

**PARA; OR, SCENES AND
ADVENTURES ON THE
BANKS OF THE AMAZON**

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Para; or, Scenes and adventures on the banks of the Amazon by John Esaias Warren

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JOHN ESAIAS WARREN

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P A R A ;

OR,

Discs and Adventures

ON

THE BANKS OF THE AMAZON.

BY

JOHN ESAIAS WARREN.

"Regions immense, unsearchable, unknown,
Bask in the splendor of the solar zone."
MONTGOMERY.

NEW YORK:
G. P. PUTNAM, 155 BROADWAY.

1851.

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P R E F A C E .

THOSE who have wandered in strange and beautiful lands, where the wonderful objects around them have aroused emotions of delight and pleasure of which they were before unconscious, naturally feel a desire to communicate their impressions, either for the gratification of friends, or the entertainment of the public. The writer of this unpretending narrative frankly acknowledges that he has been influenced by both of these considerations. So little has of late been written on the subject of Brazil,—a country which in regard to its natural advantages is perhaps the most luxuriant in the world,—that he desires, if possible, to direct attention to the extraordinary magnificence and beauty of that province particularly which lies along the banks of the Amazon, and which extends from the shores of the Atlantic to the base of the towering Andes! Throughout this immense domain the reign of summer is perpetual and undisturbed. Scarcely

a murmur of civilization breaks upon the prevailing solitude! The gigantic forests are inhabited by tribes of savage Indians, birds of the most brilliant plumage, and serpents of innumerable varieties and enormous size. With truth therefore, may it be said, that

“Wildly here without control,
Nature reigns and rules the whole.”

New York, May 10, 1851.



P A R A .

CHAPTER I.

Evening on the Amazon—The Harbor of Para—Promiscuous Bathing—A Brazilian Dinner—Beautiful Garden—Manufacture of India Rubber Shoes—First Night Ashore.

THE shades of evening were gathering fast upon the waters, when the little bark, in which we had safely crossed the wide expanse of ocean, now quietly anchored in the mighty river of the Amazons.

Through the rich twilight we were able to discern the white sandy shore, skirting a dense forest of perennial luxuriance and beauty. Gentle zephyrs, fraught with the most delightful fragrance from the wilderness of flowers, softly saluted our senses; while occasionally the soft and plaintive voices of southern nightingales came with mellowed sweetness to our ears.

The queenly moon, unobscured by a single cloud, threw an indescribable charm over the enchanting scene,

reflecting her brilliant rays upon the placid surface of the river, and shrouding the beautiful foliage of the forest in a drapery of gold. Innumerable stars brightly glittered in the azure firmament, and the constellation of the "Southern Cross" gleamed above us like a diadem.

All around seemed to be wrapped in the most profound repose. Not a sound disturbed the silence of the interminable solitude save the hushed and mournful notes of evening birds, the distant howling of prowling jaguars, or the rustling of the wind through the forest trees. Nature appeared to us, for the first time, in all her pristine loveliness, and seemed indeed, to our excited imagination, to present but a dreamy picture of fairy land.

At an early hour in the morning we weighed anchor, and with a fresh breeze and strong tide rapidly moved up the noble river, gliding by the most beautiful scenery that fancy can conceive.

The nearly impenetrable forest which lined the shore was of a deep emerald green, and consisted of exceedingly lofty trees, of remarkably curious and grotesque figures, interlaced together by numerous running vines, the interstices of which were filled up with magnificent shrubbery.

We observed, towering high above the surrounding trees, many singular species of palms, among which the far-famed cocoa-nut proudly stood pre-eminent. This

beautiful tree gives a peculiar witchery to a tropical landscape, which those only who have seen it can possibly realize. The trunk grows up perfectly perpendicular to a great height, before it throws out its curious branches, which bend over as gracefully as ostrich plumes, and quiver in the slightest breeze. Consequently, the general appearance of the tree at a distance is somewhat similar to that of an umbrella.

As we gradually proceeded, we now and then caught glimpses of smiling cottages, with their snug little verandas and red-tiled roofs peering from amid the foliage of the river's banks, and giving, as it were, a character of sociality and animation to the beauteous scene.

Perhaps the most interesting spot that we noticed was an estate bearing the name of Pinherios, which had been formerly the site of a Carmelite convent, but which has lately been sold to the government for a "Hospital dos Lazaros." Here also was an establishment for the manufacture of earthenware tiles, which are extensively used throughout the Brazilian empire for roofing houses.

So low is the valuation of land in this section of Brazil, that this immense estate, embracing within its limits nearly three thousand acres, and situated, as it is, within twelve miles of the city of Para, was sold for a sum equivalent to *about four thousand dollars*. This may be taken as a fair standard of the value of real