

J. M. Lincoln



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No. LXXXVI.—JULY, 1857.—VOL. XV.



THE CARIB SETTLEMENTS.

HAVING sent Manuel to Tulian with a note to the Carib chief to order a boat for us, and receiving a satisfactory reply, we commenced packing our luggage, which consisted of two large mosquito nets. Having finished this laborious task we retired to our hammocks to get a good sleep, that we might be fresh for the start in the morning, as we were to be off by daylight to get the favorable land-breeze.

We were aroused in ample time by the Carib boys, and our party being joined by the Doctor, whose portly, jolly body is well known through the Southern and Western States, we left our quarters for the beach, where, in absence of docks, we were "backed" to our boat. I can't

say that the addition of the "Doc." to our party was in the remotest degree desirable, as he weighed nearly three hundred pounds, and our "dory," or "dug-out," was not so large as many I have seen used to carry much smaller loads; besides, we now numbered, all told, passengers and crew, seven mortals. Seven! mysterious number! Shades of the departed astrologers and Grand Street wizards! was it safe to start in face of these auspices?

I think it was unlucky, and it proved so on the start; for in dumping the "Doc." into the boat, which operation required the united strength of two Caribs, he dipped the boat and half filled her with water! They were obliged to reland him and bail her out.

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Doc. quietly remarked that it was "all right; he had got a *duck*, and out of season, too."

However, after little delay we started in high spirits, but when we reached the "Point" the wind completely failed us. Down came the sail, and out went the paddles, handled by four stout Caribs, who were built, as H—— remarked, on the "Yankee Doodle plan—lean but *very* muscular," and away went the canoe skimming over the broad waves of the Caribbean Sea.

The manner of using the paddle is not unlike the North American Indian mode. It is held perfectly perpendicular in the water, carried along the side of the canoe very swiftly, and at the conclusion of the stroke it is turned inward or outward as they may desire the canoe to head. In this way they propel canoes of large size with a rapidity that would astonish some of our Whitehall boatmen.

Nor does the distance to make cause them to lessen their activity; frequently they paddle many miles in a rough sea perfectly content. On one occasion, an urgent one, it is true, three of them paddled a canoe three days and three nights, their only food the while being brandy and water.

We had not proceeded far on our journey when a sea-breeze sprang up. This time H—— did not "engineer the ropes" as on a former occasion on Lake Nicaragua, but left that duty to the Caribs, than whom, in small boats, there are no better sailors to be found. He took out his "old banjo" from a mere desire to *finger some strings*, and gave us some "real old sea songs," regular sea dogs, daring and braving the sea in song, and lustily inviting all his friends to follow in the footsteps of him, their illustrious predecessor. I think old Neptune must have heard him, and not liking his style or his sentiments concluded to give us a poke of his "iron," for soon after a squall came upon us that "blew great guns," to say nothing of the horse-pistols and revolvers.

Away we went taking a salt shower-bath every two minutes—once a week would have been more to our fancy. And the clouds began to lower, the thunder to rattle, the sea to roll,

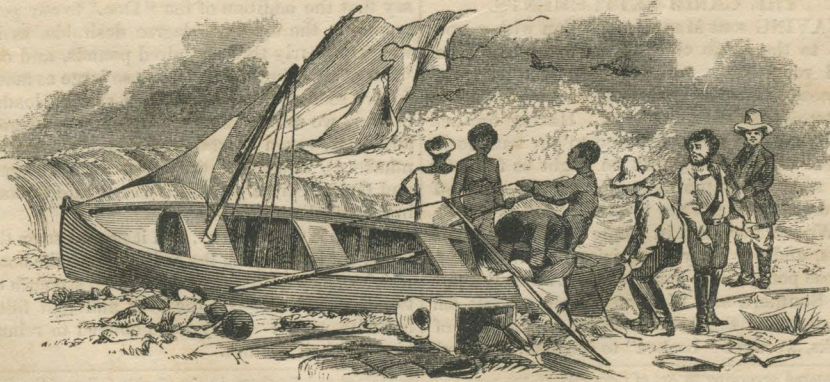
and the Caribs to swear (that is, I presume they did, their language being *hard* enough to lead one to imagine 'twas composed entirely of blasphemous ejaculations), but it wouldn't do; the norther came upon us harder and harder every moment, and we could hear the surf beating fearfully upon the rocky shore nearly two miles astern.

"Keep her head to the sea!" shouted the old chief; and head to the sea it was—the sea heading us in a manner not at all congenial to our feelings. If we had been in a ship and made the "stern way" we were making in our old hollow log, we should have gone on a visit to "Davy Jones, Esquire," immediately.

But the dug-out was like a Roman sword, cutting both ways equally well. Away we went, she dipping the water in, and we dipping it out, when suddenly we found ourselves close upon a sand bar or "Cay," about one mile and a half from shore. Out went our paddle again to avoid it. "Bring her around under the lee of the Cay," said the old "King of the Cannibal Islands," as H—— called the Carib chief. I gave one glance at the pure white sand which I thought would have looked much better on some country ball-room floor, and I within the same distance of it. Still we were dancing on toward it with the back-step, much afraid that the wind would give us a sort of waltz movement and compel us to change partners before we thought proper. But it turned into a regular stag dance, every man for himself, for in turning around she struck a rock and over she went!

The next step in our figure was a movement for the "Cay," which being near was soon accomplished—or, in other words, easily swum. H—— declared that I *walked* ashore, and as there were two or three shells in the top of one of my boots, I couldn't well deny it.

Our canoe soon followed us, the smaller articles close upon it, with a box of cigars bringing up the rear. A stray bottle of old brandy was seen at this moment hesitating on a wave, evidently not wishing to come ashore, not having been invited. We pitied the poor fellow's modesty, and really wishing him with us in our pres-



ON THE CAY.



THE RAINBOW AND WATER-SPOUT.

ent plight, one of us went to him, took him by the neck, and gave him an ardent welcome. He came without hesitation, and we enjoyed his company amazingly.

One of the Caribs soon fished up our guns, the old banjo taking care of himself. In fact, when we set him against a tree in the wind, he commenced singing as if nothing had occurred out of his usual line. But then he had no babies to feed; why shouldn't he be jolly when he found himself safe on *terra firma*? But he was too merry for the rest of the party, and the rascal, instead of confining his merriment to old familiar tunes that might have touched a chord in our memories and enlivened us too, launched off into a lot of wild, extempore music, quite suggestive of a storm. The Caribs were greatly alarmed at this, and we had some difficulty in explaining to them that it was altogether on the Æolian principle, and that it could not *talk*, as they supposed.

The sun soon came out to look at us, the storm died away, and we made clothes-horses of ourselves to dry our garments on.

We were stocked with what somebody calls "hunger-sauce," but unfortunately had nothing to season therewith. All our biscuit was wet, sugar and coffee ditto. The Caribs took their spears and soon brought us a fine barracuda, but not until H—— and myself had damaged our boots while chasing a flat-fish, which we were green enough to think we could catch. We did get a couple of craw-fish, but lost the sole of one of our boots against a projecting rock hidden below the surface of the water.

These and the fish we soon roasted in some plantain-leaves on the beach. For the benefit of future castaways, I will describe the method. First dig a hole; then build a fire in it. The Caribs did this in a novel way to me. One of them collected a quantity of dry brush, and lighting his *cigarro*, stood up in the wind, and placing a spark in the brush commenced swinging it in the breeze. Soon it was in a blaze, and in a few seconds more our "pit" was a mass of burning embers. Wood was heaped upon it until it was filled with coals. The fish were cleaned and wrapped in plantain-leaves, and the whole covered with the live coals. In a few moments they were taken out, beautifully roasted.

Those who boast of the *cuisine Française* would do well to taste of the Carib *asado*.

Before we had finished our meal the Caribs told us a storm was approaching, and, as we knew them to be good barometers, their advice was heeded. We got four stout sticks, and planted them firmly in the sand, rigging the sail over them after the style of a tent, fastening the sheet-ropes to heavy bushes in the direction of the storm, to prevent the tent's making away, as this mishap would cause us to scud under bare poles for a time, which pleasant little amusement we very naturally objected to.

I knew well what it was, having been wrecked on the Yucatan coast only six weeks previous to our present adventure. There I was knocked about among the reefs for twelve days, sleeping *à la chicken*—eleven of us in a small open boat! While there, we dined sumptuously on cocoa-

nut-water—when we could get the nuts; when we couldn't, we “chewed the cud of sweet and bitter fancy,” and thought of the good dinners we had had at home at Delmonico's, Florence's, and other benefactors of hungry men with money in their pockets. We thought of numerous “fries, with celery,” “roasts, with ‘Mumm's best,’” and wished that there might be flourishing restaurants established all along the coast.

But I am forgetting our present plight for my past misfortune. The storm came with a regular tropical rain, but our sail acted nobly in protecting us from its fury. After a short time the rain abated, and the sun again appeared in all his glory. We were fully requited for our accident by the appearance of a most wonderful atmospheric phenomena. Away, in the north, rose an enormous water-spout, over which were two magnificent rainbows! The water-spout rose to the clouds, the rainbows forming a perfect half-circle over it.

The inner rainbow was beautifully colored; while the outer, or reflected bow, was less brilliant, though almost as gorgeous. I think this a sight seldom seen even by old sea-captains, who, by-the-way, have *always* witnessed these wonderful sights at sea, while we were gazing at it with wonder and delight from our Robinson Crusoe-like position.

In an hour more we were in the town of Tulian, Honduras, seven miles east of Omoa, which, with the settlement of Seineguita, was the object of our visit. We had expected to find nothing but dark-colored Caribs at this place, and were most joyfully surprised to see on the

beach, waiting to receive us, a fine-looking Spanish girl.

We shouted “*Adios, mi abna*” to her, long before she could, by any possible construction of the laws of sound, understand our affectionate addresses. I had forgotten that we were married men; but no matter—we were away from home, on a sketching expedition, and *this* was very much in our line. There was one, at least, we thought, who could appreciate our sentimental songs (all Spanish songs are sentimental), and knew something of the agreeable little courtesies of civilized life that one understands so fully when he sees it contrasted with nature, crude and rough. When we landed we found her pretty and intelligent—two great desiderata for a “note-book sketch”—so we immediately presented ourselves, introducing each other.

I thought (being the best-looking) that I had made an impression; but when she turned her lovely black eyes upon my companions with such winning smiles, it was all over with me—my heart went back to its proper place immediately. Still, I liked “Juanita.”

The Carib language is harsh, it must be—for one of them, noticing the glances I threw toward the individual who had robbed me of my peace (I believe that is the usual mode of expressing it), he remarked, “She was a good *wurrie* for such a *woogerie* as myself!” That sent Tom Moore and his poetry out of my head directly, and I began to think I had got into some saw-filing establishment. We formed into line, the boys taking our luggage, and marched



HOUSE OF THE KING OF THE CANNIBALS.



THE TANGO.

to the house of the "King of the Cannibal Islands." They soon swung our hammocks, in which we seated ourselves, while they busied themselves preparing coffee.

It was now near night, and we were settling ourselves for a sleep after the fatigues of the day, when the "King" made his appearance and said the boys were getting up a "tango," in honor of our arrival, if we were not too tired to attend.

We belied our feelings most woefully by stating, as many an exhausted, inebriated individual has remarked before us, that "we never felt better." So the "tango" was gotten up, and after finishing our supper, astonishing the natives at the same time by the rapid disappearance, one by one, of the many chickens and fish supplied for our meal, we repaired to the hut in which the dance was to take place.

Our arrival was the signal for the commencement of the festivities. Such another exhibition of the Terpsichorean art I never had the pleasure of witnessing. Their instruments consisted of a couple of drums made of hollow logs with hide stretched over one end, and a Boston tin cracker-box, on which instruments a sort of running accompaniment was beaten with their hands. Wild songs were chanted during the progress of the dance, one of which, more moderate than the rest, and in English, was shouted for our benefit. It was repeated so often that it became traced on my memory. It ran in this way:

Fi, yi, yi! money no dare,
Soger take him, money so gone!

After repeating this as often as they thought

courtesy demanded—and it was a great length of time—they broke into another wild Carib song, that made me instinctively feel for my scalp. Having assured myself 'twas all right, and that my friends were equally fortunate, I really enjoyed the oddity of the affair.

I am told their dancing is a perfect counterpart of similar proceedings on the western coast of Africa, from whence they originally came. They placed the music in the centre of the room, and arranged themselves around it, and commenced a series of movements of the body, throwing in frequent twists and jerks by way of embellishment.

Between the dances we gave them some regular "Clem Johnson" negro songs, and the torrents of applause that followed would have been perfectly satisfactory to the most renowned tenor, and would have furnished lots of items for the penny-a-liners. H— gave them the Juba dance, which, being more in their line, they appreciated to its fullest extent, and it convinced them that the Yankees could do every thing. They were very temperate regarding liquor—but few of them drinking it, and many of them not even coffee.

We retired that night perfectly satisfied with our day's adventures. One peculiar feature of this place I must not forget to mention. The mosquitoes, although they are very numerous and blood-thirsty during the day, never prowled around the houses at night! Whether they are off on a tango spree of their own, or asleep, I can't say; but I know they did not molest us.

that night, though we slept without the nets, which we had taken so much trouble to preserve. For this favorable indulgence on their part, I commend them to the consideration and admiration of the mosquito-bitten community of the civilized world.

In the morning we rose and took coffee at the door, receiving the invigorating sea-breeze filtered through the branches of the cocoa-nut, which were waving before the door, musical with birds. We sat upon the old "stocks," and drank in nature's beauty to repletion.

At breakfast we had my favorite dish, fried plantains and fresh cassava bread, of which I will speak shortly. After this H— drew a portrait of the King, which he admired very much, and seemed to have gained from it a more full conception of his own personal charms.

After we had sufficiently astonished them with a display of talent perfectly new to them, we started up the Tullian River for sketches, having heard it was rather fine. We found the stream to be of surpassing beauty. Every hundred feet was a picture in itself. It was beautiful beyond description—perfectly sublime! Enormous wild fig-trees, the cocoa-nut and plantain lined its banks, with the brilliant, lively-colored orange or sweet lemon creeping in among the openings.

Occasionally we saw a plantain field stretching to the water's edge, the broad flat leaves of the trees dipping themselves gracefully in the



WILD FIG-TREE.

limpid stream. Every body knows they are picturesquely beautiful, and on this occasion they were positively splendid.

After paddling a short distance we dragged the canoe off shore, the water being too shallow to allow us to proceed further with it; so we continued our journey on foot, detailing a couple of Caribs to "back" us across the stream when our fancy should lead us on the "other side of Jordan;" and I can assure you they had plenty of exercise.

How they growled when the Doctor mounted! We positively were sore with laughter.

One little spot took our fancy wonderfully. A gigantic wild fig-tree had located himself on a point of land around which the scenery was perfectly enchanting. From one branch of the tree a large family of "yellow tails" had built their hanging nests. This bird is about the size of a hawk, with a "crooked tail" like the swallow. Its body is black, blending into brown, the brown into an Indian red, and the red into a brilliant yellow on the tail, not unlike the dazzling gold of the Baltimore oriole at home. Not being well posted in ornithology, I can't give its scientific name; but I have no doubt many of your readers know the bird as well by reputation as I do from observation.

While H— was making his sketch, the Doctor and I shot a deer and several Indian rabbits, which are much larger than our common rabbits at home. Pursuing this little Euphrates through the Garden of Eden, we reached the *Camino Real* to Comayagua, when another scene burst upon us. Fortunately, nothing was injured by the explosion except some paper, pencils, and the least bit of color imaginable.

At the ranch on the hill we took a sort of half-breakfast, half-dinner meal, for which, for our party of three, we paid thirty-seven and a half cents. We tried to make an arrangement with them to board us in town at the same ratio, but it wouldn't do. They were not in the *fonda* business, though they did sometimes entertain hungry wretches like ourselves. We



SCENE ON THE TULLIAN.

larger dory, and embarked for the town of Seineguita and Puerto Cabello lagoon, but went no farther than the town, as a shower came upon us.

Seineguita is not so pretty a place as Tulian, but is much larger, and has more of the appearance of a regular town. There were a great number of women to be seen, and but few men. The great disparity in numbers struck me, but it was explained by the men being off on the mahogany works, where they remain by contract for from three to twelve months, as they may agree. During this time they never see their wives, and when they do return they have a "big drunk" to commemorate the event.

The cassava bread, of which I spoke before, is made from the root of the cassava bush, or *yuca*, as it is called by the Caribs. It grows wild, and in great profusion, in the vicinity of Puerto Cabello. The root is hard, unpalatable, and withal extremely poisonous, if eaten in its crude state.

Their mode of preparing it is curious. The root is boiled in water until the outer dark rough coating becomes soft and removable—not unlike the skin of a boiled beet. The root, thus relieved of its clothing, is of a pure white color, and while warm is "rasped" into a pulp, on large wooden graters, not unlike the old-fashioned washboard of my childhood days. If there are any of your readers who are ignorant of the form of this household utensil, I refer them to their grandmothers for an explanation

of this article—important, at least, in the manufacture of the Carib "staff of life."

The pulp falls into a large wooden receiving tray, from whence it is taken by the women, and punched and pummeled in a manner that reminded me of the times when I used to look through the windows of the bakers' shops at home, and see the men making bread and cakes, and resolved when I grew up to be nothing but a baker, that I might daily gorge myself with the sweet things that were so temptingly exposed in the nicely-arranged windows. After it is pounded until it becomes soft, it is kneaded into dough, and formed into cakes, about two and a half feet in diameter, and one-sixteenth of an inch thick, and baked upon large earthen plates. When baked, it is of a soft, crispy nature, and of a cream color.

Another portion of the cassava pulp is placed on the top of an apparatus called a *culebra*, or snake, which, by-the-way, it resembles. It is closely-plaited split cane, forming a hollow body, twelve feet long, by ten inches in diameter. Attached to the lower end is a stout stick, upon which sit some half dozen of the prettiest girls, of course.

They rise, and throwing their bodies upon the pole, elongate the *culebra* by their weight, which compresses the contents, from which flows the cassava juice, which is boiled, and, with the addition of spices and chillis, forms a delicious sauce for the bread, and is used in place of butter. To me it is extremely palatable; but H—— will have nothing to do with it, vowing



CASSAVA BREAD-MAKING.



PUERTO CABELLO LAGOON.

that it is simply baked saw-dust. But he is no judge.

Having left the hut, we started for the second time, and with a good breeze, direct for the mouth of Puerto Cabello lagoon. We were now in the famous bay which bears the name above-mentioned; and certainly a finer harbor it would be difficult to find. Perfectly sheltered from the violence of all the storms that blew over it, with any quantity of water, with fine holding ground for anchorage, it appeared to be to me the very desideratum for the necessities of a large town.

The harbor is easily made, the entrance being several miles broad, and the Chimileon mountain rising, in one unbroken peak, to a great height, serves as a landmark for vessels many miles at sea. Mr. Squier, in his "Notes on Central America," gives a perfect description of it, with an accompanying map. Blunt, in his "Coast Pilot," pronounces it to be one of the best harbors on the coast.

It is a beautiful sheet of water, unbroken by a single rock or other obstruction to the free and secure navigation of it in any part.

During our progress we shot many wild fowls, and passed some beautiful plantations, at one of which we compelled our boatmen to land us. Here we selected our future residence on a gentle slope, a few feet from the water's edge, and when we shall have finished our Central American palace—which I think should be in the form of a paint-brush or palette, emblematic of our calling—we will send you on a sketch of it.

On board again we soon entered the lagoon. If it were only in the North, *adios* to Saratoga, Newport, etc. Why, in my mind, I saw in the blue distance of a near future a dozen hotels on its delightful shores, with "regular boarders" the year round, and in their record-books names hailing from Maine to Texas. The Doctor, who is from the latter place, offers, as an inducement to some enterprising Yankee, to take *his* room so soon as the shingles are on. A Mr. Fisher has a plantation here, and around him is clustered a family of bouncing little ones to whom disease is unknown.

This is the proposed northern terminus of the "Interoceanic Railroad," and a more desirable location could not have been selected. By building docks two hundred feet long, the largest ocean steamers could discharge their living freights with all the security of New York accommodations.

The people every where along the coast are anxious for its commencement, rightly thinking that it would turn their comparatively worthless plantations into "independent patches of wealth," as the Doctor calls them.

Start the Railroad, gentlemen! Open the richest country on the globe to the enterprise of the world! Let the "iron horse" but once snort through these majestic forests, and its woods will be turned into shining silver, its grasses into glistening gold, its small plantations into thriving Yankee farms; the plow and sickle will supersede the *machete* and the rude digging iron; the weeds, rank and strong, will

turn into waving corn and wheat; and the little marshy spots will be soon covered with nutritious rice, all yielding plenty and smiling contentment on the hardy adventurer.

In concluding this sketch we would observe that this race of Caribs originated on the Cayman Islands, and are known as the "Red Caribs."

It is not many years since their depredations in the piratical way have been suppressed, and many an old sea-captain may tell of the care he used to avoid its inhospitable shores. In the first instance, they were driven from St. Domingo and Jamaica for their participation in numerous outbreaks, and they went carrying with them an unquenchable hatred against the whites. In the settlements on this coast and in Guatamala they are very hospitable, and most of them speak the Creole English. Their language contains many French words, not recognizable, perhaps, with its guttural intonation, to the polished Parisian—with the exception of the numerals, the pronunciation of which is tolerably correct. They are, in fine, an industrious, hard-working community; and so free are they from the cares of this life, and so smoothly does time fly with them, that but few of them have any idea of the number of summers that have passed over their heads in their happy, quiet homes!

We left them with regret, but with a promise to return soon and settle among them.

NORTH CAROLINA ILLUSTRATED.

BY PORTE CRAYON.

III.—GUILFORD.

"List his discourse of war, and you shall hear
A fearful battle rendered you in music."

SHAKSPEARE.

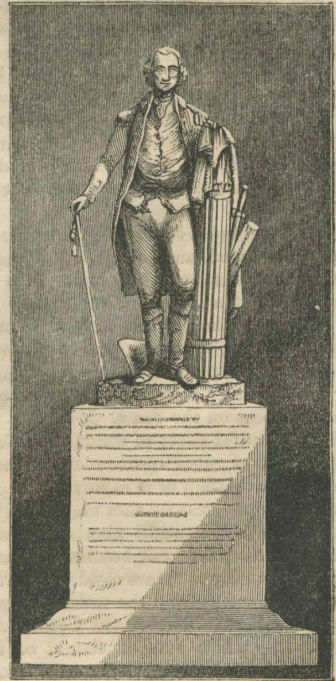
"THE capitol of North Carolina bears the appropriate and beautiful name of Raleigh, in honor of the accomplished and chivalrous 'Sir Walter, the man of wit and the sword,' under whose auspices the first colonies were planted on our shores. The town is comparatively of recent date, its site having been established by a convention met at Hillsborough in 1788. In 1810, it contained only six hundred and seventy inhabitants, but its permanent population at present is estimated at between two and three thousand. On a commanding but gently sloping eminence, the young city sits embowered, in a grove of stately oaks, like a rustic beauty, whose ornaments are awkwardly worn and unskillfully put on. Incongruous, incomplete, but nathless fair and pleasing. Thus appear her broad tree planted, unpaved avenues. The superb and costly capitol with its forms of Grecian elegance, rising amidst a grove of forest oaks, in an inclosure grown up with weeds and traversed by narrow ungraveled paths, and its stately entrances encumbered with huge wood piles.

"Around this central point the town is built upon several streets densely shaded with double rows of trees. The private residences for the most part resemble country houses, each stand-

ing isolated in the midst of its ornamented grounds, profuse in shade-trees, shrubbery, and flowers, reminding one more of a thickly settled neighborhood than a town. The avenue leading from the capitol to the Governor's house is more compactly built, and is the theatre of all the commercial life the place affords.

"On an eminence near the town, imposing from its extent and position, stands the State Asylum for the Insane. A building worthy the taste and public spirit of any State.

"By the burning of the old capitol in 1831 Raleigh lost the statue of Washington by Canova, a gem of art of which the Carolinians were justly proud. The hero was represented in a sitting posture, costumed as a Roman general, holding tablets in one hand and a style in the other, as if about to write; we believe the intention of the sculptor was, to represent him as Washington the statesman and lawgiver, while his recent military character was indicated by the sheathed sword beside him. The conception was beautiful, the work skillfully and elegantly wrought, but there was nothing in it especially to touch the American heart or understanding. The soft Italian, whose genius was inspired by dreams of the Greek ideal commingling with shapes of modern elegance, who pined even in brilliant Paris for the balmy air and sunshine of his native land, beneath whose magic chisel the frigid marble warmed and melted into forms of voluptuous beauty, had neither the soul to conceive nor the hand to carve the iron man of '76."



HOUDON'S WASHINGTON.