

the former yielding the natives their principal article of food, and the latter their clothing. to this dearth of animals may be attributed the chief cause of their ferocity and propensity to cannibalism. in most uncivilised countries the natives use their arms against the wild animals of the forest. the dangers and difficulties they encounter in overcoming them form a kind of prelude to war, and perfect them in the use of their weapons. the rifle of the north american indian would never be so dreaded did he not depend upon its produce for his subsistence. i have myself during my travels through north america had many opportunities of witnessing the certain aim they take both with the arrow and the bullet; while those in the southern parts of that vast continent, who depend on taking the wild cattle, acquire, by constant practice, an equal dexterity with the lasso, which those who have not witnessed it could scarcely imagine possible. the new zealander, while handling a musket, is quite in a state of trepidation; and though it is his darling weapon he seems always afraid of it, and is never sure of his aim till he is quite close to his object. i have mentioned this fact to several europeans who had accompanied various tribes to battle, and they all informed me they made a sad bungling use of the musket; their aim would be surer if they had large and ferocious animals to hunt or contend with. there is another circumstance that operates against their acquiring skill in the use of the gun: they are so fond of cleaning, scrubbing, and taking them to pieces, that in a short time the locks become loose, retaking it: that consequently it was not worth the while to engage in so many expenses and troubles as this would cost. notwithstanding which, don john being an expert and valiant soldier, ordered that provisions should be conveyed to puerto velo for the use of the militia, and transported himself thither, with no small danger of his life. here he arrived july, with most things necessary to the expedition in hand, where he found in the port a good ship, and well mounted, called the st. vincent, that belonged to the company of the negroes, which he manned and victualled very well, and sent to the isle of st. catherine, constituting captain joseph sanchez ximenez, major of puerto velo, commander thereof. he carried with him two hundred and seventy soldiers, and thirty seven prisoners of the same island, besides thirty four spaniards of the garrison of puerto velo, twenty nine mulattoes of panama, twelve indians, very dextrous at shooting with bows and arrows, seven expert and able gunners, two lieutenants, two pilots, one surgeon, and one priest, of the order of st. francis, for their chaplain. don john soon after gave orders to all the officers how to behave themselves, telling them that the governor of cathagena would supply them with more men, boats, and all things else, necessary for that enterprise; to which effect he had already written to the said governor. july, don john setting sail with a fair wind, he called before him all his people, and made them a speech, encouraging them to fight against the enemies of their country and religion, and especially against those inhuman pirates, who had committed so many horrid cruelties upon the subjects of his catholic majesty; withal, promising thirst, and the water bottles are empty. a sight like that has driven men mad before now with disappointment. the boys recalled these words over and over again during their journey, for from the very first they realised what a tramp through such a desert meant the sun came down with scorching power, and it was reflected up from the white sand and salt. at mid day when they halted where there was no shadow but that cast by their four footed companions, there was not a breath of air, and the poor brutes stood with hanging heads and drooping ears, panting and even sighing, while when the evening drew near the wind swept boisterously over the plain, but brought no refreshment, for not only was it hot, but it wafted up the fine, irritating dust and produced additional sensations of thirst. the march was kept on long after sundown, when another halt was made for refreshment; but there seemed to be none, for the amount of water used was small in the extreme, and after about an hours wait, during which the baggage animals had been relieved of their burdens, the doctor rose. now then, he said sternly, load up. we must keep on all through the night, and refresh again at daybreak. refresh said wilton dismally. well, rest the mules, replied the doctor. then go on again for three or four hours and try and sleep through the hottest part of the day. what about keeping our course correctly