SPORT IN SOUTH AMERICAN FORESTS.

BY T. RICHARDSON.

BEYOND an occasional day among the "bunnies" I shot but little in England. Of course, I always turned out with the rest of them on the first of September and knocked away at the partridges among the stubble and the turnips, but I was never an enthusiast. Put me on a stout hunter at the corner of a covert with forty or fifty others as well mounted as myself, with

A southerly wind and a cloudy sky,

and I am all right, for in my mind—and I have tried my hand at every English sport—there is nothing under the sun to beat foxhunting for wild excitement and a sort of delirious pleasure. I can get up the enthusiasm, too, in the prospect of a dash at the otters, even though it may necessitate a turn out at 3 o'clock in the morning and a cold drag of four or five hours before the fun begins. But in England the gun was never an implement I cared a fig about handling, and when I visited British Guiana in South America last autumn, and found a country—with the—exception of a narrow strip of coast line-covered with almost impenetrable tropical forests, I did not anticipate much pleasure in the way of sport. In this I soon found I was mistaken. Shooting in the forest wilds of Guiana partakes more of the character of exciting exploration than anything else. Away from the sugar estates on the coast, there is very little known about the country. Solitary groups of gold miners travel up the rivers and camp by the sides of beautiful creeks to penetrate into the bush, but beyond this the interior is left to the undisturbed possession of the aboriginal Indians.

For a few weeks after landing at Georgetown, the capital of the country, I quietly allowed myself to become accustomed to the tropical heat, for Europeans have an ugly way of dropping off with yellow fever on their first arrival. Then myself and two other Englishmen arranged a little shooting expedition into the bush. We fixed upon a fortnight as its probable duration. As a rule the most expensive and laborious part of traveling in the interior is the feeding department. It is customary to carry provisions to last you during the expedition, but we had great confidence in our powers as sportsmen and decided to trust, to a great extent, to our guns. We nevertheless laid in a store of rice, crackers, tinned meat, rum (for the boatmen), and whiskey (for ourselves). We had two rifles and two shotguns, a goodly store of ammunition, hammocks and blankets, and, with a view to ingratiating ourselves with any Indians we might chance to meet, we carried a few small cases of powder and shot, in addition to our own supply, and half a dozen big clasp knives. The plan we had mapped out for ourselves was that we should travel about eighty miles up the River Demerara, penetrate by one of the creeks into the forest, and pitch our tents there in any suitable place. We secured a trimly-made bateau, a species of overgrown canoe in common use on the South American rivers, loaded it with our traps, and with a couple of Madrasee coolies as boatmen shot out from the stelling into the river exactly at midnight. A small craft can only travel on this river with the tide, which comes rushing up at the rate of seven knots an hour, and when we started it was just beginning to flow. The reason for night traveling on the river is, of course, the excessive heat in the daytime. It was a glorious night—not moonlight certainly—but in this tropical land the purity of the air is such that every star, however insignificant, stands out like a glorious brilliant in the pure azure sky, and the calm beauty of this architecture of the heavens casts a charm over every scene, no matter how plain it may be in the light of day. We soon glided out beyond the wharves and warehouses of Georgetown, and as the boatmen had been treated to a noggin of rum at the start we made rapid progress. The negroes are the lustiest boatmen for the tropics, and they are as plentiful as the mosquitoes. At any moment a crew of native boatmen can be engaged to travel any distance up the rivers and be

contented with a supply of rum as the only payment. But with rum and a tropical negro in the same boat there is no calculating on the future, so we chose two slim coolies as the more reliable for our purpose. For the first two hours or so we were full of interest in our expedition, and lay in the bottom of the bateau smoking and building castles of game in the air. We were right out in the river, which here is about two miles broad, so we could see nothing in the shape of land; but the shrill whistle of the creek frog could still be heard coming from the shore. And after a while we began to hear sounds like the echoing of laughter right ahead of us on the water. As it came nearer we recognized the familiar harmony. It was a bateau full of bush negroes—borianders, as they are called, the name being a corruption of the two words "above yonder"—coming into town, and brightening the journey with the banjo and their characteristic glee songs. We could see, as they passed far away to starboard of us, that the paddlemen were making desperate efforts to get down before the tide was in full flow. I have many times been a close listener to these negro songs without being by any means enraptured, but it was pleasant to hear the chorus of these happy travelers floating across the water to our ears, although the song itself was anything but romantic. I caught a fragment that was being repeated over and over again, and this is how it ran:

John do Baptist is me name;
Juk 'im in de eye now, hit 'im on the chest.
John de Baptist is me name,
Didn't I told you so.
Gib she plantain, gib she rum,
Nigger man fat now, nebbah go fo' work;
Gib she plantain, gib she rum,
Didn't I told you so.

As the strains of this wild air grew faint and died away, we drew our blankets round us and settled down to sleep. Our coolies had already been told that we expected them before the tide turned to reach a small creek that branched off into the bush about thirty miles up the river, for there we could get out of the sun until the next tide. I soon dozed off and slept —I don't know how long. I was roused by the voices of the others. Day was just breaking, but there was such a heavy mist on the river that nothing could be seen twenty yards away. We were no longer going up the stream, The canoe had been turned half round and we were evidently shooting into one of the banks of the river. As I was still drowsy I naturally concluded that the boatmen knew what they were about, and I watched the proceedings without comment. Suddenly, before I had seen the shadow of an opening, we were out of the river and gliding tranquilly on a little tributary creek, above which the wild tropical vegetation spread and formed a natural roof of cool, green leaves. This was the first stage of our journey, and here we secured the bateau and landed. A few minutes later one of the coolies discovered a house a little way in the bush, and we set off to investigate. We were in luck that morning. It was the rude bamboo house of an English woodcutter who was well known to one of my companions. We lost no time in rousing him out of his slumbers and soon his whole establishment of negroes was busy making a special breakfast in our honor. We fed luxuriously on goat steak, baked cassava, yams and pepper-pot, the latter a conglomeration of stewed meats much in vogue in Guiana, and we finished up with hot coffee. He had about an acre of ground cleared round his hut, and here we lounged, waiting for the tide and employing the time in eating pines and smoking cigarettes.

The moment the rapid ebb of the tide began to slacken, however, we were off again, but this time it was by no means pleasant traveling. Although we kept close to the bank of the river and got some shelter from the great trees that hung right over the water, it was still dreadfully hot, and by the time we reached our creek we were all pretty nearly roasted. This, of course, was after being several hours on the water. Once in the creek we all took a hand at the paddles, and we shot like an arrow through the water. Nothing can be more beautiful than the appearance of these natural waterways. They are formed by the water draining off the vast tracts of forest-clad land and forcing its way to the rivers. Many of them are like rivers themselves, only the water is as clear as crystal and they are everywhere spanned by the great trees of the forest. These trees in their turn are covered with vegetation of indescribable beauty. In this land everything must grow. A falling seed will find a resting place on the trunk of a great tree. It takes root and in process of time is a tree itself. Then it will

be overrun with every manner of luxuriant parasites, many of them having most beautiful flowers, until the whole forest is one great mass of impenetrable vegetation. From every lofty tree trailing lianas (or bush rope, as it is called) fall to the ground, take root, and rise up again to increase the density of the foliage. Clinging to every little rock and hiding in the trunks of trees are lovely orchids, blooming in innumerable varieties, and, as the creek winds in and out of the forest, nature, with all its profusion of loveliness, is unfolded in a thousand different forms. A Northerner is struck with the gorgeous flowers that cover some of the largest of the forest trees, and here and there, descending from the green canopy that everywhere overspreads the creek, graceful twistings of liana, sometimes bearing at their very tip a blooming orchid or other parasitical flower, droop down almost to the surface of the water, As we rapidly followed the windings of the creek we passed several Indian tracks into the forest, and occasionally a startled crash among the brushwood told of the presence of game of some description. But we pressed on at our best rate, and never slackened our pace until the growing dimness warned us that it was time to look out for a suitable camp, for here the lovely twilight which is so much enjoyed in more northern lands does not exist. We drew up at the next appearance of a track and slung our hammocks as best we could in the tangled network of vegetation, intending to go farther inland next morning.

A man can usually sleep anywhere if he is sufficiently tired, and there was no insomnia among us that night. Nevertheless everyone was eagerly afoot at sunrise, and after a hurried breakfast we once more took to the paddles. After three hours' good traveling we began to hear sounds like the rush of a rapid river in front of us. This could only have one signification here. It must be a fall in the creek, and if so it seemed as though this would have to be our destination, for without help it would be impossible to get our bateau and traps overland to the other side. In half an hour we came right upon it. It was a fall over which the water came tumbling in a pretty cascade of about fifteen feet, but what was of more interest to us was the appearance of an Indian canoe—"woodskins," they are called-anchored safely in the still pool at the base of the fall. When we came within ten feet of this object an Indian who had been asleep in the bottom of the canoe sprang upright and was on the bank in a moment. There he got over his shyness and stood waiting for us to speak. Fortunately he understood a little English, and we learnt that a mile or two above the fall was an Indian village, We at once resolved to make this village our headquarters, and we dispatched the native for aid. In less than an hour he returned. To our surprise he brought with him ten women, and when we asked for an explanation we were told that every man in the village had been. engaged and taken away some time before by a white man who was gathering flowers. A week later we discovered that this was an enterprising citizen of the United States who made this long journey to collect orchids and carry them to the London markets. Well, the women were just as good for our purpose. Our goods were unloaded, the bateau was lifted bodily out of the water, and by a track which we would never have discovered ourselves we traveled overland until beyond the falls we came upon the creek again. Then we embarked once more and in twenty minutes reached the village. It was an excellent place for a camping ground. A small piece of ground had been cleared beneath the trees, and here the Indian houses, or benabs, were erected. This primitive dwelling place simply consists of four bamboo poles surmounted by a flat roof of palm leaves. In the twinkling of an eye a similar residence had been built for us, and under this roof we stored our baggage. As a sleeping place we preferred a hammock slung twenty feet above the ground in a tree. At this elevation we should escape much of the feverish miasma that hovers over the ground during the night.

When everything, had been arranged there was still the greater part of the day before us, so we retained the male Indian and set out into the forest, my two companions armed with shotguns and I carrying a rifle, or, the off chance of meeting with bigger game. The Indian carried the common weapon of the aborigines of South America—a stout bow about ten feet long and a quiver of arrows. We had two grand. objects in view—one, to pot something that would be more delectable eating than corned beef and biscuit, and, secondly, to secure specimens of rare birds

or animals, for one of my companions was an amateur taxidermist. We easily penetrated into the bush among the numerous tracks, and soon found that by eluding the lianas that twisted and coiled on every side we could even deviate from the pathway and still make fair progress. There was almost always a little space that we could move in at the foot of the large trees. It is often supposed that these tropical forests are ablaze with birds of brilliant plumage and ringing with the chattering of monkeys, and that at every step you are liable to have a huge snake suddenly glide down the branches of a tree and inoculate you with its poison. The old accounts of the travelers have much to answer for. The fauna of Guiana, in number and variety, is perhaps more extensive than that of any other tropical country in the world, and yet we could stand in this forest and imagine we were the only things that lived. Solitude and stillness reigned supreme. Here, as in the northern countries, the game has to be found, and our Indian was the man who must find it. We easily made him understand that we wanted something we could eat, and as we went along he carefully explored the thick grass and the holes about the roots of the trees. Presently a brace of bush fowl rose at his feet and dashed wildly among the trees. Notwithstanding the difficulty of shooting, one of them was brought down, and within half an hour four others were added to it. This bird is very similar in size and appearance to the grouse of the Old Country, if anything a shade or two lighter in color, and it is excellent eating.

With the aid of our guide we gradually found that this great, silent wilderness was full of life. It only wanted a child of the forest to expose it. In crossing a piece of ground much less thickly wooded than the rest, he suddenly stopped and pointed to a bushy tree directly in front of us. Then he drew his bow and fired a blunt twig at random into the tree. Instantly there was a heavy fluttering among the topmost leaves and a gorgeous macaw sailed grandly out, its long, red tail pointing two or three feet straight behind it. It was an easy shot, and our bird collector had it smashing down among the brushwood in a twinkling. And a magnificent specimen it was. Near this place, too, twelve or fifteen parrots—the common green South American bird—had been amusing themselves at the tops of the trees, but the shot had startled them, and we could just see them circling right up above the trees. A parrot in the bush is about as difficult to get at as a crow is in England. The slightest noise sends them into the sky, and they do not come down there again until everything is quiet. Their weakest moment appears to be in the early morning. At that time they possess considerably more temerity, and flit about uttering at intervals loud, hoarse shrieks, but never showing that versatility in vocal sounds which comes to them in their captivity. It is one of the commonest birds in British Guiana. On this occasion, however, they kept out of our reach.

We bagged another brace of bush fowl, and two pretty toucans, with their long yellow bills, were added to the collection. The only animals we came across were a kibbi-ee—something in shape and size like a small fox, but belonging to the ant-eater tribes—and a few graceful marmozet monkeys high up in the trees. I sent a bullet after the former, but he fled on unharmed and took refuge in the trunk of a rotten tree some distance in the bush. The Indian gave chase, and half a minute later a shrill scream announced a capture. When he came back he was carefully extracting an arrow from the animal's body. Several times during the day when any small bird of brilliant plumage started out of the bushes my ornithological friend had his shotgun up in a moment and invariably blew the coveted specimen to pieces. This afforded the greatest amusement to our Indian, who on those occasions probably came as near laughing as ever he did in his life. We were back at the village by 4 o'clock and at once made arrangements for passing the evening quietly and pleasantly until bedtime. A fire was already waiting, and one of the coolies, who had a fair knowledge of cookery, was deputed to roast a brace of fowl and curry one, while the other boatman boiled the cassava which we had procured from the Indians. Cassava when boiled tastes much like a superior potato. It is the root of a bush and is a great food with the Guianese Indians, who also bake it into bread.

After washing in the creek and putting on dry flannel clothing we all felt extremely satisfied with ourselves. Every thing around us was of interest. It Was the first time any of us had been among the Indians, and we were all anxious to

observe their manners. They belonged to the Acawois tribe. None of them, with the exception of the one man left in charge of the village, could speak English, and from him we learnt that it was very rarely they saw a white face in those wilds. The South American Indians are not, so far as can be ascertained, a dying race. In this they differ from those in North America, but they differ in many other respects also. They are peaceful, shy and as industrious as can be expected; that is to say, they cultivate what vegetable provisions are necessary for their wants. Their features are broad and flat, and in most cases ugly; their bodies short, but extremely square and strong. The only time they venture into the town is when those that have guns want powder, and others knives and hatchets, and then they will carry to exchange for these articles animal skins and hammocks elegantly knitted with cotton. On these rare occasions they may be seen walking through the streets of Georgetown, mixing with well-dressed English men and women, in a state of perfect nudity, with the exception of a fragment of linen round the loins.

In our little camp the fact of some of the women having worked for us seemed to have driven away a little of their shyness, and they came about with their children in a great state of inquisitiveness. But they never ventured to touch anything that belonged to us and they looked upon the coolies preparing our supper as individuals possessing very high privileges. I was surprised at the carelessness with which they walked about in the canoes. Two of these were drawn up at the side of the creek, and I saw a woman step into one of them, walk right to the end and pick something up and come back again with just as much ease as though she had been on shore. Now, these woodskins are the most fragile and exquisitely balanced pieces of workmanship imaginable. They are made of the bark of a tree, and are so narrow that the slightest movement to either side will upset them. And yet the Indian is just as safe sitting at the prow of one of these things as he would be on board a transatlantic steamer. On the river they shoot falls and run the gauntlet through innumerable rapids without the slightest thought of danger. I have traveled short journeys on the creeks in this craft, but it was a case of maintaining a rigid balance between the two sides all the while.

Both myself and my companions were still returning the curiosity of our Indian friends with interest, when supper was announced. The coolies had made an excellent job of it. The fowls were delicious, and we lingered long at the festive board. Then we sat and smoked till darkness drove us to our hammocks and blankets. I have said that these great forests are as still as the grave. That, I must explain, only refers to the daytime. As soon as night falls thousands of insects combine to hold a sort of oratorio, and the squeaking and whistling, and chirruping and trilling are something awful. There is a big beetle that goes off every few minutes like an alarm clock, and nearly makes you jump out of your skin; and occasionally a huge flying cricket will settle at the head of your hammock, and suddenly give a startling chirrup in your ear. But one soon grows accustomed to these trifles, and he is very new to bush life who allows them to disturb his rest. They had not this effect on us. Next morning we were up betimes, and a couple of parrots were shot as they flew over the camp. One was old, so we relegated him to the collection; the other made an excellent stew for breakfast. We started early this morning, and our Indian friend had prepared a little surprise for us. It seems the ornithologist had disgusted him the day previous by his miserable method of shooting small birds, and he had determined to show us the artistic method. Besides his bow, he now carried a hollow cane about two and a half feet long, and a bunch of very small pointed reeds. He also led a mongrel-looking dog to the warfare.

We were soon initiated into the science of shooting small birds. This cane instrument was a blowpipe. As we were walking into the forest a tiny hummingbird darted past us and then stopped and hovered like a butterfly over a flowering creeper. The Indian slipped one of the little darts into the cane and put it to his mouth. As quick as lightning, when for a single moment the bird was in an almost stationary position, "pluff" went the dart, and the little creature dropped fluttering to the ground. When the dart was extracted there was no mark at all to show how it had come to its death. The skill of the Indian with this peculiar weapon was marvelous. He took successfully the most difficult shots, and during the day brought down birds of

considerable size. The collection was thus considerably enriched. A number of gaudy birds of the strike tribe, a few pretty little manikins, several humming-birds (one our scientist took to be a new species), a sun parrot, and one of the rare Guianese bellbirds were this day contributed by the Indian and his blowpipe. We had plenty of shooting without going deep into the forest, but it was of a very miscellaneous order, and the only eatable results in the way of birds were a couple of big, fat pigeons, a bird very similar to the common stock dove. In returning home, however, we secured a delicacy for the larder. This was nothing less than a fine laba—an animal about the size of a sucking pig—which our sporting dog unearthed and the Indian shot. This same gentleman also killed a couple of monkeys for his own private consumption. By hungry gold diggers and woodcutters in the bush young monkey is considered a very palatable sort of food in the absence of anything better.

The days passed quickly in these forest rambles, We rose early in the morning, sauntered about the village until breakfast was ready, and laughed at the snake stories we had read of in books; for here, when the sun was rising, we could scarcely walk twenty paces anywhere without starting some reptile hurriedly into the forest. We saw several big camoodie snakes, but all were of the same mind. They invariably made a terrific rush to get out of our way. The same with the alligators in the creeks. They are the most timid things alive, and will disappear for hours if they see the shadow of a man. In bathing in the creeks the only thing to be afraid of is a fish called the peri. It appears to be a misanthropical sort of fish—something like the English pike-and it will attack a man without the slightest provocation. We generally sallied forth immediately after breakfast with the guns. There is plenty of respectable game in these forests. The jaguar —tiger, as the natives call it—is very common, and, besides deer and wild pig, there is a small brown bear and a big army of tiger cats. But we hunted six days without bringing home anything larger than the laba. Then we made an expedition to a savannah, which the Indians told us lay about twelve miles distant. We traveled the greater part of the way in the bateau along the creek. We had only three miles to scramble through the bush, but what a frightful track it was! At every few yards we were tripping over the hidden roots of trees or sinking up to the hips in ground undermined by the ants.

The reward, however, was worth the labor. After a slow and weary tramp we emerged from the dark, silent forest and suddenly found the glorious savannah stretching for miles in front of us. Here everything was bright and beautiful. The land was covered with rich herbage, topped with a gorgeous flowering, and at intervals luxuriant wood islands had grown up and relieved the monotony of the plain. We began skirting the forest in search of venison, keeping all the while well in ambush. The deer, which is moderately plentiful in these parts, is a beautiful animal, small, and something of the character of the gazelle. Game was not lacking, but after three or four hours of patient hunting we were as far from our object as ever. Notwithstanding all our precautions we had the mortification, as we moved slowly along within the edge of the forest, of seeing one graceful animal after another start from the long grass and scamper into hiding, and every one safely out of range. Our philosophical aboriginal was the only one of the company whose face did not suggest disagreeable perversions of the second commandment.

When success seemed so hopeless that each one of us was beginning to wish that the other would suggest giving up the chase, there was a grunt and a roar in front of us, and two heavy bush hogs floundered up out of the herbage and rushed like a couple of ill-regulated thunderbolts for ambush. Bang! bang! rang out both the rifles, but on they went. Whizz! came from the Indian's bow and the leader wheeled suddenly out of his course. But neither of them stopped for a moment, and before anything more could be done both had disappeared' and were crashing in thick cover through the bush. We had come a few paces out of hiding during this incident, and were beginning to laugh at the little diversion given us by the pigs, when the Indian quietly touched me on the arm and nodded toward the place where they had disappeared. I looked up, and there, coming down the side of the bush in a gentle canter, moving his head from side to side as if uncertain where to go, was our man, making straight toward us. He had apparently been suddenly startled

from his rest. The ornithologist was the only man loaded. He raised his gun, and as he did so the game paused and stood stock still. It was his last effort. The next moment we were leaning over as much venison as would keep the commissariat going for days. By the time we had him skinned and the best of the meat slung in the green hide it was getting late in the day and we set off for the boat. and as the sun went down that night there was an odor of burning flesh floating round the village which was calculated to bring every Indian in Guiana trooping to the feast.

This, according to all precept and the general practice, should have been a night of sound repose. We were all thoroughly exhausted and willing enough to sleep to any time short of doomsday. But fate willed it otherwise. It was a trivial thing to keep me awake at first. One of the big Guianese night monkeys had come into the higher branches of the tree above my hammock, and for the life of me I could not sleep while the animal was going through his ghostly antics over my head. An hour after we had turned in I was still wide awake. Suddenly I heard a crackling among the top branches of the trees to the left of our camp, then a tremendous crash, prolonged until it ended in a dull thud. In an instant we were all sliding to the ground, and looking at each other for an explanation. It had sounded as though the forest was falling about our ears, but as it turned out it was only one tree. We inspected the scene. A huge giant of the forest lay stretching through the brushwood. Every other growing thing had been crushed beneath it as it lumbered down from aloft, and soon we were acquainted with the cause of this strange descent. The trunk of the tree, close to where it would have entered the ground, had been gradually eaten by insects until the wood was as soft as a sponge, and, of course, the tree had fallen.

Having satisfied ourselves we turned in once more, and this time I slept. Still another alarm. About midnight I began to be conscious of someone shouting to me. I looked round. The other hammocks were empty, and among the benabs the Indians were moving about and chattering to each other. It was Booderam, one of our boatmen, who called me. He was standing beneath my hammock, and I inquired in language more pointed than polite the meaning of this sudden uprising. "Tiger come, sahib!" he shouted. "Tiger come for see buckman and tief um lillie goat one time." (The male Indians are always called bucks in Guiana and the females buckines.) I was down the tree like a squirrel and joined the throng. My companions were already there, and now knew all about it. It seemed that about two weeks before a jaguar had come upon the village and carried off a goat. Now he came a second time. One of the women had heard the noise and rushed out just in time to see him disappearing with his prey, and the whole village was excited about it. If the men of the community had been there the matter would have created little or no commotion. They would just have laid in ambush every night until the tiger returned, and then matters would have been put on a proper footing. As it was, however, nothing could be done that night; so after more talk of a more or less excited kind, we made yet another attempt to sleep.

This time it was a partial success. We slumbered undisturbed until the break of day. Then there arose in the village an uproar which it is quite impossible to describe. Everyone seemed to be screaming and yelling, and amidst it all the tom-tom gave forth its melancholy music. The occasion was a great one. The orchid collector was returning with his Indians down the creek. We were almost as pleased as the women themselves, and we ran to the side of the stream to await the coming of the wanderers. They had been absent nearly six weeks. Soon a fleet. of fifteen woodskins came round a bend of the creek into sight and glided toward us, two Indians paddling in each, the one at the prow and the other at the stern. In the last canoe was the collector. In a moment everyone was busy unloading the floral treasures, and I was much interested in seeing how orchids are gathered and transported from those distant lands. They were all packed in fine wicker baskets, made by the Indians. In traveling by land a piece of fibre is attached to the end of each basket. This band the Indian puts across his forehead and then allows the burden to hang upon his back.

This orchid collector was a German by birth, but a citizen of the United States. We were soon all squatting to a breakfast of baked venison, and telling each other's adventures. It seemed that this had been

an unusually long expedition, but he had secured several thousand specimens which he intended to turn into dollars in the London market, and this was a sovereign balm to all his troubles. We found him dreadfully anxious to get back to the coast, but at the same time he was as pleased as a child at once more meeting with someone he could talk to, and he immediately laid himself out to persuade us to return along with him. But we had a tiger to kill. The venison was all that remained in the way of provisions, but we couldn't leave without seeing the ambush laid for the jaguar. Finally, our new friend consented to stay a couple of days with us.

That night the ambush was laid. When darkness set in we four Europeans and five Indians took up a convenient position beneath one of the benabs. The goats belonging to the village were all tethered to the trees a short distance away. Only one of the Indians was armed with a gun, and the rest had the usual bow and arrows. We calculated safely on the arrival of our prey. These jaguars will sometimes descend into the populated portions of the country, and night after night make a raid upon the cattle of one particular district. We therefore, knowing their habits, waited with exemplary patience. It was a long vigil. Twelve o'clock passed without any visitor, and I found myself looking toward the goats still, but without making any particular effort to descry anything. I was, in fact, almost dozing off into a sleep, when the Indian sitting next to me gave the slightest perceptible start. I was instantly on the alert, but I could see nothing, although the night was very light. The enemy was nevertheless upon us. A moment later some dark object dropped straight from the branches of a tree onto the back of one of the unconscious goats and began a sort of worrying struggle on the ground. The other goats immediately scuttled bleating away as far as the tether would allow them, and the ground was left clear round the jaguar and his. victim. The proceedings now were very brief. The report of the Indian's rifle came almost instantaneously with this panic. With a loud yell the tiger dropped his prey and made a leap toward the brush, but his spring scarcely carried him two yards. The ball had broken his back, and his hind quarters dragged helplessly on the ground.

While he pawed fiercely at the ground and desperately attempted to drag himself forward, an arrow from one of the Indians struck him in the neck and rolled him clean over. Still he was not done. Again he made a struggle to regain his feet, and with an effort got into a sitting posture. Then the crack of a second rifle rang his death knell, and throwing out wide his fore legs and stretching open his ugly jaws, the jaguar was dead. And now all the Indians came out to rejoice over the victory. Instantly the proceedings took the form of a festival, and the great dish of paiwarri was brought out and the genial cup passed round. This is the drink in which the Indians of Guiana pay homage to Bacchus. It is almost as thick as molasses, and is one of the most execrable mixtures imaginable. It makes the Indians mad drunk, for the women produce fermentation in paiwarri by chewing the root of the bitter cassava and spitting the juice into the drink bowl. It is needless to say that we declined every pressing invitation to join the feast, and as sleep was out of the question we made ourselves as comfortable as possible and watched the fun until morning.

About noon we had sufficient Indians sensible to be able to man the canoes, so, according to our promise, we started on the homeward journey. Before night fell we were close to the river, and here, at the mouth of the creek, the botanist found a large bateau and a crew of negroes awaiting him. The baskets were transferred from the canoes to the bateau, the Indians were paid off and sent back rejoicing, and in a beautiful night we began the run down the river. Two days later, at 3 o'clock in the morning, we made our craft fast to a deserted wharf in Georgetown, scrambled up the muddy timbers. and entered the town. That night a feather bed received us.