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AN
ACCOUNT
OF
J A M A I C A,
AND
ITS INHABITANTS.

BY A GENTLEMAN,
LONG RESIDENT IN THE WEST INDIES,

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,
BY G. WOODFALL, PATERNOSTER-RROW.

1808.



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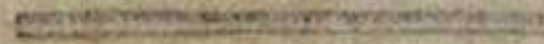
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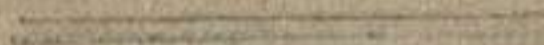
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PREFACE.

THE author of the following Account of Jamaica has endeavoured to avoid, as much as possible, treading in the footsteps of those who have already written on the same subject. The mere repetition of a task anticipated by others, though offered in a new shape, would be quite superfluous. His object is rather to supply, by particular observations on various topics connected with such account (which those writers have either not touched on, or noticed but slightly) that information which may perhaps interest and amuse in a greater degree than the more systematic and general description of a country. Though such writers have either disdained or neglected to enter minutely into many of these subjects, it will yet be allowed that they are deserving of a little more attention. The minuter traits and more gradual shades of life and man

ners, doubtless convey a more accurate knowledge of a people, besides the entertainment afforded, than those general outlines and more obvious features which the formal historian would probably content himself with exhibiting. Into such minutiae the author will occasionally enter, and he will sometimes interweave with his descriptions such facts, anecdotes, and notices, as have come within his own knowledge, or have been derived from authentic sources. His principal view is to exhibit a picture of society and manners in this island (which will in some measure apply to the other West India islands); to describe the different ranks and classes of the whites, and of the free people of colour and blacks; to give an account of the slaves, their character, customs, condition, and treatment; and whatever else is dependent on, or may arise out of these subjects.

A residence of twenty-one years in Jamaica, and in a situation where he had opportunities of knowing and observing much on the topics he has discussed, will, the author trusts, enable him to perform this task with truth and accuracy.

He will not be so confident as to say, that *no errors whatever* will be found to have crept into his production; but he will at least flatter himself, that none of any moment will be discovered; and he can boldly affirm, not one originating from partiality, prejudice, or misrepresentation.

In order to give consistency and connection to the whole, he will offer sketches of the history, topography, government, colonial laws, commerce, productions, &c. of this island. Elaborate or learned disquisitions on these subjects he does not aim at; nor are they at all wanted in such a work. They are to be found in the pages of more voluminous and scientific writers; to copy whom would be altogether unnecessary. At the same time, whatever opinions, sentiments, or observations of the author's own, may occasionally occur, he will of course not fail to offer. Perhaps owing to changes produced by time, or to his seeing things in different points of view from others, he may sometimes differ from them in his opinions and representations. This he cannot help: but he can at least say, that the account

he gives is in a great measure the result of his own personal experience and observation, unaided and unrestrained by the pages of any writer whatever, and unbiassed by any motives but those of a love of truth.

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AN

ACCOUNT OF JAMAICA.

CHAPTER I.

Geographical Situation of Jamaica.—Sketch of its Discovery, and Settlement, and subsequent History.

THE island of Jamaica is one of that great cluster of islands that lie in the gulph of Florida, and go under the name of Caribbees; they are divided into windward and leeward. Jamaica belongs to the latter division, and is situated between 17. 44. N. L. and 75. 55. and 78. 48. W. L. it is 180 miles in length from east to west, and 60 miles in its greatest breadth. This island was discovered by the great Columbus, in 1494, after he had discovered Hispaniola and Cuba, in the neighbourhood of which islands it lies, at about thirty leagues distance from each. But it was not till fifteen years after, that the Spaniards made any settlement in Jamaica; and then, it is asserted, they behaved to the unfortunate inhabitants with all that barbarity and oppression with which they treated the natives of every country they conquered, and which have fixed a

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horrible and indelible stain on the character of that nation.

At this period Jamaica was doubtless considered as very far inferior in point of importance to either Cuba or Hispaniola; as in truth it would be at the present day, were these islands equally improved and cultivated. Neither at the time of its conquest by the British, nor for many years after, was the true value of this island at all understood. It was reserved for the enterprising industry and commercial spirit of the British to render Jamaica, what it is at this moment, the most flourishing, opulent, and productive colony in the American Archipelago. Fifteen years back St. Domingo, (the French part of Hispaniola), would have disputed with it that title; but that fertile and beautiful region is now a scene of desolation.

The armament that wrested Jamaica from its first European possessors, in 1655, was destined for another enterprise,—the conquest of Hispaniola; and to the failure of this, England is indebted for this valuable acquisition. So little, however, did Oliver Cromwell appreciate this conquest, or so vexed was he at the miscarriage of the real object of the expedition, that he sent the two commanders (Admiral Penn and General Venables), on their return home, to the tower. It is a curious fact, however, that Jamaica, at this time, produces a greater revenue to the

mother country, than the whole amount of the national revenue in the protector's time.

While the Spaniards were in possession of Jamaica, they derived little or no benefit from it; and many years elapsed before it became essentially productive to the English. As to the government, it was little better than a military one till some time after the restoration, when another was formed for it of an arbitrary nature. This was nobly and manfully rejected by the inhabitants; and, in consequence, it was new modelled, and made to resemble the constitution of the parent country. Since that period the government or constitution of this island has kept pace with that of Great Britain, undergoing precisely the same changes and amelioration.

Different attempts have been made, both by the Spaniards and the French, to re-conquer this island from the English; but they were all of a very feeble nature till that grand united expedition of the two powers, which, under the Count de Grasse, was to have gone against it in 1782. That this formidable armament would have succeeded in its object there can be no manner of doubt had not the gallant Rodney, happily at a critical juncture, fallen in with the French fleet, and obtained over it that decisive victory which has immortalised his name. The island, highly grateful for this important and well-timed service, did not fail to pay the most

splendid honours to the brave commander, who had thus rescued it in a moment of such imminent peril. The anniversary of the 12th of April, 1782, is regularly celebrated with much rejoicing by the most respectable of the inhabitants; and a fine statue, inclosed in a neat elegant temple, has been erected in St. Jago de la Vega, to the memory of the gallant admiral.

Since that time, Jamaica has remained undisturbed by foreign enemies; but in 1795 there arose, within its own bosom, a foe more terrible than any exterior enemy, who threatened to involve it in all the horrors which St. Domingo had so recently suffered. The Trelawney town Maroons, incensed at the mode of punishment which had been inflicted on two of their tribe for a theft they had committed, and being otherwise dissatisfied, took to arms and bade defiance to the whites. It would be superfluous to enter into the particulars of this contest, which have already been detailed by Edwards and Dallas: suffice it to say, that, after a five months' struggle, the Maroons capitulated with the whites, and were subsequently transported to Nova Scotia, and afterwards to the banks of the Sierra Leon in Africa. As the author of this account was, however, present during the whole of this contest, he will offer some observations thereon when he comes to speak of the Maroons. Had this chapter been intended as any thing more

than a short and slight sketch of the history of this island, it would have been doubtless proper to have given an account of the various rebellions of the negroes at different times, and chiefly of that which established, by a compact between them and the whites, the independence, or rather freedom, of the Maroons. All this has, however, been related by other writers, and need not therefore be here repeated.

CHAPTER II.

Voyage to Jamaica.—Aspect of the Country.—View of the Interior.—Division into Counties and Parishes.—Towns and Villages, Houses, Bridges, Roads, &c.

AFTER crossing the tropic of Cancer, nothing can be imagined more pleasing than the sweet refreshing gales that waft a ship along to the West Indies. These perpetually blow from one quarter, that is, from east to west, following the sun's motion, and of course driving the vessel before them, except when the sudden and transient squall alters their direction for the moment. Let those who have never crossed the Atlantic imagine to themselves a ship going, with a crowd of sail set, under one of those delightful breezes (called trade winds), at the rate of seven or eight miles an hour; her colours spread, her streamers floating in the air, the sky clear and serene, the sea of a deep azure blue, lashed into white spray by the vessel before her, and exhibiting the track of her keel behind, called by seamen the *wake of the ship*; the dolphin and the porpoise gamboling around, the flying-fish sporting in air, emulating the aquatic birds, which are seen hovering about in the latitude of the islands; and, among the rest, the murderous and

voracious shark, that tyrant of the deep, pursuing the affrighted dolphin, as the latter pursues the flying-fish.

On approaching the shores of Jamaica, if at a certain season of the year (from January to June), when the crops of sugar are getting in, the eye of a stranger is instantly struck and delighted with the diversity of the landscape. Here a dry stubble field in the midst of others covered with ripe sugar-canes, or clothed with the verdure of luxuriant guinea-grass, finely shaded; there a wind-mill on the summit of a hill; in another place a cluster of buildings, or tuft of trees; and in the neighbourhood an extensive savannah, partly bare and partly covered with wild shrubbery and trees, with a stream of water rushing precipitately from the contiguous hills upon its level bosom; while the lofty *cloud-capt* mountains behind, crowned with deep woods, and covered with perpetual verdure, close the scene. Add to this, the novel appearance of the mangrove, with which the shores of this island are deeply fringed. Perhaps nothing is more delightfully rural than the fine extensive guinea-grass pastures here, shaded by the tall and elegant bread-nut, whose deep green foilage forms an enchanting contrast to the lighter verdure of the grass; or adorned by the fragrant pimento, whose leaves are still of a deeper green and finer polish than those of the

bread-nut, and whose perfumes remind us of Arabia.

But it is in the interior of the country that the great and stupendous works of nature are chiefly to be seen. Here the barren and the fertile, the level and the inaccessible, are mingled. In one place a fine valley, or glade, fertile and irrigated, stretching along the foot of craggy and desolate mountains, covered with immense rocks, slightly intermixed with a dry, arid, and unfruitful soil; in another, a narrow and frightful defile, or deep and gloomy cock-pit, where the rays of the sun never penetrated, both inclosed by abrupt precipices, overhanging rocks, and impervious woods. It was in the midst of these fastnesses, these stupendous fortifications of nature, that the Maroons bade defiance to the whole military force of the country. Safely concealed in ambush, and entrenched behind fragments of rocks and huge trees, these savages poured in a close and deadly fire on the parties and detachments that were sent in pursuit of them, while the caverns of the rocks afforded to their women and children a temporary retreat. But of this more hereafter.

In many parts of the interior there are extensive tracts of mountainous forest, so barren and so dreary, that every tree is stunted, and not even a reptile is to be seen crawling on their desolate surfaces. In the midst of these inhospitable tracts, however, fine glades are often discovered,

made fertile by the washings from the surrounding acclivities. No country can be more diversified with hill and dale. About ten miles from Montego Bay (in the parish of St. James, on the north side of the island) is a commanding eminence near to the road leading to the Trelawney Maroon town, from which the spectator looks down on a considerable tract of country, so inconceivably varied as to bid defiance to the pencil. In gazing on this landscape, the author has been more than once reminded of the method a gentleman, who had been in Jamaica, took to give an idea of its interior to some of his acquaintance, who wanted a description of it. He took a sheet of writing paper, and crumpling it up between his hands, laid it on the table, and, half expanding it, told the company "that was the best description he could give of the face of the interior of Jamaica." No country perhaps is more susceptible of ornament than this, and yet there are few who take much pains in embellishing their estates with those sylvan beauties which we meet with in the mother country. Men here are otherwise engaged, and have other objects in view. There is, however, something more sublime and attractive in the wild and simple charms of nature, disregarded and unimproved as they may be, than in all the efforts of art; and here this remark will be found often exemplified. The scenery, as already said, is beautifully varied;

innumerable springs gush down the sides of the hills, or wander along the glades; in the woods a thousand undescribed blossoms and wild flowers emit their sweets; and numberless unknown birds chaunt (or rather chirp) their "wood-notes wild," for there are few of the feathered tribe here endowed with the gift of song.

What an interesting field is there here for the naturalist; for though Sir Hans Sloane and other succeeding naturalists have been supposed to have rifled the treasures of the animal and vegetable kingdoms in these regions, yet there are hundreds of recesses throughout the island which neither Sir Hans Sloane nor any other person ever penetrated, much less explored. And can there be a doubt, that in those deep, and almost impervious retreats, there are birds, insects, plants, and fossils, that have no existence in any other museum than the grand repository of nature?

There are few countries in the world better watered than Jamaica; for, besides the countless springs and rivulets which issue from its mountains, there are many fine rivers in various parts of it. None of these are, however, navigable, excepting Black river, in the parish of St. Elizabeth, on which flat-bottomed boats bring down the sugar, rum, and other produce from the interior of that parish to the port of Black river: on some of the others, as the Rio Cobre, &c. canoes and small boats can sail for some way up.

As to the smaller streams, it is impossible to particularise them; suffice it to say, that in many parts of the island seven or eight springs, all or most of them perennial, are known to take their rise within the circuit of two or three miles.

Jamaica is divided into three counties, Middlesex, Surrey, and Cornwall; and these are subdivided into twenty parishes. It contains one city (Kingston), and 35 towns and villages. The principal of these are Montego Bay (which for size, population, and trade, may be ranked second to Kingston), Falmouth, St. Jago de la Vega (the seat of government), Port Royal, Savannah la Mar, Morant Bay, Port Morant, Lucca, Port Maria, Old Harbour, St. Ann's (or St. John), Lacovia, &c. Kingston is a large city, and has a very extensive trade. Its population may be set down at upwards of thirty thousand souls of all descriptions. It is governed by a mayor, aldermen, and council, and has a town guard of forty men, who act under the police of the city, and are of great service in protecting the inhabitants, and preventing riot and disorder. There are in it some handsome buildings in the West India style. Kingston is, however, a hot, and, at times, a very unhealthy place. Many of the gentlemen there have pens, or country seats, in the cool parts of the vicinity, particularly the Ligumea mountains, to which they occasionally retire, and where they breathe

for awhile a more pure and salubrious air. There are some very laudable institutions here for charitable purposes, particularly the free-school, and asylum for deserted negroes; the latter is of a nature so benevolent and necessary, that none of the parishes ought to be without one.

Montego Bay is a thriving and pretty populous town; but it was still more so previous to 1795, in which year it suffered very severely by a fire, which consumed two thirds of the town, and destroyed a great deal of other property: the whole of the houses that were destroyed have not since been rebuilt, a proof that this town is not now so populous as it then was. There is here a handsome court-house, lately built, and a neat little church, but the gaol is a most wretched one, and is, indeed, a disgrace to the parish. This town is the capital and sea port of St. James's.

Falmouth not many years back was a small petty village; but it has risen rapidly to be a considerable town, through the increasing trade and cultivation of the parish (Trelawney) of which it is the sea port, and now bids fair to rival Montego Bay in wealth and prosperity. There is a good church here, and a hydraulic machine for supplying the inhabitants with water.

St. Jago de la Vega, or Spanish Town (as it is sometimes called), is situated in St. Catherine's, and is, as before noticed, the seat of government. Here, too, are the public offices; so that this

town, though not a large one, from it's containing the government and assembly houses, and various other public buildings, may be considered as the genteelest and handsomest town in the island. It is intended, too, that some considerable additions and improvements in the public buildings here are to take place. Here, as before observed, is a temple and statue erected to the memory of Lord Rodney, whose name the people of Jamaica honour as they would that of a tutelary deity.

Port Royal is a middling large but mean-looking town, standing on a narrow peninsula or neck of land. It is chiefly remarkable for its excellent fortifications, and naval yard, the harbour of Port Royal being the rendezvous for our men of war in this part of the world. Most of the inhabitants here are people of colour. This town was totally swallowed up by an earthquake, in the year 1692.

Savannah la Mar is a hot, dirty, and mean looking place, inhabited chiefly by people of colour, who keep lodging houses for the accommodation of those who attend the Cornwall assize-court, this place having the honour of being the county town, on account of its central situation. In this wretched place, however, the best fare is provided, for which a most enormous price is charged, viz. six or seven dollars per day. Savannah la Mar once suffered greatly from an earthquake.

There being nothing remarkable in the other smaller towns or villages, and this not being intended as a regular topographical account, it will be unnecessary to say any thing respecting them.

The houses in this island are of various forms and constructions. Some have stone foundations, others are entirely built of wood; some have jealousies, some sash windows with venetian blinds, and some have a mixture of both. Most of them have piazzas, either open or with jealousies, and many have balconies. The apartments within, besides the piazzas, are a large hall, sometimes a recess as a sitting-room, or houdoir, a pantry, a closet, and bed-rooms. The kitchen, or *cook-room*, as it is here called, is a separate building, being never part of the dwelling-house as in Europe; this is highly proper, in order to obviate accidents by fire.

In the towns there is a wretched intermixture of handsome and spacious houses with vile hovels and disgraceful *sheds*, inhabited by free people of colour, who keep petty hucksters' shops, and by low white people, who vend liquors and give rise to many disorderly and indecent scenes. This evil ought to be rectified if possible. As the city of Kingston is now chartered as a corporate body, it will probably take the lead.

As for bridges, and other public structures of the kind, in this part of the world there are few that deserve mention, except a neat cast iron

bridge, imported from Great Britain, and some few years ago thrown across the Rio Cobre. There is indeed often a marked deficiency here of public spirit in undertakings of this sort. Men who will cheerfully spend their money on a horse-race, &c. will often prove niggardly of a small addition to a subscription for completing a permanent public work. An instance of this lately occurred in the parish of St. James. A sum was raised for the purpose of throwing a bridge over Montego river, near to a dangerous ford, about a mile and a half from Montego bay, where many lives had been lost in consequence of the force and rapidity of the stream when the river had got swelled by heavy rains. A few additional thousands would have sufficed to build a handsome, durable, and substantial stone bridge; but rather than come forward with this additional required supply, the rulers of the parish contented themselves with a wooden *machine*, which they denominated a bridge. The former, besides the advantage of durability, would have been an ornament and a credit to the place; the latter, *as long as it lasts*, will exhibit a monument of the *taste* and *sound policy* of the projectors. As a still further display of *taste*, a gallows has been placed on the centre of this *bridge*, like a triumphal arch! through which the traveller has to pass, no doubt to his great *admiration*. Some small amends are, however,

made for this act of *gothicism*, by the erection of a handsome court-house, as already noticed.

About fifteen years ago a work was undertaken, no doubt from laudable and benevolent motives, which, had it succeeded, would have proved a most useful and important benefit. This was an intended close harbour, or pier, within which vessels would have rode in safety during the prevalence of the north winds, which have too often made terrible havoc among the shipping in Montego bay, owing to that harbour being exposed to a heavy swell from the sea. A charter was obtained, a company erected, tolls demanded, and considerable sums of money subscribed, which have been regularly laid out; yet, whether it be owing to some mismanagement in the prosecution of this work, or to the impracticability of the scheme, the projectors seem still at as great a distance from the completion of it as when they began. Had an able engineer been on the spot when this work was commenced, it is probable he would have given some wholesome advice on the occasion.

The public roads in this island are in general very good; they are superintended and kept in repair by way-wardens, as they are here called, who are appointed by the parochial vestries for the purpose. A parochial tax is levied to defray the expense. Of late years many new roads of communication have been opened throughout the

island at the expense of the government. The difficulty of traversing the country during the Maroon war pointed out the expediency of these improvements; and, besides this public expediency, these new tracts operate to enhance the value of the lands in their neighbourhood, and so encourage settlers to cultivate them. Along some of the public roads by the sea-side are planted rows of cocoa-nuts, which help to intercept the piercing beams of a hot vertical sun, and have a pleasing rural appearance. For the same purpose, a variety of fruit and other trees appear scattered throughout the towns. In the neighbourhood of the houses, the tall cabbage-tree or palmetto, the cocoa-nut, the elegant orange, or the shaddock, serve to adorn the premises, and refresh the eye of the panting inhabitant; and sometimes the umbrageous tamarind throws its spacious shade over the area of a dwelling, and yields, during the sun's noon-tide blaze, a sweet and ineffable relief. At a distance, and particularly from sea, this mixture of tropical foliage has a picturesque and pleasing effect.

Mr. Robertson, a surveyor of Jamaica, of considerable talents, assisted by an able and ingenious delineator (Mr. Robson), has lately published, under the sanction of the assembly of that island, three very complete maps of the three counties thereof. They are of a very large size, and comprize, besides the usual matter con-

tained in maps, a delineation of roads, springs, mountains, and all the principal properties. No map was ever, perhaps, more complete and comprehensive; and though such a work is not of much moment to the world in general, yet to the Jamaica proprietor it must prove peculiarly interesting.

CHAPTER III.

Soil.—Climate.—Seasons.—Diseases incident to the Whites,—Precautions to guard against Sickness.—Earthquakes.—Hurricanes.—Description of one.—Opinion the Negroes have of those visitations.

THERE are a very great variety of soils in Jamaica. The principal are a rich brown loam, intermixed with flint stones; a brown loam, without stones, on a stiff clay; a deep and rich black mould; a kind of fuller's earth; and a species of brick mould, of a strong and firm texture. All these are considered as excellent sugar soils, and are also well adapted for coffee, which requires a deep and rich soil. There are besides these various other lighter soils, in which there is a considerable admixture of gravel, of small stones, and of marl; but these are neither adapted to the sugar cane nor to coffee; they, however, produce guinea-grass, and various roots, particularly the sweet potatoe, which flourishes best in a light superficial soil, as the guinea-grass luxuriates in a stony and rocky one. So variously, and capriciously as it were, are all these soils intermingled on some spots, that the author has known frequently four or five of them contained within the compass of one small field

of eight or ten acres. This was in a mountainous part of the island, where this diversity is chiefly observable; in the level parts there is a greater uniformity of soil. As the clays here are in general very stiff, the planter finds it indispensably necessary, in tilling such soils, either to plough the land, or turn it up with the hoe (which is the most common method), some time previous to planting the cane, in order to have it mellowed and pulverised. But on the subject of the treatment and cultivation of the land here, something will be said in another place.

Jamaica being situated within eighteen degrees of the equator, its climate will naturally be expected to be of a degree of warmth considerably above temperate. In these tropical regions it has been wisely ordained by providence, that the heat, which would otherwise be insufferable, should be tempered by appropriate causes. While the inhabitant of the mountains of Jamaica enjoys a purer and more wholesome air than he who resides near to the ocean, the latter is comforted and refreshed by the daily sea-breeze, which periodically sets in at a certain hour. So peculiarly grateful and welcome is this friend of man, that the poor half-parched seaman, when he eyes the distant rippling of the ocean, and the dark blue streak on its farthest verge, indicative of its approach, hails it by the *healing* appellation of the *doctor*. To speak poetically, health sits

perched on its wing, and joy and cheerfulness follow in its train. It is also observable, that, during the hottest times of the day, and the most sultry months, a succession of light flying clouds continually pass over and intercept the sun's fiercer blaze. It is cooler and more salubrious on the north side of the island than on the south. The medium temperature of the air may be said to be 75 degrees of Fahrenheit. During the hottest times, it is often as high as 96, and sometimes upwards of 100. In the mountains the author has, however, known it as low as 49.

There is little variation of the seasons here, except what is occasioned by the alternation of rainy and dry weather. In the months of December, January, and February, the air on the mountains is indeed sensibly colder, but this is chiefly observable in the morning; and at this time it is here so keen, at times, as to cause one to shiver, and almost wish for a fire. In the low valleys and level grounds this coldness is not so observable. Indeed, between the high mountain and sea-side air there is a difference of many degrees, which is very perceptible on passing from the one to the other. July and August may be considered as the hottest months of the year. The rainy weather does not always take place in the same months. Sometimes the spring-rains do not set in till the beginning of June, and sometimes later; sometimes they begin in the

month of March, sometimes even in February, and continue for two months, perhaps, or more. This being the time of getting in the crops, that is on the north side of the island, these early rains are a considerable impediment; and the roads being hollowed, and cut up, the planters find it a difficult task both to get home their canes, and to forward their produce to the shipping place; besides the deficiency of fuel occasioned by perpetual rains, which to the estates is a primary concern, as without this necessary article they cannot go on. The autumnal, or fall rains, as they are here called, usually happen in October and November, sometimes earlier, sometimes later. These are essentially necessary to the planter to bring forward his young canes, which are generally planted at this season in preference to the spring, as having a longer time to grow, and of course coming to greater perfection. The spring rains are by far the most violent. During the prevalence of these, the air is most insufferably sultry: this extreme heat, joined to a still unagitated atmosphere, is a presage of the coming deluge. It comes on with an astonishing rapidity. The clouds gather in an instant, though the arch of heaven was pure and cloudless but the instant before, and the torrent pours down without giving warning to the negroes, who are employed in the fields, to retire from its fury. A terrible peal of thunder usually precedes it, and during

its continuance the firmament is rent with these awful sounds, which are sometimes so frightfully loud as to resemble the close report of the heaviest artillery; while the quick and vivid lightening, threatening destruction as it shoots across the sky, is truly terrific. These rains, often for weeks together, set in regularly at the same hour, and continue about the same length of time, viz. two or three hours; sometimes, however, they will continue whole days and nights, with little or no intermission. The autumnal rains are neither so heavy as those of the spring and autumn, nor are they usually accompanied with such terrible thunder and lightening. The rains, particularly those of the spring, are frequently partial; it often happens, that while the mountainous parts, which seldom have cause to complain of drought, are annoyed with daily torrents, the low country is parched up with excessive drought. Nay, the author has known a property almost burnt up by drought, while the neighbouring one, divided from it only by a ridge of hills, was blest by plenteous and daily showers; these passing along the one valley, never crossed over to the other; and this tantalizing partiality would continue for weeks. The heavy dews which generally fall here, during droughts, are a considerable help to vegetation.

It can hardly be said, that there are any particular seasons in this country when sickness is

more common among the white people than at other times. The author has found all times of the year nearly alike as to healthiness, when proper precautions have been observed. Of course, as in all countries, the vicissitudes of heat and cold, wet and dry, are dangerous to health, and in a hot climate more particularly so; the seeds of a disorder which may embitter a whole life, or sweep men rapidly off, may, and often are, laid in what at first appeared but a *slight cold*, caught by being exposed to these alternations. The change from a long course of wet weather to dry, strange to say, is often productive of such colds, and *vice versa*. Those who enjoy the wholesome temperature of Great Britain doubtless congratulate themselves on such a happiness, and rejoice that destiny has not placed them in the burning regions of the torrid zone, and exposed them to the pestilence and ravages of the yellow fever, and other hideous diseases. This self-congratulation is perfectly natural. But it is with dangers at a distance as it is with a person walking in a mist; the passing objects appear to him magnified to a frightful size, till a nearer approach convinces him of his mistake: not that it can be said there are no such things, but the terrors and dangers of them are mightily exaggerated. There is hardly a doubt that the yellow fever is any thing more than a malignant bilious fever, the extravasated fluid, diffused through the system,

producing that deep yellow tinge on the skin which gives name to the disease. As to its epidemic influence, and general mortal effects, much may be said on these subjects. The very terrors which the presence of such a disease must conjure up, have no doubt often operated fatally. Some years back the yellow fever made its appearance in various parts of the island, and swept off numbers. Consternation was spread in the vicinity of those parts where the disease most fatally prevailed. On this occasion there were numerous instances of people going to bed, in apparent perfect health, who, in forty or fifty hours, were corpses. They, perhaps, lived on the same property with one who had died of this distemper, or had attended the funeral of some who had fallen victims to it. A slight head-ache was the first symptom that alarmed them; soon after which a burning fever succeeded, and all its dreadful concomitants; the unhappy patient sunk into a morbid despondency of mind, and yielded, in despair, to its direful progress. On many estates, every white person on them were swept, in succession, off within the space of a week or two. But why, it may be asked, if this disease was thus infectious in its nature, and rapid and certain in its effects, were not the medical attendants infected and carried off by it? They were generally exempt from its rage, while their patients were thus in such numbers dying around them. In

short, there can hardly be a doubt of many of these unhappy men having become martyrs to self-created terrors. The yellow fever is a virulent disease, but neither so infectious nor so inevitably mortal as some people believe; and, without entering into any investigation of the present mode of treating this disease, it is to be hoped, at least, that an *improved* and more effectual one will in time be adopted to meet so terrible a scourge of the human race. The yellow fever seldom, or never, visits the mountainous parts of the interior, nor are the negroes and brown people at all subject to it. There are indeed some diseases peculiar to each class, of which something will be said when treating of the negroes. Besides the yellow, or bilious fever, intermittent fevers prevail in Jamaica, pleurisies, &c. but consumptions are little known. Young men, just arrived in the island, are peculiarly liable to febrile disorders; an excellent precaution against which would be their residing, if possible, in a cool and healthy part of the interior for a few months, as a sort of seasoning. What strikingly evinces the propriety of such a step is the following circumstance:—About twelve years ago (from 1806), his Majesty's 16th regiment of foot arrived at Montego Bay from Halifax. It was then about 500 strong; and in the first year it was quartered at that place it lost from two to three hundred men by sickness. But since the

Maroon war, the bulk of the regiments stationed in St. James's has been quartered at barracks built on the scite of the old Maroon town, (about twenty miles up in the interior), since which time the part of the regiments posted there has been uniformly as healthy as if quartered in the heart of England. Seven hundred of the 55th regiment, some time back stationed there, had at one time not one sick man in the hospital, and only one had died in a space of six months. This spot is, therefore, very properly converted into headquarters for the regiments. There are, indeed, two circumstances to be observed with respect to the mortality in the 16th regiment; it was injudiciously drawn from a very cold country to a hot tropical climate, and the soldiers had unfortunately a too free access to spirituous liquors, the very bane of the best constitutions in a climate like this. Indeed it is to be presumed, that intemperance and irregularity destroy many more constitutions than any thing inimical in the climate; they are the fruitful sources of much of the sickness here, and consign many an infatuated wretch to an untimely grave.

For many years back this island has been happily exempt from those terrible visitations, hurricanes and earthquakes. The only earthquake which was peculiarly awful and destructive in its effects here was that which, in 1692, swallowed up the town of Port Royal, and its

wretched inhabitants, leaving not a vestige or wreck behind. The earth on which it stood suddenly sunk, the sea, terribly agitated, rushed in over it, and the vessels which rode in the harbour were torn from their moorings, and rapidly wafted over the spot where, but a few minutes before, stood the houses of this devoted town. Since this signal and destructive visitation, few of the earthquakes that have happened here have been of any great moment. They have done little more mischief than cracking a few walls, shivering a few panes of glass, or breaking a little china ware. Perhaps, too, they may have tended to awaken a few trembling apprehensions, religious scruples, and conscientious qualms in the breasts of some; and, if happening during the solemn stillness of night, to rouse and terrify a number of worthy people of both sexes from their beds, as in the last shock (in 1802), at eleven o'clock at night, when, in an instant, the streets of the towns that felt it most sensibly were filled with people of all descriptions, who issued out with wildness and surprise in their looks, and without waiting the formality of slipping on their clothes.

As for hurricanes, these visitations have been not only much more frequent, but, in many instances, equally terrible and destructive with the devouring earthquake in its most awful shape. For twenty years past Jamaica has not expe-

rienced what may properly be called a hurricane. There have been storms, or severe gusts of wind, but no hurricane since the year 1786; for between a hurricane and one of these gusts there is as much difference as between a smart breeze and the gentlest zephyr.

A hurricane in the West Indies is usually preceded by awful and certain prognostics. An ominous stillness seems to reign in the sky, the air is unusually sultry, the clouds unsettled; at length a deep gloom gradually settles and overspreads the hemisphere; the sun is by degrees enveloped in darkness; a deep, hollow, and murmuring sound is indistinctly heard, like the roaring of a distant torrent, or the howling of the winds through remote woods; rapid and transient gusts of wind and rain suddenly succeed; the birds are seen flying hastily across the sky, or agitated in mid-air by the violence of the sudden blasts; even the beasts of the fields seem conscious of the coming danger, and flee to their accustomed sheds. The blasts soon become more violent and durable; they seem to sweep along in streams or volumes that are irresistible. At one moment they rage with inconceivable fury, and on the ensuing instant seem as it were to expire suddenly away. In a few hours the hurricane reaches its *acmè* of violence, when all the winds of heaven, and from every point of the compass, winged with destruction, seem let loose from their

caverns. The largest trees of the forest cannot resist their force, the plantain-walks are levelled to the ground, the fields of sugar canes are torn from the roots, and wafted about like chaff; and all the level country is inundated by floods of rain. If unhappily the winds should find entrance into some unfortunate dwelling, at this perilous moment, it would soon be unroofed, and the trembling inhabitants, if not buried in its ruins, compelled to seek for other shelter; but that has often proved impracticable, and many are the unfortunate victims who have thus perished amid the fury of those tropical tempests—helpless, unheard, and unseen. Nothing can be more terrible and heart-appalling (the author writes from experience) than the wild howling and threatening violence of a hurricane during the dead of the night, when the silent and sudden gleams of light darting across the heavens (for no thunder is heard) serve only to make “darkness visible,” and heighten the horrors of the scene. Well might we then exclaim with King Lear,

—————“ Tremble thou wretch,
 “ Who hast committed crimes,
 “ Unwhipt of justice.”

But what must be the horrors which then surround the unhappy mariner? His ship buffeted about by the wild and mountainous waves, which threaten every moment to swallow him up in an

unfathomable grave. Even the sight of land at this terrific crisis fills him with new horrors: the treacherous reef, the sunken rock, the wild breakers, and tremendous surf, are far more dreadful to him than even the open ocean.

When a hurricane subsides, every object around wears an unspeakably dismal appearance. Every tree is stript of its verdure, or lies shattered on the earth; the fields of canes are levelled with the ground, or twisted and torn from their roots; the plantain trees (from which the inhabitants of this quarter of the globe draw a great part of their subsistence) are every where destroyed; and even the ground provisions, (or various roots), do not entirely escape. The planter, in short, has his crop destroyed; and, what is much worse, is in danger, perhaps, of seeing his slaves perish around him for want of subsistence, or die by diseases brought upon them by improper nourishment. What adds to the horrors of such a situation, is the long droughts that are too often known to succeed these visitations, by which the products of the earth, which the tempest had spared, are arrested in their growth, and its vegetation dried up and suspended by the parching heat and want of moisture. This situation is truly dreadful. But it was never so severely felt as after the great hurricane of 1780, at which time, the author has

been told by many respectable gentlemen who were witnesses of what they related, that the negroes on the different properties throughout the island were every day perishing in numbers, partly from diseases (chiefly dysenteries) brought on by unwholesome food, and partly from absolute starvation! that the lowest price of a barrel of old decayed flour was ten pounds currency; that it was a great favour to obtain it at any price; that a universal dearth of other provisions prevailed to a most awful and alarming degree; and that the poor negroes were compelled to feed on the wild yam (a bitter and unwholesome root) and other wretched vegetables, which to their craving appetites were yet sweet and gratifying. At this time of general misery and want, there were some avaricious monopolizers, who, to the disgrace of humanity, it is said, kept back their flour with a view of obtaining a still higher price for it. As a base avarice often over-reaches itself, it will be gratifying to the reader to learn that one of those wretches kept a considerable quantity of this article on hand till the arrival of a fresh supply, which was generously sold by the importer at a moderate price; and this man's flour being by this time nearly spoilt by keeping, he was under a necessity of selling it by public outcry, for about one twentieth of what he had expected to exact for it.

The negroes are at a loss what to think of earthquakes: they are often shrewd in their remarks and conjectures, but earthquakes and eclipses puzzle them. As to hurricanes, they naturally enough consider them as indications of the divine wrath, as punishments inflicted by heaven on the human race for their crimes and impiety; they have no idea of their arising from natural causes; the necessary war of the elements is to them an incomprehensible doctrine; and they would smile to hear the philosopher say, that, though these visitations inflict evil, they also impart benefit, by purifying the atmosphere of those pestilential vapours which would otherwise spread disease and death. They do not look much to natural causes and remote consequences. If the winged lightning which flashes across the fields should strike dead an oppressive overseer, they hail the circumstance as a just judgment of the Almighty; but they are guilty of blasphemy when they arraign him of partiality, if, when their day of rest returns, it should prove an unfavourable one, or when any other unforeseen disaster befalls them. But above all, they cannot reconcile it to fairness, that the supreme ruler of the universe should have shewn so marked a predilection in favour of the whites, as to give dominion to them, while he placed the blacks, *who never offended him*, in a state of perpetual bondage

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under them. Poor creatures ! they have not yet learned the doctrine of unrepining submission to the will of providence ; though those who boast of being Christians, when they meet with little petty vexations, usually exclaim—" the Lord's will be done."

CHAPTER IV.

Government, &c.—Laws.—Litigiousness, &c. of the people.—Ecclesiastical affairs.—Parochial regulations.

THE government of Jamaica is formed after the model of that of the mother country. It consists of the governor, council, and assembly, or house of representatives. The council may be considered as equivalent to the house of lords. The office of governor, or lieutenant-governor, of Jamaica, is a very lucrative and important one. He is usually a staff officer, and has performed some acceptable services to the country and government, or is at least in high favour with the ministry. His office is two-fold, civil and military; he is both commander-in-chief of the forces, and chancellor. It may be asked, how it can reasonably be expected, that one who has been bred up in a camp, and educated merely for the military profession, and who has never, perhaps, thought of, much less studied, civil jurisprudence, can be at all competent to the functions of a chancellor? The court in which he presides, being a court of equity, not of law, legal professional talents are not so indispensably necessary therein; besides that he has had the advice and assistance of the masters of chan-

cery, who ought, of course, to be well acquainted both with the spirit and practice of that court. An anecdote is mentioned of Lord Chancellor Hardwick, and a general officer, who was appointed as lieutenant-governor of one of our West India islands. The officer waited on his lordship, and expressed himself extremely embarrassed at the thought of his incompetency to fulfil the important duties of a colonial chancellor, which he understood was attached to his new appointment, and begged the favour of his advice and instructions how to act. His lordship said "that there was little occasion for detailed instructions; that all he had to do was to hear patiently both sides of the question, and then to decide according to the dictates of his unbiassed conscience." It was remarked of Lord Effingham, who died during his government in Jamaica, about fifteen years ago, that he was the most indefatigable and learned chancellor the island had ever known: his decrees gave universal satisfaction, and so prompt were they that, like the great Sir Thomas More, he seldom had many undecided cases on hand.

The governor's income may be about 10,000*l.* currency, or rather better than 7,000*l.* sterling; the half of which sum arises out of his perquisites of office, and the pen or farm of which he has the use.

The council consists of twelve (including the

president) of the most opulent and respectable of the inhabitants, and is appointed by the governor. It acts as a privy council to him, and has besides a voice as an independent branch of the legislature; so that it has a sort of double function to perform. Add to this its function with the governor as a president, as a court of appeal upon errors. The assembly consists of the representatives (two for each parish) who are elected by the freeholders. Like the imperial house of commons, they have the originating of all bills relative to the finances and economy of the country, and furnishing the supplies. Indeed, all bills may be said to originate with them, as the council has seldom more to do than giving its voice in the passing of them. The persons of the members are sacred from arrest, the same as the British representatives.

The assembly of Jamaica has the character of being an independent and public-spirited body of men; at least, this is the character which they have on former occasions merited, having often stedfastly and meritoriously supported, with a becoming spirit and dignity, the rights of the country and their own privileges. It is seldom that much senatorial eloquence is displayed within the walls of the assembly-house here. Since the time that Mr. Brian Edwards, of ingenious and historic memory, occupied a seat in it, few attempts have been made to mould and

electrify by oratorical flourishes. The talents that are most in request, are such as are rather solid than brilliant;—commercial and financial knowledge, joined to a respectable fund of local and general information, engrafted on a strong understanding, and penetrating comprehensive mind. Yet it is to be remarked, that lately this assembly drew up a memorial to government on the subject of their grievances, which, for manly eloquence and masterly accurate statement, would have done credit even to a committee of the house of commons. The office of secretary is here a very lucrative one indeed, perhaps second to none but that of the governor himself. The fees attached to it are very considerable: every patent commission, and other instrument, has its stated price, and even the records of office can only be opened with a *golden key*. It is pretty shrewdly to be suspected, that the *price* of sinecure or nominal appointments is rather arbitrary than specific. It is by no means unusual to offer from an hundred to five hundred pounds currency for these nominal appointments: they are eagerly sought for as soon as vacant, by people who can afford the money, either for the honour of the thing, or in order to be exempted from militia duty; for as there is little or no duty to perform, neither is there any emolument accruing. This sale of nominal appointments is indeed often carried to a most reprehensible length.

The secretary under a late governor, on the eve of the latter's departure from his government, eager to reap the golden harvest while the *sun* in which he basked had not yet sunk below the horizon, made, it is said, a pretty active use of this privilege, and not always with a very scrupulous attention as to recommendations, &c. So sensible was the succeeding chief magistrate of the impropriety of many of those appointments, that he for some time hesitated whether he would confirm them: and his predecessor no doubt must have felt that he had sometimes too implicitly given the sanction of his name on these occasions. This species of traffic, to say the least of it, is an indiscriminating way of giving ease and honour, if *honour* it may be called. By this unjust distribution, able-bodied men are improperly exempted from that duty, in a military capacity, which they owe to their country, as well as others; and situations which should be the reward of merit, the mead of talent, or the repose of age, are thus scattered fortuitously among those who can afford the most alluring price. But where, it may be asked, is the country where *preferment*, or honour, or whatever else we may call it, is not bought and sold? We do not live in such times as were those of Aristides or Lycurgus, when nought but honour and reverence was attached to public functions, and nought but merit and patriotism was competent to fill them.

The laws of Jamaica are precisely those of the mother country, only with such slight variation, in matters of property and others, as the nature of the country requires. Over and above the civil and criminal law of Great Britain, there is, of course, a code of laws in this and the other islands, which must be peculiar to the West Indies, and may be called colonial. These chiefly relate to negroes and negro property. Those laws and regulations which have, from time to time, been enacted for the protection of the slaves, and amelioration of their condition, go under the general epithet of "Consolidated Slave Laws." It will, however, be proper to defer touching on these laws till treating of the negro slaves.

Besides the assize, or county courts, there is here what is called the "grand court," in which the chief judge presides; there are here also what are called quarter sessions courts in each parish, for the trial of petty actions. In these the oldest magistrate of the parish presides, and the attornies at law (who also practise as such in the assize courts) perform the part of advocates. The chief judge is one who has been a barrister of some standing and repute in the island; but the judges who sit in the assize courts are usually gentlemen who are magistrates of the county; these, seldom being bred to the law, cannot be supposed to be very competent to decide in com-

plex and intricate cases, where many nice points of law are involved. It is therefore to be wished, that, besides the chief judge, who never sits out of his own court, there were two or three puisne judges to go the circuits of the assize courts. This was in the contemplation of the legislature some years ago, and it is rather unaccountable that it was laid aside. As for the barristers, they are men who have received a regular legal education in Great Britain; and are in general men of ability and information, though they do not often lay claim to that Demosthenian eloquence which "takes captive the reason." The situation of clerk of the court is a patent office of great value, supposed worth about 6,000*l.* currency per annum: this and other patent offices may either be sold or *rented*, the real holder, in this latter case, perhaps residing in Great Britain. The office of provost marshal is also held by patent. This office is somewhat equivalent to that of sheriff in Great Britain. He has a deputy in every parish in the island, who has the custody and issuing of all writs, the serving subpœnas, and other legal summonses, the care and custody of the jails and prisoners, &c. &c.

It has been supposed, that the lawyers of this *petty speck* on the terrestrial globe receive not less than half a million of money annually for defending the properties of their fellow citizens against legal or *illegal* invasion; or, to make use of lan-

guage still more military, for entrenching those properties within legal lines of circumvallation, and fortifying them with bonds, contracts, deeds of gift, precedents and quibbles. It is really astonishing to see the number of actions that are contested in this little spot. It is doubtful to say, whether this be altogether owing to a natural litigiousness of disposition in the inhabitants: perhaps it may in a much greater measure be owing to a propensity in them to heedless expense, chiefly arising from the long, and sometimes indefinite, credits that are given, on account of the scarcity of specie. At least, if there was no want of a circulating medium, and the merchants, shopkeepers, &c. were to dispose of their goods at a little more reasonable rate (for at present they have the extreme *modesty* to demand two, and sometimes three, hundred per cent. for them) for cash or other equivalent paid down, the people of this country (that is, of the description here alluded to) would be more economical, more punctual, more honest and independent than they now are, and would not have half the recourse to law which they now have. But when people get involved in a variety of expenses, and incumber themselves, in consequence, with debts which their finances, and even properties, are at length inadequate to discharge, they are too apt to fall on low stratagems and base subterfuges, which a generous and ho-

nourable mind would spurn at; but which cunning suggests, and necessity dictates, to those who can overcome their scruples. Hence the securing of property, by prior deeds of gift, beyond the reach of the creditor, the making temporary conveyances, in order to avail themselves of the lenity of the laws of insolvency, and other paltry shifts of dishonesty. It is melancholy to reflect how a benevolent law is thus abused and perverted; how it is made the foundation on which to build the most dishonourable dealing; how it is converted into a door for the fraudulent and unprincipled to escape through. Yet nothing is more common in this country. Instances often occur of men, who have got deeply into debt, eluding the payment of their creditors, by either making over their properties to their families, or getting them secured by a fictitious or nominal deed of gift, and then taking the benefit of the act. Cannot this shameful practice be remedied or prevented? The only precaution the creditor can take to guard himself against this species of fraud, is to search the office and ascertain whether, in the first place, the property which his *would-be* creditor holds, is his own or not, or whether there are prior judgments against him to the amount of that property; and, if not, to secure himself by taking early judgment on his account or obligation. The man who thus defrauds, or keeps his cre-

ditors at bay, generally shields himself from censure by professions of an intention to pay *when he is able*; and so many examples of this mode of dealing exist, that those who are guilty of it do not appear to feel abashed at the thought, neither are they (wonderful to relate) treated with much less respect than they otherwise would have been. Most of the people who have had any dealings in the courts can speak most *knowingly* on the subject of law, and make it a sort of study to become acquainted with all its mysteries and manœuvres. By a law of the island, no person can leave it without advertising his intention some weeks beforehand; in which case it is in the power of a creditor to stop him till his demand is satisfied; and if any master of a vessel takes him off, he becomes liable to a heavy penalty. Strictly, he is under an obligation of taking out a passport, which he obtains from the secretary, by paying a certain sum.

The established religion of Jamaica is that of the church of England. There are twenty-eight churches and chapels throughout the island; and each of the parishes has a rector. The Bishop of London is their diocesan; but the governor has the appointment to vacant rectories, and may even suspend from the functions of the ministry, should he see cause. The stipends are from four to five hundred pounds currency a year, besides the parsonage house and a small glebe. But it

is the fees, which the rectors receive, that stamp a value on the rectory. These, in populous parishes, amount to a very considerable sum; in the most populous, from fifteen hundred to two thousand pounds may be estimated as the income of the rectors. These fees are fixed by law, but it is not so much on the *legal fees* that these holy men depend, as on those which the generosity and munificence of their employers bestow. From the genteeler sort two doubloons, or 10*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* currency, is the usual *douceur* for a christening, a marriage, or a funeral; and, out of church (for in the church they must officiate for what the law allows) some of them would disdain to open a prayer book for a smaller sum than one doubloon, or 5*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* Besides this, they receive so much for every interment in the church, and for every monument or tombstone that is therein erected. It would be unjust to say there were not, in this part of the world, worthy and pious men who wear the clerical habit; but it cannot be dissembled, that there are others who look more to the *good things* of this world than of *that to come*; who, like their lay brethren, are more solicitous in amassing wealth, than making proselytes or converting sinners. One of these reverend preachers, having received a doubloon as a reward for having recommended to heaven the soul of a poor departed sinner, returned it with much contempt, accompanied

with this apt scriptural quotation—"the labourer is worthy of his hire." Another having received four doubloons, for going a few miles into the country to christen a gentleman's child and some of his negroes, wrote an indignant letter on the occasion, complaining of the injustice that was done him. One part of this letter was curious enough. It seems the gentleman, from a motive of politeness, asked his reverend guest to spend a second day at his house, and the acceptance of this invitation was enumerated as one of the *apostolic labours* of this holy man. His avarice, however, defeated its own end, for this curious epistle exposed him to much ridicule and contempt; and soon after another act of rapaciousness brought him under the notice and reprehension of the governor. A poor soldier, desirous of being united in wedlock to a woman with whom he had been for years in previous *intimacy*, applied to our Mess John to fix the connubial knot. Finding, however, that the soldier could not *muster* up so much money as a doubloon, he very gravely told him to "keep on in the way he had hitherto been doing, till he had got the necessary sum." The soldier mentioned the affair to his officer, and the officer to the commander-in-chief. It is said of one, who was told that a profligate parson was on the eve of setting out for the West Indies, that he thought him *good enough for the people*; but if, on the other

hand, a people regardless of religious and moral duty ought to have pious and exemplary pastors, in order to check and reform them, certainly no country more imperiously demands such characters than Jamaica.

Ecclesiastical affairs are here managed by a commissary court, consisting of a certain number of the clergy deputed by the king. The rectors have a seat and voice in the parochial vestries, in whatever relates to the church.

Each parish is under the direction of a vestry, which consists of the oldest magistrate (who is designated honourable, and is called *custos rotulorum*, from his having the custody of the parochial records), and ten freeholders elected by the rest. All affairs relative to the parish are regulated and settled by this body of men, and all questions are carried by a majority of voices. Besides the regulation of roads and other public works, they have the appointment to different parochial offices. In each parish there is an officer called "clerk of the peace," who is the public prosecutor in all breaches of the peace, misdemeanors, &c. He is by profession an attorney at law, and his office, in the courts of session, may be said to be like that of the attorney-general, in *miniature*. There is also a coroner. The constables are appointed by the *custos* and other magistrates.

CHAPTER V.

Commerce.—Cruisers for the protection of the trade.—Thoughts on the intercourse between the West Indies and America; and on West India politics in general.—Coins.—Inconveniences of a scarcity of specie; and causes of this want.—Taxes, public and parochial.—Lotteries.—Price of labour.

THE commerce of Jamaica may be classed under the following heads. That between it and the mother country, which is far more considerable than all the other branches together; the trade with the United States of America; with British North America, and with the Spanish Main, Cuba, &c. That some idea may be formed of the magnitude of the exports from this island, a summary of these for one year (from September 1801 to September 1802) is here subjoined:

129,544 hogsheads, 45,405 tierces, and 2,403 barrels of sugar;
 45,632 puncheons, 2,073 hogsheads, 473 barrels, and 205 kegs of rum;
 366 casks of molasses; 2,079 bags and 23 casks of ginger;
 7,793 bags and 591 casks of pimento; and
 17,961,923 pounds of coffee.

The greater part of this was shipped to Great Britain. The increase this year on the preceding one, was 4,000 hogsheads of sugar, and 4,560,455 pounds of coffee; and the decrease about 3,000 puncheons of rum, and 6,291 bags and 57 casks of pimento.

The two articles of decrease are ever fluctuating in quantity: the former depends greatly on the nature of the seasons before and during crop time; and the latter is alternately produced in large and small crops. The increase of the two principal articles, sugar and coffee, was considerable for one year; and both these commodities have been greatly on the increase since that period, particularly coffee. The revenue arising to the mother country from such a vast annual import must be very great. In return for these commodities, Jamaica receives from Great Britain almost every article and necessary of life. There is much less cotton now exported from here than formerly, and little or no cocoa or chocolate, nor much indigo. The planters do not find their account in cultivating these commodities to any great extent; they find themselves undersold in the market by the importers of other countries. Convoys are regularly appointed to escort the British vessels to and from Jamaica. As to the American and Spanish trades, they are chiefly carried on in their own bottoms. The Americans supply the island with lumber, and

provisions of various kinds ; for which they take rum chiefly, molasses, &c. the balance of exchange is usually in their favour. From British America the island is supplied with cod-fish, salmon, oil, tar, salt, &c. &c. for which it takes produce ; and by the Spaniards, in time of peace, with horses, mules, cattle, hogs, hides, tortoise-shell, mahogany, dried fish, and other articles. In war time, they seldom, or never, bring over horses, mules, or cattle ; indeed, the trade at that time dwindles away to a mere trifle : perhaps it may appear extraordinary that any trade at all should exist between two nations at war with each other ; it is contrary to the wish of the Spanish government, but the British encourage it ; and the Spanish traders receive passports from the governor of Jamaica, which protects them from British cruisers. But it is questionable, whether the little advantage the island may enjoy from this licensed trade compensates for the evil it may be likely to produce. It has been ascertained, that some of these petty Spanish traders resort to the island, less with a view of bartering their commodities, than to gain information of the sailing of our fleets, their routs, &c. for the purpose of communicating it to their privateering countrymen, who avail themselves of the information accordingly. The Spaniards generally take British merchandize in return for their commodities. Formerly this trade was peculiarly be-

neficial to the island, from the quantity of specie which was brought over from Cuba, &c. to purchase goods; but there is seldom much of that now brought to Jamaica. The Spaniards, at present, rather demand than give money in their dealings with the English.

The trade of this island is prodigiously annoyed by swarms of privateers, or piccaroons, as they are here called, who often capture the British merchantmen, even under convoy. They will steal into the midst of a fleet in the night, and, getting alongside of a ship, will capture her, and bring her out unobserved. These privateers are usually light, low-lying vessels, with latteen sails, adapted either to sail fast with the wind, or, in calms, row with fifteen or twenty oars on a side. They are manned with a motley crew of low vagabonds and desperadoes, who scruple not, at times, to commit many shocking acts of piracy and barbarity. They have sometimes the audacity to commit depredations on the coast, even in sight of our cruisers, whose vigilance and pursuit they are too often successful in eluding. It would doubtless be a most desirable thing to have a number of light cruizers on the station, to carry six or eight guns, and to be calculated for rowing, the same as the piccaroons; in which case the latter would not so often escape in calms, or light and baffling winds. There are not above two or three privateers fitted out from Jamaica;

while our enemies have perhaps little less than two or three hundred from Cuba and Hispaniola. This may easily be accounted for. The trade of our enemies is nearly annihilated, of course British privateers would have little chance of making any valuable captures; while our commerce affords to *them* a prospect of gaining much and losing little.

The merchants of Jamaica, and indeed all its inhabitants, were highly pleased with the conduct of Sir John Thomas Duckworth, during his command on this station. His cruisers were singularly successful in watching and capturing the enemy's armed vessels, and never perhaps were the coasts of this island, in time of war, better protected against these petty depredators. On the admiral's being superseded on this station, the merchants of Kingston, the legislative body, the grand jury of Kingston, and almost every parish in the island, unanimously presented him with addresses, expressive of their sense of the services he had rendered them, and of their regret at the prospect of his approaching departure. One of his captains in particular (Captain Bissel, of the *Racoon* sloop) was peculiarly active and successful in capturing, destroying, and terrifying the enemy's privateers and armed craft. The commercial body of the country were not quite so well satisfied with the admiral's predecessor, whose cruisers, they alledged, were seeking for

prizes in distant latitudes, while the coasts and trade of the island were exposed to the insults and depredations of the enemy. At least, this seemed the public sentiment, and the merchants were not backward in reminding this commander of the losses they had suffered, and the risks to which they were exposed.

The intercourse between the British West Indies and the United States is not only beneficial, but absolutely necessary to the former. The planter cannot do without the staves he receives from America, particularly the white oak staves for puncheons, and the island requires an annual supply of flour, corn, and other dry provisions, and an additional quantity of salted provisions to what the mother country can supply. These provisions the planter obtains at a reasonable rate, and the American importer usually takes rum in payment at the planter's own price. But, allowing that the mother country and her dependencies were competent to supply our West India islands with all, or part of those articles, the planter, in such case, would have to drive a most wretched bargain; for not only would he purchase those articles at a much higher rate than he obtains them for from the United States, but he would have to ship to Great Britain (where his produce is loaded with such heavy duties as to leave him but a miserable return for it) all that rum, &c. which he thus beneficially

disposes of to the American dealer. It has been asserted, that Ireland alone is competent to supply the West Indies with salted provisions, besides answering the other demands on her for that article. Without questioning the truth of this assertion, however problematical it may appear, it need only to be observed, that the planter, in thus dealing for an article in which there would be no competition, would have to pay a most enormous price for it ;—much more, indeed, in existing circumstances, than he could afford to pay ; and thus, of necessity, would the requisite supply be curtailed. But the truth is, the immense quantity of salted provisions (dry beef and pork) consumed in the West Indies could not be supplied from Ireland, nor could the various other articles of American supply be furnished by the British settlements in North America, the supply from these countries being at best scanty and precarious. The British government having interdicted the importation to the West Indies of American salted provisions in American bottoms, “except in cases of actual emergency,” to be judged of at the discretion of the governors ;* and the assembly of Jamaica having, in a late able and spirited memorial, complained of this as a great hardship, a brief statement of this affair

* The British privy council has since, very properly, taken this discretionary power into its own hands.

may not here be improper. The governor of Jamaica, it is alledged, took up this order of interdiction in a too imperative sense; he understood *actual want*, not obvious benefit, to be the point of dispensation meant in his instructions. The assembly, and the great body of the planters exclaimed loudly against this measure; they represented, that the American salted provision trade was necessary to supply their slaves with an essential requisite of life, and that it opened an advantageous market for their rum, which must either remain a dead commodity on their hands, or be sent to Great Britain, where the excessive heavy duties rendered what was already sent there hardly a compensation for the expense of manufacturing it. To these representations the governor remained deaf, not with any ill-natured or sinister design; for the worst that could be said of his inflexibility was, that he had a little misunderstood the *spirit* of his instructions, though he acted agreeably to the *letter* of them. This conduct was, also, in some measure, sanctioned and confirmed by a petition, praying the continuance of the interdiction, which was privately presented to him by a number of opulent merchants of the city of Kingston, *who dealt in the Irish trade*. The motives by which these gentlemen were actuated were therefore pretty apparent. Their own private interest, not the public welfare, was the point at issue with

them. So incensed was the assembly at this selfish and unjustifiable interference, when it came to be known, that the petitioners were ordered to attend at the bar of the house, to be reprimanded for a breach of privilege; and one of them (who was a member of the house) refusing to attend, he was taken into the custody of the serjeant at arms, and obliged, at length, to submit to the required homage.

There was at this time a good deal of *sparring* between the different branches of the legislature, and on more occasions than that above related. The council usually took part with the governor, but the general sense of the country sided with its representatives. Colonial politics are sometimes carried to as great a height of zealous wrangling as in the mother country, though the politicians here have neither foreign relations to settle, nor a complex and gigantic financial system to manage. All questions, on which there is a difference of opinion between the executive and representative bodies, are taken up with zeal, and agitated with warmth, and sometimes virulence. On the expiration of the government of a chief magistrate, valedictory addresses flow in from every quarter, expressive of a sense of his public and political conduct during his administration. Though the officer, of whom we have been speaking, was not so fortunate as to agree in certain political points with the

assembly and bulk of the inhabitants, yet the colony owes him many acknowledgements for his zealous and *unexampled* attention to the improvement of its militia, on which subject more will hereafter be said. On the appointment of his successor, the customary addresses were presented by the council, assembly, &c.—that from the former couched in adulatory strains; while the other was drawn out in respectful and friendly language, conveying thanks and eulogia on his military talents and exertions, but perfectly silent as to his civil government. Indeed, a fulsome indiscriminate strain of flattery, in such circumstances especially, would have been degrading. To make political truths or discontents subservient to political complaisance would have been a little too much in the jesuitical style.

There is an anecdote (I think related in the Spectator) of one of our smaller islands having been justly punished for this disregard to sincerity. On the demise of its lieutenant-governor, the civil and military command fell upon the next senior officer (a lieutenant-colonel of a regiment), whose conduct excited great dissatisfaction among the inhabitants. Sensible that his government was likely to be but of short duration, he caused it to be intimated, that he was willing to make a voluntary resignation of his government, provided the inhabitants would compliment him with addresses expressive of their thanks for his mild,

equitable, and wise government, and of their lively regret at the prospect of his so speedy departure, &c. Glad to get rid of him on any terms, they were not backward in this. The colonel pocketed the addreses, returned gracious answers, went home to England, and, in a few months after, returned with a commission as full governor, obtained on the strength of those very addresses.

Perhaps the assembly of Jamaica never agreed more perfectly and uniformly with any governor than it did with the Earl of Balcarras, who filled that situation about twelve years ago. The inhabitants remember him with much affection and gratitude. They say, that, instead of wishing to carry any measures inimical to the sense of the assembly and country, he was ever zealous to hear their complaints, redress their grievances, avoid as much as possible all disagreements of opinion with the other branches of the legislature, and act rather as a sort of mediator between them and the British ministry than as an imperative vicegerent.

The coins in circulation in this island are chiefly Spanish, with some Portuguese gold pieces, and a few guineas. As an inducement to the bringing of the latter to the island, they are made to go for about three shillings above the exchange; which is as five to seven, or an hundred pounds sterling to an hundred and forty pounds

currency. The Spanish gold coins are doubloons (16 dollars, or 5*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* currency); pistoles of four dollars, or 26*s.* 8*d.* and half pistoles: the silver coins are dollars (6*s.* 8*d.*), half dollars, and quarter dollars, or maccaronies as they are here popularly called; pesterines and bitts, at 1*s.* 3*d.* and 7½*d.* (these are rare); tenpenny and five penny pieces; the latter is the smallest coin in use, there being no copper coin in circulation. The Portuguese coins are gold pieces, called joes, or johannoos, and half joes; these pass for 5*l.* 10*s.* and 2*l.* 15*s.*

There is at present a much greater scarcity of specie in Jamaica than has been known at any former period. This is owing to various causes. In former times, the Spanish trade was peculiarly beneficial to this island, from the specie (chiefly dollars) which they were wont to bring to it for the purpose of purchasing cloth, hardwares, and other British merchandize. Little of this, comparatively speaking, is, however, now brought to it. As the Spaniards are not in the habit of purchasing so much of this merchandize; the balance of trade is therefore often in their favour.

One great drain of the specie here, is the custom-house, which annually sends home to England considerable quantities of dollars. Frequent other mercantile and other remittances are also sent thither in dollars; and the amount of the voluntary subscriptions of this island, in aid of go-

vernment, viz. about three hundred thousand pounds, was chiefly remitted in dollars: these never returned; but transformed by Mr. Bolton's patent machine into British crown-pieces, or retaining their native shape at the value of four shillings and sixpence, continue to circulate in the mother country. The Americans often receive considerable balances for their cargoes in cash. The author has often thought, and he presumes he is not mistaken in his conjecture, that a very considerable quantity of specie (silver coin) lies dormant in the hands of the negroes, many of whom, denying themselves the comforts they could afford to purchase, hoard up and bury their money, as they acquire it, with a surprising avaricious avidity.

The want of specie is here a very serious evil, as there are no banks (which is somewhat extraordinary, considering the great utility they would be of) to supply a circulating medium. During the season of crop, payments are often made in rum, which thus becomes a sort of circulating medium; but where rum is either to be paid, or received in payment, and a balance on either side accrues, the difficulty is—how is this balance to be paid? for cash cannot be obtained. It is amusing enough to see how various accounts are settled in this way. A puncheon of rum will, perhaps, have passed through the hands of fifty possessors in the course of as many days, by

orders, indorsed over and over again, on the wharfinger, at whose wharf it is supposed to lie; when, perhaps, it has never been sent thither, or, if sent, seldom stirs from it all the time it is thus rapidly transferred from hand to hand. If there were abundance of specie in the country, or a circulation of good bank notes to supply its place, and short credits and punctual payments were more *in fashion* among the inhabitants, it would be of considerable advantage to them in all their dealings with each other. It would give additional confidence and facility to those dealings, and it would tend to render more reasonable most of the necessary articles of life. A merchant or storekeeper here, in making his calculations of probable profit, pre-supposes that a certain portion of his customers are such as he will never receive a farthing from; he therefore adds, in proportion, to the price of his goods, so that the honest and punctual customer is made to pay for the delinquency or the incapacity of him who never pays, or cannot pay.

The principal taxes in this island are a poll-tax of ten shillings on negroes; a tax on cattle, horses, and mules; a tax called the deficiency-tax, being a tax of twenty shillings per head on slaves and stock, but with this proviso, that every able-bodied man, whether proprietor or other person employed by him, who does duty in the militia, saves to the amount of fifty pounds of

this tax annually ; and every such person and his wife (if a married man) saves these (what are called) deficiencies, or to the amount of one hundred and fifty pounds : this tax is chiefly intended to operate as an encouragement to population and matrimony, and to prevent an undue exemption from militia duty. There is also a land tax of sixpence per acre ; a stamp tax ; a tax on wheel-carriages for pleasure : and others. Some of these, as the stamp tax, &c. it was found necessary to lay on, or augment, subsequent to the Maroon war, in order to facilitate the liquidation of the debt incurred by the expences of that war.

The parochial taxes are, the road tax, for keeping the public highways in repair ; the house tax ; and some others of lesser note, as the transient tax, paid by transient traders, who are not inhabitants of the parish, or living inhabitants, do not contribute to the other taxes, &c.

There was once a lottery in this island, the highest prize of which was 5,000 dollars ; but it was soon dropt. It was a private lottery, the government in this country having not yet, in imitation of a more dignified one, descended so far as to have recourse to so paltry a shift for raising money. Indeed, that contemptible resource may be said to be far beneath the dignity of such a government, and ought to be annihilated : to say the least of it, it is holding out a

legislative sanction to gambling, and fostering a spirit of it, by holding out to the people false and delusive hopes of gain.

The price of labour here is very high, and yet, perhaps, not an equivalent for the high price of negroes, the risk of seasoning them to the country when purchased from the African ships, the subsequent risk of losing them by disease or accident, and the expense of taxes, feeding, clothing, &c. &c. Two shillings and sixpence is the usual hire of an able field negro, and five shillings for a tradesman, who is considered as nearly double the value of the former, and, if a skilful mechanic, perhaps even treble. When this high price of labour is considered, together with the much smaller portion of it performed by a negro than the European labourer goes through, and his inferior skill and activity, it is no wonder that public and other works of any magnitude should be attended with so prodigious an expense. Indeed, there are certain undertakings, (such as canals), which would be utterly impracticable here, were they ever so much wanted, in consequence of this inferiority of the negro labourer in skill, activity, and manual exertion.

As for the salaries of the white tradesmen and others, employed upon the estates and in the towns, these will hereafter be mentioned.

CHAPTER VI.

Military establishment.—Militia.—Lieutenant-General (now Sir George) Nugent's zealous attention to its improvement.—General remarks on corps of this kind, riflemen, &c.

THE number of regular troops usually stationed in this island is about two thousand, including a detachment of about two hundred royal artillerists, who are stationed at the different fortifications. The head-quarters of these troops is the seat of government, of course, where the commander-in-chief resides. Small detachments are stationed at the different towns throughout the island, and one whole regiment is placed in the county of Cornwall, the head-quarters of which are, as before said, in that healthy part of the interior, the former scite of the Trelawney Maroon town. Some years ago, a regiment of dragoons (the 21st) was stationed in this island, at the express desire of its legislature, who was at the expense of maintaining it; but, finding this establishment expensive, and the cavalry not so serviceable as was expected in a war carried on in the interior, this regiment was recalled. Beside their usual pay, the troops here have a handsome allowance from the island, which enables

them to subsist more comfortably. Besides the white troops employed in the West Indies, there are eight *West India* regiments, composed of negro soldiers, commanded by white officers. The embodying and employing of such corps in the West Indies is considered by the inhabitants, and doubtless with much reason, as a very impolitic step. The more perfect these troops might become in their discipline, the more dangerous and formidable they would be, in case of defection (and examples have occurred to prove that their friendship and fidelity is not implicitly to be relied on), in a country to which they are attached by passions and affections not easily eradicated; not certainly to their quondam masters and managers, but to their colour, their fellow bondsmen, their friends, their relatives, their congenial connections. One measure might, if practicable, be embraced, to obviate this threatening evil, without lessening the effective strength of the empire. If the West India regiments were sent to the East Indies, and an adequate number of Sepoys sent to fill their place in the West Indies, the danger would vanish, and the hazard of loss by mortality, in consequence of the exchange, would be little, as both live under similar parallels of latitude, though in opposite hemispheres.

There is here a tolerably well disciplined militia, and it is pretty numerous considering the

white population. From eight to ten thousand effective men (including about two thousand free browns and blacks, enrolled with the whites, being, on an average, at the rate of an hundred for each parochial regiment) might, upon an emergency, be brought into the field. To most of the regiments is attached a company of artillery, and two field pieces. The Jamaica militia, though it bears that name, is by no means raised in the same manner as the militia in Great Britain, by ballot; but every male here between the age of sixteen and sixty, if not incapacitated by accident or infirmity, or exempted by public official situation, is obliged to enroll himself in it. The term *militia* is, indeed, somewhat misapplied to this corps; it rather resembles the volunteer corps in the mother country, the only difference between the two arising merely from the circumstance of those who compose the latter having the option of either enrolling themselves as volunteers, or standing the chance of being balloted for as militia-men; for as to discipline and duty, they are pretty much the same.

A scale of regular and colonial rank is very properly established in the West Indies, in order to prevent disputes, and with a view of transferring commands, in times of danger, to the proper hands. According to this scale, a regular lieutenant-colonel takes the colonial rank of major-general, and, in actual service, the

command of the troops (both regulars and militia) of the district; a regular captain has the colonial rank of lieutenant-colonel, and so with the other ranks in proportion. All this is highly necessary. A militia general, who has never made military tactics his particular study, nor has seen other *service* than that of the parade, though he might make a tolerable shift to wade through the duty of a field day or review, would prove but an awkward leader on the day of battle. A captain of regulars would certainly be a more desirable one. A small mistake in the evolutions of a battalion may be easily rectified by a little *consultation* on the parade; but, in the field of battle, it is not quite so trifling an affair. The soldier will always follow, with alacrity and confidence, the officer who, he knows, will lead him with skill and promptitude: when headed by one who knows his duty but by halves, he feels neither confidence in him nor in himself, conscious that his mistakes, his demurs, and delays, must produce inevitable discomfiture and disgrace. Very lately Sir Eyre Coote (the present governor of Jamaica) placed a brigadier-general in each of the three counties, for the purpose of inspecting and directing the militia: these officers he brought out with him in his suit, with this view. Lieutenant-General Nugent (now Sir George Nugent), this officer's predecessor in the government, is much to be thanked and com-

mended for his zealous attention to the militia of this island. He certainly took more personal pains to improve it in discipline than any of his predecessors had ever done. Few of them had taken the trouble of making periodical tours through the island, for the purpose of seeing, *with their own eyes*, the state of discipline of the respective corps. Even the simple circumstance of his thus reviewing them in person had the effect of inspiring a spirit of emulation, and a wish to excel. He also, no doubt, added something to the *esprit du corps* of the militia martinetts, by giving them a handsome uniform (scarlet with blue and gold), and a hat (*chapeau bras*) and feather quite *a la militaire*. Perhaps, however, a round hat would have suited the climate better; and as a proof that this was his excellency's *private* opinion, he always wore one.

During the visit of the combined fleet of the enemy, under Admirals Villeneuve and Gravina, to these seas, an attack on Jamaica was expected. On this occasion the commander-in-chief here laid on martial law, and ordered the militia on permanent duty. But the gallant Nelson (lamented hero! to whose memory every Briton must pay the homage of a sigh) soon relieved these apprehensions, and compelled the enemy to re-measure his steps with quicker precipitation than he had advanced.

When a body of men, who are only *occa-*

sionally soldiers, are thus called out to do regular duty, it were always to be wished, that both officers and men would endeavour to unite the manners and deportment of gentlemen with the requisite attention of the soldier to discipline and duty. But it too frequently happens, that the conduct of both forms a marked contrast to the order and regularity of a well disciplined regular regiment. Though this remark is not universally applicable to our *irregular* corps, it certainly is so at times. It would, methinks, be commendable in the officers of such corps, when thus called out, to set proper examples to the privates of sobriety, decency, and a strict and impartial performance of duty; joined to a mild and gentlemanly, yet firm and steady, behaviour towards these men, many of whom are no way inferior in respectability to themselves. Surely discipline may be enforced in such a corps, without the aid of harsh unmannerly language, and a contemptuous rudeness, which nothing but ignorance can excuse, and this temporary authority protect. They should endure the hardships and inconveniences incidental to a military life with patience and cheerfulness; and, above all, they should be rigidly disinterested, and disdain to bring to punishment that inattention, self-indulgence, and irregularity which they themselves may have set an example of. The gentleman, who quits his profession, his family, and his home, to act as a

soldier in defence of his country, whether he carry a musket or wield a sword, performs an equally honourable duty. The ignorant conceited coxcomb, who fancies himself highly exalted above his fellow subjects by being dubbed a volunteer officer, and is fond of shewing his authority, would do well to ponder on the words of a liberal and enlightened officer of high rank and illustrious birth. At the commencement of the volunteer system, that great man and consummate soldier said, "give me a musket, and I will do my duty as a volunteer in the ranks, with as much pride and alacrity as if you were to put me at the head of the corps; in performing that subordinate duty, my station, I should conceive, was equally honourable with that of the officer who led me." On the other hand, it would appear as if many of the privates, on such occasions, were of opinion that the putting on of a red coat was a sort of licence for all manner of dissipation, disorder, and blackguardism; such behaviour, in short, as was disgraceful to them both as gentlemen and soldiers.

One great evil that was long complained of in the Jamaica militia was the grossly partial and indiscriminate distribution of commissions to whoever had favour, interest, or influence with the colonels of the different regiments. In consequence of this, raw, inexperienced youth, the sons of men of wealth, influence, and family-con-

nection, were often made officers, at the age of fifteen or sixteen, in preference to men who had done the duty of privates in the regiment for fifteen, twenty, or more years, and who, of course, were more eligible in many points of view. This operated as might be expected. Such officers were necessarily ignorant of their duty, and the bulk of the privates, seeing themselves thus contemptuously superseded by boys, who had hardly or never served in the ranks at all, naturally felt themselves discouraged, if not insulted, by this shameful and glaring injustice. It is not surprising that they should feel little respect for such officers, who, in addition to their ignorance of duty, were sometimes arbitrary and supercilious. However men may consider such subjects abstractedly, there are few whose feelings do not revolt at a systematic and settled neglect. Without meaning to say, that there are not other qualifications, besides seniority, necessary to entitle a private to promotion, it will doubtless be allowed that when these are not disputed, long services and good conduct ought to take place of untried conduct and no services at all. Any one, who was a relation of the colonel, or a relation of the colonel's wife; who was in favour with this gentleman, or in favour with any of his friends, required no other merit or pretension to preferment in the militia; he recommended the individual to the commander-in-chief, and the

commander-in-chief, in virtue of this official document of his deserts, signed the commission. By certain clauses in a late act of the colonial legislature, "for the better regulation of the militia of Jamaica," this abuse is attempted to be in some measure remedied. But even subsequent to the enacting of this law, instances have occurred of its having been disregarded or eluded.

The Maroons that remain in the island (not exceeding four or five hundred effective men) may be considered also as a part of the military strength of the island; but their services and fidelity are, it is to be feared, little to be depended upon. During the war with the Trelawney town Maroons, the Maroons of Accompong town served for a while along with the whites; but, on a few of them being killed and wounded in a skirmish, they sullenly and silently retired, and did not afterwards appear in the conflict. They had, however, the negative merit of remaining peaceably at home, and not offering to aid or assist the rebellious tribe who were in arms against the whites.

There are some very good fortifications in some parts of the island, as at Port Royal, &c. but at many or most of the out-ports, the batteries, and forts (if in fact they deserve the name) were, at the time of the late apprehended visit from the enemy, in a shameful state of dilapidation and neglect; and even some of the guns, for want of attention

(being seldom scaled and painted), were found "more formidable to their friends than to their enemies," to borrow the words of a great and lamented general on another occasion. People do not always think of and provide against danger till it comes home to their doors. Since then, however, something more respectable has been undertaken; the island engineer has inspected these forts, and made his report of their condition; perhaps, in short, a recent danger will cause some degree of care and attention to these defences, till a long period of security again produces a second relapse into neglect.

During the existence of martial law, commissioners are appointed in all the parishes, for regulating and furnishing necessaries for the troops: these consist of the most opulent and respectable of the elderly inhabitants, who are furnished with authority to make a requisition on the properties of mules, cattle, carts, &c. for the transporting of baggage, provisions, &c. for the army; to purchase such provisions; and to impress for its use, if it cannot be obtained otherwise, whatever else may be wanted.

At such a time, and in such a country, it is unwise in a commanding officer to harass and fatigue his men by unnecessary duties, and endanger their health by exposure to morning dews and vertical suns. The fatal effects of a long and fatiguing exposure to a burning sun are suf-

ficiently obvious. Men have been known to drop down in the ranks, and soon after expire in consequence of it. One thing, on such occasions, would be highly proper, viz. carriages for the rapidly transporting of troops from one place to another, in emergent cases, where they were immediately wanted. These ought to be in constant readiness. In hot climates a long and fatiguing march would render troops incapable of any immediate active service after it. To prove the importance of such a provision, a case need only be supposed. Had an enemy effected a landing between Montego bay and Falmouth (a distance of twenty-two miles), orders would of course have been issued to the troops at these and other stations to have marched with all rapidity, and formed a junction at this place: if they made a forced march on foot, in the heat of the day, what service would they be fit for by the time they effected it? If, on the contrary, such as could immediately obtain horses or carriages, were allowed to use them, yet still a very large proportion would not have any such thing at hand, and the moments were precious. To speak then of pressing, would have only shewn the folly of deferring to the last moment what ought to have been previously arranged, and acting by hazard on the spur of the occasion. It is certain that, where such an arrangement had been already provided and understood, from

three to four hundred men could have been transported from Montego bay to the point of attack (say twenty miles) in three hours or less, without the least fatigue or inconvenience to the troops. Frequent gratuitous offers have been made to government, by the English nobility, gentry, and farmers, of the use of their horses, carriages, &c. for the quick conveyance of troops in case of actual invasion. The opulent and leading men of Jamaica, on a future case of threatened invasion of that island, would do well to copy this patriotic example.

One or two further observations on the militia of this country may not here be inapplicable. In a hot climate the arms, accoutrements, and dress ought to be as light as possible, and to sit loose and easy on the wearer: this maxim is perhaps not sufficiently attended to here. Corps of riflemen, or sharpshooters (say forty or fifty attached to each regiment), would be of peculiar use* in a contest either with a domestic or external enemy. It is known of what terrible use the American riflemen were in their struggle with the mother country for independence; and America is not half so much intersected with woods, mountains, valleys, rocks, and defiles as Jamaica

* The author some years ago offered some hints on this subject, through the medium of a Jamaica newspaper. Since this time the assembly have voted for a thousand stand of rifle arms being sent for.

is. Such, indeed, is the topographical nature of this country, that, though an enemy might be in possession of the towns, and even the fortifications, the interior could easily be defended against a very superior force. Nature affords innumerable situations here that may be deemed impregnable, without the assistance of art, or the efforts of labour.

Though regular troops must be much more effective than the militia here, in a contest with an external and regular foe, yet in a warfare (such as that with the Maroons) the latter are better adapted than any troops of the line. They are more accustomed to the country, and inured to the clime; they are more in the habit of traversing the woods, and more familiarized to those haunts and recesses which they afford. Regular troops are taught to face danger without flinching or seeking for refuge from it; but this very bravery, or rather steadiness, which is the soul of discipline against a civilized foe, often proved the destruction of parties of regular soldiers, who were sent to watch the motions of the Maroons, or drive them from their haunts; while in their extreme caution, and art of concealment, consisted the principal generalship of these savages. The militia were more cautious; on marching through dangerous defiles, where they apprehended an ambuscade, they stole guardedly along, having recourse, like their barbarous ad-

versaries, as occasion required, to the natural defences of rocks and trees. During this contest a body of armed slaves, called black shot, usually attended the expeditions of the whites; they behaved with great fidelity, and were wonderfully useful, as an advance guard, in scouring the woods, and discovering the retreats of the Maroons.

It is here to be remarked, that the militia cavalry were, during this contest, found unfit for other use than carrying dispatches; and against a regular enemy it is feared it would be found little formidable. The horses are not at all trained for the purpose; they are not even accustomed to stand a close fire, and are therefore little calculated to make an impression on regular troops. General Nugent, one day, after reviewing a battalion of militia infantry, sent an aid-de-camp to the officer of a troop of militia horse, then drawn up in the field, desiring him to make a charge, and perform some other cavalry manœuvres. The officer very wisely desired the aid-de-camp to inform his excellency, that "*he was afraid his troop was incompetent to the task.*" If it is asked when this corps was raised, it may be replied fifty years ago for aught the author knows to the contrary.

CHAPTER VII.

*Quadrupeds.—Reptiles, &c.—Birds.—Fishes.—
Domestic animals.—Observations on the alligator and the shark.*

NATURE has been most bountiful in bestowing on this country an astonishing variety of her finest and most envied productions. Though a considerable portion of these have been transplanted from other regions, yet has she given a soil and climate which is productive of, and congenial to, the support of those strangers; so that they are become naturalized to this second home, and now all its own. In this and the succeeding chapter will be given a brief sketch of those productions, both animal and vegetable.

To begin with the animal creation:—There are here few wild quadrupeds; in former times the woods are said to have abounded with a species of the monkey, but none are now to be found. The wild hog is still to be found in great numbers in the remote woods, where they are occasionally hunted. Hunting the wild boar was a favourite diversion here, both to the hardy active Creole whites of the interior, and to the Maroons. It is not now so often practised, these animals having retired far back into the

woods; so that when their flesh is desired for a *barbecue* (considered as a great delicacy here, being the hog's flesh smoked with a certain odoriferous wood, which communicates to it a peculiar flavour), negroes are usually sent in quest of them. The wild boar is hunted with dogs, who keep him at bay while the huntsmen take aim at him with their guns; the dogs durst not approach him, he is so fierce and terrible in his attacks; with his monstrous tusks he would soon annihilate them, did they venture to encounter him too closely. It is supposed that the wild hog of Jamaica is not an original native of the island, but a descendant from those which the first discoverers and others may have left there. There are no other wild quadrupeds in the island that deserve notice. Rats, mice, lizards, &c. may, indeed, be enumerated as such; the former is a too conspicuous animal, much to the annoyance and injury of the country; they are most numerous and destructive, particularly to the sugar cane; in some years whole fields of this plant are as completely destroyed by this voracious animal as if a blight had alighted on them. One year with another it is supposed that the estates sustain, by this unavoidable plunder, at least a loss of eight or ten hogsheads of sugar, for every hundred they make. Innumerable traps are set, and packs of small terriers are daily employed, to extirpate this enemy of the vegetable creation;

but though incredible numbers are continually destroyed (fifty thousand are caught or killed on some properties annually), yet no sensible diminution of their numbers takes place. They are of a much larger size than the European rat, particularly that species of them called by the negroes racoon: on trying the experiment of putting one of these and a cat together, the latter turned from it dismayed. As for lizards (which should more properly be classed with the reptile race), they are a harmless animal themselves, but are preyed on by numerous inveterate enemies. Snakes and owls are the most formidable assailants of these poor animals, as they are also of the rats. There are four or five different species of the snake in Jamaica; the two principal of which are the yellow and the black snake. None of them are venomous, instances having often taken place of negroes having been bitten by them, without suffering any other consequence than a temporary pain and inflammation, and swelling of the part, and sometimes a slight degree of fever. It may, indeed, be questioned, whatever terrible tales may be told of the serpent kind, whether there are any of them that are absolutely mortal in their bite; at least, any to whose bite there is not an effectual antidote or remedy: little more is necessary, as such, to the bite of the West India snake than a fomentation of the part with sweet oil, or warm lime-juice, and extracting the tooth

if it has been left in the flesh. Some of the yellow snakes grow to the length of ten feet; the black snake is not above half that size. The yellow snake is a most indolent animal, and will suffer a person to come up close to it, if coiled up and reposing itself as it is very fond of doing, and even touch it, without making any effort to move; it is only when casually trodden upon and bruised, that it will prove hostile; but even then it will glide hastily off, if the person springs from its entanglement. The author recollects an instance of one of the largest size having got, in the night, through a jealousie into a gentleman's bed-room, where it crawled up on the bed, and coiling itself on the bed-clothes, fell very contentedly asleep. On awaking in the morning, the gentleman feeling something heavy press upon him, lifted up his head, and was electrified with terror at the sight of a monstrous snake which had been his bed-fellow all the night. His situation may easily be conceived; he durst neither move nor call for assistance: at length, the negro servants, finding that he did not come out at the accustomed time, looked through the jealousies, and saw the cause, the musquito-net of the bed happening to be up. They soon got the door opened, and relieved the gentleman from his *purgatory* by killing the snake. This animal is so incredibly strong that the united strength of four negroes cannot draw one of moderate size

from a place where he has got any hold ; so that one cannot, from this, altogether discredit what is told of the monstrous serpents, of thirty or forty feet long, in Guiana, Ceylon, &c. which, it is said, have been known to strangle and devour the buffalo and the tyger. So horrible and revolting is the very look of this animal, that it is impossible a person, even if he is conscious there is no danger attending its bite, can avoid starting at the sight of him ; even the very brutes, horses, oxen, &c. start and snort if they see one near them : this the author has more than once remarked. Dogs bark at them, but carefully keep aloof while they are in a posture of defence. It is remarkable that the black snake, when assailed by a dog, always darts at his eyes ; by this means the terriers, who never pass by them without shewing their antipathy, often get blind and useless by this warfare. As to the power of fascination which it is said the snake possesses, the author never knew but one instance that had the appearance of it :—on riding along a road one day, he observed a little bird hopping, with a kind of circular and feeble motion, round one particular spot ; he desired his servant to go and seize the little flutterer ; but just as he had got to the spot, and almost laid his hand on it, a large black snake darted away from under the grass, and at the same instant the little bird flew away. Extreme terror and strong surprise produce a

species of fascination, and this probably is the kind which charms and arrests the hapless bird, and finally draws him into the mouth of the wily serpent. A gentleman, in traversing the woods one day, found the skeleton of a snake entwined round that of a cat; they had been fighting, and perished together in the conflict.

The gallow-wasp is an ugly and frightful animal; it is made like the guano, or lizard, but with a much broader back and shorter tail: this animal was for some time thought venomous, but that opinion now no longer exists. There are green guanos here, but none of that large species which the Spaniards of the neighbouring islands consider as so dainty a morsel. There are here, besides those mentioned, various other noxious reptiles, such as scorpions, centipedes, &c. with innumerable tribes of insects, which it were superfluous to describe. Something, however, may be said of that remarkable one the musquito, so troublesome to the inhabitants of the West Indies and other hot countries. This little animal proves most annoying to new-comers; at times they hover about in innumerable swarms, and incessantly attacking the face and hands, soon cover them with blisters, which create for a while a very unpleasant itching: a remedy for this is bathing the affected parts with lemon or lime-juice. To guard against their annoyance in the night, the beds are hung with what are called

musquito-nets, made of coarse gauze. It is remarkable, that the negroes, who cannot often afford this nocturnal defence, acquire a mechanical habit of driving away, with their hands, these troublesome visitors, while they are at the same time in a deep sleep. These insects abound most in the woods, and in the vicinity of woods and marshes; the evenings and mornings are the times when they issue from their cool retreats: they are provided with a proboscis for sucking the blood of those they assail, and the puncture they make in the skin is instantly and keenly felt. Bees are numerous in the woods here, and may be kept in the gardens.

The woods of this island abound with unnumbered tribes of the feathered creation, to describe which, as a naturalist, would require volumes. Few of these, as before observed, are endowed with the gift of song. Two species, indeed, have a sweet and pleasing note; but they are too delicate for confinement in cages—at least, the art has not yet been discovered of reconciling them to this endurance; and the truth is, little pains are taken to domesticate these warblers of nature. One of these is the Jamaica nightingale, a species of the mock bird; it is rather larger than the thrush, and has a white and dark plumage. The other is the Banana-bird (called so from its feeding on that fruit), which is of the size of the European black-bird, and is adorned

with a bright and beautiful yellow and dark brown plumage. Indeed, though nature has not bestowed so fine and various a pipe on the birds of these tropical regions, as on the feathered inhabitants of more temperate climes, she has, to compensate for this deficiency, decked them out in all the gay and brilliant colours which fancy itself can pourtray. These fine tints and exquisite shades, fading into each other by the softest gradations, are more peculiarly displayed in the various species of the humming bird, of which there are three or four kinds here. Some of the species of the wild pigeon have also a most beautiful plumage; of these there are no less than nine different sorts: the largest of these, called the ring-tailed pigeon, is considered as one of the greatest delicacies of the country at a certain season of the year (from October till February), when the wood-seeds on which it feeds are ripe, at which time it is covered with fat, and is eagerly sought for by those who are, and those who are not, epicures. It is remarkable that this bird becomes very shy and solitary at this time, hiding itself in the thickest shades and deepest retreats of the forest, as if conscious of hovering danger in the vicinity of the dwellings of man; while, at other times, it is frequently seen on the skirts of the woods, and not at all so shy. The sportsman has, therefore, to travel many miles over rocks and woody precipices before he gets to the

haunts of the ring-tail (for it is only at the particular season, it is worth shooting) ; so that he has much toil to encounter in pursuing this desirable game. Its size is at least a third larger than the domestic pigeon, and so heavy is it with fat, in the proper season, that it splits frequently in falling from the lofty trees on which it is shot. There are seven other species that are either larger than, or nearly as large as, the domestic pigeon ; the other is a small bird, about the size of the turtle dove. There are four of the parrot species here, viz, the maccaw, the yellow and the black bill, green parrots, and the paroquet. The former is very rare, but the other kinds are prodigiously numerous, sometimes darkening the air in vast flocks, being gregarious, and rending it with their shrill clamours. The parrots frequent the higher woods, but the paroquet is every where found : both are often very destructive to the plantain walks, &c. the fruit of which they greedily devour. It would be an endless task to enumerate and describe all the various feathered tenants of the woods here ; suffice it then to say, that, besides these, there is a variety also of aquatic birds, such as cootes, divers, &c. and a great variety of the heron (or galding, as it here called) from the smaller size up to that of the crane ; all these are either of a bluish colour, or milk white. There are also various tribes which are migratory, as ducks, teal, plover, snipes, and

a species of the ortolan. These arrive in October, either from Cuba, or the continent of America, and remain four or five months, and afford excellent sport. There are two species of the wild duck, one of which, called the whistling-duck, removes only in the dusk of the evening, and has a plaintive kind of cry. Besides the migratory snipe, there is a smaller species peculiar to the island. The ortolan feeds on the guinea-grass seeds, which are ripe in October; it is thought little inferior to the bird of that name which bears so high a price in the London market. There are some species of birds here, besides the migratory tribes, that exactly resemble those in Europe, as the quail, one or two species of the wild pigeon, &c.

The sea around this island, and the rivers which water it, abound with various sorts of the finest fish. Of the former the mullet, the rock-fish, the barracoota, the grooper, the jew-fish, &c. are reckoned as the best; and among the latter, the calapavor, the fresh-water mullet, and the mud-fish. Perhaps, for richness, flavour, and taste, the calapavor is equal to the salmon; and the mullet, which is something in shape and size like the trout, is greatly superior to that fish. The numerous other species it would be superfluous to mention. The sea also produces excellent lobsters, crabs, prawns, cockles, congers, and oysters. The latter is a curiosity, as they

literally *grow upon trees*; that is, they adhere to the stems and thick fibres of the mangrove, which, growing in the water, continue to shoot downwards innumerable fibres that take root in succession, and form around the parent stem a sort of impenetrable palisade. Another curiosity is the land-crab, which can hardly be considered as belonging to the tribe of *shell-fish*; it is rather a sojourner on *terra-firma*, making, in a sort of *caravans*, periodical excursions into the interior and returning again, climbing the highest mountains, scaling the precipitous rocks, and mounting over all impediments and obstructions, however formidable, that may lie in its line of march: this animal, at a certain season, is considered as the first delicacy in the island. In the rivers are the finest *craw-fish*, which are also a great delicacy; they are more tender and better flavoured than the lobster, which they much resemble in shape.

All the European domestic and tame animals thrive in Jamaica. The horses bred in the island are middle-sized, hardy, active, and strong, as are those brought from Cuba, which are, however, of a smaller size: the price of the former is from seventy or eighty to an hundred and fifty pounds currency, and of the latter, from forty to sixty or seventy. The English and North American horses, not being bred in the climate, are not accounted so hardy; although, when

taken proper care of, they thrive wonderfully well. These shed their hair once a year, getting what is called their winter coat in those months which constitute that season in the temperate zone. In all the parishes there are biennial horse races. The running horses are bred and trained for the purpose, and are so fleet and well-bottomed, that English racers brought hither have often been beaten by them. They are rode by negro jockeys, who have all the adroitness and *knowingness* to be met with in that description of men in other countries. It is, however, truly lamentable to see the poor animals rode three and four-mile heats at mid-day, under the hot blaze of a vertical sun, in a climate like this; when the cool of the morning might be so infinitely better substituted. If the horse masters are devoid of compassion for their generous and willing steeds, one would think that the risk of losing them, or at least rendering them useless, would have some *weight* with them. The author, not long ago, was witness to an instance of this; a fine horse was so overcome by the heat and exercise of the race he had performed, that he dropt down the instant he came in, and soon after expired.

But it is on the mules here the planters place their principal reliance, all the work and drudgery of the plantations being performed by these hardy animals, who are capable of under-

going double the fatigue which a horse could endure. Indeed, the latter are seldom used as beasts of burthen; and as to the carts and wains, they are drawn by oxen. But with all this hardihood, the mule of the West Indies is the most perverse and stubborn animal that can be conceived; few are taught to be so docile as to be fit for the saddle, that is, made perfectly free of tricks; yet the most stubborn are made to go through their work by the negroes, who have a wonderful knack in managing them. Great numbers of mules are bred upon the pens in the island, and the Spaniards were wont to bring over an additional supply. The price of an unbroke mule is fifty pounds currency; for a saddle mule, if free of tricks, ninety or an hundred is often given.

The oxen here are of a middle size, and hardy; the Spanish ox brought hither is smaller than the Creole ox. The beef here, if of an animal not too old and over-wrought when killed, is sweet, palatable, and savoury. The price of a stout ox is forty or forty-five pounds, and of the beef fifteen pence per pound.

The sheep are very good, and the mutton little inferior to the English.

All these animals, as also goats (great numbers of which are bred in the country, where they thrive as well as they would do in the mountains of Wales), feed upon the guinea-grass and na-

tural grass of the country, both of which are wholesome and fattening to the animals accustomed to them: horses kept in the stable are, however, assisted with Indian corn, or maize.

The hogs are small sized, and squat made; and the inhabitants justly boast that their pork, for sweetness and delicacy, is far superior to the European, and not to be exceeded by any in the world. Rabbits also thrive here.

The poultry (which is fed with guinea and Indian corn), is very good, and thrives and increases fast. Muscovy ducks are peculiarly hardy and thriving; though English ducks are also raised, but not in such numbers. The customary price of a dung-hill fowl is five shillings, of a turkey fifteen or twenty, of a duck six shillings and three pence, and of a tame pigeon one shilling and eight pence, currency. The last named animal is very prolific and hardy in this climate.

As in mentioning the inhabitants of the ocean and the rivers, no notice was taken of the alligator and the shark, a few observations relative to these aquatic monsters may not here be amiss.

Two or three of the rivers in this island contain alligators, some of which have been known to measure twelve or fifteen feet in length. People who have only read exaggerated accounts of this animal, may conceive that it is terrible to the

human species, both in the water (like the shark) and on the land, where it is also a denizen. But the truth is, that in Jamaica the alligator is perfectly harmless as to man. If, in swimming in the rivers where he laves, a person should accidentally come near to one, instead of darting with fierceness at his prey, he plunges from him down into the watery abyss, more terrified at the contact, than eager to devour. All the harm, in short, which they usually do, is the destroying the fish in the river, and now and then catching an unfortunate duck, or other domestic animal. The author has seen an alligator fastened with a chain about his neck, and fed upon fish, entrails, &c. which were occasionally thrown to him. He had been a mischievous plunderer of poultry in the neighbourhood, and was at last caught and secured.

Happy were it for the transatlantic seas if the shark were equally inoffensive to man; but many a shocking tale too well attests that this is not the case. There are two or three species of this terrible fish in these seas, but the white shark is the most voracious and daring. These will sometimes dart after their prey into the shallowest water, and, goaded by hunger, instantly seize it. Those of the largest size will devour a man at two mouthfuls. Terrified by the apprehension of this monster, there are few who have

the temerity to venture in these seas beyond their depth. The length of the shark is from ten or twelve to eighteen feet. In seizing his prey he is obliged, from the formation of his mouth, to turn on his side. It is remarkable, that a little fish, called by the seamen pilot fish, usually attends this monster, and often swims close to his mouth, as if fearless of danger, or conscious there was none. Some say this diminutive fish conducts the shark to his prey, as the jackall does the lion, and hence obtains the name of pilot. Without repeating any of the horrible recitals the author has either heard or read of this voracious fish, he will content himself with mentioning one to which he was an eye-witness. A poor sailor having, while ashore in Kingston, made a little too free in one of the grog shops there, took it into his head that he would swim to the ship to which he belonged, though a boat was just at the time going off to it. His shipmates used every argument to dissuade him from the mad attempt, and even used force to get him into the boat; but all in vain. He jumped into the sea; but had not proceeded fifty yards before those in the boat, which was at some distance before, heard him utter a loud shriek and a groan: they guessed at what had happened, and instantly rowed back to where he was; on approaching near to him, he uttered a second

piercing shriek. He was taken into the boat, but in a most mangled and horrible condition. A shark had taken off one of his limbs at the upper part of the thigh; and, returning again, finished the murderous work by tearing out his entrails.

CHAPTER VIII.

Vegetable productions, trees, shrubs, fruits, flowers, &c. native and exotic.—Description of a West India estate, and routine of work thereon.—Various agricultural remarks.

THE vegetable productions of Jamaica, enriched as they are with so many acquisitions from other countries, form a most respectable and interesting catalogue; to describe which scientifically would form a work of itself. It is rather the intention of this work to convey to the general reader an idea of the most prominent of the productions of this island, than to enter into a minute and botanical account of them.

The native woods here abound with a very great variety of the most valuable timbers, and woods for dying, and ornamental cabinet work. The author has reckoned up fifty different kinds, which were fit for those purposes, or for framing, mill work, &c. The mahogany is too well known as a wood to require description. It is a tall handsome tree, and sometimes grows to a great size. There are now few remaining in Jamaica, except in the remote and mountainous parts of the island, from whence it is very laborious and difficult to remove them. Most of the

mahogany now brought into Great Britain is the product of the bay of Honduras. The cedar grows to a most immense size, some of these trees measuring twenty-five feet, and even thirty feet, in circumference below, and being proportionably lofty. This cedar has not so fine a grain as what is called the cedar of Lebanon; it is used for various purposes. The black and green ebony, the *lignum vitæ*, the fustic, the logwood, &c. are too well known to require being described. There is a wood here, called satin-wood, from its resemblance, on being polished, to the beautiful shining gloss of that fabric, which is highly prized by the cabinet-makers, who give a handsome price for it. Bitter-wood, which abounds here, was, not long since, used in England as a succedaneum for hops, when there was a scarcity of that article, and sold at the enormous price of eighty pounds sterling per ton; but an equivalent duty having been laid on by government, it ceased to be an object of exportation. The cotton tree is of a monstrous size, and is used for hollowing out canoes. Iron-wood is remarkable for its hardness, brittleness, and weight (hence its name); but resisting the best tools, it is of little value. There are a great many hard woods in the country, which answer far better than any European wood for mill rollers, shafts, &c. There can hardly be a doubt that, if the woods were carefully explored, many

other species, fit for various purposes besides those already discovered, might be found. The low country, for five, six, or seven miles back, is, in some parts of the island, almost totally denuded of forest, in consequence of the vast quantity of wood annually consumed as fuel on the plantations; so that many estates are under a necessity of importing coals from Great Britain, at an enormous price, for the purpose of manufacturing their produce, besides having to purchase American lumber, for the purposes of building. As a remedy for the first of these wants, the author has often been surprised, that more general pains were not taken on such properties to cultivate the bamboo-cane. This is a most ornamental as well as useful plant, and arrives at perfection in four or five years. After it covers the ground it requires no further attention, and when cut down it again shoots rapidly up as vigorous as before. It is calculated to supply many essential wants, as rails, wattles (hurdles), &c. besides affording excellent fuel; and the leaves and tender shoots are a wholesome and nutritive food to the cattle, to whom it yields also a sweet refreshing shade. In short, this excellent plant, which providence seems kindly to have placed within the planter's reach, in order to supply some of his most essential wants, is not attended to with that solicitude which *those wants alone* ought to inspire. If twenty or thirty

acres of the best land upon an estate, without other wood for fuel, were devoted to the purpose of establishing a bamboo-walk, the savings arising from it, merely as a necessary fund of fuel, independent of other advantages, would more than repay the expence and sacrifice.

Among the various delicious fruits which this island yields in such inexhaustible abundance, may be mentioned the pine, or anana (of which Thomson has given so luscious a description), the orange, the shaddock, the sappadillo (a luscious fruit growing spontaneously in the woods), the pomegranate, the granadillo, the musk melon, the neesberry (resembling the taste and flavour of the finest mellow ripe European pear), &c. &c. What is called a pear (avagato pear) here differs very much from the European pear; before being perfectly ripe it is intolerably bitter to the taste, after which, however, it is so rich and luscious, without any degree of sweetness, that it has emphatically enough been called the "vegetable marrow of the West Indies." The principal exotic fruits established of late years in the island are the mango (from the East Indies), the bread-fruit, the jack-fruit, besides a great variety of others too tedious to mention. All these are to be found in the island botanic garden; part of them were a present from Lord Rodney to the island, having been the cargo of a French vessel bound from the Mauritius to St. Domingo, and

taken by one of his cruisers; but the greater part were brought by Captain Bligh, who was sent out by the British government for the purpose, from the islands of the Pacific and Indian oceans; of course they are the joint produce of the southern and eastern hemispheres. Many of these productions are merely objects of curiosity to the scientific, as it is not probable they will ever thrive to any great extent in this island; such are the sago tree, nutmeg tree, tea plant, cinnamon, mace, &c. But this is not the case with most of the fruits, which agree to a miracle with the climate here. The mango is now propagated in such abundance, that the hogs are fed with the coarser kinds of them; the others are eaten, or pickled or preserved for use. The smallest sized mangos are sweet and agreeably flavoured; the large sized kind have neither of those qualities to recommend them. As for the bread fruit it is not so important an acquisition to the country as was so sanguinely expected. This plant multiplies so fast, that at the present time (twelve years since its first introduction here) every part of the island abounds with it. The negro, however, who is a pretty good judge of the *substantial* benefits of vegetable production, regards this stranger with cold apathy; except as a novelty, he prefers the cultivation of his more productive and substantial plantain, and his more palatable and nutritive yam. The truth is, the

bread fruit, though it makes a very good pudding, is of itself an insipid and not very substantial food. Add to this, that if a violent hurricane were to sweep the bread-fruit trees to the ground, as it certainly would do, four years would be required to bring them forward again to fecundity, whereas only one year is required for the plantain; and the yam and other roots are seldom seriously affected by those tropical blasts. A very excellent law (which, however, is not so generally and punctually attended to as it should) exists here relative to ground provisions (as they are called), or roots, by which all estates and other settlements are required to have ten acres of such provisions for every hundred negroes, over and above the negroes' grounds and plantain walks: this is intended as a resource against famine or scarcity, in case of a hurricane. These roots, or ground provisions, are so productive (particularly the yam), that the constant labour of one negro would almost be competent to feed fifty. This may easily be conceived, by considering that, though a negro and his wife do not work in their ground above one day in eight or nine throughout the year, yet the produce of it, if they are industrious, and the soil and seasons are favourable, will maintain them and a small family of four or five children, besides furnishing a considerable allowance for market. There are four or five species of the yam, some of the largest of

which have been known to weigh seventy pounds. The plantain grows in bunches on the tree, which is cut down when the fruit is gathered; but from the root a vigorous sucker instantly springs up to supply the place of the fallen tree, and thus is the plantain perpetually re-produced in regular succession. The banana tree almost exactly resembles the plantain, and bears a sweet agreeable fruit. The numberless other fruits it would be endless to particularize.

None of the European fruits arrive at any perfection in this island; the apple tree grows and bears a small indifferently tasted apple, and a few insipid strawberries are sometimes raised, both being rather objects of curiosity than profit or pleasure. This is by no means the case with many or most of the products of the European kitchen-garden. Cabbages, turnips, leeks, radishes, carrots, lettuce, celery, asparagus, pease, potatoes, &c. are raised in tolerable perfection in the mountains, where the climate approaches nearer to the temperature of their native air. Cabbages and lettuce thrive, indeed, if taken proper care of, equal to what they do even in England; but cauliflowers, artichokes, and onions, do not flourish; as a substitute, however, for the latter, there are excellent echallots, which for flavour, perhaps, equal the onion; and in lieu of spinnage, there is a plant, called callaloo, which much resembles that delicate vegetable.

The mountain cabbage, or palmetto (which should properly have been mentioned with the trees), yields, when cut down, a delicate substance, which in taste resembles the cabbage, and hence its name. But it would be a pity indeed to cut down so beautiful and ornamental a tree, merely for the sake of this vegetable; and indeed this is seldom done, except in the deep woods, where their waving and lofty foliage is little seen and less prized. This tree is sometimes seventy or eighty feet high, perfectly straight, and unincumbered with branches to the very top, where an elegant deep green foliage waves gracefully to the passing breeze. The bread-nut tree, which should also have been mentioned in its proper place, is not only an ornamental but a most useful tree in many respects. It is generally left standing in the pastures, where it affords a desirable shade to the panting herds; its smaller branches are cut for fodder for the grazing stock of all kinds, and none can be more wholesome and nutritive; it bears a kind of nut, about the size of an acorn, which when boiled is palatable food; and, when cut down, the heart of the trunk is to the cabinet-maker a most valuable acquisition, displaying a beauty and variety of vein which rivals the most exquisitely clouded marble. This tree is from seventy to an hundred feet high, straight and majestic, and adorned with the finest foliage.

But it is now time to say something of that valuable plant, and grand staple of the country, the sugar cane, whose uses are, perhaps, more numerous than those of any other plant whatever. It yields sugar, rum, molasses, excellent vinegar (from the cane juice), fuel (for boiling the sugar), fodder for cattle, thatching for the negroes' dwellings, and ashes which serve as a manure for the land, or as an ingredient in the mortar for hanging the coppers, &c. The sugar cane takes twelve months to ripen if what is called a *ratoon* cane, and thirteen or fourteen months if a plant; but it may be cut younger than this, particularly in dry years, and make very good sugar. The Otaheite, or South Sea cane (introduced about fourteen years ago into the country), has almost totally superseded the old West India cane, there being now few properties that retain any of the latter, particularly on the north side of the island. This cane was of a much smaller size than its successor; it seldom exceeded six or seven feet, exclusive of the top, and was about four or five inches in circumference; whereas the other is frequently ten, twelve, and even fifteen feet in length, and eight or nine inches in circumference; the size, however, must necessarily depend on the fertility of the soil, and favourableness of the seasons. The old cane had, however, its peculiar advantages; its juices were perhaps richer, it yielded a weightier and more substantial sugar,

and its leaves, or tops, afforded a larger supply of fodder, and of a better kind, than the other. The planters were therefore for some time doubtful, on these accounts, of the benefit and expediency of the exchange. But the greatly increased quantity of sugar which the South Sea cane yielded caused it finally to triumph over its ancient rival. Four hogsheads (of 18 *Cwt.*) are often obtained from an acre of the former, while the latter seldom or never exceeded two and a half: the medium of both may be set down at two and a half, and one and a half.

The coffee tree is a handsome plant, growing, if admitted, to the height of fifteen or twenty feet, but kept pruned to that of four or five. It bears a profusion of beautiful white blossoms, and afterwards the berry, covered with a red sweetish pulp. Upwards of double the quantity of this commodity which the country produced about twenty years ago, is now exported from it, owing to the increased demand for it, and the excellent price it has fetched. The indigo is a shrub, the leaves of which yield the dye by being infused in water. Neither the cotton nor the cocoa tree are very handsome plants; nor are they now so much cultivated as in former times. Small quantities of ginger are annually sent to Great Britain, but very little turmeric. These plants are very similar to each other in their growth and shape, having a resemblance in the structure of

the leaves, &c. coming to about the same height, and being both produced in the same way.

Flowers are not cultivated here with the same success as in England; the same pains are not taken. It is considered by many as a useless *unprofitable* employment. Few of the European flowers thrive here: the climate is too hot for the more delicate of these blooming children of the spring. The rose, however, blushes forth with her native glow, but diminished in size; and the hardy marigold, the flaring sun flower, the variegated balsam, and a species of the lily, flourish here in perpetual bloom; but few others. The pink, the carnation, the gilly flower, the auricula, the polyanthus, &c. have been tried by some, and, with much care, have been raised above the surface of the earth, but they soon languished and died away under the tropical blaze. To compensate, however, for the want of these, a variety of other flowers, indigenous to the country, or brought hither from congenial climes, are reared by those few who have a taste as florists. But it is in the wild uncultivated woods where innumerable painted blossoms and wild flowers, diffusing fragrance around, are often to be found. Many of these, if transplanted into the garden, would vie with the loveliest productions that adorn it. Here, even in the midst of December, are often seen trees with both blossoms and fruit at once suspended

on their branches,—the rivalship of Flora and Pomona so common in the torrid zone. Of all the fruit-bearing trees here, perhaps the orange and the pimento display the finest foliage, and the most fragrant and luxurious blossoms; the one purple, the other white, and both forming an enchanting contrast to the verdure of the leaves. But the most elegant flower which perhaps any country can produce, is the blossom of the granadillo, containing so brilliant a display of fine tints, as to mock the efforts of the pencil. This plant is sometimes formed into extensive arbours, entwined with the jessamine—as sweet a plant as that of its European namesake, and peculiarly thriving here. The woodbine, or honey-suckle, is unknown here. Most of the aromatic herbs of Great Britain grow here, but in no great perfection. The grape thrives tolerably.

The situation best adapted for a West India estate, is a fertile level or valley, well watered, and at an easy convenient distance from the sea side. But few estates in Jamaica can, from the nature of the country, be so favourably situated. The greater part are more or less intersected with ridges of mountains, a number are without the conveniency of contiguous water, and many are necessarily placed at a great distance from the *barquedia*, or shipping place. If an estate lies in a mountainous district, the hills on which the sugar cane is planted, are the better for being of

easy acclivity, and facing towards the rising sun. But the steepest acclivities sometimes consist of a most fertile soil, and produce the most luxuriant canes: there is, however, a great additional difficulty in removing them from these eminencies to the mill; and a remote estate requires double the number of oxen which are on one situated by the sea side, in order to transport its produce to the shipping place. An estate which has a water-mill, saves considerably in stock; as one, without such conveniency, must work their mills with cattle and mules: if, however, it be situated near the sea, it may be supplied with a wind-mill. In the interior, the breeze is too unsteady and precarious for such a machine, and is too liable to be intercepted by the natural inequalities of the country. The works of an estate, or buildings for the manufacturing of the produce, are placed in the most central situation of the cane land; at the same time with an eye to other conveniences, as a stream of water (this being a most essential advantage, in many points of view) an easiness of access, and a proper extent of eligible ground for building on, and for a good sizeable area around for drying trash, &c. These buildings are a mill (sometimes two, a water and cattle-mill, or cattle-mill and wind-mill, or two cattle-mills, according to the size of the estate;) a boiling-house, a curing-house (where the sugar is cured) a distilling-house; one, two, or three

trash-houses (for drying the cane-trash for fuel); one or two mule sheds; and a cooper's and carpenter's shop. These, if on a large scale, will cost twelve or fifteen thousand pounds currency: but such an expensive set of works are only necessary to a first-rate estate, making five or six hundred hogsheads of sugar. The other buildings on the estate are the proprietor's house, the overseer's house, an hospital for sick negroes, and sometimes a house for the surgeon; though sometimes he resides in the overseer's house. The land is portioned out in the following manner: If a large estate, consisting of about fifteen hundred acres, about a fifth part is planted in canes; two fifths are laid out in guinea-grass and common pasture; one fifth is occupied by plantain walks, &c. and negro grounds; and the remaining fifth consists in woods, ruins, and land lying fallow. This proportion varies, however, according to circumstances. The fields of canes and pastures are enclosed either with logwood fences or stone walls; the former is most common, and, when kept in neat order, are a beautiful ornament to an estate; it much resembles the hawthorn. Some few have tried the marengo as a hedge, but it by no means answers the purpose so well as the logwood; it is, however, a handsome plant, bearing a whitish blossom, and the inner rind of its bark is a very

good substitute for horse-radish, being exactly the same in taste*.

Besides the logwood and marengo, hedges of the lime-tree are sometimes used; but these are rare. There is a curious creeping plant here, with sharp prickles, which is used to plant on the top of stone walls, where it flourishes in perpetual green, with a very slight portion of earth. There is also a plant called penguins, which answers for this purpose, and to plant on the tops of the banks of ditches. It much resembles the pine apple plant, and bears a yellow berry of a sharp acid taste. The fields of canes contain from ten to twenty acres, having between them roads or intervals of twelve or fifteen feet wide. The negroes' houses are grouped together, and stand isolated from all the other buildings, forming a sort of rustic village, inclosed by a stone wall, and displaying an intermixture of gardens and various fruit-trees, which has a pleasing sylvan appearance. These gardens, besides the different roots, the plantain, the banana, &c. cultivated in the grounds, contain also a variety of pulse (of which there are numerous species

* Such coincidences in vegetables, so opposite in all other respects, are doubtless surprising; they are often, however, observable; it is remarked, that the seeds of a fruit here (the papaw) exactly correspond in taste to the garden cress. The water-cress of Jamaica is precisely the same as the European water-cress.

in the island) and sometimes European vegetables.

When an estate is to be laid out or settled from the uncultivated woods, the first thing is to fell and clear the trees. The price of this, if done by a jobber (one who has a gang of negroes, and undertakes various work with them) is twelve pounds per acre. The trees are not grubbed up as in Europe and North America; but, being cut down, and suffered to remain for some time on the ground till they have become pretty dry, fire is set to them, and they are soon consumed. Previous to this operation, however, the most valuable of the timber is drawn out; but, if far in the interior of the country, where the carriage is difficult and expensive, much of this is consumed in the indiscriminate blaze. Ruinate, or thicket, is cleared for about half the above sum. When the land is cleared, the choicest of it is appropriated for the sugar cane. It often indeed happens that newly opened land proves too rich for the cane; in consequence of which, while it grows to a most enormous size, it yields but a poor insipid juice, that is unfit for sugar, and is therefore converted into rum. As a corrective to this evil, the stubble on the fields is burnt off every year, till the land is duly *impoverished* for the purpose. Much land of this kind is not however often met with. When the land is cleared, it is laid out into the requisite fields,

halled, and planted in the proper season. The price of halling stiff land by a jobber, is eight pounds currency per acre, and of lighter land about six pounds. The price, however, varies, according to the style of doing this; some cane holes being opened in the manner of trenches, others with intervals between. The season of planting is March for a spring plant; and September, and the two following months, for a full plant. Some estates begin as early as December to cut thin canes for crop; others do not begin till the commencement of the February following: this difference of time depends on various circumstances, which it were tedious and useless to detail. The canes are brought to the mill by carts with cattle, and on the backs of mules: here they go through the necessary operation of grinding in the mill, from whence the juice flows into the boiling-house, and is converted into sugar, while the molasses and scum from the coppers, being passed into the distilling-house, are there manufactured into rum. To enter into the minutiae of these operations, would only be a superfluous repetition of what has often before been described.

Crop being finished, and the produce sent to the market, the planter turns his whole attention to the weeding of his canes, and, at the proper time, planting an additional supply, if required, not forgetting, also, his pastures and pro-

vision grounds, which are usually cleaned twice in the year. In the time of crop the negroes work both by day and by night in the mill-house and boiling-house; this is called "keeping of spell;" that is, a fourth of the number work till midnight, when they are relieved by an equal number, and the other two fourths perform the same task the night following; so that this duty, on the whole, falls easy on the negroes. Not so does it fall on the poor book-keeper on some estates, where there are perhaps only two; he, in this case, has to sit up the whole night, and that too every other night; so that to him it is a most severe and distressing duty, which, if rigidly exacted by an unfeeling overseer, tends to destroy his health, throw a damp upon his spirits, and finally, shorten his days. But this subject will be touched on more at large in giving an account of the nature of the situation of book-keepers.

Various opinions are entertained here on the subject of turning up the land. The following may be considered as the most general and correct. A heavy and stiff clay may be ploughed; this is necessary to be done some months previous to halling, in order that the land may have time to pulverize. This mode of tillage on such soils, is performed with considerable less labour than by merely halling the ground, which is a most severe and harassing task to the negroes. But the lighter soils, particularly if not very fertile, would

perhaps sustain some injury from this previous ploughing; besides that it would not materially facilitate the halling of such fields. There is much of the cane land in Jamaica that cannot be ploughed; such as the steep and stony fields, of which there are a considerable proportion in the island. The manure chiefly in use here, is that collected from the cattle-pens, mule-stables, &c. Some estates use lime occasionally for the stiff cold soils; but this excellent manure is not in such general use as perhaps it should be; for such soils, it may be said, indeed, to be indispensable: the wonderful effects produced by it in the mother country have been experienced, to the great profit of the farmer, and the fertilization of his fields. There it is often used in the proportion of an hundred and forty, or an hundred and sixty bushels to an acre, in dressing the land for a crop of wheat. Estates that have much of the soil which requires this powerful manure, and can easily obtain it, should methinks be not sparing of it. Marl and ashes are also used for the cane land; these are best suited to strong soils. As for those of a lighter quality, well digested stable manure is as good a dressing as can be applied.

Some of the gentlemen of landed property in the county of Cornwall have lately formed themselves into an agricultural society, the first thing of the kind ever heard of in this island. The intention

is certainly laudable, though it is much to be feared, that it contains the seeds of dissolution within itself:—it is formed on too confined a basis; it wants scientific men, to guide its labours and speculations, and direct its experiments: there is besides, in such a society, a thousand petty ambitions, feuds, and jealousies, to crush and repress it in its infancy. Be this as it may, every well-wisher to the prosperity of the island, must be grateful to the authors of such an undertaking, and join in wishing it every success. Some of the premiums, offered by this society, are for discoveries and inventions that are of little merit or importance:—some indeed of a trifling nature. It holds its sittings at Montego bay.

Under the head of agricultural observations, it may not be amiss to remark, that the pens of Jamaica in some measure resemble the grass-farms of Great Britain. Cattle, horses, mules, and sheep, are bred in great numbers upon them. But cheese is never made from the superfluous milk; nor is there more butter usually made than is sufficient for the consumption of the place. The butter is very good; though the milk is not so rich as that in England; neither do the cows here yield it in half the abundance which they do in the mother country.

CHAPTER IX.

Travelling in Jamaica.—Pictures of a December evening and morning in Jamaica.—Times and modes of travelling.—Travelling in Great Britain and Jamaica compared.—Thoughts on the embellishments, &c. of a country.

TRAVELLING in Jamaica is infinitely less pleasant than in England, and other temperate climes, and finely embellished countries of Europe. Here the sun blazes so intensely, and the whole atmosphere is so heated with his sultry beams, that travelling on horse-back at mid-day, and at particular times of the year, is absolutely insufferable, even to a person seasoned and accustomed to the climate. It is even fatiguing and disagreeable in a carriage. If the weather be dry, clouds of suffocating dust often envelope the passenger; and, during the rainy seasons, he is impeded and annoyed with the badness of the roads in the interior and liable, at an instant's notice, to be drenched by deluges from the sky. December, November (when dry), and the three or four following months, are in general the most pleasant for travelling; December, January, and February are strikingly so;

these months being the coolest of the year, and being usually fair, save now and then that the air is cooled, and vegetation refreshed, by gentle showers. So that, while the inhabitants of the temperate zone are shivering beneath a bleak and frigid sky, carefully guarding themselves from cold by pelices and furs, and mourning the temporary annihilation of vernal beauty, the people of these more southern climes are enjoying their sweetest season, and exulting in the unperishable verdure that adorns their fields: while on this subject, it may not be amiss, before proceeding on the subject of travelling here, to present to the reader pictures of a December evening and morning, taken on the spot.

The sun was just setting below the western horizon, and the heavens were mildly irradiated with his farewell beams; it was clear and serene all around; the air was mild and bland, and the distant green eminences gleamed with a reflected lustre. Nought disturbed the stillness of the scene, save the busy and officious musquito, who is kind enough to warn you of her approach by an unwelcome buzzing in your ear, the screechings of the wild parrots, who, in detached parties, skim the arch of heaven, in their retreat to their haunts; and now and then the scream of the clucking-hen, an unsociable bird, delighting in the solitude of the deepest retreats.

The following is a landscape at sun-rise in this

month. From the lofty summit of a mountain is beheld an extensive circuit of country. The scenery at the foot of the mountain is lively and vivid; the negroes, in gangs, are employed in the fields cutting canes, or weeding pastures; numerous herds of oxen, &c. graze in the reaped fields, or verdant acclivities. An endless diversity of hill, valley, wood, mountain and defile, interspersed with clusters of the bamboo cane, copses of underwood, pastures shaded with lofty trees, plantain walks, ruins, and extensive fields of sugar-canes, chequer and adorn the face of the country; while from the *works* of many of the properties, columns of smoke perpendicularly ascend to a great height in the pure heavens—and activity and stir is apparent around them. At a greater distance, an extensive and beautiful valley, rich in the products of the soil, opens to the eye. The morning mists, which still partially hang over it, have the illusive appearance to the beholder of a vast lake resting on its bosom: behind it are the evanescent hills, losing themselves by degrees in the clouds. At a still greater distance, appears the ocean—still, calm, and unruffled, the sea-breeze not yet having curled its smooth glassy surface. The air is serene, the sky cloudless, and the sun, now immersed into sight, appears as if resting on the bend of a distant rising while he gladdens and illumines the whole scene! Innumerable wild

flowers, shrubs, and blossoms, now exhale their sweetest perfumes; and the birds, who retire silently into the shade from the mid-day heat, now warble their renovated song.

But to return to the subject of travelling; the morning is by far the most desirable time for travelling here; so that the traveller, if he wishes to perform his journey with the greatest pleasure and least inconvenience to himself, must rise betimes, before Aurora has begun with rosy fingers to draw the curtains of day, while the dew yet bespangles the fields, and nothing is heard but the shrill horn of the watchful cock. But, if compelled to travel under a vertical sun, an umbrella, or some sort of shade, is absolutely necessary; at least to those unused to exposure to equinoctial skies. About nine o'clock, the heat is begun to be felt. Travelling along the sea-side is certainly least unpleasant at mid-day, as the sea-breeze, catching coolness from the wave as it skims over it, tempers the heat, and comforts and refreshes the traveller.

All kinds of carriages for travelling are in use in this country; but it is impracticable to travel with these in most of the mountainous roads, they being too steep to admit the use of such vehicles: so that riding is the most general mode of travelling; and there are consequently at least three saddle horses in the island for one carriage horse: it is in the level parts of the country alone where

gigs, chaises, &c. are made use of, and here indeed they are in very general use. As for palanquins, the inhabitants of the West Indies have not yet arrived at that pitch of effeminacy to copy this example of it from the Asiatics. A horse here will travel fifty miles in a day; but it is improper to push him to this extent in a climate so hot. Being, however, bred in the country, and inured to the climate, he is better able to perform it than an English horse would, being less liable to surfeits and other diseases of the blood, arising from heat and fatigue. Walking is very little practised in Jamaica by the whites; though a negro, who is hardier, more robust, and better accustomed to this kind of exercise, will walk thirty miles in a day with ease. In Great Britain, a walk of ten or twelve miles is called a healthy and pleasant *tramp*; in Jamaica it would overpower the strongest white man, if performed in the ordinary time taken in the former country, unless in the cool of the morning, or evening, or under the shade of trees. On account of the extreme relaxing heat of the climate, it is, too, that all athletic games are usually avoided. Cricket parties have sometimes amused themselves at this game in the evenings; but it is found too violent an exercise.

There is one thing which renders travelling in Great Britain so much the more pleasant;—the variety of beautiful and adorned seats, &c. with

which the face of the country is every where enlivened and embellished. Scarcely has the traveller proceeded a few miles in his journey, when he is amazed and delighted with the various objects that salute his view; charming villas, romantic castles, awful ruins, neat villages, and the spires of distant towns, are continually passing in succession, and recalling the stories, legendary tales, and records of history, which relate to them. The tourist would here have a barren field for observations of this cast. Neither could he enrich his account with the genealogy and history of celebrated and illustrious houses, and anecdotes of the distinguished individuals belonging to them, as also of other remarkable characters, to whom the places he passes through may have given birth;—all which form so respectable a part of a modern tour. There are few if any, individuals, or families here, who have made themselves thus distinguished by uncommon talent, brilliant achievement, or any thing else that is very remarkable or eccentric. Their history would be therefore little more than an insipid blank. One year, month, or day, differs little from another in the lives of the inhabitants of this island, and is only to be distinguished (by themselves and connections) by any new extraordinary accession of fortune, or means of obtaining it. All, therefore, which a tourist could say of the opulent individuals here would be, that one kept a

better stud of horses than another, or had a larger retinue of servants; that hospitality and profusion marked the table of one, and a variety of excellent wines that of another; that one had a better, larger, and more commodious house than his neighbours; that one was famous for race-horses, another for game-cocks (both in high estimation here); and a third for cabbages and cucumbers. In short, it is in an European country, made celebrated by the interesting history of ages, and whose face is enlivened and diversified by the embellishments of modern taste, and the vestiges of ancient magnificence, that the curious and enlightened traveller receives ample gratification. In Jamaica he will be disappointed if he looks for these.

But, if he be an admirer of the stupendous works of nature, and fond of contemplating the picturesque and romantic, he will here have ample room for the indulgence of his taste; here his imagination may wander amid objects congenial to it. Here he may enjoy the sublime and terrific in all their native wildness, by traversing narrow paths, where, on one hand, he will see an immense rock suspended as it were above him, and rising to an immense height; and, on the other, a tremendous abyss beneath, where the tops of the loftiest trees are seen waving between him and the bottom! In these solitudes he will hear nought but the most melancholy sounds and

discordant din—the plaintive coo of the ringtail pigeon, the wild gibberish of the gabbling crow, the dismal shrieks of the clucking hen, the uncooth croaking of toads, chirping of crickets, and whistling of the yellow snake (for it is asserted that this animal has such a note). Such paths of communication are however rarely frequented, except by the sportsman in pursuit of the ringtail, or by the surveyor in tracking the woods. The traveller may also, if sojourning in the mountains, be often gratified with the finest and most extensive prospects, and diversified landscapes. But when he descends to the low lands and valleys, this gratification in a great measure ceases; for though there are numberless spots, where nature seems to have been more lavish of her attractions than usual, yet the views are too circumscribed in general, they want decoration, and, in consequence, often present too much of a dull uniformity and insipid sameness. In this country there are indeed little pains bestowed in improving and adorning those rude scenes of nature which are susceptible of embellishment. The man who has been in the habit of contemplating nature with admiration, and of employing his fancy and his genius in heightening and setting off, by every effort of art, her native charms, will view, with a sigh, the most lovely scenes left to the cold contingencies of chance. He will see the most limpid streams flowing through fields

covered with vile weeds and bushes, the finest cascades neglected and unshaded, and the most fertile and charming spots left wild and desolate, or converted to the purposes of interest. Few of the resident proprietors have either taste or inclination to bestow their time, and *waste* their land in improvements of this kind; and it unfortunately happens, that those who have received their education in Great Britain, and may have imbibed there more liberal, enlarged, and classical ideas of taste, have contracted such attachments to it as for ever after rivet them to the soil. It therefore happens, that a very large proportion of the principal proprietors are resident in that country. Here they commonly marry and have families, spend their incomes, and transfer thither their whole affections. In which case, they commit the management of their estates to an attorney, or agent, who, probably, cares for little other improvement than the *improvement* of his emoluments. As for the overseer, he considers his situation as at best precarious, and he is therefore only solicitous to second the views of the attorney, by whom he is employed, and whose mandates he must implicitly obey, on pain of dismissal. If he can make large crops, at whatever general disadvantage to the estate, he commonly gives the required satisfaction; and therefore all his efforts are directed to this one point. The proprietor, on the other hand, remains

supine in Great Britain, and while he receives the produce of his estates regularly and unimpaired, he never thinks of inquiring about improvements and embellishments. The stranger, therefore, who comes to Jamaica with his head full of romantic ideas of charming walks and lovely groves, shaded and adorned by aromatic trees and shrubs, perfumed with a thousand flowers, refreshed by limpid streams, and harmonized by the melody of the bird of Paradise! will find himself grievously disappointed. He may find most of these objects scattered and disjointed through various parts of the country, by the hand of nature herself; but seldom or never brought together by the improving hand of art. Here no Dryad presides in the woods, nor Naiad conducts the streamlets over their pebbled beds; nor is either temple or statue erected to these sylvan deities. In short, there is no such thing throughout the island as an extensive garden, laid out with its concomitant beauties and embellishments of shaded gravel walks, parterres of flowers, labyrinths of wood, lakes, fountains, &c. There are, indeed, a few tolerable repositories of exotics and medicinal herbs. This deficiency is certainly lamentable in a country possessing so many charming and romantic situations, where coy nature might be successfully wooed by art, and decked by him in the loveliest attire.

The author has often thought, that a public

walk or garden in the principal towns of the island, would be a most desirable thing to the inhabitants. There is something of this kind near to Kingston, called Harmony-hall gardens. For want of such a spot as an evening promenade, many of the ladies of these places chuse rather to take their evening airing in their carriages, than be exposed to the inconvenience of promiscuous company. Though such a spot would require some length of time to establish, yet the expence would be but trifling to a community. A piece of ground might be enclosed for the purpose, which might be laid out in gravel walks, vistas of fruit trees, flowering shrubs, and plats of Bahama grass (a plant which spreads rapidly, and forms a smooth and beautiful sward); and, if possible, a stream of water conducted through its recesses, with a few pavilions and benches, conveniently placed, and adorned and perfumed with the native jessamine, or the grana-dillo. The price of the land for such a purpose would be inconsiderable; and, after having been laid out, the annual trouble of keeping it in repair could be performed by a white gardener, employed for the purpose, and a few negroes under him, for very little; and even that little might be defrayed, in time, by the sale of the fruits it produced. There is no liberal minded inhabitant but would gladly join in such an undertaking, so conducive to health, and affording so delightful a recreation.

CHAPTER X.

Planters.—Proprietors.—Attornies.—Overseers.—Book-keepers.—The situation of these last considered.

THE number of white inhabitants in Jamaica may be from thirty to thirty-five thousand. These consist of Creoles, or natives, and Europeans, who may be divided into various classes, according to their situation, profession, and circumstances; as planters, merchants, shopkeepers, and those filling various other professions, trades, and occupations. Previous to entering upon a delineation of the general character of the people, and the state of society and manners here, it may not be improper to describe these in order.

The planters may be classed in the following order:—proprietors, attornies or agents, overseers, and book-keepers.

The resident proprietor of Jamaica, if a man of education, talents and virtue, generally passes his time in a manner useful to the community, and honourable and pleasant to himself, being equally divided between the discharge of some public duty or trust, and an attention to his own private affairs, and occasionally enlivened with innocent amusements and liberal recreations.

This character may be considered as the most respectable in the island. But it cannot be dissembled, that there are too many, even of this respectable class, who are debased by ignorance, licentiousness, and low, frivolous, and groveling pursuits. If of the former character, he has a great latitude for doing good,—by setting a commendable example in his own person of that decorous respect for religious and moral duty, which is so little attended to in this country, by humanity and attention to his slaves, by an encouragement of merit in those in his employ, and by countenancing and promoting whatever may contribute to the real interests and substantial good of the country in which he has so much at stake.

The attorney is either a substantial merchant, or experienced overseer, to whom the non-resident proprietor commits the care and management of his estates. Sometimes both these are joined in the care of the same properties; and either or both has often the management of several estates belonging to different people. The merchant-attorney manages the mercantile affairs of the estate, such as shipping the produce, &c. &c. and the planter the planting part. An attorney, who has ten, fifteen, or more estates under his care (which is by no means unusual), is in the way of realizing a rapid fortune; his profits are considerable, having a commission of six per

cent on all sales and purchases ; though a few are employed at a certain salary. Besides this, they have the privilege, if they chuse, of residing on one of the properties, and have the use of servants, &c. belonging to the property : besides various *imprescriptive rights*, and *privileges*, which it were useless, and invidious, perhaps, to particularize. Thus an attorney, if what is called a *money-making* man, and not burthened with an over-scrupulous conscience, soon rises to wealth, and becomes a proprietor himself, perhaps by purchase (or rather by buying and selling) from his lazy and inactive constituent ; who, fascinated by a continual round of gaiety and pleasure in the British metropolis, will not take upon himself the trouble of managing his own property, because he cannot doom himself to a removal from the country of which he is so enamoured. Hence, too often, heavy debts and mortgages to mercantile houses in England, and even perhaps to his own faithful agent,—Not that the author would insinuate that integrity and faithful management are not often to be found in Jamaica agents, his experience evinces the contrary ; but practices which prove that these are not *always* the guides of the conduct of many of these gentlemen, are certainly too common and notorious. If the attorney be also a merchant, this is a very convenient union of two occupations, which, *if rightly managed*, must be

productive of peculiar advantages to the holder, by enabling him to supply the estates under his care with a variety of *necessaries*, which he could not perhaps have so *expeditiously* disposed of, on the *most reasonable* terms. Princely fortunes have been made by men who have had a great number of attorneyships for several years. These attorneyships have sometimes lain in three or four different parishes, and at a distance of thirty or forty miles from each other. Quære—whether one man was competent to pay proper attention to fifteen or twenty estates, so isolated and detached?

The overseer is one who, serving a certain number of years as a book-keeper, is, at length, entrusted with the management of an estate, at an advanced salary. His duty consists in superintending the planting concerns of the estate, ordering the proper work to be done, and seeing that it is executed as it should. Under his controul and direction, but qualified by the authority and occasional intervention of the attorney or proprietor, are the book-keepers and tradesmen on the estate. The negroes, stock, fields, buildings, and utensils, are committed to his attention and care; his situation is, therefore, an arduous and important one. It is the indispensable duty of the proprietor or attorney to watch attentively over the conduct of his overseer for some time, till he becomes convinced, by experience, that he

is one on whose humanity, good sense, propriety of conduct, and attention to the interests of the estate under his care, he may rely; and, above all, to be assured that he is likely to act the part of a lenient manager, rather than an inhuman task-master, over his slaves. He will soon discover, if a man of humanity himself, whether the chastisements they may occasionally receive be such as are no more than commensurate to the offence, and necessary as examples for the support of order and discipline, or wantonly and unnecessarily inflicted. An overseer, according to his education, temper, and habits, is either an unfeeling tyrant, or a mild, considerate, and equitable governor; if the former, it is undoubtedly the duty of the employer instantly to dismiss him, from a thorough self-conviction that he is so, not from the perverted and exaggerated statements of the negroes themselves, who are peculiarly artful and dextrous at misrepresentations of this nature; for did he implicitly believe every complaint that was made to him, and act accordingly without examination, no overseer he could employ would be respected or obeyed by his negroes; they would grow obdurate and licentious, and his property would soon go to ruin. This disposition to low cunning and unabashed falsehood, observable in many of the negroes, is rather perhaps (to speak philosophically) a superadded nature, nurtured in slavery, than one originally

implanted in them ; perhaps the European would be equally abased by this condition. Why then, it may be asked, does slavery exist at all ? Why is it not exterminated from the face of the earth ? Why is there a trace of it remaining at this late and enlightened period ? This is a solemn and important question. Are the slaves of the West Indies capable of becoming happier in consequence of the gift of liberty ? Are they capable of appreciating and enjoying its blessings : or would they even exchange their present condition for the turbulence, the dangers, the insecurity of a savage state of independence ? The period, however distant, will doubtless arrive when the dominion of the Europeans throughout the American Archipelago, shall no longer exist ; but to precipitate that period would be to renew the horrors and desolation of one of its most beautiful and flourishing colonies.

An overseer has it in his power to impart much good in his situation, if he be a man of education and feeling (and surely there are some such in the profession), and if his feelings have not been rendered callous by habits not certainly calculated to soften the heart or improve the manners. He may hear and redress the complaints of the slaves, he may settle their disputes, compose their quarrels, and repress their violence and injustice towards each other ; in short, he may diffuse much comfort, and be the author of

a variety of kind benefits and salutary restraints. In former times the attorney, anxious to outdo his predecessors in the magnitude of the crops, and forward thereby his own interests and reputation, too often acted as a stimulus, instead of a restraint, upon the impolitic and unfeeling zeal of his overseers, by perpetually sounding in their ears the quantum of produce and of work he expected, without perhaps ever taking the pains of proportioning either to the efficient strength of hands upon the properties, or weighing in his mind the impolicy and inhumanity of purchasing a few additional hogsheads of sugar at the expense of the health, spirits, and even lives of the devoted slaves. It is, however, to be hoped, that such examples are now rare. An overseer, if his conduct be good, and he has able friends to assist him, may in time be entrusted, as an attorney, with the management of estates.

But before a young man, who follows the profession of a planter, arrives at the *dignity* of overseer, he has, as before observed, to pass through the probationary situation of a book-keeper, a wretched misplaced appellation, as one who never perhaps saw a book in his life may yet be an expert *book-keeper*. As nine-tenths of the young men who come from Great Britain to Jamaica are placed in this line of life, it will be proper to enter more at large into the nature of this preliminary situation. Of all situations in

the country this perhaps is the least enviable. A book-keeper is a sort of voluntary slave, who condemns himself, for a term of years, on a paltry salary, seldom more than sufficient to support him decently in clothes, to a dull, despicable, and drudging life, in hopes he will one day become an overseer. This situation he attains in five, six, or seven years, just as he may have a friend or friends who will push him forward into it, sooner than his mere merit would have procured such advancement. He follows the negroes in a scorching sun by day, and at night, in crop time, is deprived of a material portion of his rest, by being obliged, in his turn (generally every other night), to sit up and watch in the boiling-house, scarcely daring to take snatches of repose, to soften his fatigue, and sooth his solitary labours, with broken and unquiet slumbers. Still he starts at the thought of the surly frown, the harsh censure, of his overseer; unless, perchance, he should have the good fortune to live under one of a more liberal and humane turn. Unless he has the advantage of being acquainted with some genteel families in the neighbourhood, which is not often the case, he is totally precluded from the society of that charming sex (those of his own description is meant) by whom man is soothed and consoled, and by whose loved idea he is animated through a thousand hardships and difficulties. Nay, strange as it

may appear, the planter, whether overseer or not, is in a manner forced, against his inclinations, to a life of celibacy, unless, indeed, he is fortunate enough to realize an independency, and at the same time preserve himself from being entangled and infatuated by less reputable connections; for while still dependent, he would, by preferring the more honourable conjugal state, incur the hazard of bringing difficulty and want on himself and the beloved partner of his heart. In short, there are few who would employ him with such an *incumbrance*, and many would immediately dismiss him in consequence. This wretched and illiberal *policy* is indeed truly unaccountable, particularly when it is considered that, by natural course, it inevitably leads, or contributes to lead, to a new order of things in the colonies. It may, without exaggeration, be said, that the annual white births are not more than as one to fifteen of colour; the latter who are besides more strong and healthy children, and less subject to infantile diseases. What must be the consequence of the amazing disproportion in the two populations, which must necessarily too be increasing? It is also to be considered, that the property of the country is falling fast into the hands of this description of people, in spite of the legal restraints under which the white parent lies, in bequeathing his property to his children of colour; two thousand pounds currency being the *ne plus ultra* allowed as

a bequest to an individual of that class : this may be easily evaded by previous gifts, &c. The same attentions, the same education, is bestowed on children of colour, if the offspring of men of fortune, as if they were not an illegitimate race ; so that the boundary between them and the whites must at one period give way, or be broken down ; either the free browns will be admitted to an equal participation of the rights and privileges of the whites, or they will, at some future day, enforce that admission. And yet so many of the men of wealth and influence in the island persevere with a blind and fatal obstinacy, to throw obstacles in the way of increasing white population, by thus discouraging matrimony :—strange delusion ! Perhaps this narrow and illiberal policy would be less countenanced were all the great proprietors to reside in the island ; for were they men of families, they would, of course, be anxious for their posterity ; they would then be bound by a double tie to provide against remote contingencies ; they would look forward with solicitude to future probable events : their's is a permanent interest ; their agents have no other view, in general, than to make a speedy fortune, and return with it, if Europeans, to their native country.

But to return from this digression to the book-keeper. The man who has received but little education, who has been accustomed from his earliest years to a rustic and drudging life, who,

in short, has directed the plough, or wielded the pitch-fork, in his native country, is not so much to be sympathised with; he, perhaps, feels little hardship in the exchange. But the young man, who has been liberally educated, genteelly bred—brought up as it were in the lap of luxury and indulgence, flattered with fond hopes and sanguine expectations, by the affectionate anticipation of kind friends and anxious parents, must naturally, for a long time, find it a subject of sore and melancholy regret. Let this unhack-nied youth be traced from his first departure from his native country. Previous to his crossing the Atlantic, he is terrified and alarmed by exaggerated accounts of the insufferable heat of the climate, the unwholesomeness of the atmosphere, the fatal ravages of the yellow fever, the savage and treacherous disposition of the negroes, and the huge serpents and other venomous reptiles with which the country is infested. But he is at the same time instigated and encouraged by happier representations—of the riches with which it abounds, the facility with which these were to be acquired—in short, the prospect of realizing, in a few years, the fortune of a Nabob! These partial representations and delusive promises are fostered in his breast. Full of hope, animated by expectation, he is eager to be freed from parental authority and academic thralldom, and to rush forward on the golden enterprize! But

soon the delusion vanishes—soon does he perceive the fallaciousness of his hopes; his disappointment is felt with the bitterest chagrin; with sorrow he recalls the blissful moments, when he emerged from the discipline of a school; his fond imagination cherished the pleasing prospect of a speedy period to his voluntary exile—when he should return, in the triumph of wealth, to his native country, and realize those schemes of happiness his fancy had pourtrayed! He wishes he could renew those happy days, when every passing moment yielded delight, when every pleasure was undashed with bitterness, and the heart spontaneously exulted with gay hope and unbidden joy! Placed as a book-keeper upon a Jamaica estate, and perhaps under a severe overseer, who rigidly exacts all the fatiguing duties of his situation, often does he seat himself under the solitary shade of the plantain, or beneath the welcome foliage of the friendly bread-nut, and give a vent to his full heart! His active and brooding memory brings a thousand tender things in review; the innocent and playful moments of youthful gaiety, the indulgent fondness of dear parents, whom he is doomed perhaps never more to behold! and, above all, perchance, the image of some sweet amiable maid, who had stolen from him the first dawnings of affection, and in whose charming company he had passed many an envied hour! with whom he had often wan-

dered along the meanders of some sweet stream, by the blue verge of the ocean, or through the mazes of sylvan retreats, while, at every look, his heart drank deep at the fountain of love! But when he thinks on the melancholy moment, when, with nameless sorrow, he bade adieu to those dear friends, his heart sinks within him, and he only finds relief in a flood of tears! He now finds himself placed in a line of life, where, to his first conception, every thing wears the appearance of barbarity and slavish oppression; he sees the negroes assembled in gangs in the fields, and kept to their work with whips, by black drivers, who certainly are not always the most gentle of the human race; and he is apt, at times, to assimilate his own situation with that of his enslaved fellow-creatures. He contemplates the profession with a species of horror, and considers himself as doomed to a kind of banishment and bondage. This first impression is natural to a young mind, unaccustomed to such scenes of life, and before his minuter observation can contemplate the reverse of the medal, and discover, in the condition of the negro slave, many comforts and ameliorations which he could not for some time think compatible with such a situation. It is a novel scene to him, and the melancholy state of his own mind leads him to the most sombre conclusions, casting a dark shade on every thing around him, and converting every

thought into gloom, dislike, and suspicion. He seems to himself a forlorn and destitute being, pitied, despised, and neglected by the ignorant and unfeeling, as a sort of menial dependent, while a vast ocean separates him from friends, relatives, and the companions of his youth. Happy, if in this despised situation (though, in truth, it ought to be respected) this young man should possess strength of mind, and consolations and resources within himself, to support him under his hardships and mortifications; happy, if bereft, as he in a great measure is, of the sweets of social intercourse, his mind should have imbibed a taste for literary amusement. By reading, his leisure and solitary hours might be cheered and consoled; but he has little time which he can devote even to this comfort; even Sunday, allotted by heaven as a day of rest to man, he cannot always call his own; and it would be *sacrilege* to allow books to interfere with the business of the estate! But too many, if they have the misfortune of being placed under harsh, vulgar, and unfeeling overseers—if they have no resource in friends, or other professions; if they want that strength of mind, and resource of consolation in literary taste above mentioned, are apt to sink into an involuntary torpor, and disesteem of themselves; they lose, by degrees, that pride and energy of character, which ought to accompany us through life, as a shield against meanness

and imposition; they contract low, profligate habits, and imbibe vulgar ideas and manners, while their hearts, thus isolated from all that is wont to inspire them with nobler feelings and generous resolutions, become callous and seared with apathy.

The following sketch may convey an idea of what a book-keeper had to suffer about fifteen or twenty years ago, upon many properties, in crop time. He had to sit up every other night in the boiling-house, in order to prevent the negroes from pilfering the produce; and by day his attention to this and other duties must be unremitting; when his night of repose came, some unavoidable delay or accident, in certain departments of the work, forbade his retiring to it; and, to aggravate his sufferings, the overseer had received orders from the humane attorney to cause a book-keeper to accompany the wains to the wharf, whenever rum was to be sent to it, under the pretence of guarding it from the pilferage of the negro cartmen; this duty was to be performed at all events, whether it interfered with his night of rest or not; and this it must unavoidably do, as the wains left the estate at one or two o'clock in the morning, when the journey was eight or ten miles; and, after all, when his night of *spell* returned, if the poor man yielded for a moment to the imperious calls of nature, if he sunk into a short and involuntary slumber,

if he lost the sense of his cares and his hardships in this transient oblivious balm, his *liberal* and considerate overseer thought it an unpardonable crime! Strange, that this man's experience of perhaps the same hardships, should not have softened his heart, and awakened him to a sense of his injustice. There were, however, many exceptions to this picture; and at the present time the situation of the poor book-keeper is much ameliorated, like that of the plantation slave, his fellow-labourer; for certainly the *happiness* of some of these poor people was as little to be envied as the condition of the latter: the negro, indeed, during crop, is suffered to enjoy, undisturbed, a regular and sufficient portion of rest. The treatment of both doubtless depends on the character of the overseer under whom they live: with a gentleman and man of humanity, their situation is comparatively easy and comfortable; with the man who has little of that character to boast of, and has no other ambition but to make *great crops*, they must enjoy comforts by stealth or necessity. To a few extraordinary casks of sugar, such an one will have little scruple to sacrifice a portion of the happiness of his fellow-creatures; he wishes to establish his fame as a *great planter*—to this every other consideration, either of justice or humanity, is to be made subservient. It is to be hoped there are now few such characters in the island.

It is much to be wished, that some plan could be devised to supersede the necessity of *spell-keeping* by the book-keepers. There can be no hesitation in saying, that this practice, as it is generally conducted, is one of the opprobria of Jamaica, and other islands where it prevails. It is inimical to the health of a numerous and valuable class of people in the island (though so much kept in the back ground); it is a principal discouragement to their entering into and persevering in their line of life; and how, it may be asked, can it be expected, that men deprived of their natural and necessary rest, should be capable of performing their duty by day with spirit and alacrity? If a decent and comfortable apartment, &c. were to be provided on the spot, the book-keeper, it is to be presumed, could do the necessary duties, and at the same time enjoy a portion of repose, under certain arrangements. Some estates adopt this humane regulation.

The salary of the book-keeper was formerly only from thirty or forty, to sixty or seventy pounds currency per annum; so that many of them could barely furnish themselves with wearing apparel on this paltry sum; and if they had the misfortune to get a severe fit of illness, the doctor (a very *money-making* profession in this country) *generously* came forward with a bill of forty or fifty pounds for medicine and attendance on them! In lieu of the risk of paying this enor-

mous sum for a fit of sickness, many of the estate's surgeons now compound with the book-keeper for five pounds per annum, sick or well ! At present the book-keepers' salaries are from fifty to eighty pounds per annum ; and the head book-keepers on the larger estates have sometimes an hundred pounds. As the amount of one deficiency (that is, one white person short of the proportion to negroes and stock required by law) is now fifty pounds, no salary under that amount can be given to a white man doing duty in the militia. The salary of an overseer is from an hundred and forty to three hundred pounds per annum.

CHAPTER XI.

*Medical men.—Tradesmen on estates.—Jobbers.—
—Surveyors.—Merchants.—Shopkeepers.—
Vendue masters.—Wharfingers, &c.*

BESIDES the overseer and book-keeper, there is on the estates sometimes a surgeon (for three, four, or more properties adjoining) and tradesmen of different descriptions; as a carpenter, a mason, and, on the large properties, a cooper and blacksmith.

The surgeon is either employed by a proprietor of two, three, or more estates, to attend the hospitals (or *hot-houses*, as they are here called) of those properties alone; in which case, he usually resides on one of them; or he practises for a number of properties belonging to different people, besides the smaller settlements in the vicinity of his practice. He has ten shillings annually per head for every negro on those properties; so that if his practice should be extensive (and some surgeons have ten or fifteen estates, &c. under their care, comprising a negro population of from two to three thousand) his income, including his white practice, must be very considerable. This practice is usually attended by the surgeon, with the aid of only one

assistant. The hospitals on the estates should, if possible, be visited every other day. But this cannot be done by two medical men in a practice so considerable, particularly if the estates, &c. lie scattered over any great extent of country: indeed, at a sickly period, strict medical attention to all the patients under their care must become utterly impracticable. It would therefore be highly proper to limit or proportion the quantum of practice to the number of practitioners, even if those sons of Esculapius were to be compensated for this by raising their emoluments; though it must be confessed, they would have little cause to complain of the tardiness of fortune, without such remuneration for yielding to a necessary regulation; for, besides their fees of attendance (viz. a pistole for every visit, &c. on a white patient) they have a monstrous profit upon their drugs, which may be said to be charged *ad libitum*. It used to be observed, that many of the surgeons who were wont to emigrate to Jamaica, were not the most competent that could be desired, dispensing with the usual formality of college lectures, hospital practice, &c. and disdaining any other title to set up as a healer of disorders, than that of having served a few years' apprenticeship to an apothecary, and perhaps a voyage or two on board of an African trader. It must however be confessed, that there are now many very able practitioners in the island;

though there are but few regular bred physicians, or doctors of medicine. Perhaps the old experienced surgeon, who, by a long residence and extensive practice in the country, has acquired a thorough knowledge of the diseases incident to the climate, and the most successful mode of treating them, is a more desirable medical attendant than the regular-bred young physician, just emerged from the cloisters of a college, and fortified with Greek, Latin, and his diploma.

The tradesmen are usually employed on the estates at salaries of from an hundred and forty to two hundred pounds currency per annum. They do not perform much manual work themselves; their employment chiefly is the superintendance of the gangs of negro tradesmen. The jobber is one who having (chiefly as a planter) acquired a gang of forty, fifty, or more negroes, and a mountain settlement, retires from the planting profession, and devotes his attention partly to the improvement of his settlement, and partly to the *improvement* of his finances, by working, or *jobbing* out his slaves; that is, undertaking various kinds of work at certain regular prices.

A surveyor is a lucrative employment in Jamaica, being handsomely paid for his labours, and having always abundant employment; for there are few surveys (particularly of immense tracts of woodland) so accurately taken as not to leave room for still further precision in others:

indeed, it would be *unnatural*, as well as ungenerous, in these gentlemen, to reduce their surveys and measurements to a mathematical certainty, as it would preclude their younger brethren of the theodolite from the same extensive *field* of employment: A surveyor should therefore endeavour to perpetuate the disagreement of diagrams and lines, as the lawyer exults in the glorious uncertainties of the law. It must, however, be acknowledged, that the Jamaica surveyor has an infinite deal of painful laborious work to go through. When traversing the deepest woods, he is compelled, at times, to lead the life of a Maroon for weeks together; he has to clamber over rocks and precipices at the hazard of his life; he is exposed to the inclemencies of the weather, and is liable to sickness from the damps of the woods, and the vicissitudes of heat, cold, wet, and dry; he eats his solitary and unsavory meal on the barren inhospitable rock; and, at night, he reposes on the damp earth, annoyed by musquitoes, and in danger of receiving cold. He is, however, sometimes compensated for these endurances, by discovering an unoccupied run of land, which he immediately possesses himself of by patent: but this does not so often happen at the present time as it did in former periods, most of the land in the island that is worth possessing being already preoccupied. A surveyor, however, if he has enough of *good employment*,

may speedily realize a handsome fortune; by *good employment* is meant such as he is likely to get paid for; for in this country it is thought, by many, highly *ungenteel* to pay at all.

The professions most likely to make money here, next to attornies and the reverend clergy, are surgeons, surveyors, watch-makers, copper-smiths, masons, taylors, &c. Tradesmen in general can never for a moment want employment; and, if they are skilful and industrious, their salaries are liberal. They have it much more in their power to make a speedy fortune than the planter-adventurer.

The merchant, by giving long credits to his customers, has an enormous profit upon his goods. But as this subject has already been touched upon, it may here only be added that the merchants of Jamaica trade either with Great Britain, or with America, and sometimes with both; and, if they possess a tolerable capital, they soon realize a fine fortune. Many of them are respectable and useful characters. The shop-keepers are here called store-keepers; they receive regular supplies of goods from Great Britain, for which they demand their own price, generally raising it to an unreasonable height according to the exigencies of the demand; so that the prices seldom remain long uniform and stationary, as in the mother country. Thirty shillings, for instance, has been known to have been demanded

for a pair of common *export shoes* (not always calculated for long wearing), for which, perhaps, the store-keeper paid six or seven shillings sterling; but the article was scarce, and *must* be had at any rate. But then they consider, that they must be somehow compensated for the hazard they run with bad customers. A store-keeper, who sets up with a tolerable fund, is supported and countenanced by an able friend, and has the good fortune to procure *choice* customers, cannot fail of succeeding; and, without these, it would be better for him to lay out his money at lawful interest, on good security, than hazard it on so precarious a bottom. Some, however, succeed astonishingly, with few or none of these advantages, by dealing chiefly or solely in negro goods, or such merchandize as is adapted for the use of the negroes, for which they receive cash alone. This is a mighty advantage to them, as with ready money they are enabled to renew their stock of goods at a very considerable discount, sometimes (at vendue sales, as they are called) even under prime cost. Specie is so scarce in the island, that extraordinary bargains may be made by a command of it at times. It is by no means unusual to see various kinds of property disposed of by public sale, for cash, at one third less than they would be sold for upon credit, and at a price, indeed, sometimes greatly under their intrinsic value. The Spaniards who trade to the island are gene-

rally advantageous customers to the store-keepers ; for, even if they do not give cash for the goods they purchase, the store-keeper may drive an advantageous bargain with them, by taking in payment the articles they import, such as horses, mules, cattle, and hogs, which they afterwards sell to the planters at a considerable profit ; or hides, tortoise-shell, lance-wood spars, mahogany, fustic, &c. which they may export with advantage to Great Britain.

The vendue-masters here are the same as auctioneers in Great Britain ; goods are placed in their hands to be sold either for what they will fetch at public outcry, or for a certain moderate price fixed by the owner, and disposed of privately. Their profits are six per cent. on all sales.

Wharfingers are men who keep public wharves for the shipment and storage of goods : the rates of wharfage are fixed by law, and a wharfinger is answerable for the goods, or for any damage they may sustain, while under his custody. Nevertheless this is considered as a profitable line of life by some, who soon make fortunes by it. There are in the towns, also, various other branches of business, as timber merchants, liquor dealers, &c. &c. But enough has been said of professions and occupations, to convey to the reader an idea of the nature and emoluments of those more particularly deserving of attention.

A considerable share of the mercantile and retail business of this island is engrossed by the Jews; a people who, in every part of the world where traffic exists, ensure to themselves, by their skill, sagacity, and indefatigable diligence, success and profit. They deal here, in the retail way, in almost every kind of merchandize, but particularly in jewelry. By selling cheaply (though it is generally understood of this people, that they do not always ask equitable prices for their goods), they have generally a considerable command of cash, with which they often attend public sales, and, by forming combinations among one another, usually secure to themselves good bargains, to the exclusion of Christian buyers. In the course of ten or twelve years a Jew generally amasses here a considerable fortune. One of the first mercantile houses of this island has a Jew as the principal of the firm. But nine-tenths of that nation are engaged in the shop-keeping line.

CHAPTER XII.

Creoles, or natives.—Men.—Women.

THE white inhabitants of Jamaica consist, as before said, of Creoles, or natives of the island, and Europeans come hither to seek or improve their fortunes. It is impossible to fix the precise proportion of each of these classes to the other; perhaps two Creoles for one European may be pretty near the mark. There are few of the former engaged in mercantile concerns, but they comprise the bulk of the wealthy and respectable of the land-holders.

The Creoles are in their persons generally tall and well-proportioned, mostly swarthy in their complexions (the men are here spoken of), though those who are sent early to Great Britain retain little of it; and, notwithstanding the climate, have a strength and hardiness, though not robust, which is capable of undergoing the greatest fatigues and privations. They are uncommonly active, and fond of every kind of exercise; they are commonly lively and cheerful, being blessed with an abundant flow of spirits, which has, however, sometimes the appearance of levity and frivolity; they are open, generous, and unsuspecting in their natures, and hospitable even to

excess. The visit of the stranger, or the call of the acquaintance, is considered by them as a compliment; the best their houses can afford is poured forth in profusion for his entertainment; and the sincerity of their welcome is pure, unaffected, and spontaneous. Their conduct, in short, would frequently seem to imply, that they regard the maxim, "be just before you are generous," as cold, selfish, and worldly; as many, while they run heedlessly into debts which they have not the present means of paying, will yet continue the undiminished exercise of their generous hospitality, and take a pride and a zeal in entertaining their guests with renewed splendour and profusion. They are, in general, kind and generous friends, affectionate relatives, and many of them are lenient and indulgent masters to their slaves; it were to be wished that this could be said of the whole; but one thing may, at least, be said, and that is, that they possess, in general, as much humanity as the Europeans in the island. As there never was a people among whose amiable qualities there were not mingled certain characteristic shades, so it is to be lamented that, among the Creoles, are too often to be found individuals, who are by no means the most exemplary in their moral conduct. These are men, whose minds are debased, and whose taste and appetites are vitiated, by habitual low gratifications and despicable indulgencies; who, after

having entered into the conjugal state, behave in a manner degrading to themselves, and calculated to wound the tenderest feelings of their faithful unoffending wives. It is by no means unusual for such men to entertain openly their *harams* of sable and tawny mistresses, without even being at the pains to preserve secrecy and decorum in this shameful dereliction of all that is kind and amiable in a husband. They do not steal with fear and trembling, and secret blushing, from the arms of a virtuous, deserving, and perhaps lovely partner, to bestow their caresses on those wretched companions; but they fly openly and avowedly, fearless of censure, and unabashed by the baseness of the act. Unhappily, such conduct is too prevalent even among men whose situation in life, and even reputation for talents, ought to induce them to hold out other examples; and yet these men are countenanced, nay, caressed, because, forsooth, they are men of property. One cannot so much blame the unhappy man, whose circumstances and situation preclude him from the enjoyment of connubial bliss: one cannot absolutely condemn that person, who, at one moment of his life, looked forward, with "young-eyed hope," to the period when he was to enjoy those conjugal sweets; but who, since that period, has entangled and attached himself, beyond retraction, in more disreputable connections: but the man

who, after having united himself by indissoluble ties to a virtuous and amiable woman, wantonly lacerates her feelings by such profligate conduct, is surely worthy of detestation. Ignorance, inconsiderateness, vulgar habits, may afford a reason, and some slight palliation, for such barbarity, in the low and worthless; but what excuse can be offered for the man of better information, and filling a distinguished and respectable sphere of life? It is observable, that the natives who have been brought up in the island are most frequently guilty of this base contemptible conduct; though not all of those bred and educated in Great Britain, nor even the Europeans themselves, are always exempt from the reproach of it, though they have a greater regard to decency and appearances. The Creoles are in general far more temperate in drinking than the Europeans; and this, in spite of their other excesses, has the effect of preserving to many of them a pretty long life.

The white females of the West Indies are rather of a more slender form than the European women in general, although a tolerable proportion of them are pretty lusty. Their complexion is either a light olive, or pale unmingled white. The former has certainly the advantage:—brunettes, and beautiful ones too, are found in every part of the world, and to those of no country does the West India brunette yield in comeliness

and beauty; but the pale white, not being animated by the enchanting bloom that "*speaks so eloquently*" in the cheek of the British fair, has a sickly and languid appearance. Their features are sweet and regular, their eyes rather expressive and sparkling, their hair a fine auburn, their voices soft and pleasing, and their whole air and looks tender, gentle, and feminine. With the appearance of languor and indolence, they are active and animated on occasion, particularly when dancing, an amusement of which they are peculiarly fond, and in which they display an ease, gracefulness, and agility, which surprises and delights a stranger. They are fond of music, and there are few whose fine voices are not often employed in trilling the melting melody of song; though, after a while, it is observed they begin to grow more indifferent towards the piano-forte, and other instrumental music. They are accused of excessive indolence in general; and *outré* examples of this are given by those who wish to exhibit them to ridicule. These exaggerations are like all others of a national description, and savour more of caricatura than faithful delineation. A degree of languor originates in the climate, and may be increased by the still habits of a sedentary life; but those in middling situations of life are as industrious and alert in household concerns as the females of any country in the world; and this much may be added of the

whole, that there are few whose lives are wasted in that insipid round of fashionable frivolity and dissipation which is the delight of the females of rank of more polished societies. In short, the West India ladies are in many respects very amiable, and a number are as lovely in person, as they are winning by their agreeable manners and friendly disposition. They are in general modest and decorous in their behaviour, sprightly and agreeable when occasion requires it—they are tender, generous, and hospitable (the two latter virtues may indeed be said to be proverbial of the Creoles of both sexes), and above all, they have the reputation of leading the most correct and virtuous lives. In short, they are formed to become faithful and affectionate wives, and tender and indulgent mothers. Pity it is then that so many of them are devoted to the solitary unsocial state of cold virginity, who, if they had had the opportunity, would have so well employed the conjugal and maternal virtues!

“ Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness in the desert air !”

In paying this tribute to the West India fair, the author speaks from experience. He has had the happiness of being acquainted with individuals among them, who would have done honour to any country; and in the different parts of the world he has traversed, he can truly say, that

never was kindness more freely shown him than those hospitable and generous attentions he has experienced from his female friends of this quarter of the world. Kindness and generosity are indeed possessed by the sex in a more eminent degree than by the proud "lords of the creation." There is a charm in whatever they do, which enhances the value of their every act of kindness, of civility, and benevolence; and though we may sometimes meet with such as are haughty, conceited, and supercilious, yet, to console us for the disappointment, we much oftener meet with the truly sensible, friendly, polite, and amiable woman. How many happy moments do we pass in their sweet society! When satiated with the frivolity, the ignorance, the rudeness, and vulgarity of many of our own sex, how gladly do we fly for relief to the company of the sensible and agreeable of the other! often do we forget our cares, our troubles, and vexations, while conversing with them—we feel our bosoms enlivened with pleasure by their smiles, and animated with unwonted gaiety by their bewitching presence! We never enter but with gladness into their company—we never leave it with other sadness than the regret of so soon parting!

This eulogium on the sex, so justly due, cannot be better concluded than by that beautiful and sentimental one of Ledyard's the traveller. "I have always remarked," says he, "that wo-

men in all countries are civil, obliging, tender, and humane: that they are inclined to be gay and cheerful, timorous and modest; and that they do not hesitate, like men, to perform a generous action. Not haughty, nor arrogant, nor supercilious; they are full of courtesy, and fond of society; more liable to error than man; but in general, also, more virtuous, and performing more good actions than he. To a woman, whether civilized or savage, I never addressed myself in the language of decency and friendship, without receiving a decent and friendly answer. With man it has often been otherwise. In wandering through the barren plains of inhospitable Denmark, through honest Sweden, and frozen Lapland, rude and churlish Finland, unprincipled Russia, and the wide-spread regions of the wandering Tartar, if hungry, dry, cold, wet, or sick, the women have ever been friendly to me; and to add to this virtue (so worthy of the appellation of benevolence) their actions have been performed in so free, and so kind a manner, that if I was dry, I drank the sweetest draught; and, if hungry, I eat the coarsest morsel with a double relish."

But although there are few females that are more susceptible of a refined and delicate sensibility than those of the West Indies, yet it unfortunately happens, that their domestic education, or rather habits, and the scenes that are per-

petually passing in review before them, have the effect, by giving a peculiar turn to their ideas, of rendering many less amiable and elegant than they would otherwise be. It is remarked, that the very manners and barbarous dialect of the negroes are apt to produce, through the force of early habit, an involuntary imitation on the part of the natives of this country, educated and brought up at home; and that there is often, in consequence, an aukward and ungraceful sort of affectation in their language and manner, which strongly indicates ignorance and untutored simplicity; or, to use an expression in common use here, many of them (who have not had the advantage of a judicious education, and introduction into polite company) exhibit much of the *Quashiba*. This remark is perhaps too true, particularly among the lower classes; and the evil which it notices should be carefully guarded against by parents, &c. It also sometimes happens, that they contract domineering and harsh ideas with respect to their slaves—ideas ill suited to the native softness and humanity of the female mind; so that the severe and arbitrary mistress will not infrequently be combined with the affectionate wife, the tender mother, the dear friend, and agreeable companion; such is the force and effect of early habits and accustomed prejudices, which suffers qualities so anomalous to exist together in the same breast! While yet a child,

perhaps a little negress of her own age is pointed out to the young Creolian as her future waiting-maid; her infant mind cannot conceive the harm of a little vexatious tyranny over this sable being, who is her own property; and thus are such ideas gradually nurtured in the tender uninformed mind. The growth of this unamiable propensity should be carefully guarded against and corrected by parents, particularly in their female infants; it is their fault if such an one appears in them. It must indeed, in justice, be remarked, that examples of unfeeling severity are now very rare among the females of Jamaica; and the author can with truth say, that he has known some who were as kind, attentive, and indulgent to their slaves, as even a parent could be towards his children. Formerly (and sometimes even at the present day, in some of the families of the middling and lower classes of the natives) the children were too often made witnesses of a most improper spectacle for them—the punishment of the slaves. Perhaps the chastisement may have been justly due; but why should the tender and pliant mind of unhacknied youth be early hardened and contaminated by a sight of such scenes? Such inflictions may in time be viewed with a sort of savage gratification. In the males it may produce brutality of mind; and, in the females, to say the mildest of it, a sort of insensibility to human misery, and a cold contemplation of its dis-

tresses. The latter, in particular, should never be suffered to be spectators of these corrections. Humanity and benevolence are among the brightest traits in the female character—without these, even beauty, wit, and accomplishments, would lose half their charms. The tender heart of lovely woman should weep at a tale of distress, and she should ever be prone rather to relieve and alleviate, than inflict pain. Cruelty and revenge should be far from the female bosom.

Mrs. Charlotte Smith has given in one of her novels the following lesson, with respect to this. A young officer, of liberal education and genteel connections, being in the West Indies with his regiment, fell in love with a young lady, the daughter of a respectable planter, and offered her his hand; which, with the consent of her parents, she accepted. The day of marriage was accordingly fixed, and every thing previously settled. Early in the morning of this wished-for day, the impatient youth hurried to his mistress's apartment, that, out of a frolic, he might surprize her in bed. On entering it he found she was up, and he was charmed with the neat and elegant appearance of every thing around: every part of the apartment was decked and perfumed with garlands and festoons of various coloured flowers. He inquired of a female slave where her young mistress was, and upon her pointing to the back area of the house, he flew thither on the wings of

love ! But what was his astonishment—to behold the charmer of his soul very coolly and deliberately superintending the punishment of a little mulatto girl, who was suspended by one hand, while a negro whipped her. Her piercing cries sufficiently testified the agony she endured, and sunk deep in the heart of the thunder-struck lover, who stood aghast, not offering to advance. At length he recollected himself, and springing back abruptly, drew out a slip of paper out of his pocket, and hastily penciled upon it—an eternal adieu !

Real examples might be adduced to shew, that this exercise of severity by females in the West Indies on their offending slaves, was not viewed with that kind of *feeling* which it would be in Europe, but that such ideas are now wearing away. The West India females, with a few exceptions, are at the present day as mild, indulgent, and gentle towards their slaves, as their relative situation will admit. Indeed, the female who has the management of a house full of black attendants (and some houses are *burthened* with twenty or more such domestics) is much to be pitied. They are often so perverse, refractory, and indolent, that the person who has the task of keeping them in order, and seeing that they perform their respective duties, is perhaps more in effect a slave than any individual among them. This duty of twenty would, without the turbu-

lence and trouble, be performed by six white domestics. The truth is, that Jamaica may be said to be a country unworthy of, and unsuitable to, the tender and amiable part of the human species. They are too often placed in situations that militate against their finer sensibilities; they are often ill-used and neglected; and those who ought to be their protectors, their defenders, their affectionate companions, act, in too many instances, in a manner inconsistent with that character.

CHAPTER XIII.

Education in Jamaica.—Mental precocity of the Creoles.—Thoughts on the establishment of proper seminaries.—Literature, and literary amusement.—Cause of its small estimation in Jamaica.

ONE of the most lamentable wants in Jamaica is that of proper seminaries for the instruction of youth. This evil is the fruitful source of many others. Were the West Indians, who are educated at home, to be brought up under such able teachers as we can boast of in Great Britain, to whose authority they should equally be delivered over, as is customary there, the young Creole, who receives a British education, would not have so much cause of triumph over his less fortunate countrymen in the superiority of his mental attainments. But the misfortune is, the teachers in general here are little better than half-educated adventurers, caught fortuitously up in the country, who are little solicitous about the improvement of their pupils, and still less about their morals; whose chief solicitude is in temporizing, from selfish and interested motives, with the parents of the children, and who, knowing their situation to be precarious, and reputed despica-

ble, have neither the talents, the courage, nor the inclination to command respect; fearful they might only provoke opposition and dislike.

It is remarked of the children of the West Indies, that they exhibit earlier proofs of premature genius than the children who are born in colder climes. This remark may be partly true; and the philosopher, perhaps, would be for assigning it to some physical cause or other. He would be for ascribing this phenomenon to the maturing influence of the climate: he would probably say, that, like its native fruits, genius soon ripens here; or, like the charms of the person, which rapidly expand, bloom forth in beauty, but are doomed to an earlier decay than the loveliness of the temperate zone. Without advancing any of these fanciful opinions, it will be sufficient to remark, that if it be true, that the inborn genius of the West Indian expands at an earlier age than that of the European, it does not often follow that it matures with the same facility to intellectual perfection. Few have given proofs to the world of literary eminence; and those few have owed that eminence to the classical influence of a British seminary. The truth is, that most of the children here are vivacious, lively, and shrewd; but this does not always turn out to be the early indication of genius: on the contrary, as in other countries, the poorer classes of uneducated people here are deplorably simple and

ignorant. The West Indian may, by the culture of education, become as deservedly eminent in his particular walk of life as the native of any other country; but it seldom happens, that he has the patience to endure the toils of intense study, or to climb up the steep ascent of scientific pursuit. He is too lively, too volatile, too indolent, and too fond of pleasure for such application: this is perhaps one great cause of literary pursuits being in such small estimation in the West Indies, and of the very small numbers of its natives who have favoured the world with the fruits of their studies and their researches.

As the means of education in this island are so notoriously inefficient, the most speedy means should be adopted to remedy the evil. Much to their honour, the inhabitants of one of the parishes (St. James's) appear to have taken the lead in so wise and so liberal an undertaking. They have applied to the assembly (who, by the bye, has itself *now* taken the subject seriously to heart) for the establishment of a proper seminary, where every branch of liberal education may be taught. Some years ago the author offered some hints on this subject. Among other things, he suggested, that three large schools (one for each of the three counties) should be established after the model of our most respectable grammar-schools in England; that the masters should be men of regular classical educa-

tion, recommended from our Universities; that their situations should be made desirable, by liberal stipends, and by attaching to them a greater degree of estimation than heretofore;—that is to say, the head master should be considered as an equally respectable character with the rectors of the parishes, and admissible into the genteel circles of society. He should chuse and provide his own ushers; he should have a preference in the appointment to vacant rectories, which would be the more agreeable to the inhabitants, as he would be a man with whom they were in previous habits of intimacy, and whom they probably esteemed for his virtues, his talents, and assiduous attention to the education of their youth. He should, if possible, be a married man. The senior ushers should have a preference to the appointment of head master, in case of the demise or resignation of one, provided he be chosen by the governors of the institution as one fit and qualified to fill the situation; if not, the election then to fall on the next senior usher, who might be deemed thus qualified; by which means able and respectable young men might be induced to act in that capacity. The governors might consist of the leading and respectable men of each parish, chosen by their fellow parishioners, who should have the enacting of public regulations for the schools, which should not be suffered to be violated by the whim, partiality, or caprice of any.

parent whatever. The boys, whose homes were at a distance, could be provided with the necessary accommodations on the spot. The school-house should be built at the expence of the county to which it belonged, and should be a spacious and elegant structure.

What desirable purposes such an establishment would produce! what a strong additional encouragement to matrimony, and, of course, to population. We should not then have to witness the most deplorable ignorance in the poorer classes of the natives, whose parents, ignorant themselves of the blessings and advantages of education, have neglected it in their children. The fond parent, who could afford to his offspring a liberal education, would seldom then have to part, with agonized feelings, from his beloved child, by sending him to a distant country for this purpose, without the prospect of again beholding him for a long term of years: he would have an opportunity of marking on the spot his progress in intellectual acquirements, of perceiving the "young ideas shoot forth," and the buds of infant genius gradually expand. It would be a mean, also, of remedying a most crying grievance under which this country seriously suffers; it would transfer the affections and attachments of the great proprietors from Great Britain, where they have been educated, to their native soil, where they ought properly to be fixed. At pre-

sent, from being educated in the former country, early attachments fix them to it. Their presence here would give additional life to the spirit of the country, and put a stop to that efflux of wealth which impoverishes its credit, and damps its energies. The want of public spirit for noble and liberal undertakings, has long been a striking feature of this island, while the inhabitants will heedlessly throw away thousands upon some trifling amusement. A public seminary was built and endowed by the munificence of one man (Colonel Codrington, of Barbadoes) in an island not much larger than one of the parishes of Jamaica. Such a thing would be considered as a Herculean undertaking, even by a whole community in this island; while it would suffer a common mountebank, or *exhibiter of curiosities*, to levy contributions on their generosity to a greater extent than would suffice to furnish a genteel and liberal stipend to a respectable teacher for six years!

As for the females of this country, such as are daughters of opulent men, are usually sent to Great Britain, to be initiated in those elegant accomplishments which give an additional lustre to loveliness itself, and without which beauty would be but like a diamond in the mine, rude and unpolished. Those young ladies, who have received this English education, are supposed to possess a considerable advantage over others who

have been bred and educated in the island, both in mental attainments, and the graces of superior and more elegant manners. This they pride themselves upon. That it is an advantage to be exempted from the risk of contracting certain peculiar ideas, habits, and manners, which the nature of this country exposes a girl to, cannot be denied; but as to the mere *items* of female accomplishments, she may here attain them as well as elsewhere, under the guidance of a sensible and accomplished parent, or governess; if we except, perhaps, drawing, and a paltry smattering of French and Italian, which will never be of any service to her.

Literature is little cultivated in Jamaica; nor is reading a very general favourite amusement. There is a circulating library in Kingston, and, in one or two other places, a paltry attempt at such a thing, these collections of books not being of that choice and miscellaneous nature which they ought to be, but usually composed of a few good novels, mixed with a much larger proportion of those ephemeral ones which are daily springing up, and which are a disgrace to literature, and an insult to common sense. The *trash* of novels that are often sent out here, are mere *catch-pennies*; perhaps written by ignorant girls, who conceive themselves qualified for the task, by having collected in their memory the common-place rant of our novels; but who, in reality, are as ignorant of

real life and "living manners," as those they pretend to amuse and instruct. At the same time, it is to be acknowledged, that we have many sensible, judicious, and elegant performances in this line, by ladies whose intellectual endowments do honour to the sex. It is perhaps to be lamented, that young ladies should apply themselves to novels at all till such times as by other more useful branches of study, as history, geography, &c. by a little knowledge of the world, and by converse in polite and intelligent companies, a foundation was laid for such reading, their minds therefore formed, and they were less liable to be misled and misinformed. A periodical publication, edited with judgment and ability, would be of infinite value here, not only towards diffusing an elegant and literary taste, but promoting real useful local knowledge and improvement; yet no such thing at present exists in the island. There were two attempts at such a thing, but they failed. Many causes contributed to render them abortive. The subscribers to the last once had some reason to complain, that the price was too high (being sixteen dollars per annum for twelve numbers) even for the most respectable work of this kind, being at least a third more than was paid for the most celebrated English magazines, postage by the packets included: they also complained, that the conditions held out in the prospectus of the work, were by

no means fulfilled ; that engravings, which were promised, were not given ; that the work was not sufficiently extensive ; and that the matter it contained was in general nothing more than simple transcriptions from British periodical performances, which many of its readers found they had anticipated. It is true, that the number of subscribers never was great enough to give a fair encouragement to such a work. Probably there were many who were desirous of seeing first what sort of a work it would prove, before they decided whether they would become subscribers or not. Be this as it may, there are doubtless a great number, even among the most opulent of this country, who consider a book (not an account-book) as a useless superfluous thing, calculated only for the idle, and view all arts and information as contemptible, that do not contribute to the production of cent. per cent.

The ardent thirst, and eager pursuit of gain, by which so large a proportion of the people of this country are more or less actuated, is a passion naturally hostile to literary pursuits and intellectual enjoyments. Sordid and selfish, it seeks its sole gratification in the narrow circle of its own efforts. It is fond of a drudging indefatigable life, and soon renders its possessors callous to every finer feeling, and alive only to the voice of interest, and the presentiment of success. The want of relaxation, by the enjoyment of rational

pleasures and elegant amusements, fosters this disposition, and renders it, in time, habitual and inveterate. Sententious, ill-natured, and cynical, it looks upon these as idle and childish—unfit for the *man of business*, and only suited to him “who has more money and time than he knows what to do with.” We are speaking of the love of gain, when carried to excess, and degenerated into habit—when it teaches us to despise whatever embellishes life, and renders it happy and attractive. What then are the advantages which society derives from literature?—they are incalculable. It is too copious a subject to enter upon. A taste for literature lifts society from ignorance and vandalism to civilization and politeness; it aids and embellishes the arts, and strews with flowers the thorny paths of science. Literature corrects and improves the understanding, softens the manners, and humanizes the heart; it makes us gentle, compassionate, and benevolent: it converts every passion into its milder counter-part; desire into love, fierceness into courage, and revenge into generous indignation! In short, without literature, and the virtues it assists to inculcate, society would be little better than a barbarous horde, distinguished only by a sordid unprincipled contention for wealth, or a Gothic struggle for the tyranny of power.

CHAPTER XIV.

Amusements.—Want of public ones.—Concerts.—Dancing assemblies, &c.—Rural sports.—Convivial parties.

AS a taste for literature is but little cultivated, in this island, so neither do any of the polite and elegant amusements of life meet with much encouragement in it. There is neither countenance for the poet, nor employment for the painter, the statuary, nor the harmonious son of Apollo. Here is no classic ground for the contemplative student to tread on; and as to the muses, they are treated as vagrants. The avidity with which wealth is sought after and pursued; the lukewarmness of so great a proportion of the inhabitants, who come to the country with the sole view of making a fortune, and whose hopes and affections are centered in another country; the want of taste, spirit, or liberality in what may be called the permanent inhabitants, to encourage generous undertakings; and perhaps the absence of the chief proprietors, whose presence and countenance would doubtless give energy to whatever would do honour to their native country, are among the causes which contribute to this *vandalism* of taste.

There are no theatrical exhibitions in this island. About twenty-five years ago a company of the sons and daughters of Thespis came here. They had some years -before *migrated* from North America, terrified and proscribed as they must have been by the fierceness of civil discord. But on peace being restored to that country, they returned to it; and have not since, nor have any others, visited the shores of this island. A company of good actors might be stationary in the country: Kingston might be considered as their head-quarters, from whence they might, at certain periods, say annually, depart on a tour round the island, in order to exhibit in the other towns.

A monthly concert is an amusement which might, with little trouble or expense, be procured for the ladies of a tolerably populous and genteel town, by such gentlemen as were amateurs in the art, combining their talents for this purpose; and surely nothing can be a more pleasing task than an effort to deserve the thanks and the approbation of the fair. In Kingston there are occasionally tolerable concerts, the principal performers in which are French emigrants from St. Domingo; these unhappy people resorting, among other expedients, to this exercise of their talents, in order to obtain a livelihood. And here, as the subject of these unfortunate wanderers has been mentioned, it is but justice to

add, that from the inhabitants of this island, they experienced the most hospitable and benevolent reception. Suddenly cut off, as they were, by a horrible convulsion, from their possessions and homes, reduced as it were in a moment from happiness, affluence, and independence, to all the wretchedness of want, many of them found in this island an hospitable asylum, and in the generosity of its inhabitants a relief from the horrors of their forlorn situation. Jealousies of the intriguing spirit of this people have, however, existed of late; and a wish has been expressed to the governor to have them removed; but whither was he to have sent them? and how and by what means were they to be provided for?

But to return. The want of public amusements and of amusing exhibitions in this island, creates an eager and lively curiosity in the bulk of the people of all descriptions to see whatever has the appearance or promise of novelty in spectacles of the most trifling nature. Conjurers, sleight of hand men, dancers on the slack wire, exhibitors of wax-work figures, sometimes make their appearance here, and never fail to attract crowds of inquisitive people, to their great emolument, as they take care that the price of admission should be consonant to the supposed wealth and munificence of the West Indians.

Monthly assemblies in the different parishes are a source of some amusement here, particu-

larly to the females, who, as before observed, are very fond of dancing. These are continued throughout the year. In temperate climes, the inhabitants usually lay this exercise aside in the hot summer months, as being rather warm for such a season, but here there is no such renunciation; it continues throughout the year, and during the sultry dog days, the gay throng trip it on the "light fantastic toe" with as much vivacity and animation as in the cooler months of December and January. Country dances are the greatest favourites; and the negro fiddlers, accompanied by the lively sound of the tambourin, in lieu of the bass-viol, often play, though not regularly taught, with wonderful accuracy and apparent taste. It is, however, rather a painful sight often to see, in a hot room, where even the sedentary spectator pants for the refreshing air, a groupe of charming well-dressed young women *sweltering* through the fatigue of a long country dance, yet animated by gaiety, and a love of the amusement, to renew again and again the grateful toil.

The horse races, which have already been described, afford also a week's amusement once in two years to the inhabitants of the different parishes. On these occasions, a ball is given, and the time while the races last is spent with great festivity and hilarity. Drinking, dancing, and gambling parties are then more than usually frequent, from the mixed concourse of people which

the occasion brings together from the different neighbouring parishes, besides the inhabitants of the one in which the race takes place. The opulent and the fashionable of both sexes throng the course, in carriages and on horse-back, the same as in England. The purses are an hundred pounds, or an hundred pistoles; they are all raised by subscription, except the king's purse, which is the first that is run for. The heats are two, three, and four miles. Gambling, if it may be classed as an amusement, is very common in Jamaica, particularly during races; and sometimes considerable sums of money are won and lost. The favourite games are billiards, and various games of hazard with the dice.

There are few rural sports here. There are neither deer, hares, nor foxes to pursue; and if there were, there is but a narrow range of champaign country for such amusement, and that little adapted to it. The hunting of the wild hog is now, as before said, generally relinquished as a too fatiguing and troublesome sport. Shooting various sorts of game is, however, common. These consist of the different species of the wild pigeon here, quails, coots, &c. and, in the season, the wild duck, the snipe, the ortolan, the plover, and other birds of the migratory kind common in the West Indies. There are no game laws existing in Jamaica, to restrain the unqualified sportsman, or protect the feathered

race from indiscriminate slaughter at all seasons. A penalty of five pounds is, however, very properly exacted from the person who wantonly kills a carrion crow (a species of the vulture) in the neighbourhood of the towns. This bird, though frightful and disgusting to the sight, is, however, a most useful and salutary appendage to the climate, by destroying those nuisances which might otherwise fill the air with pestilential vapours.

Except the amusements here enumerated, there are few the inhabitants of Jamaica can have recourse to, but such as originate in a friendly interchange of visits. The inhabitant of the town, as well as the country (unless constantly engaged in some active employment that engrosses the whole of his time), is liable to the dull uniformity of a perpetual unvaried sameness of life and objects; unless, happily actuated by a spirit of inquiry and taste for study, he employs the leisure hours of life in gratifying curiosity, and adding to the acquisition of knowledge. An account of a battle by land, or fight by sea, is therefore as acceptable to him as to most of our political *quid-nuncs*; and one will see clusters of those politicians gathered together in the towns and villages on a Sunday or Monday morning waiting the coming in of the post-boy, with anxious looks, on the arrival of a packet from England; the greater part impatient to know the

prices and sales of sugar, rum, coffee, &c. and all solicitous to learn the important events of the war, as if their very existence depended on the issue of a siege, or the event of an expedition. Those vicissitudes of European warfare greatly contribute to keep their minds from a stagnant languor, and give a new spring to conversation and to conjecture. There are some tolerable good newspapers for the circulation of this sort of intelligence.

The inhabitants of this country, particularly the Europeans, are peculiarly fond of convivial parties, though perhaps not so much now as formerly. This is another source of *amusement* and occupation of spare time. Besides numerous private parties, there are frequent tavern dinners on various public occasions; as free-masons' dinners (there are no less than seventeen lodges in the island), military dinners, vestry dinners, grand jury dinners, peace dinners, king's birth-day dinners, governor's dinners (while that officer performs his military tour), victory dinners, &c. &c. On these occasions no expense is spared to render the entertainment costly and splendid. Every luxury is catered up for the purpose, and copious libations of various wines, and other *good things*, are poured forth to the jolly god of *good fellowship*. Indeed, neither Hygeia nor the goddess of prudence have often a voice at these jovial meetings. It is rather to be

apprehended, that there is a greater *actual* risk of the sacrifice of health, than a certainty of the enjoyment of pleasure at them, particularly in such a climate, where irregularity and intemperance must be doubly injurious. Hard drinking is, however, not quite so much the fashion here at present as in former times, when unbounded dissipation was the "order of the day," both at public and private entertainments; and when it was conceived by the master of the feast, if a private one, that he did not treat his guests with a cordial welcome if he did not, ere they quitted his table, deprive them of the use of their reason and their legs; or, if a public one, he was considered as a disaffected person who did not get most loyally drunk.

But the shameful excesses formerly practised by the white people on the estates exceeded all credibility. But of this more will hereafter be said.

There is in Kingston, and one or two of the parishes, an annual meeting, called the European club, the members of which are all Europeans, as the name imports. The qualification for a constituent member is a thirty years' residence in Jamaica; and for an honorary one twenty-five years. The generality of them, therefore, must be old, or elderly men, seasoned to the climate and to *good drinking*. It must be a venerable spectacle, to see this groupe of *grey-*

beards "moistening the clay" with the juice of the grape, and gaily recalling, over the beloved potation, the days of frolic and of youth.

Many thousands are annually wasted on these expensive entertainments. If, however, when the tidings of a glorious but sanguinary victory arrive, the sums that are expended in *this sort of rejoicing* were consecrated to another use—the contributing to the support of the unfortunate widows and orphans of the brave fellows who may have perished in the conflict, it would be more honourable to the country as well as to the cause of humanity.

It is, on the whole, much to be wished, that a few polite and elegant amusements were encouraged in this island, if it were only for the accommodation and pleasure of the fair sex, whose happiness the generous and the amiable of mankind must consult in preference to their own. They cannot participate in many of the diversions, revels, and relaxations of the other sex. Amusements calculated at once to please and instruct, would animate and enliven them, afford topics for conversation, and impart an emulation of higher excellencies, by communicating new ideas. The embellishments of the mind give a dignity and interest to the charms of the person, and correct, as we acquire them, the defects of early habit and education. Without some degree of mental attainment and cultivation, the com-

pany of the most lovely woman would soon become insipid. It is this which makes her doubly enchanting, and rivets the chains which beauty had forged. To this it need only be added, that, when possessed of this intellectual grace, the West India beauty displays attractions and amiableness perhaps equal to any on earth.

CHAPTER XV.

Houses, and their interior economy.—Furniture.—Servants and equipage.—Entertainments.—Manner of spending time.—Visits, &c.

THE houses here are in general such as have in a former chapter been described. But there are some exceptions, particularly in the country parts or interior. There are here and there modern built houses, belonging to opulent individuals, which exhibit a striking degree of magnificence, costliness, and taste. But there are also many old houses, belonging to such men, which have a very mean appearance. These are built chiefly of stone, with open piazzas, and without either sash windows or jealousies, having only vulgar-looking stanchion windows, with shutters; and in various parts of the house are loop-holes for muskets, as a defence in case of a sudden insurrection of the slaves, a danger of which the white inhabitants were formerly in perpetual apprehension. There can hardly be a doubt but that these insurrections sometimes originated in improper severities, as the present quiet and tranquil behaviour of the slaves is greatly owing to their milder treatment, and more ameliorated

condition. The exterior of such dwellings displays a striking contrast to the magnificence of the entertainment which usually reigns within. The Creoles are not extravagantly expensive in their furniture; this is generally plain but genteel. Their side-boards and beaufets, however, display a costly brilliancy, in unison with the plentiful and splendid cheer which is spread on their dinner tables. In a large house, consisting of many apartments, the labour of six or eight female slaves is required for two or three hours every morning, in burnishing the floors, which for smoothness of polish rival even the finest mahogany tables. These floors are either of mahogany, wild orange, or other hard wood, and acquire at length, by this daily operation, so glossy a surface that a stranger, not accustomed to *tread on such smooth ground*, must be heedful how he walks, in order to avoid slipping and falling down.

About such a house, if the proprietor be wealthy, and have a large family (say ten or twelve in all), there are perhaps about twenty-five or thirty black and mulatto servants of all descriptions, including cooks, grooms, laundresses, &c. and each of the females of the family has her waiting maid, besides the domestics generally attending about the house. The employment of these servants, besides keeping the house in order, consists in making and mending the household linen,

&c. running of errands, attending at table, and other such offices. A certain number, who are taught sewing, sit down on the floor, under the superintendance of the ladies, to their needle, at which they are astonishingly expert. The equipage of such a family consists of a coach, and one or two covered gigs or one-horse chaises, and fifteen or twenty horses and mules, with their proper attendants, &c. The equipage and horses, &c. may be worth about two thousand pounds sterling. When an entertainment is to be given, no expense or pains are spared to render it as sumptuous as possible. The table is spread with a profusion and variety of all the viands and delicacies which industry or money can procure. Different courses do not come in in succession, but the table is at once loaded with superabundance ; flesh, fish, fowl, game, and different vegetables appear at once to the view, in a style which rather shews the hospitality and abundance of the master or mistress of the feast, than their taste and selection. Yet here at least, whatever other sauces may give a *whet* to the appetite, is the zest of a free, hearty, and undisguised welcome. After the removal of the dinner, the desert is ushered in, consisting of tarts, cakes, puddings, and a profusion of sweetmeats, which make a still more magnificent display than the dinner ; while various wines (kept cool by wet towels), liqueurs, &c. are handed

round to the guests by the black attendants; who, on this occasion, appear in their newest liveries. After the desert, comes a countless variety of the choicest fruit; and, after the ladies withdraw, which is after a few toasts are given, the gentlemen sometimes smoke segars, and sip their wine, till a late hour, amid cheerful conversation and unbidden hilarity. If singing is desired, the ladies remain longer, and do not hesitate to exercise their vocal powers at the request of the company. It has been mentioned, that they have in general a fine ear, and musical toned voices. It is not to be presumed that any but the most opulent can afford this expensive display of magnificent entertainment; but all are ambitious to make a figure in this respect, and usually treat their guests much above rather than under their circumstances.

The paucity of public amusements has been observed. There is little else besides assemblies and social parties, at least to the ladies, to enliven life, and throw its unvaried surface into gentle undulation; except perhaps a little *harmless* circulation of scandal, which, in all parts of the world, is to the fair sex a *useful sort of thing*, by giving an advantageous scope to the display of much untried eloquence and dormant wit; and perhaps communicating an additional zest to the tea, which their pretty lips occasionally sip, while they are dealing forth their oracular

remarks, and *deep-drawn* inferences. The Creole ladies are in general of a lively and social disposition, but they are not so uniformly so as the men. This may, at times, be ascribed to certain circumstances. The author has known four or five families (some of which were even distantly related) who, though residing within a mile or two of each other, never exchanged visits, nor seemed to evince the least inclination to cultivate such intimacy, though they seldom saw other company, and were not often from home! Strange infatuation of caprice, or whatever else it may be called, which can sedulously shun the sweets of society, and court the gloom of unsocial seclusion. And yet, such is the force of habit, that this unnatural devotion to retirement will grow upon us, and be at length engrafted, as it were, upon our natures. Doctor Moore, in his journal while in France, says, that he met with two nuns, an old one and a young one, who were in the deepest affliction at the thought of being obliged, by an order of the convention, to quit the solitude of their convent, and be restored again to society, to their friends, and the light of heaven! It must indeed be confessed, that solitude is to be preferred to certain descriptions of company; yet even from these some benefit may be derived; they may often contribute at least to give us some insight into human nature. It is pleasing to retire for a while

from the promiscuous crowd, to enjoy the sweets of leisure and retirement; but one would not like to be tied down to a life of seclusion: one would wish to emerge from it occasionally, to revisit and enjoy society, which we would naturally do with renovated desires, and a double relish for its pleasures.

The ladies here, like the modish fair of Great Britain, think it vulgar and ungentle to rise too early in the morning; and therefore generally indulge in bed till Phoebus has performed a ninth part or more of his diurnal journey along the ecliptic, and not a pearly dew-drop is to be seen sparkling on a leaf, or refreshing a flower. Thus they lose the most delightful time of the day in dull and cheerless languor. It is true there are exceptions, but they are few. Indeed one must contemplate with pity the number of lovely women, who, slaves to fashion, and to habits of indulgence, are strangers to the sweetest portion of daily existence. How much happier the girl, who having a taste for nature's early charms, rises betimes, sweet as the rose, and cheerful as the lark, to inhale the freshness and perfumes of the morning! They sit down to breakfast about nine, or past it, have what they call second breakfast at twelve, dine at three or four, and drink tea at eight; but seldom eat much, if any, supper. The intervals between these necessary *avocations* are usually employed in sewing, reading, or

lounging, according to circumstances, *taste*, inclination, or caprice. The meal called second-breakfast is the most favourite of all their meals, though it generally has the effect of taking away their appetite for dinner; so that a stranger, not being previously informed of this meal, and seeing them picking at the pinion of a chicken, without eating any thing else, during dinner, would conceive that, like the camelion, they lived upon air! But this is by no means the case; for the dainties of the second breakfast compensate for this deficiency. This meal has something peculiar in it. It must consist of certain favourite viands, such as the black or land crab, shrimps, toasted green Indian corn, pepper-pot (a distinguished dish, made so hot with green pepper, that one can hardly endure it in the mouth), *tum-tum*, that is, plantains beat into a kind of dough, and boiled in the pepper-pot, and several other articles. This must be eaten with the assistance of the fingers alone; for knives and forks are on this occasion proscribed! In short, so fond are the ladies in general of this second breakfast, that they would (the author verily believes) relinquish all the other three, rather than part with this one. In the poorer families, though they find it necessary to retrench many luxuries and superfluities, yet second breakfast remains sacred and indispensable. If a young lady is to be sent to Great Britain for her education, her female

acquaintance sooth and condole with her on the privation she is likely to endure of her beloved second breakfast, and of all those dainties and delicacies of which it consists; and when she is on the eve of departing, a provision is laid in for her use during the voyage, which would be sufficient for the consumption of ten people! Besides all kinds of live stock, with forage for their support, a variety of vegetables is provided, with a profusion of fruit, sweetmeats, pickles, *liqueurs*, &c. &c. and as an amusement, half a dozen parrots, Barbary doves, and other humble companions. When this young lady, however, returns (in eight or ten years) in all the pride of ripened charms and acquired accomplishments, her quondam companions are surprised to find, that among her other refinements, she has contracted an unwonted indifference for her once favourite second breakfast; her roasted corn, her *tum-tum*, her pepper-pot, and other etcætera. But a little time usually suffices to restore this forgotten taste.

If a young lady here has a taste for reading, drawing, music, &c. (which is sometimes the case) she may make a shift to keep aloof the *ennui* of life for a while, till an assembly, a party, or something else comes to her relief. The ladies residing in the towns (particularly Kingston, where there is generally something or other offered as an amusement) have greatly the ad-

vantage of their sisterhood of the country; as, besides the variety of objects before them, they can occasionally relieve the tedium of existence with a *shopping*; that is, a rummaging over every shop, without any intention, perhaps, of buying any thing; an *amusement* which the females here are as partial to as those of the first fashion in the British metropolis. The country ladies have, however, a mighty relief in their periodical visits to friends and relations. These removals may more properly be termed *migrations*, as a whole family, perhaps to the amount of thirty or forty, including domestics, set out together on a six or eight weeks' visit! or, as the visits, *pro forma*, of the town ladies may properly be called visits—little short ceremonial trips; the others may truly be termed visitations! Their approach (which seals the death-doom of many a turkey, pig, duck, and fowl) is announced by a cloud of dust before them; then arrives in sight the advance-guard of these gormandisers, consisting of twenty or more female slaves, loaded with trunks, beds, chairs, and band-boxes; soon after these, the cavalcade makes its appearance, of uncles, cousins, aunts, and cousin Germans; some in carriages, some on horse-back, followed by waiting men, waiting maids, grooms, cooks, postillions, and fiddlers, and accompanied by led-horses and sumpter-mules! Could the pigs, the lambs, and the poultry anticipate the approaching havock which was

about to thin their ranks, what a lamentable *concert* of cackling, squeaking, and bleating there would arise among them! But Providence has with kindness to these poor animals, shut the book of fate.

“ Behold the lamb, thy riot dooms to-day;
 Had he thy reason would he skip and play?
 Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flowery food,
 And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood!”

These *visitations* do not so often occur now as in former times, nor is the removal so *mighty* a one.

CHAPTER XVI.

Europeans.—Those in the planting line.—Those in the towns.—Nabobs.—Anecdote of one, &c.

THE Europeans who are settled in Jamaica, come to it with one invariable view—that of making or mending their fortunes. Some few, after obtaining this end, continue to remain in it, purchase property, marry, and have families; and, in short, are domesticated as fixed inhabitants of the country. These, attached by a new train of connections and endearments, seldom desire to return to their native country, to which, and to their relatives there, they become in time perfectly indifferent, and as great strangers as they at one time were to this their second home. Another class continue fixed in the country by less agreeable and reputable attachments, which has however the effect, in time, of weaning them from every other wish, hope, and prospect of binding themselves by ties of a more amiable and rational nature. But by far the greater number either ultimately return to their native country, or fall victims to disease before the arrival of that period. Some realize fortunes by the assistance of friends, and a series of good fortune; but many more fail in the attempt at this *great*

object. On their first arrival in the island, they are placed, according to their views, talents, and inclinations, either in the planting line, as book-keepers; in the mercantile line, as clerks; or, if of any profession or trade, in a subordinate situation under others of such profession or trade; till, by proofs of their merit, their industry and abilities, they obtain more independent and responsible situations. As a great many low uneducated men come to Jamaica from Europe, it is observed, that such characters, when still further *brutalized* by the habits they soon fall into here, are more dissolute in their lives, shameful in their excesses, and more unfeeling in their ideas of the management of the slaves than the lowest and most ignorant of the natives. To the honour of the respectable class of employers, however, be it mentioned, that when they discover such a character in their employ, they immediately dismiss him; so that he wanders about, generally shunned and despised, from situation to situation, till a premature death puts a period to his sufferings and his excesses. In former times such characters as these were too common in the island, particularly in the planting profession; but times are now greatly altered here. New modes and improved ideas are fast gaining ground in the West Indies; and it is, at present, by no means unusual to see young men in the planting line, who have received the most re-

spectable educations, and are of very genteel and reputable connections and parentage; who, if they have a friend, or friends, to take them by the hand, may do pretty well even in this line of life. But it is lamentable to reflect, that many a one, even with these advantages, is apt to contract low, vulgar, and profligate habits, through the general prevalence of example, and the abandonment of moral and religious duties and ideas in those with whom he is often obliged to converse and associate. He is by no means in a situation calculated to foster and revive such ideas. He does not, nor cannot, attend any religious institution; for his Sundays are otherwise occupied by attending to see that the slaves work in their grounds; and he is, besides, generally at a distance from any place of worship. On his first entry into this way of life, this unhacknied youth shrinks with horror at the contemplation of every thing around him; he sees, and trembles at the sight of various practices which he has been taught are incompatible with virtue, and a decorous and religious life: and he often hears language uttered, which is designed to ridicule his correcter and more scrupulous opinions, and undebauched principles. These examples, and this general ridicule of whatever is decent and exemplary in moral and religious conduct, has, in time, the desired effect. The young tyro in vice and profligacy yields at length to their bale-

ful influence, after a short and ineffectual resistance. He now can drink, wench, and blaspheme, without a sigh or a blush! He sports his sable mistress, he shews his wit and his smartness by ridiculing the clergy and the scriptures, and he can drink strong rum punch (denominated *corkers* here) and smoke segars, or chew tobacco, with the oldest and most confirmed sinners of his acquaintance. In short, his mind soon becomes a chaos of licentiousness, indecency, and profanation; while his constitution and person proportionably suffer by the excesses to which they instigate him. Formerly drinking debauches were carried to a most shameful and incredible excess by the white people employed on the estates. On the meeting together of a company of people of this class, they were accustomed invariably to sit and continue swilling strong punch (sometimes half rum, and that not always ameliorated by age, half lime-juice, sugar and water); and smoking segars till they could neither see nor stand; and he who could swallow the greatest quantity of this *liquid fire*, or infuse in it the greatest proportion of ardent spirits, was considered as the *cleverest fellow*—the Alexander of the feast! That these horrid and wanton excesses sent more wretched men to their graves, than either the insalubrity of the climate, or the unavoidable diseases of the country, can hardly for a moment be doubted; and it is only astonishing, that men endowed with

the gift of understanding and reason, should thus wantonly rush on certain self-destruction ! These riotous debauches are however growing fast into disrepute ; and it is to be hoped, that they will in time be exploded and discountenanced. The inferior orders in the towns are by no means exempt from the reproach of intemperance ; nor are the more opulent classes, generally speaking, behind hand in this respect. Sangaree (Madeira wine diluted with water, and sweetened) arrack punch, and other *potations* are pretty freely drank, early in the day, in the taverns.

Let us now take a view of the wealthy European (whether planter or merchant) whose abilities, diligence, and application, good fortune, or other *nameless* means, have raised him to a proud state of independence and authority over others. Perhaps this man may be of a mild, friendly, and conciliating disposition, beloved by his equals, amiable towards his inferiors and dependants, decent and exemplary (*comparatively speaking*) in his moral conduct, and faithful and diligent in the discharge of his public duties, if he has any to perform. In this case, he is a worthy and estimable character, and a valuable acquisition to the community of which he is a member. The country would be the better by having many such characters to boast of. But, if made giddy by this exaltation of fortune, he forgets his primitive situation in society, and affects the *mighty*

man, or *nabob*, without at the same time possessing any extraordinary share of brilliant talents, or considerable claim to public gratitude for services rendered, he only exposes himself to ridicule, dislike, and opposition. His purpose defeats itself; for as he rises preposterously in his own, he sinks, in proportion, in the public estimation. He is *great* only by the smiles of fortune, and obeyed, not respected, only because he is powerful. If this personage be not a married man, he has, as a companion, an over-grown black, or Mulatto woman, who has, perhaps, brought into the world for him a numerous illegitimate progeny, and has obtained over him a complete ascendancy and sway. She is his friend, his adviser, and, in many things, his *directress*: she manages his household affairs, has the use of his equipage, and is the partner of his bed; only, perchance, when he can escape the jealous observation of this female Argus, that he consoles himself, at times, in the arms of some younger dingy nymph. His spurious issue he doats on with as parental a fondness as if they were the offspring of a more virtuous and tender union; he lavishes on them abundance, he sends them to Europe, where they are liberally educated, and, if the laws of the colony would permit him, he would, at his decease, bequeath the bulk of his fortune to them. This is the way in which nine-tenths of the male inhabitants of Jamaica live.

Not one out of an hundred of this proportion is without his dingy female companion. Should this Nabob, this man of wealth, take it into his head, after all, to enter into the holy bands of matrimony, at an advanced period of life, when the feelings and affections of the heart are almost extinguished, it can only be an union of interest on one side, and of dotage on the other. He pays homage at the altar of Hymen too late, and finds that he has only the dregs of a mis-spent, dissolute life to bestow on his blooming but meretricious bride. If he revisits his native country, he must of course make a *grand dash*. He attracts, by a splendid and ostentatious display, the stare and the envy of the empty and the avaricious; but excites in the breast of the wise and the thinking, a contempt of his vanity, and a sympathy for the hollowness of his comforts. This picture is equally applicable to the East as to the West India Nabob, of this cast.

The author has somewhere heard or read a humorous story of one of these great men of wealth. On returning home from abroad with an immense fortune, and wishing to astonish the quondam acquaintances of his youth, he drove, in princely state, with a splendid equipage, and numerous retinue of servants in gaudy liveries, to the humble village of his nativity. The poor people gazed with astonishment on this pheno-

menon of grandeur, and were delighted with the handfuls of silver which were thrown among them by the unknown hand. Our Nabob enquired for the *principal* inn of the place; but, alas! there was no mansion there fit for the reception of so magnificent a guest; and but one petty ale-house, the owner of which was a sort of *Fac-totum*, as the sign he exhibited over his door indicated; being an intimation, that the ingenious owner acted in the treble capacity of parish-clerk, grave-digger, and barber-surgeon, and politely inviting the passenger to step in either to be shaved, his corns cut, a tooth drawn, or a little blood let. To this humble abode was our great man obliged to adjourn for a while. Not a soul knew a word about him; all was amazement, whisper, and conjecture! till the Nabob ordered his valet de chambre to go and inform his father that he desired an interview with him: the old man was surprized at the sight of this sable Mercury, bedizened out as he was in a glittering livery; but when he heard his message, that manly and honest pride, which is necessary to keep the poor but irreproachable man from sinking into contempt, was instantly awakened. He indignantly desired the footman to tell his master, that, "if *he* was too great a man to wait upon his father, he" (the latter) "would not demean himself by waiting on his proud and undutiful son."

Young men coming abroad to either of the Indies, should be cautioned to keep a watchful guard over their tongues, when asked questions relative to the kindred and connections of Nabobs; otherwise they may unfortunately blab out very unacceptable pieces of information, such as may injure their own interests, disgrace their patrons, and enrage their friends and families. Some very humourous mistakes of this kind sometimes occur,—where the *equivoque* between untutored sincerity on one hand, and offended pride on the other, would have formed an excellent scene in a modern comedy.

The man who has acquired a considerable degree of wealth and influence in Jamaica, is enabled thereby to appear with great *eclat*, and make a very conspicuous figure, both by the splendour of his establishment, and by the rank, place, and honorary distinction, which he spares neither pains nor expence to obtain. In so narrow a sphere, such men shine with a dazzling lustre, and spread a *broad blaze of light*; in Great Britain they appear, like dim stars, shorn of their beams; there they shrink into comparative insignificance. The proud and supercilious upstart to wealth and distinction, has been here spoken of. It is not from thence to be inferred, that there are not many worthy individuals who acquire, in the West Indies, the advantages of wealth, yet retain the good sense and liberality

not to expose themselves by idle and ostentatious parade, to assume extraordinary honours, to triumph in the superiority of wealth, or insult, by an implied comparison, or the authority of power, indigent and unfriended merit.

CHAP. XVII.

Causes to which may be attributed the too general dissoluteness of manners in Jamaica.— Thoughts on religion, and religious habits.— Pride of wealth, &c.

THE debauched and profligate lives which so large a proportion of the white inhabitants of Jamaica lead is owing to many causes. It has already been observed, that all those in the planting line (indeed all those living in the interior, of whatever description), seldom or never attend any religious institution; nor do they either read pious books themselves, nor enjoin their children to do so. Sunday here is a day like any other, except for the *form sake*; and religious piety and devotion are terms which may be said to be blotted from the Jamaica vocabulary. It would be superfluous to enter into an argument to prove that religion is, and ought to be, the foundation of all moral and decorous conduct. This has been so fully felt, and often put to the test in all ages, and so universally acknowledged by all civilized nations, that little else, even setting aside the divine authority of religion, is necessary to establish its truth. If, therefore, religion and religious instruction were more in repute than they are in

this island ; if its inhabitants, instead of sneering at, and turning all that regards them into ridicule, were even to pay them the homage of exterior respect, there is no doubt but this would in time contribute to effect a reformation in the morals and manners of the people, particularly of the rising generation, whose young minds are not yet polluted by the too prevailing contagion of vice. The ministers of religion in this region have it not in their power, from the causes already assigned, to extend their pastoral care and instruction to the whole of the inhabitants. It were, however, to be wished, that *all of them* would not only give pious and apostolic advice to those more immediately under their care, but set an *apostolic example*, by the regularity of their lives and the *disinterestedness* of their labours, to these their flocks. It is true they are a perverse, hardened, and truant set of sheep ; but that is the very reason why the watchful shepherd should double his diligence and his endeavours to bring back into the fold the refractory and vicious, by wholesome precept and *good example*.

A small improvement in morals and manners has certainly taken place, in some respects, in this island, even within the author's own knowledge ; as in the article of hard drinking, treatment of negroes, &c. but still much remains yet to be done. From the very nature of the country, and the general state of society

here, a thorough reformation cannot take place. While the sabbath day continues to be the same as any other, and not devoted to religious duty and exercise, much respect for this pillar of society, and of the moral duties, cannot be expected. And yet this, and other evils, cannot well be redressed without a fundamental alteration in some essential matters. Sunday is the day on which the negro collects and brings to market (in the towns) his provisions, and other articles which he wishes to dispose of; and on this day, chiefly, is the inhabitant of the town supplied with his weekly quantum of such necessaries. The negro, on the other hand, wishes to supply himself and family with various necessaries, which he can only procure in the towns. On this account, Sunday is a day on which traffic of this kind goes on to a greater extent than on all the other days of the week together. The stores, or shops, are all open; and the centre of the town, where the markets are held, is a scene of the utmost tumult and bustle, thousands of negroes being assembled to dispose of their merchandize, and various descriptions of buyers necessarily augmenting the crowd. The magistrates of some of the parishes ordered, *for decency sake*, that the stores should be shut up during divine service; but this was little better than a *farce*; for though the door of a shop was shut, in order to comply with the *form* of the

thing, it was still understood by the customer, that he might enter at any time for the purposes of traffic.

Intemperance in drinking will, perhaps, not entirely cease, particularly among those in the planting line, while a facility of acquiring the means continues to be a temptation to the thoughtless, the giddy, and the dissolute. And that promiscuous sexual intercourse, which reigns so openly, so universally, and unblushingly here, and is so disgraceful to a civilized and *Christian* society, must ever continue, while matrimony is discouraged to the degree that it is, while a taste only for low vulgar pleasures prevails among all classes, and while the men of power and wealth, instead of discountenancing this depravity, so frequently hold out the most striking examples of it. But let innocent, elegant, and rational pleasures be a little more encouraged here; let a polite taste for literature be diffused, at least among the independent; let the means of education be more fully and liberally established; let the great and leading men (*married* as well as single) exhibit, in their moral conduct, correct examples of virtue, propriety, decency; let them foster and encourage this disposition in their dependants, by their countenance, favour, and assistance; and, above all, let the duties and ordinances of religion be more fully understood, and better respected, and the good consequences would

soon appear. Virtue and reason would then, in some measure, re-assume their rights; self-love would be enlisted on the side of duty; men would be impelled, by still stronger motives than those of shame, to avoid the open and gross violation of the social duties; one passion would be engaged to counteract another; the voice of interest would check and intimidate the licentious sallies of passion; instead of that indecent disregard of religious and moral duty; instead of that general debasement of illicit sexual intercourse, so much complained of by the wise and thinking part of the West Indians themselves; instead of that universal laxity of manners, which will ultimately prove the ruin of the country; men would at least *strive* to be virtuous and decent; they would at least *endeavour* to avoid the semblance of a licentious and dissolute people.

The females of this country (the white females are of course meant) may truly be said to be the most decorous, amiable, and virtuous of all the inhabitants of the West Indies; and if they are not so attentive to religious duties as they should be, it is because their fathers, husbands, and brothers are so little solicitous about setting before them an example of this pious regard.

The pride of wealth, not of virtue, as before observed, is in this country the great *desideratum*. It is this which exalts and ennobles, covers all defects, excuses all faults, and procures a general

and unqualified exterior respect. It is a passport into the first circles and the best company; without it, merit of any kind is little thought of, except for its utility. This pride of wealth is too often observable both in the natives and Europeans, who have pretensions to opulence and influence. It is a little, short-sighted, and illiberal passion, particularly when isolated from other more estimable qualities, which might render it less revolting and unamiable. It is apt to betray its possessor into a thousand absurdities and ridiculous affectations, which are obvious to thinking observers, and are concealed from himself by an impervious veil of self-love. It is for this reason that in parts distant from the mother country (as the East or West Indies), one so frequently meets with such *contradictions*: to all reason and nature as your self-exalted *nabobs*, a species of the human race who have already been described. Vain empty mortals, who, by various ways, have ascended to the very pinnacle of fortune, a situation which they know not how to enjoy with dignity and taste; who lavish it in ostentatious display, without public munificence or private charity. Many of these *mighty mortals* have an infinite deal more of *hauteur* and inaccessible pride than the first peers of the British realm, or even the monarch himself, who, by the bye, worthy man! possesses as little of either as any of his subjects, considering he is

under a state-necessity of keeping up suitable appearances of dignity. But one of the most ludicrous affectations of the pride of wealth in the nabob is, the associating with it the pride of birth and family, a pride in which the whole of his family (particularly the female part of it) most naturally and cordially participate. The *rationality* of this species of pride, which takes to itself merit from the illustrious actions of a long line of ancestors, has indeed been often called in question: such an assumption is, however, natural and excusable; but what are we to say of those, whose immediate, or at least not far distant, progenitors had the *honour* of wielding an awl, brandishing a goose, or adjusting a towel under the chin of a customer? What are we to say to such, when they speak of the dignity of their family, and foolishly deck themselves in *borrowed plumes*? Not that it would be either just or generous to reproach any one with the meanness of their origin, or their former poverty and obscurity, when they “bear their honours meekly;” on the contrary, their having risen to wealth and distinction, by their own efforts, is generally an argument in favour of their merit; but when they get giddy on the pinnacle of prosperity, and look down with an affected contempt on all below, however equal or superior to themselves in every thing but wealth, one cannot but smile at the petty workings of human conceit. In this

case a gentle fillip of satire, like cephalic powder to one troubled with giddiness, has sometimes a very salutary effect. As for this species of pride in many of the females of the opulent families in this country; it is much more pardonable in them than in the other sex. In most countries, as well as Jamaica, this sort of ambition is natural to the fair sex; they are fond of place and pre-eminence, and eagerly snatch at all occasions of asserting it.

This, however, is only a picture of some which has been drawn. It is pleasing to contemplate the reverse of the medal. It is a pleasing task to have it to say, that if there are some of the natives of distinction who are rendered not so amiable and estimable as they would otherwise be, by this supercilious pride and ungracious conceit, there are also others who, in all respects, would do honour to any country, and to any sphere of life; whose generosity and liberality of soul are free as the winds of heaven; whose minds are expansive as air; their understandings cultivated, and their hearts overflowing with the "milk of human kindness." This is no overstrained eulogium. The author has had the happiness and the honour of being acquainted with some such, whose virtues and liberality he esteems and reveres.

CHAP. XVIII.

Thoughts on slavery, and on the condition of the negro slaves of the West Indies.—Remarks on the slave trade.

THE author is now entering upon a subject the most important and interesting—the condition, character, and treatment of the slaves in the West Indies; a subject which has engaged the attention, and interested the feelings, of a considerable portion of Europe; a subject which has given employment to the ablest pens, and called forth such bursts of indignant oratory, and such glowing pictures of human misery, degradation, and oppression, as were calculated to excite a general sentiment of commiseration and sympathy for the supposed wrongs and sufferings of this injured part of the human race. Humanity is a field which the heart delights to expatiate in; the tribute it pays to it is willing and grateful; it is a favourite theme, and when seconded and enforced by the powers of an irresistible eloquence, every passion, every affection of the heart, is zealously enlisted in its cause. In this case, every attempt to excuse, undeceive, or explain, to rectify misrepresentation, or soften exaggerated

pictures, must be a peculiarly unpleasing, as it will generally prove an unsuccessful, task, such attempts being too apt to be construed as perversions and palliations, originating in selfish and interested motives. What, then, is the author an advocate for the perpetuation of slavery and oppression? God forbid! But is there then no possibility of separating the two ideas? This is a large field, which has already been traversed over and over again; to repeat the arguments which have been exhausted on this subject would, therefore, be superfluous and nugatory, and would rather lead to a suspicion (which he sincerely deprecates) of his being a professed advocate for one side of the question, than operate to produce conviction in the minds of those who have adopted the other. To avert this suspicion as much as possible, he will at once say, that he is *unconditionally an advocate for neither side*.

On a broad and philosophical view of the subject, who but must wish that slavery were forever driven from the face of the earth, and even the very name blotted out from the vocabulary of every free and enlightened nation. But is this, in every situation, safe, practicable, wise, politic, consistent with the security, property, and even existence of one of the parties (which ought to be a primary consideration), or conducive to the peace, welfare, and happiness of the other? Perhaps there can be little hesitation

in predicting that, at some distant period, *the order of things* in the West Indies will be different from what it is at the present time; and perhaps this change will be effected by the slow operation of time, without any sudden or violent convulsion. But, at the present moment, to loosen those bands by which dominion and order are maintained, would be to let loose the horrors of massacre and desolation; it would be the involving of one party in indiscriminate destruction, and plunging the other into anarchy and disorder, savage violence, and bloodshed. A neighbouring colony (once flourishing and happy) presents an awful example. The poison of the new politico-philosophical creed found its way across the Atlantic, and produced its wonted effects. The flame of enthusiasm, or rather savage madness, kindled up by it, could only be quenched by seas of blood, with which the very soil of that unhappy country may be said to have been fertilized.

There is now a system of amelioration introduced into the West Indies, in the government of the slaves, with which every friend to humanity must be gratified. There certainly was a time, not very distant, when their treatment and condition was very different—when the arm of legislative power was loudly called for to interpose in their behalf. Pity it is, for the honour of the colonial assemblies, that they did not take this business under consideration at a much earlier

period—that they did not come forward uninstituted by any adventitious cause whatever; but it will unluckily be found, that all or most of those mild and benignant laws which have been enacted for the benefit and protection of the negro slave, are of subsequent date to the first agitation of the question of the abolition of the slave trade by the British parliament, and may therefore be fairly presumed to have been suggested at least by that measure. Be this as it may, the situation and treatment of the West India slaves is infinitely more mild, lenient, and comfortable, than it was twenty-five or thirty years ago. The poor slave is now no longer at the *sole* mercy of a barbarian master, but is protected by the laws from injury, insult, and wanton and unmerited severity. His master is also compelled to furnish him with food, clothing, medical attendance, and every thing else necessary for his comfort and support. But he must be a *wretch* indeed, who would require to be *compelled* to that which humanity, gratitude, and even interest (too often a more powerful incentive than either) so unequivocally demands of him. Perhaps there are such men, who will sometimes act in opposition to the suggestions of common sense, common humanity, and sound policy! It is at least to be presumed they are rare; and it would be unfair to draw general conclusions from partial practices and particular ex-

amples. Nor are *individual* violations of justice and humanity to be found in the West Indies alone; in the most free and civilized countries, and in situations of life the most honourable, they will be sometimes found. Without any intention of drawing invidious comparisons, the candid, the liberal, the humane of all descriptions, who have had opportunities of knowing and judging, may be appealed to—whether the punishments allotted for crimes and misdemeanours committed by the West India slaves, are not *considerably more lenient* than what is found necessary to support order and discipline in our European military establishments; or if there are any punishments whatever *now* inflicted on the slaves, which are not adopted, as salutary and exemplary, by the jurisprudence of every civilized government on earth. Individuals will be found, who will violate laws, who will step beyond the boundaries prescribed by them in exercising authority over their fellow-creatures; where are such characters not to be found? The question then is, whether such men are not equally amenable to, and liable to be punished by, those injured laws, for such wanton transgression, in the West Indies, as in any other? This will hereafter be shown more at large.

But then it may be said, the very word *slavery* sounds harshly in the ear, and recalls involun-

tarily to our minds that affecting passage of our immortal dramatic poet——

“ O but man, proud man,
Dress'd in a little brief authority,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,
As make the angels weep.”

It is apt to associate with it ideas and images so repulsive to all the generous feelings of our nature—racks, chains, whips, &c. Merciful God!—And yet what are many of those ideas but the yearnings of a noble heart, the broodings of a lively fancy, pictures conjured up by the imagination, which, like the figures exhibited through a magic-lanthorn, are magnified to the mind's eye. The honest truth is (let it here again be repeated) that the punishments to which the slaves of the West Indies are liable, are moderate and lenient; nor can the degree, as prescribed by the law, be often exceeded with impunity. As to labour, the fact is, that a poor peasant or labourer in Great Britain, performs twice the quantum usually performed by an able negro. But when we come to compare their respective situations (and keep but the name and idea of slavery out of the question) that of the latter has in many respects decidedly the preference. An industrious negro has it in his power to save a provision for a future day; and the author has

known a negro, who, without the extraordinary economy of a Dancer or an Elwes, has saved seven hundred pounds, the fruit of his industry; and yet would have refused his liberty had it been offered to him! This, it is true, was a singular instance, as there are few who amass this much. The hard earnings of the poor peasant is perhaps insufficient for the support of himself and family. The negro has a dwelling erected for him, he is clothed, in times of necessity fed, and, in sickness, he receives medical attendance, at his master's expence. Who is to supply those wants and minister those comforts to the poor labouring peasant, when, worn down by toil, age, and infirmity, or assailed by sickness, he stands in need of them? The further consideration of the condition and treatment of the negro slaves will be reserved for a future chapter. The author will conclude this one by a few brief observations on the slave trade*.

Little, indeed, need now be said on this subject, as so much has already been said; and if new volumes were written on it, they would probably produce as little effect as heretofore, on the minds of either of the parties, the abolitionists and anti-abolitionists, who, like parallel lines, seem destined never to meet in opinion on

* This trade, the reader will be informed, is abolished by a late act of the British legislature.

this long contested question. It is now a barren and exhausted subject, on which every sentence and sentiment which could at this time be uttered, would be only a repetition of what has eagerly and long since been anticipated. It would only be ranging, on one side of the question, the words trade, commercial adventure, cultivation of waste-lands, revenue, expediency, unavoidable decrease of negroes, prosperity of the colonies, consideration of what is due to the West India planters and merchants, &c. &c. and, on the other, reason, nature, religion, grave of seamen, immutable decrees of eternal justice, and other sounding epithets; and spinning out, with these materials, supplied by the sagacity, the ingenuity, and research of original gleaners in this once fruitful field, a useless web of controversial eloquence. Were it possible that the two *extreme* opinions could ever coalesce, an union or compromise would long since have taken place. One only expedient would be likely to make converts of either party, or induce them to change sides.— Let the abolitionist come into possession of extensive landed property, or mortgages upon that property, in the West Indies; let the anti-abolitionist drop that *hold*, and, at the same time, let him be suddenly inspired with a desire for popularity, by displaying the powers of a brilliant oratory in behalf of “suffering humanity;” and perhaps the staunchness of neither of their prin-

ciples can be answered for. Far be it from the author to think, that the agitation of this question has been useless; on the contrary, he knows, and has already said, that it has been productive of the most beneficial effects and influence in favour of that portion of the human race which it regarded: nor does he mean to insinuate that many of its generous and distinguished leaders were not actuated by the purest and most benevolent motives. Were he to venture an opinion of his own, it would be a middle one.—He would say, that while he admitted the eternal principles and fundamental maxims (these cannot be called in question) on which one party built their opinion; he would, at the same time, join with the candid and moderate of the other, in blaming precipitation in a business which involved so much public and individual property. One evil of a very serious nature, which the abolition of the slave trade is likely to produce, he does not recollect having heard particularly urged. It will considerably diminish the encouragement to young Europeans to go and settle in the West Indies; and the white population in our colonies (an object of the greatest importance) will thereby, in the course of a little time, be sensibly and alarmingly diminished. The young planter has hardly any other way of acquiring an independency, than by the occasional purchase of a few negroes, the hire of which is a material part of

his income. He can save but little of his salary; and his employer can hardly afford to enhance it, from the heavy burthens which lie upon himself. But this resource in a great measure ceasing with the importation of slaves from Africa, his views will be diminished, if not annihilated: he will rarely meet with slaves to purchase; and these of course will be at so enormously increased a value, as to make the purchase of them incompatible with his finances.

Were he to attempt to purchase slaves for his own use, it would be a middle one.—He would say, that while he admitted the eternal principles and the eternal laws of justice, these cannot be called in question, or with one party built their own mind; he would, at the same time, join with the candid and moderate of the other, in blaming the operation of a business which involved so much public and individual property. One evil of a very serious nature, which the abolition of the slave trade is likely to produce, he does not recollect having particularly urged. It will considerably diminish the encouragement to young Europeans to go and settle in the West Indies; and the white population in our colonies (an object of the greatest importance) will thereby in the course of a little time be sensibly and alarmingly diminished. The young planter has hardly any other way of acquiring an independence, than by the occasional purchase of a few negroes, the life of which is a material part of

CHAPTER XIX.

Prejudices against the West India planter.—

Former condition and treatment of the slaves.

—Present ameliorated condition and treatment.—Routine of their work.—Their dwellings, food, clothing, &c.

IT is a common received opinion, that the slaves on the estates are treated with an unjustifiable harshness and severity. However this supposition might have been too well founded in former times, it certainly is not so correct a one now. In general they are treated with every proper lenity, and with the greatest degree of attention to their wants and comforts. It is in a marked degree the interest of their masters to treat them with this gentleness, and be thus attentive to their comforts. Without his slaves (and they are now become additionally valuable) the land of a West India proprietor is nothing better to him than a useless waste. Self-love will therefore, independent of humanity, operate to produce all its purposes. But it would be ungenerous and unjust to assume, that humanity was a principle extinguished in the breast of a West India planter. In spite of the odium under which this class of people too generally lie, there are

among them many worthy, respectable, and benevolent characters. The prejudices against them often originate in the misrepresentations of the ignorant, the exaggerations of the malicious, or the credulity of those who seek for no other evidence than the boldness of unqualified assertion. There may be, there doubtless are, solitary exceptions; and it is such exceptions which create a belief that a system of cruelty universally prevails. This is not an unusual mode of inference, though certainly a most illiberal one. As well might a stranger infer, from witnessing crime in a country he visited, that the people were all ruffians. That there are still such men as cruel masters, and violent and merciless overseers, in this country, it would be folly to deny; but that such characters are rare, will naturally be concluded from what has before been said; it seldom happens, that either the one escapes long from reprobation, and even punishment, where his conduct comes within the cognizance of the law, or that the other ever succeeds in his profession. In former times, the condition and treatment of the poor negro was truly deplorable; particularly when he had the misfortune to fall into the hands of a barbarous master or manager. He might torture him in various ways, he might wound, maim, or even kill him, and all the punishment he was liable to for this savage exercise of authority, was the payment of a pecuniary fine! The author has heard

of one wretch who used to set his dogs upon those of his negroes who displeased him, and feast his eyes with the spectacle of the animals worrying them: and of another, who, when his negroes became useless by age or disease, ordered them to be precipitated into the cavern of a rock! This man was an incredible monster of inhumanity, and was so notorious throughout the island, that there is still a general song among the negroes relative to him, the burthen of which is a poor negro, while he is dragging to this horrible fate, exclaiming, "*Massa me no dead yet!*" It is said that one of those poor wretches escaped by miracle from this dungeon of death, not having been materially hurt by the fall, and afterwards recovered; but that evil mischance bringing him one day in the way of his diabolical master, he claimed him; though the unhappy negro justly pleaded that he had now no further title to him, as he had "*thrown him away.*" To recount the instances of savage barbarity that were too common in former times, would only be shocking the feelings of the reader. Be it however remarked, that the names of both the above-mentioned monsters still continue to be mentioned with horror and execration by all ranks of people in the island. In the time of these men, it was not an unusual thing, when a negro ran away, to pay so much to a Maroon to produce him dead or alive; that is, under the pretence that the fugitive had made resistance, the Ma-

roon killed him, and cut off his head, which he brought in his wallet to the master, who had it set up in some conspicuous part, as an example, *in terrorem*, to the rest of his slaves!

But these horrible times are now past, and the negro slave is as completely protected against violence and murder, as the white man. Within these late years, one or two white men have been executed in Jamaica for the murder of their own negroes; and one infatuated man, of opulent fortune and respectable family, was lately obliged to fly to a foreign country, in order to avoid a like fate, for having, in a fit of passion and inebriety, killed his negro servant. There is a complete code of laws, called the consolidated slave law, now existing in this island, chiefly for the protection of the slaves. A white man, who beats and abuses a negro, is equally liable to be prosecuted and punished, either by a magistrate, or the owner of the slave, as if he thus treated a white man like himself. The evidence of a slave is, however, not admissible against a white man: it is conceived, that such admission would open a door to much perjury and abuse of this prerogative; for the slaves, who do not consider it as any great sin or shame to tell the grossest falsehoods, would, also, not scruple to confirm such falsehood with the solemnity of an oath; they have no other opinion of "*Buckra swear*," as they call the oath of the white people, than

that it is a mere empty form of words, unless they have been baptized as Christians; but they regard their own mode of taking an oath as most solemn and binding; this however can only be administered by one negro to another. Considering then the revengeful spirit of the negroes, and how prone they are to complain, from frivolous causes, against the whites, their own unsupported assertions, unqualified by other evidence, would be a source of perpetual confusion and employment to the magistrates and the courts. As to the petty oppression and severity to which the slaves may be liable on the estates, from an unfeeling overseer, the employer, or proprietor, will soon discover, by various means, whether such abuse exists on any of his properties, and he will immediately dismiss this tyrannical manager from his service. The character of a cruel and oppressive person is indeed now so inimical to the welfare of an overseer, and to his being admitted into any reputable employ, that, whatever his disposition may be, he carefully avoids the appearance of being one of that character. Neither overseer nor owner is allowed by the law to exceed, in inflicting punishment, thirty-nine lashes; nor is a book-keeper, nor others in subordinate situations, permitted to exceed the fourth part of that *quantum*: at least, if they abuse this law, they are liable to a heavy penalty, one half of which goes to the informer. But,

after all, it is not so much these minor laws for the restraining of this *official* severity, as the example and exertions of the leading and respectable men of the country, which tends to produce a system of mildness and humanity. These laws may be partially evaded; but the general tenor of an overseer's conduct towards the slaves under his authority, cannot escape the observation of his employer; and where his character and prosperity are at stake, he will necessarily be cautious, however he may be disposed, how he *injures himself* by an oppressive and severe conduct. The incentives of the proprietor to be thus watchful over the comforts and welfare of his slaves are sufficiently obvious.

Formerly the slaves on the estates were cruelly and injudiciously made to perform much supernumerary work, at improper times. After the labours of crop were over, and they should have enjoyed a little additional respite, they were, on many properties, harassed to a shameful degree. Not even the light of heaven circumscribed their labours, but they were made to work for hours after it was dark, and for hours before the light dawned in the morning. At present their labour is light, and this supernumerary toil is no longer exacted. On a property which has five hundred acres of land in cultivation (including pasture and provisions) there are two hundred slaves, about half of which number are constantly em-

ployed in the agricultural duties of the estate, and manufacturing the produce. In England, an estate of this extent would be cultivated by the tenth of this number. It is true, the mode of cultivation is here different. This proportion shews at least that the work the slaves here perform is far from being excessive. The routine of their daily work is as follows: They assemble in the fields at day break; about ten in the forenoon, they are allowed about half an hour to eat their breakfast, which is brought out into the fields by the negro cooks; at one they go to dinner, and in about two hours after are again assembled in the fields (either by a bell, or, as is most usual, by the sound of a conque-shell, which is heard at a very great distance); and they draw off from work in the twilight of the evening. Once a fortnight, out of crop, they are allowed a day; but during crop none can be allowed, as that is too busy a season for any extra allowance of time. Perhaps, if one day out of every week throughout the year was allowed, besides Sunday, which should rather be deemed a day of rest, in conformity with our holy religion, it would not be more than humanity entitles them to; and if that were impracticable, as in truth it is during the season of crop, some compensation might be allowed in lieu of the deprivation of it. At Christmas they are allowed three days, and at the end of crop, or harvest-home, one day to

make merry. Though the season of crop brings along with it many additional labours, yet is it the gayest and most cheerful throughout the year to the negroes. At this time they seem animated with a livelier flow of spirits, and merriment and song every where resounds: in short, a stranger, with the anticipation of being a witness of naught but depression and misery, would be astonished and delighted with this exterior shew of happiness, both at this time, and at Christmas, when they give way to unrestrained festivity. It is difficult to say, whether the juice of the sugar-cane has any effect in elevating their spirits; certain it is, that it has a very evident one in promoting their health. Indeed, so salubrious is this liquor, that not only the negroes, but all the different animals on the estate are fond of, and thrive wonderfully on it. The negroes are formed into different gangs, according to their age and strength. The first gang consists of the ablest hands (of both sexes) on the estate; the second gang of less able hands, and boys and girls; and the third, or small gang, of children from eight to twelve years of age, who are employed in weeding the young plant-canes, and such other light work. The two principal gangs are followed by black drivers, as they are called, who superintend the work under the book-keepers, and carry whips, as instruments of occasional correction, which it is the duty of the book-keeper, in the absence of

the overseer, to see they do not unnecessarily or maliciously inflict, and only in a moderate degree. It were perhaps to be wished, that this instrument were laid aside, at least only used in cases of marked delinquency, and a mode of common correction, less revolting, substituted; for, however seldom this instrument may be used, it is in itself a disgusting and unnatural thing, and the very sound of it must be the reverse of music to the ears of a man of sentiment and feeling.

The houses of the negroes are in general comfortable. They are built with hard wood posts, wattled and plaistered, and either roofed with shingles (wood split and dressed into the shape of slates, and used as a substitute for them), or thatched with the top of the sugar-cane; or, if at a short distance from the woods, with the mountain thatch. This latter, when neatly plaited, forms a very handsome roof; and is of so durable a nature, that, like the English thatching-reed, it will last for upwards of half a century. The furniture of this dwelling, which usually consists of three apartments, is a small table, two or three chairs or stools, a small cupboard, furnished with a few articles of crockery-ware, some wooden bowls and calabashes, a water-jar, a wooden mortar for pounding their Indian corn, &c. and various other articles. The beds are seldom more than wooden frames spread with a mat and blankets. The negro's common food is salt meat,

or fish boiled with their vegetables, which they season highly with pepper. Those in better circumstances live in a very comfortable manner; and all of them have it in their power, from the abundance of excellent vegetables which the soil yields, to subsist plentifully. They receive from their masters a weekly allowance of salted herrings; but there are few of them who depend solely on this supply of animal food. They rear abundance of poultry, hogs, goats, &c. but they are not allowed to keep horses and cattle. The common dress of the men is an Osnaburgh or check frock, and Osnaburgh trowsers, with a coarse hat, but no shoes; so little are these *in fashion* among the negroes, that they are seldom worn, even when they dress out the most gaudily in other respects, nor are they usually worn even by gentlemen's servants. The common dress of the women is an Osnaburgh or coarse linen shift, a petticoat made of various stuff, according to their taste and circumstances, and a handkerchief tied round their heads. Both men and women are also provided with great coats (or crookas, as they call them) of blue woollen stuff. There are times, however, when the latter appear tricked off in all the expensive finery of gay and gaudy apparel, as will hereafter be described. The annual allowance of clothing which they receive from their owners, is as much Osnaburgh as will make two frocks, and as much woollen stuff as

will make a great coat; with a hat, handkerchief, knife, and needles and thread to make up their clothes. This specific quantity an owner is obliged by law to give to his slaves, and many humanely allow them more.

Besides a small garden attached to his house, the negro has a ground of a quarter or half an acre, according to his industry, which is the principal means of his support. But many negroes support themselves otherwise; as by fishing, collecting and selling wood, grass, &c. and such as are tradesmen, by the sale of various articles which they make.

CHAPTER XX.

General character of the negroes—Various tribes of them that come to the West Indies.—Toussaint L'Ouverture.—Anecdotes of their sagacity, fidelity, and acuteness of feeling, &c.

THE negroes are crafty, artful, and plausible; not often grateful for small services; but frequently deceitful and over-reaching; of a more mild and pacific disposition than the North-American savage, and more timid and cowardly; not so easily roused to fierceness and revenge; but, when once these passions are awakened, equally cruel and implacable: they are avaricious and selfish, obstinate and perverse, giving all the plague they can to their white rulers; little ashamed of falsehood, and strongly addicted to theft. Some of these dispositions doubtless originate in, and are fostered by, the nature of their situation and treatment; and would probably spring up in an European breast, if sunk and degraded by a state of servile bondage. The negro has, however, some good qualities mingled with his unamiable ones. He is patient, cheerful, and commonly submissive, capable, at times, of grateful attachments, where uniformly well

treated, and kind and affectionate towards his kindred and offspring. The affection and solicitude of a negro mother towards her infant, is indeed ardent even to enthusiasm. The crime of infanticide, so shocking to nature, so horrible in idea, yet unfortunately not unknown to nations calling themselves civilized, was perhaps never heard of among the negro tribes: and yet it is said, that, prompted by avarice, the African father will sometimes sell his children to the Europeans! It is not an easy matter to trace with an unerring pencil the true character and dispositions of the negro, they are often so ambiguous and disguised; and there will occur examples that bid defiance to analogy. The dispositions of some are a disgrace to human nature; while others there are whose good qualities would put many of their rulers to the blush. It is at least incumbent on the latter to distinguish between those opposite characters, and while they are under the painful necessity of restraining the former by correction, they ought to foster and encourage the latter by every kindness and reasonable indulgence. It is also to be observed, that there is a marked difference in the dispositions of the different tribes of Africans who are *imported* into this country. The Eboe is crafty, saving, and industrious, artful and disputative in driving a bargain, and suspicious of being overreached by others with whom he deals. The

Eboe may be called the Jew of the negro race, though they themselves say that they are like the Scotch; a very large proportion of which nation reside in this part of the world, and generally succeed, by their diligence, their perseverance, their economy, and industry, in their respective pursuits. The Coromantee is fierce, savage, violent, and revengeful. This tribe has generally been at the head of all insurrections, and was the original parent-stock of the Maroons. The Congo, Chamba, Mandingo, &c. are of a more mild and peaceable disposition. The Mandingoes are a sort of Mahometans, though they are too ignorant to understand any thing of the Alcoran, or of the nature of their religion. Some of them, however, can scrawl a few Arabic characters, but without understanding, or being able to explain, much of their meaning. Probably they are scraps from the Alcoran, which they have been taught by their imans, or priests. The Creole negroes are, of course, the descendants of the Africans, and may be said to possess in common the mingled dispositions of their parents or ancestors. But they affect a greater degree of *taste and refinement* than the Africans, boast of their good fortune in being born a Creole, and the farther they are removed from the African blood, the more they pride themselves thereon. There is a variety of shades between the black and the white; as Sambos, Mulattos, Quadroons, and

Mestees, beyond which last the distinction of colour is lost. This mixed race will be spoken of in a subsequent chapter.

The negroes, though so rude and ignorant in their savage state, have a natural shrewdness and genius, which is doubtless susceptible of culture and improvement. Many of them are wonderfully ingenious in making a variety of articles for their own use, or to sell to others; and such as are properly brought up to any trade, shew a skill and dexterity in it but little inferior to the civilized European. Their ideas only want a proper clue to exhibit an equal degree of acuteness and discrimination. In reckoning numbers, they are peculiarly puzzled, being obliged to mark the decimals as they proceed on. Some author mentions a nation who were so barbarous and stupid, that they could not reckon beyond the number four! The negro can go far beyond this; indeed, give him time, and he will, by a mode of combination of his own, make out a pretty round sum; but he is utterly perplexed by the minuter combinations of figures according to the European system of arithmetic.

By way of illustrating what has been said of the favourable part of the character of the negro, a few facts and anecdotes may not be improper. These may convey a more correct opinion on the subject than volumes of observations. The negro forms a considerable portion of the human race,

and whatever relates to him must therefore be interesting.

It has been said, that though the generality of the negroes appear to be strangely stupid and perverse, yet there are some who are susceptible of all the advantages of culture and instruction. The author has known many, whose ingenuity as mechanics was astonishing; and others, whose sagacity and discrimination (without the aid of acquired information) could hardly be surpassed, without such aid.

Toussaint L'Ouverture, the celebrated St. Domingo chief, received, it is said, the benefit of a tolerably liberal education, being sent by his master, who was fond of him, when very young, to France for that purpose. Toussaint had the reputation of an excellent general, legislator, and politician. He was brave, resolute, and prompt, in all his measures. He was obliged (perhaps against his inclination, but this cannot be vouched for) to employ severe measures in order to keep his banditti in order and subjection. This banditti had recently emancipated themselves from the yoke of European masters, and they required a resolute and prudent hand to direct and govern them: this task Toussaint had to perform. Captain Rainsford, an officer of the British army, offers a handsome testimony in favour of his character. Captain Rainsford was taken prisoner on his passage to join his regiment at Martinique;

carried to St. Domingo, and sentenced there to death, on suspicion of being a spy. Toussaint, by his humane and friendly interference, saved him, and afterwards behaved towards him as a generous enemy ought to do. The Captain, in speaking of his benefactor, says, "he was a man of general humanity, great suavity of manners, and possessing uncommon discernment." It is said of Toussaint, that his gratitude towards his quondam master, impelled him to continue remitting to him annually, while his power lasted, a moiety of the produce of his estates in St. Domingo. Whatever fate may have befallen this man on his going to France, certain it is that his talents and influence might have been more effectually employed than legions of troops, to have restored that valuable colony to its former masters; and he might doubtless have been won over by kindness and favour, to employ himself in this undertaking.

Many indeed are the examples which are given us of the gratitude and attachment of the negro race. These are far from being surprising. On the contrary, nothing is more easy than for a humane master to attach to him, by ties of gratitude, a slave of good dispositions whom he is in the habit of employing near his person, where a reciprocity of indulgence and fidelity between them, must in course produce that effect. But how seldom will it happen, that two such shall

come together. Much oftener will the indulgent master and the perverse slave, or the faithful servant and the harsh unfeeling master, meet unhappily together. As for the great bulk of the slaves, they are beyond the ken of their master's immediate observation: indeed there are many, both masters and agents, who do not *personally* know a tenth part of the numerous slaves whom they own, or are concerned for.

Two instances may here be given of uncommon gratitude and attachment in slaves towards their masters; both of which are pretty well authenticated.

Soon after the breaking out of the insurrection in St. Domingo, when the unfortunate whites were every where hunted and massacred, and their dwellings given up to fire and pillage, a negro, who loved his master, hastened to him with the first intelligence of the revolt, and the imminent danger in which he stood; but, added this faithful slave, "I will save you, or perish myself in the attempt!" He immediately conveyed away his master to a place of safety, where he could lie concealed for a while. In the dead of night he put him into a sack, and placing him across a mule, conveyed him to some distance before day dawn, and again concealed him in the cavern of a rock: at night he again renewed his journey; and in this manner did this faithful creature safely conduct his master a distance of an

hundred miles, till he brought him to a navigable river, where he procured a canoe, and at night paddled it down with the stream till he came to a post occupied by the whites, to whom he delivered his master in safety and unhurt!

The other instance occurred in Jamaica during the Maroon war, and is well attested by several respectable gentlemen, who were eye-witnesses of the transaction. During the ambuscade attack of the Maroons on lieutenant-colonel Sandford's party of dragoons and militia, at a narrow defile leading from the new to the old Trelawney Maroon-town, a gentleman's negro servant, being close to his master, and observing a Maroon's piece levelled at him, he instantly threw himself between him and the danger, and received the shot in his body! Happily it did not prove mortal: this generous negro lived to enjoy the well-earned fruits of his master's gratitude. Many other instances might here be given of the gratitude and attachment of negroes towards their masters, which proves that they are not devoid of those amiable feelings. But at the same time, the author must lament, that more numerous examples have come within his knowledge of an opposite description. He has had occasion to witness the most hardened ingratitude in wretches of the race, not only towards their masters and their fellow slaves, but even towards their very parents, when age and decrepitude have rendered their kindness

and assistance doubly necessary and welcome. Filial gratitude is not so energetic an affection in the human race in general, as parental fondness; and among the negro race this is often strikingly exemplified.

The passions and affections of the negroes, being less under the controul of reason, being less tempered by philosophy, and softened and moderated by the dictates of our holy religion, are of course more violent and impetuous when they break out, than those of the civilized European. Rage, revenge, grief, jealousy, even excess of love, in the negro, have often been productive of terrible catastrophes. It may seem surprising that *excess of love* should produce such tragical effects among so barbarous a people, that so noble a passion should operate to such extent in their savage bosoms: but what shall we call that infatuation of the heart, which would rather behold its beloved object perish, than be possessed by another? It is then a savage and selfish love, unmingled with the tenderness of civilized minds, which seeks more for its own gratification than the happiness of its adored object. It partakes less of sentiment and sympathy, and more of desire, than the moralist would wish to allow, in what he denominates love. The affecting story related in the Spectator of the two friends and their mistress, is an example; though certainly there is more of the romantic in this affecting

tale, than one usually meets with in the loves of the negroes. This struggle between love and friendship had an air of heroism; but it was a savage nature that could urge them to immolate the object of their mutual affection at the altar of friendship, rather than relinquish her to some third rival, or abide by her decision in favour of the one or the other of themselves.

A melancholy instance of despair, originating in jealousy, in a negro, lately came under the author's own knowledge. A negro was fond to excess of one of his master's female slaves, and flattered himself with the thought that his affection was returned. At last he conceived himself slighted by her, and suspected her affections were bestowed on another negro belonging to an adjoining property. One morning he anxiously inquired whither she was going, and on being told to a spring near to where his supposed rival dwelt, to fetch water, he told her he would fetch it for her; and, on her refusal, his suspicions were confirmed. He grew desperate, and resolved on self-destruction; but first he went and deliberately took leave of his master, and all his fellow slaves, but without intimating to them the nature of his purpose. This behaviour, and his wild looks, occasioning however a suspicion of his intention, he was watched into a wood, where he was seen fixing a rope to the branch of a tree to suspend himself by: the spies immediately

rushed forward to prevent his fatal purpose, when, seeing them coming, he locked his hands behind him, and throwing himself with violence from the tree on the rocks beneath, he was dashed to death on the spot.

There are some callous wretches among the whites, who, having little sentiment or feeling themselves, make light of insulting the feelings, and sporting with the passions of the poor negroes. A shocking circumstance, which the author recollects having occurred within a few miles of his residence, shewed the danger and inhumanity of such conduct. He will, however, spare the recital, and the reader's feelings and delicacy.

Though the negro is alive to the emotions of anger and revenge, yet he has generally sufficient mastery over himself to suppress them at the moment, and await the slow operations of a malignant rancour, which broods in silence over its wrongs: a manly, open, and generous courage, seldom being among the number of his virtues; he rather chuses to watch a favourable opportunity of retaliation, than encourage the instant impulse, which might involve him in unnecessary hazard.

A humane regulation was latterly introduced into the slave trade, viz. to have no negroes brought from Africa above twenty-five years of age. Had the limited age been eighteen or twenty, the regulation would have been still more humane. For,

as we cannot deny to negroes the passions and affections of human nature, we must also suppose that they have their sufferings and regrets at the moment of separation from kind relatives and accustomed friends. The younger they are, therefore, when torn from those friends and relatives, the better; as early and short attachments are more easily effaced in the bosom of youth than maturer age. Even to the very soil there is an attachment in men long accustomed to it; besides that the heart becomes less elastic as years and experience creep on. At a negro sale, it is a common but affecting scene, to see groups of negroes with their arms entwined round each other's necks, and with pensive and anxious looks awaiting the expected moment of their separation. Perhaps they are sisters and friends—perhaps a mother and her children—perhaps a husband and wife.—In vain would the purchaser endeavour to separate them—they cling closer together—they weep, they shriek piteously—would it be humane, would it be discreet to tear them asunder? Soon, perhaps, if he did, would the buyer have to regret his folly and his want of feeling. Despair would probably seize on the objects of his choice, and they would either sink into a hapless dejection of spirits, or put a period to their sorrows and their lives!—Though scenes of this kind often occur, it is yet too notorious, that the unnatural wretch of an African father,

will sometimes sell his children to the Europeans; while the children will trepan their parents, and the friend the friend of his bosom! Avarice and revenge will at times prompt them to these unnatural deeds. This is no groundless allegation of the whites against the negroes; the author has often had recitals of this sort of conduct from their own mouths. One humorous anecdote, shewing the reality of such practices, he perfectly recollects: A negro, who had been some years in the country, happened one day to see an elderly *new negro*, who had been just purchased from an African trader recently arrived, whom he recognized to be his father, who had some years before sold him to the Europeans. Without explanation or preface, he addressed to him a speech in his country dialect, which he thus translated to the bye-standers. "So, you old rascal, dem catch you at last-no? Buckra do good—you no care for your pickininnie (child)—but they will make you feel, work, pinch too."

But after all, it is not to be inferred, from such instances of treachery, rapacity, and unnatural violence, that there is no such thing in Africa as affection, fidelity, and the charities of life.

CHAPTER XXI.

Metaphysical and religious ideas of the negroes. — Funerals. — Music. — Thoughts on converting them to Christianity. — Obeah. — Ideas and practice of justice.

THE ideas of the negroes cannot be expected to extend to abstract and metaphysical subjects. Of the existence and attributes of a Deity, of a future state, and of duration and space, they have but imperfect notions. They cannot dilate and subdivide their conceptions into minuter distinctions and more abstract combinations; yet they will often express, in their own way, a wonderfully acute conception of things. These conceptions they sometimes compress into short and pithy sentences, something like the sententious proverbs of the Europeans, to which many of them bear an exact analogy. These sayings often convey an astonishing force and meaning; and would, if clothed in a more courtly dress, make no despicable figure even among those precepts of wisdom which are ascribed to the wisest of men. When they wish to imply, that a peaceable man is often wise and provident in his conduct, they say, "*Softly water run deep:*" when they would express the oblivion and disregard which follows us after death, they say,

“when man dead grass grow in him door;” and when they would express the humility which is the usual accompaniment of poverty, they say, “*Poor man never vex.*” Instead of short familiar names, they give sometimes whole sentences as names to their dogs, and other domestic animals, as, “*Keep what you have; take care of yourself, &c.*” and those who have been baptized, give a sort of pious appellation to these animals, as *God give, God send, bless the Lord, tell God tankee.*” These latter names are exactly of a piece with the epithets assumed by the puritans in Oliver Cromwell’s day—some of which were as follows: “Be faithful;” “Fly debate;” “Stand fast on high;” “God reward;” “Faint not;” “Fight the good fight of faith,” &c.

Although the proverbial sayings of the negroes have often much point and meaning, they, however, no sooner begin to expatiate, and enter more minutely into particulars, than they become tedious, verbose, and circumlocutive, beginning their speeches with a tiresome exordium, mingling with them much extraneous matter, and frequently traversing over and over the same ground, and cautioning the hearer to be attentive, as if fearful that some of the particulars and points on which their meaning and argument hinged, should escape his attention. So that by the time they arrive at the peroration of their harangue, the listener is heartily fatigued with it, and perceives

that the whole which has been said, though it may have taken up half an hour, could have been comprised in a dozen of words.

The African negroes, whatever theological notions they may bring with them from Africa, generally agree in believing in the existence of a Supreme Being, whom they also consider as the distributor of rewards and punishments, for good or evil actions, in a future life. But their ideas in other respects are peculiar and fanciful. They think, that for some unexpiated guilt, or through some unaccountable folly of the primitive black pair to whom they owe their origin, servitude was the unfortunate lot assigned to them; while dominion was given to the more favoured whites. The poor creatures cherish the hope, that after death they shall first return to their native country, and enjoy again the loved society of kindred and friends, from whom they have been torn away in a luckless hour, and who would be so hard-hearted as to deprive them of the sweet consolation! It is true, this idea is, on their first arrival, sometimes carried to such a length, as, combined with their terrors, to produce acts of suicide. As an example, to deter others from this crime, the head of the unhappy wretch, who thus, from a mistaken hope and principle, lays violent hands on his own life, used to be cut off and fixed on a pole by the side of some public road, a melancholy and disgusting spectacle!

while the rest of the body was perhaps consumed by fire;—this, it was thought by some, would induce a belief in the survivors, that the body, thus annihilated, could not again be restored to life, liberty, and happiness, as the wretched victims fondly imagined. This horrible operation is now hardly ever heard of. After a term of years the Africans become, however, more reconciled to their new situation, particularly if they are industrious, and get families, in which case they retain little of their primitive superstition, and experience no wish to return, had they it even in their power, to their original wild life, and savage state of independence. As to the Creole slaves, they have no particular superstition different from their African forefathers, and do not in general adopt the whole of that.

At their funerals they use various ceremonies; among which is the practice of pouring libations, and sacrificing a fowl on the grave of the deceased; a tribute of respect they afterwards occasionally repeat. During the whole of the ceremony, many fantastic motions and wild gesticulations are practised, accompanied with a suitable beat of their drums, and other rude instruments, while a melancholy dirge is sung by a female, the chorus of which is performed by the whole of the other females with admirable precision, and full toned, and not unmelodious voices. This species of barbarous music is indeed more en

chanting to their ears than all the most exquisite notes of a Purcell or a Pleyel ; and however delighted they might appear to be with the finest melody of our bands, let them but hear at a distance the uncouth sounds of their own native instruments, and they would instantly fly from the one to enjoy the other. When taught to sing in the European style, the negro girls have an expression and melody little inferior to the finest voice of a white female.

When the deceased is interred, the plaintive notes of sympathy and regret are no longer heard ; the drums resound with a livelier beat, the song grows animated and cheerful ; dancing and apparent merriment commences, and the remainder of the night is spent in feasting and riotous debauchery. Previous to the interment of the corpse, it is pretended that it is endowed with the gift of speech, and the friends and relatives alternately place their ears to the lid of the coffin to hear what the deceased has to say. This generally consists of complaints and upbraidings for various injuries, treachery, ingratitude, injustice, slander, and, in particular, the non-payment of debts due to the deceased : this latter complaint is sometimes shewn by the deceased in a more *cogent* way than by mere words ; for on coming opposite to the door of the negro debtor, the coffin makes a full stop, and no persuasion nor *strength* can induce the deceased to go for-

ward peaceably to his grave, till the money is paid; so that the unhappy debtor has no alternative but to comply with this demand, or have his creditor palmed on him as a lodger for some time. Sometimes, however, the deceased is a little unconscionable, by claiming a fictitious debt. In short, this superstition is often made subservient to fraudulent extortion. A negro, who was to be interred in one of the towns here, it was pretended by some of his friends, had a claim on another negro for a sum of money. The latter denied any such claim; and accordingly, at the funeral of the deceased, the accustomed ceremonies took place opposite to the door of his supposed debtor; and this mummary was continued for hours, till the magistrates thought proper to interfere, and compelled the defunct to forego his claim, and proceed quietly on to his place of rest.

Frequent attempts have been made to convert the negroes to Christianity, but generally by such contemptible missionaries as were very unfit and very inadequate to fulfil so solemn and important a duty. Not that the author would wish to insinuate, that some of these men are not very exemplary decent characters; and, however mistaken they may be in their religious tenets and opinions, still they deserve respect, and even reverence, instead of hatred and persecution, for the laborious and disinterested zeal

with which they perform a most fatiguing, hazardous, and often ill-requited duty, in various parts of the globe. But it has not often happened, that men of this character have visited this island, in order to exercise their apostolic functions; and perhaps if they had, they would have met with little encouragement; for the truth is, the planters in general do not wish to have that portion of the time of their slaves occupied in religious exercises and attendance, which they think should be devoted to the more *substantial* and indispensable purpose of providing for their support and that of their families. They are of opinion too, that the slaves do not reap any considerable mental benefit by such attendance. The fact is, if the sabbath day was devoted to the instructing and converting of the negroes, another day must necessarily be allowed them, in lieu thereof, to attend to their temporal concerns; and this would be considered by many as a hardship and inconvenience. A law of the island now exists against "itinerant preachers"; and as for the regular clergy of the island, there are few of them who are so solicitous about making proselytes as about *making money*. It has been said, that the mind of the negro is too rude and barbarous to receive, with its desired effect, the principles and maxims of Christianity. Perhaps the experiment was never yet properly tried; at least most of the itinerant preachers who have worked in this vineyard, have not, as before observed,

been the most respectable or judicious characters. One of these, it is said, instead of inculcating the Christian virtues, directed a long dissertation, to his sable congregation, on slavery, and assimilated their condition to that of the oppressed Israelites, who at length escaped from the bondage of their unjust task-masters. A few such preachers as this in the island, would soon light up a flame, which neither their *eloquence* nor their *sanctity* could extinguish! Another, whom the author knew, was a low, ignorant, and avaricious character, who, while he exacted from the poor negroes the fruits of their labour, which he called a *pious offering*, consoled them with the assurance, that "the Lord would always provide for them." Many of them took up this in a literal sense, and were surprized, when inattention to their provision grounds had reduced them to want, that the Lord did not come to their assistance! In short, the negroes who attended this *pastor* were only Christians *by halves*; or rather they were reduced to a worse condition than that in which they were found, both with respect to mental happiness, and a true sense of the proper duties of religion and morality. They became, in consequence of the methodistical cant of this pretended teacher, more hypocritical, more cunning, and cautious in their actions, more regardful of outward appearances, and observances of religion, without improvement in its genuine duties; less cheerful and lively, full of a religious

gloom, bordering upon melancholy, and, in many respects, less happy, and less attentive, either to the affairs of their families, or the interest of their owners. Like their prototype teacher, they conceived, or affected to think, that canting, whining, and psalm-singing, were more acceptable in the sight of heaven, than honesty, charity, forgiveness, and an attention to the cardinal virtues; in short, that good works were inferior to *faith*. The author knew a poor elderly negro woman, who had always been remarkable for cheerfulness, alacrity, and an animated attention to the duties she owed to herself and to her family, suddenly, from an over-zealous attendance on a Mulatto preacher, sink into a gloomy languor and listless despondency; she neglected herself, she neglected her family — she would not even exert herself to provide for the most obvious and urgent wants; and when reproved for it, the poor creature would reply, with a piteous look and whining tone, “The Lord would help his servant!” Nor is this by any means a singular picture of the effects of these mock-religious exhortations. But were a few respectable and really pious and sensible men to undertake the task of inculcating the true principles of religion in the minds of the negroes, there is hardly a doubt of their success. As for the baptismal ceremony *alone*, it is merely a nominal thing. At the same time, it is to be observed, that there are a great many men in

this island, and those reputed grave respectable characters, who would start what they conceived to be insurmountable objections to an attempt at general conversion, *on any terms*. They would say, that, generally, it would make the slaves little better or more virtuous than they now are; that it would unnerve their minds; and, lastly, that the time which would be devoted to the performance of religious observances, would (as before observed) be more profitably bestowed, and in fact indispensably required, in the cultivation of their grounds, and other domestic avocations. The first two objections are far from being unanswerable; the latter deserves more attention: indeed this *must remain* a sort of bar to any such reformation, till Sunday shall cease to be, like any other, a day of labour and business; and to this *innovation* the author supposes nine out of ten of the white inhabitants of Jamaica would most strenuously object.

There is one good effect which the simple persuasion of his being a Christian produces on the mind of the negro; it is an effectual antidote against the spells and charms of his native superstition. One negro who desires to be revenged on another, if he fears a more open and manly attack on his adversary, has usually recourse to *obeah*. This is considered as a potent and irresistable spell, withering and palsyng, by undescribable terrors, and unwonted sensations, the unhappy victim! Like the witches'

cauldron in Macbeth, it is a combination of all that is hateful and disgusting; a toad's foot, a lizard's tail, a snake's tooth, the plumage of the carrion crow, or vulture, a broken egg-shell, a piece of wood fashioned into the shape of a coffin, with many other nameless ingredients, compose the fatal mixture. It will of course be conceived, that the practice of *obeah* can have little effect, without a negro is conscious that it is practised upon him, or thinks so; for as the sole evil lies in the terrors of a perturbed fancy, it is of little consequence whether it is really practised or not, if he only imagines that it is. An *obeah* man or woman upon an estate, is therefore a very dangerous person; and the practice of it for evil purposes is made felony by the law. But numbers may be swept off by its infatuation, before the practice is detected; for, strange as it may appear, so much do the negroes stand in awe of these wretches, so much do they dread their malice and their power, that, though knowing the havock they have made, and are still making, many of them are afraid to discover them to the whites; and others, perhaps, are in league with them for sinister purposes of mischief and revenge. A negro under this infatuation can only be cured of his terrors by being made a Christian; refuse him this indulgence, and he soon sinks a martyr to imagined evils. The author knew an instance of a negro, who, being reduced

by the fatal influence of *obeah* to the lowest state of dejection and debility, from which there were little hopes of his recovery, was surprisingly and rapidly restored to health and to spirits, by being baptized a Christian: so wonderful are the workings of a weak and superstitious imagination. But, though so liable to be perverted into an instrument of malice and revenge, *obeah*, at least a sort of it, may be said to have its uses. When placed in the gardens and grounds of the negroes, it becomes an excellent guard or watchman, scaring away the predatory runaway, and mid-night plunderer, with more effective terror than guns and spring guns. It loses its effect, however, when put to protect the gardens and plantain-walks of the *Buckras*! When an oath is taken by a negro, according to a certain *obeah* process, it binds by ties the most sacred and inviolable. This ceremony is usually performed over a grave.

The ideas which the negroes have of justice are not the most liberal and correct. They are of opinion, in unison with their African habits, that she should, on some occasions, bow to superior power, or be influenced and *tempered* in some measure by favour, affection, and interest. On many of the estates, the leading and more wealthy negroes erect themselves into a sort of bench of justice, which sits and decides, privately, and without the knowledge and interference

of the whites, on all disputes and complaints of their fellow slaves. The sentences of this court are frequently severe, and sometimes partial and inequitable. They consist in pecuniary fines, which often exceed the means of the party. Frequent appeals have been brought before the author from this court, complaining of enormous *damages and costs of suit*, which the appellants were utterly unable to make good. He has reversed or softened these sentences, always to the great satisfaction of one party, but to the never failing discontent of the other. He has attempted to abolish these courts altogether, but without success; still they would secretly hold their sittings, and were countenanced and desired by the principal negroes and their adherents. There were no advocates or pleaders in these courts; the judges themselves pleaded, and, when agreed in opinion, they passed sentence. Bribery, of course, had great *weight* in their decisions, and favour and affection were not unattended to; so that the poorest and most unfriended of the negroes had the worst chance of justice from their hands. The opening and proceedings of this court were curious enough. On the judges taking their seats (usually three in number) and the parties appearing, not a word was spoken on any of the causes, till the former had half intoxicated themselves by copious libations of rum, which was presented to them by the respective plaintiffs

and defendants, this offering being considered as an indispensable preliminary to the dispensing of *justice*. It is wonderful, however, with what patience they would hear each other's long harangues; though sometimes, where there was an irreconcilable difference of opinion between the judges, the court would break up with much clamour.

CHAPTER XXII.

Negro amusements.—Festivity and dissipation at Christmas and harvest-home.—Gambling.—Ideas which the negroes have of the inventions, &c. of the Europeans.

THE negroes have few amusements, nor have they much time to devote to amusement. Plays, as they call them, is their principal and favourite one. This is an assemblage of both sexes, who form a ring round a male and female dancer, who perform to the music of their drums, and the songs of the other females of the party, one alternately going over the song, while her companions repeat in chorus. Both the singers and dancers shew the exactest precision as to time and measure. This rude music is usually accompanied by a kind of rattles, being small calabashes filled with the black hard seed of a plant which the negroes call Indian shot, or with the seed of the wild liquorice. Nigh at hand, this music is harsh and clamorous; at a distance, however, it has a not unpleasing sound. When two dancers have fatigued themselves pretty well, a second couple enter the ring, and thus the amusement continues. So fond are the negroes of this amusement, that they will continue for nights and days

enjoying it, when allowed ; but their owners find it prudent and necessary to restrain them from it, excepting at Christmas, when they have two or three days allowed them. This and harvest-home may be considered as their two annual festivals. Little do they consider, and less do they care, for the origin and occasion of the former of these festivals ; it suffices that *Buckera* gives them their three days ; though the law appoints only two, in consideration of the injury the negroes may sustain by three days and nights of unbounded dissipation, and of the danger, at such a time of unrestrained licentiousness, of riots, disorder, and even insurrection. On this occasion, these poor people appear as it were quite another race. They shew themselves off to the greatest advantage, by fine clothes, and a profusion of trinkets ; they affect a genteeler behaviour, and more select and correct mode of speech ; they address the whites with greater familiarity ; they come into their master's houses, and drink with them—the distance between them appears to be annihilated for the moment, like the familiar footing on which the Roman slaves were with their masters at the feast of the Saturnalia ; to which a West India Christmas may be compared ; pleasure animates them, and seems to throw a veil of oblivion over their cares and their condition ; in short, they seem as a people recreated and renewed. Many of them, however, give way to excessive

intemperance, drink inordinately of spirituous liquors, which, with their nocturnal dances and debauches, often brings sickness on them, and is the cause of many deaths. Such is the severe exercise they undergo in their violent and athletic dances, such is their fondness for this pastime, such is the heedless manner in which they give themselves up to it during whole nights, even in the open air; such is their inconsiderate dissipation and exposure of themselves in this celebration of Christmas, that the author has often thought, that if this unrestrained indulgence were permitted for two or three weeks together, instead of two or three days, it would sweep off a considerable portion of the negro population of the country. There is not so great a latitude for indulgence at harvest-home as at Christmas, as here the negroes are allowed only one day. After the riotous festivity of Christmas, the negroes experience a degree of languor and lassitude, which for some days incapacitates them from much exertion or labour.

On new year's day it was customary for the negro girls of the towns (who conceive themselves far superior to those on the estates, in point of *taste, manners, and fashion*) to exhibit themselves in all the pride of gaudy splendor, under the denomination of *blues* and *reds*—parties in rivalry and opposition to each other, and distinguished by these colours. These girls were

wont to be decked out with much taste, sometimes at the expence of their white or brown mistresses, who took a pride in shewing them off to the greatest advantage. Their dress was of the finest muslin, trimmed with gold or silver, and ornamented with blue or red ribbons, according to their party; and gold necklaces, ear-rings, and other expensive trinkets, shone to advantage on their sable wearers. The most comely young negresses were selected, and such as had a fine and tutored voice; they paraded through the streets, two and two, in the most exact order, uniform in their dress, and nearly of the same stature and age. They were accompanied by instrumental music; but they generally sung together different songs which they had learned for the occasion, or those which they had caught up from the whites, in a style far superior to the negresses on the plantations. Their appearance, in short, was splendid, elegant, and tasteful, such as would surprise and delight a stranger. At night they had booths erected, illuminated with variegated lamps, and embellished with transparencies and other devices: here they were flattered by the attendance of the white ladies and gentlemen of the place, who came to see this exhibition, and were regaled by a profusion of wines, liqueurs, and sweet-meats. This spirit of emulation, in these parties, for finery and shew, is, however, less prevalent now than it used to

be. For some years back, no exhibitions have taken place :—and perhaps it is just as well; for they sometimes gave rise to much riot and uproar, and were indeed a powerful temptation to pilferage and robbery; as every individual of each party *must*, for the honour of her party, and her own credit sake, obtain, *somehow*, a suitable dress, and corresponding ornaments. Indeed, it is astonishing how costly some of them appear equipped. The queen, as she is called, of each party, displays, in particular, a richness of dress, and a profusion of ornament, which would not disgrace even a theatrical empress. Some of these dresses would perhaps amount to little less than fifty or sixty pounds. This annual finery cannot on any account be dispensed with; if a negress were to go all the rest of the year in filth and raggedness, still she must have her fine clothes for Christmas.

The negroes of Jamaica have no games nor pastimes, except such as have been described, whatever the Africans may have in their native country. Here, indeed, they have little time, whatever taste, skill, or inclination they might have for such amusements. The negroes in the towns, and indeed the Creole negroes in general, have imbibed from the whites a spirit of gambling; these are mostly such as are, or have at some time acted as, servants to gentlemen. They privately assemble and play at games of hazard with the

dice, though there is a law against such species of gambling, and such negroes as are found assembled for this purpose, are taken up and imprisoned. At horse-races betting goes on among the negroes who are present, as generally as among the whites. The Creole negroes affect much to copy the manners, language, &c. of the whites; those who have it in their power, have, at times, their convivial parties; when they will endeavour to mimic their masters in their drinking, their songs, and their toasts; and it is curious to see with what an awkward minuteness they aim at such imitations. The author recollects having given an entertainment to a party of negroes, who had resided together, and been in habits of intimacy for twenty years or more. After a variety of curious toasts, and some attempts to entertain each other with European songs, one, who conceived himself more knowing and accomplished than the rest, stood up and very gravely drank, "Here's to our *better acquaintance*, gentlemen!"

The negroes are astonished at the ingenuity of the Europeans; and there are some articles of their manufacture which appear quite unaccountable to them, as watches, looking-glasses, gunpowder, &c. &c. The author once amused a party of negroes with the deceptions of a magic lantern. They gazed with the utmost wonder and astonishment at the hideous figures conjured

up by this optical machine, and were of opinion that nothing short of witchcraft could have produced so curious an instrument. They are also astonished at the means by which the Europeans can find their way to remote countries, such as Africa, &c. and guide their vessels through trackless oceans with as much certainty as they can travel over a few miles of well known country.— In short, they say that they require no greater proof, that the Almighty chose the whites as his favoured people, than that he has thus taught them every curious and useful invention, that he has taught them the use of books, that he has taught them how to make gun-powder to defend themselves, or to assail others;—that he has taught them the way to make all kinds of merchandize, and pointed out to them the country where slaves were to be bought for such merchandize;—in short, that he has taught them the method of sailing thither to fetch those slaves, for the purpose of cultivating sugar in their islands, a task which they themselves could never have performed. Such are the opinions which the poor negroes have of European invention, arts, learning, and dominion.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Different diseases, &c. to which the negroes are subject.—Infantile disorders.—Various causes to which may be attributed the decrease of negro population in the West Indies.—Polygamy among the negroes, &c.

IT is not a little remarkable, that many of the diseases to which the white people in this island are subject, seldom or never affect the negroes; while the former are totally exempt from most of the disorders peculiar to the negroes, unless communicated by infection. But there are diseases, also, which are common to both, as pulmonary complaints, diseases of the liver, bowel disorders, dropsy, common intermittent fever, &c. The negro is, however, exempt from the ravages and epidemic influence of the yellow fever; nor is he subject often to consumptions, nor to the gout, and some other chronic disorders known to the Europeans. He is, however, peculiarly subject to rheumatic affections, and to a disorder of the bones, which seems peculiar to him, called the bone-ache, appearing in round swellings about the joints. He is also more often subject to obstructions and inflammations of the bowels than the whites. Formerly there was a terrible dis-

ease of the bowel kind, called the *dry belly-ache* in this country, which was wont to sweep off great numbers of the whites, with a violence of pain and rapidity of execution which was truly terrible; but this scourge of the white people is now totally unknown. It would be a curious subject of inquiry to discover to what cause was to be attributed this disappearance of so formidable an enemy. The author has never heard any other hypothesis advanced on the subject than that it was owing to the atmosphere being less humid and better ventilated, from the country being now generally cleared of wood. Neither the small-pox nor the measles are native diseases of that part of Africa inhabited by the negroes, nor are some other diseases to which they are subject in the West Indies. But there are diseases peculiar to the Africans, which are of a more terrible nature. One of these is called the *cocabay*; a distemper the most horrible and revolting in its nature, and the more so as it is peculiarly infectious, and utterly incurable. The unhappy patient who is infected with it becomes soon changed in appearance, different parts of his body swell, he is covered over with a leprous scurf, his spirits sink into deep dejection, he loathes his food, and yet his miserable existence is prolonged for years, though he continually invokes death to come and put a period to it, and to his hopeless sufferings; at least, this is the

melancholy and forlorn situation to which it reduces the unhappy white man who becomes a martyr to it by infection. Even his friends and acquaintances dare not come near to sooth and console him in this miserable situation. The negroes, who are often seized with this merciless disorder, are removed, on the first appearance of its symptoms, to some sequestered spot, where a hut is built for them, and the rest of the negroes are strictly interdicted from all intercourse with them. Some have assimilated this disease to the leprosy mentioned in scripture. Another loathsome disease to which the negroes are subject, is the *yaws*. This, however, is curable in a negro in eight or ten months, with proper care. But if a white man is seized with it by infection, it is seldom that he recovers; it is too severe and dreadful a trial for him to endure. It however seldom happens that the whites are attacked with either of these shocking disorders. Another peculiar disorder which is common among the negroes, is called the *elephantiasis*; it consists in a monstrous swelling of the feet and legs, which continues, and is seldom cured. Negroes affected thereby are rendered unfit for much labour. Hernia, hydrocele, &c. are very common among the negroes. It has been remarked that there are few of the Barbadians that are exempt from the former of these affections. This is doubtless a curious circumstance, the cause of which it

would not be an incurious inquiry to investigate. The other disorders that are generally most fatal among the negroes are pleurisies, inflammations of the bowels, dysenteries, and influenza: sometimes, too, violent fevers, proceeding from colds, are the cause of much mortality among them. The dysentery and influenza make their appearance periodically. Some years ago the latter swept of, in the course of a few months, the tenth part of the population of many of the estates; and there were few that escaped considerable loss. This disease was attended with a most violent and rapid fever, with a strong tendency to the head: in forty-eight hours the patient's strength was completely prostrated, and unless a favourable turn took place, he seldom survived long beyond that time. In the rapidity of its operation, it resembled the yellow or malignant bilious fever among the whites: but as the negroes are exempt from the attacks of this latter disorder, so are the whites not at all liable to the influenza during its prevalence among the negroes. The appearance of dysentery among the negroes is most to be apprehended in the latter end of summer, when the new yams are begun to be got in, and the avagata pear (a favourite article in the negroes' meals) still remains unripe, but which they will yet use. Both of these diseases are reputed epidemical. The treatment of the influenza was in some measure similar to that of the

yellow fever among the whites; febrifuges and sudorifics were chiefly administered, rhubarb is given in cases of dysentery; and, as a nourishment, Indian arrow-root, mixed with Port wine, and given frequently in small quantities, is a most sovereign remedy.

One of the most curious diseases to which the Africans are subject, is the *Guinea-worm*, as it is called, being a worm of two, three, or more yards in length, which breeds in the flesh, commonly the thick part of the leg. Few or none of the Creole negroes are attacked with this disease. Another troublesome animal here, which gets into the flesh, is the *chego*. It is a very small insect, almost indeed invisible, which burying itself in the fleshy parts of the feet, soon increases in size, and deposits, if suffered to remain in its usurped abode, a numerous progeny; these soon spread into other parts; and this annoyance, though not a disease in itself, soon becomes the parent of diseases, such as inveterate ulcers, elephantiasis, &c. Nothing more, however, is necessary to guard against this mischief, than cleanliness and attention; and, above all, taking particular care to extract these intruders as soon as possible. But so indolent and so negligent are many of the negroes in this respect, that they will often suffer these insects to remain till they have ate away the very flesh from their toes, and brought, as frequently happens, in-

curable lameness upon themselves thereby. The entrance of this animal into the flesh is easily perceptible by a sharp pain, resembling the puncture of a fine needle; and its subsequent presence is known by an incessant and troublesome itching around the part which it has usurped. Either the negroes are not so susceptible of this sensation as the whites, or it is not unpleasant to them. It is said, with what truth the author will not assert, that a white Creole female was wont to remark, that she thought "this sensation was one of the *luxuries* of the island!"—As much, it is to be presumed, as a certain cutaneous affection is reported to be to a native of North Britain.

The negroes are subject to a strange craving of the stomach for earth: earth-eaters are common upon almost every plantation. This propensity, or craving, is as common among the children as among the grown negroes. If this practice originates in a diseased stomach, as it is asserted it does, it must of course in some measure be involuntary; and the harsh severe means which are often used to reclaim the negroes from it, are doubtless improper, if not barbarous; but if merely the effect of a vitiated taste, perhaps such strictness, seconded by an attention to the supplying them with the most wholesome and savoury food, may have its effect. One would think that restraint, without other severity, would

answer every purpose. The negroes themselves are of a different opinion. When a mother discovers her child indulging this strange appetite, she has recourse to the severest correction ; she threatens, storms, and chastises by turns, and it would be in vain to persuade her that this unfortunate appetite is the inevitable effect of disease. The effects which it produces on the system, are a nausea for all other food, bloated swellings over the body, a corruption of the whole mass of the blood, shortness of breath, reachings, &c. these, if the practice be not discontinued, reduce the infatuated negro to the lowest state of debility, and must inevitably end in death. The author knew an elderly negro, who, though he had plenty of food at command, considered a *mud-cake* as preferable to any. He would carefully and ingeniously, and in as private a manner as possible, rake up mud from the bottom of a horse-pond, and forming it into the shape of small cakes, toast it on the fire and eat it ! This disease, when of long standing, becomes very obstinate and difficult to be cured.

The negro children are subject to a variety of disorders ; some of which are of a fatal tendency, and peculiar to the West Indies, and other tropical climates which the negro inhabits. The most formidable of these is locked jaw. Grown negroes are also sometimes attacked with this terrible symptom, and suddenly expire, unless re-

relief be soon given to the suffering patient: the jaw-bones become fixed in their sockets, the upper and lower teeth adhere closely and strongly to each other, so that even a pin can hardly at times be introduced between them; and the silent and wild looks of the afflicted patient, shew the agony he endures, and the danger he is in. This dreadful affection in infants, sometimes comes on without any apparent cause; but it is more frequently the concomitant of some other disorder. Many of the negro children die of it; but it seldom or never visits a white child. The other fatal disorders to which the negro infants are liable, are sore throats, hooping-coughs, convulsion fits, &c. The hooping-cough is an epidemic complaint among the children here, and it frequently carries off great numbers. Both white and negro children are liable to it; but the latter most. Sore throats are, however, most fatal to the white children; but liver complaints, by which these are often dangerously attacked, do not often visit the negro children; as if the systems, as well as habits, of the two races, were of an opposite nature.

The negro population of Jamaica is at the present time (1807) little less than three hundred thousand. Whether this population will be kept up, now that the wonted supply from Africa has ceased, time will shew. Certain it is, that a diminution, instead of an increase, has generally heretofore

taken place, exclusively of the African supply. Perhaps the stoppage of this supply may operate to increase the care and vigilance of the negro proprietor over the health and comforts of his slaves; though indeed his interest clearly pointed out to him such attention previous to this having taken place; as an able seasoned negro was worth to him an hundred and fifty or sixty pounds, and the price of a newly imported one was an hundred and fifteen or twenty pounds.

As a great deal has already been said on the cause or causes of this diminution of negro population in the West Indies, little need here be added on the subject. The numerous and fatal disorders to which the negro children are liable, have justly been assigned as one cause. Another which has been given is, the state of polygamy in which the negroes live. This doubtless is a very obvious cause. To enter into a dissertation why polygamy should thus operate were superfluous; it is sufficient that experience shews that it is inimical to population. But how is it to be remedied among the negroes in the West Indies, is the question? The negro, who does not profess himself a Christian, smiles at the idea of confining himself to one female companion, when his circumstances enable him, and his passions and taste for variety, instigate him to have half a dozen. He would consider a restraint in this respect, so hostile to his habits and the practice

of his country, as the most arbitrary of all measures; and it would require a thousand Arguses to watch and circumvent him in these illicit indulgences. Such as are baptized as Christians, are a little more scrupulous; some of these affect a form of marriage, and seem to lay aside all thoughts of other women than the one to whom they are united. But this is little better than form. Imbued as their minds are with strong passions, and witnessing as they are likely to continue to do, the licentiousness of their more enlightened rulers, it is not likely they will relinquish the pleasures, or resist the temptations, of an unrestrained sexual intercourse.

The mortality among the grown negroes may be ascribed to various causes—to intemperance and irregularity, night exposure, violent exercise at their junkettings and plays, transition of the seasons, and, at particular seasons, disorders brought on by green roots, unripe fruits, &c. As to the labour they are made to perform on most of the estates, it is, as before said, seldom more than what they can go through with ease, and without injury to their health. The health of the negroes upon a plantation depends much upon the situation of the place. Their houses are generally built in dry, airy situations; but on the mountain estates, in spite of every precaution, they are liable to severe colds, and other complaints produced by cold, in consequence of the

heavy and daily rains, which prevail in these parts to a greater degree than in the low country nearer to the coast.

The negroes are acquainted with the use of many simples for the cure of some disorders, such as yaws, ulcers, bone-ache, &c. and the care and management of negroes afflicted with these disorders is generally confided to an elderly negro woman who professes a knowledge of this branch of the medical art. The vaccine inoculation has been introduced into this island, and practised on the negroes with much success.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Origin of the Maroons. Description of the mode in which they carried on their war with the whites. Their barbarity. Anecdote of a Maroon. Thoughts on the employment of dogs against them. Their way of life, &c.

THE Maroons are the descendants of the rebellious negroes who were in arms against the whites prior to the year 1739, at which period a peace was concluded with them. The first insurrection of the negroes of any consequence was about fifty years before this time, in the parish of Clarendon. Various parties of insurgents and runaways at length formed themselves into a body, under a desperate leader called Cudjoe, and often issued from their retreats, burning and plundering, and massacreing wherever they went, the defenceless white inhabitants. Parties were sent in pursuit of them, and engagements often took place between these and this banditti with various success, but generally in favour of the Maroons, they being more accustomed to traverse the mountainous woods, and better acquainted with the fastnesses and retreats they afforded. At length the whites were so wearied and harassed with this perpetual state of savage warfare, being

in continual alarm of their barbarous enemies, and seeing no likelihood of being ever able to drive them from their retreats, and compel them to surrender, that a treaty was concluded with them by Governor Edward Trelawney, by which they were declared free, and lands were allotted for their subsistence. They were, however, to be subject to the laws and government of the whites; only, in petty cases, they might decide their own differences, subject in some measure, however, to the control of a white superintendent; but a violation of the laws, or the peace of the whites, was punishable by their laws. They now built towns or villages for themselves on the lands assigned them; the principal of these, as containing the greatest number of inhabitants, and the chief leaders of the Maroons, was Trelawney town, in the parish of Trelawney, situated in the mountains, and about equi-distant from Montego Bay and Falmouth. These original Maroons were chiefly of the Coromantee country, this tribe being the most restless, daring, and bloodthirsty of all the negroes brought to the West Indies. Among other articles in the treaty with this people, it was agreed that they should in future assist the whites in reclaiming runaway negroes who had fled into the woods; for each of whom, when brought in, they were to receive a specific reward. They were also to assist the whites in all their contests either with

foreign or domestic enemies. These sable allies were however little to be depended upon. They never could be considered as sincere and cordial friends, however they might affect to be so. Two subsequent insurrections of the Coromantee negroes took place in this island, one in 1760, and another in 1765; but they were quelled. Both of these originated in the parish of St. Mary; but it is said that the whole of the Coromantees throughout the island were privy to the first insurrection.

The Maroons continued peaceable under the whites, till an unfortunate accident, or circumstance, which happened in 1795, kindled the embers of rebellion. Two Trelawney town Maroons were convicted by the magistrates of Montego Bay of stealing a hog from a white settler of St. James's, and were sentenced for this crime to be whipped publicly by the work-house driver. The Maroons were indignant at this ignominious sentence: they said, that, if the whites had put their companions to death, they would not have complained; but to disgrace and degrade them was an injurious insult to the whole tribe, and could not be atoned for but by a retaliating vengeance. At this time too, they pretended to be aggrieved by other circumstances; they wanted more land; they wanted a superintendant of their own choosing; in short, there would have been no end to their wants, in the humour in which they then

were, breathing defiance, and meditating vengeance on the whites. Lord Balcarras, the governor, therefore resolved, as they had proceeded to such lengths, to call these people to a quiet submission, and surrender of their arms, or to subdue them by force. A proclamation was issued to this effect; but only a few attended to it, and submitted: the rest continuing refractory, and remaining in a menacing attitude, martial law was proclaimed, the militia called out, and with a strong body of regulars, were sent to invest their towns. The first signal of war was the unfortunate overthrow of colonel Sandford's detachment of light dragoons and militia, by an ambuscade of the Maroons, in a narrow defile between the old and new Maroon towns. This officer unfortunately pushed on further than his orders directed; and, through his temerity and imprudence, perished with thirty of his party, by a close and deadly fire from an unseen enemy. It would be superfluous to enter into the particulars of this savage contest, already detailed by other writers; suffice it to say, that, after a seven month's war, the Maroons capitulated to General Walpole, the commander of the troops, and laid down their arms, on condition that their lives should be spared, and that they should be suffered to remain in the country, under the whites as before. This last article the governor and assembly conceived it imprudent to ratify, as they

viewed such a people as highly dangerous inmates in the country. It was justly considered, that though this people would remain, from compulsion, apparently silent and peaceable, they would yet brood over their hatred to the whites, and secretly meditate a future and signal vengeance, by stirring up revolt and insurrection among the slaves. They were therefore transported, at the expence of the island, to Nova Scotia; and were subsequently, as the cold climate of that region did not agree with them, sent to the banks of the Sierra Leone, in Africa. None of the other Maroons in the island joined in this rebellion of the Trelawney town Maroons;—indeed, the Accompong Maroons appeared at first on the side of the whites; but they were not hearty in the cause; and, on a few of them being killed and wounded in a skirmish, they retired altogether from the service. None of the Maroons remaining in the island are now allowed the use of fire arms; if their services were required, they would, of course, be armed for the occasion by Government.

As the author was present during the whole of the last contest with the Maroons, he will endeavour to convey to the reader the nature of it.

At the outset, there was perhaps too much "pomp and preparation of war." The troops marched in their proper regimentals, as if

they were going to fight a regular and civilized enemy; and sometimes had even the absurdity to traverse the mountainous roads with drums beating! Nothing could be more opposite to propriety in such a contest, nor more subservient to the views of their savage and artful foe. The sound of these instruments could answer no other end than to warn the Maroons to keep out of the way, or to throw themselves into a convenient ambush, from whence they could cut off their assailants, without danger of annoyance to themselves. The customary accoutrements were too clumsy and burthensome for traversing the woods and clambering over the rocks with; and the red coats were too conspicuous an object to the Maroon marksmen, who seldom missed their aim. These inconveniences and incumbrances were at length felt, and laid aside; light green or blue jackets and trowsers were now adopted, and in lieu of cross-belts, &c. a light cartouch-box was fastened, without a bayonet (this instrument being useless here) round the middle; this, with a fusee and canteen, formed the military equipment of the militia; and the dress of the regulars was also considerably lightened. Baggage negroes followed in the rear of the detachments, carrying provisions, &c. for the troops; and thus they traversed the deepest woods, crossed over mountains, clambered up the most frightful precipices, or wandered along glades impervious

to the light, or through defiles darkened by impending rocks and the thickest woods. Here were they often encountered by the Maroons who hardly ever were seen, nor could the troops know where to direct their fire, except by the flashes of their adversaries' pieces. On these occasions, the regular soldiers were far more awkward than the island militia: having never been trained to this sort of *bush-fighting*, they disdained for a long time to have recourse to rocks and trees as a shield against their enemies' fire, accounting it base and unmanly in a soldier thus to shrink from danger; nor was it till they had repeatedly experienced the fatal effects of this temerity, that they overcame this prejudice, and reluctantly consented to put themselves on a footing with their savage enemy, by availing themselves of these natural entrenchments. A considerable number of the whites were killed by the Maroons in this contest; while it was never ascertained that even one Maroon was killed by the whites!—So superior were these savages, by their agility, their hardihood, and knowledge of the woods, in this species of warfare. Indeed, had the courage of the Maroons been equal to their skill and activity, the whites would have been still less able to have coped with them, and many more would daily have perished in the unequal conflict. But they carried their caution and their fears, luckily for the whites, to an un-

necessary extreme; only venturing on an attack when they were certain they could make it with impunity. They generally procured information of the motions of the whites from the fugitive slaves, who fled to them, and were employed by them in getting this information from the other slaves. They once received notice that a considerable quantity of provisions, &c. was to pass forward to one of the posts occupied by the whites, on a certain day, under the escort of a party of regulars commanded by a serjeant. They sent a party to way-lay this escort. On receiving the first volley from the Maroons, which killed half of the soldiers, the poor fellow who commanded, drew up the remainder, and told them to stand *openly* and manfully, and fight these cowardly miscreants: they did so, and not one of them escaped. The provisions, &c. which were carried by negroes, fell into their hands. It was fortunate for the whites, that the slaves in general conducted themselves, on this occasion, with great fidelity and attachment to their masters: they were all along, with a few exceptions, orderly, tranquil, and obedient. An antipathy had always subsisted between them and the Maroons; and it is believed that none but the turbulent and desperate among them, wished well to the cause of the Maroons.

The barbarities that were perpetrated by these wretches on the unfortunate and defenceless white

individuals who fell into their hands, were too shocking to relate. The runaway negroes who happened to be along with them on these occasions, declared that they mutilated many of these unhappy victims in a dreadful manner, and inflicted on them a variety of studied and insulting tortures! One instance only occurred of their sparing a white man, who led a solitary life in the midst of the woods, and was actually ignorant that the Maroons were in rebellion against the whites. He had at one time resided among them, and was useful to them in a medical capacity, having been bred as a surgeon. The leader of this party had become a Christian, and had retired from the other Maroons to live with his family on a small retired spot which he had cultivated, and on which he had erected a small dwelling. On coming up to the white man's dwelling, he restrained his banditti from putting him to death, which some of them were inclined to do.—“No!” said he, “we must not kill this poor Buckera; him no know say we do fight with tother Buckera; him never do we harm; but him sometimes do we good, when he been live with we.” Then addressing himself to the astonished and trembling white man, he said, “No be affraid, we wont hurt you, we wont burn your house; but give we key, we want what you have in your house to eat and drink. When we gone, no stay here; go to Buckera, and tell them, say, Johnson (this was the Ma-

roon's adopted name) no been want for trouble them; him been want for keep himself to himself; but Buckera come and burn him house; them *rook out him ground*; them say, they want for kill me; my wife and pickininnie no have house, no have victual. Well! so long as Buckera trouble me first, I will shew them something too!" This Maroon was grateful and considerate, while he thus breathed revenge, and threatened destruction. A party of militia had destroyed his property, prior to his taking up arms and joining his rebellious brethren. It must indeed be confessed, that the whites sometimes did things, during this rebellion, which could answer no other end than to exasperate the Maroons, and render them more desperate and blood-thirsty. On taking possession of the forsaken haunts of the rebels, it would have been well had they always stopped at burning the huts, and destroying the provisions; but instances occurred of their opening the graves, and cutting off the heads from the putrid carcasses of the Maroons who had been there interred? What were the survivors to think of this? but that those who could thus extend their hatred and antipathy to the dead, would wreak a horrible vengeance on the living if they had them in their power.

Much has been said against the employing of dogs against these savages; and in truth, the name of the thing has something revolting in it, when

superficially compared with the legitimate means of civilized warfare. Those who have condemned, with unqualified dogmatism, the whites, for having recourse to these animals, did not examine the subject with fairness, liberality, and candour. Not that the author means to set up a defence of this mode of carrying on war: the horrors of war are sufficiently numerous, without sharpening its scourge by additional inventions of destruction. The employment of these dogs against the Maroons has been compared to the use the Spaniards made of them in hunting and extirpating the poor Indians in South America and the Caribbees. The comparison, and the inference to be drawn therefrom, is the very reverse of fairness and truth. In the one case, these animals were used as a means of *offence* against a helpless, naked, and flying people, in order to wrest from them, by extermination, the country they inhabited and possessed: in the other, they were employed as a necessary *defence* and protection against rebellious savages, who exercised cold-blooded massacre, and every other horrible outrage and barbarity, against a people under whose government they lived in peace, and to whom they owed submission and allegiance. In civilized war, if barbarities not recognised by it, are practised by one party, the other is justifiable in having recourse to retaliation. The whites could not retaliate the dreadful cruelties of the

Maroons, without themselves incurring the name of barbarous; but to employ the *only resource* which they had left to save the country from destruction, and themselves and families from indiscriminate slaughter, was surely, at least, a pardonable *retaliation*. And the author does not hesitate to assert, that had the Maroons held out for three or four months longer, Jamaica would have exhibited a scene of general conflagration, havoc, and ruin! In the season of crop, the weather is usually long and excessively dry, and so combustible does the stubble of the cane-fields become in consequence, that a spark of fire communicated to them, would in a few hours consume three or four plantations; and the blaze, if once become general, would be stopped with much difficulty;—even the grass at this season is so parched by the heat and the drought, that it would assist to propagate the devouring element. Thus then the Maroons would have had it in their power to destroy the property of the country; and many of the slaves, seeing their success and their desperate exploits, would have been tempted, by a view of independence, to have joined their banners, and to have massacred the few whites who had been left in care of the plantations. But for what purpose were these dogs gotten? Was it to tear, devour, and suck the blood of the unhappy Maroons, as was insidiously represented? Those who have ever traversed the

interior and mountainous parts of Jamaica, well know that they afford fastnesses to such a people as the Maroons, in which dogs could not be so employed with any chance of success. Of this the whites were fully aware. But, by their keen scent, they might discover the lurking retreats of the enemy, on the approach to them of the parties of the whites, and thus put them on their guard against those ambushes which so often proved fatal to them. But the grand intent of these animals was the *terror* which the name and the presence of them conveyed to the minds of the Maroons. Negroes are fond of exaggeration, and such of the slaves as had seen them, and afterwards resorted to the Maroons, gave to these people an appalling description of their size, their fierceness, their strength, their agility, and numbers. This account operated as was expected and desired; the Maroons soon after the introduction of the Spanish dogs, testified a desire to capitulate, which they would not (as they themselves said) otherwise so easily have done. And thus was much bloodshed, not to say the absolute destruction of the country, prevented by these animals. At the same time not a drop of blood was shed by them, if we except an unfortunate accident, of one getting loose from its keeper, soon after their arrival, and worrying an old negro woman. They were muzzled and held in couples by the Spanish chasseurs,

All the Maroons that remain in the island do not amount to above five or six hundred. The Melawney town Maroons were by far the most fierce, daring, and warlike of these people.

The Maroons in general lead a wild and roving sort of life. The women are chiefly employed in cultivating the grounds, and attending to the wants of their families; while the men are (or at least *were*) in the woods, hunting the wild hog, or shooting the ring-tail pigeon. Their arms were a light fusee and powder-horn, a *machetto*, or short sabre, sometimes a lance made of the hardest wood, and, in war, a horn directed, by its various modulations, their movements. With these the Maroon climbed with the nimbleness and celerity of the roebuck, the precipitous rocks and rugged mountains of the wild woods, which he traversed in quest of his prey. He patiently explored the deepest retreats of the forest; lived in them for whole weeks; found every where abundance of materials wherewith to erect his hut, or kindle a fire for the dressing of his game; and, if unsuccessful in procuring it, he could easily subsist upon the mountain cabbage, while he assuaged his thirst with the moisture of the water-withe, or wild pine, should no rivulet be near, nor water remain in the excavations of the rocks. He was wonderfully adroit in the management of his fusee, he could charge and fire in any position, he could toss it high in the air, and, catching it

in the descent, instantly present it, with unerring aim, at his object. In short, he was completely adapted for a desultory and skirmishing warfare in a woody and mountainous country, like Jamaica. It is therefore no wonder, that in the contest between this people and the whites, they should avail themselves, so fatally to the latter, of these advantages and qualifications; nor can there be a doubt, that the terror of the Spanish dogs alone operated more powerfully to induce them to surrender, than all the troops and military talent in the country. Not that there was a deficiency of either; but what could a body of gallant troops, headed by the bravest and most skilful officer, do against an enemy who was invisible to them—who, skulking behind huge trees and immense rocks, were so placed as completely to enfilade the narrow and rugged defiles through which the former were obliged to pass? It would be painful to dwell on the various shocking barbarities exercised on the unfortunate white men who fell, in these encounters, alive into the hands of this savage foe, who gloried in having such an opportunity of glutting their blood-thirsty, and vindictive spirit, by nameless insults and protracted tortures! The man who knows he has a generous enemy to fight with, has no presentiment of so horrible a fate, to damp the energy of his spirit; he does not fear becoming the martyr of an un pitying revenge, should the chance of war, some sudden surprise, or unex-

pected ambush, throw him into the hands of such an enemy. He knows, that if he falls wounded into his power, he will be cherished, respected, consoled, with all that characteristic humanity which ever distinguishes the truly brave. Indeed, generosity and compassion to a vanquished enemy, form perhaps the brightest trait in the character of the soldier—that eye, which flashed fierceness and defiance in the hour of battle, bedews with the softest tears of a generous sympathy, the wounds of his fallen foe! To preach this doctrine to the vindictive and cowardly savage, is like persuasion to the deaf winds of heaven.

The Maroons, however successful they were in their surprises, skirmishes, and ambuscades, were certainly, as before remarked, deficient in one of the first qualities of a soldier, courage. Confident of their security in the midst of their fastnesses and retreats, the marches and movements of the whites gave them little concern as to their safety; yet in the open field they were perfectly aware they were no match for the regulars and militia; nor was their mode of warfare at all calculated for a cultivated and champaign country. While they remained in the vicinity of their town, which, as a preliminary to war, they burnt with their own hands, a few shells were thrown, in the evenings, in different directions from the post there, into the surrounding woods, in order to scour them, and prevent night sur-

prises. These, flying like comets through the darkened air, terrified and amazed them for a while; but at length, keeping a little beyond their reach, they were wont to gaze on them merely as an *amusing spectacle*. The Brigands of St. Domingo have often openly skirmished with the European troops, and have indeed, at times, fought pretty obstinately, and even come to the push of the bayonet: these negroes were partly trained to European tactics, and were supplied with artillery, to the use of which they were by no means novices. The Maroons neither knew, nor desired to know, any thing of artillery or the bayonet.

The Maroons are generally tall, well made, and more comely in their features than most of the other blacks; but there is a something in their looks which indicates wildness and ferocity. This is owing in a great measure to the wild and wandering life they lead, and to their not mixing so much with general society as the other negroes.

CHAP. XXV.

People of colour.—The different classes of them.—Their rapidly increasing population in Jamaica.—Their character, manners, and amusements, &c.

BETWEEN the whites and the blacks in the West Indies, a numerous race has sprung up, which goes by the general name of people of colour: these are subdivided into Mulattos, the offspring of a white and a black; Sambos, the offspring of a black and Mulatto: Quadroons, the offspring of a Mulatto and a white; and Mestees, or Mestises, the offspring of a Quadroon and a white. Below this last denomination, the distinction of colour is hardly perceptible; and those who are thus far removed from the original negro stock, are considered by the law as whites, and competent, in course, to enjoy all the privileges of a white. Between these particular *casts*, an endless variety of non-descript shades exist, descending from the deep jet to the faintest tinge of the olive, by gradations which it were impossible to mark and to designate.

The people of colour may be supposed to possess the mingled natures of the original *stocks* from whence they spring; and the more or less

they are removed from one extreme or the other, they seem to be imbued in proportion with their particular qualities. The Sambo differs little or nothing in manners, habits, &c. from the negro; while the Mestee and his descendant approximate as near in these particulars to the white as it is possible for a mingled race to do; and when polished by a genteel education, that little distinction almost ceases to exist. It is remarked of the people of colour, that they are peculiarly hardy, and far less subject to disease than either the whites or the negroes, of course a considerable less proportion of them are swept off by the general mortality of the country. These people are lively, active, and sometimes industrious; they feel a kind of pride in being removed some degrees from the negro race; and affect as much as possible the manners, &c. of the whites. Few marriages take place between them. A female of colour thinks it more genteel and reputable to be the kept mistress of a white man, if he is in opulent circumstances, and can afford to indulge her taste for finery and parade, than to be united in wedlock with a respectable individual of her own class. One of these girls consented to be tied in the noose of matrimony to one of her own description; for three or four years she bore her fate without *remorse* or repining; after this, however, she became uneasy and discontented, and often, with a heavy sigh, lamented the luckless

fate which drew her to the altar of Hymen ! Her husband was a quiet, decent, and respectable man, who gained an honest livelihood by the trade he professed ; he wished his wife to stay at home, and attend to her children and the affairs of her household ; the lady was of a pleasurable turn, and had a taste, like most of her colour, for a life of voluptuous and varied delight : she had been accustomed, prior to wedlock, to balls, parties, and jaunts, and she could therefore but ill brook this life of restraint and drudgery. She looked, with envy and an aching heart, at the gay, showy, and dissipated life which many of the companions of her youth led ; these were in keeping, and dashed about in style, superbly dressed, and in their curricles, attended by servants in livery ; while she, poor woman ! was obliged to toil from morning to night in dirty drudging occupations, without one faint ray of hope, that she would ever be emancipated from this sad state of thralldom, and enjoy again the dear delicious pleasures of freedom and variety ! These are the sentiments of nine tenths of the females of colour in this island ; and accordingly, perhaps, little short of that proportion are in keeping by the whites ; while the males console themselves in the same way, either with one of their own colour, or with a sable charmer. Though some of these females of colour are possessed of considerable property, given them by their

white parents, or amassed by their own industry, they never aspire to a conjugal union with a white man; nor, if such a union were sanctioned by the custom of the country, is it probable they would desire to enter into it; but no instance of this ever occurs; a white man, according to the ideas of distinction of colour which here prevail, would be considered as degrading himself by a union with a woman of colour, however respectable by fortune, or accomplished by education. But the brown female gives herself little concern about this, while the most distinguished and opulent of the whites pay an illicit homage to her charms; and even the man of family shall forsake his wife and abandon his children to hold dalliance in her more alluring company!

The free people of colour are excluded from many of the privileges of the whites; and their white parents are restrained by law from bequeathing them more than two thousand pounds currency. These distinctions and restraints are thought necessary for political purposes. But it is in vain that such laws and provisions are thrown in the way of this people's acquiring an ascendancy in the country, while other productive causes are suffered to exist. A respectable clergyman in the island assured the author, that he usually had occasion to baptize about fifteen brown children for one white child! This disproportion of the increase of the two populations

maybe considered as general throughout the island, and it must necessarily be rapidly gaining ground. As for the acquisition which the white population gains by European emigration, it is now trifling; besides, that as new hands arrive, others, who may have acquired fortunes, are returning to their native country, and a very considerable number die yearly in the country: few, upon the whole, remain in the island and live to any great age. But there is little occasion to go far for proofs of the non-increase of the white population of this island, as it appears that it has remained nearly stationary for these twenty years past; while perhaps the brown population is more than trebled in that period. The exact number of people of colour at present in the island cannot correctly be ascertained, as no census is ever taken of this branch of population; but it would not be going out of the way to say, that, including all descriptions of them, they already amount to double the number of the whites. It is in vain to enact laws and fix restraints, while the sources of an evil continue unremoved. These people *must*, in time, know and feel their own strength, when increased to an enormous disproportion to the whites, and spreading in vast masses over the country, the laws inimical to them can answer no other purpose than to sour and incense their minds, and rouse them to an exertion in their own behalf in claiming rights in common with

the whites: either therefore, as formerly observed, the whites will hereafter be obliged to allow them this participation, or they will wrest it from them by some horrible convulsion which one trembles to think of! This is no visionary speculation; it is what must inevitably, in the order of things, take place *at some period*, should the two populations thus continue in disproportion, and the manners and mode of life of the whites remain equally dissolute and immoral. Matrimony should be more encouraged, and held in greater veneration; religion should be more inculcated and respected, and a loose and profligate life be less countenanced and practised, than it is in this quarter of the globe:—such reformations as these, not feeble and partial laws and regulations, will ensure the respect, and perpetuate the submission of this people to the Europeans and their government. But as enough has before been said on this subject, it will be needless here to repeat the arguments in favour of such a change.

The children of colour, of the more opulent of the whites, are either educated in the island, or sent to Great Britain for this purpose. Such as have received liberal educations, are for the most part well behaved respectable people; but are, with a very few exceptions, excluded the society of the whites, and exposed to other mortifications, in consequence of the line of distinction

which custom and the laws draw between the whites and the browns. So that a white and a brown child sent to Europe at the same time, and brought up together at the same school, though they may be in habits of the strictest intimacy while there, discontinue that intimacy on their growing up and returning to the West Indies; though both may be equally amiable and accomplished. The white miss disowns, with a supercilious frown, her quondam companion and school-fellow, because she has been born with a deeper tinge of the brunette, and the customs and distinctions of the country forbid her cultivating such acquaintance. Some such distinctions are doubtless necessary and highly proper, though they should not be carried, as is sometimes done, to a rigid and invidious extreme. It is perhaps a pity in a parent, after having bestowed on his offspring a genteel and liberal education in a country, where at least they experience a milder and more respectful attention, to have them brought back to one where their feelings and their pride (and these it must be supposed they have acquired an addition of, along with their mental culture) are perpetually liable to be wounded by contempt and neglect. The better sort of the people of colour, thus shut out from the society of the whites, form a separate society of themselves. They have their own amusements, their parties, their visitings, and their assemblies. The lat-

ter are fully as gay and as expensive as those of the whites; and as the brown ladies are the chief planners and supporters of these, the young and the dissipated of the white males who are their admirers, form a distinguished part of these meetings of pleasure. So that the man, who to-night leads out as a partner in the dance the fair Creolian, may to-morrow give his hand, on a similar occasion, to the olive beauty of a darker shade, who dresses as well, and thinks herself as lovely and attractive as the other. The white ladies sometimes resent this behaviour in many of the gentlemen (even of the genteelest families) with a becoming spirit; but the contempt and animadversions of these amiable girls, are too often thrown away upon such hardened and thoughtless sinners!

On all occasions the brown ladies emulate, and even strive to excel the whites in splendour, taste, and expensiveness of dress, equipage, and entertainment. On public occasions, such as races, reviews, &c. they drive in their curricles, gigs, &c. in a smart and dashing style, as if anxious to leave behind their fairer competitors in the race of fashion, gaiety, and pleasure. Indeed, the latter themselves often acknowledge that they are outdone at times in gaudy display by these extravagant rivals; but the truth is, they do not aim at a competition with them.

Many of the Quadroon and Mestee females are comely, if not beautiful, as they partake chiefly of the European feature; but the Mulattos and Sambos, as less removed from the negro stock, retain something of their thick lips and flat noses. Many of the former have, however, agreeable features; and indeed a number of the negroes are not deficient in this respect. As for the Africans, their ideas of beauty in the human countenance are almost the reverse of those of an European. They have no idea that the finest Grecian contour is more beautiful than their large and gross features; and the jet black Venus from the banks of the Senegal or the Gambia, prefers her sooty Adonis to the handsomest European.

The people of colour are not so mild and humane towards their slaves as the white people: indeed, too many of them are harsh and tyrannical; and the negroes, aware of this, are wont to say, "If me for have mistress, give me Buckera mistress, no give me Mulatto, them no use neega well." Such of the browns as receive European educations, are, however, more humane and considerate.

The free males of colour are enrolled with the white militia of the country; they are embodied in separate companies, and commanded by white officers. The free blacks are also formed into

separate companies, under white officers. These last are in general a quiet inoffensive class of people, who chiefly inhabit the towns, and follow some trade or occupation; as do also several of the people of colour, many of whom are very decent and respectable characters, and peaceable and industrious members of society.

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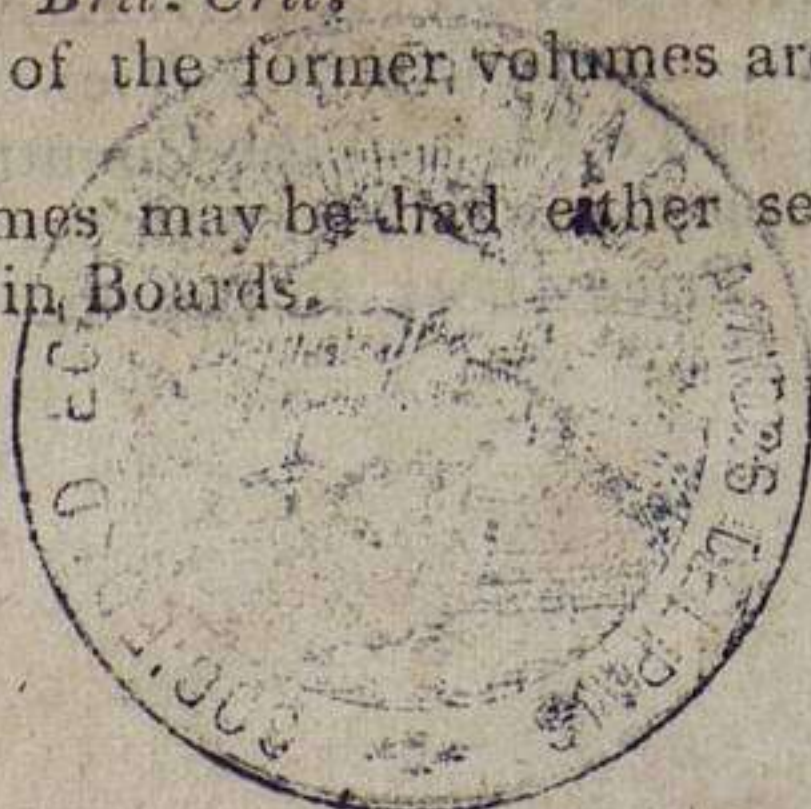
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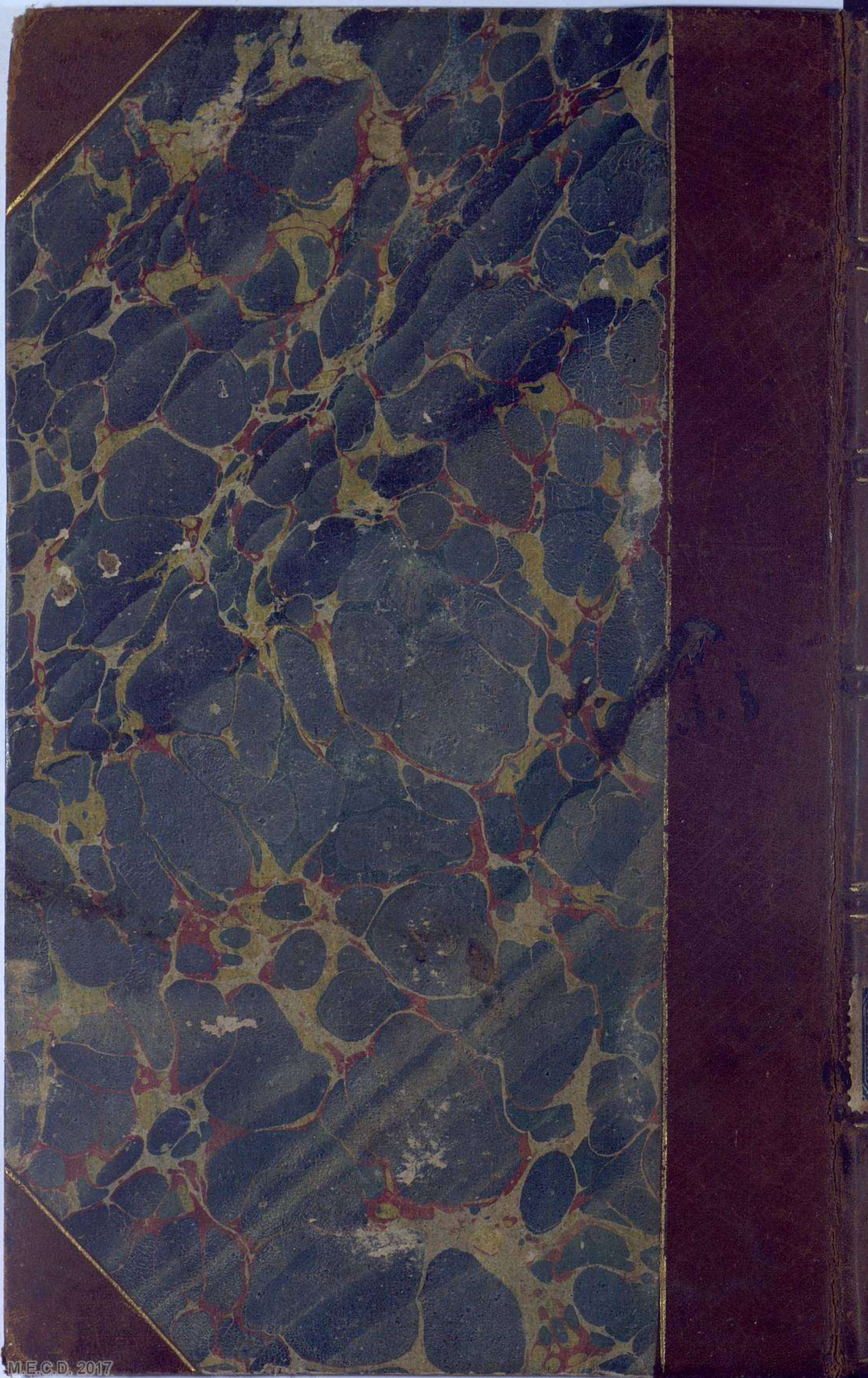
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