

numerous sand-bars. It became necessary, as the tide rose, to make the river. The Sea-Gull having got off, I put the scientific gentlemen on board of her, and ordered Lieutenant-Commandant Ringgold to proceed in, keeping in what the chart pointed out as the channel-way and deepest water. He finally succeeded in getting into the river, after thumping heavily over a sand-bar, with some fears on the part of the passengers, but without injury to the vessel, and anchored, after dark, about half a mile up the river.

During this time an amusing occurrence took place in the roadstead. I had directed Lieutenant-Commandant Ringgold, in case of accident or requiring aid, to make signal, that I might order boats at once to his assistance. When the night closed in, the signal was seen; when the requisite signal was made from the Flying-Fish to the different vessels to send boats to assist. The commanding officer's mind being somewhat impressed with an idea of the hostility of those on shore, he concluded the boats were required to repel an attack, and had them fully armed; in this state they were met in a short time exerting themselves to their fullest strength at the oars, to be in time to take part in the expected fray, and appeared greatly disappointed when it proved a false alarm, and that none was to take place.

Shortly after the schooner anchored, a voice was heard from the shore, ordering a boat to be sent immediately, when a party landed, but no one was found to receive them. Seeing a light at a distance, they proceeded towards it: it proved to be the pilot's house, a long low barn-like building; but no inhabitants were visible, and none made their appearance until our party had taken a survey of the premises. The furniture was of a rude and scanty description; a table, bench, two or three bunks in one corner, and in another a number of arms, consisting of cutlasses, carbines, and pikes, in good order; in the others, various accoutrements. The two pilots, one an Englishman and the other a Frenchman, with a negro, then made their appearance, and unravelled the mystery, by informing them that the vessels had been mistaken for the French squadron, and much alarm had been created by our visit; they also said that the guard of about thirty Guachos were in ambush near where they landed, with the intention of cutting our party off; but hearing them speaking English, they found to their satisfaction that they were not French. They also stated that all the inhabitants living near the mouth of the river had fled to the town, and that most of the women and children in the town were hurrying off to the interior. They were likewise employed driving off the cattle, and preparing to fire the country, the usual mode of warfare, and were rejoiced to identify us as Americans.