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*THE SEA FISH*  
*OF TRINIDAD*

*HARRY VINCENT*

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Violet Liddelow with  
the Author's love.

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Trinidad

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THE SEA FISH OF TRINIDAD









CHART SHOWING THE ROUTES OF THE ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY, AND THE POSITION OF TRINIDAD ON THE WORLD'S MAP.





THE  
Sea Fish of Trinidad

BY  
HARRY VINCENT



PORT OF SPAIN  
1910

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By HARRY VINCENT

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'POINTE BALEINE,' 'GASPARÉE'  
(Where the author studied fish and their habits for three years.)



## PREFACE

“Master, I marvel how the fishes live in the sea.

“Why, as men do a-land; the great ones eat up the little ones.”

*Pericles.*

THIS little book, insignificant though it appears, represents the condensed experience of over thirty years' fishing and studying the habits and haunts of fishes in the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Paria, and has been written with two main objects. One is to interest the anglers of the home-land, by informing them that there are other places besides the Gulf of Mexico and the Florida Coast for the chase of the wily “tarpon” and the huge “manta” or “devilfish”; while I hope also to create local interest in that natural bank we shall before long have to draw heavily on—our resources of sea-food.

The sea is the mother of many mysteries as yet unknown, and it is really only in its exploration that man can truly realize what an insignificant pigmy he is. Many of the able leader writers of the present day, talk jubilantly and vain-gloriously about the triumphal march of intellect, but it is to be questioned whether the opinion of Isaac Newton, afterwards endorsed by Thackeray, is not the true way of regarding the capacities of human reason. Both these great writers say, “that it always had been as it was, and would be, but as a little child picking pebbles on the great sea-shore,” and that the chief result of their knowledge was to show them how little they knew.

In my preliminary canter, I have probably prefaced rather vaingloriously with the thirty years' experience. What little I have gathered, I now give freely to the public, hoping that therein the proverbial grain of wheat may be found. Soon after Porto Rico became a portion of the

United States, the Fish Commission steamer "Fish Hawk" was sent to make a complete investigation of the marine life of that island, with a party of well-known scientists on board. The result of their labours, in a large and exhaustive report, was issued in 1900. This volume contains coloured life-like plates of many of the fish, all of which are also found in our waters, and I am deeply indebted to this book for assistance in the nomenclature of the Trinidad Fish. As far as I have been enabled to classify them, there are over one hundred varieties of sea-fish, of which eighty-five may be described as more or less edible, fourteen out of that number deserving to rank as high-class table-fish. I have personally assisted at the capture with hook, harpoon, net, or fish-pot, of every one of the fish indexed, so can guarantee their existence.

I can but trust in launching this little "brochure" that the reader thereof, when he has digested it, may be a fitting companion for those who go down to the sea in boats "tagged by the lean fin."

HARRY VINCENT.

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My most grateful thanks are due to those who have generously given me many of the really unique photographs with which this little work is embellished, namely Messrs. C. S. Rogers, Randolph Rust, Thomas Potter, R. R. Mole, and our Entomologist, F. W. Urich. Also to Mr. Vicente Marryatt, whose neat and elegant draughtsmanship has been of material assistance to me in the production of the chart of the Bocas.

HARRY VINCENT.





HAULING THE BAIT SEINE  
Savonetta Bay, Gasparillo.

## CONTENTS

1.	SEA FISHING IN THE BOCAS ISLANDS.....	9
2.	THE SEA FISH OF TRINIDAD FROM AN ECONOMIC POINT OF VIEW AS SEA-FOOD.....	33
3.	CLASSIFIED LIST OF THE TRINIDAD SEA-FISHES....	43
4.	A TRIP TO THE CAVES OF GASPAR GRANDE.....	55
5.	EASTWARD HO.....	63
6.	THE REMOUS.....	83
7.	"TRAGEDY OF THE FIRST BOCA".....	91



# ILLUSTRATIONS

FACING PAGE

Chart Showing the Routes of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, and the Position of Trinidad on the World's Map .....	Opposite Bocas
Chart of the Four Bocas, Trinidad, and the Depths of the Banks in Fathoms	Opposite Routes
Pointe Baleine, Gasparée .....	Opposite Preface
Hauling the Bait-Seine, Savonetta Bay, Gasparillo.....	Opposite Contents
Jetty and Little Bay, Pointe Baleine, Gasparillo.....	12
"Copper Hole," Monos.....	16
Bulmer's Bay, Chacachacare .....	18
View of the Boca from Chacachacare Hill.....	18
Point between Rust's and Petit Bourg Bay.....	22
Eastern Side, Huevos Bay, Johnny Wehekind's House.....	24
Watchman's House, Patos.....	28
La Tinta Bay, Chacachacare (showing the Mountains of Venezuela on the opposite side of Boca Grande).....	28
Rust's Bay, Chacachacare.....	30
Chacachacare Lighthouse .....	34
320-Lb. Grouper caught at Brighton Pier, La Brea.....	38
212-Lb. Grouper caught off Brighton Pier, La Brea.....	38
Sorb ( <i>lutianus analis</i> ), 18 lbs., caught with Rod by J. A. Bulmer, from the Jetty, Chacachacare .....	42
First Picture of the Cave, Gaspar Grande.....	56
Second Picture of the Cave, showing the "Pulpit".....	58
Third Picture of the Cave.....	60
Fourth Picture of the Cave, showing the Archway leading to the Unknown Beyond .....	62
Road Through Mora Forest (between the Oropouche and Melao Rivers)....	66
Surf Bathing on the Nariva Beach.....	70
View of the Nariva River from the Ferry.....	70
Crossing the Ortoire Ferry.....	74
The Ortoire River.....	74
Point Radix, Mayaro.....	80
Guayaguayare, showing Oil Officials' Quarters on the Beach, Gran Calle Point in the Distance .....	80
Fishing Party, La Tinta, Boca Grande.....	82
Pointe Baleine, Gasparée or Gaspar Grande .....	82
Rust's Bay, Chacachacare, showing the passing of the "Remous".....	86
Rust's Bay, after the "Remous" has finished.....	88
Giant Ray or Devil Fish ( <i>manta birostris</i> ), 12 Ft. across the Wings.....	90





SEA FISHING IN THE BOCAS ISLANDS



## PART I

### SEA FISHING IN THE BOCAS ISLANDS

Here by these crystal pools you may  
Preserve a conscience clear as they;  
And when by sullen thoughts you find  
Your harassed not busied mind  
In sable melancholy clad,  
Distempered, serious, turning sad;  
Hence fetch your cure, cast in your bait;  
All anxious cares and thoughts will straight  
Fly with such speed, they'll seem to be  
Possesst with the hydrophobie;  
The water's calmness in your breast,  
And smoothness on your brow shall rest.

*Thomas Weaver.*

AS this article is written especially for sporting visitors, it deals chiefly with fishing in the vicinity of the Bocas, as that is the only portion of Trinidad whereat suitable accommodation in the shape of residences, boats and boatmen, can be easily obtained. The Bocas Islands are four in number, and all of them possess houses, generally situated on the shores of small bays or inlets of their own. These houses are suitably furnished, and can be hired by the week, fortnight, or month, at a monthly rental ranging from \$25 to \$50 (roughly speaking £5 to £10.) Pair-oared boats can be hired from \$10 to \$12 per month (£2 to £2.10), while a small fishing boat with a pair of sculls will cost from \$5 to \$7 (£1 to £1.10). Boatmen well versed in all the tricks of tides and currents, which are very strong on occasions at the Bocas, can be obtained at 40 cents (1s. 8d.) per diem with food, or 48 cents (2s.) without rations, but visitors will find it more to the interest of sport to feed them, as otherwise they may, when required for the boat, say they have to cook their food. Visitors who lease one of these houses have to

provide their own food, liquor, bed and table linen, and cutlery; all the other furnishings are found with the house. A small stock of groceries, pickled meats, etc., will have to be taken down on assuming possession of the island home, also some live poultry. The Government Gulf Steamer visits the Islands four times a week, and supplies of fresh meat, ice, etc., can also be had down on board when required. The climate of these islands is very healthy, dry, and equable, though necessarily hot in the middle of the day under a tropical sun; the scenery is lovely, bathing not to be surpassed anywhere, and these subsidiaries should go far towards enhancing the enjoyments of the keenest fisherman. The names and situations of these four islands are:—

1. *Chacachacare*, separated from the Spanish Main or Venezuelan Coast by the Boca Grande or fourth Boca. This island may be described as consisting of two smaller islets or ridges converging towards the north until they meet, being there connected by a narrow neck of land about a hundred yards broad, and a few feet above sea level. On the Western side of this neck is the beautiful Bay of La Tinta facing the Grand Boca and the Venezuelan Coast; on the Eastern side there is a fine cove with deep water formed by the ridges. This bay was much used as an anchorage by the "Dreadnought" when she came to Trinidad on her trial trip in 1907. Chacachacare and Monos are the largest of the four, being about one and a half square miles in extent each, and having a population of several hundred Creoles, who fish in a very desultory manner, their chief subsistence being derived from what they call "gardens" on the neighbouring mainland of Venezuela, where they squat at the risk of a very summary and forcible ejection. As the land on the Main is very rich, what they plant in maize, plantains, cocoa, etc., gives back fourfold (at very little cost of labour) what they could raise on the poor dry soil of their own island. Chacachacare boasts a light-house on the north-west point, at an elevation of 800 feet above the sea level. It commands the Boca de Navios (Ships') and has an extremely powerful light, being visible from a ship's deck at a distance of 40 miles. There are four residences available for



JETTY AND LITTLE BAY,  
'Pointe Balaine,' Gasparillo.



lease or hire, La Tinta, Boissiere's, Rust's, and La Haute. As regards fishing, I have always found at Chacachacare that the "ligne dormante," a process I shall describe later on, is the most successful, as the waters there abound with the big red snappers, locally called "sorbs". There is the usual rock and small bank fishing inside the bay, and there are six deep sea banks of good repute for bottom fishing outside, viz.:

*Banc-de-Sud.* Here there are two banks about a hundred yards from the shore of a salt-marsh, situated on the south side of the island. The marks of all the banks are well known to the local fisherman.

"*La Flow*" or *The Bell-Buoy*, a buoy with a bell on it moored near to the Diamond Rock, a dangerous spot for sailing vessels, particularly at "remous" time. Large catches of the fine snapper, locally called "vivanot jolle bleu" are made here at certain seasons. This bank can only be fished for about an hour or two at half rising tide, on account of the currents.

*Ma Julie*, outside, La Tinta Bay:—dead west, facing about the middle of the bay, but just in the Grand Boca. A fine bank, and less under the influence of the currents than any Boca Bank.

*La Cabouesse*, outside in the Caribbean looking west, close to a little rocky islet called La Cabouesse, which is just separated from Chacachacare by a small channel. Good "vivanot" bank to be fished on the falling tide. A fisherman trolling through this small channel any day near "remous" time in the "tarpon" season, is pretty certain to feel one or two.

*Landslip Bank*, about eighty yards from a large landslip on the Chacachacare side of the Third Boca, going south in the direction of Point Girod.—To be fished on half rising tide.

2. *Huevos* or *Egg Island*, separates the Boca de Navios from the Huevos or Second Boca; otherwise, it is the island between the Third and Second Bocas, having Chacachacare on its west, and Monos on its east. From a fisherman's point of view, Huevos must be looked upon as the most

favourable "pied à terre" of all, as it has an embarrassment of riches in the shape of thirty to forty banks within easy call. There are also several rocks in either Boca, whereon a patient angler with "ligne dormante" is nearly sure of hooking a large fish. Trolling, or as it is called in England, "whiffling," round the island, keeping near the rocks at low tide, particularly if the bait be attractive, is often rewarded with a monster "barracouta" or a giant "tarpon". There is but one house on the island, belonging to Mr. "Johnny" Wehe-kind, an old fisherman and keen lover of the sport, but as it is one of his subsidiary industries it can generally be hired. It is situated on the shores of Huevos Bay and has a beautiful beach with vast expanse of sand. On the north side of the island is a cave of the "guachero" birds or "diablotins." The fishing banks round Huevos are too numerous for recapitulation here, so I will confine myself to the principal ones, starting from Huevos Bay to go round by the Third Boca, and come back home by the Second.

*Colonial Bank.*—For this you open out the Third Boca about one hundred and fifty yards off Point Blades. A "vivanot" and "grouper" bank, to be fished at half rising tide.

*Point Balata*, just outside the corner of the point, against the rocks of the Third Boca Cape. Mixed fish bank.

*Bank Vincent*, about one hundred and twenty yards from point on the Huevos side of Third Boca. Can be fished from half to full tide. Good for "vivanot", "walliacke," and "tête-ronde."

*Plage-blanche*, opposite the small beach of the name that is strewn with small white pebbles. This and the three following ones in the circuit ("Balata," "Bâtiment écrassé," and also "Des Enfants", can be fished almost at any tide (always excepting the time of the "remous"), as from the formation of the island the bend of the northern arm forms a strong protection against winds, and creates what the natives call a "calme" nearly always on the eastern side of the Third Boca. They are all good "vivanot" and "tête-ronde" banks.

*Balata.* This bank is situated in the small cove of that



name. Here there is a narrow channel across the island, through which the water enters from outside, navigable for fishing boats at high tide when calm, with careful steering.

*Bâtiment-écrasée.* This bank is situated about half-way between Balata and the northwestern point of Huevos called "Pointe des Enfants."

*Des Enfants*, about fifty yards before you reach the point, near to the shore. Fine sport can be sometimes obtained fishing under the lee of "Pointe des Enfants" with "ligne dormante". It is advisable to have at least one hundred fathoms of line, as there are large groupers and "pargues-dent-chien" to be found here, necessitating skill in playing. You can commence operations shortly after the tide begins to rise. When leaving "Des Enfants" you can get out your trolling line and go round the point to the Caribbean Sea outside, it being a favourite locale for tarpon, cavalli, kingfish, and in the season fine large mackerel. Going round the north side of Huevos about a quarter mile from shore you come to the following red snapper banks, all to be fished on the falling tide:

*Loo Balata*, a very deep bank, where you want plenty of spare line and the currents are exceptionally strong.

*La Grenade*, further again from the shore, the most outside of all.

*Banc l'Aboo.* Here you begin to take the turn to enter the Second Boca. This is a very large bank, and if the currents are not too strong can be fished *à la* "Margaritan", which means the boat can be allowed to drift a bit with the chance of dropping into a school or shoal of fish.

*Parasol*, near the Parasol, sometimes called the Umbrella Rock, at the northwest entrance of the Second Boca on the Huevos side. In the vicinity of the Parasol there are several rocks where good fishing can be obtained *à la* "ligne dormante."

*La Gran' Tante.* There are two marks for this bank about one hundred and fifty yards from the Huevos shore, about the middle of the island. The currents here are exceptionally strong. If you strike this bank on a calm day from half to full tide, you are likely to get fine sport.

On leaving this bank get out your trolling tackle, for between "Gran' Tante" and L'Islet at the entrance of Huevos Bay you are certain to feel Tarpon if on the feed. There is also a spot in the rocks here, which if you ground bait with small pieces of "zagaya" (small crabs), and then fish with "ligne voyante", you can catch the good edible fish called "lippè" or "l'epais."

3. *Monos (Monkey)* is separated from the mainland of Trinidad (Chaguaramas) by the first, or Monos Boca. This island is possibly the favourite sea-bathing resort for the residents of Port of Spain and country districts, having on it eight residences, to wit, Domus, Balmoral, Morrison (Port Office), Protheroe's, Copper-Hole, Grand Fond, Pampelonne's, and Kenny's. There are innumerable banks round the island that used to afford good sport, but I have noticed for the past five years they have deteriorated greatly both in the size and quantity of the fish obtainable; so I shall confine myself to mentioning the few from which I have obtained fair results within the last three years, starting from Kenny's Bay and going west round by the Second Boca and returning by the First.

"*Kenny's Point*," the southeastern cape of Monos. The bank is about two hundred yards out and west of the Point, and about fifty yards west of the "basse" or reef that runs out there, at an acute angle with Kenny's house. A mixed bank, vivanot, salmon, walliacke, and small grouper. To be fished from half rising tide to full.

*Bank Green*, almost at right angles with Copper Hole Point. The best mark, is to open the bathing houses of Protheroe's and Kenny's. A very deep falling tide bank. There are big fish here, but plenty of bait and patience are required, as the bottom is full of small fry who are at the hooks immediately they arrive.

There are three banks, *Jimmy, Coco*, and *Pointe Courante*, before you reach the point of that name, the southwestern corner of Monos, and the turning point into the Second Boca, but they are of little use, and you will have a far better chance of sport trolling from Domus corner round Pointe Courante and down the Second Boca as far as Pointe à Dia-



'COPPER HOLE,'  
Monos.



ble. En route in the boat you will pass several banks, the most notable being "*Cannes*," "*François*," and "*Trou Zombi*." At "*Pointe à Diable*" are two marks near the Monos shore, where good fishing can be had at three-quarter to full tide, but the currents are very strong and on the second mark you have to be very careful of the wreck of a coal vessel that lies near the bottom of the bank. I have lost several fine grouper after striking them, as they entangled the line in the hulk and broke my gear. Going round the north side on the Caribbean there are two "sometimish" banks, near Biscayen Bay, one called "*Trou Dehert*" and the other "*Biscayen*". Shortly after passing Biscayen the turn is taken and the First Boca entered. There are fifteen to twenty banks in the First Boca, but of late years I have only found two productive, one in a small cove called '*L'Anse Maurice*,' and the other on the Chaguaramas side of the Boca, near "*L'Anse Poua*." They are both mixed banks, but sometimes the "vivanots" and "walliackes" are of decent size.

4. *Gasparil*, or *Gaspar Grande*. The western end is immediately opposite the first or Monos Boca, while the island itself forms the southern arm or boundary of Chaguaramas Bay. It is well known on account of its extensive caves at the western end, which on account of its Bocas exposure and limestone foundation is extremely healthy, and especially suitable for people with bellows to mend. *Gasparil* boasts of thirteen residences, most of which can be hired or leased, *Pointe Baleine*, *Fort Dragon*, *St. Mary's*, *Acham's*, *Herrera's*, *Bourne's*, *Sorzano's*, *Bodu's*, *Goodwille's* (two houses), *Savary's*, *Bombshell Bay*, and *Gamble's*. As regards fishing, there are no banks of any importance round *Gasparil*, but the rock-fishing, both "*ligne dormante*" and "*ligne voyante*" is often fairly good, while from the end of April on to July, the sport that can be obtained with trolling lines is excellent, as during that season, cavalli, kingfish, tarpon, bonite and large mackerel are nearly always beating in shoals at or near *Pointe Baleine*. Before leaving the Bocas, I must not omit to mention three fishing grounds within a few hours row or sail of the islands. As far as my

personal knowledge extends, incomparably the best trolling to be had, is during the months of July, August and September, when the king-fish are biting off Cape La Peña, the northeast point of that part of the Venezuelan mainland, nearest to Trinidad. It is quite possible, and even easy, to leave headquarters at the Islands at 1 A. M., in a good pirogue with four oars (sail to use if there is a breeze), at the commencement of the falling tide, and reach La Peña at 6 A. M. You can then troll until 10 A. M., by which time you will have got all you want in more ways than one, as your hands and arms will tell you. The king-fish there average from 30 lbs. to 50 lbs. and often larger; they fight very hard, so you must have strong tackle and a good wrist, not forgetting tough fingers. Leave La Peña with the rising tide, and you can get back home between 3 P. M. and 4 P. M. The Bocas fishermen at this season go to La Peña for a week or ten days at a time, camping out on the rocks, fishing, and salting as fast as they catch, often returning with 500 lbs. to 1,000 lbs. of salted fish, locally called "tassard salé." This is eagerly bought up in Port of Spain for local consumption.

Another good trolling ground from June to August is from the northeast corner of the Monos Boca, Pointe Rouge, down the Trinidad Coast, going eastward past Trou Tazar to Macqueripe Bay, for king-fish, mackerel and cavalli, but the fish do not run nearly as large as at La Peña. This trip can be made in a morning, leaving early and returning for breakfast.

The third fishing ground is round the island of Patos in the Grand Boca, belonging to Trinidad, but just under the nose of Venezuela's latest port, Cristobal Colon. In the dry season particularly, fine red snapper fishing can be obtained on the banks there.

## TACKLE AND MODES OF FISHING

Presumably, most angling visitors from the North will fish with rod and reel. There are two or three regular visitors to the Bocas from Port of Spain, who always fish with rod and get fair sport, but, although I have a rod and



BULMER'S BAY,  
Chacachacare.



VIEW OF THE BOCA FROM CHACACHACARE HILL.





sometimes fish with it I prefer the hand line, particularly for trolling, and I put that down to the fact that, having trolled almost every day for the past three years, my fingers have got so much attuned or so much in touch with the line, that I can tell by the feel what fish I have hooked a few seconds after he has been struck, and the game fish have nearly all separate and characteristic movements, and as I fish with comparatively light tackle this necessitates skill. I know that the rod angler affects to look with contempt on the hand-liner—says there is no skill required, merely a pully-haully affair, etc., but I have as an authority John Bickerdyke, the famous English angling expert, who says, “playing a fish is a matter of hands, and really expert hand-liners are able to play a fish hooked on fine tackle, skilfully and carefully with their hands, just as the fresh-water angler can by means of a rod.” It must be also recognized, that whereas the rod-angler is generally well pleased with a bag of fish running from  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. to 5 lbs., the hand-liner in these waters requires from 10 lbs. to 30 lbs. to arouse enthusiasm. *Chacun à son goût.* For bottom-fishing in shallow banks, the use of the rod and reel will be found advantageous, but where the currents are strong and the banks thirty to fifty fathoms deep, the hand-line is preferable, as it will be found very tedious, in fact almost impossible, to reel up a big fish from these depths. Hooking and bringing up a large grouper would be something like performing the operation with a grand piano. The tarpon, king-fish, cavalli, barracouta, bonita, and mackerel, are generally fished for with trolling lines, much the same process as “whiffling” in England, only instead of using gut, gimp, snooding, and leads, the hook is gauged on to about 60 feet of flexible brass wire, and this is fastened on to a line which is balled up and placed at the fisherman’s feet (who sits in the stern of the boat). A small sardine or sprat is fixed on the hook, and as the rower propels the boat at top speed, the fisherman lets out the whole of the wire (taking care that it does not kink), and from 15 ft. to 25 ft. of the line. Having paid out this 80 ft. of line he keeps it moving swiftly with his arm and awaits eventualities.

Trolling with rod and line can be done advantageously,

but I should strongly advise the angler in place of the gimp and steel wire arrangements he will probably bring out, to fix his hook on to at least five fathoms of 22 brass wire (fishing king-fish he will require 8), and this he can tie on to his reel-line whether silk or linen, both of which I have found very good in these waters if carefully washed and dried after using. (Both gimp and steel wires are absolute failures.) The numbers of brass wire generally used range from No. 18, the thickest and strongest, to No. 27, the finest. I find that No. 24 is the most preferable to use for general trolling, as it is not too coarse to frighten the excessively wary mackerel, and is at the same time strong enough if dexterously handled to capture a 25-lb. cavalli or barracouta.

Another mode of fishing much in vogue at the Bocas is the "ligne dormante." A large No. 1 hook is gauged on to a piece of stout No. 18 brass wire, about 2 ft. long. A goodly piece of mackerel or other tempting bait is put on the hook, the tackles then attached to the end of sixty or seventy fathoms of stout line, the fisherman gets on a convenient rock (a favourite site being the lee side of a point where big fish do congregate on the rising tide), and the hook and bait is taken out in the boat, until the major portion of the line is paid out, leaving from fifteen to twenty fathoms for man and fish to play with. The fish caught in this manner are usually grouper, pargue and sorb (two species of red snapper) and run from 12 lbs. to 80 lbs. and over 100 lbs. in weight. The two last-named fish are game and give great sport, care and skill being required if the line jams in one of the numerous reefs. Of course the same mode of fishing can be pursued with rod and reel, in fact, I have caught several sorb with the rod, the largest being 17 lbs. weight. With the hand line, my best records have been, a red grouper weighing 120 lbs., and a "pargue-dent-chien" of 108 lbs., both caught off Pointe Baleine, Gasparillo.

A favourite mode of "pot" fishing, which can be prosecuted at all seasons and all tides, with more or less success, is with the "ligne voyante" or "ligne volante," and must be carried on in the boat near the rocks. For this you require from ten to twenty fathoms of fine, but strong line, and on to

this you fix about eighteen inches of No. 22 brass wire, with a hook No. 6 or No. 7 gauged on to it. Where the line joins the wire a small piece of lead, from 1 oz. to 2 oz. is bent on, and the fisherman after wetting and coiling five or six fathoms carefully, casts it as far as he can. Of course the bait sinks slowly to the bottom, but if fish are about is generally seized or bitten at before it touches. The fish you catch in this manner are small, red-mouthed grunts, walliacke, pargue, grouper, etc., but if you know how to "ménager" as the creoles term it, you can land a fish of 20 lbs. or so. Personally I prefer this mode of fishing to banking, as it is much quicker in operation, and you are infinitely less troubled by strong currents. Of course for deep sea banking at depths of thirty to fifty fathoms, you must use the heavy lead sinker and hooks, fixed, if you prefer it, on a "pater noster." The marks of the banks are well known to the boatmen of the different islands, but the best bottom fish, the snappers, are very migratory, and getting good sport is rather a lottery.

### BAIT

Far and away the best bait, especially for trolling, are what are commonly called "sardines" of which there are several varieties. Their local names in order of merit as fish killers, are:—1. Sardines rouges. 2. Anchois. 3. Sardines Dorées. 4. Cha-Cha. 5. Small Coulihou. 6. Sardines cailleux. Of these the first two mentioned are irresistible, and with either on your trolling line you must feel the surface fish if there are any about. The "sardines rouges" and "anchois" generally enter the gulf in large shoals or schools, about the month of June, beat about the bays and rocks of the Bocas islands in the morning, going out to deep water later, and returning in the afternoon. They are generally caught in small seines in any of the bays that possess a convenient beach (free from large rocks), on which the net can be hauled, and the best times for hauling are the early morning and evening, preferably about half tide. The approach of these shoals can always be detected from afar by the quantities of sea-birds that accompany them, hovering

over them screaming and squawking. Then do these little fish pass a bad quarter of an hour, as trolling or surface fish of all kinds, especially the large "camarde cavalli," are underneath and feeding merrily on them, while sharks and barracouta are after the cavalli and mackerel. To escape their finny foes, the poor sardines fly up out of the surface of the water in hundreds, to be at once nailed by the birds,—pelicans, boobies, gulls of all kinds, and men-of-war birds. There is in particular, a very persistent, pretty little white bird, a kind of kittiwake, locally called "mauve," which comes in flocks during the anchois season, and when the shoal of fish disappears, sits on the neighbouring rocks and watches for a fresh lot silently, and you can always tell when the sardines are coming again, as these birds begin to chatter at once. Pointe Baleine at Gasparil seems to be a great meeting place for the surface fish at this season, and when you see the rocks round this point crowded with these "mauve" you are sure of getting good sport. I have repeatedly seen the surface of the sea there, for about 100 yds. square, churned into a foam by the big cavalli gambolling and hunting their prey, with tarpon, king-fish, mackerel and shark literally jammed up amongst them.

All these sardines spoil and get soft in two or three hours, so it is preferable when going a distance like La Peña, to get ballahoo, which will be found the best trolling bait. It is also a much larger fish, and half of one of them cut longitudinally, will be none too big for the No. 2 hooks used when fishing the large king-fish. When none of the baits mentioned can be obtained, a strip of the underneath part of the mackerel, locally called "blanc" will be found good, as is also the similar part of the bonite and mullet. A narrow strip with the skin on must be used, and cut to a triangular point. For fishing *à la* "ligne dormante," a bunch of the large sized anchois, cha-cha, or coulihou, is a very tempting bait, but the small fish are apt to bite greedily and detach them one by one, so I have generally found the most successful lure for a large fish to be a piece or pieces of mackerel, bonite, or mullet, and sufficient thereof to cover the hook well. The same bait is also good for bottom fishing and with "ligne voyante," and



POINT BETWEEN RUST'S AND PETIT BOURG BAY



all the sardine tribe as well, good sized anchois cut up into pieces to suit the number of hook used taking the first place. I have on an emergency used shark flesh successfully, as well as other kinds, but that was only when fish were biting ravenously. In the months of October, November and December, it is often extremely difficult to procure fresh fish bait, especially at Huevos and Chacachacare. In this case it is advisable for the fisherman to dig in the sand a few inches below the surface for a kind of cockle locally called "palude." They can be found at Grand Fond at Monos, and below the church at Chacachacare. When taken out of the shell and placed carefully on the hook, they make a most tempting bait for fishing with "en ligne voyante," the only objection to them being, that they are easily washed off the hook, as the flesh is soft. At this season the native fishermen often use "zagaya," a small crab found on the rocks; these are broken up, some thrown in the water for ground-bait, and other pieces put on the hooks, either sinker-fishing or *à la* "ligne voyante." I have omitted to mention the shrimp and prawn, which are capital bait for all kinds of fish and fishing, and I have been very successful with a large prawn put whole on the hook for trolling, when mackerel were beating. The "cheche" or small squid, which is occasionally taken in the seine, when hauling for bait, is also very telling, especially for sorb and grouper, and if the angler is keen on shark-fishing, there is no bait more sure than a piece of ray, wack-awa, or devil-fish (they are all of the same family), to entrap the tiger of the sea. I shall now proceed to the game-fishes of Trinidad, in (what I consider) their order of merit, the mode generally pursued by the angler to catch them and their principal habitat.

### GAME-FISH

The *Cavalli* or *Carangue*. To this fish I honestly think must be given the pride of place, as being the pluckiest and most straightforward fighter to be found in these seas. There are five well-known varieties here, called locally the "carangue camard," "carangue gros-yeux," "carangue à



plumes," "carangue grasse," and "carangue France," and it is the two first varieties I wish to specially mention, as they are the largest and strongest. The "camard" may bite at any time of the day, but as a rule the "gros-yeux" is only taken in the early morning or just about sundown and about an hour or two after. As they are surface fish, and come often to the top of the water to gambol and hunt sardines, they are nearly always fished for with trolling lines. In taking the bait, the "camard" or "gros-yeux" does not finick about but hits it "one time," and for this the fisher must be prepared, as he will in all probability take out twenty to thirty fathoms of the slack line at his first rush when he charges for the bottom, and it matters not if he gets there as he fights like a bulldog the whole time, no getting behind rocks for him. He is now preparing for a second rush, butting with his head, or "baie tête" as the Creoles call it. The fisherman must keep a steady but not too strong a strain on the line all the time, that is, must *feel* him (with a reel the check will be sufficient). If he feels the fish softening, haul in, but always stand by for fresh rushes, of which there will probably be five or six, and if you are a hand-liner and have got all your line in the boat, be careful when you get on the wire, for that is the critical time both for your fingers and your chances of landing your fish, for if he is not quite exhausted he will make another rush, the wire will cut up your fingers, Mr. Cavalli will break it, and then "Aio Punch," for he fights to the bitter end, and never gives in till practically drowned, and even then he is still butting with his head. He is such a gallant fish, and fights so like a "proper gentleman," that the true sportsman, though he hates to lose him, must regret that he is in the bottom of the boat. He is the "Du Guesclin" of Trinidad fish. Most amateurs use gloves when trolling to save their fingers from being cut by the wire, but this necessarily does away with their fineness of touch. I have previously referred to the presence of the small bird called "mauve" being a sure sign of cavalli. This refers to the "camard." There is its counterpart, a bird of similar size, but darker, which comes at dusk, called in Creole "mache carabache," and betokens the presence of the carangue





EASTERN SIDE, HUEYOS BAY, JOHNNY WEHEKIND'S HOUSE.



“gros-yeux” seen in large shoals all round the Bocas from April to October.

The *King-Fish* or *Tasard*. This fine game-fish is very near of kin to the Californian leaping tuna, and may also be often seen jumping out of the water, particularly round the north coast of Trinidad, where he abounds at certain seasons. He also affords great sport with trolling gear, but he has not the bulldog tenacity of the carangue, and does not fight as long. He is much wilier, however, in his tactics, and if he begins to zigzag on the wire, you need all your skill and grit to hold him. Unless very hungry he will not hold on to the bait straight away like the carangue, but will play “coquin,” taking little nips and following up the bait. When he does hold on he is off with a rush, often leaping out of the water when he feels the hook (the carangue never leaps out of the water, on the contrary, goes down). After his first burst he will often appear to give up fighting and resign himself to fate, while the fisherman if he is a novice will go on hauling or reeling up his line into the boat, and if he is a hand-liner the wire also, and that will be a critical time, as directly the king-fish sees the boat he will commence a series of rushes both fore and aft like forked lightning, and then woe betide the poor novice’s hands, for if he lets go the wire, the fish will kink it, no matter how strong it be, and snap it like a piece of pack-thread. The king-fish like the carangue must be played with until exhausted, and carefully handled when put into the boat, as it has teeth like razors. I estimate that on light tackle, you must play a carangue of 20 lbs. to 25 lbs. for half an hour, and a king-fish of about the same size about twenty minutes, as they are sooner drowned. I have already mentioned that the best fishing ground for king-fish is off La Peña on the Venezuelan coast, but strong tackle is absolutely necessary, as your object is to get your fish in the boat as quickly as possible, on account of the predaceous fish there, sharks and barracoutas, who will quickly share your prey with you often leaving only the head. From May to August king-fish are fairly plentiful all round Trinidad, and fine sport can be had, particularly on the north and northeast coasts from Macqueripe to Matura. It should be

also remarked *en passant* that it is one of the finest table fish in these waters.

The *Tarpon* or *Grand-écaille*. The famous "Silver King" as he is commonly called in the Gulf of Mexico and Florida is very plentiful in Trinidad waters, especially at the river mouths, the rocks and reefs of the Bocas, and all points and headlands round the coast. The best season for fishing them, may be said to range from the end of June to the beginning of November. Although I consider both the carangue and king-fish to be more game as to their fighting qualities than the tarpon, the latter fish is far ahead of the others in point of wiliness and general cunning. He is the Machiavelli of the finny tribe, his manœuvres at and round the bait are protean. At one time he will hit the bait with a rush, directly he feels the hook, executing a tiger-like spring from the water into the air, in all probability ejecting the hook at first jump, especially if it has taken him in the top jaw or palate where it cannot possibly find secure hold on account of the bony plates there. On another occasion he will hit the bait with a similar bang, and drop it at once like a naughty boy at a runaway ring of the door-bell. Other times he will swim round the bait giving it occasional little light tugs, or more imperceptible sucks. Even when fairly hooked in the lower jaw, after making three or four springs in the air and finding them ineffectual, he will float on top of the water foxing, pretending he is exhausted, evidently hoping the fisherman will haul him in, until he gets on the wire when he will make a fresh rush and kink it, after which he can easily break it and get away. Even when gaffed and put in the boat he must be speedily stunned with a club or he will jump out again. The local fisherman have a proverb to the effect that "the grand-écaille is never dead until he is in the pot." I have known a large tarpon hooked in Huevos Bay, and played with a rod until the fisherman thought he was exhausted, and as it was inconvenient to put him in the boat, the conqueror resolved to tow him home to Domus Bay, Monos, across the Second Boca, a distance of at least a mile and a half, but on arriving at Domus, when attempting to beach him he actually got away, although to all appearances

drowned. A man may get fifty bites in an afternoon, but he can consider himself the favoured of fortune if he puts five fish in the boat. The tarpon is always caught with trolling gear, reel or hand line, rarely taking the hook if any other mode of fishing is pursued, and this trolling is carried on preferably from a small, fast fishing boat travelling up and down the fishing ground, as a rule never more than a distance of 50 ft. from the rocks, and often nearer. The tarpon will often bite with a full moon, and I have known of very good work being done with large fish on the eve of the full moon and for three or four nights after, trolling between the rock at the head of the First Boca, called "Dent Ma Taitron," and the eastern shore or rocky cliffs of Monos. A favourite ground for tarpon is from Domus Bay, Monos, round Pointe Courante, and down the Monos side of the Second Boca, as far as Pointe à Diable. The opposite side at Huevos is also good, but as I have before stated, tarpon can nearly always be felt in the season anywhere round the Trinidad Coast, and at river mouths like the Caroni, Nariva, and Ortoire, at all times and season, but the river fish do not run nearly as large.

N. B. Always carry a harpoon in the boat; it often is indispensable for securing a big fish.

The *Barracouta*. This fish, the pirate of the seas, also affords fine sport, especially if of large size, but according to my experience he is more easily played out or drowned than the fish I have just been writing about. He is the possessor of a very long and enormously powerful jaw, so when fishing for him, a large, preferably steel hook and good tackle, whether rod or hand-line, are absolutely necessary, as he will take the bait in a most emphatic manner, giving the hand-liner who is trolling for him a nice pair of blistered hands by the rate the line will travel through them, provided he has neither gloves nor a horny epidermis. I have known a boat with two men rowing hard to be stopped dead, and the troller nearly jerked out of the boat by the first rush of a large barracouta. The most tempting bait being a garfish or large ballahoo, 12 in. to 15 in. in length, it can be understood that a big hook is indispensable. When he feels the sting he sometimes springs out of the water, but not so high

or often as the tarpon. After the first rush, which is fierce but not so long as the carangue, he will sulk and shortly make a second and third rush in spurts, not so dogged and determined as the carangue, who fights hard to the bitter end. After his third rush, if the boatmen pull hard he will soon be exhausted (on account, I fancy, of his excessively long jaw, which must cause him to swallow a lot of water), and can be gaffed, or if too large, beached on the shore. Like the tarpon, the barracouta is always fished for near the shore, and his best season is November and December. He sometimes takes the bait when fishing with "ligne dormante," but is generally caught trolling. Plentiful on the northern and eastern coasts, and also the Bocas Islands. A favourite ground is Scotland Bay, and between there and L'Anse Poua on the mainland, the eastern side of the First Boca. In Scotland Bay, trolling from a small boat with one boatman, I hooked, played and beached, a barracouta 8½ ft. in length.

In closing my description of fish that afford good sport to the angler in these waters, I must not omit the "Bonite," a chunky built fish, little used for food, but greedily looked for as bait to catch other fish. He is almost as gamey and strong as the carangue, and puts up a good fight on the trolling line; the "mackerel" which when large, (10 lbs. to 15 lbs.), pursues similar tactics to the king-fish, only more "coquin" as the natives express it (Anglice, wily). I know of no fish such a confirmed bait stealer as the mackerel, the "pargue-dent-chien" which, especially when of large size, affords splendid sport either to the man with the rod or "ligne dormante," as its rushes are exceedingly swift and powerful, and lastly the "sorbe" which though not quite so powerful or swift as the "pargue" is well worth the catching. There are other good game fish such as the cod and pompano, but they are exceedingly rare and not often caught.

The hunter after the mighty monsters of the deep will not be disappointed in Trinidad waters, as the Giant Ray, Sea-Devil or Manta, is far from uncommon, and can be both seen and heard on most nights at Pointe Baleine, the western end of Gasparil. These huge beasts (often weighing over 1,000 lbs.) hurtle themselves out of the water to a height of



WATCHMAN'S HOUSE  
Patos.



LA TINTA BAY, CHACACHACARE.  
(Showing the mountains of Venezuela on the opposite side of the Boca Grande.)





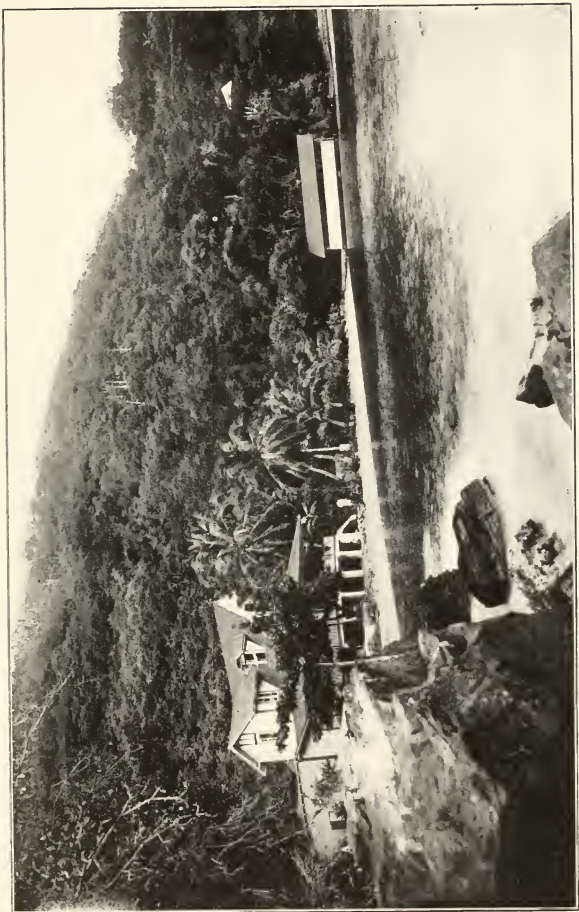


8 ft. or 10 ft. with their bat-like wings folded back; these they gradually extend as they come down, reaching the water with a loud resonant smack, followed by a boom like the meeting of thunder clouds. They go through this evolution, I fancy, to rid themselves of the parasites with which they are covered. There is a popular idea that the Manta does this to kill his prey, and that he is dangerous to man, will fold his wings over him in the water and descend with him, but I have assisted at the post-mortems of several large ones, and never seen the stomach contain anything but sardines and such small deer. He is, however, an awkward beast to tackle as he is immensely powerful and untiring, and can haul heavy boats behind him for miles, so those who hunt him should have a powerful steam-launch available. I saw one get away with three ship-boats at Brighton, La Brea, bristling like a pincushion with harpoons, and full of rifle balls, and they would never have got him if he had not chosen to beach himself. He was 14 ft. across and probably weighed close on 2,000 lbs. Sharks, sword-fish, saw-fish, and two kinds of porpoise locally called "marsouen blanc" (the small one) and "marsouen canal," weighing about three quarters of a ton, are plentiful, so the harpooner with a stout pirogue and four good oars can get plenty of fun.

In the months of February and March the Gulf of Paria is invaded by a huge army, millions in fact, of jelly-fish of the genus "Physalia," locally called "galère," and these are the favourite food of the spade-fish, known in Trinidad as the "paoua" and much esteemed as a table-fish in the United States. The island fishermen angle eagerly for them in the following manner. Half a dozen hooks, Nos. 6 or 7, gauged with fishing line, are fastened in a bunch on a two foot length of No. 20 brass wire, which is fixed on to a fishing line. Experience has shown that the Paoua bites at a depth of three to four fathoms from the surface, so a lead plummet or sinker about 1 lb. weight, is fixed parallel to the wire and hooks. Galère for bait are caught when floating on the sea with a small hand-net, a pointed stick, or even with the hand. They are circular in shape and have a saucer-like edge, so the hooks are passed through the jelly-like flesh

almost equidistantly, and the bait is then lowered into the sea the requisite depth, the weight of the lead keeping it there. A favourite spot is the leeside of a point, near the rocks and where the current is fairly strong, and they generally bite either after the full tide, when it commences to fall, though outside the Bocas it is often vice versa. These "paoua" come in large schools, and their presence can be easily detected by numbers of them often rising and beating on top of the water. When they commence biting, they do so ravenously, and the fishermen out for a livelihood not infrequently put out four lines, one in each hand and one tied to each big toe. Sometimes a man will be seen struggling with three fish at once, and this is a very amusing sight, especially as he will be in a tremendous hurry to let go the slip knot off his toe. Favourite spots for "paoua" fishing near the Bocas in the season, are, the leesides of Pointe Courante at Monos, Pointe Rouge the northeast point of the First Boca, and near the Parasol Rock in the Second Boca. The point at the northwest corner of Cronstadt, the Doctor's island, is also good.

A word about two distinct specialties of the northwestern fishing region, the Bocas negro, and the "remous": the former is "sui generis" indubitably ignorant, superstitious and lazy, faults of the conditions under which he was reared, and probably too much of the "gentle life" described so graphically by Canon Kingsley. His mode of life, dependent almost entirely on the caprices of Ocean and her finny inhabitants, naturally predisposes him to be supine and indolent, save when the magic shout "carangue ka bat" (cavalli are beating) is raised. On the other hand, he is fairly honest, of kindly and cheerful disposition, particularly to women and children, and although when he occasionally gets hold of rum he may be like "Thompson, the hero of Angels," frightfully drunk, yet he is always polite to the stranger. When the fish are on the move or bite, he is a thorough sportsman, and spares not himself in the interests of the game. He is a hardy mariner and knows all the currents (which are swift and dangerous), and rocks of his native islets, and it is on account of this knowledge that he is indis-



RUST'S BAY, CHACACHACARE.



pensable. A strange boatman would be at sea, in more senses than one, for a considerable period at the Bocas.

Now for the "remous." It must be remembered that there is the sweep of two contrary currents along the coast, which have their conflict in the bay, opposite Port of Spain. The currents are made up of the resultants between the tides of the sea, the Orinoco currents, and the Caroni current. When the tide is ebbing, a current sweeps along the coast from the Serpent's mouth towards Port of Spain, and seeks an outlet through the Bocas, into the open sea. But when the tide rises, a contrary current from outside the Bocas forces them back to the eastward; and there is a moment, when the mutually opposed currents are equalized. It is at this moment, just at the lowest ebb, and the approaching rise, that the famous boiling of the waters, called the "remous," takes place, afterwards the Bocas currents assert supremacy until the tide begins to ebb. At this time it is only those who have faced the Maelstrom of Pointe Girod, or the Scylla and Charybdis of Pointe Courante, who can fully appreciate the force of the currents, and the skill of those who navigate them.

For the sporting tourist, no finer or more complete change can be found from the cold grey winters of Europe and America, than that offered by the Bocas islands, lapped by the summer seas, whereon he can lead the aforesaid "gentle life" as depicted by Charles Kingsley in "At Last," exhilarated with the chase of the "Silver King." A fine, dry climate, warm it is true, but not any hotter and far healthier than Florida (the great resort of the tarpon fisher both English and American); inexpressibly finer scenery than the Gulf of Mexico can show, and from June to November plenty of tarpon. The north coast of Trinidad is simply teeming with fish the year round, but as I have said before there is no living accommodation for tourists ashore, so for at all events some time to come, their "point d'appui" must be the Bocas Islands.



THE SEA FISH OF TRINIDAD, FROM AN  
ECONOMIC POINT OF VIEW,  
AS SEA-FOOD







CHACACHACARE LIGHTHOUSE.



## PART II

# THE SEA FISH OF TRINIDAD, FROM AN ECONOMIC POINT OF VIEW, AS SEA-FOOD

*Total weight of fish weighed at the Port of Spain Fish-Market for  
the twelve months ending December 31, 1908*

MONTH	WEIGHT
January.....	96,464 lbs.
February.....	98,922 “
March.....	97,166 “
April.....	94,448 “
May.....	142,128 “
June.....	172,881 “
July.....	154,842 “
August.....	142,856 “
September.....	138,701 “
October.....	128,790 “
November.....	153,384 “
December.....	107,374 “
Total.....	1,527,956 lbs.

or an average of 4,186 lbs. per diem. All fish coming to Port of Spain by sea has to be weighed and passed through the Fish-Market. A certain quantity is, however, brought daily from Carenage, Macqueripe, etc., by hucksters and “marchands” on land, probably bringing up the daily consumption to an average of 5,000 lbs.

It will be seen from the preceding table that the average daily consumption of fresh fish in Port of Spain is approximately 5,000 lbs., and this, allowing the population of the town to be between 50,000 and 60,000, is rather a small allowance, and all owing to the fact that the ordinary citizen has to pay too dearly for his breakfast, or dinner, fish.

In the vicinity of the Bocas, during the months of June, July and August, the fishermen frequently capture in their seines schools of fish ranging from ten to twenty thousand pounds weight, chiefly "cavalli" and "paoua," and these they can keep alive for some days in the seine, hauling the ends ashore and mooring the back of the bag or purse to a boat anchored out. Very often there will be six or more boat loads (large pirogues holding 2,500 lbs. each) captured, but the fishermen only take out a boat-load at a time for transmission to market; if they take more they will be at the mercy of the ring of "middle-men" who will force them to accept their offer or jettison their cargo, which necessarily becomes quickly unsaleable after the sun gets up. The seine crew sell their fish to the middle-men at prices ranging from \$2.00 to \$4.00 per 100 lbs., (on an average), so they do not make an exorbitant profit; but the aforesaid ordinary citizen has to pay almost invariably from 10 cents to 12 cents per pound, so there must be a screw loose somewhere. Such an important article of diet to the masses in a sea-port town as fresh fish, should certainly be more within the reach of their limited purse than it now is, and for that purpose alone it would be highly advisable that a Sea-fishery Commission of some sort should be appointed to look into and deal with the matter. With the experiences of Jamaica before us, as so ably described by Mr. Duerden, the Bocas fishing grounds would be in the main impracticable for trawling on account of the rocky bottom and reefs, but there seems no reason why good work should not be achieved by a fast steam trawler in the Gulf going south from Port of Spain to Cedros, in fact to any port where there is no rocky bottom to cut up the trawl. The main requisites would be quick despatch and plenty of ice. The long-line fishery, where miles of line are put out with thousands of hooks, would be unsuccessful on account of the quantities of predaceous fish that obtain in these waters. The fact that our supply of sea-food depends entirely on the desultory efforts of a very poor section of our population, and that there is no amalgamation of capital with labour, is a great impediment to the development of an industry which ought to be one of our chief resources.

The waters round Trinidad are teeming with edible fish, and their exploitation conducted in an intelligent manner should be productive of the best results, not only in ensuring a cheap and plentiful supply of good food for the masses, but also excellent profits to the prosecutors of the industry. By the Trade Returns for the year ending March 31, 1908, I note we imported over £80,000 in salted and smoked fish, principally from Canada, but I also see there was close upon £5,000 expended in salted fish imported from Venezuela, and this must have been mainly for salted king-fish and mackerel, both which fish abound in our seas. For the past few years I have been gathering information from people engaged in the fishing industries of Great Britain as to the cost of boats, gear, etc., for steam-trawls, and have much pleasure in transcribing these notes here for the benefit of those who may take an active interest in developing our sea-food resources, for which I estimate a working capital of \$20,000 to \$30,000 would be ample. One estimate I received for a steam trawler reads as follows:—

“She is Clyde built and practically new. Hull of wood. Frames natural crook oak. Keel 10 in.x6 in. of elm. Planking in three thicknesses (diagonal) two of teak and one mahogany above elm below. Yellow metal fastening. 62 ft. over all, 51 ft. 6 in. BP by 12 ft. 6 in. beam. 7 ft. deep. Draws 5 ft. aft, 3 ft. forward. New twin-screw engines.

Two 5½” cylinders 8” stroke  
 “ 10” “

New horizontal Return Tube boiler 6 ft. x 6 ft. for 100 lbs. working pressure. Speed 10 knots. Bunkers for 12 tons. Burns 8 to 12 cwt. for 24 hrs. Forecastle for three men and berth for one in Engine Room. The Cabin 8 ft. x 10 ft. to sleep 6 hands. After Cabin to sleep 4, pantry, lavatory, etc., small deck-house. Steam windlass. 2 masts. Schooner rig. Cutwater bow. 6 ft. head-room under cabin beams.

Price..... £1600  
 Complete Trawl Gear.....£ 200”

I also received an estimate from an experienced master regarding the cost of bringing out the vessel from the Clyde

to Trinidad. The cost without insurance would be about £450, covering wages for 1 master, 1 mate, 1 cook-steward, 3 seamen, 2 engineers, and 3 firemen, with their food, all deck and engine-room stores, nautical instruments and charts, and coals, with port charges at ports of call, and also return fares if any. The insurance would vary from £5. 5s. to £7. 7s., roughly £100, according to the time of the year for bringing her out. An experienced trawling captain could be engaged for about £20 a month, an experienced fish-curer for about half that amount, and arrangements could probably be made to get them out as part of the crew to save their food and wages out, but the trawler captain would not do for taking the steamer out. I think it would be advisable, at all events for the inauguration of the industry, to have two experienced hands, one for the trawl and the other for the curing.

As I consider fishing with a beam-trawl would in all probability be the most successful mode of supplying the Trinidad market, for the benefit of those who are at present making a precarious living as toilers of the sea, I here append a short description of one as used in British waters, for which I am indebted to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

“The beam-trawl may be simply described as a triangular flat, purse-shaped net, with the mouth extended by a horizontal wooden beam, which is raised a short distance from the ground by means of two iron frames or heads, one at each end, the upper part of the mouth being fastened to the beam, and the under portion dragging on the ground as the net is towed over the bottom. The beam of course, varies in length according to the size of the net, and depends to some extent also on the length and power of the vessel which has to work it. In the larger ‘smacks’ or trawl boats, the beam ranges from 36 ft. to 50 ft. in length, and there is hardly anything less than this now used by the deep-sea trawlers. When the trawl is being hoisted in, the first part of the apparatus taken on board is the large heavy beam, and this is very commonly done when the vessel is rolling and pitching about in a sea-way. It is therefore necessary for the sake of safety that the beam should be secured as soon as



320 LB. GROUPEE CAUGHT AT BRIGHTON PIER, LA BREA.



212 LB. GROUPEE CAUGHT OFF BRIGHTON PIER, LA BREA.





possible, and in such a position as to be out of the way, and at the same time conveniently placed for lowering again when required. All this may be easily effected by having the beam of such a length in proportion to the size of the vessel that when hoisted up one end of it may come over the taffrail, with the iron head just clear outside, and the fore end in front of one of the shrouds. The object and use of the beam is to extend the mouth of the net, but in order to allow room for the fish to enter, the beam, and with it the back of the net which is laced to it, must be raised a certain distance from the ground. For this purpose the beam is fastened at each end to the top of an iron frame, shaped somewhat like an irregularly formed stirrup, which is fitted to it at right angles by a square socket at the top. By these 'heads' or 'irons,' the beam is supported at a height of nearly 3 ft. from the ground, and, contrary to the popular idea on the subject, never touches the bottom. The lower part of the trawl-head or iron is straight and flat, just like the corresponding part of a stirrup. It is called the 'shoe' and is the part which slides over the ground as the trawl beam and following net are towed along. We now have the long beam supported at each end by a more or less stirrup-shaped iron fitted at right angles. The next thing to be considered is the net. When the net is spread out in the manner it would be when working, the upper part or back has its straight front edge fastened to the beam, but the corresponding lower part or belly is cut away in such a manner that the front margin forms a deep curve extending from the shoe of one trawl-head to the other, the centre of the curve, or bosom as it is called, being at a considerable distance behind the beam. This lower edge of the mouth of the trawl is fastened to and protected by the 'ground-rope,' which is made of an old hawser 'rounded' or covered with small rope to keep it from chafing and to make it heavier. The ends of the ground-rope are fastened at each side by a few turns round the back of the trawl-heads, just above the shoe, and the rope itself rests on the ground throughout its entire curve. The fish which may be disturbed by it, have, therefore, no chance of escape at either the sides or back of the net, and as the outlet

under the beam is a long way past them, and is steadily moving on, their fate is sooner or later decided by their passing over the ground-rope and finding their way into the funnel-shaped end of the net, from which a small valve of netting prevents their return. The ground-rope is the part which directly bears on the ground, and to prevent the possibility of the fish passing under it, the rope should have some weight in it so as to 'bite' well, or press the ground closely. It is, however, *always* made of old material, so that it may break in case of getting foul of rocks or other obstructions as may be met with on the generally smooth ground, where the trawl can only be worked with advantage. If in such a contingency the rope were so strong and good as not to break, there would be serious danger of the tow-rope snapping, and then the whole apparatus might be lost; but the ground-rope giving way enables the net to be cleared and hauled up. The remaining part of the trawl, extending from the bosom to the extreme end, forms a complete bag, gradually diminishing in breadth to within about the last 10 ft., which part is called the 'cod' or purse, and is closed by a draw-rope or 'cod-line' at the extremity when the net is being used. This is the general receptacle for the various fishes which enter the net, and when the trawl is hauled up and got on board the vessel, the draw-rope is cast off and the fish all fall out on the deck.

"The meshes of an ordinary deep-sea trawl vary in size in different parts of the net, diminishing from 4 sq. ins. near the mouth to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. in the cod or purse. The under part of the net, being exposed to more wear and chafing than the upper, is usually made with stouter twine, and the purse being especially liable to injury from being dragged over the ground with a weight of fish and perhaps stones, has some protection provided by layers of old netting called 'rubbing pieces' laced to its under surface."

A deep-sea trawl, such as now has been described, is therefore an immense bag-net, the largest size being about 50 ft. the mouth and about 100 ft. long. The trawl is towed over the ground by the trawl warp, generally a 6 in. rope, 150 fathoms long, and made up of two lengths of 75 fathoms each

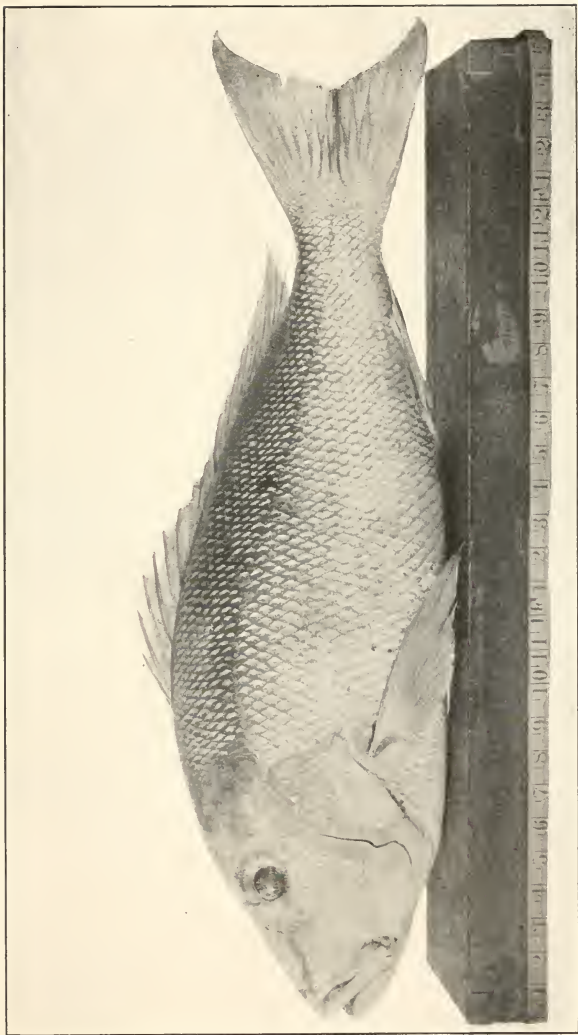
spliced together; one end of this warp is shackled to two other pieces, each 15 fathoms long, and called the "spans" or "bridles," which lead one to each end of the beam, and are shackled to swivel-bolts in front of the iron heads, so as to give a firm pull on the whole apparatus.

There is a belief prevalent amongst the fishing folk here, that steam-trawling would soon exhaust all the grounds, but this is erroneous, as for some time at all events there would be but one steam-trawl. At Brixham in Devonshire, where trawling is believed to have originated, and fishing has always been the chief industry, one particular fishing ground, practically about twenty miles long and from three to eight miles from land, has been worked steadily for over a hundred years, and yet there is no sign of the ground being exhausted; in fact it has never been so prosperous as in the past few years.

The trawler would also have to be provided with "drift-nets" and "stow-nets." The "drift-net" in its use corresponds to what is locally called a "fillet" but it is worked in a more intelligent manner in British seas. The essential principle of the working of the "drift-net" is that it forms a long wall or barrier of netting, hanging for a few fathoms perpendicularly in the water, but extending a great length horizontally, and that the surface fish meeting these nets, and trying to pass, become meshed, that is, get their heads and gills in the meshes of the net, from which they cannot withdraw, their gill-covers being caught. This system of fishing is generally prosecuted at night. The "stow-net" used from the trawler, ought to be particularly successful with shoal-fish like "jacks" and "anchois", etc. It is the same mode as followed in the sprat fisheries in England. Long-lining, which consists of coils of line 7,200 fathoms, or nearly eight miles long, and with nearly 5,000 hooks fastened on snoods  $1\frac{1}{2}$  fathoms apart, I am afraid would not answer on account of the predaceous fish, but the trawler would have to carry hand-lines, as some of the choicest table-fish, to wit, the "vivanot jolle bleu" can only be caught on the deep-sea bottom, where nets cannot reach. The trawl would have to carry plenty of ice to keep the fish fresh, the "well"

for keeping them alive being practically abandoned in the Northern fisheries, as experience has shown that in a well the large fish smother each other.

It will be seen by these notes that a steam-trawler of good capacity can be brought out here, ready for action and fully equipped for about twelve thousand dollars, and I see no reason why the venture should not be a profitable one and at the same time supply the Colony with good fresh fish at six cents per pound. The curing of fish would be a matter for after consideration, but from personal experiments, I am satisfied that the "king-fish," "mackerel" and "jack-fish" could when cured be made a very tasty article of diet.



SORB (*Lutianus analis*) 18 lbs.  
(Caught with rod by J. A. Bulmer, Esq., from the jetty, Chacachacare.)



CLASSIFIED LIST OF THE TRINIDAD  
SEA-FISHES





PART III

CLASSIFIED LIST OF THE TRINIDAD  
SEA-FISHES

Food Fishes.....	85	species
Not used for food.....	31	“
	<hr/>	
Total.....	116	“

*N. B.*—Fishes of superior quality are marked A1. Fishes of good quality are marked B. Fishes of inferior quality are marked C.

## FOOD FISHES OF TRINIDAD

Trinidad Name	Family	Genus	Naturalists	Quality	Remarks as to habitat, Means of catching, etc.
Brochet, or Pike, or Snook	Centropomidae (the Robalos)	Centropomus undecimalis	(Bloch)	C	Brackish water. Taken in seine and with hook, trolling
Saumon or Salmon	Centropomidae (the Robalos)	Centropomus parallelus	(Poey)	B	Mud banks, chiefly bottom fishing
Barracouta or Bechine	Sphyrenidae (the Barracutas)	Sphyraena barracuda	(Walbaum)	B	Trolling, and also in seine and with harpoon
Secoye, or Shoal Barracouta	Sphyrenidae (the Barracutas)	Sphyraena guachancho	(Cuvier & Valenciennes)	B	In seines. Rather rare. Rocky bottoms and sand
Palriôt	Hæmulidæ (the Grunts)	Anisotremus virginicus	(Linnaeus)	B	Rocky bottoms. Caught with hook on cast lines and in fish pots
Lippè	Hæmulidæ (the Grunts)	Anisotremus surinamensis	(Bloch)	B	Rocky bottoms. Caught with hook on cast lines and in fish pots
Grey Grunt or Crocro	Hæmulidæ (the Grunts)	Hæmulon macrostomum	(Günther)	C	Deep sea bottom fishing
Tête-feuilles	Hæmulidæ (the Grunts)	Hæmulon parra	(Desmarest)	C	Deep sea bottom fishing
Sailor's choice	Hæmulidæ (the Grunts)	Hæmulon album	(Cuvier & Valenciennes)	C	Bottom fishing, chiefly mud banks
Grunt, Yellow	Hæmulidæ (the Grunts)	Hæmulon carbo-	(Poey)	A <sub>1</sub>	Rocky bottoms with cast lines or sinkers. Also fish pots
White Grunt, or Crocro	Hæmulidæ (the Grunts)	Hæmulon scuirus	(Shaw)	B	Rocky bottoms with cast lines or sinkers. Also fish pots
Red-mouth Grunt, or Crocro	Hæmulidæ (the Grunts)	Hæmulon plumieri	(Lacépède)	B	Rocky bottoms with cast lines or sinkers. Also fish pots
Gueule-rouge	Hæmulidæ (the Grunts)	Bathystoma ri-	(Jordan & Swain)	B	Deep sea bottom fishing. Rocky bottom with cast lines
Yellow Grunt	Hæmulidæ (the Grunts)	mator			
Common Grunt	Lutianidæ				
Seize or Tomtate					

Cola	(Snappers)	Ocyurus chrysurus	(Bloch)	B	Rocky bottom. Hook with cast lines and seine
Pargue (dent-chien) or Dog's-tooth Par- gue	Lutianidæ (Snappers)	Lutianus jocu	(Jordan & Evermann)	A1	Rocky bottoms with cast line or line dormant
Green Pargue or Mangrove Pargue	Lutianidæ (Snappers)	Lutianus griseus	(Jordan & Evermann)	B	Rocky and sandy bottoms. Cast lines and fish pots
Pargue or School- master	Lutianidæ (Snappers)	Lutianus apodus	(Jordan & Evermann)	B	Deep sea snapper with bottom or cast line
Sorb	Lutianidæ (Snappers)	Lutianus analis	(Jordan & Evermann)	A1	Rocky bottoms. Cast line or line dormant
Vivanot Jolle-bleu	Lutianidæ (Snappers)	Lutianus aza	(Jordan & Evermann)	A1	Deep sea bottom fishing. Rocks or mud
Vivanot or Silk Snapper	Lutianidæ (Snappers)	Lutianus vivanus	(Jordan & Evermann)	B	Deep sea bottom fishing. Rocks or mud
Walliacke	Lutianidæ (Snappers)	Lutianus synagris	(Jordan & Evermann)	B	Rock and mud bottom. Bottom fishing and cast line
Tête ronde or Cata- lufa	Priacanthidæ (the Catalufas)	Priacanthus arena- tus	(Cuvier & Valenciennes)	C	Deep sea bottom fishing. Rock and mud
Rock Grouper or Hind	Serranidæ (sea basses)	Epinephelus ade- censionis	(Osbeck)	B	Rocky bottoms. Trolling and cast lines, also fish pots
Lucky Grouper	Serranidæ (sea basses)	Epinephelus mac- ulosus	(Jordan & Evermann)	B	Rocky bottoms. Trolling and cast lines, also fish pots
Ouitallibè	Serranidæ (sea basses)	Petrometropon cruentatus	(Lacépède)	A1	Rocky bottoms. Trolling and cast lines, also fish pots
Red Grouper or Vieille Rouge	Serranidæ (sea basses)	Epinephelus morio	(Cuvier & Valenciennes)	A1	Rocky bottom. Line dormant and bottom fishing
Tienne or White Grouper	Serranidæ	Epinephelus striatus	(Bloch)	B	Deep sea bottom fishing. Rock and mud
Koon	Serranidæ	Epinephelus gut- tatus	(Linnaeus)	B	Rocky bottom. Trolling and cast lines. Also fish pots
Black Grouper	Serranidæ	Mycteroperca bonaci	(Poey)	B	Deep sea bottom fishing. Rock and mud. More in mud bottoms.
Jew-fish	Serranidæ	Promicrops Itaira	(Jordan & Evermann)	B	Deep sea, rocky bottom

## FOOD FISHES OF TRINIDAD

Trinidad Name	Family	Genus	Naturalists	Quality	Remarks as to habitat. Means of catching, etc.
Spanish Mackerel or Carite	Scombridae (mackerels)	<i>Scomberomorus maculatus</i>	(Mitchill)	B	Rocks or mud. Trolling and fillet nets
Tassard, or King-fish	Serranidae (mackerels)	<i>Scomberomorus cavalla</i>	(Cuvier & Valenciennes)	A1	Rocks or mud. Trolling and occasionally in seines
Bonite	Scombridae (mackerels)	<i>Sarda sarda</i>	(Jordan & Evermann)	C	Rocks or mud. Trolling and in seines
Zapatero, or Shoe-maker	Carangidae (the carangues)	<i>Oligophlites saurus</i>	(Bloch & Schneider)	C	Common in all waters. Hardy used for food. Coarse seines
Camard	Carangidae (the carangues)	<i>Caranx hippos</i>	(Linnaeus)	B	Trolling and in seines. Rocky bottoms chiefly
Cavalli, or Carangue	Carangidae (the carangues)	<i>Caranx latus</i>	(Agassiz)	B	Trolling and in seines. Rocky bottoms chiefly
Carangue Gros-yeux	Carangidae (the carangues)	<i>Caranx chrysos</i>	(Mitchill)	A1	Trolling and in seines. Rocky bottoms chiefly
Carangue Grasse	Carangidae (the carangues)	<i>Trachinotus</i>	(Jordan & Evermann)		
Carangue France	Carangidae (the carangues)	<i>Carolinus</i>	(Jordan & Evermann)	A1	Trolling and bottom fishing.
Carangue à plume	Nematistudæ, or Papagallos	<i>Nematisturus pectoralis</i>	(Jordan & Evermann)	A1	Rare. Rocky bottoms
Pompano	Nematistudæ, or Papagallos	<i>Trachinotus goodeii</i>	(Linnaeus)	A1	Cast line and harpoon
La Lune, or Moon-fish	Carangidae (the carangues)	<i>Selone vomer</i>	(Linnaeus)	B	Trolling and bottom fishing. Rarely. Seines, rocky and sandy coasts
Cha-cha	Carangidae	<i>Decapterus punctatus</i>	(Agassiz)	B	Small and good bait fish. Caught in seines
Coolihoo, or Jack-fish	Carangidae	<i>Carangus Bartholomæi</i>	(Cuvier & Valenciennes)	A1	When small, in seines; large, on hook, bottom fishing
Cod-fish, or Morue	Gadidae	<i>Gadus morrhua</i>	(Linnaeus)	A1	Trolling and harpoon. Very rare
Banane, or Carajo	Albulidae	<i>Albula vulpes</i>	(Linnaeus)	C	Trolling. Coarse, hardly used for food. Rock and Sand.

Lebranche, Garmot, or Mullet (large)	Mugilidæ	Mugil brasiliensis	(Agassiz)	A1	In mullet nets. Will not take hook. Mud banks and estuaries
White Mullet (small)	Mugilidæ	Mugil curema	(Cuvier & Valenciennes)	B	In mullet nets. Will not take hook. Mud banks and estuaries
Ancho	Mugilidæ	Mugil trichodon	(Poey)	A1	Mud banks and in seines. Sel- dom by hook.
Capitan	Labridæ	Lachnolaimus maximus	(Walbaum)	B	Rocky bottoms. Fish pots, rarely takes hook
Souris jaune, or Yel- low Goat-fish	Mullidæ	Upeneus martini- cus	(Cuvier & Valenciennes)	C	Bottom fishing. Hardly used for food. Too small and coarse
Souris rouge, or Red Goat-fish	Mullidæ	Upeneus maculatus	(Bloch)	C	Bottom fishing. Hardly used for food. Too small and coarse
Marianne, or Squir- rel-fish	Holocentridæ	Holocentrus as- censionis	(Osbeck)	C	Rocky bottoms. Cast lines or bottom fishing
Soleil	Holocentridæ	Flammis Marianus	(Jordan & Evermann)	C	Rocky bottoms. Cast lines or bottom fishing
Jacquot, or Parrot- fish Red	Scaridæ	Sparisoma abild- gaardii	(Bloch)	C	Rocky bottoms. Caught in fish pots. Rarely take hook. Not much esteemed as food
Jacquot, Green	Scaridæ	Sparisoma chrys- opterus	(Bloch & Schneider)	C	Rocky bottoms. Caught in fish pots. Rarely take hook. Not much esteemed as food
Jacquot, Variegated	Scaridæ	Scarus vetula	(Bloch & Schneider)	C	Rocky bottoms. Caught in fish pots. Rarely take hook. Not much esteemed as food.
Jacquot, Blue	Scaridæ	Scarus cæruleus	(Bloch)	C	Rocky bottoms. Caught in fish pots. Rarely takes hook. Not much esteemed as food
Guachawo Giant Parrot-fish	Scaridæ	Iridis radiatus	(Jordan & Evermann)	B	Rocky bottom. Large size only taken with harpoon. Fish pots

## FOOD FISHES OF TRINIDAD

Trinidad Name	Family	Genus	Naturalists	Quality	Remarks as to habitat, Means of catching, etc.
Demoiselle or Mari- posa Marguerite	Chætodontidæ (Demoiselles) Chætodontidæ (Demoiselles)	Chætodon striatus Chætodon capis- tratus	(Linnaeus) (Linnaeus)	C C	Rocky bottoms. Fish pots. Not much used for food, too small Rocky bottoms. Fish pots. Not much used for food, too small
Sabellick, or Portu- gais Angel Fish, or Rock Beauty Blue Angel Fish	Chætodontidæ (Demoiselles) Chætodontidæ (Demoiselles) Chætodontidæ (Demoiselles) Teuthididæ	Pomacanthus arcuatus Holacanthus tri- color Angelichthys cil- iaris Teuthis cæruleus	(Linnaeus) (Bloch) (Linnaeus) (Bloch & Schneider) (Linnaeus)	B C C	Harpoon, and occasionally take hook. Good fish food Fish pots. Good food Rocky bottom fish pots. Fair food fish
Blue Doctor Fish, or Tang Black Doctor Fish, or Tang Z'orphie, or Gar-fish	Teuthididæ Esocidæ (the needle-fishes)	Teuthis hepatus Tylosorus raphi- doma	(Linnaeus) (Jordan & Evermann)	B A	Rocky bottom. Fish pots. Will not take hook. Good food Rocky bottom. Fish pots. Will not take hook. Good food Caught in garfish seines without leads. Sandy and rocky bottoms. Rarely caught with hooks
Balaju, or Ballyhoo	Hemiramphitidæ (the balaos)	Hyporhamphus unifasciatus, or roberti	(Jordan & Evermann)	C	Rocky and sandy places. Caught in seines and with cast nets. Torching at night. Good bait
Paoua, or Spade Fish	Ephippidæ (the spade-fishes)	Chædopterus faber	(Broussonet)	B	Rocks or mud. In seines. Caught with "galere" or jelly-fish bait on hooks at certain seasons
Grand-écaille, or Tarpon	Elopidæ (the tarpons)	Tarpon atlanticus	(Cuvier & Valenciennes)	C	Trolling. Sometimes in seines. Great game fish. Coarse for food
Sardines, or Caille	Clupeidæ (the herrings)	Clupanodon pseu- dohispanicus	(Poey)	C	Rocky shores. Caught in seines, used chiefly for bait

Sardine, d'or	Clupeidæ	<i>Sardinella humeralis</i>	(Cuvier & Valenciennes)	C	Rocky shores. Very good bait
Sardine rouge	Clupeidæ	<i>Sardinella macrophthalmma</i>	(Ranzani)	C	Rocky shores. Irresistible as bait
Large Z' anchois or Anchovies	Engraulididæ (the anchovies)	<i>Engraulis mordax</i>	(Jordan & Evermann)	B	Large shoals enter in June, captured in seines. Good bait
Small Z' anchois	Engraulididæ (the anchovies)	<i>Anchovia delicatissima</i>	(Jordan & Evermann)	C	Large shoals enter in June, captured in seines. Good bait
Harang, or herring	Clupeidæ	<i>Pomolobus medioeris</i>	(Jordan & Evermann)	C	Shoal fish on sandy and muddy shores, caught in seines
Sole	Soledæ (the soles)	<i>Achirus fasciatus</i>	(Jordan & Evermann)	C	Deep sea bottom fishing. Very rare
Aileronde	Soledæ (the soles)	<i>Achirus lineatus</i>	(Linnaeus)	A1	Harpoon, seine and rarely hook. Sandy shores
Small Sole, or Flounder	Soledæ (the soles)	<i>Pleuronectes gronovii</i>	(Jordan & Evermann)	B	Muddy or sandy estuaries near river mouths. Cast nets
Palomettes	Stromateidæ	<i>Palometa similima</i>	(Jordan & Evermann)	C	Muddy or sandy estuaries near river mouths. Cast nets
"Blanche" or Iodiform Fish	Gerridæ	<i>Xystoerma cinereum</i>	(Jordan & Evermann)		Caught in seines
Rodeau	Sparidæ	<i>Archosargus unimaculatus</i>	(Bloch)	B	Rocky coasts. Caught with cast lines
Porgy (Gros yeux)	Sparidæ	<i>Calamus, calamus</i>	(Cuvier & Valenciennes)	B	Deep sea bottom fishing
Croco (Tête-feuilles)	Sparidæ	<i>Calamus proridens</i>	(Jordan & Evermann)	C	Deep sea bottom fishing
Small Dolphin	Coryphoenidæ	<i>Coryphæna equisetis</i>	(Jordan & Evermann)	B	Deep sea. Trolling wire. Very rare

## TRINIDAD FISHES—(NOT USED FOR FOOD)

Trinidad Name	Family	Genus	Naturalists	Remarks as to habitat, Means of catching, etc.
Vingt-quatre Heures or Scorpion Fish	Scorpænidæ (scorpion fishes)	Scorpæna grandicornis	(Cuvier & Valenciennes)	Rocky bottom. Spines highly poisonous. Will take hook on cast lines
Pipe-fish	Siphostoma	Siphostoma Jonesii	(Günther)	Rocky and sandy shores. Taken in seines
Sea-horse	Siphostoma	Hippocampus punctatus	(Guichenot)	Rocky and sandy shores. Taken in seines
Trumpet-fish or Trompetero	Fistulariidæ (the cornet-fish)	Fistularia tabucaria	(Linnaeus)	Rocky and sandy shores. Taken in seines
Espadon, or Saw-fish	Pristidæ (the saw-fishes)	Pristis pectinatus	(Latham)	Sandy shores and mud banks. Rarely takes hook. Harpooned generally
Maman-balatre, or Ocean Gar, or Sail-fish	Istiophoridæ	Tetrapturus amplius	(Jordan & Evermann)	Grows to large size. Generally harpooned
Coutelas or Cutlass-fish	Trichuridæ (the cutlass fishes)	Trichiurus lepturus	(Linnaeus)	Common in all seas. Will take hook and often jumps in the boat at dusk
Crapeaud-fish, or Sea-toad		Batrachus surinamensis	(Bloch)	Common in all seas. Will take hook. Considered good food by some
Cat-fish or Machoiran	Siluridæ	Mystus	(Jordan & Evermann)	Common on mud banks. Caught bottom fishing
Sea-cow, or Trunk-fish	Ostraciidæ (the trunk fishes)	Lactophrys tricornis	(Linnaeus)	Rocky shores. Caught in the seine
Pilot, Pilot-fish or Sucker	Crangidæ (the remora, or suckers)	Naucrates ductor	(Jordan & Evermann)	Generally found hanging on to or swimming round sharks and groupers. Will take hook
Cheche, or Squid		Loligo vulgaris	(Jordan & Evermann)	Caught in seines near rocky shores. Excellent bait



Chouf-chouf	Tetraodontidæ (the puffers)	Spheroides spengleri	(Bloch)	Rocky shores, in seine. The flesh is poisonous
Porcupine-fish	Diodontidæ (the porcupines)	Diodon	(Linnæus)	Rocky shores. Caught in seine. Covered with spines
Sea Mat, or Lizard	Synodontidæ (the lizard)	Synodus hystrix	(Linnæus)	Near rocks. Caught with hook trolling. No use
Poule de la Mer, or Sea-fowl	Cephalacanthidæ	Cephalacanthus volitans	(Linnæus)	Caught fishing on the bottom. Rocky or sandy. No use
Pantouffler, or Ham- merhead Shark	Sphyrnidæ (the hammer heads)	Sphyrna zygona	(Linnæus)	Very common and voracious, in all warm seas
Nurse Shark	Ginglymostomidæ (the nurse sharks)	Ginglymostoma cirratum	(Gmelin)	Not common. Taken with strong lines or harpoon
Olive Shark, or Tin- terero	Galeidæ	Carcharhinus falciiformis	(Bibron)	Not common. Taken with strong lines or harpoon
Dusky Shark, or Rechin	Galeidæ	Carcharhinus obscurus	(Jordan & Evermann)	Very common and destructive everywhere
Sharp-nosed Shark	Galeidæ	Carcharhinus oxyrhynchus	(Jordan & Evermann)	Rather rare
Puppy Shark, or Dog- fish	Galeidæ	Acanthias vulgaris	(Jordan & Evermann)	Common to all mud banks
Giant Ray	Batoidei (Giant rays)	Manta	(Jordan & Evermann)	Common in the gulf, and grow to immense size. Sometimes harpooned by 3 or 4 boats
Manta, or Diable de la Mer		Birostris	(Poey)	Seine or harpooned. Once hooked on trolling wire
Wacawa, or Eagle Ray	Myliobatidæ	Ætobatus narinari	(Jordan & Evermann)	Sometimes takes hooks on the bottom, also caught in seines
Sting Ray	Dasyatidæ	Dasyatis hastata	(Cuvier)	Brown conger in rocky bottoms. Will take hook. Useless
Conger Eel	Murænidæ (the morays)	Lycondontis moronga	(Ranzani)	Rocky bottoms. Will take hook. Epicurus eat it with avidity
Green Cong	Murænidæ (the morays)	Lycondontis funebris	(Evermann & Marsh)	Caught on deep sea bottom in mud. Useless
White Cong	Murænidæ (the morays)	Lycondontis albi- mentis		

## TRINIDAD FISHES—(NOT USED FOR FOOD)

Trinidad Name	Family	Genus	Naturalists	Remarks as to habitat. Means of catching, etc.
Yellow Cong	Muraenidæ (the morays)	<i>Lycondontis jordanii</i>	(Evermann & Marsh)	Caught on deep sea bottom.
Spotted Moray	Muraenidæ (the morays)	<i>Gymnothorax moringa</i>	(Jordan & Evermann)	Yellow and white. Useless Caught on deep sea bottom.
Doncellas	Labridæ	<i>Iridio bivittatus</i>	(Bloch)	Brown with white spots. Useless
Four-eyed Fish or Star-gazer		<i>Anableps tetropthalmos</i>		Small parrot-fish swarming in rocks, particularly in the vicinity of wharves, jetties, etc. Small fish found in the surf near shore. Useless save for bait

A TRIP TO THE CAVES OF GASPAR  
GRANDE





FIRST PICTURE OF THE CAVE, GASPAR GRANDE.



## PART IV

# A TRIP TO THE CAVES OF GASPAR GRANDE

“Through caverns measureless to man,  
Down to a sunless sea.”

KUBLA KHAN—*Coleridge*.

Amongst the natural beauties of Trinidad, abounding as it is in scenes of tropical loveliness, the caves of Gaspar Grande, commonly called Gasparil, should surely hold a prominent place. They are situated at Pointe Baleine, the western extremity of Gasparil, immediately facing the First Boca or Boca del Mono, on lands belonging to Mr. J. B. Todd, which have been tunnelled through by Dame Nature in a most wonderful manner, and offer to the eye a marvellous exposition of stalactite and stalagmite, basaltic pillar and crystal column. With the exception of some families who periodically visit the Bocas Islands for a holiday, on sea-bathing and fresh air intent, these picturesque phenomena are unknown to both Trinidad inhabitants and foreign visitors. The few American and English tourists whom I have met, after braving the descent, have expressed themselves as being both surprised and delighted, one lady going so far as to say that she had seen nothing in Europe to compare with them, not even at the far-famed Capri; and much wonderment has been expressed that a scene at once so unique and beautiful should have been practically unknown for so long a period. They can be reached very easily, as the Gulf steamer from Port of Spain comes to St. Mary's, the bay-house immediately below Pointe Baleine, four times a week, and drops passengers for the neighbouring residences; so all the would-be explorer has to do is to hail a boat (there are always two or three plying for hire at this station) and

allow himself to be rowed to the landing place at Pointe Baleine. Once ashore the services of either the watchman or boatman can always be engaged in the capacity of guide, as it is but twenty minutes' walk to the big Cave, as it is called in contradistinction to the small caves with which Pointe Baleine is honeycombed.

Having landed, after a few minutes' walking up and down an undulating limestone path, thinly covered with red earth generally known as Gasparil red mud, but in true parlance the decomposed lime oxide of centuries, we, at a given point, turn off the—what is facetiously called the "King's road," and wend our way through tall waving grasses (*panicum maximum* or guinea grass), gradually becoming more timbered as the path runs uphill, here and there huge Ceibas or silk-cotton trees (*Eriodendron anfractuosum*), evergreen Matapalos (*Clusia*) with their magnolia-like flowers, and the Savonette (*Sapindus Saponaria*), with its pretty blue clusters. On the left hand side can be seen a number of rubber trees (*Manihot Glaziovii*), which were put in the ground some eight years ago. They have not been of any profit so far, but the vegetation is wonderfully luxuriant, considering the fact that they have been planted in the limestone rock, with but a thin topsoil of humus and lime oxide. Truly, the Ceara will grow well in the most inhospitable soil as regards plant food. For an æsthetic eye, and keeping in view the unique nature of the Bocas vegetation, the outlook here (in the wet season) is perfect. Green, each leaf is green, in every shade of that colour the trees and shrubs grow, the *Cereus*, *Cacti* of different kinds, agaves, bromelias, and pitcairnia—while overhead the *Seguines* (*Philodendron*) and *Aroids* interlaced among the Matapalos seem to find nourishment even in the "Scotchman," as the Matapalo or tree-killer is locally named; while the trees with white and purple flowers resembling the hawthorn and sweet-pea form a pleasing variegation to the different shades of green. Owing to the thick undergrowth it is generally impossible to get a view of the Gulf, unless as occasionally happens some industrious and enterprising boatman has cleared the land a bit to make him a garden, and then a fine view rewards the visitor—the Gulf





SECOND PICTURE OF THE CAVE.  
(Showing the 'Pulpit'.)



of Paria, resplendent in the noon-day sun!!! How grand and clear the hills of Monos and Chaguaramas look!!! And the Boca Mono with its ever-moaning bar and picturesque little rock "Dent Ma Taitron," its crags encircled by clouds of sea-birds, while the whitecaps break into foam and sea-spume around the base.

Several small caves are passed on the way up, but they only appear like vast crab-holes in the ground, being so gnarled and twisted, that it is only possible to see a few feet from the top. Following this winding track up the hill for about three-quarters of a mile, the guide will turn to the left, a few more yards, and there, fenced in by a very dilapidated railing overgrown with hanging vines and cacti tall and straight, is the mouth of the Cave; fallen from overhead is a huge tree, mighty it looks, as if specially thrown to bar us poor mortals from further trespassing. About 80 ft. in diameter, thirty or more at the steepest part of the descent, and twelve at the foot of the first ladder, small caves formed in this larger one make a roof of surpassing beauty; giant stalagmites, some straight, others twisted in grotesque shape, huge stalactites hanging from the parti-coloured roof, glistening, all glistening as cut diamonds would, the rays of the sun just striking them as they peeped through the branches of the overhanging trees. Walls of limestone rock on every side and a roof on three, just open enough to give light to see further down, for at the foot of the first ladder, 18 ft. down from the mouth of the Cave, is a further opening at our feet, small this time and dark, just a narrow shaft as it were through the rock; here we descend the ladder carefully, grasping with one hand a stout rope which has been securely fastened overhead, following your faithful guide down about 30 ft. and then—words are useless to express the sight that meets our eyes, all lovers of natural beauty must stop spell-bound at this wondrous picture of Nature.

Out from the dark passages 40 ft. or more, standing on a small ledge, we behold the largest Cave. It would be useless without magnesium or some other powerful light to estimate its size, for it goes so far back veiled in dark obscurity that we can have no idea to what extent it really does go. There

is no record of its ever having been explored, altho' it is popularly supposed that treasure was submerged here by the buccaneers during the Spanish tenancy of the Colony.

Looking from where we stood at the bottom of the ladder, the first part that attracts our attention is the bit shown in the first picture. It is high noon (for it is absolutely necessary that the descent should be made at or about mid-day, when the sun is directly overhead), from the shaft overhead the sunlight comes straight down, lighting up the large pool of water, catching the reflection of the marvellous roof and walls, and throwing the colours of green, blue, and glistening white into its darkest corners. This pool is extremely deep, but the water is so clear that wherever the light strikes, the bottom can be seen most distinctly. Rocks of all sizes and shapes lie below that clear water; huge stalactites, presumably unable to bear their own weight, have fallen in and lie like marble mammoths, still, for not a ripple disturbs that smooth, glistening surface, no living fish can be seen there, probably because the outlets to the sea are too small; no one knows exactly even where the outlets are, but I personally think there must be several, for close to the landing place there is a tiny one, and on the south side between La Bordelle and Winn's Bay, there are two outlets that I have reason to think are connected with the caves. That there is connection with the sea there can be no doubt, for the water is salt and pure, which latter quality it certainly would not possess if the pool were stagnant and not continually renewed, and secondly, the depth varies with the tide.

Caused doubtless by its formation and great size, sound is carried far through the great silence, for it is the silence of the dead, nothing to be seen or heard, not even the twittering of the birds overhead, for are we not 80 ft. to 100 ft. from the sunlight of the upper world?

Some of the stalactites and stalagmites are of large size, and have acquired such different shapes that visitors from time to time have named them after objects to which they have seen a real or fancied resemblance, an example of which is a prominent feature in our second illustration, which goes under the name of "The Pulpit"; further down in the dark-



THIRD PICTURE OF THE CAVE.



est part, the formations are so joined reaching from roof to floor, as to suggest to the mind the pipes of an organ, and if one of them is struck with a stone it gives forth a very passable imitation of the bass notes of that instrument. High up on a small ledge above the large pool is a tiny figure some liken to "The Virgin," and again on the side we descend from is "The Altar."

Altogether there are three openings overhead, one is above our third picture, a very small one, and the rocks projecting out cut off the little light there is from that aperture, hence as we proceed further on, it is as black as night, and unless a lighted flambeau is at hand we would be in total darkness; in this spot, however, the rocks are white and shining, caused by the lack of moisture, for it is only in one part that there is any depth of water, it gradually getting shallower as we proceed, until all around is quite dry, for it is the constant dampness that causes the green and blue colours in the petrifactions at the other corners of the Cave.

Our fourth picture represents the part of the Cave near the largest pool. There is really only one pool, but owing to the formation of the rocks, like Pelion upon Ossa piled, it is cut off in parts, and narrow passages just run between, causing some parts to be deep, and others very shallow, though the pool covers in its widest part a breadth of 40 ft., and extends to an as yet unknown length. To give some idea of the size of the Cave, where the pool is narrowest there is a width of over 30 ft., and at its widest about 4 ft. breadth of rock high and dry, and yet one can only guess at its extent, for many of the rocks are so huge, and the formation, as our illustration shows, so curious, that it would be indeed difficult to estimate correctly.

From the second largest opening above, the roots of some liane or tree have grown down straight and strong like large ropes, ten to twenty of them, and they are the only living things in that vast silence.

From the largest shaft where the sun is sending its light down into the big pool, the Cave does not narrow down, but the mighty wall of rock comes right to the pool, just forming an archway about 12 ft. wide and 9 ft. high for the water to

pass through. What mystery or mysteries may lie in that dark and silent pool behind the archway it is impossible to prophesy. It reminds one irresistibly of Victor Hugo's delightfully weird book, "The Toilers of the Sea," or the Scandinavian legends of that great sea-monster, the "Kraken." Perhaps in the near future some hardy spirits with a canvas boat, and if possible magnesium candles, will draw on one side the curtain that has so long veiled these secrets. They may be rewarded with the loot of some old buccaneer in Spanish onzas, or have a tremendous sea-fight with a gigantic Cephalapod, the veritable "diable de la mer." Who can tell?





FOURTH PICTURE OF THE CAVE.  
(Showing the archway leading to the 'Unknown' beyond.)



EASTWARD HO!



## PART V

### EASTWARD HO!

Now the great winds shoreward blow,  
Now the salt tides seaward flow;  
Now the wild white horses play,  
Champ and chafe and toss in spray.

*Matthew Arnold.*

“Go West, young man,” was Horace Greeley’s advice to the ambitious youth of America. “Go East,” say I to the colonist, whether of Creole, European, or American birth, for that’s where the dollars lie. They may be in the fat fertile soils of Manzanilla and Toco, ideal lands for coco and rubber, where according to the old time saying, you plant a stampee (a small coin now obsolete, that represented  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cents), and a doubloon comes up; or in the sandy coast lands stretching from Point Galera, the extreme Northeast point, to Point Galeota in the Southeast, the natural home of those consols of the the East, the coco-nut palms, not forgetting the enormous future possibilities in the petroleum and other mineral deposits that are now being exploited in Guayaguayare and Southern Mayaro. But all these details the would-be planter will doubtless find out for himself without my officious assistance, so I will plunge at once into the heart of things, my object being to demonstrate to tourists and visitors the natural beauties of the Eastern side of the Colony. I say “natural” advisedly, for there is nothing artificial “Band o l’Est” way. Forewarned is forearmed and it may be too natural for some people. For those who cannot live without the artificial life that now obtains in large cities, where every luxury is requisitioned for jaded appetites, these notes are not intended, but lovers of the simple life with healthy constitutions, can confidently take the trips that I have outlined, and will I trust be im-

pressed and delighted with the result. I should also state, for those who are in a hurry, and cannot find time for any thing more than a cursory inspection, that the Royal Mail Steamer, "Kennet," a clean and speedy boat, leaves Port of Spain every Monday night for the round voyage, going by the North and returning by the South in one trip, and on the alternate going by the South and returning North, generally reaching Port of Spain on the Friday having made the round in about 4 days. She stops a few hours (varying according to the quantity of cargo she has to take), at each shipping place, where the passengers can generally go ashore if they please; the principal places of interest on the East coast being Guayaguayare (petroleum springs), Mayaro, the chief village on the East coast, Nariva and Manzanilla, coco-nuts and surf bathing, Matura, good fishing and turtle hunting, and Toco, the chief port of the most picturesque and one of the most prolific cacao districts in the Island. The expenses for the round trip are only fifteen dollars and as the fare is good, and the "Kennet" kept like all the Royal Mail boats, spotlessly clean, it is extremely good value for the money. The officers, like most of the R. M. S., are most courteous, and full of information always at the disposition of the stranger.

Now for my Eastern trips. About four years ago I took a visitor to our shores, not a Pagett, M. P., but a bright American from good old "Kaintuck," the blue grass State, to Sangre Grande. He was interested in timber and had never seen a tropical forest, and as there is a good metalled road going from the railway station right through the heart of a Mora forest (only four miles from the depôt, can be reached in an ordinary cab), I thought this would be our best starting point, more especially as I had at the same time a large gang of men sawing timber for certain contracts I had undertaken. We reached the terminus at Sangre Grande about 7 P. M., and found the buggy of my friend A. P. M. waiting for us, and were at once driven off to his house about two miles from the Sangre-Grande-Riviere Road. Our genial friend is one of the largest cacao planters in the district having some fine properties. He is also the "K. K. J."



ROAD THROUGH MORA FOREST.  
(Between the Oropouche and Melao Rivers.)





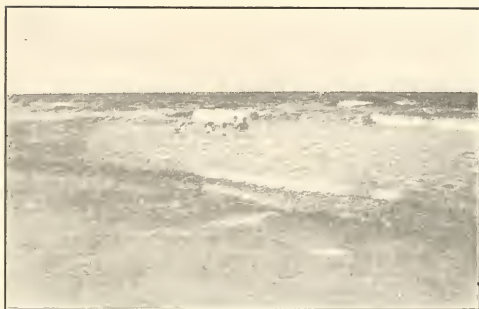
for the quarter. I am not quite certain about the origin of this title, but believe it comes from the wayback, being some ancient story of an old Castilian ancestor and "el burro del réy." After dinner we found early to bed and early to rise was the order of the day, and as we were all tired, turned in, an amusing little interlude being caused by the efforts of my American friend, 6 ft. in height, weighing 230 lbs., to get into a suit of pajamas of our host, 5 ft. 6 in. and 150 lbs. weight. At 4 A. M. the Poo-Poo-Poo of a horn or conch-shell woke us up. "Say," said Kaintuck, "is that the cows coming home?" "No," responded I, "it is the labourers going out." As our host was now bumping about with much splashing of water, we judged it was time we did ditto, and at 5.30, after some good coffee, we were off for the woods, a distance of but three miles right in the heart of the Mora forest (Mora excelsa), the great social tree of Trinidad and British Guiana. Here and there the eye of the woodsman might discern a solitary balata (*mimusops globosa*), carapa or Crapeaud, (*carapa guianensis*), guatacare (*lecythis idatimon*), or laurier cyp (*Oreodaphne cernua*), but those forest giants the Mora by far eclipsed the others in quantity, size, and grandeur, "lifting their shafts like some great amiral," one hundred and fifty, aye, and two hundred or more feet from the ground. We walked along the road on a carpet of little palms, chiefly timite (*manicaria*) and manacques (*euterpe oleracea*), and through irregular coppices of young Mora with their chestnut-like seeds strewn around like shells on the sea-shore, to the place where my workmen were busy with pit-saw, cross-cut, and axe, squaring and sawing the great chestnut-coloured logs. My American friend expressed himself delighted with the strong and tough texture of the timber, and opined that there would be a lot of money for that wood in the States for railway ties. I had to explain to him that unless there was a sudden local demand for the different hard-woods for large contracts, the game was not worth the candle, the lack of water carriage rendering an export trade utterly impossible. I also told him that although the Mora wood was so tough and heavy, there was a local prejudice against it as posts or pillar-trees, the wise men asserting that it always rotted,

especially between wind and water, that is, at the immediate spot where the butt of the post rises from the ground. My experience has shown that the same rot will happen to any timber unless it has a casing of metal or concrete 12 in. to 18 in. in length at the point of contact. Another cause that militates strongly against the success of the local woods, is the fact that owing to want of capital and the hand-to-mouth manner in which most of the lumbermen have to conduct their business, the timber is never given a chance of curing. It is cut down, squared, or sawn up, and applied to use perfectly green. All the experienced timber people of Europe and America know that wood after being squared or sawn, should be carefully stacked in a dry situation and thoroughly protected from the weather until it is quite cured, generally taking a couple of years for that process. The good people of Trinidad do not seem to realize this, if they did there would be less disappointment and outcry about warp, rot, and termites or white ants. I also expect if it were possible to start an export trade with the States or Europe in our hardwoods, the workmen there would raise an outcry about the toughness and peculiarities of the grain spoiling their tools, and would demand a prohibitive tariff of wages.

After taking a bath in the Oropouche river, which is here a lovely crystal stream with vast clumps of bamboos overhanging and forming magnificent natural arches (the huilia, anaconda, or water boa is sometimes seen and captured or shot near this river, more especially in the swampy grounds by the mouth) we got back to our saddles, and rode along the same highway to Melao, and over the molasses-coloured Melao river, still passing through Mora forest. It is the peculiar colour of the water of this river that has given the name to the district, *melao* in the Spanish language meaning molasses. About seven miles from the Sangre Grande terminus, we came to the junction with the Valencia road; slightly inclining to the right, straight ahead lay the new road to Grande Riviere on the North Coast of Toco about 20 miles in length; it had been traced some time and was then undergoing the process of benching. We turned sharp round

to the right along the Matura Road, which here dwindled to an Indian trail covered in parts with burnt clay. Two miles along this track and we reached the Government Rest-house where we stopped for breakfast. I should here mention for the benefit of tourists, that although they are nearly always sure of getting accommodation at the different island rest-houses, it is advisable before leaving Port of Spain, to get a letter from the Director or Assistant Director of Public Works recommending them to the courtesies of the district road officer who has direct charge of those bungalows. The Matura Rest-house was at this time in charge of an East Indian Creole of Demerara and his wife, who evidently kept all the appointments of the establishment in capital condition, and served us up meals which were irreproachable as to quality, plain but good. After breakfast down to the village, where I secured a henchman of mine, a one-armed Creole fisherman, but a man who even with the loss of one member, was a great deal more useful than many who had the normal complement. Thence to the beach near the mouth of the Matura river, and here we could tell by the clouds of sea-birds squawking and hustling to and fro that fish were to the fore. The sea was calm, two light shell boats with pair oars, fresh mackerel bait, and away; "Kaintuck" in one with a rod and trolling gear, myself in the other with hand-lines and 22 brass wire, the ordinary Monos equipment. We had not gone more than a couple of hundred yards, before "Kaintuck" was into a fine mackerel which he duly put into the boat. I lost several baits from the mackerel and king-fish poaching the part below the hook, playing "coquin" as the Creoles term it; and as a matter of fact we neither of us got anything of consequence until reaching Matura Point and there we had some glorious sport, especially near the rocky islets off the headland. Here we were kept busy, as the water simply teemed with king-fish and mackerel, some of the former being of great size, as they played "the cat and banjo" with "Kaintuck's" tackle, and smashed three or four wires for me. On several occasions we only retrieved the heads of the fish, some patriarchal barracoutas having relieved us of the body. There was no

mistaking these gentlemen; we would be playing a fish who was coming in nicely, when there would be a sudden jar of the arm, as if the island had been hooked, then as sudden a slackness, and goodbye, my kingfish, goodbye. Hark, a sudden burst of sound in the comparatively smooth water, leeside of Matura Point, similar to that produced at a crowded opera house at the first appearance of a popular singer, swelling gradually to the deep tones of distant thunder; a school of those game fish of the Caribbean, the Cavalli or Carangue, have risen a shoal of "sardines rouges," and these tiny fish are flashing out of the water in scintillations of silver, trying to escape their active and powerful foes who are ruthlessly tearing them up just below the sea's surface. From Scylla into Charybdis, for immediately above them the air is darkened with gulls, boobies, pelicans, kittiwakes and man-o'-war birds, who cram their maws to satiety with the jumping fugitives. Away right through the school as fast as the oars can ply, and bang, I am on to one; by the way he takes it and the pace the slack line whizzes out, a veritable "Jim Jeffries" of a carangue. He runs out somewhere about 20 fathoms at his first rush, the dry line burning my fingers like a hot iron as it runs through them, it being absolutely necessary in hand-lining to keep a gentle pressure all the time, so as not to lose touch of your fish. He now stops for a moment, butting with his head ("baie tête" the Creoles call it), when I feel the tension relieved a bit; I haul in the line, but only two or three fathoms, as soon as he makes a fresh burst and is off again taking out yet more slack. And so the game goes on for 20 minutes or more, alternately hauling in and then playing out until the gallant fish gives signs of exhaustion and goes down and down until I think he will never reach bottom. When he gets there he still goes on pluckily butting with his head; it feels to the angler's fingers exactly as if he were doing a combined tug and dance. He is weary and played out, so I begin to haul up, and when there is a sudden sharp pull and the increased strain takes out the line again—my fingers actually feel a strong tear, and the line falls limp. "Rechin," says my one-armed friend with much disgust. "Shark," respond I, with even more disappoint-



SURF BATHING ON THE NARIVA BEACH.



VIEW OF THE NARIVA RIVER FROM THE FERRY.



ment. However, it is better to have hooked and lost than never to have hooked at all, we have had splendid sport, and secured enough edible fish for a dozen men or more, so we turn our faces shoreward. Of course on our homeward way my "Jim Jeffries" which had started off at a presumably 30 lbs. weight had increased to 70 lbs., but that is a little custom of fishermen who have lost a fish they have not seen.

We had intended the next day going on to Toco via Salibia, Tabateau, Balandra Bay and Tompire, but on our return to the Matura Rest-house found a message calling us back, so after a night's sleep, we rose at 4 A. M. and caught the early train to Port of Spain. At the present date the road to Matura has been considerably improved, so it is quite easy for a traveller to engage a carriage or cab and drive right up to the Matura Rest-house.

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Four years after, that is to say, in the present year of grace 1910, I turned my steps once more Eastward, but this time alone, as my Kentucky friend having circumvented the wily Castro was basking in the smiles of the Caracas señoritas and (I fervently hope), the doubloons of the sancochos. On this occasion my arrangements were to go straight East one time as Cutcliffe Hyne would say, so I left Port of Spain by the morning train arriving at the Sangre Grande terminus about 10 A. M. Here I was met by my host G. A. F. and his buggy, which vehicle he said was entirely at my disposition, but he himself had suddenly developed a patriotic frame of mind and was going to town to crack a magnum, Brut '84, with that doughty Laird, the Balfour of Burleigh, and incidentally he thought to sing afterwards "The Maple Leaf Forever." I should here mention that a motor bus meets each one of the three daily trains and carries passengers to the beach at Manzanilla, 8½ miles for 40 cents. I regret to say that there is no accommodation for strangers when they get there, but can only trust that this want may be supplied in the near future. I took possession of the buggy and Harris the groom, but as the latter informed me, he had to "make message" (a Creolism which covers many things, making market for the mis-



tress, firing six cents rum, or love passages with his "ma comère"), I strolled about Cunape village, as Sangre Grande is locally called, to see what changes had occurred in four years. My impressions were that business had increased, judging from the number of fresh "shacks" that had been run up and the congested confusion of carts, barrels and boxes, etc., but the proportion of loafers, that is, five to every one working-man or woman, was unaltered. Every provision shop, and their name was legion, held loafers of all sorts who did nothing (as far as I could see), but sit round on barrels or lean up against the counters and doors gossiping and living seemingly on the combined smells of the shop, which were undeniably strong, and afforded probably all the nourishment these idle ones needed. Outside one of these temples, I saw a man, very drunk indeed, and it was yet early in the day, and finding his face familiar to me as that of an old wood-squarer, I asked Harris, to whom he had spoken a few maudlin words, if he were not in that line of business. Harris answered that he was a detective, which left me furiously to think over the Machiavellian methods of the Trinidad Police Force. The messages having been made we got under way, the faithful Harris acting as Jehu.

Wheeling to the right, before the Court-House, passing the Cunape River over the Brooklyn Bridge, we gallantly breasted the hill leading to the official portion of Sangre Grande. Here, near the Catholic Church I was struck by one of the first emblems of progress, a large unfinished building which looked as if the designer had intended primarily to erect a replica of the "Taj Mahal", but, having changed his mind, had chopped it up into little cubicles like a Chinese gambling house. Harris, who I found was brimful of information, told me that the building had been designed and erected by an Indian fellow citizen, a remote descendant of "the Lion of the Punjaub," at least his name had the same terminative Singh, who had amassed unto himself many shekels and was determined to show "dem half-bit buccra" of Trinidad how to build a house. Up past the houses of the official dignitaries, D. M. O., Warden, etc., over the Sangre Grande River, and again up the hill where the flourishing

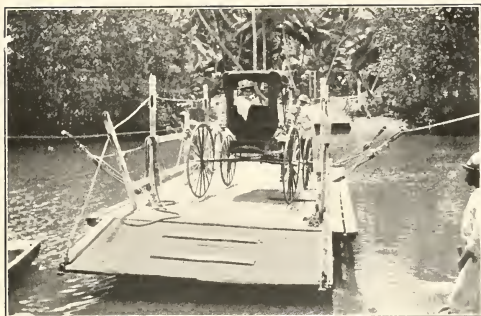


plantation of dear old Doctor Thomas is situated. Here, I would have made a short call on J. P., an old friend of prehistoric days, but he had also gone to chant "The Maple Leaf Forever." Through SangreChiquito on and on, cacao plantations innumerable on both sides of the road laden with pods, purple, scarlet, yellow and green. Perched on a hill on the right side of the road, the "Casa de Fandango" of the "Culebra," descendant from Spanish hidalgos, and the "doyen" of the district, one who can discourse with equal facility on either the mediæval customs of old Spain, including Toledo blades and culebras, or the manners of modern London and its latest development in taxicabs. Now for the long hills of famed Morne Calabash, and Comparo, where "Louis Philippe" erst protégé of the popular Lord Harris, enjoys his well-earned *otium cum dignitate*. The roads are fairly graded and were surmounted without difficulty, and at the bottom of the long descent from these hills, lay El Recuerdo, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Manzanilla beach, my resting place for the night. The house is prettily situated on a ridge, nearly 100 ft. above the level of the King's Highway, which has been carefully levelled, round edged, and terraced.

The "coup d'œil" that presented itself at dawn next morning when I went outside the house, was truly picturesque. Each terrace was lined with a wealth of plants of all kinds, palms, crotons, coleï, canna, dracenæ, roses, begonias, all too numerous to recapitulate, and G. A. F. assured me that they had all been originally planted from slips just placed in the ground, and not from rooted cuttings, proof positive of the generous nature of the soil. Westward of the house, a lawn had been laid out and planted with grass, and contiguous to this plot is a small hill, on a rise of about 50 ft. from the house, known as Mt. Beverley, on which the proprietor intends to build a châtelet, where he can pass a week-end far from the madding crowd, and a delightful spot it is. Right above the lofty tree-tops come with an uninterrupted rush, the cool winds of the eastern sea, bringing fresh life from across the Atlantic; looking towards the North, the opposite slopes are one mass of the flame-coloured Immortel (*Erythrina umbrosa*), while immediately beneath are the engine-

room, drying houses, and barracks of the plantation. On the South, one looks down into rich dells with a perfect kaleidoscopic arrangement of the glossy green cacao leaves interspersed with the pods of many hues; while on the West, Brigand Hill, about which gruesome tales are retailed in the quarter about the days of the old buccaneers, especially the renowned Blackbeard who is supposed to have opened many a dead man's chest and bottles of rum in the Caves of Brigand Hill. Further off in the blue-grey Mt. Harris forms an appropriate background. But the "pièce de résistance" of the picture is a large *Pois doux* (*Inga*), which has been entirely monopolized by the cat's claw vine now in flower, and covering the tree with a veritable shower of gold. Nor is bird life wanting. Jacamars with their greeny-gold breasts flit from bough to bough, brilliant humming birds in all hues from flower to flower, the ubiquitous shrike or "qu'est ce qu'il dit", of course, is omnipresent, whilst overhead flocks of green parroquets and blue and yellow macaws fly past chattering and screeching.

G. A. F. having ventilated his political opinions and finished with wine and wassail, returned from Port of Spain by first train, and we made arrangements to go at once to Nariva and Mayaro. I must here side-track a moment to narrate a rather amusing incident that occurred on his return. I have previously mentioned G. A. F.'s retainer, Harris, who in a humble way reminded me of his illustrious prototype, the Harris of Mark Twain in "The Tramp Abroad." Those who have read that book may remember that America's champion jokist always insisted on Harris experimenting in the first place on every new enterprise or undertaking. So it is with mine host and his Harris. G. A. F. happens to be a very ingenious mechanician, and has with infinite care and labour built him an *aéroplane*. The machine had just been finished, and lay on the terrace before the house ready for trial. G. A. F., being a very large and heavy man, thought that it would be better to have the trial trip conducted by a light weight, and called Harris for that purpose. Having shown him how to handle the lever and explained the steering gear, he ordered him to get into the *aéroplane* and try to clear the



CROSSING THE ORTOIRE FERRY.



THE ORTOIRE RIVER.



curing house, about 50 ft. below the house terrace, and drop lightly, if possible on the high road, another fall of about 30 ft. Poor Harris jibbed, so G. A. F., who stands about 6 ft. 2 in. in his socks, made a dive for him with a hand like that of Providence, and sad to say, Harris "took bush."

We left about noon and drove through the long, straggling Manzanilla village for a little over two miles, when coming over the rise of a hill, the cool strong breeze and roar of the surf warned us of our proximity to the beach. A few more seconds and there we were in full view of the Atlantic, a most refreshing sight, particularly to a denizen of the tropics. On the left the Manzanilla shipping place or depôt, where the produce of the district is collected to be shipped on the R. M. S. coastal steamer every week, and the mouth of the Lebranche River, a great resort of the famous mullet that goes by that name. Beyond the river, Manzanilla Point runs out about a mile into the sea, having at its extreme end several half-submerged rocks called the Carpenters, which have been responsible for several shipwrecks, amongst them as the legend goes, the establishment of the Cocal, a vessel loaded with coco-nuts from the Orient, being driven on the Carpenters and totally wrecked, the cargo of coco-nuts gradually drifted ashore, where Mother Earth took them to her bosom and generously nourished them, so that they formed the advance guard of the present fine property called the Cocal, a stretch of near fourteen miles from the Manzanilla Road to the Ortoire. All cultivations have more or less their attractive features, and, although that of the coco-nut does not aspire to the generosity of colour and lush vegetation of a cocoa estate, yet it has its own peculiar charm, more especially at the Cocal, where the foam-capped breakers with their everlasting roar seem to be perpetually gibing the slow work of Nature and her workers, saying, "Come, hustle up now, see what a hurry we are in and always at work. Take a lesson from us, we are the only exponents of perpetual motion"; while just outside the high-water mark are the groves of coco-nut palms, quiet and still as the Temple of Silence, with the pale amber light that is caused by the combined reflective action of sun, palm, and sand.

What a contrast to the hurly-burly outside! There had been recently heavy seas and plenty of rain, so the beach was clean, as clean, possibly, as it would have been if the 50 maids of the Walrus and Carpenter ballad had been employed on it, just a few sea-borne logs here and there. In places, torn up and spread out by the tide were heaps of chip-chip, a small shell-fish with which the East coast cooks concoct a most delicious and nutritious soup, pretty, rose-tinted shells attached to the end of a coralline 15 ins., or 18 ins. long, purple bivalves, with graceful spines projecting from them (*Cytherea Dione*), and numberless other objects of joy to the curiosity hunter. Five miles from where we turned on to the Manzanilla beach, and we arrived at the great house of the Cocal, the residence of our genial old friend, L. E. B., the manager of the property, generally called King Coco in the quarter, on account of his extreme devotion to, and care of, that valuable palm and product. He received us with open arms, and, after offering libations to Bacchus, we took a walk through his favourite groves to the Nariva, which runs at the back and parallel with the Cocal, to look into the fishing prospects, as I had heard great tales of giant tarpon, grouper and cat-fish, the latter equal in size to those of the Mississippi 80 lbs. in weight, but fisherman, beware!!!! the poison barb, a wound from it can hardly be healed. L. E. B. told us that some four weeks previously, his men had harpooned and killed a "manatee" or sea-cow in the mouth of the river, about 600 lbs. in weight, and showed us the hide, which had just been returned to him from Port of Spain, where it had been tanned. It was really fine, strong leather, looking as if it would last for ever, judging by a pair of buggy traces he had made out of it.

Our host was very keen on the cultivation of the coco-nut, and as I had realized for some time past, that it is at present and will probably remain for some time the most profitable of tropical plants, the conversation was very interesting to me. My own impression is, that the chemists having overcome the inversion that usually took place in the freshly expressed oil of the coco-nut some twenty-four hours after manufacture, and the result of this discovery being the thou-

sands of tons of vegetable butter under the names of nucoline, palmine, vegetaline, *et id genus omne*, that are now being turned out, and yet withal the supply being in no way equal to meet the demand, the cultivation of the coco-nut will be remunerative for many a year, as is evidenced by the present anxiety of large dealers to purchase forward crops. It should be also remembered that the use of these coco-nut butters is very little known; when it is generally advertised the demand will go up by leaps and bounds. For cooking purposes in particular, most persons would use a vegetable oil, in preference to an animal oil. We all agreed that the coco-nut was the plant beyond all others that for years had been allowed to grow only by the grace of God and its own sweet will, man having done little or nothing to aid it. L. E. B. waxed quite enthusiastic over improvements and the result of his experiments. When he first took over the plantation, poor and neglected, 60% of the crop consisted of culls (undersized nuts). This he had now reduced to 40%, and he would not rest until he had got that 40% to 10%. He did not believe that, taken all round, in Trinidad the palm averaged 60 nuts per annum, when with intelligent cultivation, it should yield 120. He believed in green dressing, leguminous manures and spraying, none of which had been attempted, and he was an ardent advocate for the importation of plants of well-known commercial value, particularly from South and Central American countries, even though the cost was high. As to the sinful waste, annually, in the shape of millions of husks lying rotting around, he was thankful to say he would shortly be able to put a stop to that, as his enterprising proprietor was going to give him a steel digester and high pressure pump, by the aid of which he hoped to reduce the hitherto neglected husks to cellulose, which would be baled in sheets, and sent to the paper manufacturers to turn into a first class strong wrapping paper.

By this time we had reached the Nariva ferry, and as the sun was getting low, retraced the two miles to the bungalow, where we found a most original and tastefully cooked dinner awaiting us; it was so unique that I here subjoin the menu, our host stipulating that as he was neither C'rab nor Creole,



but true Barbadian born, it should be written in honest English.

## M E N U

Mayaro Oysters (in half shell)	
Potted Manatee brains on toast	
Chip-chip Soup with forcemeat balls of minced paludes (cockles)	
Boiled grouper Cirique sauce (Blue Rock crab)	Ailerondes stewed in white wine (Mayaro soles)
Roast Lap	
Seville Orange sauce	
Iced Coco-nut Cream, with seaside grape jelly	
Dewar's whiskey (old vatted)	Contraband rum

After dinner, G. A. F., suddenly recollecting his political banquet of the previous evening, proposed the healths of the King and Sir George Ruthven, which were duly honoured. When, however, with relics of the maple leaf still clinging round him, he volunteered to sing that celebrated song, we, knowing that he had a voice like a foghorn, and being also fearful that it might attract the attention of the celebrated Vanderdecken and his phantom ship, which had been seen off the East Coast, begged him to postpone it for the present. So we adjourned to the beach for an *al fresco* smoke with the sharp salt breeze bringing its soporific influences to bear upon us, and the phosphorescent breakers playing like lambent flames on the sand. As I could see that both my friends were thoroughly impressed with the idea that supernatural beings haunted the coast, I interrogated them on the subject, and L. E. B. came out especially strong, in fact, quite Coleridgian. He had been out on the beach at all hours of the night and morning, and had frequently seen the phantom, sometimes in the shape of a full rigged ship with one solitary large blue light at the peak; at other times a sloop or small boat, evidently making in shore. One night after a storm, there came the proverbial calm, and he saw the light making for the shore near the house, so he waited for it. He noticed that the sea had an unusual appearance, for, although



smooth on the surface, "the water like a witch's oil burnt red, and blue, and bright." While he was waiting for it the light suddenly went out, there was a wail like that of a lost soul and the spectral boat vanished. At other times the "zombi" would appear in a buggy, with a phantom horse, breathing fire from its nostrils like the steed in the Erl-king's ride. One night L. E. B. was waiting anxiously for the Doctor from Manzanilla to see an invalid in his house. The clock had just chimed the first hour of the morn, when he heard buggy wheels. He rushed out and met it, when to his surprise the driver took no heed, but drove straight on. He could plainly see him, a big, old man, of sad and stern expression, "with long grey beard and glistening eye." He enquired of the Nariva ferrymen next morning, and the man told him no vehicle had crossed over during the night. I enquired after the patient, and L. E. B. told me, he went out with the tide like Barkis, before the doctor's arrival. The suggestion that I made, to the effect that Vanderdecken and his Flying Dutchman, weary of trying to round the Cape, had come westward, was not received with enthusiasm, they evidently preferring the local legend, which is that some 60 years back the Portuguese captain of a slaver, one Joachim de Gama, being pursued by a British cruiser off Point Mayaro, had brought his manacled slaves on deck and thrown them overboard, for which awful crime he had been doomed to cruise the East coast for ever. Perhaps this part of the Island is "le pays des revenants," and the phantoms, particularly the buggy ones, are the old-timers come back to review the scenes of former glories. Thence to bed and a glorious sleep, unbroken by "zombis."

Up in the morning early, for L. E. B. and self were going to take the long drive to Guayaguayare, about 24 miles, having sent on a relief horse to Plaisance, Mayaro, the night before. We ferried over the Nariva, which is here a fairly large stream (vide illustration), and then drove the 6-mile stretch of beach lined with coco-nut palms to the Ortoire ferry (vide illustration). On gaining the other bank of the Ortoire we left the beach and drove on the burnt clay road past swamp land heavily fenced in with lofty red mangroves

(*Rhizophora*), and white mangroves (*Avicennia nitida*). There ought to be dollars in the exploitation of this swamp, for these splendid poles, 40 ft. to 60 ft. in height, as the red mangrove particularly is the best wood for wet situations, and the bark is good for tanning purposes. The difficulty lies in getting the poles out, for there is not sufficient water to float a punt, while there is too much for cattle to be used as haulage, but this could, I fancy, be overcome by other means if the demand arose. Once more in view of the sea and the base of Mayaro point. As it is impossible to go round the rocks, we take the steep hill and drive right on, eventually coming out at the beach again at St. Joseph's, passing the new main road to Savanna Grande on the right. A few hundred yards more and we reached the Mayaro Rest-house, where we found our fresh horse and got breakfast. A short rest and off again, past the village, or rather villages of Mayaro. Immediately opposite the Roman Catholic Church at Plaisance, is the anchorage for the R. M. S. coastal steamer when she comes to load and discharge cargo, there being comparatively deep water so that the "Kennet" can come within a hundred feet or so of the shore. Onward through the interminable sand and miles of coco-nut groves, past Beauséjour, Perseverance, the Lagon doux (which much belies its name), and Beaumont where our local Pierpont Morgan has one of his many irons, and a good one, too. Twelve miles of this, and we cross the narrow spit of land forming the peninsula of Cape Galeota, the extreme Southeast point of the Island. Outside this point there is a reef from which oysters are obtained that cannot be excelled in flavour anywhere. Now the bay of Guayaguayare bursts on our view, the largest and most picturesque bay in Trinidad, with its two sentinels, Points Galeota and Gran Calle. It has some nasty reefs, both on the Eastern and Western shores; this in combination with sparse cultivation and population has hitherto hindered its exploitation, so it has been a *terra incognita* to Trinidad folk. Now, a combination of our English and Canadian friends, having struck "ile," there is no saying to what heights Guayaguayare may soar. At the time of my visit, everything was very much in embryo, but



POINT RADIX, MAYARO.



GUAYAGUAYARE.

(Showing oil officials' quarters on the beach. Gran Calle Point in the distance.)



there were the usual evidences of energy and progress in the tropics, boilers, tanks, iron wheels and rails, machinery of all kinds, balks of timber lying all around, with recalcitrant mules and cattle, swarthy and sweating Ethiops, many oburgations, and an atmosphere of general profanity. Out of this chaos, in time, order will be evolved, but the initiatory stages under a tropical sun are not inviting.

Students of the sea-shore will be glad to hear that they can get seaweed of many and varied hues, the best I have seen in the tropics, on the Western arm of Guayaguayare Bay, and the shells seemed to me objects of beauty, but not being a conchologist, I cannot pronounce authoritatively on them. The authorities of the Oil Company, following the advice of the Tropical School of Medicine, have erected mosquito-proof bungalows for their chief officials (the first buildings of the kind in Trinidad), in order that they may be able to battle with that insidious foe, malarial fever, of which Guayaguayare, like all newly opened districts on a tropical coast, has a fair share; and the result of that experiment will be interesting to follow. They have been put up on the beach (vide illustration), some distance South of the Pilote River, and the occupants looked fairly healthy so far, the fair chatelaine being, as she generally is—on deck. After a most agreeable evening and a fine cool night (no mosquito nets), L. E. B. and self left next morning for Mayaro, where we parted company, the former making for his palmy home with its foam-flecked border, while I worked my passage to Port of Spain, via Rio Claro and Princetown.





FISHING PARTY, LA TINTA, BOCA GRANDE.



POINTE BALEINE, GASPARÉE OR GASPAR GRANDE.





THE REMOUS



## PART VI

### THE REMOUS

“Our Mother the Sea is never at rest,  
When the spring-tide ebbs dead low;  
As the coming ‘remous’ boils up on her breast  
And thunders in caverns below.”

The “remous” is the old French name given to the curious ebullition of the sea and the mill-race-like nature of the currents and cross currents that occur round the islands of the Bocas and the contiguous mainland, when the tide has reached dead-low, and is about to turn for the rise. It varies in power according to the seasons, being much stronger during the rainy period than the dry, when it is often scarcely perceptible. Its force is always much more in evidence during the spring-tides of the new and full moon, especially during the months of October and November, this being mainly attributable to the mighty Orinoco, which then sweeps down in full flood, swollen from the inundated savannahs and torrent-swept mountains of Venezuela. These spring-tides last for five days, two days before the moon, new or full, the day of the new or full moon, and two days after—beginning strong on the first day and gradually waxing in intensity until the fifth or last day, which is the strongest tide of all.

In the French language the word “remous” has three different applications:

1. It is the sea term for the swell formed by the displacement of water caused by a ship travelling through the water.

2. It is the re-gathering of water that has hurled and broken against an obstacle such as some solid body. For instance, the famous voyager Lapeyrouse, mentions in his travels: “My boat was floating near the shore, a mass of ice

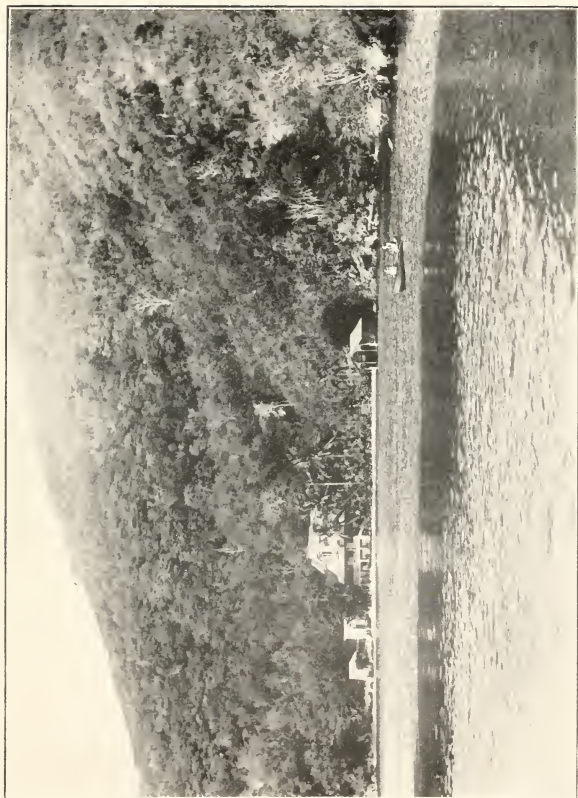
fell into the water, at a distance of 400 toises (fathoms), and this caused on the sea-shore such a 'remous' that it (the boat) was capsized and thrown perilously near the iceberg."

3. Counter-currents formed on each river boundary, which direct themselves to the source after having struck the bank. On the great rivers there are along the sides considerable "remous," and these intensify in power the nearer the sea is reached and the larger the river bed becomes.

Some etymologists derive "remous" from the Latin *removère*, but others assert that "remole" derived from the Latin *emolere* is the proper appellation. "Remole" is a sea term in France rarely used, and means a whirlpool which is always more or less dangerous. The Spanish word "remolino," also meaning a whirlpool, is evidently derived from the same source. Chateaubriand in his book on the Chase in America, mentions the word thus: "Ils (the beavers) approchent du souperail (trou ménagé dans la glace), le remole qu'ils font en nageant les trahit. "

It must be remembered that there is the sweep of two contrary currents along the coast, which have their point of conflict in the bay opposite Port of Spain. The currents are made up of the resultants between the tides of the sea, the Orinoco currents and the Caroni current. When the tide is ebbing a current sweeps along the coast from the Serpent's Mouth towards Port of Spain and seeks an outlet through the Bocas into the Caribbean. But when the tide rises, a contrary current forms outside the Bocas, forces them back to the eastward, and there is a moment just at the lowest ebb and the approaching rise, that the famous boiling of the waters, called the "remous" takes place; afterwards the Bocas currents assert their supremacy until the tide begins to ebb once more.

It is a curious and withal fascinating sight to stand on a headland commanding a good view, especially on a calm day, in the vicinity of the Bocas, and watch the "remous" from its coming to its passing away—a period of about thirty minutes, when there is a spring-tide. Personally, I prefer the rocks at Pointe Baleine, the headland occupying the western end of Gasper Grande, because the view from there



RUST'S BAY, CHACACHACARE, SHOWING THE PASSING OF THE "REMOUS."



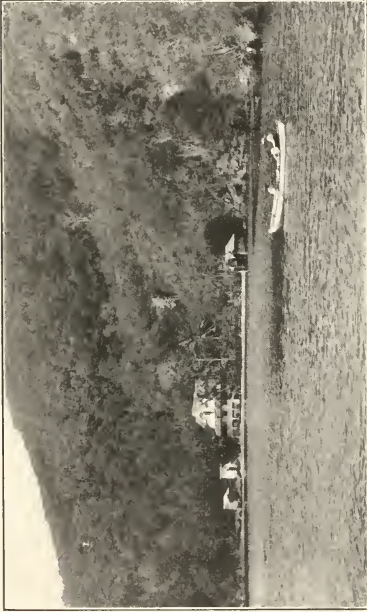
commands all the Bocas; not a vessel can enter the Gulf of Paria through any of these four mouths without being seen. Monos, Huevos, Chacachacare and Patos are all visible. For about half an hour immediately previous to the "remous," the tide which has been ebbing furiously becomes dead slack, and for that short period of time anglers should note, the trolling wire and casting line have every chance of success.

Come with me to the rocks on Pointe Baleine, facing west, and watch for the coming "remous"; it is now 9 A. M. and the third day of the new moon in October; the eastern sun is hid behind us, so we shall have a clear view. A gentle north-west breeze, just a whisper, is with tiny gusts, intermittently covering the surface of the gleaming ocean as with a film which those small white winged sloops (Grenada men-of-war by their rig, going to Port of Spain market with their fruit and vegetables) now emerging from the Monos and Huevos Bocas, are taking every advantage of, for they know full well that if they do not get through their jaws to the more peaceful expanse of the Gulf of Paria, back they will go in the Boca, driven by an irresistible force, perchance to be battered in pieces on the Parasol rocks or the towering cliffs of the first Boca. The tide is now ebbing with a final rush round Pointe Baleine past the Goat-pen, and see that dark line, coming from outside Pointe Romaine, Chacachacare—that is the rising tide coming from the Boca Grande and whirling round the Diamond Rock, with the force of a cataract, to meet the other dark line you can now see romping in from the Boca de Navios round Point Girod. Hark that dull roar gradually swelling as the two currents meet and rush down going eastward. The "remous" has begun, and here comes what is locally called the first thread. A school of "camard cavalli" rise near Baleine and perform one of their characteristic dances with great enthusiasm for a few seconds, just as a four-oared pirogue with a large seine in the stern shoots round the corner, having their work cut out to get round with the cross currents that are now coming into play. Bow and No. 3. are pulling like demons, while No. 2 and stroke back water, the cox'n handling the "gouverneur"

as the Bocas fishermen call the rudder, with an experience and dexterity learned from many tight corners. Now the water round us at the point is commencing to simmer gently, just as if it were beginning to feel the influence of some vast subterranean fire, gradually increasing in ebullition, until like some vast witch's cauldron "bubble-bubble, toil and trouble," the ocean is one seething mass, like cane syrup, which is reaching the sugar stage. A fresh roar on the north. Half-turn and look; you will see the waters of the Caribbean, coming through the Monos Boca also full of life, jumping and boiling with enthusiasm to join in the general hurly-burly. As far as the eye can reach, the surface of the sea is crossed and criss-crossed with currents running like express trains on gigantic iron roads, their surface being smooth in comparison with the masses of ebullition they pass through. The porpoises have ceased their gambols, and all signs of fish life have disappeared for the present. During the period of time the "remous" is passing, it is presumed that all fish seek the bottom of the deep, where the currents are not so perceptible, and remain there for some time until the new rising tide has calmed down from its first rush. In my experience, I have never had a bite, nor have I ever seen a fish caught during the time the "remous" is passing, and I have fished comparatively secluded spots, such as Balata, Huevos—places to outward appearance very little affected by it—but to no avail.

The visitors to our shores who are lovers of the sea, should assuredly, especially if they go down to the Bocas for a time, not neglect the chance of seeing a spring-tide "remous," as it will repay them; and as I have previously stated, I consider Pointe Baleine the best "pied à terre" for a general prospect. I have great hopes in the near future that suitable accommodation will be provided for tourists on the Eastern coast, between Manzanilla and Mayaro, but for the present, at all events, they can only find suitable residences at the islands of the Bocas. The angler will also be handicapped on the Eastern coast, the surf rendering fishing almost impracticable, except during the months of July, August and September. It is true he can get tarpon, black snapper, and





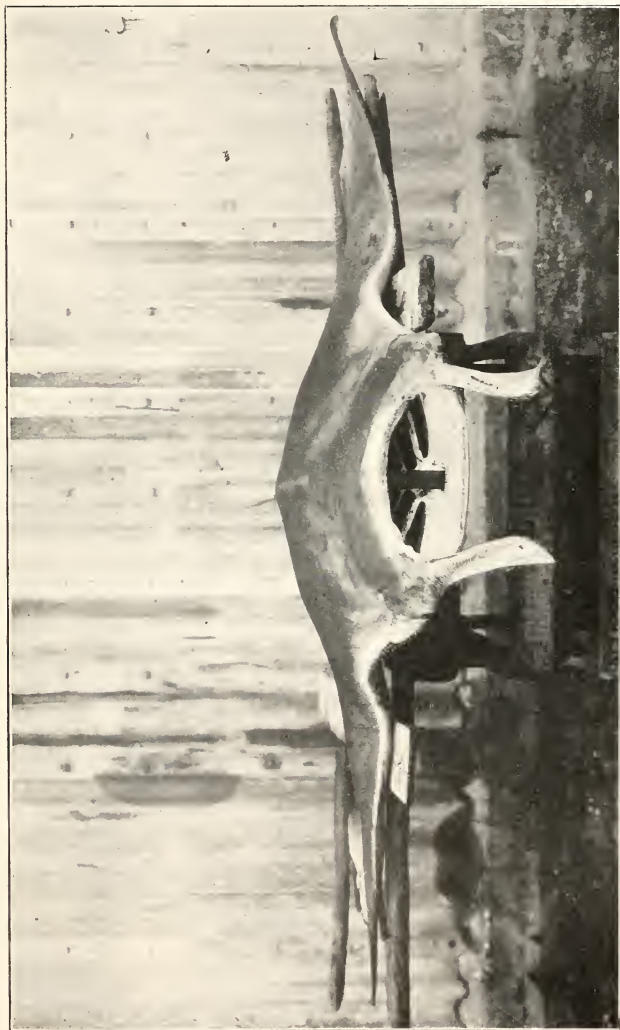
RUST'S BAY, AFTER THE "REMOUS" HAS FINISHED.



now and then, big grouper, at the mouths of the Nariva and Ortoire, but only when the river water gets salt, that is, towards the middle of the dry season, which, in that district, is rather an unknown quantity. If the visitor enjoys surf bathing he can get of the very best along the Eastern beach, and he can get pleasant interludes of riding, driving, and an occasional shot at game-birds or beasts, all pleasures unknown at the Bocas Islands. Each place has its own characteristics, and in the event of arrangements being made for the proper entertainment of guests (at present there is but the Government Rest-house at Mayaro, with only limited accommodation), the East coast will prove a formidable rival to the Bocas. Personally, through old association and a keen love of fishing, I have an indubitable preference for the latter district, more particularly, as I do not care for surf bathing; I infinitely prefer the deep sea-baths of Monos, Gasparee, and Chacachacare. One of the things worth living for, to a denizen of the tropics who can swim, is to stand on a rock or jetty stripped to the buff, at the first flush of dawn, hands over head, and with the Hindu invocation, "Mother of all, I come," or the Creole equivalent, "O gros-la-mer, gros-la-mer," dive into the pellucid depths 10, 20, aye, 30 feet, then strike out vigorously for a swim just as short or as long as you please, for the water is of such a pleasant temperature in these seas, that you can remain in, especially at early dawn or evening, just as long as you like, without sustaining any bodily harm. Then a good substantial coffee, for the sea air gives a healthy individual a prodigious appetite, the first and best pipe of the day, that of the early dawn, and if you are a fisherman, see your boat is all right and ship-shape Bristol fashion, looking carefully into all the details of tackle, bait, harpoons, knives, and "bootoo" (a small heavy club for killing sharks and other sea terrors). See to all this yourself, as your boatman, plucky and good, in all that pertains to his native seas, is naturally careless and *insouciant*, has no memory or thinking power whatever, and is sure if left to himself to forget some important part of the equipment, and then away to whatever fishing ground the tide then suits. Remember the sea is one vast lucky bag,

and you never know what you may come across or draw thereout. Do not be disheartened, if after many attempts, you have toiled hard and taken nothing. After all, your man, or men, have done most of the toiling in bending their backs to the oar; very likely when you are giving up in despair and returning home, you will (as has happened to me on several occasions), hook and land one or two large fish, making up for all your chagrin.

I have alluded to porpoises and the mysterious manner they disappear before the "remous." Now the sea in the vicinity of the Bocas is nearly always being occupied, both as a playing and hunting ground by these ocean shikarees. There are two varieties that are exceedingly common, the "marsouen blanc" (local name) or white porpoise, a small greyish-brown porpoise weighing but a few hundred weight, and the other "marsouen canale" or canal porpoise, a dark-brown variety, averaging somewhere about a ton in weight. They are great destroyers and eaters of fish, and play havoc with schools of mackerel, cavalli, and other pelagic fish, and this object they achieve in a truly military fashion, going in Indian file and throwing out wings to surround their prey. I have seen a veritable army of the big porpoise marching in this fashion through the sea with extended wings, or perhaps it would be more correct to express it in Zulu fashion, horns, at regular intervals, jumping and rearing their massive bodies right out of the sea, silver glittering chunks of fish dropping from their jaws, and note well, the supposed tyrant of the seas, the shark, is afraid of the porpoise; he may, and doubtless does act as a scavenger or camp follower, but attack *M. le Marsouen*? Never. These herds of porpoise do, undoubtedly, drive shoals of pelagic fish near the coasts for the fisher's benefit, but whether the destruction that they cause counterbalances this or not, is an open question.



GIANT RAY OR DEVIL FISH. (*Manta birostris*.)  
(12 ft. across the wings.)



“TRAGEDY OF THE FIRST BOCA”





## PART VII

### “TRAGEDY OF THE FIRST BOCA”

*The Monster “Maman-Balaou”\* of Pointe Rouge, Unsatiated by the blood of Three Previous Victims, Charges a Large Seine Pirogue. The gallant Galgitt and four boatmen find a watery grave. Exciting chase from l’Anse Poua to Chaguaramas. The finny demon charges the floating dock. Trapped at last in Hart’s Cut.*

During the past fortnight the fisher-folk of Scotland and Taitron Bays have been much perturbed by the mysterious disappearance of two men. On Saturday, March 21, Bovril of Scotland Bay, went out on the rising tide, ostensibly to fish “Paoua” at Pointe Rouge, the northeast corner of the first Boca. Neither he nor his boat has been seen since. On Wednesday, the 25th, Jonas of Taitron Bay, left there, saying he was going to try for “Paoua” at the same place. On Thursday, his boat was found ashore at L’Anse Biscayen, and on examination the sides were found perforated right through by some tremendous weapon, presumably the beak of a sword fish. Jonas has left an only brother, “Soucoyen” at Taitron, who, deeply grieved at his loss, has been since then vainly searching the Boca for the body. On Monday morning (30th), very early, Galgitt Tardieu called his seine crew together and went towards “Dent Ma Taitron” at the head of the first Boca, looking for a shoal of cavalli, that had been seen near there. Whilst gazing towards Pointe Rouge, in the cold grey morning light, he distinguished a small boat, which he judged to be that of the bereaved “Soucoyen”, and he ordered his men to pull towards it. As they were doing so, a gigantic object seemed to hurtle in the air out of the water. There was one shriek, a tremendous splash, and then dead

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\* The Maman-balaou is the Trinidad name for the great sail-fish of the Indian Ocean (*Tetrapturus amplus*).

silence. When they reached the spot they saw pieces of the boat, but no body. As the spring-tide was running out fast, and the "remous" was near at hand, this was not remarkable. After rowing round some time, one of the crew, seeing a huge object rise in the immediate vicinity of Pointe Rouge, raised a shout of "Baleine" (whale), but on getting nearer, they espied the large fan-like fin of a monster "Maman-Balaou," or "Ocean Gar," the largest of the Scomberoides. Nearer still, they could make out the gigantic beak or bill, possibly 10 to 12 ft. in length, and concluded he was lying by for fresh victims as all three men had been presumably lost near this point. Galgitt Tardieu, during his forty years' experience, had never seen a fish of this size, so he returned to Scotland Bay, for more pirogues, and as many harpooners as he could get together, to rid the Bocas of this terror.

It will be necessary here to digress a little, in order to give most of the readers of *The Mirror* some information regarding the Tardieus, who are and have been the hereditary fishing chiefs of the Bocas. The senior members of this family are six in number, and are direct descendants of those two gallant vikings and hardy old whalers, Charles Dominique Tardieu and Jean Baptiste Tardieu, names that were household words to a bygone generation. The living representatives of these good old sea-dogs, are all known by sobriquets flavouring strongly of the finny denizens of the deep. "Galgitt Grandécaille," "Vent-Vieille" and "Fontaine Fish," have their residences and carry on their fishing business at Scotland Bay; "Charles Tassard" is the doyen of Taitron Bay; "Charles Carangue" takes care of Gasparillo and its waters, while "Joseph Jolle-rouge" has Grand Fond at Monos under his fostering wing.

These chieftains of the fishing clans now met together and mapped out the plan of campaign. Each one was to furnish a pirogue with four oarsmen and two harpooners, and in addition they hired the pirogue of "Molung Baba," at Taitron Bay, which was put in charge of Captain Modeste and a scratch crew, including those veteran harpooners, Mathieu and Joseph Tomar. The programme was, after harpooning the monster, to try and head him into either

Scotland or Taitron Bay, where he could more easily be despatched, but they had a bitter awakening.

At dawn, on Tuesday, morning all the boats were at their stations, the three Scotland Bay boats, pulling for Pointe Rouge to find the big fish. Captain Modeste's boat lay off Roche Mathieu in Scotland Bay, "Charles Tassard" guarded Taitron by Gros Roche, while "Joseph Jolle-rouge" and "Charles Carangue" cruised by Kenny's Point and Point Baleine, respectively. The boat of "Vent-vieille" was the first to sight the mighty brute, calmly swimming between Dent Ma Taitron and Pointe Rouge, so going on the outside of it, they plunged two harpoons into the fish, which turned slowly as if something had tickled it, and went straight for L'Anse Pecheurs, immediately below L'Anse Paoua, where it encountered the boat of "Fontaine Fish." Receiving two more harpoons which accelerated its pace to L'Anse Paoua, the two boats fastened on, but with plenty of slack line. Galgitt was waiting for it, about 50 yards off the L'Anse Paoua point, and successfully put in three harpoons; but this lashed the monster into a fury, that was terrible to behold, churning the sea with its tail, and casting vast clots of sea spume incarnadined with blood from its head and back. This blood had already attracted hordes of predaceous fish, conspicuous amongst them being the dreaded "tintorelles" or spotted sharks, the most fearless and voracious of all. Galgitt evidently thinking that now was the time to give it the "death flurry" tried to lance it, but at the psychologic moment, the pirogue sank in a chasm caused by a huge groundswell, the giant fish launched itself into the air, transfixing the gallant Galgitt with its iron beak, and completely obliterating boat and crew with its huge body, which must have crushed and stunned the four rowers, who were seated at their oars. The two harpooners managed to float long enough to be picked up by other boats, that had gathered near, but of the heroic captain and his sturdy crew, none else were left to tell the tale. Away went the sea-devil, with its fin swaying on the waters like a great fan, away past Roche Mathieu, where that veteran whaler "Mathieu," fastened another harpoon into it, past Taitron, where near

Gros Roche "Charles Tassard" was waiting along with the boat of his cousin "Jolle-rouge." "Chambé fort," cried the wily Charles, and four more iron bolts were lanced into the fish's body. Still faster and faster, with five large pirogues training after it, and ten or twelve harpoons in its back, went the "Terror," past La Haute, down the channel, past La Retraite (where Kingsley's much-wandering Ulysses cheered the chase), and Petit Gasparillo, heading straight for the Floating Dock. The people in the different villas on Gasparillo, could not understand the cause of the hue and cry. They said it looked, from their point of view, like a submarine boat, towing a number of pirogues, but they could not comprehend the reason of the fearful pace. Chaguaramas Bay was now alive with boats and fishermen, conspicuous amongst them being the stalwart form of Harry Knaggs, who, with his slogan of "C'est moen qui là", vainly endeavoured to get near with a harpoon. Swerving neither to the right or left, with a crash that shook the dock from stem to stern, and suspended all conversation amongst the watchmen on top, the great brute ran right into the dock at the southern end, and fortunately broke off five or six feet of its beak. The impact evidently stunned it, as it now went quite slowly in the direction of Hart's Cut, which it entered, and the tide being low, it practically beached itself in the narrowest portion of the cut. The huge body of the fish is fixed so tight, that even at full tide, it could neither move backward or forward. The days of the "Terror of Pointe Rouge" are numbered, but what a fearful price to pay, in the lives of so many brave men!!!

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[By Telephone.]

Hart's Cut,

10 P. M., Tuesday.

The "Maman-Balaou" is not dead, but bleeding profusely. It cannot move and the harpoons have been extracted with the hope of keeping it alive for the inspection of the townsfolk. Its estimated weight is between four and five tons. Of course the water always incoming and outgoing, may keep it alive, but we have had to put a Police

Guard over it as the inhabitants of Hart's Cut have not eaten fish for a fortnight. The sergeant in charge informed us that, acting with his usual promptitude, Captain Saunders had ordered Captain Edmund to put the "Paria" into commission for an excursion at reduced rates to view the fish. The steamer, he thinks, will leave the Lighthouse Jetty, at 9.30 to-morrow (Wednesday) morning.

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Scotland Bay,

11.40 P. M., Tuesday.

There is much rejoicing here, as the heroic Galgitt and his men have just been brought in by a boat that was coming up from turtle fishing at La Peña. The doctor has examined Galgitt's wound. The monster's beak went deep into the fleshiest part of the veteran, but, fortunately has not injured any vital organs, and he is doing well. It appears that the reflex action of the huge ground swell had practically sucked the four oarsmen and Galgitt up into the famous Guachero Caves at L'Anse Cabritt. This accounts for their disappearance from the sight of the others. They passed a *mauvais quart d'heure* in the cave, but there was plenty of that best styptic for wounds, salt water. About 7 A. M., the passing boat heard their shouts and rescued them. Universal joy is great, and the Taitron Bay stringed band is now serenading at Scotland Bay.











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