

the scrub was so thick, what with fallen tree-trunks, covered with epiphytes of all descriptions, and cycads, and arums, and great thorny spikes of *Bromelia*, and a dense undergrowth, principally of melastomads, many of them richly covered with blue and purple flowers. Above the undergrowth, the tall forest trees ran up, straight and branchless, for thirty or forty feet; and when they began to branch, a second tier of vegetation spread over our heads, almost shutting out the sky. Great climbing *Monstera*s and other arals, and epiphytic bromeliads, and orchids, some of them distilling from their long trusses of lovely flowers a fragrance which was almost overpowering, and mazes of *Tillandsia* hanging down like tangled hanks of gray twine. Every available space between the trees was occupied by lianas twining together or running up singly, in size varying from a whip-cord to a foot in diameter. These lianas were our chief danger, for they hung down in long loops from the trees and lay upon the ground, and were apt to entangle us and catch the horses' feet as we rode on. As time wore on, it got very close and hot, and the forest relapsed into silence, most of the creatures retiring for their noonday siesta. The false roof of epiphytes and parasites kept off the glare of the sun, and it was only at intervals that a sheaf of vertical beams struck through a rift in the green canopy, and afforded us a passing glimpse of the tops of the forest trees, uniting in a delicate open tracery far above us.

For some hours our brave little horses struggled on, sometimes cantering a little where the path was pretty clear, and more usually picking their way carefully, and sometimes, with all their care, floundering into the mud-holes imperfectly bridged over with trunks of trees.

As we had made our ascent at first, all this time we had been riding nearly on a level on the plateau between the two river valleys. Suddenly the wood opened, and we rode up to the edge of a long, irregular cliff bounding the valley of Santo