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Six Hundred Miles Up the Magdalena

An account of my journey from Cartagena
to La Dorada and then to Honda in search of work

[Facsimil]

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Magdalena

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I left Cartagena on Saturday 7th June 1849,
and took the 1.00 train to Calanan, a little town
on the banks of the Magdalena about 80 miles away.
Of the little scenery along the line I won't say much,
having fully described it already, but it is not
very uninteresting, being rather monotonous and flat.
Arriving at Calanan at 5.45, I was met at the station
by Mr. Elber & Sanchez, & with them went straight
to the Hotel Colombier where we had dinner. Hotel
Colombier sounds rather grand doesn't it, & you get a
picture a fine large building, with neat and comfortable
etc; but it is only a thatched cottage of six rooms,
only two of which are bed rooms. Each bed room contains
about 6 or 8 beds, and there are no partitions or screens
whatsoever. Of the kind of dinner we had I will say

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something further on, in my remarks about the
food. After dinner, at about 7, we took a stroll
around the town, visited two or three American who
live there, and had a look at some of the native
dancers, several of which were going on. We looked some
of the native delicacies, called propielas with some
hot coffee, & had a fine time on the whole. At about
8.30 I thought it time to turn in, but as I knew the
Hotel would be looked up, went to the railway platform
with Sanchez, & slept on a little cot there, I was not
sorry in the least, for I did not like the idea of
sleeping with about 5 or 6 other people. We had a
pretty smart shower of rain during the night, & got
up at about 5.30. We strolled around the town again,
& had another look at the dancers, which were still
going on, until about 7, when we went to the hotel
and had coffee. After coffee we went out with our
Rums, & were out nearly the whole day, only coming in
for breakfast at about 12. At about 4.00 there was
a brief squall, & heavy downpour of rain, which
however did not wet us, as we got in just in time.
All the afternoon we had been looking at the boat,
& at about 7, just before dinner, she was sighted, at
8 she came alongside, & at about 8.00 I went on board.
The only sleep I got that night was an occasional
doze in a rocking chair, for everybody was in a state
of much confusion. Morning broke very cloudy, &
heavy showers fell at intervals, they stopped however,

at about 8 we had no more, although it still looks very threatening. At 8:40 we left our mooring, & I started off on one of the most lonely & uninteresting journeys I have ever had. The men looked lonely, & in some parts saw a mile broad. We had in tow a large light with a pile-drum on it, & a little steam launch, which we were taking up to the Rodaga del Sur to build a small bridge there. Keeping pretty close to the bank, I supposed to avoid the current, we must have gone at the rate of about 5 miles an hour. At 10:40 we arrived at the Rodaga San Juan, where we stopped to land some cargo. It is the most difficult place to effect a landing in the whole river, for it is just above an enormous whirlpool, in which the boats sometimes get caught - & dashed against the bank. We managed it splendidly however, & after taking in a supply of wood, left at about 11:00, when we had breakfast. During the course of the day we touched at one or two little ports, & landed secured some cargo. It was very cloudy all day long, & night closed in with threatening clouds & high thunder & lightning, but we had no rain. I turned in about 9, & slept the sleep of the just, although all I had was a bare, hard, cot, with my rug as a pillow. Mearns however some

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 welcome all discomforts, & I slept as soundly as if I were on a spring mattress, with pillows of soft down. Next morning (Tuesday 20th June) I was suddenly awakened at about 6 by the blowing of the horn, the steam pipe to which passed through my room & leaked a little, so that it was soon full of steam. I jumped up & went out quickly, & found we were at the town of Mapangue, where we would stop for about three hours. After a while I went ashore to have a look around, & bought some of the guava tree for which it is noted. Mapangue is the most neglected town on the river to Florida, & is quite a large business center. The houses are built of brick, and are very much like those in Cartagena. Of the inhabitants I won't say anything, as my remarks on "The Nations", further on, describe them fully. Two other boats were there, one of which was the "Atlewa" going down, so I hurriedly scribbled off a letter to mother, & gave it to the Captain to post for me. We left at about 10, & steamed hard all day until about 5 PM, when we stopped at the little wood-station of Guamal, (pronounced Guzamal) to take in a supply. I went ashore & got some mangoes, & took a photograph of it, with a crowd of the

nation in the foreground. We left at about 8:30
 and had dinner. At 8:50 I had coffee, & at about
 9:00 turned in. During the day & at night I
 had great fun at the games on board, & thought
 out the whole voyage it was the essence of the
 greatest pleasure to me. Next morning (Wednesday)
 was a repetition of the one before, & I was again
 awakened by the fun, this time starting off Banco
 another pretty large town, though not quite as
 big as Nagasaki, & a great many of the
 houses being thatched. There is a pretty large
 church, known with a fine dome of solid masonry.
 The town is on a large kind of the river, which
 looks very lovely. I came out quickly but did not
 go ashore, so we only stayed about half an hour.
 So soon as we left I had coffee, & then came out on
 deck & took observation. A Pradual ^{one can make} the great
 change in the scenery all around. Landmarks,
 covered with large allegories, some of them 12 or
 20 feet high, began to appear, and the words
 on each side seemed to get dinner & dinner. At
 about 2:15 we finished in at a little place called
 San Jorge. There the San Lorenzo, the
 most much name of the company, announced,
 and an orderly was called, had to go about a

quarter of a mile inland on some houses,
 so taking his gun with him he asked me to
 join him, for which I was only too ready. We
 only stayed about 15 minutes there, & did
 not see anything worth while shooting. We
 soon went back to the boat, and at 3:40 arrived
 at the town of Carmen, where we stopped some
 passengers, staying only about 10 minutes.
 It was a lovely afternoon, & numbers of
 large fowls & other beautiful birds were
 flying about in great numbers. At 7:15 we
 left the Bodoga (Carmen) was reached. Leaving at
 about 7:30 we arrived at the wood station of
 Rio Pallas at 8:30, & after taking in a good
 supply left at 11:10. It was a glorious morning
 night, & the ship's crew were looking very
 like the capt. left. I sat on deck for a long
 time thinking of different things, & at intervals
 coming in a hush conversation with a French
 lady, who could not speak a word of English.
 She should have heard me trying to speak
 French; it was great fun. I had coffee at
 9 & turned in about 11. At 1:00 we arrived
 at the Bodoga de San, where the San Lorenzo,
 & his party of men were were in charge of the

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little sham launch and pilot driver, had to leave us. I dressed & came out to see them off. The night was beautifully cool, almost cold in fact, & the moon was still shining. We left at about 2.50 & I turned into bed again. The Bodys del San is on a small tributary of the Magdalena called the Cebrija. It is a very narrow stream, & we scarcely had room to turn round. Next morning, (Thursday 22nd) I woke up naturally at about 6, no horn having rudely disturbed me, & awoke out about 6.50. There were now only three other passengers besides myself, the French lady, her maid, & little boy. After coffee, which I had all alone, I took up my accustomed seat on deck near the bow, and making myself comfortable in an easy chair, admired the beautiful ever-changing scenery. Numbers of strange & lovely birds were flying around, large cranes & other water birds seeming very tame, & allowing the boat to come quite close to them. The river was

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now seeming more and more dangerous, as sandbanks sprang, (large trees which are brought down & sometimes are hardly seen above water) was pretty frequently met with. At 11 we had breakfast; the Captain & his wife coming down to it. For the first time, as there were so few passengers, I shall say a few words about Captain Simmonds & the journey we took further on in my "Red & Ends". At about 1.00 p.m. we passed some trees on the bank simply covered with little black monkeys. They were awfully frightened at the boat, and I saw very much amused at their antics, as they hopped from branch to branch. We stopped at a little place for 5 minutes at 1.20 to drop a passenger, & at 2.00 came to a part on the bank exactly like Castleton fadens. There was a lovely stand of green grass rather high, and hundreds of palms & other beautiful trees ~~to~~ scattered all about. I gazed at it lost in admiration,

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for I could hardly believe that nature had laid out such a lovely park. The view from above is superb; here are lovely, & can hardly be described. Every afternoon I enjoy watching them. At 4 we stopped at the Bodya Bogamora, and after taking in some wood left at 4:45. At 5 we had dinner, & at 7 arrived at the wood-station of Strilla, where we had to make fast for the night, the river having become too dangerous to navigate in the dark. Just before dark we passed a tree which was evidently the roosting place of the paroquets, for it was simply covered with hundreds of the most lovely birds imaginable. They were very alarmed at the boat, & rose in the air in a dense cloud, making an awful noise, but they soon settled down again as we passed. At about 9 I had coffee, & turned in at 10. It rained heavily during the night, but I did not hear much of it: We left our moorings at

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daybreak, (Friday 20th) and I came out & had coffee at about 7, and afterwards went out on deck. The morning was cloudy, & beautifully cool. The real dense South American forest, of which I have so often read, were now on each side, and seemed to grow denser & denser every minute. Lovely palms of all kinds were scattered about, hardly visible through the dense foliage of numerous other trees, while the ground was covered with a thick growth of beautiful tropical plants, some of them in full bloom. We kept as close to the banks as possible, sometimes on one side & sometimes on ~~another~~ ^{the} other, as the channel was now very intricate. *Salweeni* sandstone with alligators on them were on all sides, and we wound our way slowly through them, very often having to go at half speed. At 11 we had breakfast, & at 4:15 stopped at the little wood-station of Mansampo for about half an hour.

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The heat during the day was intense, & my face & hands were a fiery red. At 5 we had dinner, & at 7 we arrived at Porto Berris after a most dangerous passage. The run had changed its course since they had been up there last, and an entirely new channel formed. We had to keep sounding all the way and in some places only three feet of water was recorded. I like to hear them sounding. Just off a bell rings in the engine room, and the engines are put at half speed, the Captain then goes on the upper deck, & gives a great big bell three one peal, that rings through the whole ship. Immediately two men run to the bow, one on either side, and seizing two long bamboo poles marked off in feet, begin to sound with them, calling out the number of feet recorded to the Captain, who in turn calls it out to the pilots. As the water gets shallower & shallower the speed is decreased, until

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we just crawl along. I did not go ashore at Porto Berris as it was night, and I hear it is a very unhealthy place, in fact, so we drew alongside, I saw a crowd on shore, and found afterwards that there was the corpse of a man there, who had died in the afternoon of fever. People up there don't have much respect for the dead, but when them to be buried in the best way they can. I went to the piers at about 8:30 & played until about 9:30. All the old things I used to play sound awfully nice down here, and make me fancy I am once more at home. I almost imagine sometimes I see all my old friends dancing, as I so often have, when I am playing. The little Yunch lady & the maid are very fond of music, and often dance together when I play. It is great fun to watch them. I had coffee at about 10, and turned in about eleven.

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Sunday morning, 24th, saw me awake at 5, as the boat left Porto Berris. I took a peep outside, and saw a thick fog all around. At 5:00 it became so dense that we could hardly see ten yards ahead, and we were compelled to put into the shore, and make fast to a tree. At about 6:30 however, it cleared off, we started off again. I had coffee at 7, went out on deck. It had turned out a lovely morning, and was beautifully cool. The channel was now very dangerous, and we had to sound frequently. At 9:00 we stopped for wood, leaving at 10:00, and at 11 we stopped at another woodstation, to complete our supply. Then we had breakfast, & left at 11:40. At about 1:45 we came to a place where the river had entirely changed its course since the last trip down, about two weeks before. A large tract of land, with houses, and everything, had been carried away, and their ruins could be seen further down on the bank. The channel now lay exactly

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where the land had been, and very narrow it was too. At about 2 we stopped for a short time to land some passengers, and went ahead steadily the whole afternoon until 7:40, when we reached a little wood station, & made fast for the night. During the day we passed the "Clara", another of the company boats, going down, & exchanged signals. At about 5 in the afternoon we sighted the Andio mountains in the distance. We were now only about 14 leagues from La Dorada, which we would reach the next afternoon. I had great fun at the beans again at night, and turned in at about 9:00. At 5 o'clock on Sunday morning the 25th we left our moorings, and I came out & had coffee at about 6. It was a lovely morning and there was no fog at all. At about 8:15 we stopped for wood. While we were loading, one of the men came across a snake in the wood-pile, and a very poisonous one it was too. It was only about two feet long,

but deadly poisonous, was called a
Mafinan. My son had it stuck on the
end of a sharp-pointed stick, & I had a
good look at it: the whole country is
full of snakes, & the men have to be very
careful. Even at Calaman, I forgot to mention,
we killed a coral snake, which is very pretty,
but also deadly poisonous. We left at
about 9, & at 11 called in at another station
to complete our supply, leaving again at
12. I was reclining in an easy chair,
half asleep, at about 2 o'clock, when I
heard a great commotion & excitement
among the men, & immediately the
engines were slowed down & almost
stopped. I ran to the side & soon found
out the cause. The tank on one side
was almost shewn from the water, with
only a few ledges here & there, to a pretty
good height, & was of very loose, crumbly
soft earth. A fine, large, deer had fallen
over, & was just on a little ledge, seemed

up. The men were wild with excitement,
& sprang into the water, swimming for the
shore with all their might: I got out my
gun, & was ready to shoot in case it
should try to escape. I soon had to use
it too, for, mad with fright, it made a
dash for the top before the men had
half reached the shore. It had almost
succeeded in getting away, when I let fly,
and wounding it in its hind quarters,
brought it down to the ledge again. The
shot was rather fine, & it still made
frantic efforts to escape. Again I fired,
& wounding it a second time, brought
it down into the water. I was then
awfully sorry to see that it was a
mother deer, and had a little one with
it. It was now too late to be sorry
though, for the men had already seized
it, & after a short struggle, managed to

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bring them both on board, the boat-going close to the bank to receive them. The men put them in the hold, but they did not live long, as they both encumbered, I suppose from fright & exhaustion, in the afternoon. At 2.35 La Dorada, the end of our journey, was sighted, and at 5.20 we drew alongside. It is a very small place, & can hardly be called a town. It consists of two or three Roderos or warehouses, the railway station, and twenty or thirty miserable little thatched huts. On the opposite side of the river, which is rather narrow here, is a long range of high, bold-looking mountains, which are only about half a mile away. They are outlying spurs of the lofty Cordillera, a range of the Andes. There

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was one other boat in port - called the "Antioqueño", belonging to another company. The river, as I have said is very narrow here, and about 20 miles higher up, at Honda, it is full of rapids, which the boats cannot pass. At about 5.30 we had dinner, and at 8 they commenced to skin the deer, & I went down & watched them. The skin of the young one was very pretty, & I bought it from the man who took it off for a peso. We had coffee at 8.30, & turned in about 9. Getting up at 6 next morning Monday is I had coffee at 7 & went ashore at 7.40 to take the train to Honda, which is 22 miles away. It was a very pretty journey. The track runs through dense forest, the thick bushes & low trees actually brushing against the windows of the train as it passes, and large open places covered

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with grass, but not in the distance by the thick woods. Arriving at Honda at 9.45, my first move was to go straight to the agent of the river boat company there, to whom I had a letter from Mr. Fearon. I hadn't the least idea where he was to be found, but as luck would have it, as I entered the town, I saw a flag flying in front of a building, & going to it I found it was the agency. The chief agent Mr. Ripley to whom the letter was addressed, was not in town, so I gave to Mr. Gillis, who was acting for him. Mr. Gillis was also the British Vice Consul there, & asked me for my passport, which I produced. He promised to try his best - for me, & said he would see Mr. Knowles the engineer, & Mr. Emerson, the manager, of the railway himself, and drop me a

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line if there was any chance. I then left him, strolled around the town for a little, & then went to the American hotel there for breakfast. I shall now give a short description of the town as it appeared to me. Honda is about the most, wretched, dirty, gloomy-looking place I have ever come across. The streets, although they are hardly worthy of the name, are very narrow and frightfully crooked. It is more like heading the path of a maze, than walking in the streets of a town. They are all paved!!! I mean with rough river stones of all shapes & sizes, simply thrown into position & rammed firm by the traffic. The side walks are from 2' 6" to 3' 0" wide, & are fairly good. The houses are built of brick, and are not unlike those in Carlisle, only on a smaller scale. From Honda, the

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journey to Bogota, which is only about 70 miles away, is confined on mules, horses, or cows, for which purpose hundreds of animals are always kept in readiness. The cows are generally used to carry goods & heavy packages, & stock animals they are too. A large consignment of goods had just arrived when I was there, & it was all on the backs of cows, of which there were about 50 or 70. They were lovely animals & quite tame, only two or three men hung with them, although they filled up the whole street from side to side, the narrow little sidewalks hung the only part when I could walk & even then I sometimes had to take hold of their long horns, & push them out of the way. Honda is situated just at the junction of another large river with the Magdalena. There are four beautiful & typical bridge-work there, there being

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of iron & one, (the railway) of wood. The railway bridge & two of the iron ones are across the tributary, while the fourth, an enormous iron suspension bridge, is across the mighty Magdalena itself. The people are a most God-forsaken lot. I don't think I saw twenty who had anything like a happy look on their faces. They all look sick woad, and so though they never hope to enjoy this life. The women, young & old, go about with their thin hair down, & black mantillas round their shoulders. The men all wear tall, white, straw, Panama hats, and more horrible, wretched apologies for human beings could hardly be found. It was market-day, so I went to the square which is the market place, & saw there nearly all the people of the town. I therefore had a splendid chance of observing all the little

Kuonhantio etc. etc. Captain Rimmonds had very kindly asked me to come back to the boat by the last train, & stop on board, as I should thereby save any hotel expenses. At about 1.0 o'clock I went back to Mrs. Pilli, who said he did not think there was much hope. I told him I was going back by the same boat, & was stopping on board, & he promised if anything should turn up before I left, he would at once let me know. I then left him, & took the train back to the boat, which I reached at about 4.45. At 5.30 I had dinner, & at about 9 turned in. A party of about ten Colombian sleeping board. They had come down to meet another boat, which however had not yet arrived, so they asked the captain if he would give them some beds on board, as they had nowhere to go to, which he did.

Next morning, Tuesday 27th, I got up at about 5, and getting a boy on shore went out with my gun. He went into the deep inner forests, & I fired a few shots, but was unsuccessful. I did not feel inclined to shoot at all, & did not hit a thing, so returned to the boat at about 7 & had coffee. After coffee I cleaned my gun, & then went to the piano. The Baranguilla, the boat for which the people had come to meet, came up at about 11.15, & at 11.30 we had breakfast. The rest of the day seemed awfully long. I filled some cartridges, & then took things easy on deck, alternately drying & shooting about, until about 5.30, when we had dinner. After dinner I went to the picans, & then fooled around until 8.30, when I turned in. Wednesday 28th. Darned faithfully cold. I woke up at about 5.30, and could not make it out at all. At about 6.30 I could stand it no longer, so I got up,

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and when I looked outside found a dense fog had settled on us, & I could not see the other boats at all. I came out & had some hot coffee, which fixed me up. The fog slowly dispersed at about 7.30, and at 8 the Antioquia, the boat that was there when we arrived, sailed. At about 9.15 I went out with my gun, & shot a pretty large bird called the Carpintero, or carpenter bird. It makes a tremendous noise as it taps the hollow trees, & I thought at first it was some large animal. The boy I had with me was awfully afraid of tiger-cats, & said they were in great numbers around here, so he would not go far into the woods at all. Perhaps it was just as well, for although I should have liked very much to get one, I would never have been able to kill it with the shot I had in, and my revolver,

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which I always carried in readiness at my side, would have required a range too close to be pleasant. I returned to the boat at 10.30, and after breakfast, got hold of a book belonging to the captain, & read until about 5. At 5.30 we had dinner, three passengers having arrived, one being an old priest, and another a doctor from Bogota. I took a photo of the two after dinner, & then tried to while away the time as well as I could until 10, when I turned in. Next morning, Thursday 29th I was once again awakened by the horn at about 5, having for the start to return. I had heard nothing from Mr Ellis, although he had sent down a man the evening before to dispatch the boat. I had off at about 6 with the priest & doctor, they could not speak English, so I tried to speak in Spanish as well as I could. We passed through some dense fog shortly after we left, but did not have to stop.

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Going down stream we made about 10 miles an hour, & the banks on each side seemed to slip past. At about 10 we passed the wreck of a river boat, which had allided with a snag about three years ago & sunk. Her machinery is all there, and her wheel is high out of water. We had to take the same channel both going & coming, & a narrow one it is too. At about 1 o'clock we came upon the "Antiquia", the boat that left the morning before, ground on a sandbank. It appears they had run short of wood and the afternoon before, and in order to get some from any boat that should pass, the captain had run her aground, & was signalling for help. We did not know, & went to their assistance. The captain then told us he wanted wood, & then we saw through the whole thing. Captain Dimmonds assisted him properly, but gave him some, & pulled

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them off. We had not got half a mile away, when she slicked again, & we went back to her, but she managed to get off before we reached her. She was drawing almost 4 feet of water, while we were only about 2' 6" deep. I took a snapshot of her as she came off. At 2 o'clock we arrived safely at Port Denis, took in three or four passengers, & landed some cargo. The Helix, going up, & the Antiquia, came in while we were there, & we left them both at about 3:20. The Channel had changed again since we had been up, & we took an entirely new one, going very slowly. The navigation of the river is very dangerous. Not the best pilot can ever say that he knows the channel, for it is constantly changing, and he has to be guided entirely by the appearance of the water, & his knowledge of the peculiarities of the current. Every class is with a glimmering sun, although it

looked very rainy ahead, and we had a slight shower at about 5.30, and at 7 we made fast at a little wood station for the night. I went to the beams at about 7.30, had coffee about 9, & thinned in about 10. Two other boats were moored for the night, not very far away, and we could see their lights distinctly. Friday so we were again awakened by a terrific blowing of the horns, from aft-horn succeeded one another, & I could not make it out at all. I came out quickly, & found we were passing the two boats we saw in the distance last night, & were exchanging signals. At about 7.30 we were passing the Mountains of Ceaña in the distance, very beautiful they looked, in the soft haze of the morning, with the fog on them in spots, here & there. At 9.45 we arrived at the Bodoga Logamoa, & taking in a supply of wood aft at 11, when we had

breakfast. At 12.10 we passed the Cañca going up, & at 2 arrived at a place called Boario. Here we took in a large cargo, and two passengers, and left at 4.40. If we could manage to reach the Bodoga del Sur, a distance of about 12½ leagues before nightfall, we would be able to go all night, for the channel below that is good, so we put on full speed, and going at almost 18 miles an hour, arrived there at 7.20. We were now in a good part of the river, & could go ahead all night. Leaving Bodoga del Sur at 7.50, we stopped at the Bodoga Central at 8.15 for 5 minutes & took in about 6 passengers. At 9 we arrived at the wood station of Los Pelos when we had coffee, and after taking in a good supply left at about 11, when I turned in. We bunched at one or two other little places during the night, but I did not know when. Next morning, Saturday 12th July, I came out at about 6.30, and had coffee, and at 7 we arrived at Bansa.

We took in several more passengers & some wood, & left at 7.30. At about 10 we passed the General Raig, & shortly after the "Joa" both going up, & I took photographs of them. At 11 we passed the little village of Pines; we did not stop, but went quite close in, to them a little on shore, and at 11.15 we passed the mouth of the Cauca river, a tributary of the Magdalena. This was a strip down all the way by the river, which the Magdalena is covered with large clumps of them. At 12.30 we stopped for wood, leaving at 1.15, and at 2.45 we arrived at Mayague. As we were making a long stay there, I went ashore, & got some more guava dice. We took in a large cargo, principally of rubber, & some more passengers, & left at 4.50. There were now quite a number of passengers, & the dinner table was full. At 7.30 we stopped for more wood, leaving at 8.20, & at 9.20 we arrived at San Bruno,

when we took in some more cargo, & left at about 10. We would reach Calamar at 2 or there in the morning, so I commenced putting up my things, & turned in about 11. Sunday 2nd I woke up at 5.20 & found we were at Calamar, which we had reached at 3.20. I had coffee at about 6 & went ashore about 7.30 with Sanchez. He took me all over the station, & at about 11 I returned to the "Cavalia" for breakfast. Shortly before breakfast a man fell overboard & was almost drowned. The boat who was on board attended to him, & managed to bring him round. There had been a terrible fight in Calamar the night before, & a man had been shot dead by another. His body was sent to Cartagena in the same boat. I took, which left at about 2. I arrived at Cartagena at about 6 & drove straight to the "Heronio," after spending two of the most enjoyable weeks since I landed in the Magdalena on a River Boat.

Odds and Ends

— and —

Personalities

Captain Remondos.

He is the true type of a captain. Nearly square, or rather egg-shaped, with a round, jovial looking, red face, light hair, & a short light moustache, he looks the picture of contentment; but he has a terrible temper, and it is very easily aroused. If anyone provoked him, he would get in such a rage, that you would think he was going to kill him right away. His flow of language is marvellous, I mean language of the exclamatory genre, and he could hardly open his mouth without bringing out the most awful words. If he liked anything he said it over &... a. fine, & if the contrary, his language was not wanting in words to express it; he was rather of an obstinate nature, and stated his opinion as though they were bound to be right, and that you would have to agree with him. He has a kind heart though, and will do almost anything to help a man who is down. If a man does him any little act of

kindness he never forgets him, but won't betide the man who once does him an injury. Men do never forgive, and is always waiting for an opportunity to "get level with him." He talks a little too much about "personal concerns and other people's affairs, and tries to find out as much as he can, as that one has to be very careful with him.

He is a little conceited, & a little given to boasting. He is capable to such an extent that he very often says a great many things that are not true. He is not an educated man and is by no means a gentleman, but a rough, rollicking, old chap, & not half bad when you get to know him. I got on splendidly with him, & we were the best of friends.

His wife is a Jamaican, and took a very sensible woman, although she is not pretty, and isn't quite "the lady." She has one child, a dear little golden haired dot of about 2 years, but she has inherited the terrible limp of her father, and is very unsoothable.

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— Mr. Cox - Russet. —

Call about six foot two, thin, and cadaverous looking, with a long and narrow head, and black mustache, his expression seems to say that he is quite resigned to the inevitable, whatever it may be. He has a harsh voice, & is a bit of a cynic, so I did not take to him at first. He seems disconcerted and tired of life, but is not a bad chap on the whole, when you get to know him, although it takes a very long time, for he is quiet and retiring, and seldom speaks except spoken to. He looks about forty, & has evidently had a pretty hard life, which has earned him.

— The Barber & Jew. —

Dirty! Beastly! wretched looking objects, they are more like animals than men. Their one object seems to be to make as much as they possibly can, and their habits are filthy. At meal time a large basin is handed to show a dozen of them, full of some horrible mess, and they all crowd round

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it. Wiping their hands, for they have neither knives nor forks, they grab huge joints of meat; pieces of plantain, & handfuls of rice etc; and lean away at them carelessly, throwing back into the basin anything they do not want. Then two or three large gounds of coffee are passed round, & they all drink out of the same one. They are awfully childish and simple-minded, and are easily amused at small things. Before they think of doing anything for you, they always want to find out how much they will make by it.

— The Natives. —

The natives of the interior are very different to those of the coast, in every manner and character. The black mantilla is always worn by the women. Young & old all wear them hair hanging loose on their shoulders, & it is very amusing to see old

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have going about with their gray locks spread out: They are very fond of smoking, and are often seen in the streets with cigar in their mouths. The men seldom wear coats, but over their shirts they have a kind of overcoat, which consist of a square piece of very thick cloth, with a slit in the middle, through which they thrust their heads so, while it hangs loosely over their shoulders. They all wear high-crowned, white Panama hats, and a dirty, more wretched-looking cloth would be hard to find. Of this manner & character I did not see much, but I hear on the whole they are much more honest than those on the coast, and this was seen to better advantage. They seem a very simple minded people & are easily amused. The natives on the coast seem to have all the bad qualities of other races in them, & are qual'raoals.

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The Food.

I now come to a small though very important subject - viz - The Food. It is not as bad as I expected it was going to be, although they have a distinctly peculiar style of their own. Garlic and grease are their favorite constituents to every dish. Breakfast & dinner both consist of about 5 or 6 different things, for they can hardly be called courses. First of all, soup, which goes by the name of San Coché, and very funny soup it is too. It is just like water, with about half a pound of butter, some lard & grease, yam, plantain, beef, onion, sealions, cabbage, leeks, garlic, turnips & goodnes know what else thrown in & boiled. If it is clean it is not bad, but sometimes for a change they put the dirt off some of the pots in, I suppose to colour it, for it then assumes a purplish kind of tint, which does not look very inviting. After soup comes Mejorada a la Colombiana,

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and very troublesome sometimes it is to find the beef, for it has to be excavated out of a mass of onions, scallions, tomatoes, etc, and then at least it is found swimming in a small lake of yellow grease. With it are handed mounds of potatoes, also beautifully disguised & hidden away, and a bowl of yellow hush. Then a huge dish of hot headed round, sometimes so toiled in coconut oil & sometimes coloured a bright yellow. You start off to eat it, when in comes another dish. You are surprised, for it is beef again, only done in a slightly different way. It is cake like of you to take some of this, & with it also comes yam or macaroni. You make room & help yourself hoping to produce you will be then allowed to eat a third dish. But then is no meat for you, & you are surprised afterwards in a third dish. This is generally meat, but the potatoes & chicken & tinned meat.

You are now worked up to a terrific pitch. Really very hungry, you feel you could easily take some more, but the question is when to quit it; for only one plate is expected to hold everything. However, there is no time to be lost, so you commence chattering & chimp, & soon a little space is made. After this you are allowed beef in place. One soon gets accustomed to it however, & begins to pick off the first course & eat as he can, to make room for the others. After the substantial part has been disposed of comes dessert, which is either sliced prunes or preserved peaches, both accompanied with a piece of cheese. Then finally follows a cup of coffee, with out milk, & thin slices of toasts & plantains, quite hard & crisp. You then rise from the table with a feeling of relief, & thank goodness that at last you have got through. The beef on shore is nice, but they make a tender slice on board the boat. The plantation is the staff of life among the poor classes.

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Animal Life.

Colombia is the home of thousands of lovely birds & strange animals. Even near the cities like Cartagena, doves are common, and are often seen flying about; but the further away from civilization one gets, the more beautiful the birds become. Along the railway line to Bahama a few parrots are to be seen, & at Calcutua they are partly common, as are also all kinds of doves, & numerous other birds. Rattlesnakes and iguanas are all about, and very poisonous snakes, either coral or mephitic, are frequently met with. The coral snakes are only about two feet long, and are very pretty, being marked with black, red, & yellow. The mephitic are about the same length, but are of a dull metallic colour. Both are deadly poisonous. ~~But~~ ^{Some} ~~Coronopsis~~ ^{Coronopsis} is often seen on all animals as also to be seen around Calutua, but monkey, deer,

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and tiger cats, are only to be met with far from the abodes of man. Up the river the birds life becomes more & more interesting the higher you ascend. In thick woods & large trees are the homes of thousands of the most beautiful parrot societies wingedly and as the birds pass by, they rise from the trees in numbers, showing off their ~~beautiful~~ magnificent plumage to great advantage. Pretty grey white cranes swim slowly on the water, allowing the boat to come quite close to them, and numerous other birds with yellow plumage, whose names I do not know, flit all about. In the thick woods several other kinds are to be met with, and large doves are plentiful. The large sandbanks, which the higher reaches of the river abound in, are the favourite haunts of numerous alligators and pretty bitores, which splash lazily into the water as the boat passes by. In the dense forest

types are to be found in great numbers, & large deer & other large animals are frequent by sun, while swarms of monkeys sport among the trees.



The Lany.

And now I come to the most hypothetical and most beautiful subject of all viz The Lany. Words fail me to describe its grandeur and variety, which seem like an ever-changing panorama. I shall however try to give some idea of what it is like from Carlagena to La Dorada and how it is your imagination to picture what it is like in reality. At Carlagena everything is flat & country, & there are very few large trees, except, of course, the coconut-palm which flourishes. Starting off in the town however, a slight change is soon noticed, and good-sized trees mark the appearance

on both sides, which however are pretty far apart: Occasionally a thick wood is seen, but it is very small. With the exception of a few hills here & there, the Lany runs right up to Calaman, where the woods are larger & thicker. Leaving Calaman soaring up the Magdalena, the banks on both sides are covered with thick high grass, with a sprinkling of large trees. This continues for many miles, the trees gradually becoming thicker & closer together. Low hills, thickly wooded soon appear on each side, but beyond being a mass of bright-green, they are not much to look at: It is rather pretty on the whole though, the lovely river, like a huge silver serpent, winding its way along, bordered on each side by bright-green, is very interesting, but it does not impress one with such a feeling of awe & grandeur as the

common forests and dense woods higher up. This kind of scenery continues with but much variety to peak of night up to Baneo, about three hundred miles from Salaman, or having which however, a gradual but great change is soon to be noticed. The lovely mountains of Baroa appear in the distance, which the woods grow denser & denser, until they gradually merge into the mighty, impunctable forest of South America. A few small sandbanks too, which assume enormous proportions higher up, are seen, covered with alligators, in which the whole river abounds. And now we shall I describe the mighty forests. Every beneath which a man looks like a small speck, or else together, that their foliage is mixed, forming a lovely mass of variegated greens & stately palms, hardly to visit through the dense foliage, and hundreds of other

beautiful tropical shrubs & flowers, making a fitting carpet, can hardly be avoided with any degree of accuracy, but require to be seen before any idea can be formed. As we ascend yet higher up, the mountains on each side grow more & more beautiful, rising up tier upon tier until they appear but in the clouds. On a clear day the snow mountain can be seen in the far distance, but I did not have a chance of seeing them. Although the mountains of Ocaña have disappeared, the Andes & Western Cordilleras, both including ranges of the Andes, form not in the distance, and continue right up to La Plata, which lies almost at the foot of them. The whole view from beginning to end is simply alighted with islands, some of them of considerable size. The remarkable cloud formations are also important features in the scenery, and the different

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changes, as the sun sinks behind the mountain, are very beautiful. The last part of the journey from Nare to La Dorada, about 100 miles, is the least interesting, and is rather dreary looking. The bank on one side is very high, & consists of bare earth which is constantly falling away, & is therefore quite bare of vegetation, while on the other side are extensive sand-banks, which look very lonely & desolate.

At La Dorada the scenery is more of the bold, angry style, rough rocky hills rising up all around. From La Dorada to Honda, about 22 miles, the railway runs through wood-plain & dense forest, while in the distance painted, bare, hills are seen, then rock piled up one above the other in most fantastic shapes, sometimes looking almost like huge forts. I shall now draw my remarks on 'Oldo & Esbo' to a close for the simple reason that there are no

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more odd & ends worth writing about. It was great fun observing the little peculiarities of the different passengers, & shall speak of many of them, but they are not worth while writing down, as I do not think they in any way can be called purely "Colombian."

~ ~ ~
"Esbo"
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