

**NARRATIVE OF A RESIDENCE ON THE
MOSQUITO SHORE, DURING THE YEARS
1839, 1840 & 1841: WITH AN ACCOUNT
OF TRUXILLO, AND THE ADJACENT
ISLANDS OF BONACCA AND ROATAN**

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THOMAS YOUNG

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BONACCA, FROM HALF MOON KAY.

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BY THOMAS YOUNG.



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PREFACE.

I HAVE been led to offer the following pages, relative to the Mosquito Shore, in consequence of my having looked in vain for similar information, on embarking for that country, and severely felt the want of it on my arrival there. Much trouble, loss of time, and disappointment—many difficulties and mishaps should I have escaped, had I been in possession of the information, which my experience now enables me to present, on the manners and customs of the native tribes, the climate, seasons, and productions of the country.

Fully conscious of the responsibility involved in the publication of a work, put forth as a sort of "Hand Book" of the Mosquito Shore, and deeply sympathizing in the disappointment and misery which have

resulted to many of my countrymen, who have rashly resolved on emigration, ignorant of all they should know concerning the country in which they purpose to cast their lot,—I have, in giving the result of my experience and investigations, adhered so rigidly to facts, that I feel convinced no person will have just cause to charge me with any distortion, exaggeration, or suppression of the truth.

T. Y.

NARRATIVE OF A RESIDENCE

ON THE

MOSQUITO SHORE.

CHAPTER I.

Departure — Distress — Scotch Mariner — Storm — Mother Carey's Chickens — Porpoises — Nautilus — Phosphorescence of the Ocean — Madeira — Sinking a Bottle in the Ocean — Dolphins — Poisonous Fish — Shark — West India Islands — Water-spout — Alarm! — Breakers — Rocks — Land.

IN the year 1839 I accepted an engagement from the British Central American Land Company, as Deputy Superintendent, to proceed, with a few others, to the Mosquito Shore, to form a Settlement at Black River, about eighty miles from the Central American Port of Truxillo, in the State of Honduras, there to establish friendly relations with the people around, so that in time trade might be opened with the Spaniards in the interior, for the introduction and disposal of such British goods as they might be willing to take in exchange.

We sailed from Gravesend in July 1839, in the brig *Rose*, of 164 tons burthen, bound for Cape Gracias á Dios, there to deliver our credentials to the King of the Mosquito nation, Robert Charles Frederic, (who had been invested with the crown, on the demise of his brother George Frederic, with the

concurrence of the British Government,) and from thence proceed to Black River. For a few days after our departure from Gravesend, we had to contend with strong and adverse winds; and as the brig was continually shipping heavy seas, the captain determined to run for Dungeness, and await a favourable wind; we therefore bore up and cast anchor. About ten P. M. a gale, which had been gaining strength for some hours, burst forth with extreme fury; our windlass was broken in two by the heavy pitching of the vessel, and we were otherwise damaged, and in distress; the seamen however performing every order with the most cheerful alacrity. About four A. M. our signal of distress attracted some Deal boatmen, who, finding it impossible to trip the anchor, slipped, and safely carried us into Ramsgate Harbour; on entering which the brig sustained further damage by a Sunderland vessel running into her. We at last set sail with a fine breeze, which continued for some days, till we began to lose sight of Old England, and, as the land gradually lessened in the distance, the spell that bound us to one spot was broken by the thick shades of night. Near seven weeks elapsed before we made Cape Finisterre, owing to the succession of light and variable winds. Confined to the limits of a small vessel, the want of exercise was much felt, especially as the swell in the Bay of Biscay, even in calm weather, is considerable, exposed as it is to the broad Atlantic Ocean, so that we found it difficult to pace the deck.

An old Scotch mariner at the helm accosted me one day, and, after many turns of his quid and contortions of the face, said, "We sha'na hae ony luck this voyage, sir!" "Why?" I replied. "Because," said he, "a cat has been killed on board, and we set sail on a Friday." At these doleful tidings, the old man observing me to laugh, said, "Ah! weel, sir, I was once young mysel, and when ye hae seen as much o' the world as I hae done, ye will aye respec an auld man's opinion."—"Can it be possible for you to be so superstitious?" I asked: "Ca' it na superstition," replied the old storm-beaten sailor; "I ken from experience. Look yon, ye see the sun is setting