discoloring the ocean to the distance of one hundred and fifty miles; yet it would appear that the rush is never sufficiently strong to impede navigation, even by sail, and much less by steam. The mighty stream may be ascended almost to its source, without an obstruction—at least this is the prevailing impression both of travelers and of the dwellers upon its banks—though it must be confessed that our knowledge of the courses of the tributaries is quite incomplete. The main stream, with the Madeira and the Nigro, and we now add, since the exploration of Lieut. Herndon, the Huallaga, and part of the Yuacali, are tolerably well ascertained and laid down upon the maps; but of the Xingu, the Tapajoz, the Coary, the Puros, the Jutai, the Jabari, the Ica, and others, we possess only vague conjectures. Be-

tween the Tocantins and the Madeira, says Mr. Wallace, and between the Madeira and the Yuacali, there are two tracts of country of five hundred thousand square miles each, and each twice as large as France, and as completely unexplored as the interior of Africa. It is probable, however, from their size, and the reports of the Indians, that the greater part of them are navigable for many miles from their discharge into the main stream. "As a general rule," says Lieut. Herndon, "large ships may sail thousands of miles to the foot of the falls of the gigantic rivers of this country; and in Brazil particularly, a few hundred miles of canal would open to the steamboat, and render available, thousands of miles more."

But though the velocity of the Amazon is not so great as is commonly supposed, the first sight of it produces an impression of awful grandeur and force. Lieutenant Herndon writes:

"The march of the great river in its silent grandeur was sublime; but in the untamed might of its turbid waters as they cut away its banks, tore down the gigantic denizens of the forest, and built up islands, it was awful. It rolled through the wilderness with a stately and solemn air. Its waters looked angry, sullen, relentless; and the whole scene awoke emotions of awe and dread—such as are caused by the funeral solemnities, the minnute gun, the howl of the wind, and the angry tossing of the waves, when all hands are called to bury the dead in a troubled sea.

"I was reminded of our Mississippi at its topmost flood; the waters are quite as muddy and quite as turbid; but this stream lacked the charm and the fascination which the plantation upon the bank, the city upon the bluff, and the steamboat upon its waters, lend to its fellow of the North; nevertheless, I felt pleased at its sight. I had already travelled seven hundred miles by water, and fancied that this powerful stream would soon carry me to the ocean; but the water-travel was comparatively just begun; many a weary month was to elapse ere I should again look upon the familiar face of the sea; and many a time, when worn and wearied with the canoe life, did I exclaim, 'This river seems interminable!'"

The whole of the region through which this magnificent stream flows appears to be one of unexampled fertility, for it is covered by a rich and tangled vegetation, forming the most dense and extensive forest in the world. One may travel for weeks and months, in any direction, without discovering more than a rood of ground unoccupied by trees. On the coasts of Southern Brazil, and on the Pacific coasts, you encounter rocky mountain ridges, and immense plains that are parched and barren; but in the interior, comprising an area of some 2,700 miles in one direction, and from 400 to 1,700 in another, the entire surface is a virgin forest. What are the woods of central

Europe, what those of Africa, what the immense forests of Asia even, compared with this? In North America alone is there a parallel, in the vast wooded country, west of the Mississippi.

This vast forest is distinguished for the variety as well as the size of the trees of which it is composed. Herndon enumerates of trees fitted for nautical constructions, twenty-two kinds; for the construction of houses and boats, thirty-three; for cabinet work, twelve (some of which, such as the *jacarandá*, the tortoise-shell wood, and the *macacauba*, are very beautiful); and for making coal, seven. There are twelve kinds of trees that exude milk from some of their bark; though the milk of some of these—such as the *arvoeiro* and *assucú*—is poisonous. One is the *seringa*, or India-rubber tree, and one, the *mururé*, the milk of which is reported to possess extraordinary virtue in the cure of mercurialized patients. "It is idle," he says, "to give a list of the medicinal plants, for their name is legion." Yet, he proceeds to describe more than two dozen species of plants which already furnish valuable additions to our *materia medica*.

"This is the country," adds the author, "of rice, of sarsaparilla, of India-rubber, balsam copaiba, gum copal, animal and vegetable wax, cocoa, Brazilian nutmegs, Tonka beans, ginger, black pepper, arrowroot, tapioca, annatto, indigo, sapaçala, and Brazil nuts; dyes of the gayest colors, drugs of rare virtue, variegated cabinet woods of the finest grain, and susceptible of the highest polish. The forests are filled with game, and the rivers stocked with turtle and fish. Here dwell the anta, or the wild cow, the peixe boi, or fish ox, the sloth, the ant-eater, the beautiful black tiger, the mysterious electric eel, the boa-constrictor, the anaconda, the deadly coral snake, the voracious alligator, monkeys in endless variety, birds of the most brilliant plumage, and insects of the strangest forms and gayest colors."

Of the Zoology of the region, however, Mr. Wallace furnishes us the most copious details, while both of our authorities speak of productions, not mentioned in the above list, which are more important than any other in the view of commerce. We refer to a species of wild cotton, called *Huimba* in Peru, which, mixed with silk, can be spun into a tough yet delicate fabric; tobacco, which grows in exuberance and of excellent quality; the sugar-cane, of which plentiful crops are gathered in the province of Cercado; and coffee, which is easily cultivated. There are three kinds of indigo yielding in great abundance; maize is produced every three months all the year round; the cassave, one kind able to replace the potato, and the other giving out starch, is prolific;

wheat, barley, and oats may be raised in many districts; while, in respect to fruits, grapes, oranges, lemons, pomegranates, melons, figs, papaws, chiromas, pine-apples, &c., there is no end to the supply, at the same time the climate is spoken of as very salubrious and agreeable. The entire valley is remarkable for the uniformity of its temperature and the regular supply of moisture. Neither the wet nor the dry seasons are as severe as in other tropical countries, and the stranger seldom suffers from either excessive heat or excessive cold.

An admirable country to live in—our readers will see, presenting rare opportunities for agriculture and commerce, and promising to be in the future the seat of a prosperous empire. But as yet, we must confess, it holds forth few temptations to settlement: or rather it exhibits certain peculiarities not entirely compatible with our ideas of civilized comfort and refinement. In the first place, the present inhabitants do not invite a more familiar acquaintance. The greater part of them are Indians, and Indians generally of worthless and debased characters. Mr. Wallace, who describes some thirty different tribes, saying at the same time that there are "countless varieties of others with peculiar languages and customs, and distinct physical characteristics," thinks them superior on the whole to the Indians of South Brazil, and more like "the intelligent and noble races" of the North American prairies; but he admits, also, that they are for the most part lazy, squalid, savage, polygamic, superstitious, fond of *caxaça*, which is native for bad rum, licentious, and what is most shocking of all, the rascals, male and female go about as naked as they were born, with the exception that they wear sometimes a brilliant head-dress of parrots' tail feathers. Some, indeed, tattoo their carcasses, in red, yellow, and blue, until they look as much dressed as the clown of a circus: there are one or two tribes, too, such as the Purupurus, who are infected universally with a scrofula, or itch, spotting their bodies with white, black, and brown patches, and who bore large holes in their lips, the septum of the nose, and in their ears, out of which sticks five or six feet long, dangle as ornaments; while the Ximãnas, and Cauxañas, kill their first-born children, and the Miraubas eat the first friend they can lay their jaws upon! Precious neighbors these fellows would make!

In short, if we must tell the whole truth about these Indians, let us say that

Mr. Herndon quotes from the work of Count Castelnau, a Frenchman who ascended the Amazon some years since, an account going to show that some of them are lineal descendants from the monkey. Here is the passage :

"M. Castelnau collected some very curious stories concerning the Indians who dwell upon the banks of the Jurúá. He says, (vol. 6, p. 105,) 'I cannot pass over in silence a very curious passage of Padre Noronha, and which one is astonished to find in a work of so grave a character in other respects. The Indians, *Cauamas* and *Uginas* (says the padre), live near the sources of the river. The first are of a very short stature, scarcely exceeding five palms (about three and a half feet); and the last (of this there is no doubt) have tails, and are produced by a mixture of Indians and *Coata* monkeys. Whatever may be the cause of this fact, I am led to give it credit for three reasons: first, because there is no physical reason why men should not have tails; secondly, because many Indians, whom I have interrogated regarding this thing, have assured me of the fact, telling me that the tail was a palm and a half long; and, thirdly, because the Reverend Father Friar José de Santa Theresa Ribeiro, a Carmelite, and Curate of Castro de Avelaens, assured me that he saw the same thing in an Indian who came from Japurá, and who sent me the following attestation :

"'I, José de Santa Theresa Ribeiro, of the Order of our Lady of Mount Carmel, Ancient Observance, &c., certify and swear, in my quality of priest, and on the Holy Evangelists, that when I was a missionary in the ancient village of Parauá, where was afterwards built the village of Noguera, I saw, in 1755, a man called Manuel da Silva, native of Pernambuco, or Bahia, who came from the river Japurá with some Indians, amongst whom was one—an Infidel brute—who the said Manuel declared to me had a tail; and as I was unwilling to believe such an extraordinary fact, he brought the Indian and caused him to strip, on pretence of removing some turtles from a 'pen,' near which I stood to assure myself of the truth. There I saw, without possibility of error, that the man had a tail, of the thickness of a finger, and half a palm long, and covered with smooth and naked skin. The same Manuel assured me that the Indian had told him that every month he cut his tail, because he did not like to have it too long, and it grew very fast. I do not know to what nation this man belonged, nor if all his tribe had a similar tail; but I understood afterwards that there was a tailed nation upon the banks of the Jurúá; and I sign this act and seal it in affirmation of the truth of all that it contains.

"'ESTABLISHMENT OF CASTRO DE AVELAENS, October 14, 1768.

"'FR. JOSE DE STA. THERESA RIBEIRO.'

"M. Baena (Corog, Para) has thought proper to repeat these strange assertions. 'In this river,' says he, speaking of the Jurúá (p. 487), 'there are Indians, called *Canamas*, whose height does not exceed five palms; and there are others, called *Uginas*, who have a tail of three or four palms (four palms and an inch, Portuguese, make nearly an English yard), according to the report of many persons. But I leave to every one to put what faith he pleases in these assertions.'

"M. Castelnau says, after giving these relations, 'I will add but a word. Descending the Amazon, I saw, one day, near Fonteboa, a black *Coata*, of enormous dimensions. He belonged to an Indian woman, to whom I offered a large price, for the country, for the

curious beast; but she refused me with a burst of laughter. 'Your efforts are useless,' said an Indian who was in the cabin; 'that is her husband.'

Mr. Herndon himself does not confirm this story, which we suspect the Count borrowed from Voltaire's *Candide*, but he narrates that when he was at Echénique he bought a young monkey of an Indian woman, which refused to eat plantain when he offered it, whereupon "the woman took it and put it to her breast, where it sucked away manfully and with great gusto. She weaned it in a week, so that it would eat plantain mashed up and put into its mouth in small bits: but the little beast died of mortification, because I would not let him sleep with his arms round my neck!"

Mr. Wallace, in the course of his description of one of the tribes on the river Uaupés, gives so rational a conjecture as to the origin of the fable about a nation of Amazons, or fighting females, that we extract his words :

"The use of ornaments and trinkets of various kinds is almost confined to the men. The women wear a bracelet on the wrists, but none on the neck, and no comb in the hair; they have a garter below the knee, worn tight from infancy, for the purpose of swelling out the calf, which they consider a great beauty. While dancing in their festivals, the women wear a small tanga, or apron, made of beads, prettily arranged: it is only about six inches square, but is never worn at any other time, and immediately the dance is over it is taken off.

The men, on the other hand, have the hair carefully parted and combed on each side, and tied in a queue behind. In the young men, it hangs in long locks down their necks, and, with the comb, which is invariably carried stuck in the top of the head, gives them a most feminine appearance: this is increased by the large necklaces and bracelets of beads, and the careful extirpation of every symptom of beard. Taking these circumstances into consideration, I am strongly of opinion that the story of the Amazons has arisen from these feminine-looking warriors encountered by the early voyager. I am inclined to this opinion, from the effect they first produced on myself, when it was only by close examination I saw that they were men; and, were the front part of their bodies and their breasts covered with shields, such as they always use, I am convinced any person seeing them for the first time would conclude they were women. We have only therefore to suppose that tribes having similar customs to those now existing on the river Uaupés, inhabited the regions where the Amazons were reported to have been seen, and we have a rational explanation of what has so much puzzled all geographers. The only objection to this explanation is, that traditions are said to exist among the natives, of a nation of 'women without husbands.' Of this tradition, however, I was myself unable to obtain any trace, and I can easily imagine it entirely to have risen from the suggestions and inquiries of Europeans themselves. When the story of the Amazons was first made known, it became of course a point with all future travellers to verify it, or if possible to get a glimpse of these warlike ladies. The Indians must no doubt have been overwhelmed with ques-

tions and suggestions about them, and they, thinking that the white men must know best, would transmit to their descendants and families the idea that such a nation did exist in some distant part of the country. Succeeding travellers, finding traces of this idea among the Indians, would take it as a proof of the existence of the Amazons; instead of being merely the effect of a mistake at the first, which had been unknowingly spread among them by preceding travellers, seeking to obtain some evidence on the subject."

Next to the human or demi-human inhabitants the greatest annoyances are the animals. There are alligators, in some of the streams, big enough to bolt an Indian warrior; there are vampire bats, which, in spite of what some naturalists assert, will phlebotomize a horse until he dies; there are jaguars, which are quite as fierce and strong as the royal Bengal tiger; and there are snakes, which the good Father Vernazza avers (and he wrote as late as 1845) are forty-five feet long and five and a half thick, and who suck in their prey, man, bird, or beast, by mere inhalation, from a distance of fifty yards. Yet the plague of the country are the smaller vermin, the ants, the ticks, and the mosquitoes. Our readers will probably remember Sidney Smith's description of the insectivorous tribes, where he says,—

"The *bête rouge* lays the foundation of a tremendous ulcer. In a moment you are covered with ticks. Chigoes bury themselves in your flesh, and hatch a colony of young chigoes in a few hours. They will not live together, but every chico sets up a separate ulcer, and has his own private portion of pus. Flies get entry into your mouth, into your eyes, into your nose: you eat flies, drink flies, and breathe flies. Lizards, cockroaches, and snakes get into the bed: ants eat up the books: scorpions sting you on the foot. Every thing bites, stings or bruises: every second of your existence you are wounded by some piece of animal life that nobody has ever seen before except Swammerdam and Meriam. An insect with eleven legs is swimming in your tucup, a nondescript of nine wings is struggling in the small beer, or a caterpillar with several dozen eyes in his belly is hastening over the bread and butter. All nature is alive, and seems to be gathering her entomological hosts to eat you up, as you are standing, out of your coat, waistcoat, and breeches. Such are the tropics."

Now this is all bad enough; but Mr. Wallace complains of another nuisance, which assailed his ears. "Every night," he says, speaking of a voyage up the Tocantins, "we had a concert of frogs, which make most extraordinary noises. There are three kinds, which can be heard all at once. One makes a noise somewhat like what one would expect from a frog, namely, a dismal croak, but the sounds uttered by the others were like no animal that I ever heard before. A distant railway train approaching and a blacksmith hammering on his anvil, are what they exactly resemble. They are such true

imitations, that when lying half-dozing in the canoe, I have often fancied myself at home, hearing the familiar sounds of the approaching mail-train, and the hammering of the boiler-makers at the iron-works. Then, we often had the "guarhibas," or howling monkeys, with their terrific noises; the shrill grating whistle of the cicadas and locusts, and the peculiar notes of the suacúras and other aquatic birds, add to these the loud unpleasant hum of the mosquitoes in your immediate vicinity, and you have a pretty good idea of our nightly concert." A serenade of that sort, however, seems to us only a proper accompaniment to the general experiences of life in those latitudes.

For there is another sense that must be sometimes revolted, in spite of the luxurious fruits that we read of,—the sense of taste. A breakfast of alligator-tail is not perhaps objectionable when you are hard pressed; nor a dinner of raw turtle, which is so excellent when broiled or made into soup, that it may be, possibly, somewhat of a dainty when underdone; but heaven preserve us from monkey chops or a salad of nut-oil and river-hog! Mr. Herndon informs us that monkeys are rather tough, though the livers he found tender and good. Yet, even after a luxurious banquet on liver, Jocko was sure to have his revenge on the feeder, who always nearly perished of nightmare. "Some devil," says the gallant Lieutenant, "with arms as nervous as the monkey's, had me by the throat, and staring on me, with his cold cruel eye, expressed his determination to hold on to the death."

Still, an enthusiast may tell us that the glorious imagery, which nature every where in the tropics addresses to the eye, is a compensation for the defeats suffered by the other senses. The eye, as in Macbeth's soliloquy, "is worth all the rest;" for the grand forms of the trees, the varied hues of the foliage, the endless brilliancy of the birds and butterflies, and the deep azure of the skies, present a panorama which quite overwhelms the mind with its beauty and magnificence. But Mr. Wallace, in spite of the enthusiasm of earlier travellers, is inclined to think that he found quite as much picturesque landscape at home as in the tropics. "It is on the roadside, and on the river's banks," he says, "that we see all the beauties of the tropical vegetation. There we find a mass of bushes, and trees, and shrubs of every height, rising one over another, all exposed to the bright light and fresh air, and putting forth within reach their flowers and fruits, which, in

the forests, only grow far up on the top-most branches. Bright flowers and green foliage combine their charms, and climbing with their flowery festoons, cover over the bare and decaying stems. "Yet,"—and here comes in his protest,—“pick out the loveliest spots where the most glorious flowers of the tropics expand their glowing petals, and for every scene of this kind, we may find another at home of equal beauty, and with an equal amount of brilliant color. Look at a field of buttercups and daisies,—a hill-side covered with gorse and broom,—or a forest glade azure with a carpet of wild hyacinths, and they will bear a comparison with any scene the tropics can produce. I have never seen any thing more glorious than an old crab-tree in full blossom, and the horse-chestnut, lilac, and laburnum, will vie with the choicest tropical trees and shrubs. In the tropical waters are no more beautiful plants than our white and water lilies, our irises and the flowering rush; for I cannot consider the flower of the *Victoria Regia* more beautiful than that of the *Nymphæa Alba*, though it may be larger; nor is it so abundant an ornament of tropical waters as the latter is of ours.” Our author then adds, that the changing hues of autumn, and the tender green of spring are never seen in the tropics; while the rich expanse of green meadows and rich pastures are wanting, and the distant landscape fails in the soft and hazy effects which so excite the imagination in the more temperate latitudes. Mr. Wallace leaves out of his description the numerous and splendid families of birds,—the tanijers, the toucans, the macaws, and the parrots,—but we are still inclined to concur in the spirit of his remarks. Even for exquisite scenery “there is no place like home.”

We cannot quit the birds without quoting from Herndon a little legend which he heard of one, which had a peculiarly plaintive note, and was called by the Spaniards “the lost soul.”

“After we had retired to our mats beneath the shed for the night, I asked the governor if he knew a bird called *El alma perdida*. He did not know it by that name, and requested a description. I whistled an imitation of its notes; whereupon, an old crone, stretched on a mat near us, commenced, with animated tones and gestures, a story in the Inca language, which, translated, ran somehow thus:

“An Indian and his wife went out from the village to work their chakra, carrying their infant with them. The woman went to the spring to get water, leaving the man in charge of the child, with many cautions to take good care of it. When she arrived at the spring she found it dried up, and went further to look for another. The husband, alarmed at her long absence, left the child and went in search. When they

returned the child was gone; and to their repeated cries as they wandered through the woods in search, they could get no response save the wailing cry of this little bird, heard for the first time, whose notes their anxious and excited imagination ‘syllabled’ into *pa-pa, ma-ma* (the present Quichua name of the bird). I suppose the Spaniards heard this story, and, with that religious poetic turn of thought which seems peculiar to this people, called the bird ‘The lost soul.’

“The circumstances under which the story was told—the beautiful, still, starlight night—the deep, dark forest around—the faint-red glimmering of the fire, flickering upon the old woman’s gray hair and earnest face as she poured forth the guttural tones of the language of a people now passed away—gave it a sufficiently romantic interest to an imaginative man.”

The object of Herndon’s visit was, as we have said, to explore the resources of the valley, and to ascertain to what extent it invited the commerce of foreign nations. Our distinguished astronomer, Lieutenant Maury, had long been of the opinion that this region opened the finest opportunities for trade, and was eager to direct the attention of capitalists to the importance and prospective value of a steam navigation of the Amazon. It was at his instance, therefore, as we suspect, that Lieutenants Herndon and Gibbon were selected for the expedition. Their reports strongly confirm his anticipations as to the wealth of the whole immense district. Our present trade with Para, the city at the mouth of the river, already amounts to about one million of dollars a year, but if the productions of the interior,—the India-rubber, the sarsaparilla, the cocoa, and a thousand other commodities,—could be readily exchanged by means of steam-boats, for our goods, the trade might be prodigiously increased. The several governments having jurisdiction over the river and its tributaries, those of Peru and Bolivia in particular, are disposed to pursue a liberal policy in regard to companies which will undertake the steam navigation of it, and it only requires the co-operation of Brazil to throw open the entire valley to the navigation of the world. Brazil has foolishly made a contract with one De Sousa for the exclusive navigation, but it appears to be doubtful whether he will be able to fulfil his part of the bargain, even if it should not turn out that the said contract is an infringement of the treaty with Peru, which stipulates for a joint action of the two nations in all that concerns the subject. Tirado, who was foreign minister of Peru last year, is opposed to the contract of De Sousa, and will succeed, we trust, in getting it disavowed. In the mean time the President of Peru, Don Jose Rufino Echinique, has issued a patriotic and enlightened decree,

which offers the most liberal inducements to the navigation of the river, and to settlements in the districts over which Peru has control. It opens the ports of Nauta and Loreto to commerce, abandoning all import or export duties, and making concessions of lands, accompanied by a certain exemption from taxes, to all settlers. Bolivia has made a decree to the same effect, and it is hoped that Brazil will not long continue to stand in her own light. Herndon writes,—

"Were she to adopt a liberal instead of an exclusive policy, throw open the Amazon to foreign commerce and competition, invite settlement upon its banks, and encourage emigration by liberal grants of lands, and efficient protection to person and property, backed as she is by such natural advantages, imagination could scarcely follow her giant strides towards wealth and greatness.

"She, together with the five Spanish American republics above named, owns in the valley of the Amazon more than two millions of square miles of land, intersected in every direction by many thousand miles of what might be called canal navigation.

"This land is of unrivalled fertility; on account of its geographical situation and topographical and geological formation, it produces nearly every thing essential to the comfort and well-being of man. On the top and eastern slope of the Andes lie hid unimaginable quantities of silver, iron, coal, copper, and quicksilver, waiting but the application of science and the hand of industry for their development. The successful working of the quicksilver mines of Huancavelica would add several millions of silver to the annual product of Cerro Pasco alone. Many of the streams that dash from the summits of the Cordilleras wash gold from the mountain-side, and deposit it in the hollows and gulches as they pass. Barley, quinoa, and potatoes, best grown in a cold, with wheat, rye, maize, clover, and tobacco, products of a temperate region, deck the mountain-side, and beautify the valley; while immense herds of sheep, llamas, alpacas, and vicunas feed upon those elevated plains, and yield wool of the finest and longest staple.

"Descending towards the plain, and only for a few miles, the eye of the traveller from the temperate zone

is held with wonder and delight by the beautiful and strange productions of the torrid. He sees for the first time the symmetrical coffee-bush, rich with its dark-green leaves, its pure white blossoms, and its gay, red fruit. The prolific plantain, with its great waving fan-like leaf, and immense pendant branches of golden-looking fruit, enchains his attention. The sugar-cane waves in rank luxuriance before him, and if he be familiar with Southern plantations, his heart swells with emotion as the gay yellow blossom and white boll of the cotton set before his mind's eye the familiar scenes of home.

"Fruits, too, of the finest quality and most luscious flavor, grow here; oranges, lemons, bananas, pine-apples, melons, chirimoyas, granadillas, and many others which, unpleasant to the taste at first, become with use exceedingly grateful to the accustomed palate. The Indian gets here his indispensable coca, and the forests at certain seasons are redolent with the perfume of the vanilla."

Neither of the South American nations alone will be able to accomplish much towards the introduction of an energetic foreign population, but with the assistance of northern or European enterprise might make the most gigantic strides. Their inhabitants are not maritime; they have no skill in steam navigation; they are destitute of the necessary capital. But let them encourage the commerce of others, and they will instantly procure all the assistance that they need. Let them say to the people of the United States, already their best customers and most natural allies, "Come with your steamers laden with manufactures to our free ports," and their grand river would no longer roll in loneliness through the sullen solitudes, but grow white with ships, the precious harbingers of civilization and progress. Only give the Yankee a chance, and, in spite of insects, snakes, frog-concerts, and dirty Indians, he will raise you to power and glory.