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Alfred Russel Wallace

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A friend of Charles Darwin and a social activist respected by John Stuart Mill, Alfred R. Wallace (1823–1913) was an outstanding nineteenth-century intellectual. Wallace, renowned in his time as the co-discoverer of natural selection, was a young schoolteacher when he began his exciting career as an explorer-naturalist, and set off for Brazil in 1848 with Henry Walter Bates. *A Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro* (1853) is the stimulating and engaging result of this first expedition and a precursor to his best-selling *Malay Archipelago* (1869). The depth and breadth of Wallace's observations in this book as naturalist, anthropologist and geologist are remarkable, and it is tantalising to learn that half his notes and 'the greater part of [his] collections and sketches' were lost at sea when his ship was burned on his voyage home.

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# A Narrative of Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro

*With an Account of the Native Tribes, and  
Observations on the Climate, Geology, and  
Natural History of the Amazon*

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE



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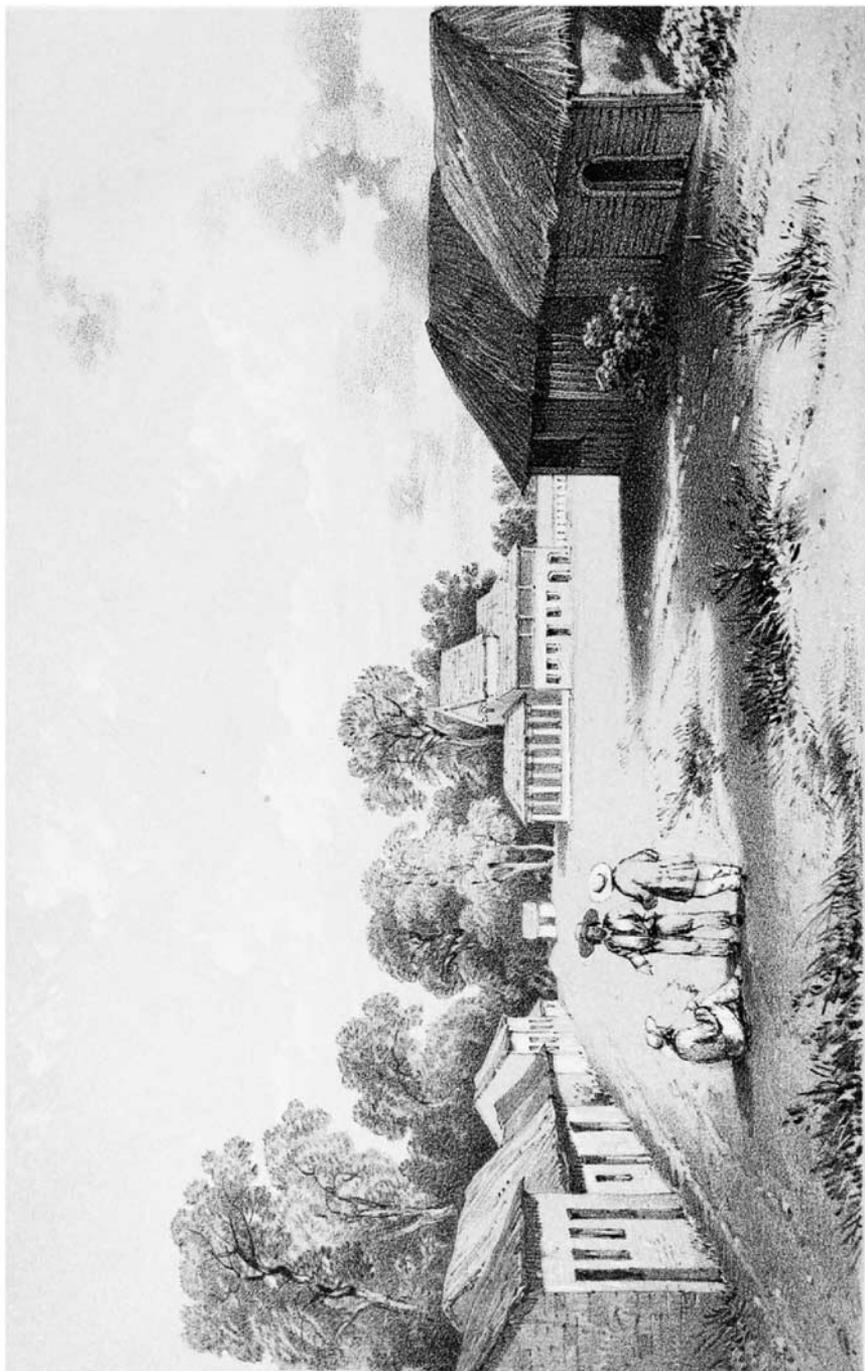
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CHAPEL AT NAZARÉ NEAR PARÁ.

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OBSERVATIONS ON THE CLIMATE, GEOLOGY, AND NATURAL  
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BY  
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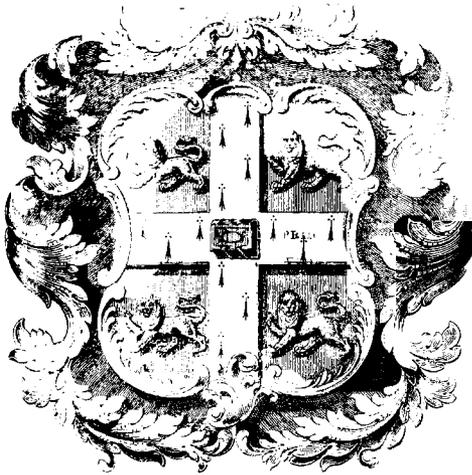
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## P R E F A C E.

AN earnest desire to visit a tropical country, to behold the luxuriance of animal and vegetable life said to exist there, and to see with my own eyes all those wonders which I had so much delighted to read of in the narratives of travellers, were the motives that induced me to break through the trammels of business and the ties of home, and start for

“Some far land where endless summer reigns.”

My attention was directed to Pará and the Amazon by Mr. Edwards's little book, 'A Voyage up the Amazon,' and I decided upon going there, both on account of its easiness of access and the little that was known of it compared with most other parts of South America.

I proposed to pay my expenses by making collections in Natural History, and I have been enabled to do so; and the pleasures I have found in the contemplation of the strange and beautiful objects continually met with, and the deep interest arising from the study in their native wilds of the varied races of mankind, have been such as to determine my continuing in the pursuit I

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## PREFACE.

have entered upon, and to cause me to look forward with pleasure to again visiting the wild and luxuriant scenery and the sparkling life of the tropics.

In the following pages I have given a narrative of my journeys and of the impressions excited at the time. The first and last portions are from my journals, -with little alteration ; but all the notes made during two years, with the greater part of my collections and sketches, were lost by the burning of the ship on my homeward voyage. From the fragmentary notes and papers which I saved I have written the intermediate portion, and the four last chapters on the Natural History of the country and on the Indian tribes, which, had I saved all my materials, were intended to form a separate work on the Physical History of the Amazon.

Several vocabularies of Indian languages, with some remarks on them kindly furnished me by Dr. R. G. Latham, will be found in an Appendix.

In conclusion, I trust that the great loss of materials which I have suffered, and which every naturalist and traveller will fully appreciate, may be taken into consideration, to explain the inequalities and imperfections of the narrative, and the meagreness of the other part of the work, so little proportionate to what might be expected from a four years' residence in such an interesting and little-known country.

*London, October, 1853.*

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