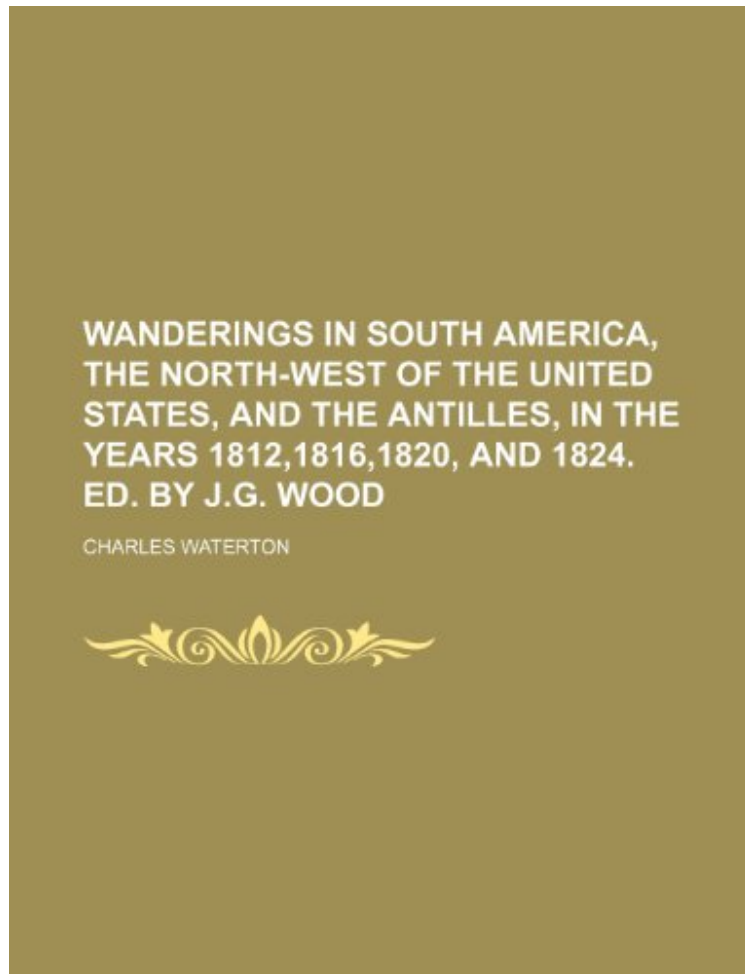


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Wanderings in South America, the north-west of the United States, and the Antilles, in the years 1812,1816,1820, and 1824. ed. by J.G. Wood

Charles Waterton

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This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can download a free scanned copy of the

original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1882 Excerpt: ... any that were deformed from their birth. Their women never perish in childbed, owing, no doubt, to their never wearing stays. They have no public religious ceremony. They acknowledge two superior beings,--a good one, and a bad one. They pray to the latter not to hurt them, and they are of opinion that the former is too good to do them an injury. I suspect, if the truth were known, the individuals of the village never offer up a single prayer or ejaculation. They have a kind of a priest called a Pee-ay-man, who is an enchanter. He finds out things lost. He mutters prayers to the evil spirit over them and their children when they are sick. If a fever be in the village, the Pee ayman goes about all night long, howling, and making dreadful noises, and begs the bad spirit to depart. But he has very seldom to perform this part of his duty, as fevers seldom visit the Indian hamlets. However, when a fever does come, and his incantations are of no avail, which I imagine is most commonly the case, they abandon the place for ever, and make a new settlement elsewhere. They consider the owl and the goat-sucker as familiars of the evil spirit, and never destroy them. I could find no monuments or marks of antiquity amongst these Indians; so that after penetrating to the Rio Branco, from the shores of the Western Ocean, had any body questioned me on this subject, I should have answered, I have seen nothing amongst these Indians which tells me that they have existed here for a century; though, for aught I know to the contrary, they may have been here before the Redemption, but their total want of civilisation has assimilated them to the forests in which they wander. Thus, an aged tree falls and moulders into dust and you cannot tell what was its appearance, its beauties, ...