

are covered, and well nigh smothered, with climbing vines.

After the delta is passed, in ascending the Orinoco, the trees vanish, and the lonely, monotonous upper course of the Orinoco begins. There are very few villages or cities on the bank, and a sailing vessel or a boat is a very rare sight.

Sometimes at night a great column of flame and smoke rushes across the plain, gleaming red and brilliant in the darkness. This is a fire which the owners of cattle have kindled. Every year they burn the grass in order that the next growth may be richer and better.

La Guayra, the chief seaport of Venezuela, has no advantage of position whatever. It looks as if it were forever sliding down the mountains into the sea. Its bay is so open that the great ocean swells make it one of the worst harbors on the Western Continent. Furthermore, the bed of the sea, a few hundred feet from the shore, slopes so abruptly that anchors are of no use; and in places where anchors do hold, the sand is apt to shift, so that they have to be raised and their positions adjusted every few hours.

La Guayra was crowded in here on the hillside, and along the narrow coast, to serve as the port of Caracas, the capital of Venezuela.

La Guayra resembles Valparaiso and Bahia in situation, although its harbor is not so good as either of theirs. The business blocks which border the single street are from two to three stories in height. The houses which straggle up the barren hillsides are lower, and have reddish brown roofs, which are the exact color of the hills.