

was to have been included with the outfit or not. He summarily fired Birbeck, and paid the rest of us off as "Mission Accomplished". Birbeck took another liquor cure, and they hired him back and kept him till he retired after twenty-five years service. Four years later he looked me up and said it looked like ancient history was about to renew itself. He had the order to go to Fomento; pick up where we left our line and continue it down the Agabama River, through the Trinidad Mountains to the city of Trinidad, near the South Coast, and asked if I could join the party. I did, but that is another story which I will take up in due time. The other members of the party scattered and I never saw any of them again.

Chapter 15

GALBIS

After I finished with the Cuba Company, I was back looking for work; but this time I was looking for a specific kind of work, Engineering. I spent quite some time looking and investigating every possibility. There just weren't any engineering jobs in Cuba. I turned again to Panama, and found that the work had progressed to the point where they were laying off engineers, not hiring more.

I had saved a little money and decided that my best opportunity might be to start a little business. I investigated several possibilities and what looked like the most promising was at Galbis. C. E. Bowman, who had been a partner of D. E. Kerr at Omaja, had dissolved partnership with Kerr and was starting another American Colony at Galbis. He needed some surveying done; a store where settlers could get their groceries; and, a lodging place where prospective settlers could stop while looking things over; and, new settlers could stay while getting settled. He wouldn't have enough surveying to keep me busy all the time; but, if I would put in a store and lodging house, he would give me three lots and let me pick them anywhere I liked; and, give me all the surveying he had. The man who had put in an American store in Omaja had built up a very good business and was still going strong. With the store, lodging house and surveying, it looked like a good deal. Definitely it was the best thing in sight, so I took it.

Bowman gave me two very good and sufficient reasons why Galbis should grow faster than Omaja. Those two reasons were genuine. He didn't mention any reasons why it should not, and there were several. Omaja had very little good water. It had none at all when the Colony began. They had dug many wells and drilled a few, but very few wells had drinkable water. I, personally, had dug one well over thirty feet deep with pick and shovel, and the water was positively bitter. My neighbor, George Snell, and I drilled a well over two hundred feet deep. It cost us over four hundred dollars; and, while we got plenty of

water, it wasn't good. The animals drank it when they could get no other, and we used it to wash dishes in during the dry season, when the cisterns were running low. We never drank it. Galbis had several excellent springs.

As mentioned before, the land in Omaja was in pesos of possession. There wasn't a clear land title on the whole proposition. The settlers had contracts with D. E. Kerr, and he had a contract with Manuel Gomez who had committed suicide. Kerr had taken the necessary legal steps to start the survey, but no one had any idea how long it would be before they got their deeds. Their contracts were not very negotiable. Not that there was any law against selling them, but you just couldn't find any buyers. The colony had now been going 4½ years. The Americans knew nothing of Cuban laws, nor Cuban courts, so were very skeptical. Suffice it to say, that the whole thing was eventually settled up and all who bought land in the Omaja colony eventually got their deeds but it took several years.

Galbis was in Camaguey Province where they had never had any pesos of possession. The land had been surveyed in very large tracts, but it had been surveyed and the titles were good. Federico Salvador, a rich Cuban, had a very large tract of land at Galbis. I don't know how much Bowman paid him to make the contract; but the contract called for Bowman to divide the land up into 10-acre tracts, and just as fast as Bowman sold the land he would pay for what he sold and Salvador would make the deed direct to the purchaser.

Before I went there Bowman had hired J. C. Kelly, a combination artist and engineer, to run enough survey lines where they had picked out a townsite so he could take topography; then he fitted his townsite into his topography, showed streets, schoolhouse, churches, parks, etc. As there were hills in the townsite, he said it was like Rome—built on 7 hills; so they named it Rome. There were hills all right, tho' I never counted the number; but, they were very diminutive as compared with those of The Eternal City. Kelly made a beautiful plan for Bowman to show to his prospects. Until Bowman started some activity, Galbis was not even a flag stop. A Texan named Frank Hall, owned a lot of ox carts, and dealt in cedar and

mahogany. Some years previous, he had bought the cedar and mahogany stumpage for miles around Rome, and got the railroad company to put in a siding so he could load his logs. Hall had finished his operations several months before Bowman arrived; but the railroad just hadn't got around to taking out the siding. Rome was three miles from Galbis, over a savana trail that you could get over with a wagon or cart very well in the dry season, but which didn't rate the name of Camino Real.

Along both sides of the Galbis townsite were small streams, fed by ever-flowing springs. Near the southeast corner of the townsite the above-mentioned trail crossed the stream that was on the east side of the townsite. In plotting his townsite, Kelly had fitted one of his streets to make use of this same trail and ford. Sometime in past ages there had been a house on the bank of the stream here. The owner had planted and left to posterity an algarrobo and several mango trees. They were now all grown to large proportions, and made a beautiful, shady grove. Bowman had said that I could have my choice of lots, so I chose this spot, with the algarrobo and three or four big mango trees on my land, and the rest of the grove on the east so the northeast trade wind would be cooled blowing through the shade.

I contracted with a Cuban to build me a very large palm-leaf roof on substantial hardwood posts, with all poles peeled to protect them from the worms. The roof was 24' x 36' with a ten-foot lean-to porch across the south side. After he finished I took over and put in a hardwood floor, about two feet above ground; cedar sides and partitions; and, something wholly unknown in the country, glass windows. The partitions only went up as high as the plates, leaving the whole upper part of the house open for air circulation. That did not add anything to the sound proofing, but definitely did add quite materially to the coolness and comfort of the house in the summertime. I divided the house into two 12' x 12' bedrooms, a 12' x 24' living-dining room, and a 12' x 24' storeroom. The store I patterned from the Cubans. Customers did not enter the room. It is so much easier to combat pilfering that way. The counter was against the south wall, and over it and running its entire length, was a door; hinged from the top;

open in the daytime; closed and bolted at night. Under the counter were bins for rice, sugar, coffee, etc. About five feet from the counter, and running around the walls, were shelves and small bins to hold anything there was a demand for. When I put the floor in the storeroom, I used sixteen-foot sleepers instead of the twelve foot ones I used in the rest of the house and let the extra length extend out into the porch. I floored that to make a platform for customers to stand on while trading. On the north side of the house I built a 12' x 14' kitchen. I put a galvanized iron roof on that to protect it from the sparks from the kitchen stove. I installed both a Cuban fogon and an American cookstove. We burned charcoal in the fogon and it generated much less heat than the cookstove. When Birdie wanted to bake, she had no choice but to use the stove, and it was very nice in cold weather.

I got a water-witch to locate me a well, and got plenty of good water at about twelve feet. Up to that time, I had to carry all my water from a big spring some five or six hundred feet away, and it was getting quite monotonous. The well was not as close to the house as I would have liked, but the water-witch said that was where the water was, just about a hundred feet away. I ordered and installed the necessary amount of pipe, a kitchen sink, and a pitcher pump. Then we had something unheard of even in the city of Camaguey: running water in the kitchen. That is, it ran every time we jiggled the pump handle. There was one serious drawback. That hundred feet of pipe exposed to the tropical sun almost boiled our water in hot weather. To remedy that, I got a five gallon earthen jar and set it on the draining board. Every night, just as regularly as we "wound up the cat and threw out the clock", we, also, filled up our water jar, and by morning it was cooler than water drawn fresh from the well.

I was quite busy till I finished my building program, then things began to slacken off. Bowman had a little, but only a very little, surveying to do. We got some trade in the store—more Cuban than American. A few settlers came and I helped them clear land and get settled, but didn't have enough work all told to either keep me busy nor make a comfortable living.

I have mentioned the good points this place had over Omaja. Bowman didn't mention the bad ones to me. Probably didn't see them himself, or he would never have undertaken the project. I should have seen some of them myself; and, in fact, did see a few, but thought the good points would counter-balance them. The biggest drawing cards to get settlers at Omaja, were the homesteads. Bowman had no money to pay Salvador for land to give away, hence offered none. Most of the land at Omaja was very fertile with either a clay or limestone subsoil. Seventy-five or eighty percent of the Galbis land was a very light soil with a rotten granite subsoil, and some of the townsite had no soil at all, the granite sticking right out on top. That was what caused the seven hills.

One thing Bowman did do was to get both a doctor and a dentist, and he helped them to get licenses to practice in the country. But he wasn't successful in getting them enough practice to hold them for many years. He kept the doctor longer than the dentist.

Some of those who came looking for land knew enough about land to dig down and examine the subsoil. I can't say positively, but I very much doubt, if anyone who dug down stayed. That three miles to the railroad over a bad road, with no store, Post Office, or town when you got there, was a great deterrent. I remarked to one of the prospective settlers one day, that I came here early and got into the project "on the ground floor". He replied with a sarcastic grin, "Yeah, it looks to me like you got into the basement." He didn't settle.

Having a store gave me opportunity to talk with my Cuban neighbors, and I was very much surprised that many of them had small land surveys they wanted made, but didn't have money enough to hire a Cuban surveyor to come out from Camaguey to do it. Once I got started on those surveys, one told another I was doing his surveying, and he told another; and, while I never had enough work to keep me busy for any great length of time at one hitch, all told they took up quite a lot of time and gave me a considerable lift.

The most interesting survey I ever made was during this time. It was a cattle ranch named La Atalaya, belonging to F. X. Saucier, a Frenchman, and lay on the southern shore of Nuevitas Bay. La Atalaya means Watch Tower. While my business over there was

to survey the ranch, Mr. Saucier took great pleasure in showing me his ruins, and telling me all about them, and I enjoyed looking and listening. Before the Ten Years War which began in 1868, this was a very prosperous part of the Island with some eight or ten sugarmills in the vicinity. Some of them were big enough to operate narrow-gauge railroads. On this ranch, by some geological freak, there was a very high hill on an otherwise extensive level plain, near the south shore of the Bay. The prewar owners operated a double, and very lucrative, business. It is difficult to say, after all these years, which was the business and which was the sideline, producing sugar or running slaves.

On top of this high hill they built a tower high enough to see all over the surrounding country and woods and get a good clear view of the entrance into Nuevitas Bay. In that tower, they installed a four-foot telescope, which I have seen in the customs house in Nuevitas. When they were expecting a slave runner, they kept a man on watch in the tower till he spotted the ship. Then they made preparations for the reception. The ship hung around outside the harbor until after night, then slipped in without lights, and kept close to the east shore around near the hill. There rowboats met it and took the slaves off. Next morning the ship cast anchor in front of the Customs house with all its papers in order and no slaves. All slave runners also carried legitimate cargo. They had to have a legal excuse for running. It is impossible to say, after all these years, which business was more profitable; but, between the two, the ship owners were quite prosperous.

At the foot of the hill on the north side, was the plantation drug store. The rear door opened, not into the big out-of-doors, but directly into a tunnel that ran right through the hill, and came out in the slave quarters on the south side, where the cane and sugar mill were. In the tunnel was a big room where the slaves were kept till they could be smuggled out two or three at a time to the other nearby sugar mills. In the war of 1868 the plantation was destroyed and the slaves freed, as were all the slaves in Cuba. It lay in ruins till after the Spanish American War, when Saucier bought it. He leveled the tower down to about twelve or fourteen feet and built his house on it.

He subdivided some of the surrounding land and started an American colony. It looked like an ideal location—a big hill with a fine house on top of it in the background, and Nuevitas in plain view just across the Bay. It wasn't as good as it looked. The Bay was several miles across, and many times too rough for rowboats. There were no stores closer, and no other transportation. Furthermore, the mosquitoes and jevenes there near the mangroves around the Bay were terrible. The Colonists soon began to complain, and with ample cause, so Saucier bought them all out and turned the whole thing into a cattle ranch.

Around the tower had been concrete sidewalks, and some of them were still intact. In one place, an arrow and a figure six was scratched into the concrete. Saucier said he often looked at that and wondered if it had any significance. One morning while he was building his house, he found a hole in the ground near this place, the imprint of an iron pot in the bottom of the hole, and the pot and its lid nearby. Then he noticed that the arrow pointed directly to the hole. He measured the distance and it was exactly six Spanish varas.

One of his workmen failed to show up for work that morning, and he never saw him nor heard from him again. Cuba had no banks before the war of sixty-eight; and the money was gold and silver. People had to care for their own money. Many people had secret hiding places in the walls of their houses; others buried theirs. I knew of several houses in Camaguey, that were being torn down to rebuild, when large sums of money were found in the walls. When tearing down a house, there were usually several persons around when the money was found, so the finder could not get away with it. We all supposed there was money in that old pot or its location would not have been so carefully marked. It had most likely been buried when the war broke out which had been more than thirty years before. The owner was dead, or out of the country, or he would have been back to get his money. Had this man known anything about the money, he would have dug it up much sooner; and, not have been there working as a common peon. He had just made an intelligent guess, and won; or he would have been back on the job perfectly innocent of why the hole and pot were there. There is no possible way of

knowing, or even making an intelligent guess, as to how much he found.

While the ancient past was very interesting, we soon had something in the modern present that was, to say the least, exciting. My neighbor, Eladio Gonzalez, and I were riding along a savana trail one day, when suddenly we saw two men with bundles on their backs; stooped very low and running, apparently from the trail ahead of us to a nearby clump of jungle. Eladio said, "Those are the sneak thieves that have been stealing so many things around here lately," and he jammed his spurs to his horse. I followed suit, and by the time we got to them they were lying down in the bunch of jungle. One of them sat up and asked what the excitement was all about. Eladio told him we would like to know the same thing, and asked what they were doing there. He said they were merely passing through on their way to San Agustin and had come over here to rest in the shade.

I hadn't heard about any stealing; but, after that I heard of a lot of it, both from Cubans and Americans. Two Americans, who were keeping batch, came up one morning and told me their shack had been entered the day before, while they were away, and every little thing of value stolen including forty dollars in gold that one of them kept for emergencies, which he thought he had hidden so no one could find it. I mounted a horse and went over to see Avelino Garcia, about the most prominent man in the neighborhood, and asked him if he would get a bunch of men together to go with me and see if we could find these men and catch them. "What will you do with them after we get them?"

"Turn them over to the Rural Guards."

"Nothing doing. They might give them a short jail sentence; but, in a few months they would be out, then they would come back and wreak vengeance on us. If you want to raise a bunch to go out and kill them, and bury them where we find them, I'll raise the bunch."

"I am not a murderer, and so far as I know they have done nothing worthy of death."

I had hired a Cuban, Agustin Monteagudo, to do some clearing for an American. One morning just after daylight he came to see me. Never in my life have I seen a man as badly scared as he was. The

weather was warm, but his teeth were rattling as if he were out in his shirt sleeves in zero weather. He said that the day before, two men had crawled out of the thick woods into the clearing he had just made, and motioned for him to go to them. When he didn't go they came to him, and began asking who of the Americans had money. He said he told them he didn't think any of those there had. Then they asked if they should kidnap my little daughter, if I had or could raise money to pay a ransom for her. He said he told them he didn't think so. He said he was afraid to go back out there alone, so was not going that day, and he thought I should know why and what was going on. I thanked him for the information, but there wasn't a thing I could do about it. Avelino had wrecked what little hope I had.

I think it was the next Sunday morning, the Rural Guards came past our place dressed in peon garb, and carrying shotguns instead of army rifles. They stopped and chatted a few minutes and said they were going hunting, but didn't say where they were going, nor what kind of game they hoped to find. We kept our store closed on Sunday; and, in order to do so successfully, we kept the whole front of the house closed. Sometime around ten o'clock that same day there was a knock on the front door. When Birdie opened it, a man staggered backward as if he had been hit in the face, but quickly recovered and asked to buy a can of cocoa, a commodity which Cubans did not use, but which we kept for the American trade. She went into the storeroom and got it for him, and as he left she said to me, "That is one of those bandits." I was playing with the children, and it being Sunday, I had my lace boots off. I asked her to go get Bowman while I got my boots on and added that we would follow him. I had never carried a gun but did keep a thirty-two calibre revolver in the store, just in case. Bowman came and I grabbed the revolver and joined him. We had followed the man a very short distance when we saw his companion emerge from hiding and join him. We increased our speed and soon came up close behind them. They started to turn off the trail, and Bowman told them to stay on the trail. One of them asked if that was his land, and Bowman told him he represented the owner. "All right, we will respect your authority." And they continued up

the trail to the Camino Real, which was approximately a mile and a half from our house. There they started to turn onto the Camino Real, and Bowman told them to continue up the trail. One of them told Bowman that was a public road and they were going to San Agustin. Bowman repeated his order and one of them pulled a forty-five out of his pocket. I don't know where Bowman learned his quick action, for he was from Ohio, but he covered that man so quickly with both a twenty-two and a thirty-two that he staggered backward and put the forty-five back in his pocket. This would have been comical had it not been so serious, with a strong probability of tragedy. It suggested a cannon taking orders from a toy pistol. They obeyed orders and continued on up the trail to the first house, which just happened to be that of Agustin Monteagudo's father-in-law.

The owner was not at home, but Agustin and his eighteen year old brother-in-law were there. Bowman had kept the bandits covered ever since we left the Camino Real, and told them to turn into the house. Inside he asked the young men to get a rope to tie the bandits up with. The younger one mounted a horse that stood near, and said he was going for the Rural Guards. I could have saved him the trouble, but I didn't want to tell the bandits what I knew. I don't think Agustin had yet recovered from his scare. He never said a word, but just disappeared into thin air, leaving his wife and mother-in-law to face anything that might happen, alone.

Bowman stood in the back door with a gun in each hand. I stood in the front door with my gun in hand. The prisoners walked back and forth between the front and back doors. Maybe they were trying to make up their minds which of us would be the easier mark. After what seemed like an hour or more, but which most likely was only a few minutes, one of them said, "You fellows have neither right nor authority to hold us. A man has only one time to die, and now is as good a time as any. We have not raised a hand against anyone, and we have these women as witnesses that we will not raise a hand first." With that he pulled a thirty-eight out of his pocket, and the other reproduced his forty-five. Both of them pointed their guns, not at my head, but at my feet; and, they walked out of the door right past me. There were two of

them and only one of me, and their guns made mine look like a toy pistol. I had never shot a revolver at anything living, much less a man, and only a very few times at a target. It didn't take long for me to make up my mind I would rather be a live coward than a dead hero. I watched them walk.

I don't know yet just what we expected to do or to learn, for we had muffed our opportunity, if we ever had one; but, we followed them till the trail passed near the jungle. They made a quick dive into it and were gone. An hour or so later the Rural Guards, still in hunting gear, came by marching the one with the forty-five in front of them, his hands tied behind him. They had brought him for me to identify. They told me where they had caught him. It was just on the other side of the woods we had chased him into. The Guards were hunting there when the two of them crept out of the woods, with their guns still in their hands. When they saw the Guards one of them said, "Look out, there are some men." The other said, "Oh, those are just some woodsmen out hunting." The guards were close enough to hear the conversation and called out, "Hands up, the Rural Guard," as they drew down on them with their shot-guns. This bandit dropped his gun and got his hands up quickly. The other dropped to the ground like he had been shot, and went into the woods like a snake. The Guards had his hat and gun, but didn't have him. They left with their prisoner for Guaimoro, the County Seat, eighteen miles away, and told Bowman and me to go there next day as witnesses.

Trials in Cuba are not conducted as in the States. They had had the prisoner on the stand before Bowman and I arrived, and he had given both his and his companion's names. The Court Room was quite open; and, while I was on the witness stand, I heard two shots and could see people running into the street. The prisoner was escaping. They had no jail, so had handcuffed him to an iron cot and left him unguarded. He had a small hand and had slipped his hand out of the cuff; then, ran into the street; and, took off. Someone saw him and called the Guard. It was he who fired, but I don't think he shot at the man, there were too many people in the street. In spite of the shots, he continued right down the street till near a clump of jungle, where he made a

break for it and won.

Some of us wondered if they would come back to bother us more, or if they would keep on going. A short time later the Havana Post came out with big headlines. "Bandits attempt to kidnap four-year-old daughter of Jean Fernandez, rich cattleman of Marti, Camaguey Province. Effective work of the Rural Guards killed five of the bandits and captured the other." The fine print gave some of the details, and the names of the bandits. The ones that had bothered us were among the dead.

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That was all I knew about the case until nineteen years later, when I was helping Henry Kaiser build Cuba's National Highway. It ran right along side of Jean Fernandez' ranch. In his pasture was a beautiful outcropping of black granite, Cuba's hardest rock, just what we were using for our paving. I went to see Jean to make a deal with him to put a rock crusher beside his rock pile and buy some of his rock. While we were talking business, a very big rain came up.

After the business was closed, the rain continued. We were sitting in the house where the kidnap attempt had been made, so he told me all about it. He was in Camaguey at the time. His head cow-puncher, China Harris, a Texas-reared Englishman, was doing some repair work around the barn. Jean's wife ran out there, almost in hysterics, but sufficiently under control to hold her voice down, and said, "China, there are some men in the house that have come to take my little daughter away. What will I do?"

"Just keep cool, go back in the house and invite them to stay for coffee. Stall a little on getting the coffee ready, and leave the rest to me." He hit a few hammer licks at the barn while he saddled a horse, then kept the barn between him and the house as he rode away, until he got behind a hill, then rode for dear life to Marti, to get the Rural Guards.

While in Marti, he told a friend of Jean's what was happening and asked him to wire Jean in Camaguey. China rode back with the Guards, and they used the same cover he had used in going. When the Guards passed the barn they divided, some going each side of the house. When the bandits saw the Rural Guards they made a run for a big woods just across the road.

The Guards shot one; the rest reached cover.

When the telegram was handed to Jean in Camaguey, he was in Hotel Plaza, in a poker game with Rosada, Train Master of the Cuba Co. Railroad, and a couple of mutual friends. After he read the telegram, he handed it to Rosada and asked, "How soon can you get me an engine up here and a clear track to Marti? You know I have the money to pay for it, don't you?"

"In about an hour."

"What? Do you mean to tell me that you are boss of all the engines on the Cuba Co. Railroad and it will take you an hour to get one of them up here?"

"I don't know if there is an engine in the yard with steam up. I will do the best I can." Jean said it didn't take an hour to get the engine and they broke all records in the run to Marti.

When he jumped off the engine he saw a horse he recognized, tied to a post; looked around for the owner; saw him seated in a nearby cafe; waved his hand to him; mounted the horse and rode for home. He went by way of the front gate, not by way of the pasture; and, when he arrived, the Chief of the Rural Guards was out there to meet him. Beside the gate lay the wounded bandit. Jean was so mad he wanted to put a bullet through him and finish him. The Chief would not let him. Told him that looking after bandits was the work of the Rural Guards. He had a family to look after and should not get involved. Besides his wife was very nervous. He should go in and see if he could comfort her.

When he came out later the bandit was still laying beside the gate, but one of the Guards had bashed his skull in with a rifle butt, just as ordinary people would kill a snake. They had a very hard rain that afternoon. The Chief wired other Rural Guard Posts and they sent enough Rural Guards to entirely surround the woods. They kept an all-night vigil and as the bandits came out next morning they shot them, all but one, and took him prisoner.

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Funny things sometimes happen in Cuba as well as the more serious ones. We used no screens in Cuba. We were eating supper one night after dark, and bugs from around the lamp flew up and lit on the ridge pole. A big rat saw his chance and was

grabbing off a feast when his foot slipped on the slick, peeled pole. I just happened to be sitting so that he fell between my back and the back of the chair. I leaned back real quickly and caught him; then asked Birdie to come and get him out and kill him. Woman-like she had no intentions of tangling with that rat, but she did have her wits with her. She told me to hold him, and she set out to hunt up the cat. She let the cat smell of him, then put the cat on the floor. I leaned forward and the cat did the rest.

One morning, just after daylight, before we were out of bed, two neighbor girls, who lived about three-quarters of a mile away, called and asked if I had a gun. They said that all their men folks were away from home, and that sometime in the night last night the dogs chased a big animal into their kitchen and he was still there. They didn't know what it was. They said that they all climbed up onto the cross timbers in the bottom of the roof and hung onto the rafters all night long. When day dawned, they climbed down and slipped out of the front door and came for me. All the guns I had were a twenty-two target rifle and the previously mentioned thirty-two revolver. I grabbed both the guns; slipped a box of twenty-two long cartridges into my pocket; and, set forth to do battle with the dragon. When I arrived, everything was peaceful and quiet; but, evidently, it hadn't been that way all night. The dogs were all lying down peacefully out in the yard, but all facing the kitchen. When I got around to where I could see into the kitchen, there, backed into a corner, lay a big deer with several points on his antlers. He just lay there and quietly looked me in the face. I presume a sportsman would say it was murder, but both the Cubans and we had venison for breakfast that morning.

The dogs had really used the deer roughly. His hind quarters were quite badly torn up. When he got backed into the corner, he had turned the tables on the dogs and used his antlers on them. When they had had enough, they went out into the yard and lay down where they could watch and rest. When the dogs lay down and let him alone, the deer also lay down. It was a genuine stalemate. The dogs couldn't dislodge the deer on account of his antlers, and the deer didn't dare to leave because as soon as he left his

corner the dogs would again attack him from the rear.

One day, like a bolt from the blue, I got a letter from Ed Hinshaw, State Bank Inspector of Indiana. He said he got my address from my Uncle Asher. His father was our local preacher all the years I was in Indiana, and his younger brother, Luther, and I were in High School together. At that time Ed was assistant cashier at the Bank of Westfield, and I knew him by sight but can't truly say I was ever really acquainted with him. He said that he and a bunch of associates had become sufficiently interested in a very large tract of land on the south coast of Cuba to form a company for its purchase, but he thought they should have an expert report on the land before buying it and asked if I could go to see it, adding that they would pay me for my time and whatever little expense I might incur. I answered that I would gladly go.

I heard no more for quite some time, then I received a letter from a Mr. Beers, head of the real estate firm of Beers and Chambers, Havana. The letter was written on the train as Mr. Beers and the President of Hinshaw's Company were returning from Bayamo to Havana. The letter said that the President had wanted to see the land for himself, but when they got to Bayamo they learned that it was not as simple as they had supposed and would require several days. The President couldn't spare that much time from his work back in the States, and he had instructed him (Beers) to make arrangements with me to go to see the land for them. He suggested that before I went to see the land, I go to Havana; meet the owner; get full instructions for the trip; and what I should expect to find there, and how to get there. In Havana, I went up to Beers and Chambers office. Chambers said he didn't know anything about this piece of land at the time, but he had been over a part of the road on the south side of the Sierra Maestra Mountains, and in places it was so much on edge that a Billy goat had to hang on by his whiskers. He said he had never been over the summit. (I don't think any other American had been either.)

Beers took me down and introduced me to the owner; and, he gave me a blueprint of a map of the land and a copy of the prospectus they had sent Hinshaw and Co. This land was neither surveyed land

nor Hacienda Comunera. It had natural boundaries, but not straight ones. It was bounded on the north by the summit ridge of the Sierra Maestra Mountains, on both the east and the west by rivers, (I don't remember their names) and on the south by the Caribbean Sea. The map gave the area. I have no idea how they arrived at it, but am quite sure it was wrong, for it had never been surveyed—neither, indeed, could it have been at the time the map was made. A survey today, with all our modern equipment, would cost far more than the whole tract is worth. My memory is poor and that was a long time ago, but it seems to me the area given was something like a hundred and fifty thousand acres. I do remember that the price they asked for the tract, on the basis of the acreage given, figured sixty cents an acre. The map showed two large plains, and all the rest was mountains. The prospectus said each of these plains would support a large sugar mill, and most of the mountains were excellent coffee land. It further said that there were great quantities of cedar and mahogany logs—far more than enough to pay for the land—but on account of the mountains, it would be necessary to build a tramway to get it out.

While in Havana, I heard rumblings of a new revolution breaking out; and, from the train window on the road home, I saw several companies of soldiers on the move; and, they sidetracked our train in one place to let a military train pass us going east. When a revolution breaks out in these Latin American Countries, you never know where it will end nor how far it will spread. So when I got home I hung around several days, waiting to see what was likely to happen next. Mr. Beers had suggested that I take some pictures on the tract. He loaned me his camera to take them with, but I had never taken a picture in my life. Elmer Robinson, a neighbor at Galbis, wasn't busy and thought this sounded like an interesting trip so volunteered to go along, as official photographer, for his expenses.

After I had hung around for a full two weeks, and everything was quiet, I decided to go on. We took the train to Bayamo. My map showed a road from Bayamo, by way of Guisa, clear through to the south coast. On the map it looked like a very simple and fairly easy trip. In Bayamo I learned that my old

friends, Marx and Windsor—to whom I owed so much—had gone out of the engineering business; dissolved partnership; and Windsor had become some-sized sugar planter over near Ceballos, while Marx was running a sawmill right here in Bayamo. Naturally I looked him up and we had quite a visit. In the course of the conversation, I told him where I was going and why. He asked if I had got my pay in advance, or, at least, enough to cover expenses. He said I should have. I told him I had known Hinshaw and his family a long time, and I was quite sure I would get my money. "Are you sure he hasn't changed since you saw him last?" That question went home hard in the months that followed.

Next morning, I hunted around and hired a pack train, and bought supplies for the trip, counting on the road over the mountains that my map showed. In Guisa our road turned west; didn't go over the mountain at all, and no one knew anything about even a trail that went over the mountain now—or ever had gone over it. I found a suitable camping ground nearby, then set out in earnest to get information about the road over the mountain. Finally someone told me that farther west lived an old man, Eligio Zaldiver, who had lived many years in the mountains. He should be able to give me the required information. I found him in his sweet potato patch, and noticed that he was barefooted, and that his feet looked much more like big misshapen sweet potatoes, than they did like human feet. Very few Cubans go barefoot. The first articles of clothing a boy wears are a hat and a pair of shoes, next a machete; other articles of clothing come later.

I asked Zaldiver about the road. He very solemnly told me there wasn't any road. I tried to show it to him on the map. He said, "I don't know anything about maps, but I do know something about this country, and there isn't any road." In further conversation, he told me that during the Ten Years War the Spaniards had driven the Cuban Army into the mountains; many of them, himself included, had taken their families with them and stayed till the war was over. During the war of 1895 the Cuban Army ran out of salt and sent him as guide, with fourteen other men, over to the coast to evaporate sea water and

bring back the salt. He had not been over the mountains since, but was quite sure he could still find his way, and for the small stipend of two dollars a day he would guide me over, but again emphasized that there was no road. I told him where I had camped for the night with my pack train. Again he smiled and said, "You can't take a pack train, but you can take it till noon, and it will save a lot of hard packing, and we will make better time."

"What will I do with the pack train and how will we carry our supplies?"

"Dismiss the pack train and send it home, and you will have to hire men to carry the supplies." During further conversation, he told me that we had already passed the place where we would have to leave the road, so we would have to retrace our steps for a ways. He said he knew some packers, and suggested that he get the packers and meet me next morning where we were camped.

He made it a family affair. He showed up next morning with two grown sons, a son-in-law, and a nephew. They were all good men, so I had no complaint. From where we left the road to Loş Horneros, where we dismissed the horses, was the roughest piece of country I ever traveled over on horse-back. The old man's timing was good. We reached the place to dismiss our horses exactly at noon. There we divided our cargo and made packs to carry on our backs. Mine weighed about twenty-five pounds. The paid packers carried fifty. Having no shoulder straps, we peeled trees and used the bark. Twenty-five pounds isn't a very big load to start off with, but after you carry it all day on shoulders that are not used to packing and over roads where in many places you have to jump from stone to stone over water and in other places you have to use both hands to pull yourself up by the bushes, before night you feel like it weighs a ton and that the shoulder straps are cutting your shoulders off.

Our "road" was the streambed of the Guama' del Norte River. We had to cross many times from one side of the water to the other. For the most part we could jump from rock to rock when we had to cross the water; but on one occasion my wet boot slipped when I landed, and with my load I went into the water for

a complete bath and narrowly escaped going over a cataract. This was a typical mountain stream with many cataracts. The surrounding country was the most picturesque I had ever seen, and the scenery changed every time we went around a bend in the river. Many of the cataracts were between vertical canyon walls from fifty to one hundred and fifty feet high. In such places we had to leave the river bed and climb along the mountain side till we passed the canyon.

I marveled at the memory of our guide. He was sixty-nine years old and hadn't been over this trail but one round-trip in thirty-four years. Whenever we were approaching one of these canyons, he would begin looking along the edge of the stream for the old trail that led around the canyon. He never once looked on the wrong side of the river; and, despite the fact that the immediate water's edge was entirely grown over, he found his trail. About two-thirty in the afternoon of the second day, we reached Drunkards Cave. The guide recommended that we camp there for the night, for we had to leave the river there and go up over the ridge of the mountain, and there was no water till we reached the head waters of the Guama' del Sur River on the other side—a pretty hard day's march.

We hadn't been there very long till it began to rain, and it rained far into the night. We were sure thankful for that cave and to the old man for suggesting that we stop there. Next morning we started up over the mountain. It was a steady climb for three or four hours, as steep as we could climb unaided all the way, and in some places so steep we had to pull ourselves up by the growth beside the trail. Many vines had grown across the trail, but the water running down it had kept it well marked and kept young trees and vines from growing up in it. The guide took the lead—machete in hand—and despite his age and his twenty-five pound pack, he cleared the trail for the rest of us.

Shortly before we reached the summit, the jungle changed to pine forest—very much resembling the long-leaf pine forests of Georgia and Florida. That was the only pine forest I ever saw in Cuba. The mountain was fairly level on top and we traveled two or three miles through the forest on the summit. Many of the trees were three to four feet in diameter—

much larger than the trees in our present southern forests. Just before we started down, the guide showed us where the shack was that he lived in during the Ten Years War, where his only daughter was born. In that high elevation the atmosphere was cool, and on that particular day the sun didn't shine all day. That made it very nice for us, for all the water we had for the seven of us was one canteen and a gallon jug full. Just as we reached a big spring at the head water of the Guam^a del Sur River, it began to rain in earnest. Robinson and I had raincoats. We put them on and gathered the luggage under them "as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing". The Cubans just had to take it.

They set to work at once, right in the rain, to build us a house—and what a house! They found a forked tree right by the water's edge, and the mountain rose so fast, they cut a long pole and put one end in the fork and the other end on the mountain side at approximately the same level, for a ridge pole. Then they cut smaller poles and stood them on the ground with the top end leaning against the ridge pole and spaced like rafters. Next they cut even smaller poles and lashed them to the rafters, parallel to the ridge pole, using vines to tie with. Then, using palm leaves and ferns as thatch, they lashed on a roof, and used some oil cloth I had bought to cover the cargo on the horse to cover the ridge. The ferns there were the biggest I have ever seen, some of them twenty to twenty-five feet tall. Next we built a fire to dry out the wet clothes. To sleep, we began at the top and tied three hammocks from the tree to the ridge pole, one below the other, and just as close together as possible. Just below the lowest one, we tied three hammocks to the tree at the same level, and spreading the other ends out like a fan, we tied them to stumps on the mountain side. The other man had no hammock; he said it was just a dead weight to carry. He curled up like a dog and slept on the bare ground at the foot of the tree. We were certainly packed in like sardines and didn't keep entirely dry, but considering our camp equipment and the heaviness of the rain, we did pretty well.

Right near our shack was a cafetal (coffee plantation) of the biggest coffee trees I ever saw, and they were loaded with berries. There was also

one red banana plant. The guide told us these were planted by runaway slaves before the Ten Years War. They couldn't go from Cuba to Canada, as they did from our Southern States, so they ran off up into the mountains; barricaded themselves in and lived on roots and herbs till they could raise fruits and vegetables. He said they had quite a colony there at one time. With so much fine coffee there, the guide seemed to be very much surprised that people from the South Coast had not been up and picked it.

By the time we got down to the South Coast I knew why. It was two days hard march down, and in one place we had to throw our packs down and let ourselves down over the cliff with vines. A man coming up would have to be a professional mountain climber or make a big detour. The guide showed us boulders lying along on the edge of the cliff, that he said had been placed there by the runaway slaves to roll down on anyone who tried to come up. The road was so perilous it would be foolhardy for one man to come alone. Whoever came would have to carry supplies for the whole round trip and to last while he picked his coffee. Coffee plantations have immense concrete floors on which to dry their coffee. There was no floor here and no place to dry the coffee, so it would have to be carried down in the berry, which would add a lot to the weight. All told, picking this coffee and carrying it home would be much more work than raising the coffee at home.

It took two hard day's march from the coffee plantation to the coast. We shouldn't have been so enthusiastic. We arrived just at dark. The mosquitoes and Jejenes were something terrible! We didn't have any mosquito bars. They were so bad we couldn't hang our hammocks in the woods. When this mountain stream was in flood, it rolled stones down all the way from the top of the mountain, and in so doing, it ground them quite round and spread them all over the shore where one usually finds sand. There was no sand here. The stones ranged in size from the size of a golf ball on up. We had no choice but to hunt a place in the open where there was a little breeze. I thought of Jacob with his stone pillow and his ladder up to Heaven. I used my hammock for a pillow but was obliged to use stones for a mattress, and didn't see any ladder up to Heaven. The mosquitoes

and jejenes were not as bad there as in the woods, but there were still enough of them. That, coupled with our stone mattresses, didn't give us much rest that night.

At the coast, we turned west on what they called the Camino Real and traveled almost half a day before we found a house. The man there had horses, so I hired him to take us both west and east on horse back and dismissed my guide and packers. I had no intention of going back over that mountain.

Before my first guide turned back, I took my blueprint and my copy of the prospectus sent to Hinshaw and Company and called the two guides into consultation. Neither man could read nor write, nor knew anything about maps, but I interpreted parts of the prospectus to them and asked them questions about the map. The map showed two big plains. The prospectus said each of these plains would raise enough cane to supply a large sugar mill, and most of the mountain sides were excellent coffee land. Several very large plantations could operate there. There was enough cedar and mahogany on the land to much more than pay for the land, but owing to the many mountains it would be necessary to build a tramway to get it out. I asked where those plains were located, and they both insisted there were no plains; and, furthermore, there wasn't enough level land on the whole tract on which to build a sugar mill, let alone to raise cane for two mills. As to coffee—yes, there was a lot of good coffee land. You don't plant coffee on vertical mountain sides, but sloping mountain sides is its natural habitat and there were many thousands of acres of that, but how would you get to it to plant it and tend it and how would you get the coffee out after it was raised? Then I turned to other points on my map. It showed Pico Turquino, Cuba's highest point, as being on this tract. They didn't know anything about tract boundaries, but it was in that vicinity and the new guide would take me to the foot of it next day. My Road Map gives it as 2005 meters high which figures 6,578 feet. Then, I asked about the rivers on the map. Every river on the map that I asked them about, they both agreed, was also on the ground; but when I tried to get the distances from Pico Turquino, the most substantial landmark, either on the map or on the

ground, I ran into trouble. There wasn't a river on the map whose distance from the mountain agreed with what the guides said it was. Some of them were several leagues out. With so many discrepancies, I began to wonder who made this map and when—so read the fine print. I don't remember the exact date, but it was made by a Spanish Engineer who had his headquarters in Santiago during the period of the Ten Years War. At that time the Cuban Army was very strongly entrenched in those mountains and no Spaniard, either military or civilian, had any business wandering around up there. In other words, someone had given that engineer the name of the mountain and the rivers, and he had placed them on his map purely by imagination; and, when he didn't have enough items to fill up his map respectably well, he just put in the two plains and gave them names to fill up his map.

The new guide started to take us to Pico Turquino on horse-back, but at the end of the first day he had to give up. The road was just too bad for the horses to get over, so we left them and proceeded on foot. All told, we put in four days inspecting the South Coast, and I knew exactly what Chambers meant when he said that in some places the country was so much on edge that a Billy goat traveling along there would have to hang on by his whiskers. At the end of the fourth day, while traveling east, we came to a little canteen and found there a little sailboat that had come to bring supplies to the canteen and was returning east that same night. I made a deal with him to take us into Santiago and dismissed my guide and horses.

Our trip had been a very interesting, but hard and expensive, failure. The Prospectus, tho' it contained some elements of truth, was evidently put out with the hope of catching a sucker. There was, doubtless, much more than enough cedar and mahogany to pay for the place if you had it in the European market. I saw the biggest cedar and mahogany trees there I ever saw. I measured one cedar that was more than fifteen feet in circumference at stump height, making it about five feet across the stump. The trouble was, there were too few of them and there was no way to get them out. The suggested tramway was impossible because the grades would have to be

too steep. Aerial cables like they use for logging in the Pacific Northwest require donkey engines to operate them, and there was no way to get them in there. The only practical, or maybe I should say, possible way to get the timber out would be by cog-way such as the one up Pikes Peak. That would be very expensive to build; and, from what I saw, I was quite sure there were not enough trees to justify the expense. As to coffee, one year with another, it is not a very paying crop in Cuba on account of the high cost of labor. When sugar is cheap, labor is cheap and the coffee industry flourishes. When sugar goes up, the cost of labor in the canefields goes up and the laborers all leave the coffee plantations and go to the canefields.

The owner of the sailboat was a Negro; and the up-rising I previously mentioned was the Negro Rebellion. He and his ten-year-old son had come here to bring supplies to the canteen. He lived at Sierraderra, a little bay about half-way between Pico Turquino and Santiago. I made a deal with him to take us into Santiago. We set sail shortly before dark. Cuba is in the region of the North East Trade Winds. These high mountains cut them off, so that all we got was swirls, eddies and unusual winds. That poor man spent most of the night rowing. The slow motion didn't bother me much that night. I was resting from my arduous toils of our trip and was asleep. But next day I thought many times of Coleridge's poem, "The Ancient Mariner", and the lines, "As silent as a painted ship upon a painted ocean". The sail hung loose most of the time. Once in a while we would see a ripple and think we were going to get a breeze; but, in most cases, it would die out before it reached us. When one did reach us, many times it was just strong enough to rattle the sail without filling it. That constant rowing got very monotonous for me. How must it have been for the poor boatman who was doing it?

He wanted to stop at his home as we went by and report to his family, lest they should worry about his long absence. As stated before, he was a Negro and the Negro Rebellion was on, but he was not a part of it. We came in front of his landing in the night, but he was afraid to land. He said that part of the Island was full of Government troops, and that

those raw recruits shot first and asked questions later, so he cast anchor well out in the Bay, until after daylight. Our entire boat trip was only fifty or sixty miles, and with anything like a decent wind we should have made it in anywhere from six to ten hours. It actually took us forty hours.

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In 1898, Lieutenant Richmond P. Hobson got a big idea. It was during the Spanish American War, and Admiral Cervera was in the inner harbor at Santiago with his entire fleet. With permission of his superior officers, Hobson ran the collier, Merrimac, into the entrance of the harbor and sank it for the purpose of bottling up Cervera and his fleet. Admiral Sampson was so sure that the mission had been effectively accomplished that he sailed away for Havana, leaving Commodore Schley in charge. The harbor entrance was much deeper than expected and the Americans had no way of checking it. The Spaniards had full opportunity, and evidently used it— for on Sunday morning, July third, when all Americans were supposed to be asleep, Cervera steamed out of the harbor with all of his fleet and headed for the open sea. Schley was not asleep; immediately gave chase and sank every boat. Three of them—the Vizcaya, the Oquendo, and another—were sunk in fairly shallow water only a few miles from the harbor entrance and could still be seen above water. We went by them for a closer look and to take some pictures.

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Santiago was fully mobilized for war, and to my very great surprise, fully half the soldiers were Negroes. Since it was a Negro Rebellion and all the Rebels were Negroes, I expected to see the Government troops all white. Instead it was largely a case of Negroes fighting Negroes. As we rode through the country on the train, we saw where many country houses and some canefields had been burned, and every little town was busily building palm-leaf shacks to care for the refugees. There were no Negroes whatsoever living near us, so when we got home we found, to my very great relief, that there had been no disturbance there. I did not leave home till I was convinced there would be no trouble there and was not at all alarmed till I saw the devastation in Oriente Province. Then I began to feel uneasy.

A few days after we reached home the Havana Post came out with big headlines: "The two leaders of the Revolution had surrendered and the revolt was over." Then next day brought another headline: "The Rebel leaders had tried to escape and were dead." In fine print, the article stated that after the men surrendered they were being taken to Santiago, when beside the road at the foot of a hill there was a woods. The men suddenly spurred their horses to a gallop and when they reached the woods they jumped off and made a break for cover, but the accurate fire of the Cuban soldiers laid them both low. Next day the same Havana paper came out with a very sarcastic editorial. Among other things, the editor said that apparently when Cuban Rebels try to escape they run backwards to increase their speed, and added that one of these men was shot in the forehead; the other in the heart.

After I got home I wrote up my report and sent it and my expense account in the same letter. It was a big mistake. Both Hinshaw and the President ignored it completely. I wrote more letters; and, getting no reply, I wrote for a copy of the Indianapolis Star and from its Professional column I selected a law firm. I wrote them the circumstances and they agreed to take the case on a contingent basis. I paid an English-speaking lawyer to take my deposition; and, put up money for court costs; and, sent both Hinshaw and Beers letters; and, the lawyers went to bat. They sued both Hinshaw and the President. The court ruled that Hinshaw's letter was not sufficient authority for running up so big an expense account and that Beers was only an agent, and a verbal order from the President to him was not authority to order a survey. Just another case of misplaced confidence and sending good money after bad. I never learned the details; but, soon after that, Hinshaw, as State Bank Inspector, was somehow involved in the failure of some Indiana banks and was sentenced to a term in the penitentiary. Apparently he saved enough money out of the bank failures to hire able lawyers. They appealed the case and he came off completely free.

I had done all the surveying near home that I found to do, so had to go farther afield to look for work. The Cuba Railroad Company had cleared several thousand acres of land along their line between Mart; and Guamo and were planting it to cane and building

the Jobabo Sugar Mill. I went down there to look for work. I didn't find any work at the mill, but it was cane planting time and they were giving cane planting contracts, one field at a time, to anyone who could round up a bunch of men to do the work. As fast as one field was planted, they gave him another. I contracted to plant a field; went home and rounded up a bunch of my neighbors; and, went to planting cane. It was hard work! Not my kind; and not very profitable. However, I was earning a little and furnishing work to some of my neighbors who otherwise would not have any and enabling them to buy groceries at my store.

I had planted some three or four fields when I got a letter from William G. Ames, an engineer I had heard of many times but never known. Just when he finished College, the first Intervention was making a survey of the City of Havana, using a lot of engineers. He took a job and came to Cuba. Later when Sir William Van Horne started to build his railroad, Ames was Chief of the first locating party in the fields. After the road was located and built, he was its Chief Engineer for a time. Then he and Miller A. Smith, who was Chief Engineer during location and construction, formed a partnership and opened an office in Havana as Consulting Engineers and Contractors. In his letter, Ames said that his Company had a contract with the Cuban Central Railroad Company to survey a railroad from Caibarien to Moron. He said he had a full standard crew of Engineers; but many times there was extra work that needed doing, and to do it, he had to pull one of the other engineers off his job and that threw the whole organization off balance. He needed another engineer to look after these extra jobs and Dick Birbeck had recommended me. Yes, the same Dick Birbeck whose liquor I had thrown out a year or two before. He had taken a liquor cure; had his old job back and was staying sober. Ames wrote that he would give me \$100 a month and expenses. I would have no classified position, but would merely be an engineer on the job, ready to fill in wherever needed. I wasn't earning a hundred a month where I was, and besides I liked engineering much better than planting cane. I wrote him I would join him just as soon as I could finish planting the field of cane I was working on.

Ames was his own Chief of Party. J. M. Manzanilla,

a Cuban, but a graduate of Rensselaer Engineering School in New York, was office engineer, doing the computing and drafting. A. E. Larcada, another Cuban engineer, was transitman. I never learned Larcada's background, but he was a competent engineer and spoke English without an accent. Billy Ralston, a Canadian and older brother of Leslie Ralston, who had been Tonneson's clerk and one of my tormentors, was running the level. He was a far more congenial man than his brother, Leslie. His background was banking in Canada. His parents bought land in the American Colony of Ceballos and moved down. He came down to visit them when we were building the railroad, and liked Cuba so much he went down on the railroad and took a job on the front end of a surveyor's chain, and had now worked up to levelman. Our work was pretty much routine. We were running a preliminary survey through flat jungle country—in other words, cutting a hole through the forest; reading the angles where we made any and taking levels on the whole line. My job, for the most part, was to run traverses both up and down all the streams we crossed and make notes of the good crossings. Ames was on the job most of the time; but, when he left, he left me in charge. When he came back from a trip to Havana, he said they had just signed a contract to continue the survey on to Nuevitas and asked how I would like to form another outfit, with myself as Chief of Party, and go down on the Nuevitas end and work back this way. I liked the idea fine, but I had no idea where I could find any more engineers, and Ames hadn't either. He had pretty well exhausted the field before he found me. It seemed that when engineers ran out of work in Cuba they just didn't hang around, but hunted greener pastures. After considerable thought and discussion we decided that instead of trying to put on a full crew of engineers, which we probably could not find, I would take the job by the kilometer; hire what engineers I could find, not what I needed; and, do the rest myself. It would take longer, but at least I would know the work was well done; and the longer it took, the longer I would have a job.

After we had our plans all made, Ames left for Havana to assemble tents and surveying instruments and I left for home to make my arrangements for the new venture. Ames told me he would write me, just as

soon as he got to Havana, when to meet him and Smith and the three of us would go over the line for a reconnaissance survey together.