

Whence they come so high up, above those lofty mountains, nobody knows,—the country has never been explored: but there must be some great domain of glaciers, some frozen sea beyond, from which they are constantly oozing out.

The country would be well worth the investigation of some able geologist or scientific tourist. No one of our party had ever seen a glacier before, or understood the subject, either theoretically or practically. We could learn nothing. The river had only been in use three or four years, and those whose callings take them upon it are men of labor, not of science or knowledge. Learned men may smile at these inefficient efforts at description, but if the painter of the "Heart of the Andes" were here, he would find the family group had crossed the equator, and settled in numbers along this Polar Zone.

"Hitched up" to-night (the 24th) in the Big Canon, in an amphitheatre of hills surrounding us on every side, so high that at noonday in this solitude the sun would not be seen, the space through which our river was flowing not being over one hundred yards in width. Take it so far, the scenery has been most wild and weird. It is not beautiful, for there is no repose. All nature is in convulsions, as if the interior forces of the earth in its first formation had left this portion on account of its dense structure of volcanic rock to revel in the greater freedom of equatorial regions, and after the crust had then so formed as to curb their expansive powers had returned here and tried to break through, boiling and tossing and seething in impotent struggles, until their failing efforts left the land a sea of barren rocks and mountains filled with snow and glaciers and turbid torrents, fit for no human being but the tourist, or the hunter after gold, or the fugitive from justice.

25th and 26th.—During the last forty-eight hours we have made the

magnificent distance of nineteen miles!—and for two-thirds of the time with all the aid of steam and warps we have not been able to hold our own. The river has asserted its power, mocked all our efforts, and as of yore given old Ocean's reply to Canute's, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." After thirty-six hours of labor we have given to this place the name of "Hard Scratch Rapids." Yesterday morning, after leaving our amphitheatre in the hills, we got glimpses of the smoke and saw our little rival the "Gertrude" dodging in and out of the different windings of the river until about noon, when we overtook her quietly "hitched up" at this now well-known place. With feelings of regretful sympathy, we proudly steamed on, but in vain—we never seemed to leave her. We puffed and blew and swerved and steamed, but hour after hour passed, and still there she was quietly tied to her tree, and we not a yard further. At last by desperate effort we got one-third our length beyond, and in despair tied to our tree too; but the strain was too great, the waters ran like a sluice, our tree gave way, and down we came upon fair little "Gertrude," squeezing her most cruelly into the bank. Here was a jam! Our guards got under her's; there was no moving one way or the other, up or down; the current pressed us in—neither party could move. We were in a "helpless fix."

The ludicrous though annoying position was nearly being darkened by a serious mishap. Five Indians were sent in a canoe to carry a warp to the other side of the river. They returned bringing back the end to our boat. As they neared and threw the line on board, the current swept the canoe under the guard. In a moment drawn under the stern wheel, then in motion to aid the boat in resisting the force of the stream, it was smashed to pieces. The hands of three of the Indians were seen clinging to the guard, their bodies not