



The West India Committee  
60. St. James's Street

DOMESTIC MANNERS  
AND  
SOCIAL CONDITION  
OF THE  
WHITE, COLOURED, AND NEGRO  
POPULATION  
OF THE  
WEST INDIES.

BY MRS. CARMICHAEL,  
FIVE YEARS A RESIDENT IN ST. VINCENT AND TRINIDAD.

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SECOND EDITION.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

LONDON:  
WHITTAKER AND CO., AVE-MARIA LANE.

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1834.



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# THE WEST INDIES.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

*Drivers — Corporal punishment — Stocks — Attorneys — Attention to the sick — Manumission — Passes — Runaway negroes, &c.*

MANY absurd stories are told of the conduct of drivers, and the license allowed them by the planter. A driver always carries a whip; and it is alleged in Britain that no small use of it is daily made, while he stands behind those at work in the field; for he has only to do with such. Now I state the precise truth when I say, that taking all the year round, during many years' residence in the colonies, I always walked five afternoons out of the seven, upon one or other estate, and often upon more than one in the same evening, and I can solemnly

declare, that *I never saw a whip once used*, either by the driver or by any other person; neither did I ever hear a negro complain of such a thing, although I used often to make inquiry. The estates I walked over were near town; where negroes are less manageable, and more troublesome than in the country. It is true that every driver carries a whip, and the use of the whip is this:—the driver always goes out first in the morning, and cracks his whip three times loudly; and as the crack is heard distinctly at the negro houses, this is a warning to go to labour. If the whip were used, as described in England, I must have seen it so used; for, besides my afternoon walks, I was often out before breakfast early, but I never once saw it used, nor ever saw the people at work, otherwise than cheerful and happy. The proprietor, manager, and overseer, know the individual character of every negro upon an estate; and it is astonishing, notwithstanding their numbers, how soon you become acquainted with all their ways. I can now look

back upon the people among whom I resided in Trinidad; and although they amounted to about eighty, yet I can distinctly recollect, and could accurately depict the individual character of every one of them, and even the tempers and disposition of all the little children. How much more must they, who are with them the whole day, be intimately acquainted with the true character and disposition of them all. A master or a manager knows the value of a good negro, whether male or female, too well not to treat them with respect, kindness, and discretion. There are negroes upon every estate, more or less, who are of this description, and who, even if they did behave incorrectly, would only be admonished in private. A master or manager would no more think of whipping or flogging such people for their faults, than if they were free servants. Good negroes may be found among all ranks, and are not confined to head people, who are however generally chosen with a reference to character as well as abilities, although now and then disappointments will

occur. It cannot be denied, however, that corporal punishment is a dread, and tends to keep all bad characters in order;—for incorrigible thieves, who either steal from their masters or who steal boldly from the good negroes,—for those, who are wantonly cruel to each other or the brute creation, for boxers and biters, I cannot help believing that some corporal punishment has hitherto been necessary, and will still be found so, until a radical change be effected, by mental instruction.

Bad characters prefer the stocks to any employment, however easy; and as for solitary confinement as a punishment to a negro of this character (who considers it the highest privilege to be allowed to sleep away his hours, and to have his food brought to him), it would be rather an incitement for him to behave ill. I have often seen it tried; and have heard negroes say that they were “much obliged to massa for letting them sit down easy.” Inimical as I was to all corporal punishment, on first coming to the West Indies, I tried every experiment I

could either hear or think of, until I found that my domestics and negroes were daily becoming bolder and bolder in wickedness; and at last I was forced to agree to some change of system. The very announcement of a change produced a perfect revolution in the establishment. The mind must have made considerable progress in civilization before mental punishment will be found productive of the slightest benefit, either to the offender personally, or as an example to the community where he resides.

I have been informed by old West India proprietors, that they can recollect the time when the best negroes they had, looked upon flogging as no disgrace. No one can now say this is the case. I have known many negroes possessing such fine feelings, that were they to be flogged, I feel confident that their first act afterwards would be, to commit suicide,—though the majority of negroes have not indeed attained this mental superiority. I speak only of the colony of St. Vincent, when I say that I have had the greatest reason to admire, what I

would call the wise administration of justice to the slaves, both from proprietors and managers; who accurately measure the treatment of a negro, according to his real personal character. This involves a world of trouble, but it is a trouble they daily take. To manage a West Indian estate with wisdom, justice, humanity, and prudence,—with a never-ceasing reference to individual character, both as to rewards and punishments, requires more patience, good temper, and penetration, than those who never lived upon, or knew the real circumstances of an estate, can almost believe. I tried for two years to have no recourse to corporal punishment among our domestics (and town domestics are more unmanageable than country negroes), but finding at length, after a course of kindness, indulgence, and instruction, that my servants became notorious for insolence and misconduct, and abhorring the alternative of corporal punishment, I had them all sent to the estate, excepting B., who never had been any thing but a domestic; and I hired free

negroes, feeling certain that I should now have a quiet, orderly household. They were hired by the month at one joe, and three-quarters of a dollar per week for allowance.—They agreed to the work, when mentioned to them; but next day, one required “a little sugar” to do this, and another to do that; so that if I had been ill off with slaves, I was ten to one worse with free people.—There is nothing like the conviction produced by experiment, so I determined to resume my slave domestics, and they were soon at their old plans, and, if possible, worse. It was literally impossible to keep any article in the house; it seemed a regular strife, who was to steal the fastest; yet so clever were they, that I could not catch them in the fact. Little S. was a most convenient person to them; for they pretended that he had been born with a moral or constitutional inability to tell an untruth: therefore S. was always produced as a witness, in whom there not only was not, but could not be guile. But S. was not to be so useful for nothing; and his demands upon the

thieves became at last so extravagant, that the farce was dropped.

It was at this time the reign of unpunished wickedness. I say unpunished; for although the stocks and confinement were tried often, yet as they had no effect in either lessening or suppressing crime, I consider them just in the same light that negroes do,—which is, “no punishment at all.” I have frequently seen our female domestic boxers, when sent to the stocks, make a very low curtsey, and with the most ironical smile of insolence say, “Thank you massa, much obliged to you for let me sit down softly.” The stocks are a wooden bed; at the foot of it is a board with circular holes, which open to admit the feet. The feet are fastened and padlocked; the prisoner is generally accommodated with a mattress; and I never saw one without a pillow, and rarely without mosquito netting. To those who have never seen West India stocks, this information will be of some interest.

I regret to have it to say, that female negroes



are far more unmanageable than males. The little girls are far more wicked than the boys: and I am convinced, were every proprietor to produce the list of his good negroes, there would be, in every instance, an amazing majority in favour of males.

It was when all my domestics were in the state of absolute anarchy described, and their master absent from the island, that R., the very respectable negro already often referred to, came to me in a state of considerable emotion; he said, "Misses, do you know what my eye see now, now in a market; your neger C. selling three of your turkeys; misses, I axe pardon, but if massa wont flog his house nigger, misses, there's no living by them—they are a pest." R. could substantiate what he had seen easily enough; but just as we were talking, the gate opened, and in came C. I said, "C. don't you see the turkeys going about?" "No, misses, I no see them dis day, yesterday, or tother day." "Where do you think they are C.?" "Misses (said he, in a violent passion), "me no know

noting 'bout trickey—me no take trickey—oh, no no,—me tieve leetle chicken, but no goose or trickey.” I had paid three dollars each for them when turkey poults ; but they were now fully grown, and I learnt that C. got four dollars for each, as they were much larger than when bought.

About four or five days after this, R. again returned, and said, “ Misses, C. tieve seven fat fowls o'mine—he sold two ;—I got him at the work, and here is the best villain that Kingstown holds,” said he, as he held C. fast by the collar, who could not resist the superior strength of R. I said, “ Well C., are you not ashamed to go and steal from R. so?” “ Misses, me no shame one bit—R. may go flog me if he like.” R. said, “ Misses, you do very bad no to punish such a villain ; but as he tieved from me, I'll punish him, unless you forbid me ; for I don't keep fowls for C. only to tieve them.” C. was punished ; it was the first punishment of any negro living in the house, and C. while he remained, did not steal again.

In the absence of a proprietor of an estate, two or more attornies are appointed: one only acts, except in cases of necessity, when the other is consulted. The business of an attorney is to ship sugars, draw bills, pay all current expenses, and remit an annual account to the proprietor. Should the negroes consider themselves aggrieved, they apply to him, the same as if he were their own master. By the term attorney, it must not be understood that he is a lawyer; for he may be either of that profession, a merchant, or any gentleman in whom the proprietor reposes confidence.

I need not tell the reader, that legal redress for wrongs, or supposed wrongs, is open at all times to the negro; but I should consider a planter far from being a fair specimen of planters generally, who, in his conduct to his negroes, kept merely within the bare letter of the law. I would say, that the kindness of proprietors to their negroes, must be most gratifying to any one, who resides among them, and witnesses their anxiety to relieve the sick; their

attention to the young; the respect they pay to the aged, whose little comforts are most minutely attended to, even after they are superannuated; and those many little kindnesses which a negro knows very well how to value: entering into their pleasures and amusements,—taking an interest in their provision grounds,—chatting familiarly with them, and hearing and being judge of all their petty quarrels,—peremptorily, as I allow, the master speaks to his slaves; that is, only when giving orders; for upon all other topics negroes converse with the utmost familiarity with the white population, and the white population also with them.

I was but a very short time in the West Indies before I was compelled to acknowledge that the proprietors of negroes were kind to them, not only in supplying them with good and abundant food and clothing, both in sickness and in health, but in giving them many indulgences, such as negroes prize. But so deeply did the impression of the slave-owners'

cruelty cling to me, that I set down all his attention to the slave to self-interest. In visiting the negro-houses on different estates, I was certainly surprised to see how much the wants of the old, and even superannuated negroes, were attended to; but still I said, though they do not work, their name is on the list, and swells the total amount of the estates' people, and confers respectability. I mention these my first feelings to shew, that if my mind was prejudiced, it was so at all events upon the popular side of the question. These opinions however, gradually suffered a change—a change which proceeded wholly from being placed in circumstances that enabled me, with great facility, to converse often both with town and estates' negroes; and also to visit them in their own houses.

I was more and more interested in the subject the longer I lived in the country; and I became daily more and more persuaded of how little I had really known of the state of either the white, black, or coloured population.

One of the first causes of my change of opinion, on the subject of the attention of proprietors to negroes, proceeding not solely from self-interest, but from really benevolent motives, was, in becoming acquainted with many cases where the greatest care had been bestowed, and no expense spared, upon *free negroes*, who, in consequence of their expensive and improvident habits, were reduced in sickness to a situation that rendered them in want of those comforts which become necessary to the preservation of life. I shall give one, out of numerous instances to which I was witness. A negro woman had freed herself and child: her former proprietors had, I believe, not the very best opinion of her; but her child, who was about seven or eight years of age, fell sick. The lady, whose servant she had formerly been, walked to some distance to see the child, and from the situation she saw it in, felt that it was impossible it could be nursed as it ought to be. She therefore had the poor little sufferer removed, not only to her own house, but

to her own room; and there a small bed was prepared for her, and the best medical advice obtained. Her medical attendant saw the child several times every day for a length of time, and the mode of cure was both tedious and expensive. Yet this lady administered the food and physic with her own hands, and she and her daughter nursed the child; and had the satisfaction, after some length of time, to see the little girl restored to perfect health. She was a very patient sufferer; and I have more than once sat by her, and hardly knew whether to admire most, the active benevolence of such a family, or the cheerful obedience of the child in all that was required of her.

Many, very many such instances as this began to open my eyes. A proprietor, thought I, may order the best food and clothing for the sick; he may give what is necessary to keep up the strength of the aged; he may have the best nurses for the little ones, and yet may be unfeeling; because self-interest would lead him to do all this. But when I see a proprietor

and his family watching, and dressing sick children; talking kindly to the aged, and humouring their little foibles; rising in the midst of the night, and going out when cases of sudden sickness occur: when I see them indulging the little children, and that even to a most unwarrantable length (for it is no uncommon thing for the lady of the house or her daughters to collect the young people, and give them a dance to the piano-forte; and to make up gay dresses for Christmas or Easter, which the negro has himself purchased;—for a negro lad thinks nothing of asking his mistress to make a pair of trowsers or a shirt for him); when I see all this, and see it directed towards the free negro, as well as the slave,—and in a climate too not favourable to activity; how can I shut my eyes to the truth, or resist the conviction, that want of real active benevolence is not the fault of the slave proprietor.

I am aware some may say, that if slaves were treated in the way above described, the population would *increase*, not *decrease*,



But it appears to me that much more natural grounds than the over-working of the negro may be brought to account for this. I took some pains to inquire into this matter. The first question I put was this:—during the continuance of the slave-trade, were there more males or females imported? I was informed by several gentlemen who could recollect the scenes which then took place, that males greatly predominated. This is one important fact; and, living, as negroes do, generally speaking, unbound by the ties of matrimony, I need not tell the economist how this state of society tends to prevent the increase of population. I believe these two causes, combined also with the frequent manumissions of negroes, will fully account for the decrease in the slave population. During a residence of nearly three years in St. Vincent, I can recall to my recollection scarcely a single weekly newspaper where there was not one manumission; and I have read the manumission of six and eight negroes, all under one date. These freedoms were sometimes granted

by the proprietor, and sometimes purchased by the negroes themselves; for I made very minute inquiry of the persons whom I thought the best able to give me an impartial account of such matters: viz. the negroes themselves; and they always assured me that, however sorry their master might be to part with them, still no obstacle was thrown in their way to prevent their purchasing their freedom, if they wished it. That some few instances of a contrary conduct, in the West Indies, may be adduced, I do not deny. There are some men in the colonies, a disgrace to humanity, as well as elsewhere; but I do assert, that no one instance of a refusal to manumit has ever come within my knowledge. And here I would make a remark, which struck me most forcibly while resident in the West Indies,—that benevolence there can never proceed from motives of ostentation. We never see in any of the colonial prints, that Mr. —— this year gave the most complete and appropriate clothing to his negroes ever seen in the island,—that his Christmas

provisions were served out in the most liberal way possible ; and that the quality of the pork and flour was of the very best description. No high-sounding paragraph blazes abroad their good deeds ; and unless you are personally known to them or their negroes, it is very unlikely you ever hear of their kindness.

The active kindness of the slave owners is shewn in a thousand ways, that might appear too trivial to mention, were it not that these trifling circumstances oftentimes serve the best to illustrate the true feelings of the heart. A gentleman of my acquaintance was appointed, from another colony, to fill a high official situation in St. Vincent : some few of his servants accompanied him ; and shortly after his family followed. Owing I believe to some peculiarity in the laws of the country he had left, he could not bring his servants without their being free. I am not certain whether he freed them, or whether they purchased freedom themselves ; but I rather think their master did free them. This, however, is of no importance.

The family arrived in perfect safety, and very soon after an invitation for a ball was sent to them. To young ladies arrived in a new colony, a ball is a great affair; and these young ladies were just at that age when a ball was most likely to engross their attention. But in the meantime intelligence was received, that the schooner in which the servants had embarked, was lost at sea; and that all had perished. The family sent an excuse immediately; saying that the melancholy catastrophe that had happened, must prevent their being able to appear in public. Now it may be said there was only good sense and decency in this. But I can prove there was more; for a gentleman who went to visit them on the day of promised pleasure, with the view of inducing the young ladies to alter their determination, told me, that when he went it was impossible to mention the subject to them, for he found all weeping in different corners of the room. This is a trifle; but I repeat, that it is an important one.

I cannot conclude this subject, without again recurring to the alleged over-working of the negroes, as the cause of the decrease of population. The following are facts, to the truth of which I pledge myself, and in them I think will be found a sufficient refutation of the statements so frequently made, even by those who, from their high official situation in the Cabinet, ought to have been better informed.

I can without hesitation affirm, that the field labour on an estate is never begun before a quarter to six in that season of the year when the sun rises earliest,—say from April to July: in the other months, from a quarter past six to half-past, is as early as work ever commences. At eight, the negroes go to breakfast; they return at nine; at noon they go to dinner, and return at two in the afternoon: and at six they leave the field, after which they have generally to bring a bundle of grass each, or cane top, for the stock, which occupies them from five to ten minutes more: but they may all be in their houses by a quarter after six, or at half-past six at farthest.

The moment a heavy shower of rain is seen approaching, the estates' great bell is rung to call them in from the field; and I have seen a whole day in this way often sacrificed, lest their health should be injured by working out in wet clothes. If by any accident a negro gets wet, he is instantly sent to put on dry clothes, and rum and water is given to him. Negro men who are employed alone at some distance in cutting wood, or jobbing of any kind, do not mind the rain, as they take off their clothes, and hide them under a bush, as I think I have stated before; nor are they ever the worse from exposure to wet, so long as they do not suffer their clothes to dry upon them; but negro men only adopt this practice when working alone, for savage as they are, they never appear so in the field, or where any one can see them; but I know it is their general practice when working as jobbers, where the women are not employed.

Field negroes are often allowed the privilege of an afternoon from two o'clock, to kill their

hog, and the half of next day to retail it: indeed a well-behaved negro never asks for a pass for a day or two, that his request is not granted.

That a negro should not go off the estate without a pass, or permit, is a very necessary and important regulation; it at once draws a marked distinction between the good and the ill-disposed. Suppose I see a strange negro lurking about the estate, I ask him "Where is your pass?" If he has one he can shew it, and you feel no further suspicion of him; if not, you are sure he is a run-away, and probably a thief; therefore you either send him to the estate he belongs to, with a trusty negro, or you, at all events, order him off your premises. If your negro delivers him safely to his master, or manager, he receives two dollars for taking him up, and eighteenpence per mile for bringing him home: so that the good negroes look very sharp after run-aways.

Formerly, run-aways were very common; but now this fault is confined wholly to negroes

of decidedly bad character; and to be a runaway among slaves, is as much a term of reproach as it is an annoyance and expense to their master. Sometimes they are taken up and put in gaol; they are then advertised in the newspaper; and when their owner sends for them, he has to pay for their maintenance and the gaoler's fees. I have known negroes who had such a propensity to run off continually, that in a few years their gaol fees amounted to more than their purchase-money; yet this estate was placed in the circumstances that many West India properties are, burdened with debt, and surrounded by uncertainty; so that the nominal proprietor could not, with honour, have sold or freed a single negro belonging to the property; indeed it would have been nearly impossible to have sold people of such a character, though it would have been for the real interest of the estate to have freed, rather than retained, slaves who were not only of no assistance as labourers, but who were such bad examples to others. During sugar-making,



those employed in the mill are sometimes occupied as late as eight o'clock, or at farthest ten o'clock. The three boiler-men have their victuals brought to them by their wives, to the boiling-house. The boiling-house is a large high-roofed building, with a very free circulation of air through it; and, though hotter than a common room, it is by no means so disagreeable as to render it either unhealthy or annoying to those employed in it. I have often been an hour, or more, in the boiling-house, from the mere wish to comprehend the process; and have stood beside the head boiler-man at *the teach*, the whole time, without feeling any inconvenience. These three boiler-men never give up their place, unless illness interferes; only relieving each other,—but all the rest occupied about the mill are so regulated, that those in the mill-gang one day, do not come on again for five days or a week; according, of course, to the number of strong efficient work-people; for elderly men or women, mothers with young children, and the weak in any respect, are

never in the mill-gang at all. Old people, or those not very strong, do all the odd jobs: such as cutting cane tops, spreading migass, and watching the sheep and cattle in the pastures, with the assistance of some of the children. On large estates there is generally an overseer required for the field, one for the stock, and often one, also, for the mill. But it is obvious that there can be no certain rule for these arrangements, which depend completely upon the size of the estate. Upon large properties the white people can relieve each other in their duties; but on smaller estates, the fatigue to be undergone by the white people during crop-time is very great,—for they are, with the driver, the first out in the morning, and the last at night; and where there is only one person to perform this duty, it is very laborious indeed, whereas negroes always have some one to relieve them.

Were negroes so over-worked as many describe them to be, their general health would be injured in crop-time; now the reverse is the

case, for the slaves are always healthier in crop-time, and look uncommonly robust.

The boiling-house is a scene of great merriment. It is without an exception, wherever I have seen it, accurately clean,—not a spot to be seen. The boiler-men are clean in their persons, with a nice apron, and towels to wipe up the least drop of liquor that is spilt. When a stranger goes into a boiling-house for the first time, the head boiler-man comes up, and after making a bow, he takes a bit of chalk and makes a cross upon your shoe; intimating by this sign, that he is aware you never were in a boiling-house before, and that therefore a *douceur* is expected: you generally give him a dollar, and this he shares with the other two who are his assistants. When the people are dismissed from the field or elsewhere, in the evening, the boiling-house is soon full enough: there you see negroes of all ages, drinking hot and cold liquor, singing songs, telling the jokes of the day, and sitting down enjoying themselves, roasting and eating yams and plantains.

I have been thus particular in my description of negro work while sugar is manufactured, for there is nothing more false than that negroes are overworked at such times, or that they dislike it.

Did any one ever hear a negro complain of crop-time, who was a good character; or was there ever a negro whose own grounds were in order, who did not prefer crop-time to all other seasons?—I never put the question to any who did not answer in the affirmative. As for negroes of bad character, as their testimony would not be regarded in this country, neither ought it to be in England: but the anti-colonial party have unfortunately seemed ever to be unaware that any difference of either rank or character exists among slaves; a plain proof that they are most unfit persons to collect slave evidence upon any subject. For although I greatly doubt the propriety of putting a slave upon his oath, in their present state of civilization, yet I would make a great difference in the credit I would attach to the answers of a

negro who bears a good character from his master and his fellow slaves, and that which I would give to the testimony of a run-away, a thief, or a liar. When I use the term a good negro, I wish my readers to understand it as we do in the West Indies—industrious, civil, with some sense of his own dignity, and a wish to retain a place in the good opinion of his master and all around him. This is the usual acceptance of the term, a good negro: such a man is seldom altogether proof against occasional deceit and theft, to an extent that would ruin the character of a servant at home; but compared with the majority, “*he is a good negro.*”

## CHAPTER XIV.

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*Preparations for removing to Trinidad—Conduct of the negroes—Voyage—Approach—Negro expectations—Arrival—Views—Port au Spain—Public walk—Population—Visit to the negroes at Laurel-Hill—Black ants—Valley of Maraval—Magnificent scenery of the tropics—Visit to the markets—Prices of provisions: and enumeration of vegetables and fruits.*

AFTER having been resident during some years in St. Vincent, Mr. C. paid a visit to the island of Trinidad. He had been there, for a few days, some months before; and had returned with a very favourable opinion of the island. His second visit confirmed his first impressions; and he came at last to the resolution of removing from St. Vincent to that colony.

One of the first steps was, to ascertain whether our people would like to accompany us or not. The proposal was no sooner made to them, than they instantly seemed, not only willing, but delighted at the prospect of a change. Their master told them, that if any of them preferred remaining, they had only to say so; and he would give them a paper,—a written permission from the master, for them to go round among the estates, and find a new master for themselves. This is the universal practice with the master; and the negro never finds any difficulty in suiting himself with a new master. The higher the value put upon the negro, the higher does he hold his head, as it is a proof that he is a good character; and I know of no more common reproach from a good to a bad negro, than the expression, “You dare tell me so, you! what you worth? you sell to-morrow, massa get noting for you, you no worth that!” and they conclude by biting off a little bit of the right-hand thumb-nail, and spitting it out with a toss of the head: by this

they mean in plain English,—you are so unprofitable a servant to your master, that you are not worth the paring of a nail.

One domestic negro alone wished to remain, as his wife, for the time being, was not a negro belonging to us; nor if she had, would she have liked going to Trinidad; at least so she said. This domestic was transferred to another member of our family, and filled the same situation there as he had done with us. He was neither a good servant, nor a good character, though not wanting in cleanliness or intelligence; but so exceedingly cruel to his fellow servants, that I was not sorry for his determination.

One request was made by all the other negroes, and that was a most reasonable one—that J., who was a run-away and a notorious thief, should be left behind. Mr. C. said, to try them, “but what shall I say to J.?” “Say massa, say noting at all; just leave him; he be one wild neger—he’ll go to the woods.”—But B., the domestic who was to remain, said,



“Oh no! massa, I’ll soon manage him; I’ll tell him the snake so big and so plenty in Trinidad, they would eat him up if he went to the mountains, and so he’ll be glad to be left in St. Vincent.” The others said—“Well, any way, so he don’t go, and shame us; massa, you know we all great sinner, but we try be good negers to you, massa, and no bring you to shame in a strange place. Massa, J. is one great tief: he no tief a little ting, but go ’bout all the plantations and tief as impudent as one monkey.”

Their master could not but allow the truth of this statement; and it was promised that J. should be left to get another master; and that they should be neither disgraced nor annoyed by such a comrade.

All was now bustle and preparation among them; smart dresses making, &c., and the excitement was alike felt by old and young. Many went out, by permission, to the country to take leave of old friends, and some old friends came to see them; but there was no

appearance of regret in any one instance in leaving old scenes and old faces. The negroes had heard a great deal of the fertility of Trinidad by B., who had been there with his master, and who allowed that Trinidad negroes had it in their power to get on fast in money-making. I do not doubt that this report made a strong impression upon them; but independently of any incentive of this kind, negroes are uncommonly fond of change; and shew less feeling in parting from their old friends, and the scenes of their early youth, than Europeans generally shew and feel.

Although the society of St. Vincent was not very congenial to my taste; yet there were some individuals from whom I could not separate without feeling deeply. Independent of those to whom I was connected by the nearest ties, there were others who had shewn us great and unaffected hospitality upon our arrival, and whose kind offices of friendship had never relaxed. I also regretted leaving St. Vincent without having been able to see every part of

the island; and particularly without having ascended the *Souffriere*. But those who endeavour, however imperfectly, to do their duty to their family, and instruct their domestics, will find very little opportunity for excursions of pleasure in the West Indies. In point of fact, although I was five years and six months altogether there, I never found it possible to devote any one whole day to the gratification of mere curiosity. The fatigue of ascending the *Souffriere* is very great in so hot a climate. My husband's eldest daughter accomplished the ascent at the expense of losing nearly the whole of the skin of her face and neck. The party by whom she was accompanied, rode part of the way upon mules, after which they were obliged to scramble up as they could—slipping and sliding—now holding on by the brushwood, and when that failed, creeping upon all-fours. The exertion, however, was amply rewarded by the magnificent prospect from the summit. Her feelings of awe, too, were probably increased by the recollections of her very early

childhood, as she had witnessed the awful irruption of the volcano in 1812. Frequent slight shocks of earthquakes had, before that event, alarmed the inhabitants; but they were, nevertheless, not at all prepared for the awful scene of horror and devastation which then took place. The sound of the explosions was terrific: they were heard distinctly in the island of Grenada, where the militia were drawn out, on the supposition that the French were coming to attack them. Baron Humboldt says, the sound of the explosion was "heard at a distance equal to that between Mount Vesuvius and Paris." The whole fruit and vegetables of the northern part of the island were destroyed,—while the country was covered with grey sand and ashes, in some places to the depth of several feet. The canes were levelled to the ground—immense forest-trees nearly denuded of their branches; the trunks standing erect, smoking and charred. The stones propelled from the mouth of the crater, were thrown in the form of a parabola—striking the

opposite side of the trees from the mountain, lodging in what branches remained, and often in the solid trunk.

All the orange and lemon tribe suffered especially: and even when I left St. Vincent, so long after these events, I had never seen a fine full-grown orange-tree; nor a lime that was superior in height to a middle-sized laurustinus shrub in Europe. Limes and oranges were then almost all imported from the neighbouring islands. One of the last places I visited with regret, was the Botanic Garden of St. Vincent. Not that as a botanic garden it had any longer a claim to attention; but as a perfectly beautiful spot. In the days of the late Dr. Anderson, it must have been a delightful spot to the lover of botany. Government, whether wisely or not I cannot say, refused to keep up the expenses of it; and at the time I allude to, it was occupied as a sort of retreat from the heat of Kingstown, by Sir Charles Brisbane, the then governor of the island. I had been invited to a very large party

there the previous day, which I had declined going to, as Mr. C. was absent; and his excellency next day offered to ride up with me,—as I preferred a quiet day for a lounge in the garden, and turning over some excellent botanical books, which had been so profitably studied by their former possessor.

The house at the Botanic Garden could never have been very good, but it was now scarcely habitable; and Sir C. Brisbane described to me, with all his comic powers, the ludicrous scene the evening before, when those who danced had to keep a sharp look-out, that they did not fall through the holes of the flooring into the cellar underneath.

We had fixed the middle of August for our departure to Trinidad, and embarked with all our family, save my husband's youngest daughter, who had married Pemberton Hobson, Esq., now attorney-general of St. Vincent. About eleven in the morning we set sail, in the sloop Ariel. The negroes had all slept on board, so that no delay took place; and we left the shore imme-

diately, with a fine strong breeze in our favour. The Ariel was an excellent vessel, and her captain a very skilful man,—well acquainted with the currents of the Charibean sea. As to the accommodation, it was as good as such vessels usually possess. There was a row of berths on each side, which a moderate sized person could roll himself into, and remain coiled up; so that at least there was no chance of being tossed about in bed. I remained on deck long enough to see the shore of St. Vincent gradually fade away, and become at length undistinguishable, without a hope or prospect of ever beholding it again; and I should not wish it to be supposed that I could thus lose sight for ever of a spot, which had been a home for years, and where with all its faults, there was much to regret, without feeling some of that heaviness of heart, which even the prospect of new, and I hoped, more prosperous scenes, could not altogether remove. Sea sickness, however, soon mastered us all; if I except one of our family, who remained on deck almost the

whole night, enjoying the sport of the sailors, catching fish, and salting it for the market at Port of Spain. I could hear their animated exclamations the livelong night, as they caught another and another king-fish.

We had some negroes of our own on board who were sailors,—fine spirited fellows: one of them enacted the part of nurse to the ladies; and he far surpassed all the female stewards I ever met with in that capacity. In the first place he had that best of all qualifications, a pair of excellent sea legs; in the second place, he had shortly before been very seriously ill, and his young massa had nursed and cured him; and he was now brimful of gratitude. He made very strong grog; and when I ventured to remonstrate, he said, “Neber mind misses, it no make you tipsy now; you sick too much.” Then he broiled salt fish; and went round the berths insisting upon our eating, with a world of gaiety and good humour,—half sorry for us, and half laughing,—proud of his own superior abilities at sea, and no less so of



his young massa, who he said, "was fit to be a gemmen sailor, he go about so."

At last, Trinidad was announced to be in sight. Although very sick, I was extremely anxious to catch the earliest glimpse of the island which was to be our future home. With the aid of my negro nurse, and his infallible recipe for sea-sickness—a sprig of Newfoundland salt fish, broiled fire-hot with capsicum, and sprinkled with lime juice—I contrived to place myself on deck. Our other negroes now began to grope their way upon deck; and salt fish and grog soon produced a happy change upon them. The joke and the laugh went round; and they rallied each other upon the comical figure they had cut during the paroxysms of sea sickness.

The island of Trinidad is about ninety miles long and fifty broad; but it has never been very accurately surveyed. This island derives its name from the three mountains which are discerned, at the distance of thirteen leagues, to the south east: they are of considerable height, compared with any other ground in the

neighbourhood, and consequently are conspicuous. They are of the secondary formation. The island was discovered by Columbus, in his third voyage to the new world, in 1498. In March 1595, Trinidad was visited by Sir Walter Raleigh, who, after reducing the defences of the island, took possession of it in the name of his sovereign. Trinidad was taken by the French in 1676; and in 1797 it was recovered by the British, under General Sir Ralph Abercrombie; and added to England by the treaty of Amiens.

Considerable knowledge of the currents is required, to make the island of Trinidad: for otherwise, vessels are liable to be swept by the current to the Spanish Main. There is a very strong current from the south-east—in the strait between the south coast of the island, and the continent of South America; through which it sets into the Gulf of Paria. Another current sets along the north coast, tending to the south, on the south-east coast of Cumana or Paria. I need scarcely say, that these con-

flicting currents occasion a constant agitation of the sea. It was from these circumstances that Columbus named the passages through which these currents set—Boccas de Drago, or Dragons' Mouths. We had the advantage of both wind and current; and entered the Bocca Grande, passing close to the small island of Chacachacarro. There are other channels; the Bocca de Navios, or Ship's Passage: the Bocca de Huevos, or Egg Passage; and the Bocca de Monos, or Ape's Passage. As we entered the Bocca del Drago, the scene became exceedingly animated and beautiful; the Gulf of Paria being studded with small islands, rising perpendicularly out of the water; and which might, from the fine verdure which covers them, be well called emerald isles. This gulf is as smooth as glass, but muddy, as it is at all times, particularly during the rainy season, which had now set in; the water is then of a dirty reddish hue, occasioned by the waters of the great river Oronoco, which enters the Atlantic, by many mouths, opposite to the island of Trinidad.

We now neared the land, so that the houses and cultivation became visible; and as every minute the objects we gazed upon assumed more and more distinctness, our people were as much interested as we were; and when at length the amazingly fine plantain trees and rich provision-grounds caught their eye, there was one simultaneous burst of joy, and “ tank you, massa, bring a we to so fine a country; we be good neger to you all the days of our life, for bringing us here.”

“ Fine easy sailing here,” said sailor Tom, as he surveyed the smooth gulf of Paria, where he looked forward to the commencement of a new era in his nautical life.

One elderly negro woman, of great natural intelligence,—a native African, seemed if possible, more delighted than any of them. I asked her if this was at all like her own country? “ Me own country misses? no no; me own country shew noting like dat—’t is better den the Charaib country.” This was the greatest possible compliment a St. Vincent negro could pay to Trinidad; for they consider justly, that

the Charaib country of St. Vincent is the land of milk and honey.

The next question was, "Massa, can you shew us the plantation a we go to?" This was impossible; but they were quite satisfied when massa assured them that Laurel-Hill produced as fine provisions as any they now saw; and that there was plenty of land for them;—"and massa, we'll see massa Warner and misses too." In fact they resembled a band of children, set out on a party of pleasure after being released from school, whose loquacity knows no bounds.

How fervently do I wish that those who passed the Act forbidding the removal of negroes from a worn-out island to a fertile and abundant one, could have witnessed the scene I did that day; nor was it a scene of highly excited expectations, to be speedily destroyed by a reality; on the contrary, time only made all our people the more thankful for the removal from an estate in St. Vincent, where the soil was so very inferior, to the rich productive island of Trinidad.

In the midst of all the noise and boisterous fun of the negroes, I could hardly look so quietly as I could have wished, upon the beautiful panorama around us. The coast of South America was quite distinct; and the beauty of the little islands in the Gulf was heightened by the rich foliage of the trees,—all of them of the freshest green, in consequence of the rains.

The outline of Trinidad, however, does not, in my opinion, at all equal St. Vincent; which, in the bolder features, far surpasses it. Yet it is not wanting in beauty; and those who have ever looked at the print of Loch Lomond, in Dr. Garnett's Tour through Scotland, may form some idea of the *toute ensemble* in miniature of the Gulf of Paria.

About five p. m., we anchored off *Port d'Espagne*, or Port of Spain, as it is usually called. The town is low, so that on ship-board we could see nothing of it. The Harbour-Master immediately came on board, and being satisfied that we had all been vaccinated, gave

us permission to land—a permission which in Trinidad is necessary. A young gentleman, resident at the house of the late Chief Judge, soon came off in a boat, and took all our family on shore, where we found Mr. Warner's carriage in waiting for us, to convey us up to Belmont—a short distance from Port of Spain. The sight of a nice English carriage, with servants, whose appearance and address bespoke something very different from St. Vincent, was the first thing that struck me as indicative of a more polished state of society than that which I had left behind. The contrast soon became still stronger, as we drove through a town particularly clean, and as regularly built as the new town of Edinburgh. It was now past six; and in that climate the transition from the brightest day to night is almost immediate; and childish as it may seem, the gas lights, and the appearance of good, well-lighted shops, quite put us all in spirits. Our young Spanish friend took great pleasure, as we drove along, in calling our attention to the different objects

likely to please us ; and he seemed, as he well might be, proud to shew us how well regulated a town Port of Spain was, compared with Kingstown in St. Vincent. Nevertheless, as Cowper says, " God made the country, and man the town ;" and town, however beautiful, could never give birth to such feelings as I experienced, when I first saw the Charaib country of St. Vincent, with its lofty volcanic mountain.

We had a steep pull up to Belmont, the residence of the Chief Justice. The very first glimpse I caught of Mr. Warner, impressed me with the most delightful presentiment of the happiness it must be to live under the roof of one, whose every feature bore the impress of worth and amiable feeling. Mrs. Warner I had formerly had the happiness of knowing in Scotland ; and I need scarcely say, how pleased we were to find that the promise we had made in Edinburgh, to meet if possible in Trinidad, had not proved to be a dream. There was a happy meeting too of the little children ; who,



though they at first looked strange to each other, soon made the house resound with their joyous bursts of laughter and mirth.

Belmont-house was old, and required repairing, but it was nevertheless far superior to any thing I had seen in the West Indies. It was surrounded by a neat and tasteful shrubbery, with those beautiful clematuses so abundant in the West Indies. The open rafters of the roof, and many other singular et ceteras about the house, would have seemed strange enough to me, had I not been already pretty familiar with these peculiarities, by my residence in St. Vincent. Mr. C. was anxious that our people should be landed and sent to Laurel-Hill. Immediately after breakfast next morning therefore, our young Spanish friend accompanied him for this purpose. I was not present, but I understood that they were all happy and cheerful, and delighted that they were about to see their new plantation.

Arrangements had been made in Trinidad, previous to the arrival of our people, and all

the old settled negroes, many of whom had spare room, received the new comers with great willingness and hospitality. I had now leisure to survey the view from Belmont, which was truly magnificent. The elevations behind the house were sufficient to confer great beauty, though not sublimity, upon the landscape; but the magnificence of the wood,—the gigantic size, and broad foliage of the trees which filled the valleys and clothed the hills, gave a new and striking character to the scene. From one of the windows there was an extensive view of the coast of South America, and of the calm and emerald-studded gulf that bathes these tropical climes. St. Anne's, the residence of his excellency Sir R. J. Woodford, the then governor of Trinidad, was a pretty object, too, as seen from Belmont. It lay rather in a low situation, in the valley of St. Anne's; but those who understand these matters better than I do, consider such a situation in Trinidad superior in point of health to one more elevated; which, it is said, catches the floating miasma during

the rainy season. There is a drive, an *alameda*, at Port of Spain, called the great and lesser circle, and which might be called the Hyde Park of Trinidad. All new comers are conducted there; and there we, of course, repaired during the evening after our arrival as soon as the heat had somewhat abated. This promenade originated, and was planned and executed by Sir Ralph Woodford; whose public spirit knew no bounds, where the good of the colony or comfort of the inhabitants was concerned. Here we found all the population of the town and its environs enjoying themselves; and here one may, at all times, have a *coup d'œil* of the singularly varied and many-coloured population of this colony; which, from its long connexion with Spain, its vicinity to the South American continent, and its extensive foreign trade, can boast a more varied population than most of the British West India colonies. I had no idea that I should see so great a number of private carriages, and of equestrians. The carriages

were full of ladies, and were all open: and most of the females, I should have remarked, were well dressed. Many of them, indeed, had a good deal of style in their appearance.

Nothing is more striking to a stranger in Trinidad than the extreme regularity with which all public business is conducted, and the excellent regulations in force, in all that regards the internal economy of the colony: and this example has had its influence on the society generally, where it always seemed to me that the uses and economy of time were most thoroughly understood. I hesitate not to ascribe these results to the influence and example of Sir Ralph Woodford, than whom no man ever existed better qualified for the government of a colony.

It is a thousand pities that the governors of colonies should not be more frequently taken from civil and legal offices, rather than from the army and navy: those are most honorable professions; but it ought to be recollected, that the first principle inculcated in each of them is

absolute obedience: and as the young officer rises in rank, he learns by degrees to exercise absolute command. Right or wrong, *to obey* is the first duty of a soldier; and such an education seems little fitted to produce, in after life, a sufficiently deliberative character for a civil governor.

A few days after our arrival in Trinidad, we went to Laurel-Hill, to see the negroes. They were already at work, and quite in spirits; quizzing the Trinidad husbandry as far inferior to St. Vincent. A great ball had been given by the Laurel-Hill negroes, as a compliment to the St. Vincent people; and the young black Trinidad dandies were sporting their best clothes and address, to gain the smiles and the favours of the young St. Vincent belles. I was informed, the only alloy in this grand gala, was the envy excited in the breasts of the young Trinidad negresses; who felt not a little annoyed at seeing the St. Vincent new comers preferred to them as partners. It is a trite saying, that human nature is every where alike; and no

where is that truth more often forced upon our observation than in living among a negro population.

Of the many novelties of Trinidad, the black ants are among the soonest to make themselves known; and among the least agreeable of acquaintances. It was but the first night of Mr. C.'s arrival, that upon stepping into bed he was attacked by an innumerable host of these small black ants: and in the course of a few minutes he was covered from head to foot. Upon examining the bed, it was full of them—the floor and walls of the house were completely covered; and in a state of desperation from their stings, Mr. C. was obliged to leave the chamber to the enemy, and fly undressed, to some rooms erected at a short distance from where Mr. W. was sleeping. Here it was not until after a fierce and long encounter that the enemy was forced to retreat for that night.

These ants are small, and in colour very black: their bite is attended with considerable

irritation. Besides this small ant, there is a larger kind, still more unceremonious and more formidable as visitors. The large ants think nothing of taking forcible possession of a whole house, and fairly driving out its inmates.

On my first arrival in Trinidad, before settling on the estate, I took advantage of the interval to see something of the country, and had soon explored most of the charming valleys that lie within the reach of an excursion from Port of Spain. The valley of Diego Martin is exceedingly beautiful, and within an easy drive of the town. It is throughout well cultivated; and studded with the residences of the planters, and with negro houses in abundance. Diego Martin is, however, far inferior to the valley of Maraval: a beautiful and most crystal stream runs through it—a most agreeable neighbourhood in a tropical climate. Groves of fruit trees, laden with their treasures; and forest trees of noble growth, cover all the banks and ridges; while the elegant cocoa-nut branches waving in the light breeze, like gigantic ostrich

feathers, and shewing at times, underneath, their silvery tints, contrast finely with the darker foliage around, and with the deep sky of a tropical climate.

I found Maraval not only cool, but absolutely cold,—so completely were the sun's rays excluded from it. But it was a damp unpleasant cold, there was a sensation of chilliness induced, that made you feel, not only that the sun's rays were then absent from the valley, but that the sun had never shone there. I should doubt, with all its beauty, whether Maraval would be a desirable place to live in. Vegetation is here gigantic. This too was my first introduction to a real grove of noble orange trees. The oranges were hanging on the boughs, as thickly clustering as any apples I have ever seen. They were of a pale pea-green; and my first impulse was to pull down a bough of the tree to help myself, but little did I wot who were the inmates of that tree. Before almost I was conscious of touching an orange, I was covered from head to foot with chasseur ants. There was but one



remedy: Mrs. Warner called one of the men servants, who tore hastily some switches from the brushwood; and I was obliged to submit to rather a rough scourging. I was shockingly stung; and moreover, many of the insects continued their assaults all the way home. This ant is black, and about the fourth of an inch long.

Shortly after my arrival in Trinidad, I paid a visit to the market of Port of Spain. The early morning hour is the most favourable for visiting it; and the following details, are the results of that visit. The butcher market is exceedingly neat and commodious; but the market for fish excels in convenience, beauty, and regularity, anything of the sort I ever saw: when I say that it is even far superior to that of Peter's Port, in the island of Guernsey, I pay it only a fair compliment. The tide comes in every day, and washes the whole site: in fact the market is held over the sea, the slabs are all of marble, the scales and weights accurately clean; and the prices are under wise and strict regulations.

The supply is abundant, and for the West Indies not unreasonable.

But before going into details regarding the market, it will be better to mention the current coin of Trinidad, and its value in sterling money.—The Spanish gold doubloon, a very handsome coin, is worth 8*l.* currency; sixteen dollars. The gold joe is worth 3*l.* 6*s.* currency, and values from 1*l.* 10*s.* to 1*l.* 17*s.* sterling: but it is seldom worth more than 1*l.* 10*s.* sterling, varying of course according to the rate of exchange. The Spanish round dollar values ten shillings currency: about four shillings and sixpence sterling, or four shillings and fourpence, according to the exchange. The ring dollar has a circular piece of silver punched out of the middle; the piece taken out is of the value of one shilling currency; so that the ring dollar is nine shillings currency—being one shilling currency less in value than the round or Spanish dollar. There are also Spanish half and quarter dollars. The silver bit piece is worth about fourpence sterling; and a half

bit piece of silver, twopence. This was the smallest current coin in Trinidad, while I was there; no copper being then in use. To one arriving from St. Vincent, the beef of Trinidad is quite a treat; nevertheless, Trinidad beef would cut a sorry figure in any English, or even Scotch market. The mutton and lamb of Port of Spain, I thought inferior in point of flavour to that of St. Vincent.

I am not able to say certainly what is the price of beef, mutton, and lamb, in Port of Spain; for I cannot find any note in my possession of the exact price per lb. My house-keeping did not begin until I left Belmont; and at Laurel-Hill we were thoroughly supplied from the negroes' stock, and from our own; so that I only once sent to market in the space of twenty months; and then the charge was made for the round of beef, without mentioning the number of lbs. But I think beef, mutton, and lamb, sold for from three to four and four bits and a half per lb. of sixteen ounces. In every thing else, I can state the exact price, from a

reference to my accounts, having kept a daily detail of every article of expenditure.

Pork, of superior quality, was bought, either in the market, or in the country from the negroes belonging to the different estates, at two bits per lb. A fowl, ready for use, at six shillings and sixpence currency. There was a law by which it was optional to purchase live poultry by weight, if one so inclined. But the negroes so deceived by feeding the fowl previous to weighing, that I preferred paying the price I mention, and getting a good article. The Peons, that is, the free native Spaniards, rear multitudes of lean poultry; and they do not play the same tricks in selling them by weight that the negroes do. They also sell lean turkeys in the same way. Their fowls are usually of the value of four shillings and sixpence or five shillings, currency; and turkeys about 1*l.* 5*s.* A chicken is sold for a quarter dollar; but if fat and fit for use, a chicken is worth from half a ring dollar to three-quarters, according to its size. Five round dollars is the

common price of a fat turkey: a pair of fat ducks, three dollars. A fat goose, three dollars to four, according as they may be plentiful or scarce in the island. A pork head, according to the size, from a cut dollar to half a dollar for a very sound one. The feet, half a cut dollar. But these are the favourite pieces with the negro, and they seldom part with them.

King fish, or tazaar, is reckoned the best fish in Trinidad; it is excellent,—handsome to the sight, and resembles a salmon in size. Grouper or vielle, is also very good, but harder, and is best stewed: cod-fish or morne, snapper or poisson-rouge, tong, congor eel or canouver, all sell at one shilling and sixpence currency per lb., and every other description of small fish at one bit. Few of these, however, are very good. Shark and cat-fish are prohibited being sold.

Eggs sell at three for a bit; and when scarce I have known them half a bit each. Salt butter, when sold by the pound in Port of Spain market, is three quarters to sometimes a Spanish dollar per lb. I never saw or heard of fresh butter for sale.

It would be impossible to enumerate the prices of the vegetables and fruits; but as a general remark it may be stated, that a tolerably sized dish of any common vegetable in season, is never under two bits; and that the rarer vegetables are dearer. English peas cost a round dollar for a small dish. A fine large pine in season may be had for from two to three or four bits. A large shaddock the same. Forbidden fruit, half a bit each; oranges, two to three bits per dozen. The other fruits are all cheap; excepting sappadilloes and the prickly pear. This pear, from its peculiarly cool pulp, is a great favourite, and is very wholesome; and with sappadilloes, are sold about three for a bit.

The guava of Trinidad is very inferior to that of St. Vincent; besides, it is hardly possible to get one quite free from worms. The custard and monkey apple also is subject to this defect. The Trinidad mango abounds everywhere; but I saw none to compare with those of the Botanic Garden in St. Vincent.

The Trinidad orange is, however, most delicious; as are also many of the plums—all indigenous to the island. Were grafting tried, I am convinced the fruit would be much improved; the stone is at present uniformly too large in proportion to the pulp. The following is a pretty accurate calendar of the fruits of Trinidad for the year. January, produces sappadilloes, pomegranates, sour sops, plantains, bananas, papas or papaws. The vegetables are—okros, capsicums of all kinds, which indeed are common every month in the year,—cocoa nuts, which are seldom used but for cakes and puddings, ground down—pigeon or angola peas, sweet potatoes, yams of different sorts, and tancias. February—the vegetable called chicou or christophine comes in, which is already described in a former part of this work. In March, grenadilloes are added to the former list. April—Java plums, mangoes, mamm-sapoetas, pines of several varieties, the Otaheite gooseberry, Jamaica plums, cerasees, and bread fruit. May adds to the list, water lemons and cashew

apples. June is much the same in its productions ; pigeon peas are, however, nearly out of season. In July the avacado pear comes in ; it is also known by the name of the alligator pear—or subaltern's butter, from its inside resembling very yellow fresh butter, both in consistence and colour. In August the only new fruit is the yellow hog plum : the other fruits in season are the mamme-sapotas and avacado pears. September produces sugar, monkey, and custard apples, sea-side grapes, and plenty of Portuguese yams. The fruits and vegetables of October are nearly the same as September ; and the only difference in November is the bread fruit being ripe again. December brings in guavas ; and that most excellent and useful production, sorrel. This plant has a succulent stalk, and grows from three to four feet high. There is a blossom, not unlike the common English columbine. There are two varieties, white and red. The blossoms, when slightly fermented, produce a delightful beverage, or stewed with sugar make tarts or jam. All the



orange and lemon tribe; shadocks and forbidden fruit; plantains and bananas, may be had every month in the year; but they abound most from April to September. Mountain cabbage is always in season, and is a most delicious vegetable. In showery weather, English peas will always do well; but the marrow-fat pea does not suit the climate so well as the different species of dwarf peas; particularly that kind known in England by the name of the early nimble tailor. Carrot, turnip, and English cabbage are very scarce and dear; and have a stunted look. Asparagus thrives pretty well; and I believe sometimes may be had at market; also artichokes, Jerusalem artichokes, the love-apple or tomata, and the two edible species of the egg plant—the one of which is a greenish white, the other a purple; they are sold in Trinidad under the name of the boulangois.

Cucumbers, melons, and gourds of all kinds are abundant and cheap. Lettuce, radishes, and cress, are not so good as in England, and are dearer. Onions will not grow to any tole-

rable size; plenty come from Madeira, but they are expensive. Parsley and celery are also dear and scarce. All the *legumes* of the country are excellent, abundant, and cheap, particularly the Lima bean. Milk is a quarter dollar a quart bottle.

Besides all these natural productions displayed for sale in the market, a great variety of cakes and pastry is always exhibited, but it is not inviting: ginger beer, mobee, and orgeat are always plentiful, and generally excellent.

To the youthful appetite, the Trinidad market is very attractive: for there are numerous bottles of comfits, sweetmeats of all kinds, and coloured papers of comfits, which all little Trinidad masters and misses know well, under the name of dragee. There are no seats for the sellers of fruit, vegetables, or other wares—some bring a chair or a stool; but many are seated on the grass, in the open area where the market is held. The first time I walked through the market of Port of Spain, it struck me as a very animated scene. The gaudy and many-

coloured handkerchiefs, on the heads of the coloured and negro women, gave great life to the picture; and the diversity of tongues spoken, bewildered as much as it astonished me. There might be heard, the languages and dialects of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Spaniards, Dutch, Germans, Italians, Chinese, and Turks. The natives of Britain and Spain predominate, and next the French,—a sufficiently motley population, without reckoning the coloured and negro population, free or slave, African, Indian, or creole.

CHAPTER XV.

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*Public institutions and buildings—Education and seminaries—Island militia—Churches—Courts of law and public bodies—Shopping—Excellent police regulations—Coranage—The pitch lake.*

BEFORE settling on our estate, we devoted a few mornings to an inspection of Port of Spain, its public buildings, institutions, &c. We were accompanied by Sir Ralph Woodford and Chief Justice Warner in our peregrinations. His Excellency called my attention to the beauty of freestone, with which the gaol is built, adding "it comes from the county of Fife." I felt as I can hardly describe, when I learned that it was even from my father's quarry at Cullelo in Fifeshire: it seemed like meeting an old friend.

The prisoners in the gaol were all exceedingly clean, and quite as comfortable as prisoners ought to be ; and there was, what would render it no temptation to commit crime in order to get free lodging and clothing,—a tread mill ; and all prisoners in health worked at it, according to their age and strength. His excellency, Mr. Warner, Mr. C., and another of our party, tried the effect of it. The exertion seemed to be fearful ; they did not prolong their dance above a minute or two, and even with this it produced profuse perspiration. It may well be doubted whether this punishment be judicious in a tropical climate. There were not many prisoners in gaol ; and the colony was then prospering, in the best sense of the word. The working population, whether free or otherwise, seemed contented, and wonderfully industrious ; if we take into account their constitutional dislike to labour. Still there was even then, a general complaint that free labourers could not be induced to work above a day or two with regularity.

While we remained at Belmont, before settling at Laurel-Hill, there was a good deal of visiting and gaiety; and among other visitors at Belmont, I was particularly pleased by a Spanish gentleman, Don Antonio Gomez. I am not quite certain, but I rather think I was told he was a native of the Spanish Main. I mention this gentleman, from the circumstance of our having entered into conversation concerning the Caraccas; and because he was the sole instance of any one, with whom I ever conversed upon the subject of making sugar by free labour, who expressed the least hope upon the subject. He did not speak like an enthusiast; but like an extremely liberal well-informed man, hoping that at some future period this most desirable object might be effected. I knew Mr. Gomez to be a Roman Catholic; and I cannot help mentioning, as a proof of that gentleman's liberality, that he had a son at Harrow school. Mr. Gomez had travelled through England and Scotland with Sir Ralph Woodford, and he had not forgotten the beauties of Dunkeld, and the

clearness of the Scotch rivers and brooks. His hospitable reception at the late Duke of Athol's, he spoke of with great pleasure; and perhaps if this ever meets the eye of Mr. Gomez, he may feel some satisfaction in knowing, that when I was at Castle-Mona, Isle of Mann, in 1830, his name was not forgotten by the excellent members of the Athol family then resident there.

The national school of Trinidad is, among other places, well worth a visit. We were unfortunate in the time we visited it;—the children were just about being dismissed, and many of the junior classes had broken up. But we heard several boys, from six to eight, read English with great propriety; and their writing and ciphering were admirable for their age. This establishment promised very fair indeed, and I believe it has gone on well ever since. The pupils amounted to nearly 180: upwards of 100 could write.

There are in Trinidad several seminaries for the education of young gentlemen and ladies;

and more than one of a highly respectable character: there are also good private teachers—in particular, a professor of music, M. Wiames, who has great musical genius, and whose style must be said to be brilliant. Such schools and such teachers are a great blessing to those who cannot send their children to Europe for education; and I heard that several young ladies, who had been wholly educated in Trinidad, were considered, in point of both the useful and agreeable, quite equal to those who had been in Europe. While upon this subject, I may mention that I had demonstration of the proficiency of Trinidad taught musicians. In the evening, at Government-house, where we had dined (and where by the by I did not, as in St. Vincent, see the wine bottles disappear through the windows; but where, on the contrary, every thing was in excellent style), I listened to some most masterly vocal performances; particularly the choicest morsels of the Italian masters, by a lady who had been wholly taught in Trinidad.



There was some talk of a militia review, while we were at Belmont; but the provokingly showery weather prevented the show. But although I did not witness the militia *en masse*, I must not therefore omit telling what excellent, well-disciplined, troops they are, as I have been told, by old officers who were capable of judging correctly, and I will also enumerate the different corps, to give the reader some idea of the formidable strength of the militia force in this colony. There are, then:—the royal Trinidad light dragoons—St. Anne's hussars—royal Trinidad artillery—royal Trinidad battalion—loyal Trinidad battalion—sea fencibles—royal invalid corps—military artificers' company—Diego Martin's chasseurs' and infantry—Caranage battalion, first and second division—St. Joseph's light cavalry—loyal Trinidad light infantry battalion—Arima pioneer company—St. Joseph's invalids—first and second battalions Couva and Point-Pierre—North Naparima cavalry and infantry—Savanna rangers—South Naparima cavalry

and infantry. Every colonist is liable to serve in the militia. There are heavy fines for non-attendance; and a third offence renders the individual, if a private, liable to a trial before a regimental court martial; and this court martial has the power to pass sentence of fine and imprisonment, not exceeding 10*l.* currency, and forty-eight hours' confinement. Should a fourth offence occur, any private so offending, is liable upon the conviction of a court martial to be expelled from the colony—his conduct being considered inimical to the regulations established for its security and good order.

The Cabildo, or body of magistrates, are a public body of great importance in Trinidad. Their powers are very extensive; they have the management of the funds of the colony, and of all regulations relative to internal taxation. No money can be granted, for any purpose whatever, without their consent. The governor for the time being is the president. There are two alcaldes—a perpetual regidor—seven elective regidores—an acting executor—a syndic pro-

curator—a protector of slaves, and a secretary and registrar, with a treasurer. There is also the commissary of population, and surveyer general's department.

There is one Protestant Episcopalian church in Port of Spain, with a rector, and assisting officiating minister. The Roman Catholic church is under the jurisdiction of a vicar apostolic. The Right Reverend the Bishop of Gerren was bishop when I was in Trinidad, and I have not heard that there has been any change. The vice-patron is his excellency the governor for the time being. There is also an ecclesiastical judge and curate of Port of Spain, and a sacristan mayor. There are Catholic curates also, who officiate at four different stations in the island. How is it that the Protestant episcopalian church of England has not given like practical evidence of a desire to carry the knowledge of the pure Gospel to the negro population of Trinidad? Had she done her duty to her colonies, conscientiously, in this respect, the field would not have been occupied

by ignorant, illiberal missionaries; and had such men never found a footing in our colonies, and the religion of the Bible been zealously disseminated, civilization among all ranks would have spread with a sure and steady pace. Emancipation would then have crept on silently and surely; for when the mind of man is sufficiently advanced to enjoy freedom, no law can keep him a slave. All classes of the community, under such circumstances, progress alike; so that there is no violent tearing up of any system—no putting in hazard the lives of thousands, and the stability of property—nothing to endanger the possession of the colony by the mother country. But I have not yet finished my enumeration of public men, public buildings, and public institutions; for when I remove to Laurel-Hill, I shall find too much occupation on the estate and with the negroes, to find leisure to return to these matters.

There is a civil, and also a militia medical board at Port of Spain; a vaccine institution;

a committee for schools; and a committee for building Catholic churches. There is an establishment, too, at Bande l'est, for the manufacture of cocoa-nut oil. The law department consists of the Tribunal of the Royal Audiencia; the Tribunal of Appeal of Civil Jurisdiction, Tribunal of Appeal of Criminal Jurisdiction,—in all of which the governor *pro tempore*, is judge. There are two other tribunals,—one for the recovery of debts due to the royal treasury, and another as judge of crown lands. There is a court for the trial of civil matters, called a Complaint Court,—the Vice-Admiralty Court,—court for the trial of criminal prosecutions, and a court of criminal inquiry. When I was in Trinidad there were nine licensed advocates practising at the bar; and I believe they have since increased in number. These are all professional men of good education; and some with talents that would do honour to them in any country. Dr. Llanos and Dr. Garcia, I heard always spoken of as men of sterling ability;—they are natives of Spain. Of the

English barristers, Mr. Edward Jackson enjoyed the highest reputation. There were only seven solicitors, besides public notaries,—a marvelously small allowance, certainly. Let me not omit to name, as a most useful body, the committee for the improvement of roads; and really, the recollection of the roads in St. Vincent made one bless this department.

Trinidad is divided into thirty-two divisions, or quarters, as they are there called. Every quarter has a commandant; and the town of St. Joseph's has one distinct from the quarter of St. Joseph's. These commandants had originally powers similar to an English justice of peace. In 1825, however, their powers were greatly increased, by an order in council from Great Britain, and the duties were thus rendered very difficult and fatiguing; occupying the time of those discharging them, almost to the exclusion of private business. But the chief hardship consisted in being compelled to accept office, if appointed by the colonial government: nor was there any

remuneration, — not even an allowance for stationery.

There were also twelve licensed physicians — three or four of whom were from Edinburgh, and others with continental diplomas. No man can practise without a license, which he pays for: an examination for which, if he is well educated, he has nothing to fear; and if not, the population have reason to thank government for preserving them from that most dangerous of all impostors—an ignorant and uneducated medical practitioner. There were eleven licensed surgeons,—subject to the same laws as the physicians. Several of the physicians had also a surgeon's diploma, to enable them to practise in either branch of their profession. There were four licensed apothecaries, and the same number of druggists. No empiric could gain a footing in Trinidad. Bakers, also are licensed. The price of bread is regulated according to the price of the barrel of American flour. Bread is tolerably good, but dearer than in England.

We were now upon the eve of quitting the

hospitable abode of Chief Justice Warner, to settle at Laurel-Hill; and a few days previous I was employed in the necessary toil of shopping. Money is a bulky commodity in that country, where dollars form the easiest medium of exchange; for it is sometimes troublesome to get change for a doubloon. We accordingly had a stout handkerchief full of dollars, tied up and laid in the bottom of the carriage. The shops were substantial and good: and the shopkeepers, whether English, Spanish, or French, invariably civil and obliging. Clothing of every description I found cheaper than in St. Vincent; but very dear compared to England. Cotton goods at least twice the price,—a fact rather inconsistent with the over production and glut of the foreign markets, of which we hear so much.

Right glad I was when we reached Belmont, at nearly six p. m. Although we had rested in the court-house, and actually ate cakes and oranges, and other good things, in so grave a place, yet, to move at all in so hot a day, was fatiguing. Fahrenheit's thermometer was 968



in the shade at noon, and usually raged from 88 to 98. In the morning, early, we had it as low as 80°, and in the evening sometimes so low as 79. Undoubtedly Port of Spain must be considered one of the hottest of towns. How the judges and lawyers could breathe in a crowded court, with so low a roof, too, is astonishing. This day, which we chanced to select for shopping, was intolerable,—for there was not a breath of air; and an atmosphere in a tropical climate, and not a breeze to agitate it, is stifling. But, notwithstanding the heat, I was not displeased with the day's occupation, I saw many things I had not seen before,—many streets, some old and some new, and all were alike peculiarly clean. No new houses are allowed to be built, otherwise than on a plan laid down by government; the consequence of which is, a neatness and uniformity not to be surpassed anywhere. Brunswick Square, in which Trinity Church is built, was not then quite finished; but it promised to be a fine square.

Every person in Port of Spain is by law obliged to sweep and keep perfectly clean the whole front of their houses, or lot of ground, and every drain is daily washed and kept clear. Every house, too, is obliged to be furnished with a barrel of water in case of fire, and there is a heavy penalty for any one who transgresses these regulations. There are two places where the whole sweepings, &c. of the town are ordered to be deposited; so that no nuisance of any description ever meets the eye. No swine, or goats, are allowed to be seen, either in the town or suburbs: any person, whether free or not, is permitted to kill the animal, if found at large within those bounds. The person who kills a hog, is entitled to cut off, instanter, and carry away the head; but half an hour is allowed for the owner to claim the body: meanwhile the slayer, generally a negro, is seen watching at a convenient distance, and no sooner is the half hour expired, than he pounces on the body of the pig, and drags it away with him, which he is entitled by usage to do.

Dogs are under the same law as to the right of killing; besides a fine of 10*l.* currency upon the owner. Every owner of a dog must have it licensed: and it must be secured, during the day, with a collar round its neck, with its owner's name: by neglect of this, a penalty is incurred of 25*l.* currency.

With such excellent laws, not only made but strictly enforced, it is not to be wondered at that strangers are struck by the general aspect of Port of Spain.

We were now in the middle of the rainy season: I heard of no fevers — no sickness, beyond what must always exist in such a population, which, by the census taken ten years ago, was—whites, 3341; coloured, 13,392; Indians, 893; slave population, 23,227; Chinese, 20;—making in all, a population of 40,873. Since that period, however, the population has doubtless changed much, both in its aggregate and detail. I may here state, that I never recollect of any five years and a half passing in Europe without some epidemic sufficiently general to

excite alarm ; but in all that time I neither saw nor heard anything of the kind in either St. Vincent or Trinidad. The opening up of new land in the neighbourhood of swamps, must always be prejudicial to the constitution in any country : and doubly so in a tropical climate : but when the land is cleared, and the industry of man and civilization are actively at work, I have every reason to think a tropical climate as healthy as any other. Some prudence is requisite, as to exposure to the sun, and dews at night : but the prudence necessary, in a cold climate, as regards cold and sudden changes of temperature, are quite as trying and frequent ; although we think less of those risks in England, because our early habits make us accustomed to them.

We drove out one day towards the Caranage ; where the Spaniards burnt their fleet, when the British landed under General Sir Ralph Abercrombie in 1797. It is a low, swampy spot ; and no European could live there. There were huts here and there, occupied by free negroes,

who cultivate vegetables for market; and strange to say, I was informed that their health does not suffer in the least from the miasma, although one hut in particular I remarked was erected almost in a marsh. I know not how long before this a white family, who had lost nearly their all by misfortune, and who had no home to shelter them, offered to rent a house which had been built long ago, and was considered untenable from the miasma by which it was surrounded. They were to have it for a mere trifle; and as house-rent is ruinously expensive in the West Indies, they were fain to risk even their health, rather than rent an abode they could not honestly see their way in paying for. There was a gentleman, his wife, and two or three children. His wife was attacked in a few days after they went to the spot, and in a week or two he was the sole survivor: broken-hearted before, and doubly so now, he died a few days afterwards. We passed the house; it was shut up—and all was ruin, and rank dark green vegetation around. I saw one or two rather

poor-looking coloured people straggling about; but they did not appear unhealthy.

I need scarcely tell the reader that the Pitch Lake is one of the most curious objects in Trinidad. The usual plan is to go down the Gulf of Paria, thirty miles, to Point La Braye. This headland is about eighty feet above the level of the sea: and about two miles in length and breadth. My daughter paid a visit to the Pitch Lake, and made some drawings of it; but as the journal of a learned doctor cannot but be more valuable than the diary of a young lady, I shall make no apology for transcribing the short notice of this phenomenon by Dr. Nugent, of the island of Antigua.—“We landed on the southern side of Point La Braye, at the plantation of M. Vessigny. As the boat drew near the shore, I was struck with the appearance of a rocky bluff, or small promontory of a reddish brown colour, very different from the pitch which I had expected to find on the whole shore. Upon examining this spot, I found it composed of a substance corresponding to the

porcelain jasper—generally of a red colour where it had been exposed to the weather, but of light slate blue in the interior. It is a very hard stone, with a conchoidal fracture—some degree of lustre, and is perfectly opaque, even at the edges. In some places, from the action of the air, it was of a reddish or yellowish brown; and an earthy appearance. We ascended the hill, which was entirely composed of this rock, up to the plantation; where we procured a negro guide, who conducted us through a wood about three quarters of a mile. We now perceived a strong sulphurous and pitchy smell, like that of burning coal, and soon after had a view of the lake, which at first sight seemed to be an expanse of still water, frequently interrupted by clumps of dwarf trees and islets of rushes and shrubs; but upon a nearer approach we found it to be in reality an extensive plain of mineral pitch, with frequent crevices, and chasms filled with water. The singularity of the scene was altogether so great, that it was some time before I could

recover from my surprise so as to investigate it minutely.

The surface of the lake is of the colour of ashes, and at this season was not polished or smooth so as to be slippery : the hardness or consistence was such as to bear any weight ; and it was not adhesive, though it partially received the impression of the foot ; it bore us without any tremulous motion whatever, and several head of cattle were browsing on it in perfect security. In the dry season, however, the surface is much more yielding, and must be in a state approaching to fluidity, as is shewn by pieces of recent wood and other substances being enveloped in it. Even large branches of trees, which were a foot above the level, had in some way become enveloped in the bituminous matter. The interstices are very numerous, ramifying and joining in every direction ; and in the wet season being filled with water, present the only obstacle to walking over the surface. These cavities are generally deep in proportion to their width ; some being only a few inches in



depth, others several feet, and many almost unfathomable : the water in them is good, and uncontaminated by the pitch ; the people of the neighbourhood derive their supply from this source, and refresh themselves by bathing in it. Fish we caught there, particularly a very good species of mullet. The arrangement of the chasms is very singular ; the sides, which of course are formed of the pitch, are invariably shelving from the surface, so as nearly to meet at the bottom, but then they bulge out toward each other, with a considerable degree of convexity. This may be supposed to arise from the tendency in the pitch slowly to coalesce, whenever softened by the intensity of the sun's rays. These crevices are known occasionally to close up entirely, and we saw many seams from this cause. How these crevices originate it may not be so easy to explain. One of our party suggested that the whole mass of pitch might be supported by the water which made its way through accidental rents, but in the solid state it is of greater specific gravity than

water, for several solid bits thrown into one of the pools immediately sunk.

“ The lake (I call it so because I think the common name appropriate enough) contains many islets covered with long grass and shrubs, which are the haunts of birds of the most beautiful plumage, as the pools are of snipe and plover. Alligators are also said to abound here, but it was not our lot to encounter any of these animals.

“ It is not easy to state the precise extent of this great collection of pitch, the line between it and the neighbouring soil is not always well defined, and indeed it appears to form the sub-stratum of the surrounding tract of land. We may say, however, that it is bounded on the north and west sides by the sea, on the south by the rocky eminence of porcelain jasper before mentioned, and on the east by the usual argillaceous soil of the country: the main body may perhaps be estimated at three miles in circumference; the depth cannot be ascertained, and no subjacent rock or soil can be discovered.

Where the bitumen is slightly covered by soil, there are plantations of cassava (or cassada, as it is frequently spelt), plantains, and pine apples; the last of which grow with luxuriance and attain to great perfection. There are three or four French and one English sugar estate in the immediate neighbourhood. Our opinions of the soil did not however coincide with that of Mr. Anderson, who, in the account he gave some years ago, thought it very fertile. It is worthy of remark, that the main body of the pitch, which may properly be called the lake, is situated higher than the adjoining land, and that you descend by a gentle slope to the sea, where the pitch is much contaminated by the sand of the beach.

“ During the dry season, as I have before remarked, this pitch is much softened, so that different bodies have been known slowly to sink into it; and if a quantity be cut out, the cavity left will be shortly filled up; and I have heard it related, that when the Spaniards undertook formerly to prepare the pitch for useful pur-

poses, and had imprudently erected their cauldrons on the very lake, they completely sank in the course of a night, so as to defeat their intention. Numberless proofs are given of its being at times in this softened state; the negro houses of the vicinage, for instance, built by driving posts in the earth, frequently are twisted or sunk on one side. In many places it seems actually to have overflowed like lava, and presents the wrinkled appearance which a sluggish substance would exhibit in motion. This substance is generally thought to be the asphaltum of naturalists; in different spots, however, it presents different appearances. In some parts it is black, with splintering conchoidal fractures of considerable specific gravity, with little or no lustre, resembling particular kinds of coal, and so hard as to require a severe blow of the hammer to detach or break it; in other parts it is so much softer, as to allow one to cut out a piece in any form with a spade or hatchet; and in the interior is vesicular and oily; this is the character of by far the greater portion of the

whole mass. In one place it bubbles up in a perfectly fluid state, so that you may take it up in a cup; and I am informed, that in one of the neighbouring plantations, there is a spot where it is of a bright colour, shining transparent and brittle, like bottle glass in resin. The odour in all these instances is strong, and like that of a combination of pitch and sulphur. No sulphur, however, is any where to be perceived; but from the strong exhalation of that substance, and the affinity which is known to exist between it and the fluid bitumens, much is no doubt contained in a state of combination; a bit of the pitch melts in the candle like sealing-wax, and burns with a light flame, which is extinguished whenever it is removed, and on cooling, the bitumen hardens again. From this property it is sufficiently evident, that this substance may be applied to many useful purposes, and accordingly it is universally used in the country wherever pitch is required; and the reports of the naval officers who have tried it, are favourable to its more general

adoption. It is requisite merely to prepare it with a proportion of oil, tallow, or common tar, to give it a sufficient degree of fluidity. In this point of view, this lake is of great national importance, and more especially to a great maritime power.

“ It is indeed singular that the attention of government should not have been more forcibly directed to a subject of such magnitude; the attempts that have been hitherto made to render it extensively useful, have for the most part been only feeble and injudicious, and have consequently proved abortive. This vast collection of bitumen might, in all probability, afford an inexhaustible supply of an essential article of naval stores, and being situated on the margin of the sea, could be brought and shipped with little inconvenience or expense. It would however be great injustice to Sir Alexander Cochrane not to state explicitly that he has at various times, during his long command on the Leeward Island station, taken considerable pains to insure a proper

and fair trial of this mineral production, for the highly important purposes for which it is generally believed to be capable. But whether it has arisen from certain perverse occurrences, or from the prejudices of the mechanical superintendants of the colonial dock-yards, or as some have pretended, from an absolute unfitness of the substance in question, the views of the gallant admiral have I believe been invariably thwarted, and his exertions rendered altogether fruitless.

“ I was at Antigua in 1809, when a transport arrived laden with this pitch for the use of the dock-yard at English Harbour; it had evidently been hastily collected, with little care or zeal, from the beach, and was of course much contaminated with sand and other foreign substances. The best way probably would be to have it properly prepared on the spot, and brought to the state in which it may be serviceable, previously to its exportation. I have frequently seen it used for the bottoms of small vessels, for which it is particularly well adapted,

as it preserves them from the numerous tribe of worms so abundant in tropical countries. There seems indeed no reason why it should not, when duly prepared and attenuated, be made applicable to all the purposes of the petroleum of Zante, a well known article of commerce in the Adriatic; or that of the district of Burmah in India, where 400,000 hogsheads are said to be collected annually."



## CHAPTER XVI.

*The cigar of Trinidad—Society—Negro effrontery—Dishonesty—Slave laws in Trinidad—Partial manumission—Departure for Laurel-Hill estate—approach and arrival—Description of the residence.*

NOTHING used to annoy us more of an evening at Belmont, than an insect known in Trinidad by the name of the cigar; it is evidently a species of locust. An engraving in the sixth vol. of the Library of Entertaining Knowledge, page 251, very nearly resembles it; but neither in that, nor any other work, have I seen an accurate description of the cigar of Trinidad. It is of a lightish brown colour, from an inch and half to two inches long, with perfectly

transparent lace-looking wings, of a delicate texture. Every evening, almost as soon as we sat down to dinner, the insect settled on some tree or shrub close to the house, and began a sort of rattling whistle, or rather a ringing, chirping sound,—first very weak, and then louder; this he repeats three times, the last time the loudest, when suddenly a complete band of choristers begin—at first not very loud, but swelling out, and increasing, to the effectual stoppage of all conversation, and even making it impossible while it lasts, for the servants to hear one word that is said to them. It is excessively ridiculous to see all at a stand during the time this deafening noise continues, which is generally about two or three minutes. There is then a dead silence for perhaps five minutes, and just as the ear begins to recover from the deafening concert, a second act begins; and so it goes on, sometimes until nine p.m.

Nature is altogether more gigantic in Trinidad than in St. Vincent. The cockroaches are of extraordinary size; and during the evening,

are extremely troublesome, flying about, dashing against the lamps and shades of the candles with great force, and occasionally slapping one most unceremoniously on the face. The mosquitoes also are larger, stronger, and more tormenting than those of St. Vincent. The sand-flies, though not very numerous near town, did great execution; and altogether, the nervous sensation as regards reptiles and insects, is kept in a more lively state of excitement in Trinidad. One evening an enormous crappaud got into the room while we were at dinner, and made no small disturbance,—the gentlemen happened to be dining out, and I believe we cut rather a ludicrous figure, as we all jumped up on the seats of our chairs to avoid the unpleasant intruder.

I had now been about a month in Trinidad; and was already forced to admit, that the society of Port of Spain was greatly superior to that of St. Vincent, and the style of entertainment, &c. very different. One cause of this was, the superiority of the servants; but

let it be well understood that I speak of the town only, and not of the country.

Mentioning this difference, one day, to the Chief Justice, he related to me, in corroboration of my opinion, a circumstance that had happened at St. Vincent before he settled in Trinidad. There was a dinner given by a club, to the ladies in Kingstown. They dined upon the green in tents; the Governor proposed after dinner, that the cold turkeys, fowls and hams, &c., should be taken to the nearest gentleman's house, and that they should adjourn there and give the ladies a dance. The nearest house happened to be Mr. Warner's, who was then a barrister in St. Vincent's. Mrs. W. took the trouble of seeing the arrangements made for supper; and one negro boy was left in the upper gallery, where it was laid out, to take care of it. After the dancing had ended, the party went up to supper,—but alas! supper there was none: every article had disappeared; nothing was left but a few empty platters. Every inquiry was made; but of course that

clever personage, Mr. Nobody, or Jumbee, was the thief. Next morning, an old faithful servant of Mr. Warner's found the bones of the feast scattered here and there all through a neighbouring cane-piece; the fragments of the dishes, also were found; for they had literally tossed the supper dishes and all, over the windows into this cane-piece. This was rather a daring piece of impudence; but the lesser kinds of impudence, as I have already remarked, are common wherever there are negro servants. Negroes understand better than any set of people I ever saw, a species of annoyance which, though it is impossible not to see that the act has been premeditated, yet can be passed off so well as a mistake, that you have not the power of even giving them a reproof for it. As an example: a lady, who had a large ceremonious party at supper, was rather shocked when she took her seat at the head of her table, to find a sheet upon it instead of a table cloth. She asked the head servant next day, how he could do such a thing, as she had

given him a table cloth; he admitted that he had received it, but he said that he saw some sheets lying beside it, and "he no know, he tink sheet as good as table cloth." The fact was, the servant was offended at something, and on all these occasions such modes of retaliation are common.

Trinidad negroes are quite as dishonest as they are in St. Vincent, and I think have a little shame on being convicted. I recollect one day, at Belmont, upon our return from a drive, one of our party missed a handkerchief. The carriage was searched, but it was not to be found; the servants who had attended us were asked if they had seen it,—and the young lady to whom it belonged was about to put up quietly with her loss, when a very faithful female negro servant, who had nursed all the children of the family, walked away, saying, "I'll get it." She returned in a few minutes with it. "Where did you find it?" said I. "Misses, me put me hand in L's. pocket, I knowed very well who 'd have it." There was

a lad of about fifteen, in a family I knew, who persisted he found gold joes under a tree, and that he believed the tree "growd 'em." The old Spanish law, which had never been altered up to the period of my being in Trinidad, though it may perhaps now be changed, was a much milder code as regarded master and slave, than that of any English colony. It is but fair however to state, that though the laws of St. Vincent were not so mild, yet the inclination of the masters of slaves rendered it of little consequence to them, for the receiving of slave evidence under proper limitations was as practically followed up in St. Vincent, as if it had been the legal code of the island. In Trinidad there was even then, a positive law, that every slave upon paying his own price at a fair valuation, might if he chose immediately claim his freedom. Now this was an excellent law, because independently altogether of justice, it constituted an incitement to the slave to work with industry: that is, if he happened to have any wish for freedom,—a wish by the way, I

never heard of in St. Vincent, unless by the term free, be understood *free time*, with all the allowances of a slave. The greatest boon that could be conferred on a St. Vincent slave, was to let him remain a slave with all his allowances; his grounds, house, clothing, &c. and have his *own time free*. Many good and attached negroes in St. Vincent had this favour bestowed upon them; and they judged very wisely, for it enabled them to get rapidly rich, and at the same time in sickness or old age, they had a sure provision for themselves.

In Port of Spain, it may be advantageous for a domestic slave to free himself; because no servant in town can make so much money as if he were free, and either rented or possessed, in right of his wife (a slave) a piece of land. The return for the most trifling labour on land [in Trinidad is so great, owing to the richness of the soil, that I know of no situation, free or slave, in town, that can bring the same income as the cultivation of vegetables and fruit. But when I was in Trinidad, it was customary



(though I am not sure, but rather think it was law), that a slave might come to his master, and paying a certain part of his purchase-money, and agreeing at a future period to pay the remainder, promise so many days in the week to serve his master, or at all events so much time, until he had paid him all. But no sooner was this partial freedom secured, than the master was completely in their power, for there was no getting them to work the time promised to the master,—though they worked for themselves: and thus the master was cheated out of both the remaining work and money promised. I conceive it completely false kindness in a master to pass over such conduct as this. If a master cannot afford to give liberty to his slave (no uncommon case, because if he did he must after be unable to meet his engagements), surely in such circumstances he ought to have had some way through the law, if not of forcing the negro to labour—for I believe that to be impossible—at least of punishing him, for the sake of deterring others.

Many such instances of dishonesty came under my notice: nothing is more detrimental to the well-being of society than carelessness as to the performance of a promise; and as the negroes, generally speaking, are strict enough in exacting the performance of one in their favour, such conduct is owing not to ignorance, but to a deliberate want of honesty.

I had now become very anxious to see our future abode. I had anticipated a good deal of difficulty; but on the other hand, I was very enthusiastic as to the much greater opportunity I should have of doing good to the negroes upon the estate in the retirement of the country, than I could hope to effect in town. Not that I considered, even independently of the personal pleasure I had received, that my time had been altogether misspent at Belmont. I had seen a good deal of the general society of the town and its vicinity, and there are many useful lessons in this world, which can only be gained by mixing in it.

We set out for Laurel-Hill on a very charming

morning, accompanied by the judge. Passing through part of the town, we soon got on the road to St. Joseph's; which continues excellent as far as St. Joseph's, seven miles from Port of Spain. In some places it resembled an English road, but then there were continual peeps of cane pieces; and the palm, cocoa nut, orange, and lime trees, dissipated the illusion. Mr. C. pointed out to me, soon after leaving town, the place where he had been on guard, when the Spanish governor was brought into the British in 1797; and he also shewed us where the treasure was found when he was sent to look for it, with Captain Rhind and a brother lieutenant, with a company of the 53d regiment. An Irishman of the name of Malony, a baker in St. Joseph's, who bore no good-will to the Spaniards, shewed them the plantations where the treasure was buried, and they brought some waggon-loads of dollars into Port of Spain. The dollars were ultimately returned to the Spanish government. After passing St. Joseph's, on a rising ground, to the left, the roads became

rather deep from the heavy rains we had had ; we passed several estates, and some neat looking houses. The house of El Dorado II. struck me as a very English-looking place, and extremely beautiful. The view at the ford of Tacaragua river, is decidedly English scenery ; and such as know the river Teme, at the village of Bransford, in Worcestershire, will find a strong resemblance. We now passed Paradise estate, and soon after turned up the avenue to Laurel-Hill.

Those who fancy a fine trim English avenue to a West Indian estate, will be in most cases wofully disappointed. There cannot be a better specimen than this, of the great difference there is between telling the truth, and yet not telling the whole truth. I might with the utmost correctness say we drove along an avenue nearly three quarters of a mile in length, with a lime fence on either side, and lime trees at short intervals ; some in blossom, others with green fruit, and some loaded with their yellow treasures. This would read well ; but

indeed, with all the deductions which the telling of the whole truth will make, it was very beautiful,—but still, it was an avenue nearly in a state of nature: the fences sometimes thick, sometimes thin; at times high, and in other places all broken down. The road was grown over with grass, and the deep ruts of the sugar-cart wheels rendered skilful driving absolutely necessary: many a juicy lime we crushed in driving up; and I could not help thinking what the good folks of Glasgow would have given for such, to aid them in the manufacture of their favourite punch.

At the end of the avenue the ground rose suddenly into a little hill, upon which were two small wooden houses, such as West India planters are well enough contented with; but to the European, they seem at first uncouth abodes. We had a small dining room, and another room to which we ascended by a few steps, as a drawing room; a bed-chamber, and dressing room entering from it, with a separate entrance also. About fifty feet off,

there were two bed rooms—a larger and a smaller; and a light closet, which served as a store for medicines, &c. for the negroes. The house rested upon wooden posts, rather more than two feet from the ground; a good preventive against damp, but serving also as a shelter for snakes, and all sorts of reptiles. There was also a small gallery in front of the left-hand house. A cellar at the end of the one house, and a store-room and servants' pantry at the end of the other, with a kitchen near it; but a separate building, as it always is in the West Indies.

These houses were like the greater number in the West Indies, with open rafters, and no glass windows,—only a wooden shutter, pushed up during the day by a long stick, to admit air and light; and shut at night, by withdrawing the stick, and putting in a hook to an eye attached to the ledge of the window-frame. Latterly we had glass put in the windward windows; before that improvement, if it rained heavy, we had only the choice between dark-

ness and suffocation, or else, having all the floor of the room deluged. These are a few of the luxuries of a planter's life, which seem not to be known in Britain.

## CHAPTER XVII.

*Description of the Laurel-Hill estate—Scenery and views—Trees and birds—Orders in council—Drivers—Instruction of the children on the estate; and some detail of their progress—Negro curiosity.*

I was nevertheless well pleased by the aspect of our future home. Those who have an eye for the beauties of nature, will not miss a fine house, when they have such a prospect to rest the eye upon as I had. There was a noble hog-plum tree in front of the house, some fifty feet high; it branched out in great beauty, and there was still some fruit upon it, though now the middle of September. The fruit is a bright yellow, like the English magnum bo-



num; irregular, elongated, and fully an inch long. The stone is so large, that the pulp in which it is enclosed is very small, and compared with the stone, is out of all proportion: this remark applies to all the plum tribe of the West Indies. The flavour is very delightful; but no doubt a skilful horticulturist might improve it. Hog-plum trees abound in Trinidad, and wherever this is the case, there are plenty of wild boars,—an excellent species of game.

The view from the house in front was, for a land view, very extensive: there was a good deal of cultivation, and beyond that a dark thick forest, many parts of which I understood had never been trodden by the foot of man. The landscape terminated by the mountain of Tumana to the south-east: this mountain is generally the refuge of run-a-way negroes.

The pasture for the cattle of the estate was one of the most lovely objects; it commenced at the foot of the hill, and I could hardly believe it possible that the hand of man had had nothing to do with the arrangement of the

majestic trees that rose here and there ; some single, others grouped in the most perfect style of picturesque beauty—a little clear stream ran across the pasture. This is always an ornament in any country to such a scene, but it is doubly enviable in a tropical climate.

On one side of the pasture were the negro houses. Two rows of wattled mud cottages, white-washed and thatched, with megass ; very similar in external appearance to the cottages all over Devonshire, only they have no such chimneys as are common in England. There were some fine almond trees, in the road between the negro houses, which afforded them shade during the heat of the day.

The works for the manufactory of the sugar and rum, were at the foot of the hill, to the right of the house ; the hill sloped gradually down to the river—an inconsiderable one indeed, but quite sufficient even then for many useful purposes ; it was beautifully clear, and some fine plantains and bananas grew on the banks of it. There was a pretty cottage by the water

side to be occupied by the washerwomen: it looked as white as snow, when contrasted with the deep green line of wood, which rose to a great height, and served as a boundary between the Laurel-Hill and the Paradise estates.

To the north, or back of the house, the ground rose gently; and gradually became more abrupt—one height rising above another, covered with brushwood, and numerous fine forest trees. There was a winding path, which even the fear of snakes and wild boars could not deter one from exploring, and which resembled exceedingly some of the lovely wild scenery of Hawthorn-den, near the village of Rosslyn, in Scotland: and in this direction something that might almost be called a mountain, terminated our view. This mountain was covered with impervious wood, excepting an angular portion near the top, which was an open natural savannah, and which bore a crop of tall rank grass, such as is common to tropical countries. This had a singular and fine effect.

In fact, as regarded nature, the place was a

perfect paradise of beauty. But the canes were in a sad state; every thing required the hand of industrious man; and the difficulty was, where to begin reform, where there seemed hardly anything fit to remain as it was.

There was something too within doors that promised well for a leisure hour, for Mr. Warner had kindly left a number of books—a great luxury in a country where it is so difficult to procure them; these, added to our own stock, made us very independent.

A great many negroes came up to see us the day of our arrival; others delayed till the ensuing day; but by that time, all had paid their compliments to us, excepting two old women who were too feeble to walk up the hill. To these I subsequently paid many a visit.

I was glad to find my piano-forte in safety, after a drive of fourteen miles in a cart; it however required tuning, so that we spent our evening in chatting over the events of the day. In adverting to the Irish baker who discovered where the Spanish treasure was buried, the

Judge informed me he had made himself the hero of a most ludicrous scene: "Two gentlemen of St. Joseph's had intentionally annoyed and vexed him, and a quarrel ensued,—Malony vowing vengeance against them. He had a hut in the mountains, whither he occasionally retired for recreation. These gentlemen going out upon an excursion to see that part of the island, lost their way, and were in danger of starving. Seeing at last to their great delight, something like a human habitation, they approached it, and asked if they could get any thing to eat or drink, as they were in a state of great exhaustion: imagine their feelings, when they were answered in the affirmative with the greatest civility, by their old enemy Malony. Starvation, however, conquered pride, and they were fain to accept the offer of a dinner. In the meantime Malony, to complete the farce, begged them to come in and rest, and have a little rum and water, while dinner was being cooked. Dinner at length made its appearance: it was an excellent ragout, and not only looked

well, but tasted admirably. The travellers, delighted and refreshed, thanked Malony gratefully for his attentions; and added, 'whenever you come to town, you will make our house your home.' Malony heard them very quietly, and looking archly at them said, 'Indeed, gentlemen, you need not be thanking me so much, may be you don't know what you've had for dinner?' So saying, he turned round the door on its hinges, exhibiting to the grateful travellers the skin of an immense yellow, full-grown monkey! They did not dare to remonstrate:—probably Malony gave the only thing he had to bestow; though no doubt, Irish humour and a spice of revenge had made him not over-scrupulous about the matter."

Next morning, the first after our arrival, I arose at break of day to enjoy the cool fresh air of the country. I was more than ever struck by the beauty of the line of wood on the Paradise estate: the trees were exceedingly lofty, and literally festooned from top to bottom by wild vines; thus fastening the branches

of the different trees together, and presenting the most gay and brilliant assemblage of blossoms, varying from every shade of pink and purple to the purest white. These blossoms are larger, but very similar in size and form, to the convolulus-major of Great Britain,—some of these vines run up as high as fifty feet.

On one side of the house, and close to it, was a very large Pois-Doux tree: it has a papilionaceous purple blossom, resembling the everlasting pea, and bears not very large pods, with small brownish-black peas, enclosed in a sort of white cotton-looking pulp, which is very sweet. Children are fond of sucking it, and it is perfectly harmless; but to birds it is a great attraction,—they open the shell and pick out the pulp, but evidently do not eat the seeds, as they are found lying under the tree. Every morning this tree was literally like an aviary, so full was it of birds of all shapes, hues, and sizes. Many were exceedingly beautiful in their plumage; but the parrots, gay as they look, make a horrible chattering, and are far from

being agreeable companions. One of the prettiest birds is the Louis D'or,—thus called because it is of so peculiarly a bright golden colour. There were many beautiful birds of different shades of purple and blue; but one I observed more particularly, of a bright light blue, which looked very gay, perched on the same bough with a Louis D'or.

Few of these lovely creatures had any note: the "*Qu'est que dit,*" indeed, repeats something very like those words distinctly enough; and I never could learn any other name for this bird. But after all, the handsomest shape and the gayest plumage are poor compensations for the melodious song of birds; and how one's heart would have bounded, could one have heard the note of a blackbird, or a sweet Scotch mavis!

There was one thing we could not admire; and that was the sand-flies, which had done such havoc on the younger members of the family, that it was quite distressing to see them. We all suffered severely; but nothing compared with the children, who, in a few days,



had their faces so swollen, that a stranger would have supposed they were labouring under confluent smallpox; and at last their ancles and feet were in such a state that they could not walk. This attack did not subside for some weeks; and though for the future nothing so severe occurred as this first seasoning, still the sand-fly is at all times a most tormenting annoyance, and is so small that no mosquito-curtain protects you.

The mosquitoes were abundant and active, but you may, by great care at night, exclude the greater number of them, though not always all; and one persevering fellow will keep singing, and eluding all your efforts at destroying him, until, in despair you yield to fatigue and sleep; when he instantly begins to feast upon you, and you rise next morning worn out with these pests of a tropical climate.

The order in council for the improvement of the slaves of Trinidad had been some time in force. The driver is neither more nor less than an upper servant, promoted to the situation of

superintendant over the negroes who are employed in field labour. He is selected from the others for his superior intelligence, and his general knowledge of the culture of the cane; his own character, too, is necessarily taken into the account, as the common field negro looks up to the driver as an example in every point of view; and he has always numbers to watch him, and report any false step he may make. They reply to him with the addition of Sir, which custom also obtains from the field negro to head tradesmen and boiler-men; and their wives and daughters have precedence next to the driver's wife and family.

The driver in Trinidad merely superintends and points out where they are wrong, and endeavours to keep up some order and regularity. "The driver" is a name obnoxious to British ears, and I think it would have been good policy had the colonists never employed such a term. The black overseer would have been a better designation; because Britons naturally associate *a driver*, with the idea of a man

driving cattle to a fair with a whip. Now, in point of fact, the driver is no driver; for he precedes, and does not follow the negroes to their work,—which if he drove them, he must do. In Trinidad he carries neither stick, whip, nor other such emblem of his office: he stands behind them at work, precisely the same way as a foreman does in England, and a grieve in Scotland. If they are incorrigible, he can report them to the white overseer,—and he again to the master,—or he may, and often does, report direct to the master: this plan was always followed at Laurel Hill. The driver has no power to punish in any way, whether by corporal punishment or confinement: his power is restricted to what I have already mentioned, and is exactly that of a farmer in England, or of a grieve in Scotland. A white or free overseer, might legally order corporal punishment; but this could not take place without another free person being present, nor could any punishment exceed twenty-five stripes.

If any slave considered himself aggrieved

either as regarded punishment or any thing else, he had a right to apply to the commandant of the quarter, or to the protector of slaves, whichever he might prefer. Every negro had one day in the week to work his provision-grounds. There was a market every Sunday, closed however at ten a.m., and a market every Thursday,—in order, as far as possible, to check by degrees the fondness for Sunday markets, and to lead finally to their abolition,—a blessed change, which has been effected in Trinidad, and also in St. Vincent. I never saw any of the white population who did not deplore the Sunday market; they were suffering from the error, nay the sin, of their ancestors, who had ever permitted such an arrangement,—and which when once established, although only by custom, is not so easily stopped as some people imagine.

The colonists were placed in more difficulty on this subject than people at home can well understand, for let it be recollected that in Port of Spain, meat killed however late on Saturday,

would be totally unfit for use on Sunday; and even in England, during the mackarel season, where in many places it is a harvest for the poor, it is permitted to be sold before church hours,—and however some people may disapprove of this, I cannot help thinking that where there is so much suffering from the high price of provisions, and when Providence at one particular season sends a supply, it is our duty to let the poor have the full benefit of it, and not to allow wholesome food to be wasted because it is Sunday. Such is the heat in Port of Spain, at some seasons, that fish caught in the morning are unfit for use by the dinner hour, which is necessarily about seven. Business goes on steadily until four, and often five, p.m., and by the time that a drive or ride for the preservation of health is over, it is nearly seven. There is a weekly market at St. Joseph's, and at the village of Arima, which is six miles to the eastward of Laurel-Hill. There are also down the coast, the small towns of San Fernando de Naparima and St. Juan de Aricagua,

and several other small villages throughout the island, where the negroes dispose of their surplus produce. I believe there was a little ebullition of feeling on the part of the slave population, when the Sunday market was abolished, but government was quite right to persist in it; it was an intolerable nuisance to every one who had a spark of Christian feeling. I often talked to the negroes on this subject; and their sole ground of real objection was, that they did not like dressing in all their "grandee buckra clothes," (as they call their holiday dress) twice a week—that is, Sunday and week-day also,—and all negroes like to go smart to market. There are negroes who go to market not very tidy in their appearance; but then these are generally not the best characters. I uniformly remarked, that good negroes never liked to go to market without being a little dandyish in their costume.

We thought it prudent not to interfere the first Sunday we were in the country; but to wait until we saw what were the habits of the

people. We were fourteen miles from any Protestant church,—a distance that rendered our going quite out of the question, especially in that climate. Mr. C. told the people he would read the morning service at eleven, and would be happy to see them attend, as there was room enough for them in the gallery of the house. They had, more than once, attended very decorously to the Judge reading the morning service, when he had passed a Sunday on the estate, previous to our arrival. But rapid changes were then accomplishing in the character of the negro. The alterations enforced by the orders in council, had been too sudden for the mind of almost the best and most intelligent negro. They were possessed with the idea, that the master was no longer at liberty even to advise them, although that advice was given in the kindest and most disinterested manner. We read the service at the hour appointed, and not one attended. With the children of the estate, we viewed the matter in a different light, and ordered them to come up

in the evening about seven. I think we mustered fifteen, from the age of about five to sixteen years. Some of these were my old pupil. I found all the Laurel-Hill children at once readily answered all the ordinary questions which were put to them: they had more or less been in the Roman Catholic chapel at Arima. What shall we say of the apathy of the Protestant church of England, when we find the negroes who attend the Roman Catholic chapel, always so much better informed than those left by the Episcopalian church to glean an uncertain instruction? Some of these children crossed themselves when they answered who the Saviour was; and also when I put the question. But I did not confuse their ideas by putting a stop to what they had been taught to consider right, and what, in their present state of knowledge, was immaterial. Of a Holy Spirit it might be said they had no idea,—their only notion of a spirit was confined to the word spirit—"a spirit, or Jumbee, the Devil;" so that we had not only to teach, but to unteach—



a still more difficult task. The Catholic children could all say the Lord's Prayer, and the Belief, as they called it.

As I know of no catechism, quite so well adapted as it ought to be, for the first instruction of negroes, I took my own plan; which was to relate the simple story of the creation of the world; of man—of his state when innocent, and how he fell from it, and was driven by God out of the garden of Eden. I related this twice; simply and slowly, in their *patois*; and as I went on, I paused and asked them if they "savey" what I said, (comprehended me); and if not, to stop me and ask questions; which I assured them I liked very much. I spoke kindly and cheerfully to them. One fine lad about fourteen, Laurel-Hill J—k, said, "Misses if I'd been Eve, I'd kill a snake dead." They were all alive to what I told them, and interested in it; and to give them some incitement, I promised them I would shew them some pictures of what I had told them, if they answered well to-morrow evening: and that I

expected them up every night. The following evening my little pupils returned, full of anxiety to say well; and to see the pictures. They answered very intelligently; and from their answers, they had evidently given their understanding to the work. One of the St. Vincent boys, who had declined learning to read; and whom it was impossible to instruct in any way, so sulky was he and so averse to apply; all at once changed, and became the most steady, attentive pupil I had, excepting Laurel-Hill J—k. There was not a great difference in their ages, and they were then both house boys, and consequently always together. It was very interesting to see these two lads watching with eager countenances, when a question was asked, to see whether his companion could answer or not, that he might have the pleasure of doing so. I arranged them in a class; and they took up the plan without any difficulty; but I told them no unfairness would be permitted—no speaking before their turn—no whispering to a favourite—no signs whatever;

and every one so offending, should be instantly placed at the bottom of the class. I thought such regulations might be useful in teaching them a little self control; and I was strict to the very letter of the law. I told them I recollected my promise of shewing them the pictures, and I took this favourable moment of teaching them what a promise meant. They had done what I required, in answering correctly; and of course I was bound to keep my promise to them. I shewed them, in Mrs. Trimmer's little Scripture prints, those applicable to the story of the preceding evening, and they were exceedingly pleased. I then proceeded to explain the state of man after his fall; and the remedy for his helplessness provided by God; and I promised the little classes, that if they answered well the following evening, I would tell them a story. The next evening came, the answers were quick and intelligent, and after some farther instruction, they all with one consent said, "now misses, the tory." So squatting themselves down in a half circle, with open

eyes and mouths, I read to them, with those omissions and alterations which I knew to be necessary for their comprehending it, Miss Edgeworth's story of the "honest boy and the thief." If that excellent authoress could have peeped across the Atlantic, at the little animated circle of happy faces of those negro children; she would have had her reward. To proceed with these details would of course be tedious; but I may state generally, that the children became tolerably well informed upon the contents of the Bible; the stories gleaned from which, read and explained, greatly interested them; and by means of which many of the Scripture truths may be advantageously explained and illustrated. I cannot but entertain a hope that these agreeable labours have left behind them some beneficial results.

After some time I offered, as a favour, to teach any to read who chose it; but I determined never to press this: because I am satisfied, however desirable the knowledge of reading may be, that a great deal of good may

be done without reading. Three or four accepted the offer—but this appeared dry work to them ; and I must honestly confess, that hardly any progress was made. As I had often taught little children, and was rather fond of the employment, I cannot but believe that my want of success was owing to the natural indisposition of the negro to apply, except when there is a very lively excitement of the mind. I endeavoured to produce this excitement, by telling them what a blessing it would be to them to read the book of God for themselves, and all the beautiful stories I had told them, and to find them all true ; but even this had little or no effect, for the answer used always to be, “ Misses, you no peak lie, me savey dat well.” “ Misses always keep promise to a we.”

I then shifted my tactics, and pointed out to them, that reading would make them clever ; and that they would rise in the world, and be as they term it, “ a head man.” But I made so little progress in my attempt, that it is not worth reporting. Some few indeed could spell

out their words, but those who read with great difficulty are not much the wiser ; the attention is absorbed on the letters, not in attending to the sense. Mental arithmetic they made progress in ; and used to correct each other, and take places with great spirit.

They were often in the habit of asking questions about “ home,” as they all call Great Britain, and were exceedingly disappointed when I told them I had never seen massa King George ; and were not satisfied until they found that their own massa had seen him frequently. Laurel-Hill J—k, was quite pleased when he heard that massa King George was a very tall handsome massa. “ Massa, do he tand so ? ” said he, drawing himself up and rising on tip-toe—looking as he imagined, “ every inch a king.” The quickness of this boy’s memory was astonishing. His father’s name happened to be Hector ; and sometimes in jest, Dr. C. used, when J—k came into the room, to repeat the lines upon Hector and Andromache. The lad one day looking very full of meaning, said

“ me can say so too, massa,” and he began to spout the lines in the exact manner the doctor had done. It is true he could not finish the quotation, but such anecdotes prove there is no want of quickness in a negro. Nevertheless there is a restlessness, an impatience of steady application, and a dislike to every species of knowledge, where the outset is dry, that I never found in any European in any rank of life, or under any circumstances.

Some singular notions I found among the negroes, which it was next to impossible to eradicate; but they were generally harmless. Among others, I found the Trinidad negroes, young and old, with few exceptions, thought that when God made the world, he shook the earth from off his hands into the water, and that made the West Indies.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*The vine gang on an estate—Little runaways—  
Deception—Punishment of negro girls by their  
mother—Infant habits—Court martial so called  
—Negro jealousy.*

It is the custom for all children in Trinidad from four years of age upwards, to enter what is called the "vine gang;" that is, they pick here and there, among the fences and cane pieces, wild vines for the sheep, under the inspection of some trusty elderly female negro. They continue under this regulation until eight or nine; when, at the season for weeding the young canes, they get a hoe put into their hands, proportioned to their size. This work is performed by them infinitely better than by grown people. The children work at first only three hours a-day with the hoe, and that not



without intermission ; the rest of the day they pick wild vines with their old comrades. As they get older and stronger, they work more and more with the hoe ; and when at sixteen, they are considered fit for the common field duty.

This, however, is uniformly regulated by the health and strength of the individual ; and it must be borne in mind, that sixteen in the West Indies, is quite equal to eighteen in Britain.

Boys have many intermediate employments ; such as driving mules ; and if the estate's mill be a cattle one, he probably drives the mule in the mill. I never saw any of the young people, at six o'clock in the evening, when their work was done, who seemed tired, or disposed to sit down ; on the contrary, they were always dancing about and full of life and fun.

The old woman who, on the Laurel-Hill estate, took care of the vine gang, was a very respectable native African, of great intelligence. I made a point of hearing, in their presence,

from her, how they had behaved during the day. I allowed them to disprove, *if they could*, the statements she made; but Mammy J. was a very steady person; and knowing well that I would have no favourites, she was generally found to give a faithful account.

There was one little boy, of nearly seven years of age: he was the sole instance among all my pupils of such apparently dogged sulkiness, that he would not speak at all. His first pretence was, that he did not know one word of English; but I obviated this excuse, by making his sister translate, what was said in English, into his French patois; but speak he would not; his improvement seemed hopeless. Day after day, Mammy J. complained that "D. was one very bad pic-a-ninny—he no gather as many vines in one day as oder do in an hour,"

One afternoon, walking down a cane piece with my children and their governess, we met J. and the vine gang; she addressed me, "Misses, you no see D., he wicked too much; he run away dis morning, and me no see 'em da whole

day; me tell he mammy and he daddy, they no see 'em; abowshee (overseer), and ebery one, and nobody see 'em. Misses, what me do?" Of course she had done already all that was possible; and I had no fear but that D. would make his appearance at night. We continued our walk a little way, when observing something like a human being moving among the tall canes, I put out my hand and caught him. I had not time to speak a word, when the little fellow, in as good English as any negro ever speaks, said, "Misses, misses, oh! please no tell Mammy J., for she tell me daddy and he go cob me." What made you run away all day?—your father and mother, and every one are hunting for you. Suppose a good big snake had come, what would you have done? "Misses, me no feared for da snake; but misses, misses, no let Mammy J. tell me daddy." I said, I shall give you up to Mammy J., and she will take you to your father or mother—I have nothing to do with punishing you, she must take care of you until six o'clock, and then take

you home. This she did, and I believe his father administered a much more severe whipping than he would have got, had he been under the *old regime*, and punished by the order of his master. Now this child had for months carried on the farce of being unable to speak one word of English; and had in fact completely succeeded in imposing upon me. But next lesson, when he came, I said, "Well D., I now know you can speak English when it serves your own purpose; and if you do not answer as the others do, I tell you very fairly that I will not only give you no reward, but I will tell your daddy." These last words had a most powerful effect; from that moment D. answered in English; but to the close he was a sulky untoward scholar. The propensity to run off and hide, is both dangerous to old and young negroes, and extremely troublesome to the master.

Another little fellow, just turned seven, but of a very different disposition from D., being uncommonly smart, active, and intelligent—in fact a little man in miniature, had several times

run away. He had that rare blessing among negroes—a most affectionate father and mother. The mother, when a little girl, had had this propensity; which, in fact, was a kind of disease. In every other respect she had been, according to the common meaning of the phrase, “a good negro.” This little boy had been born when the mother had made one of her excursions in the woods in St. Vincent; she and the child were found together—both did well, and she never once again ran away. But at five years old, S. had begun the same tricks, and his good father had caught him, and whipt him more than once. Whether the report of wild hogs, big snakes, &c. had operated for some time as a preventive, I know not; but S., though taking flight occasionally during the day, always contrived to fall in with Mammy J. before six o’clock; and, moreover, he always brought such a quantity of vines with him, that as J. said, “what me do with the pic-a-ninny; he only no walk wid us—he bring plenty a vine.” But one evening about seven o’clock, when all

was quiet, his father and mother presented themselves at the door, saying that "S. was absent without leave; and if he sleep in a bush, massa, he'll may be, be killed wid da snake." I mention this, that I may give an example of the extraordinary effrontery of little negro boys in telling lies. This little fellow, after having been absent a week, was found in Port of Spain, and brought to Laurel-Hill. "S." said his master, "please tell me why you ran off?" I shall never forget the sturdy determined look of the little fellow, as he eyed his master, saying, "Massa, me no run away—me tell you true tory me, Massa: me go pic a vine in the plantain walk with Mamma J. and the pic-a-ninny, and massa dere come a pirit; now he just lif me up massa high so—jump wid me in he arm, from one plantain tree to anoder, massa—pirit den take me all a way to Port a Spain; an I've been down a Naperima and seen it afore me daddy! and so he continued to detail his adventures until he was caught; making the spirit answerable, however, for all that had taken place.

The little run-away was delivered to his father and punished by him. The parents of those who took an interest in their children, complained very much of the order in council, which prevented their girls being punished by the order of the master. Strange as it may seem, they did not like to trust themselves to punish their child; and that, too, from the fear that they might punish too severely. Let one, out of many examples suffice. S., a girl of about fourteen, was indisputably guilty of most disgraceful and immoral conduct. Her mother was, in this one respect, particularly correct, and had a high sense of her honour; at least from the time I knew her. She was a creole of St. Vincent,—past the meridian of life,—a perfect Amazon in strength and figure,—possessing a sound understanding, and in many respects a superior person. But she was possessed also with one of the worst of tempers. She could steal too; but she was so clever and so cunning, [that it was next to impracticable to prove it. Nor had she any objection to her

children stealing, if they did it adroitly ; the sin, in her eyes, was in being so silly as to let it be discovered. F. herself came to us, and told me of her daughter's conduct ; and begged that her massa would punish her. I said, " F., he can have her put in the stocks." " But, misses," said she, " what signify tock to neger, —S. no mind tock dat ;" and she bit her nail, and spit it out. Her master was called, and he said, " That is all I can do ; and to talk to her, and try to convince her how improperly she has behaved." F. looked very grave ; and said, " Well, massa, better for S. had you punish her ; for may be I punish her, and no top as you would." Her master told her she must not attempt such conduct ; for if she acted to S. as he had known her act before towards her elder daughter, she would be subject to be sent to the commandant of the quarter, and punished for cruelty to her child.

F. promised she would be quiet ; but seeing her irritation, and knowing her temper, I kept the girl out of the mother's way until it was



bedtime ; and as F. had promised to punish her, without going to extremes, S. returned to her mother's to bed. Late at night, however, when all was quiet, did this woman rise, and beat her daughter most cruelly. I do not mean to say that the girl did not deserve punishment, and that it might not perhaps be the best way of deterring her from such conduct in future ; I only mean to assert, and I could enforce the truth of the assertion by a multitude of other examples, that in the greater number of cases young female negroes are now exposed to ten times greater severity of corporal punishment than they were when the master was the judge. This girl was so cruelly beaten, that next day she was unable to move. I dared not have shewn her any attention, or taken her from her mother's house, whom she assisted in washing and bleaching. Her elder sister, a sensible girl, who also was employed in washing, said to me, " Misses no say noting to me mammy ; if you say anyting to me mammy, she go lick her again."

F., the girl's mother, was not an ignorant woman; she had received much instruction from her youth upwards—had attended the Methodist chapel regularly for years in St. Vincent; and could talk very religiously. But it was nothing beyond talk: although a creole negro, she was in some respects as much a savage as if she had been imported from Africa the day before.

I have seldom met so mild a disposition, in a negro, as in Laurel-Hill J. He was exceedingly affectionate and obliging; he had, however, his failings;—he was rather artful, and withal a great coward; and like most such, a great braggadocia. One evening standing at the door talking, and dilating upon his great love for massa; he at last went so far as to say, that there was nothing his massa could ask him to do, but he would do it at once—he had so great love for him. So massa, just to try him, said, “Well J., I have a letter to go to Belmont—now set off like a good boy, and take it immediately.” “Yes, massa, yes, me

know; me rise very early, and go a Belmont.”  
“That is not what I mean; I intend you to go now.” “To it, now, massa? not just now; by and by, massa, me run when da sun come.”  
“The sun come!—why J. the sun is just gone down.” “Yes, massa, and he soon come up again; and den massa, me run all a way to Belmont.” “But J., ’t is this very time, now, I wish you to go.” “Well then,” said J., “E. (meaning his fellow servant in the house) E. will take me on he back; he trong, massa; he run, and den we go a Belmont wid da paper.” These little details are truly very insignificant; but it is the insignificant that is often too much neglected, in speaking of the character and condition of a population.

These boys, being domestics, were often in the habit of asking questions about home. On the occasion of the arrival of a barrel of Scotch oatmeal, I was surprised at the curiosity they shewed to know what it was. I detailed to them, as I best could, the whole process from the sowing of a field of oats, to the return from

the mill. The next question was, "do white massa do all dat vorck?" "Not massas, but white men, plough as I have told you." I then shewed them a print of a man ploughing, sowing, and harrowing, in some of my children's books. "Oh!" said E., "D. and G. (naming two servants of Mr. Whitfield's, in St. Vincent, who had been in England), tell me white folk vorck hard too much in da cold too; and if dey no vorck, dey tarve: how would you like dat J.?"

Nothing astonished the young negroes more than looking through a telescope; or seeing the quicksilver rise in the thermometer. Notwithstanding all my asseverations to the contrary; "Jumbee," they said, "must be in the telescope." I shewed them how I could, by pushing it out or in, prevent or enable them to see; and that I had the whole of it at command, not "Jumbee." Then, how anything could move up and down, as quicksilver did, and that thing not be really alive, passed their belief. I do not think it advantageous to shew

those things unasked to negroes: for it seems to me to confound and bewilder them. But they had often seen me look down the avenue, and tell what was going on, when they could not do so with the naked eye; and they had seen my children raise the quicksilver by holding the bulb of the thermometer in their hand: this it was which attracted their attention, and led them to ask questions.

I found nothing more difficult than to get the little girls to sew, — they disliked it extremely. They learnt well enough; but they did not like sitting. One young coloured girl, of about fifteen, who could work very neatly, I hired to assist in needle work. I gave her some stockings to mend. In the evening she brought them all done, and nicely folded up; but when they were taken out to be used, it was found that she had cut off all that part of the toes which required mending; and had only mended the heels; which being very well done proved she knew how to go about the work. When I told her of it, she said “some one else

had done bad to him, no she." So there was no remedy, but to purchase new ones. Servants know you have no remedy against such conduct, and therefore do such things daily.

The youngest negro, almost as soon as it can stand, begins to dance and sing in its own way. As they get older, they improve in both of these native accomplishments: some of them have very quick ears for music. Very often, when I had finished their lessons for the evening, I sat down to play on the piano-forte. On such occasions they remained about the house, listening to the music; and if it happened to be of a kind that admitted of dancing, they were sure to avail themselves of it. They soon had a large addition of tunes added to their stock of negro airs; and I have heard sundry airs from Hadyn and Mozart, chanted by the boys when cleaning their knives, with astonishing accuracy. One of the most difficult propensities to check among negro children, is the habit of fighting with each other: and in checking this, I succeeded better than in many

other of my attempts. They got into the habit, whenever they disagreed among themselves, of coming up to Misses, often accompanied by Mammy J., and then the whole evidence was heard. I made a point of first hearing all the complainant had to say, and his witnesses, one after another; and then the defendant and his witnesses. I seldom failed in being able to pronounce a verdict to please all parties; because as they said, "Come up to misses; it all one to she, who right who wrong; she no love one pick-a-ninny more den anoder."

As for stealing, I found it impossible, in any way, altogether to break the young people of this negro habit; they seldom let slip a good opportunity of helping themselves.—When I was positively certain who was the thief, I told them so; and upon all such occasions there was this improvement, if improvement it could be called, that the article stolen was generally returned.

The clothing for the house-boys is expensive beyond belief; and there is no keeping them

clean or decent do what you may. A gentleman recently arrived from England, came to pay us a morning visit at Laurel-Hill. I rang the bell for one of the boys to bring glasses and some cool water: after waiting a long while, and repeatedly ringing, a little fellow of about ten years of age made his appearance. Without turning round to see which of the boys it was, I ordered the water and tumblers; when A. returned and placed them on the table, having on no clothing but his shirt. "I suppose you've been in your grounds, A.," said a lady present; who felt I believe like myself, a little ashamed at a stranger having such a first introduction to a planter's house. "No, misses, but me go a house for me trowsers; and mamma say dey all, ebery one, in da riber." Twelve pairs of good stout trowsers had this little lad, and yet not one pair left to wear. I have already said, that I succeeded tolerably well in restraining the quarrelling and cruel behaviour of the negro children towards each other; because when they did quarrel, it became at last



an amusement to come to me and hold "court-martial"—a term they borrowed from the elder negroes. But I could not stop their wanton cruelty to the brute creation—the delight they evidently took in torturing helpless animals. We had been exceedingly plagued by rats all over the house, so that we had even to beat them out of bed; and in the store-room they made sad havock. At last E. and J. proposed setting a trap: this was done; and it is utterly impossible to conceive the eagerness with which these boys waited my opening the lock of the store-room next morning. There was an immense rat caught, half strangled. "J.," I said, "if you are not afraid of lifting the trap, take it away, and destroy the poor creature—put it out of pain as fast as you can." "Yes, misses, me no fear 'em." About half an hour after, my children came crying to tell me that E. was very naughty; for that he and J. had got the rat behind the kitchen in the trap, and they were torturing it and cutting it with knives; and they could not bear to see such a

thing. I instantly went out, and found them at the work, exactly as described. I said, "Boys, how can you be so cruel?" "Cruel, misses, little misses fool too much; go cry for a tief and a ratta.—Misses, me let 'em know what it is to tief from my massa." This, I need scarcely say, was all art and hypocrisy, to cover their cruelty. All other animals which fell into their hands, shared the same fate as the rat. Snakes they always try to dispatch quickly, because they know their danger from them.

To return to the subject of those arbitrations, called by the negroes court-martial, of which I have just spoken. These were not confined to the children, but were very generally resorted to by negroes of all ages, for the settlement of their disputes. Among the most fertile of these disputes was jealousy; and, just to convey some idea of the multifarious duties which planters may be called upon to discharge, I will give an outline of two cases which were made the subject of these references. Soon after our coming to Laurel-Hill, S., a Laurel-Hill field

negress, and the mother of a large family, came up to have, as she termed it, a court-martial from massa. S. complained that A., a young St. Vincent negro, was a great coquette, and that she was trying to deprive her of her husband, B. W., a free American negro, and a rich man, with fine grounds on Laurel-Hill: he kept a house, and was a person of some consequence. A. was summoned, and B. W. also, with the witnesses on all sides; and it was fully proven that B. W. had been giving A. plantains and sundry other presents. Mr. C. had no authority over him; but gave him his best advice. A. also was cautioned, not to receive presents from B. W.; nor from any man who had a wife; and S. was perfectly satisfied and pleased, when she found that A.'s mother had whipped her for her imprudence.

C., the wife of K., was a remarkably plain negress,—some ten or twelve years older than her husband. She was economical almost to parsimony; a rare thing among negroes. R. was the handsomest negro I ever saw,—a fine face and noble commanding figure: his address was

really graceful; and he was withal known to be a great Philander, if not a gay deceiver. He liked C.'s good management—her well-worked grounds, and the care she took to keep him a “*dandy*.” She was proud of R., but had no confidence in him,—probably she was not far wrong in this; but he knew her temper, and was as cunning as a fox. He was one of the carters; and at the season when R. carted in the sugar to town, C. would often walk as far as the Tacaragua River to meet him; and to ascertain that, in his politeness, he had not taken up some young negress in his cart, to help her home to some estate in the neighbourhood. The report was, that R. often did so: certain it is that he staid often three and four hours longer than necessary; and that his mules came in quite worn out. Time after time did C. go and meet him; but nothing did she see, but R. and his mules. At length one night, he being unusually late, C. lost all patience; and, going to meet him, she encountered him at the end of the avenue, and asked where he had been?—“*Nowhere,*” was of

course the answer. When he got to the works, he took off his hat to get out a note he had received from the Judge; when C. saw inside, a woman's handkerchief. This was too much for C. to bear; she poured out a torrent of invective against R., who said he was n't going to fight a woman, but they'd go up to massa in the morning to have a court-martial,—and up they came. C. began with, "Massa, see dat;" and she spread out a common Madras handkerchief, such as the female negroes wear on their heads,—“see dat, massa,—R. bring dat home in he hat last night,—massa, make him say who handkerchief it be.” R., whose handkerchief is that? said his master. “Massa, it's mine; me bought it a Port of Spain.” “Bought, indeed!” said C., with a most contemptuous air; “he hem! no buy hem handkerchief, massa; me misses, dey know dey no sell hem handkerchief;”—and so on. These, however, are specimens of the numerous class of cases which we were constantly obliged to give ear to, and judgment in.

## CHAPTER XIX.

*Settlement of the negroes at Laurel-Hill—Their new provision-grounds and their returns—Sums paid to negroes on the estate for provisions for the family—Estate dandies—Absurd orders in council—An anecdote—Another anecdote—Massa Buxton and Massa King George—Ignorance—Negro character.*

NEGROES, from the earliest age, have their provision-grounds; and if too young to work them, the master causes the ground to be worked by a negro, during the master's hours. The produce of course goes to the family who takes care of the child; who, as soon as he can work a little, goes up to his grounds on the negroes' day, and learns the art of cultivating the soil. At seven years of age, little boys and girls have often a great deal to sell of their own, and buy fine clothes, cakes, &c. with the produce. All the little boys and girls about

the house, have one day for themselves every week—not a Sunday—to work their grounds. On such days they rise earlier, and work longer, than they are ever in the habit of doing for their master. They do often work their grounds on Sunday also; but there is no occasion for this: were they never to lift a hoe on Sunday, they would still have an abundance of food for themselves, their pigs and their poultry, and money for fine clothes also.

I do not believe, that either English or colonial law will, for some time yet, prevent negroes from working on a Sunday. “The love of money is the root of evil,” applies with great force to the negro character; and I do not think, that if negroes had all the six days of the week to work their own ground, they would cease from labour on the seventh. I do not of course speak of isolated cases—but of the majority; nor is there wanting practical proof of this truth. Who labours more on the Sunday than the free negro? and even those born free are notorious for this.

Little negroes soon learn to rear chickens ; and by twelve years old, they make many a dollar by the sale of their eggs and chickens. After this age, boys in particular take to raising pigs ; and an excellent speculation it is. Then many of them are clever at catching fresh-water fish ; and many a half dollar have I paid at Laurel-Hill, for a dish of fresh-water fish. These fish were caught in the stream that ran at the foot of Laurel-Hill, by a boy ; and at his noon-time, from twelve to two.

Those who know little practically, of the self-denial and the privations of the working classes and labourers of England and Scotland, are little able to judge correctly of the comparative condition of labourers in Britain and in the West Indies. But living, as I had done in my early years, very much in the country—in the counties of Mid-Lothian and Fife ; and latterly seeing a good deal of the habits and mode of life of those classes in some of the finest and richest counties of England ; I cannot help saying that, whether in infancy, in youth, in maturity, or in age, the negro slave



is in much the more enviable condition as regards his physical wants.

It was in the end of August or the beginning of September, that Mr. C. measured out the provision-grounds to the St. Vincent negroes, at Laurel-Hill. They eyed the fertile soil, on the sloping hill sides ; which were now, for the first time, about to be rendered subservient to the wants of man. The boundary on the front, and on two sides, was distinctly marked out for each, to prevent, if possible, all quarrelling ; but to the upper end no boundary was assigned ; and they might clear the woods, and turn up as much new soil in that direction as they chose.

The St. Vincent people soon had their houses erected and whitewashed ; and upon my arrival in the middle of September, they were nearly ready to enter into their new abodes. They got abundance of roots, and slips of every thing useful for them to cultivate ; and I pleased some of them much by giving—to one, a little early English cabbage seed ; and to another, turnip, carrot, or English peas. They had

brought bags full of seeds of the legumes of St. Vincent; and I was requested to recollect and keep all the pine-apple crowns, or tops, as they call them, to plant in their grounds.

None of our people had come with empty purses; so they soon purchased pigs and fowls enough to set all a-going. Besides the estate's allowance of fish, &c., they had, until their provision-grounds were productive, an allowance of plantains from their master's plantain-walk, every week, for six months: and each, two shillings and sixpence for the purchase of extras. I find, by my account-book, that each child had, besides fish and plantains proportioned to his or her age, two shillings and sixpence currency a week, from seven years of age upwards;—two shillings for all above two years, and under seven;—and one shilling for all under two years of age. They had all new locks for their houses; which cost four shillings and sixpence each. The infants had an allowance of rice, instead of plantains. I have already said, that every negro has always as

much sugar as he and his family can consume; but of course it is not wished that they should sell it.

There is a well-known root in Trinidad, common all over the West Indies, I believe, known by the name of the eddoe. It abounds upon every estate. The roots are not unlike a rough irregular potatoe:—the leaves make excellent, wholesome greens; and the negro, with the addition of a bit of salt fish, or salt pork—sometimes indeed both, has an excellent pot of soup. He may add pigeon peas during the months they are in season; and as for capsicums—his seasoning for all dishes—they are never wanting. This soup is excellent, wholesome, and palatable to all—creoles, white, free, coloured or slave; and indeed is one of the great blessings of the West Indies.

It is needless after this to say, that in point of food our people, new comers as they were, were not to be pitied. Bread, unless it be fresh from the oven, negroes have no relish for; but three times a week, hucksters used to come,

from St. Joseph's to our estate, with great trays on their heads, loaded with bread, cakes, and pastry; and they seldom carried many of their dainties away. The negroes did not give money for these little luxuries; they went on the system of barter and exchange; and these huckster women might be seen, coming across the pasture from the negro houses, equally heavily laden as when they went; but with this difference, that they now carried fruit, vegetables, and eggs, to retail at St. Joseph's.

Of course it was some time before the St. Vincent people were able to cope as merchants with the old settlers; but still they did so much sooner than I had expected. The soil is so prolific and the climate so congenial, that no one who has lived only in Europe, can readily believe the quick and sure return made for any, even the most trivial labour—that of a very little child. The quick return of garden produce, often seemed to me like enchantment; and might very well have been ascribed by the negro to the agency of Jumbee. I paid 20/.

currency in the first nine months of our residence at Laurel-Hill, to each of two negroes from St. Vincent for corn alone. They came and asked me, if "massa wanted corn (Indian corn or maize) for he horses?" I said he did; and they brought up so much, that I thought they were selling more than they ought. They assured me they had plenty for themselves, and their stock in their houses, if I would come down and see: I did so, and found their account correct; and paid to each their 20% currency—forty Spanish dollars, for one article alone, out of many others, raised during the time I have specified.

The first entry I find of St. Vincent people's cultivation, is on the 7th of November—two months and a half from their settlement; when I paid E., a house boy, seven shillings for two chickens. From that date, fruit, vegetables, eggs, fresh fish, game, poultry, and pork, followed in succession; and money was fast made.

From the 16th September to 29th December

—little more than three months, I paid the negroes on Laurel-Hill estate—seventy-seven in number, including all ages—from infancy upwards—176*l.* 15*s.* 1*d.*, not including corn; being upwards of three hundred and fifty-two Spanish dollars. I paid besides this, during these months, about 10*l.* more, for articles from other negroes, some free and some slaves. It ought to be borne in mind that all those articles sold to me, were by no means all that was sold off the estate; they were but an item of the negro produce. Every week some of our people went to St. Joseph's and to Arima to market; and the carters rarely took the carts to Port of Spain without getting some articles sent into town for sale; and they also occasionally sold to the neighbouring estates, as their negroes did to us. These negroes were healthy and robust: there were a few sick now and then, and many more who pretended sickness to avoid working; but there did not seem any inclination to starve themselves in order to obtain money, by selling what they ought to

eat. The likings and dislikings of negroes are very different from those of an European: there is indeed a good deal of the *gourmond* in their disposition; and negro cookery is by no means so despicable as some suppose. I rather think a good supper is one of their first objects; fine clothes for a gala day the next. As for their appreciation of a fine house and furniture, that altogether depends upon their advancement in civilization. Every negro house on Laurel-Hill estate, was quite equal to those that I have described in the first volume of this work, as the general abodes of negroes. They had their plantain-leaf mattresses, as we also had, in general use. Their pillows and bolsters were feathers of their own purchasing, or from fowls of their own rearing; and in the article of sheets and linen, I seldom found any deficiency in any negro of good character. Some of course have much finer linen than others; but there are few who do not lay up some "Irish cloth," as they call it, for their burial. Attachment to respectable dress (I do not mean mere finery, such as

jewels, &c.) is always a proof of civilization; and some negroes are most ridiculous dandies. We had several of such at Laurel-Hill. S., the head boiler-man at Laurel-Hill, was invariably a dandy: and it was quite a picture to see him at the teach, watching the sugar, with his air of authority, and his shirt collar stuck up to his ears. He was a native African,—a Coromantee, of a very grave and sedate deportment, and exceedingly reserved as regarded his former life. Upon my first visit to Laurel-Hill boiling house, with my children and their governess, he advanced and made a very dignified bow,—wished us all health and happiness, and stooping down, with a piece of white chalk, he put, as I have already said is usual, a mark on our feet; and we got another bow in return for our Spanish dollar. S. then ushered us all through the works of the sugar manufactory; when we tasted hot liquor and cool liquor, and pan sugar, the best of all. This is the remains of the sugar that hardens in the spout, which conveys the sugar from the teach to the wooden coolers. I asked



S. one day, if he remembered Africa? "A little, misses." "Would you like to return there, and see it again?" "No, misses, me country neger very wicked,—me no wish to see 'em again." "Do you think them more wicked than negroes here—do they steal and lie more, and are they more apt to quarrel and fight?" "Misses, white lady know noting of Africa, in my part; dey bad too much,—me cannot tell you how bad." S.'s look at this moment, was one so expressive of a determination that seemed to say, Ask no more, that I stopped the conversation. Some time after, I mentioned this conversation with S. to D., one of the pleasantest and mildest mannered female negroes I ever saw. She said, "Misses, it 's well you no ask S. no more questions;" and she shook her head and looked very wise; "his country, misses, wicked too much." In a half mysterious whisper, she added, "Misses, S. be one Coromantee! and oh! misses, Coromantee eat men; misses. S. be one very good neger; but, me misses, da Coromantee blood be in him." S.

was a good workman; but it required great tact to keep him in humour: he was to be talked to always as a man of rank and authority, and in fact he had that about him, which made it impossible for any one to dare to use any freedom with him. If any little negro forgot to say Sir to him, he was sure of a blow that would make him remember in future.

One evening, hearing that S. was poorly, I went to pay him a visit. I found him in his calico dressing-gown, clean shirt, and white trowsers—his head was bound with a Madras handkerchief; and he was lying on his sofa, with three as nice pillows to recline upon as possible, with clean linen slippers, as white as snow. He had a comfortable basin of chicken soup, with a plate of boiled rice beside him. And is this, thought I, a man who, had he been left in his own country, would have probably been regaling on his fellow creatures! He talked very sensibly; and thanked me politely for coming to see him; but I always took care in future to avoid any allusion to his

country.—S. has since freed himself; having previously freed his wife, in order, as he declared, to rid himself of her “bad tongue.”

A fertile source of annoyance to the planters of Trinidad, was the constant changes occasioned by new orders in council, perpetually coming out one after another, and often quite contradictory to each other. It was evident that they were concocted by people who knew no more of the general system of agriculture in the West Indies, than that which is perhaps pursued in the moon: and, added to this, they indicated total ignorance of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of the colonies, whether white, coloured, or negro. No laws, however good and well intended, can be profitable, if they be not suited to the character, the manners, and the customs of the people to be governed by them. For what reason I know not, but an order came, that every negro was to be accurately measured! Mr. C. told them all to come up at a certain hour, and have their height ascertained. In this he was

merely executing an order sent; nor did he ever suspect any objection on the part of the negroes. But at the hour appointed, the overseer came up to say, that none of the negroes would come; and that they refused to assign any reason to him. Of course their master went, and told them to come up to him, and hear what he had to say. They grumbled a good deal; but still they had some faith in their master. He told them that measuring them would not hurt them; that he would do it himself; and he took one of our own little girls, and placing her back against the wall, he ascertained and marked her height — took a foot rule, and wrote down the number of feet and inches, saying, “You see I do so to my own picaninny, and you see it don’t hurt her; come along, like good fellows, and let me do as I am ordered.” But all shrunk back; and the negro children began to cry. “In the name of wonder,” said Mr. C. “what is the matter with you all—what are they afraid of?” said he, to R., a fine, tall, handsome, young St.

Domingo negro. "Massa," said he, "me can't tell;" and evidently in a state of great alarm, and making an effort to gain courage, he looked steadily at his master, and said, "You neber hurt me, massa—me tand so;" and he was measured accordingly. As he walked from the spot, his master said, "That is all; you see I have not hurt you." R. wiped the cold perspiration from his brow, and turning round, said, "Massa, a we no like to be measured for our coffin afore a we dead." The scene was altogether more affecting than ludicrous to us; and yet, even when assured that the measure was not taken with the intention of making coffins for them, some appeared incredulous. We prevailed, however, upon all to be measured; and the driver laughed at his folly in not telling at once what their objection was, and ended by saying, "Massa, Massa King George no know noting at all about a we negers." Change but the Massa King George to Massa something else, and never was truth better spoken.

Massa King George the negroes always considered as the author and composer of every new law; and if at any time we told them that if Massa King George could see them, we were sure he would shew no want of knowledge, they uniformly said, "Den why don't he come, and shew a we how to do." More lately, however, Massa Buxton (Buxton) was looked upon as the highest authority.

One day Mr. C. went down to the cooper's shop, and was accosted thus by P., the head cooper. P. was a thinking, grave, sensible negro—had been twice with a former master to America, and had lived some months in New York. His wife S. was a good working negro, civil and quiet; and we had always considered her as a very good wife to P., and attentive to her domestic concerns. His house was well furnished; his grounds extensive and beautiful; and they had no family. P. was a good tradesman; and not easily put in a passion. He had seen what life is; and was well aware that his lot was a very comfortable one. On the morn-

ing in question he thus addressed his master:—  
“Massa, me hear new law come out for a’ we neger to go marry one wife; me massa, afore me marry one wife, me go hang me sel in a Paradise wood first.” This was said in a steady, determined tone. “I have heard of no such law,” said his master, “nor do I believe it; but you know, P., I have often said to you, and to all those negroes who have lived long and comfortably with their wives without changing, that I would be happy to see you marry,—that I thought it was your duty to do so,—but I don’t believe that any law has come out to compel you to do so; at the same time I cannot conceive what objection you could have to marrying S., with whom you have lived more than twelve years; and she has made a very good wife to you.” “True, me massa, very good as she is; but, me massa, pose (suppose) me marry S., I say, ‘S., do so;’ she my wife then, massa—so she say, ‘No!’ Well, pose massa, *now* me say, ‘S., do so;’ she do it; ’cause she know if she no do it, me put her away, and get

anoder dat will." "I don't think S. would behave so," said his master; "I think she would do as much for you as she does now." "Massa, me beg you pardon—was you eber in New York?" "No, P." "Well den, massa, me have,—and me no be in a America for noting: no, no, me massa, me no know ebery ting you know, nor Massa King George neider; but me know some ting, too, you don't know; me know dat me neber marry neger wife: if Massa King George say, a we neger marry, den let Massa King George send out white wife to a we from England, and den we marry as many as he like." "We don't wish you to marry more than one wife; but why do you prefer a white wife?" "'Cause, massa, white wife no run bout here, dere, and every where, like negers; massa, if you gie me your wife, me marry her to-day; but afore me marry any neger wife, me go hang mesel in a Paradise wood."

Upon investigation, we found that the carters who had returned from Port of Spain the preceding evening, had spread the report over the



estate, that Massa Buston, and Massa King George (Mr. Buxton had the precedence), had sent out a law, to order every negro to marry his wife—a law which, with only two exceptions, the negroes declared they would resist, and die rather than obey. A recommendation to the planters to encourage marriage, had indeed been sent,—and such is the tenacity with which negroes will resist all interference with their habits and customs, that it was some time before the discontent, which even this recommendation produced, gave way.

My object in relating such anecdotes, is to shew the great difficulty there is for persons, not well acquainted with negro character and customs, to frame laws and regulations at all suited to their improvement or amelioration. One order passed with that latter view, and no doubt considered in England greatly in favour of the negro, was, that no negro was to be punished *instanter* for any offence; but must be first confined, for a certain length of time, in the stocks. Now this, I presume, was intended

to prevent unnecessary or severe punishment, by allowing the master's anger time to cool. But, to those inclined towards severity, this failed altogether in its effect. I have already said, that the negro looks upon the stocks as no punishment. He goes to them, lies within his mosquito curtains, with his pillow at his head—has his food brought to him, and prefers this to any work, however light. The consequence is, that a good-for-nothing negro behaves himself as some convicts used to do, when sent to Botany Bay, and saying, "Thank your honour." The negro snaps his fingers and says, "Thank you, massa," with an air calculated rather to provoke and irritate, than disarm the anger of a master. Not only, therefore, had such an order no effect in ameliorating the condition of the negro, but it was not even considered a boon by him; for although the stocks were rather liked than otherwise, the negroes in general considered the previous confinement as *meant to be* an addition to punishment, and it tended therefore rather to produce

bad than good feeling. Let me illustrate this view by an anecdote.

Before coming on the estate, we had been told the general character and disposition of each individual. Among others, we were informed that C., a female, was a personage next to impossible to manage. She appeared to us a clever superior person, with not a disagreeable countenance; neat, and civilized looking. She had been a domestic at one time to a former master; but being in this capacity quite inefficient, she was transferred to the field with her own acquiescence in the change. About ten days after our arrival, while the negroes were holing a piece of canes near the foot of the hill, I suddenly heard a very angry voice, which became louder and louder; but as Mr. C. was in the field, I paid no more attention to it. In the evening, when the driver came up to get his orders for the next day, Mr. C. said, "F., I never saw such a woman as that; is she quiet now that she is in the stocks?"—"Quiet, massa! no, noting will ever stop her. Massa,

she bad too much." "Can she work, F." "Yes, for hersel, massa; fine grounds she have; but she'll neber work for you nor any massa; me tink the Jumbee in her." Mr. C. said, "Come, we must try; I find kindness won't do, for I've tried that; and now I'm trying whether the stocks will do." F. shook his head; "Massa, tock neber do good to neger; dem who make dat new law do very bad, to make massas keep bad heart to negers." "But why do you suppose that is a sign of keeping bad heart?" "Cause, massa, all da time a neger is in da tock afore he be punish, massa heart burn gainst neger, and neger heart burn gainst massa,—dat's all bad, massa; *dem who make dat law no know a we.*" "But F., those who made that law say, that negroes were often and unjustly and severely flogged; because, at the moment, their master was in a passion: and by giving time, they think the master will cool, and the negro repent."—"Bless you, me massa, den dey know noting at all about it; for afore time massa had no time for he heart to burn;

and neger neber like noting so bad as for he massa to keep bad heart to him.”—“ Well, F., I did not make the law. I must keep it, and try whether it will do good or not.”—“ Me massa, hear me; I know black neger better eber dan you; it do no good; it do very bad, massa.”

To return for a moment to C., the negro who gave rise to this colloquy: in the stocks, or at work, it was all the same to C.; she was the torment of every one,—she poured forth abuse upon her master, the overseer, the driver, and her mother. She often came to sell articles to me,—poultry, fruit, and vegetables; and was very civil and polite. I took no notice of her bad conduct on the estate; whether it was that she had expected I would have done so, and therefore was pleased at my forbearance, I cannot tell; but she always looked graciously upon me.

The cook at this time wished to change for the field; and I proposed to C. to take her place. I thought that, by removing her from

those with whom she had been accustomed to quarrel, and by flattering her self-esteem (for to cook well is no small pride in a negro), I might change her character. She accepted the place, and served me faithfully and well; and became, under my eye, a most exemplary person; and she served us until the day we left Laurel-Hill; and cried for days before we went away. I asked her if she would like to go home to England with me? She said, "Yes, misses, me like to see England, if you bring me back." I said, "That is very natural, C.; your mother is here, and all your friends".—"Yes, misses, and me grounds." She might well say "me grounds," for C.'s grounds were indeed a source of riches to her: she had them in beautiful order, and was altogether a money-making personage. She kept a complete huckster's shop on the estate; and many, both on Laurel-Hill and the adjoining properties, bought thread, tapes, candles, soap, and pins, &c. from her. She had always plenty of money, and could at any time change a doubloon for

me; or, if I was short of a few dollars, C. always produced whatever sum I required at once; I giving her an acknowledgment for the sum borrowed, which she kept until I repaid her, when it was torn up. She had no ostensible husband. I often advised her to marry, and settle like a respectable girl,—for, spite of her temper, she had two great attractions: she had money, and was handsome; and I knew she had many admirers. She would not hear of marriage, however; but said, that “when neger come good, like white man, den she might marry.” She gave dances, and made a great deal of money by them: she paid for every thing—supper, liquor, and music; and each negro paid half a dollar for admission. The refreshments were in the house, which was particularly neat; the dance was in front of her house, with seats surrounding a space large enough for the dancing; the musicians being placed at the end. Yet, inconsistent as it must appear, this young woman was a perfect savage in many respects: if any one contra-

dicted her, she was like a frantic person, and always began to bite furiously.

I had told the grown-up negroes, that I should be very happy to see them come up, and hear the children instructed; and some, now and then dropped in; while others were very frequent in their attendance. Among these was C., who listened with great attention. I often tried to convince her how improper her violent conduct was; but she always defended herself; and said, "Misses, when me say bad to you, you no curse me; (or you don't answer me unkindly, or rudely:)" by which she meant, that if when she abused the other negroes they would not return the abuse, she would sooner restrain her temper. No sooner had we left the estate, than she was as bad as before we had come to Laurel-Hill—no one dared to speak to her. She freed herself, I believe, in 1830, or thereabouts.



## CHAPTER XX.

*More anecdotes — Massa Buston — Qualifications for freedom—Details of savage character and habits—Infant's sickness, and feigned sickness.*

IF I were to detail the whole history of the conduct of every negro on the estate, there is not one of such details that would not illustrate some point of importance, either in negro character, or in giving hints for legislation upon the condition of the slave. There is doubtless a degree of circumlocution in this mode of stating truths; and it may sometimes happen, that on a dialogue a page long, one line is all that merits attention. Curious and perhaps novel, if not important information, is generally however to be gleaned from such details; and I

shall yet for a little longer continue this mode of illustrating my views.

I., one of our negroes, was a native African. I said to her one day, Do you recollect your country well? "Yes, quite well." How did you come to the West Indies? "Me massa, in a Guinea; one great massa, he go to war wid anoder massa; me taken, and sold to a white man." Where you a friend of the great massa you were taken prisoner from? "No, me misses, me his slave—me in a house, servant." And what work did you do? "First in a morning, me milk da goat plenty; and put it in a calabashes. Well, den me go and wash me young misses's foot, help her sew calicoes, milk goat at night again, and wash me young misses's feet. Den she go to bed; if she go to dance, or go any where, me tend her, and wait on her." What did you do with the milk? "Me massa and he wife eat it when it be bonny clover," (that is curdled). Whether do you like white massa or black massa best? "Black massa not so bad neider; but only he

have so many wife, and so you see dat make so many misseses. Massa himself not so bad ; but he whip he wife when she do bad too much." Did he whip his servants ? " Sometimes ; but for common he make da head servant do so." Now tell me fairly, were you ever punished so, and what for ? " Misses, me punish when me bad ; when me pill da goat milk ; when me young and foolish too much, den me like young negers here, have saucy tongue ; den da flog me to put saucy tongue out o' me head." Had you good clothes given you ? " Misses, me have two coarse calico petticoats, two handkerchief ebery so many moons ; but me have no chemise, no hat ; me have one fine petticoat too, to put on when me go to wait on me young misses at da dance." Now whether do you think you prefer being a slave to massa in Africa or massa here ? " Oh ! me misses, me tink noting now of me country massa ; country massa good enough for dat country, but dat's all,—white massa, just massa, and dat make great differ."

Soon after this, I. came to consult me about

marrying J. P. She told me that she was going "to try live wid 'em first a little bit for trial, and den if he be one good neger, she marry 'em." I said, "You know J. P. is at least twenty years younger than you,—he is quite a drunkard, lazy, and has a very saucy tongue; moreover his grounds are not in good order, and he is a sad thief, and I think you had best not try him; for I am convinced he only wishes to get you for his wife, that he may have the advantage of your good grounds,—he is always in trouble, and fighting, and his clothes are in rags; he is a fine-looking young man, but I fear that is all; I would be happy to see you marry a good man; and though it is very necessary and prudent to know the man well whom you marry, yet to live with him upon trial is very sinful; it is against the law of God." I comprehended me very well; but in spite of all my advice, J. P.'s eloquence prevailed—for he was as negroes say, "cunning too much." Some weeks after this ill-sorted union, I. came up to me, "Oh misses, me fool

too much what me for do! J. P. very bad; he tief yam from me, plantain from me, and dollar from me; misses, what me for do? me heart break wid dat wicked neger." An investigation took place; and upon the graver charge, that of stealing dollars, there was some doubt. "Do, me massa, please punish him," said I. "Well I., I'll put him in the stocks, and lay all the story before the commandant." "Massa, me no gie dat (biting her nail) for the commandant; massa, me be your neger,—you love me, but strange massa no care for me, nor me dollar neider." "Indeed he will, I.; Monsieur Legendre, the commandant, is a very good man; and he will hear all the story, and try to get back the dollars; and if it is fairly proved, I'm sure he'll punish J. P." I. however was not at all satisfied with this proposed plan; she insisted that an appeal to the commandant always made negroes spiteful against those who proceeded in that way, and ended by saying "Dat new law bad law, when one own massa can't gie justice to he own neger." "But I.

I wish to get justice for you." "Me know, me massa, you do; but me want no stranger massa justice—stranger massa no love me; massa, you no care to love Massa Legendre neger; Massa Legendre no love yours." This is one out of a thousand such instances. A person better qualified than M. Legendre could not have been selected for the office he held,—he was perfectly acquainted with every custom and prejudice of the people he had to deal with; but difficulties on the part of the negro, of this nature, were never thought of by people at home, who, from erroneous information, had come to the conclusion, that negroes have no confidence in their masters. However people may believe it or not, I have heard good and intelligent negroes find great fault with the ignorance of "Massa Buxton and Massa King George,"—for ever after 1824, it was evident they conceived Massa King George a very subordinate personage to Massa Buxton. The negroes whose business it is to go to town, hear all that is going on in England; and though

they cannot read, they have the substance of all that is printed from those who can. Believing as they do, that "Massa Buxton" is at the head of the English government, as regards negroes, it is not to be wondered at, that when they hear the substance of many speeches made by that gentleman, the minds of the best of them are now unsettled; and that the bad and idle characters, who form too often the majority upon an estate, believe that unlimited freedom (a term which they interpret in their own way) *has been given*, and is withheld by the combination of their masters and the colonial government, against the commands of Mr. Buxton.

Upon Mr. C. going down to the field one morning at six o'clock, he found a great deficiency in the number of negroes. "What is the matter?" said he to the driver. "Massa, dey all gone up in da grounds,—dey say they vorck no more for massa." It was a circumstance well worthy of remark—that the negroes remaining in the field were all the good characters. They were quite contented and cheer-

ful ; and spoke with marked disapprobation of the conduct of the others. " Massa," said N., " it's pity R. and W. eber go in a Port of Spain ; dey hear bad ting dey, and tell bad tory (story) to negers ; and massa, dey foolish too much ; me know, me massa, you do me just (justice) better dan tranger." A better explanation than this negro gave, could hardly be : those negroes who go to town, though generally chosen for the situation in consequence of intelligence and ability, are nevertheless exposed to the contact of bad advice. They return heated with liquor, and of course with exaggerated stories in their heads ; these they retail to all their comrades at night, as they sit eating their suppers, outside their doors. The really good negro is wonderfully little impressed by it, but it is far otherwise with the lazy and the bad : freedom is prized by them, not for the sake of personal liberty in the British sense of the word, but as they have invariably told me, " to sit down softly." Freedom, so given and so used, will never be productive of civilization or Christianity.



The fact of all good negroes being contented and happy, and attached to their masters, is proved by their working as they have done, with so many incitements to have acted otherwise. Had slaves been treated as many people assert they are, it is absurd to suppose that two or three white men could have kept up any authority on estates where there is always such a majority of negroes, and distant too from all help. Turn the matter which way we will, the question remains yet to be answered,—and a grave question it is, Would the immediate legal emancipation of the negro, advance or depress him in the scale of civilized life?—for unless we are quite sure that the slave population have reached that point of civilization when the boon of freedom would not make them fall back again to the habits of savage life, we are not benefiting but injuring them, both spiritually and temporally. Hitherto the anecdotes I have here related, have been mostly of good negroes, (by good, I mean good according to the negro

code of morality); we shall now turn to the opposite side.

One day I was much shocked by I. P. presenting himself at the door, dreadfully agitated, as well he might. "See!" said he, "massa, see what carpenter J. do me." His shoulder was bleeding,—*a large piece had just been bitten out of the most fleshy part.* The poor fellow was in dreadful pain. His master dressed the wound for him; and making him sit down, he sent for carpenter J. I need not detail the investigation that took place; both were bad negroes; there had been a quarrel,—and this was the consequence. I ask this question—is a man, who, cannibal-like, bites a piece out of another's shoulder, advanced to that point in civilization which renders it wise to bestow freedom upon him; or is it safe to free him from coercion? The sore produced by the bite was dreadful; it required dressing during many weeks; and years afterwards had left a deep scar.

B. W., a free American negro, took some

umbrage at a negro family on the estate, and at night, when all was quiet, he got broken glass bottles, and laid them all along, with the sharp corners up, before their door, that when they came out in the morning, without being aware, they might cut their feet. The driver, who is always up long before the other people, and who usually met his master and the overseer at the works, told them the circumstance, and that he had warned the family not to come out until he had reported it to his master. The overseer saw it, and the bottles were cleared away, and B. W.'s conduct was of course inquired into. The proofs were abundant that he was the guilty person; perhaps the best proof of all was, that the same day when Mr. C. was at the works, he came up to me, and did what I never saw a slave do, knelt down on his knees before me, to beg me to intercede with Mr. C. to allow him to remain on the estate, as he had heard it was very likely he would be ordered off. I told him to rise, and said that I was exceedingly sorry to

see him, *a free man*, who had been in America, and seen the world, behave so badly; that he ought to remember, that his being free would neither make us or the negroes respect him one bit the more, unless by his conduct he shewed himself worthy of his freedom, by behaving like a civilized being. He began a long speech, about the devil getting into his heart, and a great deal of cant, which I assured him I did not care for; in short, he wished to convince me, that though he had done this savage deed, he was not to blame,—it was merely that for a short time he had fallen into the net set for him by “the enemy of souls.” Having his wife and children on the estate, he was suffered to remain, upon a promise of amendment; but he was always a troublesome, deceitful character, and a savage, who would have been better under restraint than free. I could enumerate numerous facts, all tending to prove that many negroes are utterly unfit for the rights of civilized men. I have seen negroes, upon the slightest provocation, snatch up any weapon at

hand, and inflict a deep gash on whatever part of the body first presented itself, of a wife, husband, or child. One day I saw A. run down a young deer, in the plantain walk near the house, and having secured it, he deliberately took his knife, cut a bit out of the thick part of the leg of the living animal, and ate it with great relish; and when I expressed astonishment and disgust, he said, "It be best of all so, misses."

I have in the first volume of this work spoken of the care of negro children; and of the nurses who are appointed to look after them upon all estates—a practice adopted, partly because a mother who had the sole charge of children, could have no time for work of any kind—partly because negro mothers are, with very few exceptions, extremely cruel to their children. At Laurel-Hill, we were very well off in this respect. Patience was really patient, both by name and nature; and many a merry song and dance, she sang and danced to the "little negers," as she called them; and when

one or two began first to walk, she was as proud as possible to exhibit them, and all the little tricks she had taught them. I was very desirous, however, to try and get the mother to feel some personal pleasure in taking care of one of their children. I could not however wish Mr. C. to make any experiment among those whose habits were such that we knew they preferred their pig to their children; but Mr. C. had in St. Vincent promised a reward of two joes to any mother who would produce her child to him, at two years of age, in good health; and we renewed the experiment at Trinidad. Three or four received the reward, but these were all; the others preferred work, and the nurse to take care of their babies. There were some other mothers, who were good to their children so long as they did not trouble them "too much;" but I saw none with whom I thought it would be safe to try the experiment of their taking care of their children all day, as well as all night. The fact is, that negro women like the gossip and the fun of the field;

and to stay at home and nurse their child is too monotonous and dull a life for them. No doubt there are exceptions, but they are not numerous; otherwise so considerable a reward as Mr. C. held out, would have produced greater results than it did effect.

The management of the sick negro is an important branch of duty on all estates; but the first difficulty is, who are really sick? I have already incidentally mentioned this; but a few details, and an illustrative anecdote, with reference especially to Laurel-Hill, are required notwithstanding. Nothing can be more ludicrous than to see some ten or twelve negroes crawling up to massa's house, on a Monday morning, walking at about the rate of a quarter of a mile an hour. The clothes are put on in a most negligent style, the head is tied up in a peculiar form, which every one who has seen, can well understand, and which no description of mine, could convey the reality of: then there is the whining tone, the entreaty for physic at once; or more commonly a blister, for that is

merely painful for a few hours, and of course produces consequences that relieves the negro from work for several days. Good negroes call these people *skulkers*—that is, that they invent any excuse to escape work. Before I got out of bed on the Monday morning, I could, from the voices merely, tell almost to a certainty who were to be the skulkers for that week. By a good deal of tact, and some humour, Mr. C. used to get rid of about one half the number; making them laugh, and so cajoling them, that at last they would confess it was merely a Monday morning's sickness. Perhaps one or two might be really sick; but this any one acquainted with the negro countenance can tell without difficulty. Even the shammers, however, insisted on having some drug, to save appearances, or something to make gruel with; but it was understood that they took the physic, and went up to their grounds after breakfast. Sometimes a skulker makes his appearance during the week; but Monday is the great day. We were better situated at



Laurel-Hill than most planters, as regarded the sick list, because Dr. C. lived upon the estate; but notwithstanding this, they sometimes were cunning enough to baffle massa, misses, and the doctor too. Let one instance suffice,—one woman, C., came perpetually up, morning after morning, to the doctor; her pulse was good, her skin cool, not the least appearance of sickness about her, excepting her tongue—and that tongue certainly did astonish the doctor, for such a tongue he had never either read of, or seen. Every morning it was of a perfectly different colour; all the browns, greens, and shades of white had been exhausted, when to the horror of the doctor, a perfectly bright blue tongue was thrust out. He was now convinced how matters stood; so taking a wet clean towel, he told her to put out her tongue: she rather objected to this ordeal, but the doctor insisted upon it; and having washed the dye off, C. shewed as clean and healthy a tongue as possible, and for a good while after, she did not skulk from work; for the good

negroes quizzed her unmercifully. Many such cases are continually occurring on every estate. It ought to be remarked, that skulkers never appear on a Sunday, holiday, or on their own day; or, if skulking the day before, they uniformly recover on those days.

## CHAPTER XXI.

*The Laurel-Hill negroes—Examples of faithfulness—Saving banks, and negro opinions of them—Wesleyan Methodist instruction on the estate—Mr. Goy, and Mr. Stephenson—Conversations with the missionaries—Negro expectations—Difficulties in the way of the government plan—Division of time—Compensation for clothing and provision grounds—More conversations with the missionaries—Negro marriages—Erroneous returns of the Methodists.*

THE first Sunday we were at Laurel-Hill, nothing was said as to negro amusements on that day; we wished to see what their own habits were, and about eight in the evening we heard the drum begin. Next day Mr. C. told them he was aware he could not forbid them to dance on a Sunday, but that we would feel

obliged by their not doing so; that it was breaking a positive command of God, and it was disagreeable to us. Some said, "Massa, we no do so no more;" and others said, "Very well," good humouredly; and but a very few looked "black and sulky." Their master added, "I have no objection to your dancing at proper times, and making yourselves merry and happy; but it is best not to dance on Saturday night either, because you are apt to dance too late, and forget the Sunday morning. We were pleased on the next Friday to hear the drum with the dance going on, but there was no dancing on Saturday night or the Sabbath evening. But as the negroes heard continually of fresh laws coming out, all tending to weaken in the negro, respect or affection to the master, it was not to be wondered at that certain effects were produced. I recollect, on one Saturday evening, between six and seven o'clock, after the period when the negroes became so unsettled by the constant changes and orders, that I rang the bell several times and no one answered:

this was however not unusual, for the servants often fall asleep in the afternoon: and I went out with the intention of awaking them. I found E., one of the house-boys, alone; the rest were all absent. I said, "You may bring in tea, E." He stood rubbing a tumbler, and replied, "Me finish rubbing me glass, and me going away down to the neger-house; Massa Buston say, Saturday night the same as Sabbath-day;" and laying down his tumbler, and hanging up the towel, he brushed past me, and ran down the hill: this was in February 1825, when the people were a good deal excited, more or less, upon every estate. In all such cases, no alternative remains but to help oneself; thus West Indians learn a number of useful and practical lessons of this kind; and I am not quite sure if all the females who sign petitions, and sigh over the distresses of the poor negroes, would much relish doing their work for them.

Nothing evidently was more perplexing to the negroes, than the conflict in their own mind

between the bad advice abundantly administered to them, and consequent erroneous views, and the feeling which still occasionally arose, of trust in their masters. Some few indeed never in any respect changed; and to the last moment of our residence in Trinidad, all the stories they heard, seemed to have no effect upon them; and when the time of our departure arrived, and they found that we were really going to leave them, many even of the bad negroes began to relent, and I think there were not above eight or ten who did not come to shake hands with us, and say, God bless you—and that too with a heartiness which, to us, who knew their characters, left no doubt in our minds that they felt they had behaved ill, and would have been glad to detain us. Nor were we forgotten, even when we had long left the West Indies.

There were some five or six people upon Laurel-Hill, in the decline of life, who did only a little light work. Of these there were at first three, and latterly only two, past all work.

They were nice old women; the eldest must have been eighty, or near it; their grounds were worked by their god-children,—a general custom in Trinidad, as in St. Vincent. If the aged person has no child of his own, the god-child is uniformly the heir; and if they have neither children nor god-children to work their grounds, the master appoints a person to do the duty, and he looks personally to see that there is plenty of provisions for the individual, whose other allowances of salt provisions and clothing are the same as those of any stout negro; and if the individual cannot use all the allowances, which is generally the case, she or he sells them for their own benefit.

We often visited these old women. M. B. had a great deal of dry humour, and was very fond of children; the natural result of which was that all the children were fond of her. But though she could not cultivate her grounds herself, she could feed chickens and fowls, and sell them; and M. B. had always fresh eggs. Then she had a cat, so wise, that she said it

knew better than many a neger : she regularly had a rat caught, and broiled it for puss's supper, to the great delight of the young negroes. Old as this woman was, she remembered us with affection; and long after we were in England, I had a letter from a friend who had been visiting her at Laurel-Hill, and who says, the poor soul always inquires for you, and finished by hoping "da Lord will bless da sweet pic-a-ninnies." Let no one suppose such a case as this to be out of the usual course of events in the West Indies. I can unhesitatingly say, that in St. Vincent and Trinidad, such are every day occurrences, and that cases of cruelty and of neglect appeared to me extremely rare; and that though going out highly prejudiced on the popular side, and employing five years in minute personal investigation, and even keeping a journal of what I saw, I should be guilty of the grossest misrepresentation, did I not state things to be in all respects, as regards master and slave, totally the reverse of what the popular believe is. As for punish-



ments, every body must allow that it would be more agreeable to the natural feelings of every kind-hearted person, could punishments be altogether dispensed with. But this, I venture to say, is impossible, whether labour is to be done by a slave or an apprentice, so long as the labourer is uninstructed and unchristianized.

F. came one day to his master, just before the standing stocks were introduced as a punishment, and complained that J. had robbed his grounds of three large branches of plantains, and he added, "Massa, pray do punish him:" his master said, "I'll put him in the stocks, and I'll give you the same quantity of plantains." "Massa, it's no dat so much me want, me want him punish; cause massa, if he no punish, he tief from some one else to-morrow, and he say, 'Neber mind, me massa no punish me, but gie dem plantain from he own plantain walk;' and so he'll go on massa." J. P. was put in the stocks, but as usual he laughed at it. The planter had long known the inefficiency of the stocks, and at length government ordered

the use of standing stocks, in a conspicuous place of the estate; which certainly were more effectual as a punishment, but much better punishments might have been devised, without having any recourse to flogging,—for it may well be supposed that a planter, in the midst of the hurry and anxiety of getting his sugar made before the rainy season sets in, will pass over almost any conduct, rather than deprive himself of even one workman for a day; and those know very little of negro character, who are ignorant that the negro is clever enough to see this, and that it is always when he can be least spared that the bad negro behaves the worst, knowing that scarcely any offence would not at that time be passed over. When I speak of flagrant offences, such as I contend deserve corporal punishment, let me be understood; I call that negro justly punished, who was flogged for killing seventy-five head of poultry by thrusting coarse needles into them, for poisoning a calf, and cutting and maiming several mules.

Another subject recommended by government to the consideration of the planter, was, to get the negroes to place their moneys in a savings bank. They ought to have been very grateful for so kind an offer, when a bank was a benefit and a convenience, which the white population even did not possess. We explained the system to the most intelligent negroes on the estate: I took twenty shillings currency in my hand, and said, "You give those twenty shillings to the bank, on Christmas day, they give you a 'good' for them (good, means acknowledgement). The Christmas following, you go back and they give you twenty-one shillings,—you see you get your twenty shillings, and one shilling more; or if you choose to leave it, they give you another 'good' for twenty-one shillings, and so on. Now you know that you are often robbed of your money; you tie up all your gold and silver, and put it in a pocket handkerchief, and then stuff it in the thatch of your house; and even if nobody steal it from you, you get nothing all the year from it. You put

twenty shillings into the handkerchief, and you take the same twenty out of it. Now I know you have all both gold and silver, a good deal, and I think you ought to be much obliged to Massa King George for making such a kind offer to you, as to keep your money safe, and give you something besides, for keeping it." The answer was, "Misses, do you put your money dey?" "No; I wish we had such an advantage, but it is only meant for you." "Misses, I fancy massa keep his own money? so will we." I told them, massa trusted a bank much farther off, in England, and that I was sure their money would be safe." "May be, misses; but den you savey all dem ting; a' we no care to savey bout bank, we keep our own dollar." The mind of the negro is, in but few cases only, sufficiently enlightened to comprehend such a thing as receiving interest for money: he cannot believe that any one will take the risk of keeping his money, and will give him something more; neither has he any trust in strangers, and nothing can compensate him for

the pleasure of opening his handkerchief, and adding to his stock of dollars every week, as he sells his produce. Many of them have handkerchief upon handkerchief tied up, full of gold and silver, and thrust up in the thatch of the roof—the universal strong box of the negroes.

In 1827, very little money, only a few dollars, had been paid into the savings bank of Trinidad, and it was established in 1824. The fact is, that the civilization of the uncivilized is an infinitely slower process than any body who has not lived among negroes can imagine. They come by very slow steps to perceive that their customs are inferior to ours. One grand step, however, is already gained in favour of the civilization of the negroes,—it is, that they universally admit that white man is wiser and better than they. When once we allow a person to be our superior in understanding, we are likely to benefit by his example and instruction. Negro men say, give us white wives, and we have no objection to marry; and negro

women the converse,—this is no bad proof of what I assert.

The greatest difficulty we felt, was how to give them instruction; because we determined not to adopt the error so common among missionaries, to take “words for deeds,” and to lead them into a pharisaical mode of speech and manner, which is generally indicative of anything but a change of heart. Finding latterly that the respect formerly paid to the wishes of the master, though not given as commands, was entirely withdrawn, we were at a loss how to act. Sunday dances were now given regularly, and it was of no use to interfere; whenever we spoke by way of enforcing respect, there was some quotation from “Massa Buston;” for latterly Massa King George was not even allowed the dignity of a co-partnership with Massa Buston. Though, when any law was ordered to be put in force, which the negroes did not like, then they used to say, “I wish dat Massa Buston would come and see a’ we neger, and no send out *dat law*.” The

good negroes were less shaken in their affection, and less changed in conduct, than any one could have expected; they spoke to me often with regret of the number of "bad negers," and the fear they had, that they would "do some ting bad too much." One evening, I was rather surprised by two very faithful negro men, P. and M., coming up about seven o'clock. It was during the time of sugar-making. I saw there was something unusual in their manner; they said, "Misses, come up tair (stairs) and hear a we." I took the candle in my hand, when they pointed to me to come to a corner of the room furthest from the window, and said, "Misses, no let me dear massa go down to night: misses, if he do,—wicked neger dey,—he neber come up again." In an instant the danger flashed upon me; and probably those two faithful creatures saw my alarm, for they added, "No fear, my dear misses; no let massa come down, that's all, and you no fear; no one shall eber hurt me massa or misses, or the pic-a-ninny, or Miss F.;" meaning the

children's governess. I of course thanked them, and they told me I must tell no one, as the "wicked negers would be angry wid em." I offered them some refreshment; but they refused, saying they did not wish to be missed from the negro-houses; and they dashed down the shortest way, like two deer.

Some weeks after this, Mammy J., whom I have so frequently mentioned, came to me one evening just as the sun was going down; she requested me to come with her to the doctor's shop, as she wanted some physic. When she got there, she shut the door, and said, "Me misses, hear me—me no say much, me dare not—no let massa down to-night, say to him old Mammy J. say so; no fear for you all here; F., &c. &c. (and she named several negroes) no let one come up to hurt you; tell massa no come down to a boiling-house to-night. Misses, you tell no one but me massa; God bless you, me misses,—give me some salts, den they no say me go up to tell tory." J. got as much physic as she chose in a saucer, that it might be supposed



she had been up really for this article. Of course Mr. C. went down neither evening, but it may be believed we slept little, and felt exceedingly anxious to remove from a country where we were no longer in security, and where all our exertions for doing good were completely neutralized by the efforts of those who, though they may be well meaning, may yet have to answer for a fearful state of things, induced by their total ignorance of all classes of that community, which they profess so thoroughly to understand.

Before we had finally made up our minds to return to Europe, and when we found that all instruction from the master was useless, since by the larger number of negroes, all that came from the master was looked upon with distrust and aversion; the bad, also, intimidating the good; we thought it our duty to ascertain if the negroes would listen to others. Like many a resident, we deeply regretted that the Protestant Episcopal church had left such a field open to those whom we, as members of the church

of England, conceived less qualified for so difficult and arduous a work. But still we considered it more consistent with our duty, to have instruction conveyed to the negroes by Wesleyan Methodists, than to leave them in ignorance. Mr. Warner, the chief justice, conveyed a communication to this effect to the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries then resident at Trinidad, the Rev. Mr. Goy, and the Rev. Mr. Stephenson. The negroes were told that the Methodists were to preach to them next Sunday in the gallery of the house, where there was room enough for them, without exposure to the sun. Mr. Goy came to Laurel-Hill on the Saturday evening, and remained with us until after morning service on the Sunday.

There was a very fair attendance of the negroes, and they behaved very quietly: J. and one or two Roman Catholics crossed themselves very devoutly. I know not whether Mr. Goy observed this. I think, before our departure, Mr. Goy was three times, or it might be more, and Mr. Stephenson once or twice, at Laurel-

Hill; and my memorandum after each visit was, that they expressed themselves decidedly pleased by the attention of the negroes, and in as far as was in our power we received these gentlemen with hospitality and good-will, and with every sincere wish that they might do good. I told Mr. Goy the plan of instruction I had pursued, and how it had been at last rendered nugatory, owing to the minds of those negroes who were of indifferent and bad character, having been made unsettled by the events that had taken place in England; while those who were of good character had been intimidated by others, from shewing any wish to hear instruction from their master. I added, "we are most unjustly blamed for not instructing our negroes; and the espionage that is going on in the colonies, is sapping the foundation of every proper tie between the master and the negro." Mr. G. said, "It is a very difficult business; but I can assure you, our society don't employ spies." I said, "You may depend upon it, we had no suspicion you

were spies, or we would never have requested you to instruct the negroes." "Spies," added he, "are what our society would never permit." "But you are aware," I said, "that there are spies, and that we are altogether misrepresented and calumniated by those spies." "*That* there is no doubt of," said he; "but I can assure you, *we* are not such."

Some few negroes, both slave and free, attended these meetings from neighbouring estates; and although I made thorough inquiry, I could hear of no opposition to the preaching of the Methodists, excepting on one estate, where I was told the proprietor ordered the negroes not to attend: but though I might regret this, yet it was only a step consistent with their religious belief. The family were Roman Catholics; and it ought to be recollected, that no consistent Roman Catholic could have acted otherwise. The negroes of the estate, too, I was told by two of them, and by a respectable free woman who lived in the neighbourhood, were all Roman Catholics, or at least ostensibly so.

I asked one or two of the most intelligent of our people, after Mr. Goy had gone, if they understood what they had heard. They said they did. I asked them if they could tell me any one thing they had heard; but they could not. Now Mr. Goy's sermon was about as plain as any sermon could be, to be a sermon at all, and this was decidedly the nature of every sermon preached to them. I never, however, found that one of them, even the most intelligent, had gained one idea; and when I compare this with the great ignorance I found among negroes in St. Vincent, who had attended the Methodist chapel for years, I think I am justified in saying, that beyond encouraging the habit of attending divine service—as regards the real conversion of the negroes—it is nearly a hopeless method of instruction. I by no means despise the endeavour to establish a habit of regularly attending divine service; I only mean to say, after having for so many years daily studied the negro character, as well as instructed them, that in my belief, a

sermon preached in Arabic would be just as efficacious as in English. Mr. Goy left the Wesleyan Methodist Catechism, for the instruction of those who might be willing to learn, with the overseer, that he might teach them. Mr. Goy did not mention this to us, but the overseer did, and we of course did not interfere with his plan ; but I perused the catechism which Mr. Short, the overseer, was requested to teach them, and however good it may be, I am satisfied the answers were altogether above the capacity of any, even the best educated, European child of seven years old. I make no doubt, that even negro children might learn to repeat the whole of it ; but however well such reports of progress look in print, they appear to me worth nothing as regards the real instruction of the negro ; and it seems strange that even at the present day, so very few people are at all aware of the mischief that PARROT TEACHING produces. About two years ago, I happened to meet with an European child, of nearly eight years old—a very sharp little girl for her age.

She attended a day school, where she learnt English, French, writing, and sewing. On Sunday she attended a Methodist school: her memory was crammed full; it was absolutely beyond belief, the number of hymns and passages of Scripture which this child could repeat, and very correctly too. One of my family, however, suspected that the understanding of the child did not accompany all this showy work, and asked this simple question—"My dear, who do you mean when you say, 'Our Father which art in heaven?'" Her answer was, "It is my papa, who died last year, and you know he is in heaven." No child could have been more in earnest. Dr. Watts' First Catechism answers very well with European Children, but I found even that by no means adapted to the capacity of negroes, who unless they be instructed by a person who has a very thorough knowledge of their customs, manners, and patois, will make but very little advancement.

It is to me impossible to conceive that any

one ever could have conveyed the first elements of religious instruction to the negroes half so well as the master, who, in consequence of his daily intercourse with them, knows the individual character and temper of each, and can suit his instructions to their individual capacities, with a power and a success, that no stranger could effect. It may be said—What success had I? The answer is, that at first, in St. Vincent, there was improvement; but from the time the Commissioners of Inquiry arrived, there seemed to be a complete check put to our power of giving instruction—not that the Commissioners were at all to blame; it was but the natural result of an attempt at such hasty legislation. One object occupied the majority, and excluded all wish to improve—and that one object was, “to be free, and sit down softly.” Indeed, several St. Vincent negroes told me, “that Massa King George was to gie dem all da plantations; for widout dat, dey no care for free.” More than once in Trinidad, talking to free negroes, and asking them if



they were better off now than when they were slaves, they allowed they were not richer, but always ended by saying, "but, misses, you know, now we vorck if we like, we no vorck if we no like, and we neber rise in a morning." A negro on a neighbouring estate, I think, The Garden, having freed himself, and being asked what his reason was, answered, "he would lie ebery morning till ten o'clock now." I cannot help thinking that had a thorough system of instruction and civilization been attended to, emancipation would have proved a very different boon to the negro, from that which it is likely to prove. No person, who, from his knowledge of negro character, is an impartial and competent witness, can think otherwise, than that personal liberty, coupled with any necessity to go to work at six o'clock in the morning, will be laughed at by the negro; and unenlightened, and uncivilised as he is, I do not fear to say that his cunning will be more than a match for all the laws that may ever emanate from the collective wisdom of the British parliament.

But let me not make an assertion without at least endeavouring to support it, by bringing the results of experience on colonial cultivation and negro character, to bear upon it.

Suppose then, as is now proposed, that the negro is to work three-fourths of his time for the master and the rest for himself; what is the master to do, if it should so happen that the negro is always sick on the master's days, and always well on his own? The theorist may make two answers to this,—he may say, he must be made to work for the master on his own days. What then is to become of his grounds?—for if the master take his own days from him, then his grounds go back in cultivation, and he has no vegetables to eat, and none to sell. Or he may answer, the negroes must be made to work.—Now, I cannot comprehend how this is to be done; for in the West Indies, if a negro run off to the woods, or the mountains, where, according to his present partial state of civilization, he can make himself quite happy, I am very sure that the exertions of the

best and cleverest police would be utterly useless. A negro can run like a deer, and hold on by his feet, as well as by his hands, on the most precipitous paths, and he knows very well his superiority over any European in all such feats.

It is also supposed, that he ought to be able to claim a weekly payment in lieu of food and clothing, if he chooses. Now there are two objections to this: the planters have but little money, and can with difficulty command the common necessaries of life for their families,—it is indeed only by means of barter with a merchant in town, that they can have either butter, salt beef and pork, tea, or a little wine, which is by no means the daily beverage of every planter. And who that knows anything of negroes could believe, when they made such a claim, that they would abandon their grounds; or, if they did abandon them, of what value would the grounds be to the master, without labourers to cultivate them? People at home talk of negro provision-grounds, as if they were

something like the cabbage gardens of English labourers: do they know the extent of those grounds, and the value of their produce? Until they do, they are speaking upon a subject of which they are utterly disqualified by ignorance from giving an opinion. I have walked over the negro grounds of many estates; and can assure my readers, that some negroes possess grounds which would be an object of no small ambition to many in Britain as a small farm; and any man possessing, rent free, the grounds that every negro may possess, would be reckoned at home, a man in very comfortable, and even independent circumstances.

In January, 1832, on Laurel-Hill, few negroes had under six acres in fine cultivation, producing two crops a year. Now Laurel-Hill is a small estate, and the average extent of negro grounds may fairly be taken considerably above this extent. M., the driver on our estate, had twenty acres of his own!! I do not mean to say this man cultivated all this ground himself—he was rather too important a person to

labour much with his own hands ; but his wife worked a little, his son a good deal, and for the rest, he hired labourers : and labourers hired by negroes, are generally negroes belonging to the same estate, and are almost always paid in produce.

Negroes know the certain return from their grounds too well to grudge paying others, in produce, in order to set their work forward. Every good negro has good grounds, and every bad negro indifferently cultivated grounds,—so much so, that the master is often obliged to send up a good negro in order to give help in the grounds of a bad one, that he may not by his indolence be in want of provisions. I lay it down as an incontrovertible fact, to which one may arrive by the mere knowledge of negro character, but which has besides been proved by experience, that in the present state of negro civilization all contracts between master and slave, whether entered into voluntarily, or forced by act of parliament, are absurd and incapable of being depended upon. I suppose

there is hardly an instance of a master who gave a negro his freedom upon part payment of his appraised value, who ever got the remainder of the sum. I made many enquiries, but I could not hear of one. Several good negroes have paid for their freedom the whole sum at once; but I again assert, that all contracts with negroes in their present state of civilization are out of the question, as regards their fulfilment by the negro. I do not believe, therefore, that any negro would give up his grounds for any stipulated sum; and as to his clothing, there are very many who would feel no objection to go without clothing, except upon gala days, or in cold weather; and I am very certain they never would spend any part of their wages upon common working clothes.

With respect to the wages which might be appointed by law to negroes, they know very well what is the value of a day's labour: I have tried the experiment frequently, but never could get one of our people to work for me under a dollar a day. More than once I have

wished work finished on a day that was their own, and have paid them their dollar for it. But a head tradesman will not work under a Spanish dollar: and neither is the request out of the way,—in his own grounds, the negro's labour is well worth that to him; and in certain seasons it is worth more. Negroes are most tenacious of their time and labour. I never found that I could get an extra hour from a domestic without paying for it.

The utmost vigilance, as regards self-interest, is not at all at variance with the lowest state of civilization. Should any one consider my statements to be contradictory to each other, I can only say, that I state facts; and if those who are inclined to cavil, would go and pass as many years as I did in observing minutely—not one set of people, but the whole population—they would come to the same conclusion that I have come to,—viz., that nominal freedom is a thing which one nation may give to another by a stroke of a pen; but that mental freedom and real civilization will ever be a slow process;

and I will say, moreover, it is a process which, since 1824, has been anything but wisely proceeded with in the West Indies.

Up to 1824, I never could perceive among the colonists any prejudice against Wesleyan Methodist missionaries; in many cases I observed decidedly the reverse. I did, indeed, hear at all times a general regret that the church of England had not attended to the spiritual instruction of the West India colonies as she ought; nor am I aware of any apology she can offer. I had heard men in authority speak well of the missionaries in St. Vincent; nor ever, until that year, did I hear one word said implying a suspicion that they had any secret influence over the minds of the negroes. It was upon occasion of Sir Charles Brisbane, the then governor of St. Vincent, making some remark opposed to what I had ever heard of the Methodists, that I said, "I thought your excellency had a good opinion of them, and that you had subscribed to their society."—"So I did," answered his excellency: "one



must often hold a candle to the devil in this world." I replied, "I thought it was much better never to do so; for though I greatly preferred the negroes being instructed by Methodists, to their receiving no instruction at all, yet I did not see that those ought to subscribe to a society, who felt there was much in it they could not approve of." Sir Charles shook his head, as much as to say, that may be all very fine talk; and he added, "I'll tell you what,—if there was a disturbance in the island, the Methodists would have more power than you are aware of." I answered that I hoped they would employ it judiciously. "Well then," said his excellency, "don't you see, that it is very necessary to keep them in good humour, and give them a subscription."

When Mr. Goy came upon Laurel-Hill estate, I asked him if he had met with much opposition to his labour in the West Indies. He said, "By no means so." I replied, that I was glad to hear him say so, for the opinion in England was, that the Methodists were

much persecuted. "I suppose," said Mr. C., "that you have occasionally fallen in with some gruff-enough managers or overseers." "No, Sir," was the instant reply. "I have been nearly seven years now in the colonies, and in all that time I have not encountered the slightest incivility from any one of the white population; and from many, I have received great kindness and hospitality. I have had my difficulties in instructing the negroes, but, upon the whole, I like my labour in the West Indies; and I am sure I can say we are much more kindly treated, and experience far less opposition, than in our labour in England." I said, "I am happy to hear you say so: I hope when you go home, Mr. Goy, you will tell your opinion upon those subjects." "You can do so, too," said he. I replied, "I both can and will; but, in your character as a missionary, you will meet belief, where my testimony would perhaps be disregarded."

Although I had then no intention of ever writing for the public, I thought the conver-

sation so important, that I committed it to writing, verbatim, on the day it occurred. Indeed, up to the period of my leaving Laurel-Hill, I thought the Methodist missionaries well intentioned, and had not an idea that any of them professed one set of sentiments, on one side of the Atlantic, and the reverse on the other. Mr. Goy talked to me with horror of the sad state of ignorance in St. Domingo; and through him alone were we informed that they had undergone a most severe persecution in that free island, and had been stoned, imprisoned, and had their very lives put in danger.

I have kept notes of some conversations with the Methodist missionaries, upon other topics equally important: none more so than marriage among negroes, which is said to be so much discouraged by the planters. I recollect saying to Mr. Stephenson (also a missionary) that an idea seemed common at home, that the planters discouraged negro marriages, — than which nothing could be more false. I added, “the negroes themselves very often object to it:”

and I mentioned some of those anecdotes which I have already related. Mr. S. said, "By the by, the driver, I believe, wishes to be married." I said, "Which of his wives does he mean to marry?—of course you are aware he has two—one with whom he has lived fifteen years: she is here; and they have a son, a fine lad, about twelve. The other wife is a negress on an estate, I think, in Diego Martin Valley: she is a young woman. He is, strange as it may seem, exceedingly kind to both wives: last Christmas he brought up his Diego Martin wife, and introduced her to me: she spent one or two days at that time in the house with his old wife; and he gave them each new dresses of the same kind, and the wives never had a quarrel. But," I added, "for all that, he ought not to marry, and retain a married and an unmarried wife." Mr. S. said, "I was not at all aware of this circumstance." Now I do not at all doubt that Mr. S. was ignorant of the circumstance; but this is what the planters complain of—that Methodists are grievously

ignorant; and what is more, that they do not wish for any information respecting the negro but through the negroes themselves, or coloured people. Mr. S. said, "We have married many couples, and they always live together very properly." I said, "Do you never find that they consider the marriage ceremony only a tie, which forbids the wife to leave them, and puts her more under their power, particularly in punishing her as they choose, — because she cannot so easily run off as formerly?" and added, "I wished they would all marry, did they fully comprehend the solemn promises they give and receive; but that I did not like their marrying without this knowledge; and that encouraging negroes to marry one wife, when we knew they would still retain others, was only making bad worse:" to which Mr. Stephenson made this most important reply—"*If we were only to marry under such circumstances as that, what would the society at home say?—they would think we are doing nothing at all.*" I replied, "People at home know little or nothing of the

people among whom you labour, or they could not suppose such rapid benefits to result from your labours, as appear to result from them."

Here the conversation dropped. In the evening, M., the driver mentioned by Mr. Stephenson, as being desirous of marrying,—a peculiarly intelligent, good negro, in their sense of the expression,—came up to see his master, about something he wished to know with reference to his duty early next morning. I said, "Well, M., I am very happy to hear that you have expressed a wish to be married; but which of your wives do you purpose marrying?" "D., me misses, she me oldest wife, and a very good woman." "Yes, indeed she is, M.: and D. is also willing, I hope, to marry you?" "Yes, me misses." "Now, M.," said I, "you are I hope not going to marry D., and keep nevertheless your other wife at Diego Martin." M. scratched his head, and seemed at a loss what answer to make; but at last he said, "Me misses, she be very good wife." I said, "I do not doubt it, but God has commanded

that marriage is not lawful for any man who keeps two wives. I should be very happy indeed to see you marry, but only if you felt willing to keep but one wife; for otherwise I should not be teaching you the will of God, or doing my duty by encouraging you to marry." Upon Mr. C. adding something more respecting the obligations of marriage—"Me see it," said M., "me savey what you and misses say very well, but me no knowed dat when me say me marry; me will tink upon all dat." Thinking, however, that M. might with great propriety feel that in giving up his other wife, she might find it a great loss, I said, "You know M., you might very easily send something to your other wife, by some other person than yourself; but certainly, before marrying D., you ought to see her, and tell her all this; and after you have told her, and made up your mind, you ought then not to visit her any more, for you might perhaps forget your promises to D." M. said, "Me misses, me tank you, and me tink upon it;" but there is no doubt that this

negro, at the very time that he expressed a wish to marry one woman, purposed retaining the other. From ignorance of negro customs and character, and from ignorance of the actual situation and intentions of the negro, the missionary would have married him; but I need scarcely say, that such marriage would have been no proof of his advancement, either in morals or civilization. There can be no doubt that many such cases as this have been reported at home, as proving that the planters discourage marriage among their negroes; but I think I have shewn, by this one case, that there are difficulties on every side, and to jump over them, as the missionary would have done, would have little mended matters. I confess that in the case to which I have alluded, I could not help feeling for M.'s youngest wife, and I saw the tears stand in his eyes when he spoke of her; yet D. had been much longer his wife; and I knew he loved her, and made her a good husband, and she was a mild, kind creature. It is exceedingly easy to say, he



ought to give up the younger wife and cling to the elder; but the habits, feelings, and opinions of the negro, are sad stumbling-blocks in the way of those who would act upon the very best of precepts.

I have invariably found that the Methodists elude the communication of all information from the planter, who would point out to them the individual character and circumstances of his negroes; and which I think can only proceed from this,—that such information involves them in difficulties as regards their labours, and would necessarily shorten the list of converts which they send home, and diminish the assumed quantity of improvement. Were they thus to disappoint the society, where would the funds for the support of the missionaries come from? Much is heard in England of the labours performed, and the hardships endured, by the missionaries in the West Indies. I do not mean to say that the missionaries do not labour; but I am sure their bodily and mental fatigue is a bagatelle in comparison

with that either of the professional men or the planters of the colonies. They are comfortably provided for; and it is quite right they should; but it is more than ridiculous to talk of them, as people talk of them in England—of their persecutions and privations. Privations, indeed, as regards personal comfort, to a certain extent, every one in a tropical climate must undergo; but they undergo less of these than any officer in His Majesty's service does in any of the barracks I have seen in the West Indies; and I am much mistaken if the pay of the missionary be not as good.

That Methodists have been often decidedly opposed in the West Indies since 1825, there can be no doubt; but the whole fault rests with themselves: had they acted a candid, straightforward part, they would have fared very differently,—but they have never come forward and made one single honest, manly denial of all the calumnies, spoken and published against them: one such avowal would have effected more, than all the reiterated and accumulated

assertions of the planters. I have had a thousand examples of thus keeping apart from the planter, and making all that is done a mystery to him whom, next to the negroes themselves, it the most concerns. Though the missionaries would rather have the countenance of the proprietor, he must not presume to offer them any advice, or give the least hint as to the conduct or individual characters of the people: in short, so long as a proprietor acts hospitably to the missionaries, and remains a passive spectator of all that is going on, they will be satisfied; but if the proprietor, or his wife, ask any direct questions, or exercise the right of private judgment, as I did, they must be prepared to receive in return, nothing but silent contempt. As the negroes, both in St. Vincent and Trinidad, had differed in the account they gave me, regarding the opinion of the Methodists upon dancing, I stated this to Mr. Goy, telling him that some of the negroes said the Methodists forbade their communicants dancing at all; that others said they only forbade the drum, and not the

fiddle dance; while others again said it was only the African dances that were disapproved of. I asked whether any of these accounts were correct?—but Mr. Goy, and afterwards Mr. Stephenson, heard me in silence, and made no answer of any kind.

I cannot but regret, in common with all who have really given attention to the subject, that the field is much occupied by men—many of whom may be well-intentioned, but who are so completely bound down to the interests of the society they represent, and by party spirit, that with all their good intentions, they are still doing essential harm. But let not the real well-wisher to the negro despair; for there is still ample room for the labourer; and I can promise to all who conduct themselves like Christians and gentlemen, such a reception among the planters, as will give assurance of an abundant reward.

## CHAPTER XXII.

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*A few words on a plan of negro instruction.*

SOME system resembling our parish schools in Scotland, would do most essential service in the West Indies. It must be recollected, that nearly the whole population of the white proprietors of the West Indies, belongs either to the Established church of England or Scotland; and that the feeling of confidence in Dissenters, which once existed to a great extent in the West Indies, is now thoroughly destroyed, and can never be restored. Therefore, no plan of instruction, where the teachers are not to be *bona fide* members of one or other of those Established churches, will ever meet

with encouragement from the planter; who has already had sufficient experience of the little confidence he ought to place in people, whose personal interest is concerned in calumniating him. Some difficulty would occur with Roman Catholic proprietors; but I cannot see that we could have any right to compel them to countenance Protestant instruction, farther than this; that if the negroes chose to get Protestant instruction, the proprietor should not have power to hinder it.

I do not think any person of cool judgment, and especially any one who has had colonial experience, will ever expect much to be done in the instruction of the elder negroes, beyond what might be effected by personal exhortation and explanation given familiarly, and in a great measure delivered in their own *patois*, upon the simple doctrines of the Bible; but with the young, much might be done, and the sooner some proper system be set on foot, the better. I know that much difficulty will be found in the outset, in obtaining the necessary steady

attention from the young negro; without which he cannot learn to read. But were the negro children taught on Dr. Bell's system, in which there is considerable room for emulation, I should have no fear of success. Negro children are full of life, and fond of show; we must avail ourselves of all the national characteristics, and turn them to a useful account. I found the little I could do, in the way of prizes, very useful; I had a fixed reward for every one who told the exact truth,—even if it were to confess a fault. I have frequent entries in my memoranda to this effect—to A., for speaking the truth, a bit. To B., for coming up to get justice instead of fighting with C., half a bit; and so on. Little shewy medals, attached to a shewy suspender, would I am sure incite to learning and good conduct. Quarterly public examinations, where progress would be marked, by little prizes; such as they would at first value—a trifling necklace to the girls; a needle-book; balls of cotton; scissars, or a head-handkerchief: while a knife; a neck

handkerchief; or a piece of jean for a jacket, to the good boys; would be all prizes greatly valued by them. When they could read distinctly, books would be the best prizes; but it is to be regretted, that there are so few suited for them; indeed, I know of no entertaining little books fitted for their perusal, without much alteration. The greater part of European life and scenery, is a dead letter to them; and though when explained, they delight to hear of it; yet unexplained, it conveys to them no idea. Even European children in the West Indies feel this; and I cannot give a better illustration than that my own children, who could read well at four years old, and almost had Mrs. Sherwood and Miss Edgeworth's books by heart, besides many other children's books; yet, so confused were their ideas respecting things on this side of the Atlantic, that when they arrived in England the merest trifles excited their attention, and puzzled and deceived them. They took the handles of the bell-pulls for watches; and were down on their knees, to smell the English



roses on the Brussels carpet, on the floor of the hotel we were in at Bristol. If such is the European child, with every advantage; what must be the confusion of ideas in a negro, who reads in a book, adapted to European scenes and ideas, such a multitude of things foreign to him?

The slight similarity which exists between West and East India customs and manners, made Mrs. Sherwood's books more useful than any others, particularly the "Ayah and Lady;" but even here much alteration was necessary. When I read those stories, and introduced West India names of anything, both the elder and younger negroes would look delighted, and say, "we savey dat well, misses." Little stories, religious and moral, yet entertaining, might easily be written. They must be accommodated to their understandings, and illustrative of their manners and customs; with correct allusions to the natural history of the islands. Books of this description might be read to them with great benefit, before they could read for them-

selves — making their hearing the story, a reward to follow their attention to their reading lesson. Negroes so taught throughout all our colonies, would grow up very different from the present middle-aged negro population. The elder negroes might gain much real benefit by stories suited to them being read aloud, because adults always make slower progress in learning to read, than children do. I do conceive that without some such expedient as that which I have ventured to hint at, the work of instruction, to whatever hands it is confided, will be tedious and unsatisfactory. Negro children must be kept lively while instruction goes on: anything like prosy teaching, would set them to sleep. Two hours in school each day would be sufficient; and one teacher might teach on one, two, or three estates; at least in the greater number of cases. When the estates were thickly settled, perhaps a central school for all the children might be the most eligible plan; and if they were too numerous to meet all at once, so many hours might be given to one set,

and so many to another. The children would require to be brought and taken from school in regular order, by the person who has the care of them in the vine gang; otherwise, they would run off and hide, fight, and commit every sort of disorder. The superintendent of the vine gang ought to report all good and bad conduct to the schoolmaster, and he ought to have the power of rewarding or punishing. I recollect sketching the outline of this plan to the Chief Justice Warner, one evening at Laurel-Hill, and he was pleased to look upon it as more practical and more likely to do real good, than anything that had before been proposed. But he added, "*The good folks at home would never second it : for it would not be rapid enough for them.*" I recollect particularly, that he quite agreed with us, in thinking emulation a decided feature in the character of the negro; and that honorary medals, to be bestowed by the master, and worn by deserving negroes of *any age*, would produce excellent results. Mr. Warner knew negro character well; he had

had long and close experience, and his opinions are therefore well entitled to attention. Had all the money, subscribed to anti-slavery societies, been bestowed upon a feasible plan of general colonial education, the negro would long ere this have been ripe for the appreciation of those privileges, which might have been conferred without danger, and would have benefitted the proprietor; and which would, indeed, have been one link in the chain of civilization. But it is not too late: let party spirit be forgotten; and let some far wiser head than mine organize a society, or concoct a system, for the general education of the negro population; but let there be the one restriction I have alluded to, that the teachers be members of the Established church. It must not be supposed, that any such system could be put in operation without large expenses. Living is dear in the West Indies; and the teacher ought to be sufficiently well bred, and well educated, to entitle him to visit occasionally in the houses of the planters, in order that he might hear

for himself all sides of the question, as regarded the real character of his pupils; and his salary should be sufficiently large, to enable him by his external appearance and mode of life, to obtain the respect of the negroes. He would no doubt find difficulties; but I am sure he would have much also to encourage him to go on.

I know there are many planters in such a state of poverty, that they could do nothing to help in such a plan; but there are others, who although greatly reduced, would, I am confident, come forward. But those who could not give money, might lend a mason or a carpenter, &c. to assist in building the master's house and school-room. I would accept help, in whatever shape it might be tendered;—whether in money, or labour, or wood. Service might be performed on the sabbath, in the school-room, if the station were distant from church or chapel; for no advice or interference ought to be used, to prevent the negro from attending what place of worship he might prefer, be it the Episcopalian church, or a Roman

Catholic or Dissenting chapel; nor should any allusions to distinction of sect be permitted. Religious party spirit *must be crushed*, if good is to be done; and the only power I would ask is, that the master be allowed to compel every child in health, to attend the school, instituted by law, as well on Sunday as during the week. To teach the catechism of either the church of England or Scotland, I think would be much above the negro comprehension; besides, that in the present posture of affairs, it would be in all respects better, to teach a catechism that would comprehend, in the shortest and simplest form, the pure doctrines of the Bible, to which no one who professes to be a Christian, could possibly object to say amen. This is but a very imperfect sketch of a plan of negro instruction; and my only apology for having ventured to say one word upon the subject is, the hope that it may rouse some one better qualified than I am, and with a deeper knowledge of the subject, to propose a system from which the greatest possible good may result.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*The agriculture of a sugar estate, as it bears upon the question of free labour—Machinery—Worn-out colonies—Trials of free labour on the estate—Free labour in the Caraccas, Columbia, and in St. Domingo.*

WE shall, preparatory to some observations as to the probability of making sugar by free labour, take a glance at the agriculture of a Trinidad estate. These observations will be here aptly enough introduced, inasmuch as it is in Trinidad, that the experiment of free labour has been tried and vaunted. The agriculture of Trinidad differs considerably from that of St. Vincent, and is applicable to many of the larger and more fruitful colonies. Trinidad has many extensive valleys—little hill-side cultivation. The land is rich, and often alluvial

soil: the dews are so regular and so heavy, that want of moisture is a rare complaint; while a superabundance is more common. Holing the ground for canes is therefore a different process from what it is in St. Vincent. Mr. C.'s first impression of Trinidad agriculture was, that it was slovenly when compared to St. Vincent's. The St. Vincent negroes, indeed, quizzed Trinidad husbandry most unmercifully. In the end of September, or beginning of October, a piece was begun to be holed for canes, and the St. Vincent plan was pursued. The Trinidad negroes laughed at the plan,—for even practical knowledge gives a feeling of superiority to a negro. The canes were planted, and certainly it looked like a garden,—it was all so neat and regular. But a gentleman, originally from Antigua, came to pay us a visit; and his eye was at once caught by this cane-piece: he said it was very pretty, but that it would not do: and he was right. The wet low land rotted the plants; the cane holes held the rain like a mud pool, and the whole had to be



undone. New plants were put in, and long trenches cut, after the Trinidad fashion, that the rain and the dews might be carried off from the plants, and thus prevent their rotting. The first weeding of canes in Trinidad is far more tedious than in St. Vincent; the soil being so rich, the crop of weeds is beyond belief. But the second weeding is less operose; because the great profusion of luxuriant leaves of the cane, necessary to be stripped off and laid on the soil, retards the second crop of weeds: whereas, in St. Vincent, the ground being less fertile, fewer weeds arise the first time: but, on the second weeding, their growth has not been so much retarded as in Trinidad, because the St. Vincent cane has not such luxuriant leaves, to be stripped off and laid on the soil.

In St. Vincent, canes are generally three times stripped: in Trinidad, they are glad if they can command hands to do it once: some estates are so deficient of hands, that they cannot strip at all. About four strikes of sugar

ought to make a hogshead, of 1500 cwt.; in St. Vincent it is usual to take off each strike in from one hour and a-half to one hour and three-quarters: the quicker it is done the better is the sugar; but so watery is the cane juice of Trinidad, from the amazingly rich soil, and the greater moisture of the climate, that sometimes it requires from five to six hours to take off one strike. Here is a great accumulation of labour, both to the negro and the stock; and a great additional consumption of fuel; and a necessity is also created for *steady labour*. After the canes are ripe, the process of sugar-making admits of no more, perhaps less delay, than the wheat harvest in Britain. If left too long uncut, the canes are, for that season, useless; and if cut, they must not lie for more than thirty-six or forty hours, or they become acid; and it is then impossible to make sugar of them. In that case it is necessary, great as the loss is, to boil them into melasses; which are afterwards distilled and made into rum.

It is evident, therefore, that no sugar could

ever be made were there a fixed hour for stopping the boiling ; *or if the planter had not the uncontrolled command of the negro's labour.* The most experienced planter or negro cannot tell, when he is grinding the canes, what watery juice they exactly contain ; but that watery juice must be evaporated before he can take the strike off. Those who represent the season of sugar-making as a time of oppression to the negro, must either be very ignorant, or else very determined to misrepresent facts. It is quite true that there is more work to do, but it is a work that the negroes like. It is the season of mirth and jollity ; they look forward to crop-time, (the West India harvest), and speak of its getting nearer and nearer with joy, not with dread : and it is an unanswerable fact, that during crop-time the sick list diminishes ; and such is the fun, and such the feasting upon canes, hot and cold liquor, and new sugar, that even the most obstinate skulkers at other times are then much seldomer absent. The stock, too, have much more work to perform ; never-

theless, they have plenty of cane-tops and melasses, and they also get fat and healthy. The master, the manager, and overseer, work harder too; and they have no one to relieve them and take their place: still I never heard any complain. It was known to be a necessary duty; and the general cheerfulness spread a smiling aspect over us all. In Trinidad, as in St. Vincent, there is a contest who is to cut the last cane for the season; and there is a dance at the conclusion, and the master supplies the requisites for a merry-making.

It is a rare occurrence, when the boiling-house is not shut up by ten o'clock at night. The people during sugar-making, are divided into what are called spells; and those at work at extra hours on Monday do not come on again till Thursday. It is of the utmost consequence to get off the crop in dry weather; for the time and labour required to boil sugar in showery weather is most expensive; and the quality of the sugar is much deteriorated.

Here, again, is demonstrated the absurdity

of any division of time between the master and negro; and the absolute necessity that the labour of the one should be at the will of the other, as regards time. The work of a cocoa estate is nothing compared to that of a sugar estate. The whole labour is performed in the shade; but negroes prefer a sugar estate notwithstanding. We had two negroes from a cocoa estate, who came upon a sugar one at their own request; and when a negro came with a message from a cocoa estate to Laurel-Hill, he said the very smell of the sugar was delightful to him; and he was quite happy to get liquor, hot or cold, to drink, and a bit of sugar to take home.

I have often heard Mr. C. say to a negro, after six o'clock, and when he had taken his bundle of grass to the stock,—a duty which is the concluding one of every day,—“Why are you here in the boiling-house? you have nothing to do here; go home and get your supper, and go to bed, and take a good rest against to-morrow.”—“Massa,” was the inva-

riable answer, "me roast me yam in da copper-hole, and get some hot liquor." Then there was the joke, the laugh, and the song going round; and I often said that the boiling-house, after regular work was over, reminded me of a blacksmith's shop in a Scotch village, where all the gossip of the day was sure to be retailed. Sometimes, indeed, S.'s dignity was offended by the familiar dialogues going on; and he would turn round and tell them "to go out, or not keep such noise dey."

The labour of the negroes was never such as to prevent their having a dance at night,—and really I cannot conceive of people who are overworked, preferring dancing to bed, and still being robust, healthy, and happy. Where there is really physical suffering it will easily be seen; and the best and most wiley dissembler cannot deceive one on this head. Among all the negroes I have seen in towns, and on estates, I never saw one deformed person—old, young, or middle-aged. I never saw or heard of an idiot, or any insane negro;

a fact, I think, well worth recording. One of our people was occasionally liable to a taciturnity, that at times amounted to despondency. He sometimes indulged in drinking to excess; with this one fault excepted, he was a good faithful negro. In 1832, without any assignable cause, he committed suicide.

Much has been said, respecting the dogged obstinacy of planters in preferring manual labour to machinery. After, however, a residence of many years among planters, I have found them wonderfully like other men. There was very much which they wished they could do in order to facilitate labour; but then, where were the means? Planters are in no colony in affluent circumstances. All their supplies must be paid for from America and Britain; and six per cent. is charged to the planter on all advances made for him;—charged too from the day on which the order reaches the merchant. Ready-money, consequently, is in fact a thing that hardly a single planter possesses. With respect to the plough, it is only in some

colonies, and on some estates, that it could ever be used. In St. Vincent, for example, the greater part of the cultivation, and certainly the best canes, are on steep hill sides. The little flat land there is, has never been sufficiently stumped up to admit of a plough working; because there never were spare hands enough to perform this laborious task. The cane holes, however, can be made by the hoe; and beautiful crops are raised. Indeed the agriculture and excellent sugar of St. Vincent, are well known to all who are conversant with colonial affairs. Upon Mr. Greatheed's estate, Colonel Caines, the late manager, made many years ago, a very fair trial of the plough. The proprietor sent one out, and an Englishman to work it; for negroes there will not hear of such a thing. The piece of land was most favourable for the attempt; it lay perfectly level, and was freer from all obstacles than almost any other piece of land in the island. Four oxen were put in, but they were found not sufficient. Four mules were added; but neither would



this do; and after all, the negroes were obliged to return, and hole the ground regularly. Thus all the trouble and expense went for nothing. Unless the proprietors were rich enough to stump their land clean, and cut drains on their estates, ploughing will never answer. In Trinidad, could the estates be drained, there is plenty of level land; but proper drains, faced with mason work, could only be formed at an immense expense. Besides, it must be paid for with ready money, as well as the labour of stumping up the ground—an operation quite as requisite in Trinidad as in St. Vincent. Had the proprietors of Trinidad capital for this, the plough, I do not doubt, would be most useful. But latterly, planters have had neither money nor credit.

A steam engine was introduced upon the Eldorada estate in Trinidad; but I heard that it disappointed the expectations formed of it. The mill had been a cattle mill formerly, and the steam engine was intended to reduce the expense of so many cattle. However, it was

found upon trial, that the labour required from the cattle or mules, in going for fuel to supply the engine, was equal to that which the mill had demanded from them. Much that is excellent, and apparently easy in theory, is impossible in practice ; and I can assure my readers, that however dogged they may consider the planter, the negro is much more so. I hardly ever saw a negro who could be coaxed not to do his work in his own way ; and I would ask any lady, resident in the West Indies, if she ever could even prevail upon her washerwoman—her own slave—not to starch every article of her wardrobe, to a degree that in England would render many things unfit for use. Even the pocket handkerchief—all are condemned to wear it in “ negro fashion.” I never even heard of one negro who, although civilly requested, would comply with this one change from her “ own sweet will.”

The truth is, planters would be very happy to improve their estates, and use machinery, where labour is so scarce and dear ; but they have

neither capital to make the improvements necessary to ensure a fair trial of machinery, nor money to purchase machines, and get out European labourers to superintend them; and thus, by degrees, conquer the antipathy which negroes have to any change of system.

I believe nothing would contribute so much to the real comfort and welfare of the negroes, in many of the islands, as the passing a Bill to enable the proprietors of worn-out estates, in the old islands, to remove to Trinidad with their people. Let the people have the choice fairly set before them, explaining to them the capabilities and richness of soil, and abundance of land in Trinidad; and I know very well there would be few negroes who would not be delighted beyond measure at such a change. Trinidad has never been surveyed throughout: there are immense tracks of level land,—rich alluvial soil, unappropriated: and does it consist with common reason, to tie men down to a worn-out estate, such as many are in the small islands, where, with ten times the labour requi-

site in Trinidad, and with manure too, the same produce cannot be obtained, as with the most trifling labour, and with no manure for several crops, may be obtained in Trinidad. The people whom we took to Trinidad, continue up to this hour, to bless their master for the change.

Let me now add a few words on the important subject of free labour—a subject, which was forced upon our attention in Trinidad, not only by the course of events in England, but by the experiments which were going on around us; and I may add, by the growing difficulty which every planter experienced, in getting the work of his estate performed by slave labour. No one felt this difficulty more than the driver M. He said the bulk of the people only laughed at him, when he told them of their idleness. The steadiness of this man, and some of the other people, surprised me—and knowing well his general intelligence, as regarded the agriculture of the estate, I said to him one day, M., what is it they want? “Why misses, dey

say dey want liberty." Well, said I, I am sure if they would work, as free men and women do in England, it would be much better for the master that they were free; do you think they would do so? "Dat is a very difficult question misses." I know it is; but suppose M., a master were to say, Your house is worth so much a year, your garden, your grounds, and your clothing;—"and misses," interrupted M., "the doctor and the physic"—well M., and the doctor and the physic,—suppose the master says, instead of clothing, doctor and physic, I will give you as many dollars as your friend and my friend think them worth; and for the rest, you have your house, your grounds, your fire wood, and one week day every week. Do you think M. they would work? "Misses, I tink da good nigger would do, I tink so, but me no say for sartin; but den, some o' dem would not like pay for doctor or physic; dat would be de worst ting; but da bad nigger would not vorck, only a leetle bit, one day or two day, den sit down softly. Oh misses, me

know niggers better den Massa King George do." I am thoroughly convinced that M.'s judgment was a very correct one: with the really good negro, a little, but not much trouble would be found; though I think it probable that the master would be obliged from humanity still to pay for the doctor and the physic. As to bad negroes, which now I suspect constitute the majority, they would never do steady work; and without steady work, it is utterly impracticable to cultivate the cane or to make sugar. What would any intelligent Northumberland or Berwickshire farmer think, if he were told, that out of every eight workmen, he could not depend any one morning on seeing more than two? How would he maintain his family; pay his rent, taxes, and current expenditure for cultivation? 'T is needless to say he could not; and without steady labourers, neither can a planter maintain his family, pay his honourable engagements to his merchant, his expense of cultivation, and his colonial taxes.

Before we came upon Laurel-Hill, Peons

(a Spanish word well known in Trinidad, and meaning free labourers) were tried by Mr. Fitzgerald, the then manager; but he could get no steady work from them.

Our kind friend and relative, Judge Warner, was exceedingly anxious, and Mr. C. was no less so, to make the fairest possible trial of free labour. For even with the addition of the St. Vincent people, whom we brought to Trinidad, there were not nearly enough of hands to do justice to the estate. A good many peons were therefore hired, at half a dollar per day; they had always the same allowance of salt-fish as a negro, and three bottles of rum weekly. They would not agree, unless paid in advance. They asked, how could they eat, if they had not their money and their allowances? In short, "passave," as they drawl out the word; meaning, it is to them a matter of perfect indifference whether they work for you or not. They can go to the mountain, and work for themselves; and they only work as a favour for you: therefore, you must accept of their terms, or do without them.

Mr. C. proposed the payments to be made each evening; but no, they had stated their terms, and "passave" was again drawled out, and so free labour began. I also was anxious to have a garden made; and we hired for that purpose a free American negro—a very smart clever-looking young man. All the labourers we hired were stout, able-bodied, healthy men. On the Monday three dollars were paid to them, and their fish and rum also were given. They worked three successive days very indolently; but they came back no more that week. Next week they returned. They had been "sick—very sick; could not work, and had been obliged to consume all their money and allowances; and could not possibly work unless the weekly sum, the fish, and the rum, were given them before they commenced." There was no alternative; so given it was. They worked two days—Monday and Tuesday; were sick three—Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday; and returned on the Saturday; when the estates' people being in their grounds, their work was,



comparatively speaking, of little use. This went on for some time, until the expense of the experiment rendered farther trial of it out of the question. They did not care for being dismissed: they had good grounds of their own; for they often came back and sold me poultry and vegetables. So little manual labour indeed is requisite, in that genial climate and rich soil, to produce two fine crops yearly of fruit and vegetables, that I see no cause to wonder at their preference of a very easy indolent life, with less profit, than riches and steady daily labour.

I am convinced, that the love of labour, whether in or out of doors, is not the cause of our being well supplied in England with labourers. Could our labourers live comfortably without it, they would, even in our cold climate, shew some inclination for a life exempt from steady labour: and this is indeed proved among the collieries. But land and food are not so easy to be had in Britain as in Trinidad; and it is the difference of local circumstances, as

much as anything else, that creates the great difficulty in the way of free labour. To the planter, I conceive, the matter is now of minor importance. The mischief done to him cannot be repaired. The bond of affection between the negro, whether free or slave, and the planter, is, for the present generation, destroyed in the majority of cases ; and, however the statement may be denied, it is certain there was a strong bond of affection between many masters and their slaves. It may, perhaps, in many cases have been begun and founded on reciprocity of interest ; but it grew and increased : and I have seen a slave, freed by the family, serve afterwards for wages with an affection that rarely occurs with servants in England. I heard of many families in Trinidad, who, from the difficulties brought upon them by the rapid legislation at home, were reduced to the greatest streights : for, when the English merchant sees things getting worse and worse, he fore-closes the mortgages—sells the estate, and pays himself ; and what is it to him, whether the negroes

lose their old massa or not? I heard of many such distressing cases in Trinidad, where the negroes went and regularly supplied their old master, now in poverty, with vegetables, fruit, and at times with poultry and pork, from their own stock.

Many other planters besides ourselves tried peons; but the result was ever the same—they never worked for above half the value of the sum and allowances asked by them; and even that, they did as a favour.

I was rather inclined at first to boast of my free American gardener; he was a neat, civil, clever fellow. It is true he did not come to work until nearly seven; but then the estate's negroes were never all of them out before that hour. I certainly did coax him, and keep him in humour, and he worked five consecutive days; but I suspect this was an event in his life that never happened before or since. The next week, one day and a half sufficed; and then he said he was tired working garden work. Finding he was accustomed to the still-house

work, he was tried there; but he got drunk, stole the rum, broke through the cellar window, and had to be turned off the estate.

Some free labour—so called—has been performed in Trinidad, under the control of government; but the labourers work under compulsion; in so far that no planter could have the same means of inducing them to work, as the government has. Therefore no fair inference can be drawn from this circumstance. Colombia and Caraccas have frequently been brought forward, too, as cases in support of free labour; but, to the shame of the mother country, who neglected altogether to send proper religious instructors to her negro population, does this example also fail: for, however some Protestants may choose to smile at aught that savours of Popery, I can tell them, that though Catholics do not teach their slaves to read, yet they most conscientiously teach them, by means of missionaries sent for the purpose, to fear God—to behave honestly, soberly, and respectfully to their masters; and to be industrious.

The negroes of Caraccas and Colombia are, therefore, a far more instructed population, as regards moral duties; and, consequently, more likely to act as free men ought: and had the negroes of our colonies been instructed so, I should have had no doubt of their working and acting like free men; the fault lies with the Episcopalian church, who neglected them and their masters too.

I had much conversation on the subject of free labour with a Spanish gentleman, who knew Trinidad agriculture well; and who paid a visit of some duration to the Caraccas, while we were in Trinidad. Nor was I astonished at what I learned from him; for I had myself ever found the even nominal Roman Catholic negro much better disposed and more attentive to his duties, than those of other persuasions.

In 1830, I had the pleasure of meeting a gentleman, a proprietor in St. Domingo. Upon asking him how he got free labourers to make sugar, he said "It is nearly impossible; I lose the half of my crop every year. They

come two days, and cut and grind; then off they go—the cane juice of course ferments, and has to be thrown out. Weeding is nearly out of the question. Could you see, first a Jamaica estate, and then a St. Domingo one; you would think the latter a caricature.” These words I noted down. The quality of the sugar, he said, was very bad; and one dared not shew the negroes in what respect the work was wrong; for in that case they immediately left you in the lurch. I inquired if missionaries were well treated there, in consequence of the freedom of their government? “Quite the reverse,” he said: “Methodists and all sects are persecuted: it cannot be said there is any religion in the island.” I asked, also, respecting the morals of the negro upper ranks of society in St. Domingo, comparatively with those of the white population of the British colonies? The answer was most unfavourable to St. Domingo. This gentleman assured me, that the reputed great increase of population in St. Domingo was a subject he had personally

examined with care; and that the statement was wilfully incorrect, and altogether a delusion. The gentleman I refer to has no British colonial property, nor has any connexions engaged in it; but he had resided in Jamaica nearly twenty years, and therefore was able to judge of the likelihood of free labour ever producing sugar, *in the same quantity or quality*, as by slave labour.

I certainly do not believe that the present generation of negroes will ever make free sugar, to any amount, unless by compulsory labour, which is no longer free labour; and which I really do not see how government could enforce. But although the present time is lost, and the present proprietors, to a great extent, ruined; and although the commercial interests of Great Britain may yet, in respect of her colonies, have to suffer a blow that many people dare scarcely think of; yet I entertain no doubt that, by a wise, and rational, and temperate course, the colonies might, at some period, be enabled to send forth a negro population, much superior

to any of the present race of free negroes, in any part of the globe. But unless Britain be content but to sow the seed, and leave the harvest to be reaped by others, she can do nothing. Impatience will destroy the future.

Let me add a single word upon the compensation to be offered to the planters. If, as many assert, negroes will make sugar as well by free as by slave labour; then it is evident that those people consider the whole negro population to have made an almost miraculous advance in civilization and religion, since 1823. At that time, they only proposed such amelioration and instruction to be given, as should fit them for emancipation. Therefore if, as they say, they are now fit for emancipation, it proves that they consider that the measures devised for the amelioration of the state of slavery, must have been wisely acted upon by the colonial legislatures and slave proprietors; since in nine years it has fitted a population of 800,000 slaves for freedom. But if they are fit for freedom, they, of course, will work like freemen—



making a fair allowance for climate and soil ; and if it be certain they will do so, upon what principle do they propose to give compensation? I am sure a free labourer who would work five consecutive days, every week he is in health, would be a profit and not a loss to his master. But the fact is, it is well known that the majority will not work steadily, as free labourers ; and that many will not work at all ; and therefore it is proposed to grant compensation for a loss—the amount of which no proprietor can tell. It is, in fact, a point dependent upon an experiment which is yet to be tried : and sure am I, if the West India proprietors require compensation — as every honest impartial man must allow they do—no less is compensation in justice required to be voted to the English merchants, ship-owners, manufacturers, and traders ; all of whom will be affected by whatever diminishes the quantity of colonial produce.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

*Negro recreations—Field sports—Description of feats—Branding of negroes—A negro song.*

I have already, when speaking of the negro population in the first volume of this work, treated upon negro recreations. On looking back to these slight notices, I find that I have yet wherewithal to fill a short chapter upon this subject; which, besides being an interesting one, is not without its importance in devising a plan of instruction and civilization for the negroes. The habits of a people, in their hours of relaxation, may not be barren of a lesson.

It may almost be said, that negro recreation is comprised in the one word, dancing. I have spoken of the entertainments given by negroes,

and of the handsome style in which they provide refreshments; but as an every day amusement, the dance is not accompanied by supper, or refreshments: and on these occasions there is little other music than the drum,—which is a barrel, having the top covered with sheep-skin, and tightly fastened down.

Christmas and Easter are the two grand seasons of negro recreation. Before speaking of the feats of these gala days, let me just notice another recreation of the negro; not an every day, or universal amusement, like dancing,—but one in which he frequently indulges; more however, from the love of gain, than from the greater pleasure it affords him. I allude to field sports—shooting and running down game. Among the wild animals most commonly the subject of negro prowess are, the ramier, the tourterello, the perdrix, the wild boar, the lap, and the wild deer, all of which are abundant. The wild boar and the lap of Trinidad are excellent; the deer is, however, greatly inferior to the venison of England or Scotland. I have

seen the wild deer so abundant at Laurel-Hill, that, on one occasion, I remember one of them having put its antlers in at the window. They are not the light, graceful, elegant creatures, one sees in the parks of the nobility and gentry at home:—on the contrary, they are tumble-down, awkward, calf-looking animals. When a deer is caught, upon a moderate sized estate, which sometimes occurs twice in a week, the person who catches it sends up a quarter to the master; and sells, or makes use of the rest as he pleases. They also catch the armadillo, and the agouti; both of which are excellent for the table. The armadillo is as white and delicate as a chicken; the agouti very much resembles the hare. In some parts of Trinidad there are wild turkeys, which are considered a great delicacy. All those animals are often caught at night; and in a moonlight night, some one or other of the negroes is always on the look-out. Excepting deer, the master always pays for game to the negro who catches it. I paid a quarter dollar for an agouti, and

half a dollar for an armadillo; for a lap, two bits per lb. ; and for wild boar the same. Tourterello, ramiers, and perdrix, from a dollar to a dollar and a half per couple.

The vulture is very common in Trinidad. In town, there is a heavy fine for any one guilty of shooting them—so useful are they in devouring carrion. In the country the negroes occasionally have a shot at them, as they are very destructive to their poultry. They are black-speckled, and about the size of a domestic turkey; they look magnificent birds when soaring in the air. The king of the corbeaus is, I believe, a splendid bird; larger than the common corbeau, and of pure white, with a fine crest. I never saw one, nor are they common; but one was shot not very far from us, in the high grounds. Field sports, therefore, such as every colony affords, are one of the negro recreations.

Negroes have an inclination for gambling; and pitch and toss is a game for which they have an early predilection; but which I always tried to discourage. Sitting outside their doors,

in the fine nights of a tropical climate,—cooking, and eating their suppers, telling stories, and singing songs, is also a common negro recreation.

The children, besides dancing, have many games; some of which have a resemblance to those of Britain. “Through-the-needle-eye, boy,” I found very common; also “French and English,” and a game resembling “The hounds and the hare,” which all little masters and misses in Trinidad know by the name of “I’m fishing, I’m fishing all night, and what did I catch but a grouper;”—a handkerchief is dropt at the word grouper, and the chase begins.

Let me return to the festival season, and its galas. The first Christmas I was at Laurel-Hill, I had an invitation to go and see a ball given by F., as a return from the St. Vincent people, for the civilities of those of Laurel-Hill, upon their arrival on the estate. We had a cold dinner at three o’clock, that our negroes might have the sole use of our kitchen and oven;

which were soon filled with good things—hot and cold roast fowls, pork roasted and soused, and plenty of pies, both of meat and of fruit; cakes from St. Joseph's, and fruit in every variety. Mr. C. gave them some wine and porter; besides which, they had bought some. I went about nine o'clock, and found them all well dressed. The prevailing costume was thin muslin, and some had coloured slips on. Shoes were not universal; but many had handsome necklaces and ear-rings. Their head handkerchiefs were gracefully put on; and the whole was managed with an attention to politeness and decorum, that was certainly very creditable. The music consisted of four female singers, one drum, and three women, with calabashes hollowed out, so that a few stones may be put in them; this they flourish up and down, and rattle in the same way as a tamborine. There was no drinking or fighting: they supped very late, and kept it up until near sun-rise; and danced the next night, as long, and as merrily elsewhere. I recollect one

Christmas morning, I was awoke just as day dawned, by the sound of many merry voices, young and old, wishing massa and misses a good Christmas. We got up, and dressed as quickly as possible, to return the compliment, and found upwards of twenty negroes—both Laurel-Hill and St. Vincent people. When we came to the door, they all shook hands with us; some made long speeches, full of good wishes; and one female negro expressed what she no doubt considered the best wish of all. She meant that her master should enjoy a good old age; but she expressed it by saying, “Me massa, me hope you live long, very long; me hope you live to bury all your pic-a-ninnies.” Songs and dances followed: the songs of their own composition, and full of good wishes for a good crop and good sugar.

The giving out the Christmas allowances is a very merry scene: they flour each other's black faces and curly hair, and call out, “look at he white face! and he white wig!”—with many other jokes of their own. On Christmas



eve, or rather from noon the day preceding Christmas, nothing is done but to bring the grass for the stock—all is bustle and preparation; and this is continued until the evening of Christmas-day, which always terminates in a dance. About eleven in the morning, a party of negroes from Paradise, the adjoining estate, came to wish us a good Christmas. They had two fiddlers, whose hats and fiddles were decorated with many-coloured ribbons. They said they wished to come and play good Christmas to the “young misses.” They were very nicely dressed, in clean white shirts, trowsers, and jackets. We told them to come back and see us on New Year’s day; as we wished now to be quiet, and read the service for Christmas-day. They went away very good humouredly, and returned on New Year’s day; and pleased and entertained us with their songs and merriment. The children’s governess and I had been engaged some days previous to Christmas, in trimming their dresses; and every spare ribbon at Laurel-Hill being called into service, I had

got out a fresh supply from Belmont, besides artificial flowers, which looked very gay in the hats of the dandies. Indeed, there were some who came up not an hour before the dance commenced, to have their "hats drest." We had to be our own servants on that day; for the negroes were too happy, and far too busy in cooking and dressing, to recollect that massa or misses had either to eat or drink. But though we had no Christmas dinner, in the English sense of the word, we had nevertheless a very merry Christmas; and to see so many of our fellow creatures dependent upon us, all rejoicing around us, was worth all the Christmas geese and plum-puddings that ever were set down. It was a busy and cheerful scene all day, to see the women hurrying to and from the river with their pails, and often throwing the water over each other, and laughing till the woods rung. The supper, as usual, consisted of pork, fowls, puddings, pies, cakes, Madeira, porter, rum, and lemonade. It was one of the loveliest of evenings. No one who has not

lived in a tropical climate, or at least in the most southern parts of Europe, can fancy the splendour of such a night. The moon was at her full: the sky was of the brightest blue, and cloudless: there was just breeze enough to make the cocoa-nut trees gently wave their branches, and shew their silver tints. The little stream glanced and vanished, as its turnings and windings were exposed to the full glare of the moon, or were shaded by the noble forest trees, that studded the pasture.

The drum and the song were soon distinct; and we shortly reached C.'s house, where, before her door, a large space was left clear for the dancers, surrounded on three sides by seats of all kinds. The musicians were at one end. They were engaged in a dance of eight persons when we reached the spot; it was similar to a French quadrille, and they were dancing to the air of "Le Garçon Volage." Muslin was the general dress of the young people, variously trimmed with coloured satin and ribbons, in rows; and sashes of the same. Some sported

silk stockings, coloured kid shoes, and gilt buckles: while others had handsome large coral necklaces, or chains of gilt cut beads, and necklaces to suit the blue trimmings of the dress. One had a pink silk dress, and gauze flounces; and many of the elderly women had exceedingly shewy-coloured chintz petticoats, of the best quality, but of patterns such as we use in England for window-curtains. These had white thick muslin bodices and sleeves,—some trimmed with embroidery, some with lace: old Mammy J., whom I have often mentioned, had a profusion of Valenciennes edging: all had necklaces and earrings, some of them of considerable value. The universal neck-handkerchief was the Madras—the same as that worn on the head: these handkerchiefs often cost four and five Spanish dollars each. With hardly an exception, these handkerchiefs were put on in the most becoming style.

The men were all well dressed: the favourite costume was Windsor-grey jean trowsers, embroidered down the seams; and flourished

round the pockets with black or white cord. Almost all had white jackets and shirts. Some had a handkerchief round the neck—others had not; but all had high collars, and all the collars were as stiff as parchment: so particular were they, that when the heat and its consequences made the collar droop, many retired and changed them. The children were nice and neat; and danced on the outside of the space which had been enclosed.

Every grown person paid C. half a dollar for coming to this dance; and for this they had refreshments and supper. The supper is not a sitting one;—each of the party lends plates, dishes, and other requisites; and a certain number cut up the meat, which is handed round on plates. The men always give the preference to the females, and wait upon them before they themselves sup. Punch, sugar and water, lemonade, and rum and water, are partaken of, during the dance; and the men go into the house, and bring to their partners what refreshments they choose—generally lemonade,

or sugar and water: the wine and porter do not appear until supper. C.'s house was well lit up: the table was neatly laid out with refreshments; and there was a clean tablecloth, and dozens of glasses and tumblers of all sorts and sizes. Many dances of all kinds were performed: among the most interesting, a *pas de deux*, by the two oldest negroes present—the driver and his wife. During this dance there was the profoundest attention, and the deepest silence. The supper took place at a late hour, and they danced till sunrise. I ought not to omit mentioning the two drummers; these men get each half a dollar, their supper, and refreshments; and they well deserve their pay, for it is a most fatiguing job. They are seated on a bench, with their drum before them; and such is the exertion requisite to beat the drum in proper style, that they cannot bear the heat of a jacket; they have the shirt turned down over the shoulders, while two persons are obliged to stand behind them with dry handkerchiefs, with which they keep continually

wiping off the profuse perspiration. It is considered a first-rate accomplishment to beat the drum well ; and a negro piques himself as much upon this accomplishment, as a first-rate violin player does in Europe.

Before finishing all I have to say respecting the negro population, I must add one or two observations, which would, indeed, have been better introduced elsewhere, but which, rather than omit altogether, I shall conclude this chapter with. Much has been said as to slaves being branded with hot irons, and being punished by wearing heavy collars, weights, and chains attached to them. To pass over this, might be construed into a wish to blink at one of the charges brought against the West India proprietors. In common with others, I once believed in those horrors ; but I do solemnly declare, that though looking into, and daily investigating the treatment of slaves,—walking over estates when no one expected me, or suspected I had a thought beyond the enjoyment of a walk, I never saw one slave

branded ; nor one working at any time with a collar, or weight, upon any part of his or her person. I saw, occasionally, a double series of marks upon some African male negroes,—marks very similar to fresh scars left by cupping-glasses. But I never saw them without inquiring what was the cause of those marks; and the negroes invariably told me they were their own country marks.' Some few like to have their initials marked on their arms, and other figures pricked: but this is a fancy of their own. This is done by themselves for each other often, and sometimes they get white sailors to do it for them, with a needle and gunpowder, and a little indigo. The native African mark is admired by them: it is generally on the centre of the chest; and I think I have seen one or two such marks on the arm, and on the cheek. They told me this tattooing was done in Africa, when they were young, that the marks might grow as they grew up. Creole negroes are never tattooed.

Refractory negroes, in St. Vincent, when



taken up and brought to gaol, are at times taken out, attached to each other by a chain, and are made to clean the streets. I am not certain, but I think a tread-mill has since superseded this. I recollect saying to Sir Charles Brisbane, that it was the only thing as regarded the punishment of negroes, that I saw any cause to wish a change in. His Excellency of course admitted that the spectacle was unpleasant; but referred me to the hulks, where, he said, I should see the same; and that not a punishment of only a few days, but for life. I mention this to shew that I have throughout never varied from representing things as I saw them, and expressing the feelings excited by what I saw also. I have seen some distressed and diseased-looking negroes in St. Vincent; but during two years and a half, their number did not amount to ten. Every one of such cases I inquired into; and with the exception of one, they were all the result of personal misconduct; and unconnected with the acts of the planters. In the one case I except, the negro

had been punished—certainly with over severity, by a coloured master or mistress. It must be recollected, that the majority of the coloured population are less really educated than the white population: their tempers are consequently less under self-control, and they are more accustomed to correct with severity.

In Trinidad I never saw one distressed negro, though no doubt there must have been some brought to misery by depravity; which, with its consequences, cannot as far as I know, be excluded from any state of society. I did, indeed see negroes, whom I could tell were not good people, with their clothes in tatters; but these I knew to be incorrigible. Some of them I had tried over and over again to win to civilized habits; but found it impossible. Mr. C., who has been more or less in many of the islands of the West Indies, has never, during thirty years, seen but one branded negro; and he was the property of a Frenchman in St. Lucia.

Perhaps my readers may be gratified by a

specimen of negro poetry ; and with it, I shall conclude this chapter. Soon after coming to Laurel-Hill, and subsequently to the meditated insurrection in Trinidad, I heard some of the young negroes singing, as I thought, rather a singular song. I asked J. to sing it for me ; he hesitated, and said, " Misses, it no good song." Why do you sing it then ? "'Cause misses, it a funny song, and me no mean bad by it." At last I prevailed upon J. not only to sing the song (which turned out to be an insurrectionary song), but to explain it. The words are these—

Fire in da mountain,  
 Nobody for out him,  
 Take me daddy's bo tick (dandy stick),  
 And make a monkey out him.

Chorus.

Poor John ! nobody for out him, &c.

Go to de king's gaol,  
 You 'll find a doubloon dey ;  
 Go to de king's gaol,  
 You 'll find a doubloon dey.

Chorus.

Poor John ! nobody for out him, &c.

The explanation of this song is, that when the bad negroes wanted to do evil, they made for a sign, a fire on the hill-sides, to burn down the canes. There is nobody up there, to put out the fire; but as a sort of satire, the song goes on to say, "take me daddy's bo tick," (daddy is a mere term of civility), take some one's dandy stick, and tell the monkeys to help to put out the fire among the canes for John; (meaning John Bull). The chorus means, that poor John has nobody to put out the fire in the canes for him. Then when the canes are burning, go to the gaol, and seize the money. The tune to which this is sung, is said to be negro music; it is on a minor key, and singularly resembles an incorrect edition of an old Scotch tune, the name of which I do not recollect.

CHAPTER XXV.

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*White society in Trinidad—Orange grove—La Reconnoissance and Count Lopinot—The climate; variations; temperature: precautions necessary for preserving health—Heat not the real annoyance of a tropical climate—Insects and reptiles—The sand fly, the chigre, snakes, tarantula, &c.—Ants; the parasol ant, the chasseur ant—singular relation—Preparations for leaving the colony—Parting from our people.*

IN this concluding chapter, I shall throw together all that I have not been able conveniently to introduce elsewhere; particularly noticing the subjects of climate and disease, which I should certainly be culpable in passing over. From Monday morning to Saturday night, the planter's life, and the planter's wife's life, is a

life of labour—and sometimes even Sunday has to be broken in upon, by hearing the negro quarrels, and adjusting them. It may be conceived, therefore, that planters have little time for social society. I did, however, partake of some, which I cannot soon forget.

One of our near neighbours was the Honorable William Burnley, at Orange-Grove; and I was much charmed by the aspect of this place: not that I considered its natural beauties at all comparable to Laurel-Hill, but it remains a marvel to me to this day, how the remarkable neatness of that place was effected by negro labourers. The house stands in a park of some extent, studded with fine natural wood, and dotted with abundance of better-looking sheep than one usually sees in the West Indies. But when we speak of a park in the West Indies, it must not be figured the delicate velvet turf of an English park. Orange-Grove was, however, a very charming place to look at, and a very delightful place to visit.

Perhaps the place most worthy of mention, is

La Reconnoissance, the property of Mr. Gillman. There is a story almost of romance connected with the first settlement of this estate, which renders it a very interesting spot, independent of its matchless natural beauty. Count Lopinot was the proprietor of an estate in St. Domingo: when the troubles broke out in that colony, he fled with his family, to save his life, and came to Trinidad. The whole of his negroes voluntarily followed him; and a hospitable planter in Tacaragua, received him and all his people upon his estate. The Count made an application to the colonial government for a grant of land,—his negroes having declared their only wish was to serve him, and to live and die with him. Count Lopinot was allowed to select that situation which pleased him best; and he wandered up on the high grounds behind Laurel-Hill, taking his negroes with him to cut their way through passes, then for the first time trodden by man. After climbing the most precipitous paths, the Count found on the mountain, a spot precisely to his mind,—plenty

of level rich land, and excellent water in great abundance. It was a serious undertaking to cut even such a path as one could clamber up by, to this paradise. The Count, however, was an old soldier—he was not to be baffled by difficulties: he soon erected a habitation for himself and family, and houses for his negroes; and by perseverance and industry, this desert was soon made “to blossom like the rose.”

To cultivate sugar where it would have been next to impossible to convey it to the highway, was wisely not attempted. It was resolved that it should be a cocoa estate. Here again the old soldier shewed himself: he laid out the cocoa land in the form of a general officer, with his epaulettes. Nothing can be more beautiful than the cultivation of the cocoa: it is planted in quincunxes, so that whichever way you turn, a long vista presents itself to the view. The cocoa trees are planted from fifteen to twenty feet apart; they are from the size of a large gooseberry bush, to that of a fair sized apple tree, according to the age of



the cocoa. The bois immortelle, or in Spanish, La Madre del Cacao, or as the English negroes term it, the cocoa-mammy, is planted at equal distances among the cocoa: it collects the dews, and gives shade and nourishment to the cocoa. Independent of this, the bois immortelle is a noble forest tree, abounding in all the woods of Trinidad: it is from sixty to eighty feet in height, covered once a year with a bright flame-coloured magnificent blossom; and at that season, the woods seen at a distance, appear at times as if on fire.

As soon as Count Lopinot had got all his family and his negroes up in safety, he assembled them together, and thanking God solemnly for their preservation and escape from St. Domingo, and for the prospect now held out of a home once more, he christened the estate "La Reconnoissance"—a name which it would be sacrilege to change. La belle France, which the family had originally left at the first dawn of the Revolution, was never forgotten by the Count and Countess, who also cherished a fond regard for the Bourbon line. Both lived to

hear of the re-establishment of that family in 1815; but they are now dead, and it is pleasing to know that their memory is even yet annually commemorated by the negroes, who strew the finest flowers over massa and misses' grave in the garden.

The village of Arima, about six miles from Laurel-Hill, has a Catholic chapel and a resident curate. It is chiefly inhabited by free settlers, many of whom are Indians. They feed stock, and cultivate such provisions as are necessary for their support. The indolence of these people surpasses belief, their only delight being to spend their lives swinging in a hammock.

The climate of the West Indies is always spoken of in England with dread, by those who have never been across the Atlantic, and by others also, who may have suffered severely from imprudence, or lost relations from the same cause; thus a West India climate is represented as little better than a grave for Europeans. I suspect there is a good deal of ignorance, and I know there is a great deal of exaggeration, in this.

I found, in first going to the West Indies, a much greater variation in the seasons than I had expected. December, January, and February, may be said to be pleasant months; for although it is generally showery in December and January, yet the showers are of short duration, and, from the nature of the soil of St. Vincent, at which island I first arrived, I found the roads dry almost as soon as the rain had ceased. The average of the thermometer during those months in St. Vincent, may be stated to be about seventy-eight in the shade at noon: in the morning, very early, it is a few degrees lower; but seldom falls much in the evening, at which time, in that island (though not in these particular months) the heat is most oppressive, the nights being at times so hot as to preclude the possibility of undisturbed rest, and one often rises in the morning more fatigued than on going to bed. In December, January, and February, however, the nights are very agreeable, though never so cold as to require a blanket during the night. The heat

and drought increase in March, April, and May; the average of the thermometer is then rather above eighty. In June, or rather towards the latter end of it, heavy showers commence; the breezes so refreshing during the day in the other months are now scarcely felt. In July and August the showers increase, and sometimes it rains a few hours without interruption; but heavy showers, with intervals of the brightest sunshine, are most common; and the heat is at such times very trying to those who are first exposed to the rain and afterwards to the sun's rays. The latter end of August is generally accompanied by a good deal of thunder, and almost every night, by what is called sheet lightning; but I never experienced a thunder storm in St. Vincent, that appeared to me more severe than I have seen at home. Here, accidents from the electric fluid are extremely rare, and I may say generally in the West Indies, partly owing to the houses being low, seldom exceeding one story, and probably, also, owing to the absence of bell-wires and other things

which at home act as conductors. During September and October, the rains continue, and the sky is more often clouded than at any other season—thunder and lightning are very frequent, and at times, sudden and heavy squalls, and hurricanes. In August, hurricanes are rare; September is the month when they are chiefly dreaded; and after full-moon in October, no farther danger is apprehended.

St. Vincent is nearly out of the hurricane tract, although it has more than once suffered, particularly in 1780; but while I was resident there, no gale occurred that would have been reckoned severe, even in England. The only occasion upon which I saw any alarm shewn, was at the conclusion of the hurricane season, the full moon of October: there had been heavy showers all the preceding night, and constant sheet-lightning, with a strong breeze from the eastward as usual; but about eight in the morning, the wind lulled in a moment; not a breath was perceivable; the oppression of the atmosphere produced a suffocating sensation; and

the sky assumed that peculiar bluish black, intermixed with distant towering white clouds, so often to be remarked during the continuance of a storm at sea. The barometer, that faithful indicator in northern latitudes, is of little use in a tropical climate. Its variations are so slight, that it is hardly worth while observing them : however, I found it had fallen about the fourth part of one-tenth of an inch, which was more than I had ever before been able to detect. This perfect calm continued for about ten minutes, when in a moment the wind shifted to the westward, and blew with great violence. A certain alarm is felt whenever the wind shifts to the westward ; and as a first measure of precaution, all the nails and hammers were in requisition, to fasten the doors and windows. The squall increased, and we were just on the point of accepting shelter in a neighbouring kitchen, which had a stone arched roof, when our fears were as suddenly dissipated as they had been roused. There was a flash of lightning, a peal of thunder, and in a moment the

wind subsided, the sky began to break, and in less than an hour all alarm ceased. In November the showers become daily less, and it gets cooler and cooler, until the pleasant month of December is again hailed with joy, after the rains and intense heats.

I was very much struck, at first, by the quantity of liquid drank by many in the forenoon,—commonly water, just tinged with rum; though by the older settlers, syrup and water, or tamarind beverage, is commonly used; but new-comers seldom relish these drinks. Those who have been only a year or two from Europe, do not experience the intense thirst which those do who have been long resident between the tropics; the constitution becomes more and more relaxed, and the desire for liquids increases, while the appetite for solids diminishes; and thus, after a time, one is tempted only by highly seasoned and salted food, which is not only more agreeable to the palate, but apparently agrees better with the stomach; at times, indeed, fresh food, plainly dressed, is almost

loathed. During the first year I resided in St. Vincent, I never felt thirst between breakfast and dinner, unless I had walked or rode out during the heat of the day; but before I left the West Indies, I felt a great change in this respect, taking sometimes as many as six or seven large glasses of water in the forenoon. Upon the whole, indeed, the dangers of climate seem pretty nearly balanced between Great Britain and the West Indies: imprudent exposure to cold is dangerous in Britain, and the same exposure to heat is dangerous in the West Indies.

I dined in company with a physician who had been long in the West Indies, a few days before I left Edinburgh for embarkation; and he asked me if I had any fears of the climate? I said I had no fears. His answer was, "then by the blessing of God, that is the best possible guarantee for your health. The greater number of people who die in the West Indies, die from apprehension. At first avoid exposure to the sun, and eat sparingly of all kinds of fruit; never eat two kinds of fruit in one day,—nor



mix different wines. Avoid cocoa-nut water, and nuts of any kind; take no malt liquor or cider; eat a fair proportion of as good animal food or fish as you can get, daily: by no means lower your usual diet if you are in health, and take at least a couple of glasses of Madeira every day. After the first rainy season is over, you are then seasoned. Exercise out of the sun is beneficial to health." I have subsequently found from experience, that better advice could not have been given: we went out seven in family, and not one of us suffered from the climate.

That which struck me at first as the great peculiarity of the climate, was the burning heat of the sun, and yet the constant breeze,—that by contrast seemed almost cold, and which blowing upon you, in doors and out of doors, while the body is more or less in a state of perspiration, must, I thought, be dangerous; and so it is, out of doors, unless under proper precautions. The best precaution against heat in riding, is by wearing a cloth riding-habit, but-

toned up to the throat, and a habit-shirt, with a high standing collar ;— so attired, one may brave both the sun and the wind. To cover the neck and chest as lightly as we do in an English summer, is neither safe nor comfortable. The sun blisters the neck, unless it be defended from its rays. Linen is pretty generally worn, but cotton is considered safer. Flannel, however, is every way the safest and pleasantest wear. I speak, however, of new comers ; for after the first rainy season is over, and one is “ creolized,” almost any dress may be worn, with attention to ordinary precautions.

White is the general dress of ladies, both morning and evening, and nothing looks so appropriate in that climate. All coloured muslins, and gingham for children, become, after being washed several times, as white as if bought white. Gentlemen mostly wear white jackets, waistcoats, and trowsers, at dinner, or in paying a morning visit, cloth coats are worn the same as in Europe. Black beaver and grey hats, the same as in England, are worn ; all

fancy straw hats being reckoned vulgar, and gentlemen never wear them except on an estate, and even then very early in the morning.

From six to eight is the time for exercise; then breakfast; afterwards the heat renders exercise uncomfortable, till four or five, when it gets somewhat cooler; and by half-past five it is delightful. I then usually rode, or more often walked, out with my children for an hour, and on a moonlight night, much longer. In St. Vincent, the dews are very light, but in Trinidad they were very heavy; the consequence is, that rheumatic complaints are not unfrequent in Trinidad, but in St. Vincent they are rare.

The nights in St. Vincent are, in the hot season, most oppressive; but in Trinidad, they are always cool, sometimes cold. I have even longed for a fire in Trinidad; and, between six and seven of an evening, not unfrequently gone and warmed myself at the kitchen fire. A blanket is at times not an unpleasant companion in Trinidad; the sight of one in St. Vincent would be enough to put one in a fever.

There are, decidedly, unhealthy spots in Trinidad, near swamps and uncleared lands; and it seems most unaccountable, that barracks for our troops are frequently, in the West Indies, built in situations which no experienced person would select as a healthy residence. It is also a great error to send out troops at the near approach, the commencement of, or the middle of the rainy season. The safest time to land in the West Indies is in November, or at least before February. It is an equal trial of health to remove from a temperate to a tropical climate during the heats, as it is to arrive from the tropics in a temperate climate during its winter. The following, I would say, are good general rules:—avoid drafts of cold air, when heated by exercise, or by exposure to the sun, unless sufficiently covered by thick clothing. When heated, and you wish to get cool, the safest and simplest plan is to shut up the room, so as to prevent any draft of air upon your person; and after undressing, to lie down for a short time. This should always be done before washing and dressing for dinner, if one be

previously overheated. Cold bathing, moderately indulged in, is decidedly healthy. To sit in wet clothing, whether from rain, dew, or perspiration,—injudicious in all climates,—is most dangerous in the West Indies; and the utmost attention to cleanliness, also useful in temperate climes, is essential to health within the tropics.

The great danger which young officers, and indeed all new comers labour under, is this: the inhabitants of the West Indies are proverbially kind and hospitable. Their constitutions are seasoned, and accustomed to the climate; and, in the excess of their hospitality, they often forget that the stranger ought to partake of it at first sparingly. The stranger is also full of curiosity, and anxious to see the novel and striking scenery by which he is surrounded; he is apt to forget the new circumstances in which he is placed; he rides out all the morning, perhaps, without an umbrella—an accompaniment which an equestrian considers in *mauvais gout*; he drives out, drinks

freely, and concludes by dancing half the night; but all this is dangerous, until the constitution be seasoned. Then it is probable that the variety and beauty of the fruit, and the thirst induced by heat and wine, tempt him to taste a little bit of each; the stomach is deranged, and the probable issue of all is, an attack of fever, more or less severe.

In the event of feeling any the most trifling premonitory symptoms of illness, there ought to be no trifling; that which is of no moment, if at first checked by proper medical treatment, is often incurable from neglect. Even a slight fever from a cold requires prompt attention: but colds are not frequent. The same treatment is pursued in the West Indies as in England, but only with a little consideration of the nature of the climate.

The yellow fever never appeared when I was in St. Vincent, or Trinidad; indeed the inhabitants say, that there is now no such fever in these islands, nor has been for many years. The climate and health of every island must

necessarily improve, the more it is cleared and drained.

Ague prevailed in Port of Spain and its neighbourhood for a short time as an epidemic: all ages and colours were affected by it. I do not recollect hearing of any fatal cases, but in the country we had not one case. The only general prevailing epidemic while we were in Trinidad, was hooping-cough; but excepting in a few isolated cases, it appears under a much milder form than in Great Britain. Measles is also a trifling disease in the West Indies, compared to what it is in Europe. Children cut their teeth more easily, and it seems a climate every way suitable for young people until seven or eight, when I think they often get thin, and look sickly. From eight o'clock till nearly five, all exercise out of doors is prejudicial to the health of a child; therefore a good deal of ingenuity is required, to provide varied amusement and employment. After twelve years of age, children appear to require a change of climate, they grow too fast; and at fourteen, a

girl who has never been in Europe, is, in appearance and manner, like an English girl of seventeen or eighteen. I saw many very healthy old people in the West Indies; and it did not strike me that life was shorter, or deaths more frequent, than at home.

St. Vincent is considered one of the healthiest of the islands, and Trinidad has often been characterized as the reverse; but I saw nothing in the climate to be dreaded by persons living in healthy situations, and acting with prudence. Drinking to excess is unknown in good society in Trinidad;—the gentlemen join the ladies in the drawing-room, in a quarter of an hour after they have retired. It is worth mentioning, that I never saw, or heard of card playing in Trinidad.

I resided so much in the country, that I know little of the coloured population of Trinidad but by report. I however understood, that there were many very respectable people among them. Several of them are proprietors both of land and negroes. The morals of the coloured



population, as a whole, are however undoubtedly very lax, compared with the white population, whom I consider much more exemplary than we find them in England in the same rank of life. In no country of the world do married people live more affectionately and happily: this may be easily accounted for, by the circumstance that nowhere do people so generally marry from disinterested affection; it does not appear that money or high connexion is looked to. Disputes about marriage settlements never occur; and young people are there supposed to be better judges themselves of the person with whom they can live happily for life, than any one can be for them. Divorces and separations, in consequence, are absolutely unknown. Family ties of relationship and connexion are kept up with much affection.

I may remark, also, that in general there is none of that unamiable system of exclusive society so prevalent in Great Britain: every person of gentlemanlike conduct and manners, is admitted into society upon equal terms of

civility; and a man, destitute of these, would find neither birth nor gold obtain for him the advantages which they infallibly command in England. Every proper respect is paid to either European or colonial rank; but no attempt is made, or any desire shewn, to exclude those from the best society, who, though they may have neither rank from Europe nor in the colony, are fitted by their conduct, education, and manners, to move in any circle. West Indians feel a sad reverse when they go to England; where, if they have not rank, admittance into society must be purchased by their weight in gold.

With respect to the influence of climate upon the negro,—I believe the West Indies to be very suitable to his constitution. I never heard a negro complain of heat; but often in the cool season, he complains of cold. I think there can be no doubt that the habits of negroes, particularly the late hours they indulge in at night, contribute to shorten life. Their irregular habits in other respects, act as a check to

population; and my own belief is, that until the moral habits of the negro very nearly resemble those of the white population, there will not, under any change of circumstances, effected by the wisest laws, be that increase of population which, it is thought by some, is only prevented by hard work, and by a deprivation of temporal comforts.

The great objection to a tropical climate is considered, in England, to be its intense heat. But it will generally be found, that those who have resided some time in the West Indies feel this to be a trifling objection, and would, if asked to point out the greatest tropical annoyance, pass over the heat of the climate, and complain of the insects and reptiles. No doubt, after a time, sand flies and mosquitoes bite less fiercely and less frequently; but still they do bite, and deprive one of sleep; and at some seasons, they are troublesome even to an old settler.

There is an insect with which the grass abounds, called "bete rouge;" it is like the

most minute particle of dust in size, and of the colour of red sealing wax. One footstep in the grass is sufficient; the feet and ancles are instantly covered, and a few paces more, covers the whole body; they produce a universal and most intolerable itching, and the only effectual remedy is, to get river sand and lime juice, and literally scour down your whole person.

The chigre is a small sand flea, which abounds in all dry sandy places. They bury themselves in the heels, the toes, and the fingers; and are particularly annoying.

Ants of many kinds abound in the West Indian islands, and, as I believe, in none more than Trinidad; if you go in their way, or in any manner disturb them, they sting severely; this I have already adverted to.

I had heard of the parasol-ant previous to going to Trinidad, but I could hardly believe the account I had received of them. The first morning I was at Belmont, Mrs. Warner called me to run out and see the parasol ants—and sure enough there was a string of black ants,

about the length of a common house fly, moving as ants do in England in a long file; and every ant with a small bit of a green leaf, held erect over its head. I never beheld any thing so strange; not one was without the leaf;—I heard too, a stranger story still, that they plucked these leaves, and took them down a great way under ground. I was informed by Mr. Gillman, of La Reconnoissance, that his negroes having by his orders dug into the ants' habitation, it was found full of these same leaves withered, and at the bottom of the nest, one or two (I forget which) white snakes, of from nine inches to a foot in length; and it was said, that every one who had dug out these nests, had found the leaves and the white snakes.

At Laurel-Hill, we observed a great many of these parasol ants; and Mr. C. resolved to get at the truth. The ants came from the high ground, a considerable distance above the house; their route was as distinct, and as bare of herbage as a sheep track. They were accordingly traced to the side of a bank, and we dug

where they disappeared. It proved a work of some difficulty to get fairly to the nest; it was from ten to twelve feet underground, and there, sure enough, were found two contiguous chambers, full of the leaves, and a white snake nearly in the centre.

One morning my attention was arrested at Laurel-Hill by an unusual number of black birds, whose appearance was foreign to me; they were smaller, but not unlike an English crow; and were perched on a calibash tree near the kitchen. I asked D., who at that moment came up from the garden, what could be the cause of the appearance of so many of those black birds? She said, "Misses, dem be a sign of the blessing of God; dey are not de blessing, but only de sign, as we say, of God's blessing. Misses, you'll see afore noon-time, how the ants will come and clear the houses." At this moment I was called to breakfast, and thinking it was some superstitious idea of D.'s, I paid no farther attention to it. In about two hours after this, I observed

an uncommon number of *chasseur-ants* crawling about the floor of the room: my children were annoyed by them, and seated themselves on a table, where their legs did not communicate with the floor. They did not crawl upon my person, but I was now surrounded by them. Shortly after this, the walls of the room became covered by them,—and next they began to take possession of the tables and chairs. I now thought it necessary to take refuge in an adjoining room, separated only by a few ascending steps from the one we occupied; and this was not accomplished without great care and generalship,—for had we trodden upon one, we should have been summarily punished. There were several ants on the step of the stair, but they were not nearly so numerous as in the room we had left;—but the upper room presented a singular spectacle, for not only were the floor and the walls covered like the other room, but the roof was covered also.

The open rafters of a West India house, at all times afford shelter to a numerous tribe of

insects, more particularly the cockroach; but now their destruction was inevitable. The chasseur ants, as if trained for battle, ascended in regular thick files to the rafters, and threw down the cockroaches to their comrades on the floor, who as regularly marched off with the dead bodies of cockroaches, dragging them away by their united efforts with amazing rapidity. Either the cockroaches were stung to death on the rafters, or else the fall killed them. The ants never stopped to devour their prey, but conveyed it all to their store-house. The windward windows of this room were glass, and a battle now ensued between the ants and the jack-spaniards, on the panes of glass. The jack-spaniard, may be called the wasp of the West Indies; it is twice as large as a British wasp, and its sting is in proportion more painful. It builds its nests in trees and old houses, and sometimes in the rafters of a room. The jack-spaniards were not quite such easy prey, for they used their wings, which not one cockroach had attempted. Two jack-



spaniards, hotly pursued on the window, alighted on the dress of one of my children. I entreated her to sit still, and remain quiet. In an almost inconceivably short space of time, a party of ants crawled upon her frock, surrounded, covered the two jack-spaniards, and crawled down again to the floor, dragging off their prey, and doing the child no harm.

From this room I went to the adjoining bed-chamber and dressing-room, and found them equally in possession of the chasseurs. I opened a large military chest full of linens, which had been much infested; for I was determined to take every advantage of such able hunters. I found the ants already inside: I suppose they must have got in at some opening at the hinges. I pulled out the linens on the floor, and with them hundreds of cockroaches; not one of which escaped.

We now left the house, and went to the chambers built at a little distance; but these also were in the same state. I next proceeded to open a store-room at the end of the other

house, for a place of retreat; but, to get the key, I had to return to the under room, where the battle was now more hot than ever: the ants had commenced an attack upon the rats and mice, and, strange as it may appear, they were no match for their apparently insignificant foes. They surrounded them, as they had the insect tribe, covered them over, and dragged them off with a celerity and union of strength that no one who has not watched such a scene can comprehend. I did not see one mouse or rat escape, and I am sure I saw a score carried off during a very short period. We next tried the kitchen—for the store-room and boys' pantry were already occupied; but the kitchen was equally the field of battle, between rats, mice, cockroaches, and ants killing them. A huckster negro came up selling cakes, and seeing the uproar, and the family and servants standing out in the sun, he said, "Ah misses, you've got the blessing of God to-day, and a great blessing it be to get such a cleaning." I think it was about ten when I first observed the ants; about twelve, the battle was formidable; soon

after one o'clock, the great strife began with the rats and mice ; and about three, the houses were cleared. In a quarter of an hour more the ants began to decamp, and soon, not one was to be seen within doors. But the grass round the house was full of them ; and they seemed now feasting on the remnants of their prey, which had been left on the road to their nests ; and so the feasting continued till about four o'clock, when the black birds, who had never been long absent from the calibash and pois-doux trees, in the neighbourhood, darted down among them, and destroyed by millions those who were too sluggish to make good their retreat. By five o'clock, the whole was over ; before sun down, the negro houses were also cleared out in the same way ; and they told me they had seen the black birds hovering about the almond trees close to the negro houses, as early as seven in the morning. I never saw those black birds before or since, and the negroes assured me that they never were seen but at such times.

Snakes abound in all the colonies,—in Trini-

dad they are from two or three feet long, to twelve or fourteen; from four to six feet, are the most common size. Some are quite harmless, but others are venomous; these latter are short, and of a brownish-black colour. The boa-constrictor, it is said, is sometimes found in the woods. The tarantula is not uncommon. Centipedes, as well as scorpions, are abundant. These, not the climate, are the great drawbacks on the pleasure of a residence in a tropical land.

We had now determined upon returning to Europe: there seemed no longer any rational prospect of doing good, in any sense of the word; the toil became insupportable, where the best intended efforts all failed, either for the improvement of the people, or the benefit of the estate. We felt that the really important influence of the proprietor was gone; that even personal security was in danger; and in fine, that there was no longer any incentive to remain. There were some good and faithful negroes, both of those originally attached to the estate, and also among those from St. Vincent; but in the event of any rising, their

numbers could have been of no avail. Health and spirit both fail under such hopeless circumstances; and though we had many dear friends to part from, and felt a deep interest in our people, yet the certainty that we were no longer safe, and were no longer able to effect any good, determined us to leave the estate.

There was little time for deliberation; only two ships remained to sail, in such time as would enable us to reach England during the summer; one of these was to proceed first to America; we therefore chose the other, direct for Bristol, and our arrangements were soon made.

The best negroes expressed much concern at the prospect of our departure; and many who had latterly behaved ill, appeared then to feel there was a possibility they might miss us. Numbers came up a few days before we left, begging us to give them some remembrancer of us; and the morning before we left, all but ten negroes came up in turns, and received something to keep them in mind of massa and misses. Jugs and plates, saucepans and baskets,

every thing that could be mustered, was in requisition. Many no doubt took the opportunity to profess an affection they did not feel, that they might possess themselves of some little household article they coveted; but we knew the true character of every individual, and who those were who prized the gift more than the giver. Some of our really attached people brought up fine fowls, as a present for us, to put on board for sea stock; indeed, we purchased and collected nearly our whole provisions for the voyage home, from the estate negroes. Plenty of fruit was gathered, and brought for the pic-a-ninnies to eat on board; and for the last few days, the good negroes were continually loitering about the house, and seemed anxious to see all they could of us, during the short time we had yet to remain.

I had visited all my favourite spots, and walked for a last time round the garden with old D., who was evidently struggling with her feelings.—“Misses, I’ll take care of dis bush for your sake,” said she, as we passed a young

elder tree, which I had got from La Reconnoissance, and cherished as an European plant. Mr. Warner sent to let me know that the carriage was ready. The best negroes were all around the door, waiting to shake hands, and say "God bless you;" many others were at the foot of the hill, where the carriage was. Tears were streaming down their cheeks, *all save one*; and that one I have often mentioned as a most excellent negro. Ned's conduct on this occasion was quite like himself. Seeing his wife crying and sobbing, he pushed her back saying with spirit, "You fool too much, no cry so,—me love massa, love misses, love pic-a-ninny, ebery one; but me no go cry; me gie me hand to massa, misses, pic-a-ninny, and say, God bless you all ebery one, and take you safe in a' England ober da sea. Me say me prayers ebery night for you all, and den go vorck ebery day wid good heart, for massa. See, you make massa and misses cry! B., you fool too much." We walked down in silence, followed by our people; and again shook hands

with them, and the others waiting to see us, at the foot of the hill. There was not a dry eye to be seen: they kissed the children over and over again:—and lifting them into the carriage, I silently commended those whom we had left to the care of the Almighty, hoping and trusting that though our path of usefulness had been closed, yet in His own way, and good time, He would begin and perfect his own work. We drove on in silence, until we approached a bend in the road which I knew would shut out Laurel-Hill from our view; and there we all involuntarily turned round, and took one last look at a spot, endeared to us, even then, by many, many recollections.

In a few weeks, the Atlantic rolled betwixt us and Trinidad.



THE END.

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