

sels carpets, marble wash-stands and dressing-tables, and all these comforts while whirling along over hill and dale; through luxuriant forests and tangled weed-bound swamps—over undulating prairies like the rolling sea—alkali plains, arid as the Sahara desert—through mountain gorges and over hilly spurs, and deep defiles, and yawning canyons, and placid rivers, and roaring cataracts, until the same passengers and the same car that left New York are landed on San Francisco wharf, within thirty feet of the Pacific, and in one short week. Now, look at the other side of the picture. I need not tell of the horrors of the “middle passage” across the plains—of the thousands of lives that were lost by famine, disease and the tomahawk—or of the discomforts and tediousness of a voyage around the Terra del Fuego, but I remember well, as if it were yesterday, the miseries of the way by Chagres. I was then in my teens, and like other young men, hopeful and ardent. I also plunged into the mighty torrent of emigration “to the West.” The old Crescent City steamship took out with us nine hundred souls of all nationalities and tongues; there was scarcely standing room, and the “spoon fashion” mode of packing had to be adopted, not only between decks, but also on the deck and in the open air. Grumbling, oaths and quarrels were the order of the day. The deep guttural of the German—the sharp accented tones of the Frenchman—the mellifluous notes of the Spaniard, Portugese and Italian—the *patois* of the French Canadian, and the Hebrew of the Jew, were at that time sanscrit to me, swore they even. Roundly, but I have no doubt Pandemonium was a respectable place to the hold and deck of this ship. After ten days of sea-sickness and disgusting scenes, a home-sick swain might have been seen in the miserable village of Chagres—standing, the picture of despair, in the midst of mud the most tenacious, and rain the most pitiless, and lightning and thunder the most intense,—and native women, and men and children, the most nude and barbarous, and ugly and shameless, as ever the sun shone on. The natives are a mongrel race of Indians and Negroes and Spaniards, and possessing cunning and rascality in a superlative degree. The houses of these villages are composed of bamboo for walls, and rushes for roofs. Windows and chimneys are almost unknown, and dirt the most filthy was in abundance on all hands. The river Chagres empties into the Carribean Sea at this point, and on a bold rocky promontory, overlooking the surrounding country, was built several centuries ago, by the Spaniards, a formidable fortress called San Lorenzo. Beautiful cannon made of silver, and a brass amalgam, still overtop the parapets, but some of them, in mere wantonness, have been cast over the precipice, and are sticking in crevices of the rocks. The place was several times, in its history, taken by the buccanners, whose resort was the Isle of Pines, but now, battlements, casements, magazines, fosses and salient angles, are one mass of ruins.

With the exception of small patches of rice and sugar-cane, the luxuriant and boundless forest was everywhere. The air was loaded with the most delicious perfume from orange groves, pine-apple plants, and the laden lemon and lime trees. I left Canada frost-bound and snow-covered in April, and in twelve days after was revelling in the