the luxuriance of animal and vegetable life said to exist there." His design was to make a large collection of objects in natural history; but unhappily they were destroyed by a fire at sea which he encountered on his return. The reader will be surprised to learn that upon the whole Mr. Wallace was disappointed with tropical scenery. It would be very grand if you could see it, but you cannot see it on account of its own luxuriance. It covers the land with a green plain, viewed from a height, when the spectator looks down upon the forest; and below, nothing can be seen by reason of the number of trees, and the thick-growing climbing plants that mat them together. Nor did Mr. Wallace find so many animals as he expected. The truth is, they cannot be copied in the thicket, and they move away at the sound of footsteps long before the traveller can cut his way with his hatchet to the spot where they had been feeding. Then there is the incalculable annoyance of the insect world, destroying all pleasure that might otherwise be derived from the novelty of place and scene. Mr. Wallace saw most when he was upon the river; for then he could get a peep into vistas of the forest, and animal life was more abundant and approachable. Here is one of the most remarkable objects he beheld:—

THE MILK-TREE.

What most interested us, however, were several large logs or the massaranduba, or milk-tree. On our way through the forest we had seen some trunks much notched by persons who had been extracting the milk. It is one of the noblest trees of the forest, rising with a straight stem to an enormous height. The timber is very hard, fine-grained, and durable, and is valuable for works which are much exposed to the weather. The fruit is eatable, and very good, the size of a small apple, and full of a rich and very juicy pulp. But strangest of all is the vegetable milk, which exudes in abundance when the bark is cut. It has about the consistency of thick cream, and, but for a very slight peculiar taste, could scarcely be distinguished from the genuine product of the cow. Mr. Leavens ordered a man to tap some logs that had lain nearly a month in the yard. He cut several notches in the bark with an axe, and in a minute the rich sap was running out in great quantities. It was collected in a basin, diluted with water, strained, and brought up at tea-time and at breakfast next morning. The peculiar flavour of the milk seemed rather to improve the quality of the tea, and gave it as good a colour as rich cream. In coffee it is equally good. Mr. Leavens informed us that he had made a custard of it, and that, though it had a curious dark colour, it was very well tasted. The milk is also used for glue, and is said to be as durable as that made use of by carpenters. As a specimen of its capabilities in this line, Mr. Leavens showed us a violin he had made, the belly-board of which, formed of two pieces, he had glued together with it applied fresh from the tree, without any preparation. It had been done two years. The instrument had been in constant use; and the joint was now perfectly good and sound throughout its whole length. As the milk hardens by exposure to air, it becomes a very tough, slightly elastic substance, much resembling gutta-percha; but, not having the property of being softened by hot water, it is not likely to become so extensively useful as that article.

Another curiosity was
The next morning my hunter arrived, and immediately went out in his canoe among the islands, where the umbrella-birds are found. In the evening after dark he returned, bringing one fine specimen. This singular bird is about the size of a raven, and is of a similar colour, but its feathers have a more scaly appearance, from being margined with a different shade of glossy blue. It is also allied to the crows in its structure, being very similar to them in its feet and bill. On its head it bears a crest, different from that of any other bird. It is formed of feathers more than two inches long, very thickly set, and with hairy plumes curving over at the end. These can be laid back so as to be hardly visible, or can be erected and spread out on every side, forming a hemispherical or rather a hemiellipsoidal dome completely covering the head, and even reaching beyond the point of the beak; the individual feathers then stand out something like the down-bearing seeds of the dandelion. Besides this, there is another ornamental appendage on the breast, formed by a fleshy tubercle, as thick as a quill and an inch and a half long, which hangs down from the neck, and is thickly covered with glossy feathers, forming a large pendent plume or tassel. This also the bird can either press to its breast, so as to be scarcely visible, or can swell out, so as almost to conceal the fore part of its body. In the female the crest and the neck-plume are less developed, and she is altogether a smaller and much less handsome bird. It inhabits the flooded islands of the Rio Negro and the Solimoes, never appearing on the mainland. It feeds on fruits, and utters a loud hoarse cry, like some deep musical instrument;
The river Negro is not the only one to display its beauty, for not far from its mouth the Tapajos also is a gem of nature. The Negro is the larger and more majestic, but the Tapajos has a charm that is peculiar to itself.

The Tapajos is a tributary of the Amazon, and it flows through a region of high mountains and dense forests. It is navigable for most of its course, but the falls and rapids make travel difficult and dangerous. The Indians who live along its banks are a hardy people, skilled in the use of canoes and the art of navigation.

The forests along the Tapajos are rich in variety and beauty, with many species of trees and plants that are unknown elsewhere. The air is filled with the scent of flowers and the sound of birds, and the river is teeming with life. The Indians catch fish with nets and spears, and hunt for game with bows and arrows.

The Tapajos is not only a river of life, but also a river of death. Its waters are filled with dangerous creatures, such as anacondas and caimans, and the Indians must be careful when they venture into its depths. But despite the dangers, they make the most of its abundant resources, living in harmony with the land and the creatures that inhabit it.

The Tapajos is a river of many marvels, and it is a place of wonder and mystery. Its beauty is not to be fully appreciated without a journey into its depths, where one can truly experience the majesty of nature.
Another scrap of Natural History.

THE COWFISH.

One day the fisherman brought us in a fine "peixe boi," or cow-fish, a species of *Manatus*, which inhabits the Amazon, and is particularly abundant in the lakes in this part of the river. It was a female, about six feet long, and near five in circumference in the thickest part. The body is perfectly smooth, and without any projections or inequalities, gradually changing into a horizontal semicircular flat tail, with no appearance whatever of hind limbs. There is no distinct neck; the head is not very large, and is terminated by a large mouth and fleshy lips, somewhat resembling those of a cow. There are stiff bristles on the lips and a few distantly scattered hairs over the body. Behind the head are two powerful oval fins, and just beneath them are the breasts, from which, on pressure being applied, flows a stream of beautiful white milk. The ears are minute holes, and the eyes very small. The dung resembles that of a horse. The colour is a dusky lead, with some large pinkish-white marbled blotches on the belly. The skin is about an inch thick on the back, and a quarter of an surface above; such a treat is perhaps reserved for the traveller of a future age.