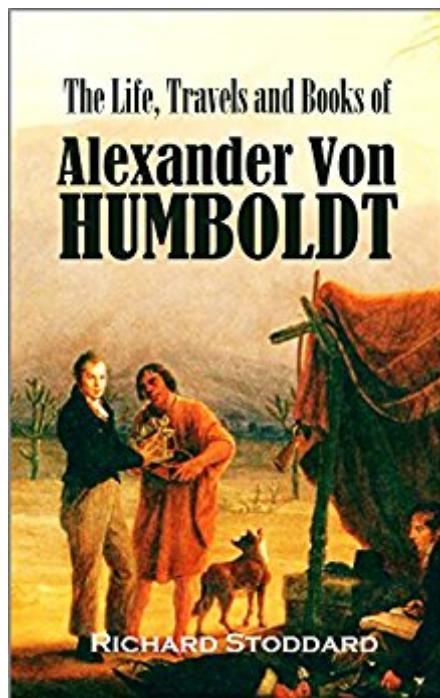


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# The Life, Travels And Books Of Alexander Von Humboldt (1859)



## Synopsis

Alexander von Humboldt (1769 – 1859) was a Prussian geographer, naturalist, explorer, and influential proponent of Romantic philosophy and science. Humboldt's quantitative work on botanical geography laid the foundation for the field of biogeography. Between 1799 and 1804, Humboldt travelled extensively in Latin America, exploring and describing it for the first time from a modern scientific point of view. His description of the journey was written up and published in an enormous set of volumes over 21 years. Richard Henry Stoddard, was the author of the 1859 book "The Life, Travels and Books of Alexander Von Humboldt". A BIOGRAPHY of Alexander Von Humboldt, which shall contain a full and conscientious account of his life and labors, written in a style sufficiently clear and untechnical to meet the popular tastes, has long been a necessity in our literature. Those biographies which are already in existence do not possess this character: they are rather chronicles of his achievements in the various departments of natural science, than stories of a life almost unexampled for its wealth of experience, its labors, and successes. The lesson of Humboldt's life is not without its special significance at the present day, when the thirst for wealth, and place, and power, seems hotter and fiercer than ever. With the advantages of his birth and inherited position, many paths of advancement were open to him, but he disdained them all, sacrificing everything to his love of knowledge, until finally, in his old age, honors such as no statesman ever won, were laid as voluntary offerings at his feet. The indifference which he regarded them showed how little such rewards had entered into his plan of life. Yet, though the acknowledged equal of kings, he was never seduced by the splendors of courts to forget his character as a man, whose sympathies were with the people rather than their rulers. Humboldt may be termed the father of Physical Geography, and the suggester, if not the discoverer, of that system of the distribution of plants and animals which opens to our view another field of that Divine Order, manifested in the visible world. He strove to grasp those secrets, which, perhaps, no single mind will ever be able to comprehend – the aggregate of the laws which underlie the mysteries of Creation, Growth, and Decay; and though he fell short of the sublime aim, he was at least able to say, like Kepler, when he discovered the mathematical harmonies of the solar system; "Oh, Almighty God, I think Thy thoughts after Thee!" In describing difficulties Humboldt faced in his travels in the Andes, Stoddard writes: "They proceeded for another hour, and found the rocky path less steep; the mist, however, was thicker than ever. They now began to suffer severely from the extreme rarefaction of the air. They breathed with difficulty, and what was still more disagreeable, felt like vomiting. Their heads swam, their lips and gums bled profusely, and their eyelids and eyeballs were charged with blood. From time to time great birds, probably condors, came swooping down the terrible pass . . .

."In describing a run-in with a croc, Stoddard writes:"A large dog, which had accompanied him in his journey from Caracas to the Rio Negro, was one day pursued in swimming by an enormous crocodile. The latter had nearly reached its prey, when the dog escaped by turning round suddenly and swimming against the current. The crocodile performed the same movement, but much more slowly than the dog . . . ."ContentsBOOK I 1769-1799.CHAPTER I Childhood And Youth CHAPTER II.Studies And Dreams BOOK II. 1799-1804.CHAPTER I.The Sea CHAPTER II.About Cumana, CHAPTER III.Towards The Orinoco CHAPTER IV.UP The Orinoco CHAPTER V.To Cuba And Back CHAPTER VI.Colombia And Peru CHAPTER VII.Mexico BOOK III 1804-1829.CHAPTER IBooks CHAPTER IICentral Asia BOOK IV. 1829-1859.CHAPTER IHumboldt At Home

## **Book Information**

File Size: 1301 KB

Print Length: 352 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publication Date: September 10, 2016

Sold by:Ã ª Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B01LX5F2MY

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #398,269 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #12 inÃ ª Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Travel > Central & South America > South America > Argentina #17 inÃ ª Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Travel > Central & South America > South America > Brazil #60 inÃ ª Books > Travel > South America > Argentina > General

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Not worth the buck. A poorly written outdated bio with none of Humboldt's books.

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